Armed and Dangerous: Legacies of Incumbent-Military Ties and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa

Abstract

While a growing literature explores the danger that authoritarian military legacies pose for regime breakdown, there is little research on the effects of similar legacies in the context of multiparty politics. This is an important gap in the literature since in many cases the introduction of formal democratic institutions has led to neither democratic consolidation nor regime breakdown. We start exploring this lacuna by developing a theory that links the use of violent electoral tactics to the ties of the executive with the authoritarian era's military. We argue that incumbents with close ties to the authoritarian regime's military are more likely to instigate election violence. Empirical tests on a sample of 230 elections in 39 Sub-Saharan African countries since 1974 show that election violence is more prevalent in countries where such ties exist. These findings speak to several areas of study, including those on election violence, and on military legacies.

Introduction

While the introduction of elections is considered a new beginning, it is not a blank slate when it comes to political legacies and institutions. Nonetheless, the effects of such political residuals remain largely unexplored. A recent wave of scholarship has delved into how authoritarian era military legacies affect democratization and the prospects of democratic consolidation (Kim, 2021). Much of this literature focuses on the potential for coups and the democratic regime's breakdown (e.g., Cheibub, 2007; Kim, 2021; Poast and Urpelainen, 2015; Powell et al., 2018; Svolik, 2008). However, while regime breakdown is the most extreme possible outcome, the existence of such legacies can have wider repercussions within the context of multiparty politics. Elections are seen as an alternative to violence, a tool often utilized by many regimes struggling to remain in power. Yet, we do not know how a capacity for violence developed under authoritarianism can intrude on electoral politics. As leaders who were in power before the introduction of multiparty elections frequently partake in and often win elections, it is important to examine whether and how they might leverage being closely related or even leading armies in the period before the transition. In this paper we study how a legacy of incumbent-military ties that predate the transition to multiparty politics affects the propensity for election violence.

The coercive institutions of an authoritarian regime can survive the transition to the multiparty era, as on the one hand dismantling them requires targeted effort immediately after the transition and, on the other hand, re-purposing them is a long process and not always successful (Hassan, 2017). Therefore, since institutions such as the army are likely to survive the transition intact, elected leaders with a legacy of close ties to the authoritarian era military will be able to utilize its coercive capacity to at least some extent. As a result, we argue that incumbents who have a legacy of strong ties to the authoritarian regime's coercive institutions are likely to use them in acts of electoral violence, especially in the pre-electoral period. Pre-election violence is political violence carried out before an election to influence the process and, as a result, the outcome (von Borzyskowski and Kuhn, 2020: 17).

We test how a legacy of incumbent-military ties affect the levels of election violence instigated by the government on a sample of 231 elections from 39 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The region's large number of countries with significant variation in terms of both levels of election violence and kinds of ties between the incumbent and the military offer a suitable environment for testing the proposed theory. In accordance with our argument, the analysis yields strong support for our claims concerning governmental electoral violence. Incumbents whose political past is explicitly linked to the authoritarian regime's military forces are overwhelmingly more likely to engage in election violence in order to secure reelection.

This paper aims to make several contributions. While most research on election violence focuses on the effects of causes contemporary to the elections of interest, we promote the idea of thinking in more broad terms when considering the causes of election violence. Relatedly, we point out that incumbents are able and willing to use pre-existing institutions to affect the levels of violence even post regime change. Finally, we provide additional insights on the ways that the military affects politics after transition to a multiparty electoral regime. While much of the existing literature focuses on the conditions under which the military might revert the process of democratization, we highlight how a legacy of strong ties between the incumbent and the authoritarian era's military might limit the prospects for fair elections and further democratic consolidation.

From a Legacy of Military Ties to Election Violence

An autocrat's relationship with their military is fundamental for their political survival. The military's higher echelons are among the most important parts of the autocrat's winning coalition and have influence over regime politics. Consequently, the military can exert huge influence in times of transition. The decision to support or oppose the regime can lead to fundamentally different outcomes. When the military does not side with the autocrat, transition usually takes place due to the collapse of the regime, and the autocrat is forced out of power (Bellin, 2012). When the military sides with the autocrat, even if a transition to an electoral regime is enacted, they remain a critical force which is highly capable of affecting the course of post-transition politics (Kim, 2021; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Uggla, 2005).

The decision is made based on calculations of self preservation. If the institution's structures are considered deep enough to survive the fall of the autocrat, the military is likely to remain neutral or oppose the autocrat and allow or even embrace a regime transition. If, on the other hand, the autocrat's fall could threaten their structures, the military is more likely to side with the autocrat (Bellin, 2012). In the African context these scenarios frequently played out during the early 1990s. In cases that the military was invested in the autocrat, interventions in their favor were not uncommon. Otherwise, the military was more likely to remain neutral or side with the opposition (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997: 211-217).

Therefore, the military of the authoritarian regime tends to survive instances of regime change and to maintain its operational capacity. As a result, after transitions to multiparty regimes, elected leaders with a legacy of ties to the authoritarian military have the capability to at least partially draw on its coercive capacity to manage the internal functions of the state (e.g., Hassan, 2017). In effect, it is possible to incorporate elements of the authoritarian military into a coercive network which will be functional in the

post-transition multiparty regime (e.g., Themnér, 2017). On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that after the transition, governments can be loathe to request the support of the military to resolve internal strife if strong bonds do not already exist between them (Cook and Savun, 2016). This emphasizes how the government-military relations may differ depending on linkages predating the multiparty regime.

We argue that upon introduction of multiparty elections, incumbents with a legacy of ties to the authoritarian military are more likely to employ electoral violence, particularly in the pre-electoral period. Incumbents with autocratic tendencies rarely allow the opposition a fair chance at campaigning, let alone winning (Van de Walle, 2002). Given that state institutions in African countries tend to be weak, especially after regime transition, control of the security forces allows these politicians to consolidate power and potentially engage in undemocratic practices (Angerbrandt and Themnér, 2021; Themnér, 2017). While election violence can be spontaneous, pre-election violence tends to be orchestrated by incumbent politicians or their allies (von Borzyskowski and Kuhn, 2020: 17). Therefore, incumbents are likely to use their existing coercive networks in order to assure their electoral victory (Croissant et al., 2010; Hassan, 2017; Levitsky and Way, 2010; Loveman, 1994). Incumbents with a legacy of ties to the authoritarian era's military will be in a better position to employ violence during elections in the post transition period as they will already have a loyal coercive apparatus in place.

However, violent electoral tactics are costly both domestically (Young, 2020) and abroad (Hyde and Marinov, 2014). As a result, incumbents are incentivised to avoid them (Hafner-Burton et al., 2014). Nonetheless, compared to other incumbents, those with military ties are more likely to employ violence as a reelection tool for two reasons. First, close ties with the military is likely to affect their perception of violence as a problem-solving tool (Weeks, 2012) and to entrench notions of securitization, or the idea that core values need to be protected (Vuori, 2008). Incumbents agreeable to using violence to solve problems, are prone to portraying political threats as security threats (Fisher and Anderson, 2015). This logic can be applied in the electoral context and legitimate heavy military presence and increased state violence during elections (Jenkins, 2020).

Second, the bond between the incumbent and the military alleviates commitment problems. When there are no bonds between the civil government and the coercive apparatus, the incumbent may avoid involving them in internal matters (e.g., Cook and Savun, 2016). On the contrary, when such a bond exists, the institutions forming the state's coercive apparatus are infused with the military personnel that is invested in keeping the incumbent in office. As a result, the incumbent trusts that the coercive apparatus will employ violence to keep them in office if needed. On the other hand, the members of these institutions trust that they will not be held liable for acts of electoral violence they instigate on the incumbent's behalf.

Thus, the military's justified access to coercive resources (Linz and Stepan, 1996) and its institutional role as a security force makes it a tool that can enforce the will of its commander in democratic politics (Croissant et al., 2010). For example, in the case of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe inherited from the colonial state an extensive and efficient coercive apparatus, which he infused with ZANU's guerrilla troops (Levitsky and Way, 2010). Subsequently, this coercive institution was utilized in every electoral contest up to the present. This allowed him to remain in power until recently by winning multiple electoral contests, that often turned extensively violent. The influence of Mugabe's military ties were evident in various forms such as "pre-election military terror campaigns or operations meant to tweak voting patterns and choices; the issuing of televised press statements by army generals during the run-up-to elections with the intention of reminding the electorate that voting ZANU-PF was better than risking punitive consequences by voting for the opposition; and populating state institutions responsible for administering elections with securocrats and their loyalists, willing to sacrifice professionalism for loyalty to ZANU-PF" (Ruhanya, 2020: 195). Mugabe's mindset in employing violence to garner the votes appears in his speech – "our votes must go together with our guns. After all, any vote we shall have, shall have been the product of the gun" (Meredith 2007: 1, cited in Ruhanya, 2020: 195) – and resulted in extensive election violence campaigns such as Operation Gukurahundi (1983-1987), Operation Murambatsvina (2004), and Operation Makavhoterapapi (2008). Critically, that same coercive apparatus played a key role in forcing his resignation in 2017 as well as in raising Mnangagwa to the presidentship in his place (Ruhanya, 2020).

Therefore, we argue that upon introduction of multiparty elections, incumbents with a legacy of ties to the authoritarian military are more likely to employ electoral violence. Formally, we hypothesize that *an incumbent with a legacy of military ties predating the introduction of multiparty elections will be more prone to employing electoral violence than those with no such ties*.

Data and Methods

To test our hypothesis, we operationalize our dependent variable, the levels of electoral violence, using V-Dem's "v2elintim", which measures the levels of election violence, i.e., repression, intimidation, violence, or harassment, instigated by the government, the ruling party, or their agents (Coppedge et al., 2021). The original variable is ordinal coded with higher scores denoting more limited violence and converted to interval by the measurement model. To make the presentation of our results more straightforward, we use the inverse of the converted variable as our dependent variable, ranging from -2.12 (no violence) to 2.88 (heavy violence) in our sample. To better communicate the results, we also discuss them based on

the ordinal version of the same variable, "v2elintim_ord," which takes the values no violence, restrained violence, some violence, frequent violence, and heavy violence.

To operationalize our independent variables, incumbent-military ties, we introduce a novel variable denoting whether the incumbent has a legacy of ties with the authoritarian regime's military. In coding this variable, we follow the most inclusive definition of military rule, i.e., military-led autocracy (Geddes et al., 2014), focusing on a member of the military regardless of the nature of the rest of the leadership. The important features of the military rule encompasses two distinctive forms of rules: military regime and military strongman rule. The former looks at 'domination of decision making by a group of officers representing the military institutions' and the latter considers dictatorships 'controlled by a single officer absent elite constraints' (Geddes et al., 2014: 152).

Three groups of leaders fulfill this criterion. The first group is comprised of the leaders of military regimes, who legitimate their rule through control of the armed forces and of military officers serving under such regimes (Geddes, 1999). Another group is comprised of leaders of civilian regimes who came to power as a result of being protagonists in recent liberation wars or civil wars (Themnér, 2017).[1] Finally, the last group consists of leaders who did not themselves command an armed force, but they were handpicked by military leaders turned politicians in order to succeed them in the leadership of the party they created. Based on the above, our indicator is coded as 1 if the incumbent is running for reelection and they were also (a) leaders of a military regime, (b) military officers during the authoritarian regime, (c) rebel leaders, or (d) they rose to office as a direct result of support from the military or ex-military leaders. Otherwise, it is coded as 0.[2] The main sources used to facilitate the coding of the existence of military ties were the case descriptions accompanying the Archigos dataset (Goemans et al., 2009), and the African Elections Database (www.africanelections.tripod.com).

To account for alternative explanations we also include in our models several control variables. A viable alternative explanation is that what we capture is a legacy of ties to the military but a regime type legacy. Indeed, there are important differences in terms of military involvement and readiness among authoritarian regimes. Specifically, military regimes have coercive institutions that are more reliable in terms of delivering violence compared to civilian-led autocracies. They prioritize professional expertise and training of

[1]Most of the leaders in the category served as political leaders after the end of the period of military conflict and before the introduction of multiparty elections (e.g., in the cases of Angola, Mozambique, and Rwanda). Therefore, they had the opportunity to infuse the state's coercive apparatus with their rebel troops in a context that was not democratic. Even in the rare cases where such a period of formal autocratic rule was absent (e.g., in Zimbabwe), the rebel leader had secured the loyalty of a military force during the authoritarian period absent any civilian control. As a result, the mentality of using violence as a tool and the strong ties with the armed forces would still be present and lead them to engage in election violence more frequently than incumbents who did not have such ties.

[2]The list of country and election-year across each element of *Legacy of Military Ties* is available in Table A4 in Appendix.

the armed forces in the use of force, so they are better equipped to use violence against opposition leaders and civilians (Bidwell et al., 2019; Geddes et al., 2014; Svolik, 2013). Also, military regimes commit more human rights violations, and are more likely to initiate violence at home (i.e., civil war (Fjelde, 2010)) as well as abroad (Lai and Slater, 2006; Weeks, 2012). Furthermore, in times of regime transition from military regimes, certain prerogatives and reserved domains, such as reserved seats in parliament for representatives of the military, tend to be negotiated (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Tusalem, 2014), and military leaders impose conditions on how authoritarian institutions will be changed to serve the new regime. This way the military's prerogatives on key political issues were preserved through the transition in several countries including Nigeria, Ghana, and Uganda (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997). The influence of the military in new democracies in Africa was compounded by the military's reserved domains (Tusalem, 2014) as well as it's de facto monopoly on coercion during the period of transition (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997: 171). Therefore, it is possible for this military legacy be the cause behind increased military involvement and violence that ensues during elections in the successor regimes. To account for this alternative explanation, we control for whether the previous regime was a military regime. Using Geddes et al.'s (2014) data, we coded 1 if the democratic transition occurred from a military regime, and 0 otherwise.

We also control for the levels of corruption, and extracted the data from V-Dem project, expecting that increased corruption is associated with more extensive election violence (Birch, 2020). In addition, we control for the level of democracy and the number of years that a state has been democratic, as electoral violence is less likely to take place in more consolidated democracies (Marshall et al., 2002). Furthermore, we include several political and socioeconomic controls. First, we control for the type of electoral system. In majoritarian systems the electoral stakes are higher, which increases the likelihood of election violence (Fjelde and Höglund, 2016). We obtained the data on electoral system from Institutions and Elections Project (IAEP)[3]. Also, we control for the level of economic development (GDP per capita constant 2010 US dollar), and the size of the population, as these variables are known to affect the levels of political violence (Hafner-Burton et al., 2014). We obtained the data from World Bank's World Development Indicator.

Finally, for robustness purposes we control for the fear of losing (Hafner-Burton et al., 2014), measured by vote share of the largest party, and the state capacity of the economy including land control, expecting that strong control reduces visible and costly manipulation such as electoral violence (Seeberg, 2021). In addition, we control for the levels of oil production in the country, given that the abundance of natural wealth provides incumbents with the means to manipulate elections in several ways (Ross, 2001). Due to

[3]https://www.dante-project.org/datasets/iaep

limited data availability in these last three variables, we include them in separate models presented in the Appendix (Table A2).

Overall, our dataset includes 230 elections from 39 African countries between 1974 and 2013.[4] Our sample has an unbalanced structure as it includes 1-12 observations per country. Moreover, the number of panels is substantially larger than the number of time points. Given this data structure, we follow the suggestion of Beck and Katz (1995) , who recommend Ordinary Least Square regression with Panel Corrected Standard Errors (PCSE). To deal with the threat of unobservable unit specific characteristics in the composite error term, we employ a Fixed Effects estimation strategy at the country level.[5]

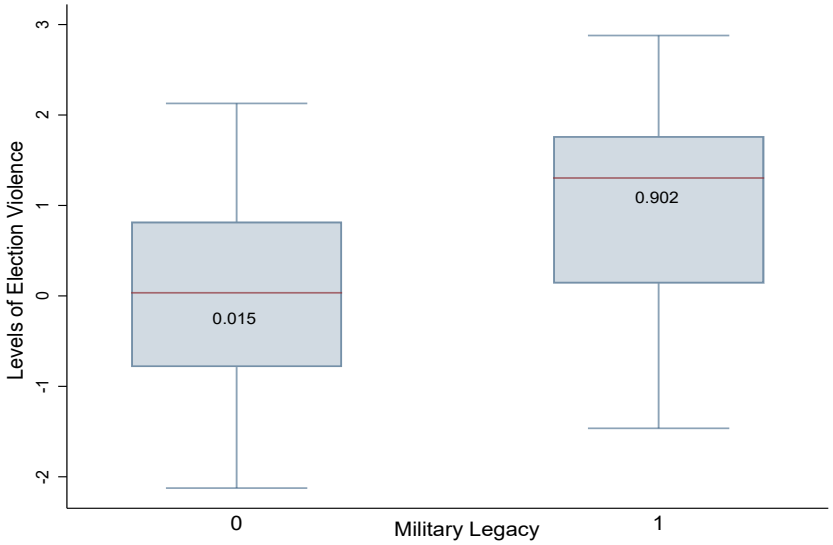
Analysis and Results

We begin our analysis by looking descriptively at the difference in the levels of electoral violence depending on whether the incumbent has a legacy of ties to the military dating back to the authoritarian regime in Figure 1. The box-and-whisker plot shows the difference in distribution of the levels of election violence across the absence and presence of a legacy of military ties. The mean and median values are substantially different across the two groups. On average the election violence index takes a value of 0.015 for election races where the incumbent does not have strong connections to the authoritarian regime's military. On the other hand, the levels of election violence explode to 0.902 when such a connection to the military exists. A difference of means test confirms that the means are statistically different. In terms of the ordinal variable, this suggests a shift from *restrained* violence (i.e., sporadic instances of violent harassment and intimidation by incumbent or its agents in at least one part of the country) to *some* violence (i.e., periodic, not systematic, but possibly centrally coordinated harassment and intimidation by the incumbent or its agents) (Coppedge et al., 2021: 66). These preliminary results are indicative of strong support for our main argument, that when the incumbent has military ties we are likely to witness increased levels of electoral violence instigated by the government.

However, the descriptive analysis does not take into consideration the multitude of other factors that may affect the levels of election violence. In order to further explore the relationship between an incumbent's connection with the military and the levels of election violence we run models including multiple control variables. Table 1 presents the estimation results of OLS with Panel Corrected Standard Error using Fixed Effects. In Model 1 we present results using the full sample. Based on Cook's Distance diagnostic, we

[4]The list of country-elections in the sample is available in the Appendix, Table A3.
[5]A Hausman test rejected the H0 (p-value< 0.001) in favor of using the Fixed Effects model rather than the Random Effects model.

Figure 1: Bivariate relationship between Election Violence and a Legacy of Military Ties



Note: Each number within the box indicates the mean of electoral violence. There are 73 cases of military past (1) compared to 217 cases of non-military past (0). The sample size changes when we control for various control variables in multivariate analyzes. The t-test (-6.839) test rejects H0 (diff=0) in favor that the difference is smaller than zero at the 95% confidence level.

identify influential cases, which may cause a downward bias in our estimations. Model 2 shows the results without these outliers.

Based on Model 1 in Table 1, incumbents with a legacy of ties to the authoritarian era's military are more likely to instigate election violence. When an incumbent with such ties runs for office, there is an increase in election violence by 0.39 points. The relationship is statistically significant 99% confidence levels and robust to controlling for further rival explanations such as electoral *Competitiveness*, *State Capacity*, and *Oil* (Table A1, Model 1). Not surprisingly, and in line with Cook and Savun (2016), we also found that election violence is more likely in democracies emerging from military regime (*Ex Military Regime*), but less likely as the number of years since the transition increase (Marshall et al., 2002). The results remain unchanged when the outliers are removed from the sample (Model 2).

To get a better sense of these results, in Figure 2 we present the result of simulations based on Model 1. The *Legacy of Military Ties* indicator varies from 0 to 1 with all other variables taking their observed values (see Hanmer and Kalkan, 2013). Based on the graph, the legacy of military ties has a pronounced effect on the levels of election violence. The average level of election violence when the incumbent lacks ties with the previous regime's military, is 0.25 (95% CIs: 0.17 – 0.33). On the other hand, when the incumbent has military ties, the average level of violence increases to 0.67 (95% CIs: 0.43 – 0.86). In terms of the ordinal

Table 1: Effects of a Legacy of Military Ties on Election Violence

	Model 1	Model 2
Legacy of Military Ties	0.394***	0.377***
	(0.114)	(0.128)
Ex Military Regime	0.543**	0.759***
	(0.245)	(0.215)
Electoral System	0.138	0.352***
	(0.167)	(0.128)
GDP per capita	0.148**	0.226***
	(0.074)	(0.073)
Population (log)	0.374**	0.283*
	(0.151)	(0.167)
Corruption	1.903***	2.576***
	(0.386)	(0.471)
Years since Transition	-0.022***	-0.023***
	(0.007)	(0.006)
Polity	-0.028***	-0.026***
	(0.010)	(0.009)
Constant	-6.396***	-7.542***
	(1.144)	(1.232)
R^2	0.902	0.930
Fixed Effects	✓	✓
Elections	230	209
Countries	39	36

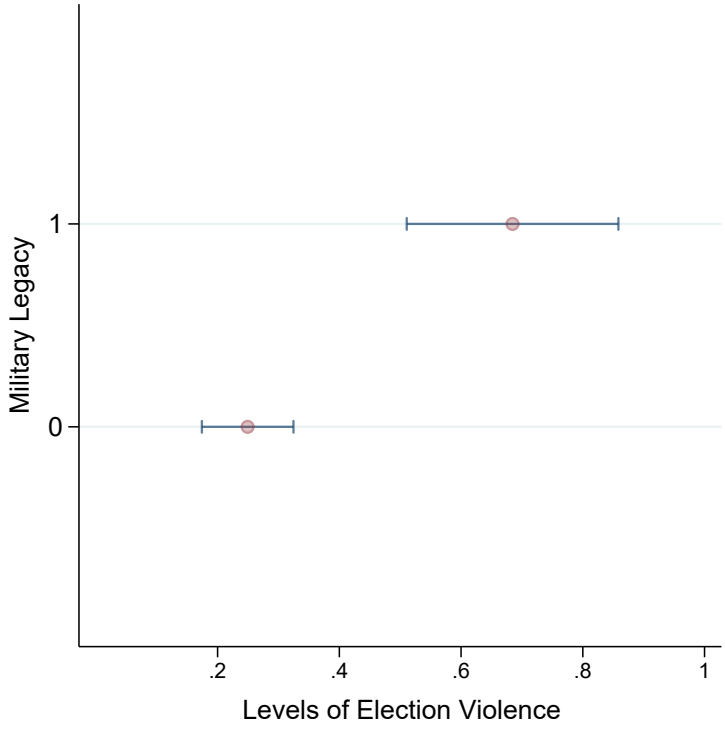
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses using `xtpcse` command in `Stata`.

Model 1 is based on all observations while Model 2 presents the results without outliers.

variable, this again suggests a shift from *restrained* violence to *some* violence. In a nutshell, incumbents with military ties tend to employ more election violence.

Figure 2: Simulated Results of Main Effects



Note: We present the changes in the *Levels of Election Violence* when the value of *Legacy of Military Ties* changes from 0 to 1 with all other variables taking their observed values.

To test if incumbent-military ties lead to an increase in election violence across all four components of the *Legacy of Military Ties* (e.g., Military, Rebel, Officer, and Successor), in Table 2 we estimate additional models using each component as a separate independent variable (Model $1-4$),[6] and a model with all four included separately (Model 5). It is apparent that among the four categories, incumbent who were '*Military*' or '*Rebel*' leaders tend to increase the levels of electoral violence. Conversely, incumbents who were former military officers or civilians who rose to office with direct support from the military exhibit no significant effects on the use of election violence. The results remain the same when all four variables are included in Model 5. These more fine-grained findings show that not all four kinds of ties lead to increased levels of election violence. One potential explanation could be that these leaders have already shown a willingness and have experience in commanding a country or an armed group based on the explicit or implicit use of violence. Thus, it might be less of a leap for them to resort to employing violence. It is also plausible that

[6]We also present a bivariate relationship between each element of *Military Ties* and election violence in a box-and-whisker plot in Figure A1 in Appendix.

Table 2: Effects of Individual Element of a Legacy of Military Ties on Election Violence

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Legacy of Military Ties					
Military Leader	0.643***				0.650***
	(0.121)				(0.128)
Rebel		1.889***			2.434***
		(0.372)			(0.380)
Officer			-0.101		0.158
			(0.365)		(0.371)
Successor				-0.538	-0.445
				(0.323)	(0.273)
Ex Military Regime	0.586**	0.446	0.450	0.440	0.578**
	(0.234)	(0.282)	(0.280)	(0.285)	(0.235)
Electoral System	0.103	0.150	0.147	0.150	0.108
	(0.167)	(0.167)	(0.169)	(0.167)	(0.169)
GDP per capita	0.196***	0.145*	0.148**	0.152**	0.198**
	(0.076)	(0.074)	(0.075)	(0.074)	(0.078)
Population(log)	0.351**	0.424***	0.434***	0.411***	0.324**
	(0.152)	(0.156)	(0.164)	(0.159)	(0.160)
Corruption	1.946***	1.920***	1.916***	1.962***	1.988***
	(0.358)	(0.436)	(0.440)	(0.439)	(0.356)
Years since Transition	-0.024***	-0.023***	-0.024***	-0.024***	-0.023***
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Polity	-0.023**	-0.039***	-0.039***	-0.041***	-0.024**
	(0.01)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.009)
Constant	-6.641***	-6.571***	-6.644***	-6.554***	-6.513***
	(1.019)	(1.294)	(1.311)	(1.304)	(1.081)
R^2	0.906	0.898	0.897	0.898	0.907
Fixed Effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elections	230	230	230	230	230
Country	39	39	39	39	39

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses using `xtpcse` command in `Stata`.

Model 1-4 include each of category of *Legacy of Military Ties* as a separate independent variable, and Model 5 presents the results with all four included separately.

both Military and Rebel leaders had more direct relationships with the higher echelons of the army, and therefore could forge stronger ties and inspire more loyalty compared to lower ranking officers or outsiders whom the military supported.

Overall, our findings are in line with Cook and Savun (2016) who demonstrate that conflicts and violence are more likely to occur in democracies emerging from military regimes. The role of the military in the prior authoritarian era is considerable in shaping the post-transition political environment on issues such as democratic consolidation (Svolik, 2008; Tusalem, 2014), civil war and conflicts (Cook and Savun, 2016; Mansfield and Snyder, 2008; Snyder, 2001), and corruption (Keefer and Khemani, 2009). On top of that, this finding suggests that new democracies whose leaders have a legacy of military ties are often 'armed and dangerous' and this violent nature, in turn, appears to make the election process vulnerable by increasing the risk of electoral violence.

The findings also speak to van Ham and Lindberg (2015) in that military regimes with high capacity of violence tend to replace other forms of electoral manipulation with violence. For an incumbent with strong military-ties, employing violence is instrumentally motivated to preserve their hold on power as the cost for violence is very low. This in turn makes using sticks (repression) more attractive than carrots (co-optation) in an attempt to maintain their own status.

Conclusion

This paper links electoral violence and its possible causes to a, not so distant, authoritarian past. Focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, a region frequently plagued by electoral violence, we show that there is a strong connection positive between the incumbent's a legacy of ties to the coercive apparatus of the authoritarian regime and the instigation of electoral violence by the government during the multiparty regime.

This study contributes to our understanding of election violence by adding a new perspective on the ability to employ violence. Our findings are in line with those of recent studies on the capacity and capability of employing election violence (e.g., Seeberg, 2021; Taylor et al., 2017). However, while previous works help us understand why political elites in new democracies demand violence (e.g., Birch, 2020; Fjelde and Höglund, 2016; Hafner-Burton et al., 2014), we focus on the supply-side perspective: *whether the elites have the ability to deliver violence*. Also, this study promotes the idea of thinking in more broad terms when considering the causes of electoral violence. Regime change rarely, if ever, represents a clean break with the past. However, as Brosche et al.'s (2020) observe, most scholars have looked at the short-term factors as

causes of electoral violence, and have overlooked the importance of long-lasting legacies of the authoritarian past. Furthermore, this study adds to the literature studying the military in relation to the prospects of democratization. While much of the existing literature focuses on the conditions under which the military might revert the process of democratization (Kim, 2021), we provide a fresh perspective on how a legacy of ties between the incumbent and the authoritarian era's military might limit the prospects for fair elections and, therefore, further democratic consolidation.

Nonetheless, several questions remain unanswered. To begin with, our study focuses on the effect of ties with the military, however many authoritarian regimes employ additional coercive institutions including police, militias, and presidential guards. Military regimes rely on the military, but other regimes rely on different kinds of coercive institutions for their survival (e.g., Greitens, 2016; Harkness, 2018). While our study shows that ties with the military increase the levels of election violence, it is possible that the existence of or ties to other formal or informal coercive institutions also affect the levels of election violence or other types of electoral malpractice.

Another important consideration regards the effect of time. In this paper, we assume that incumbent-military ties remain strong in the long run, and that this will allow the incumbent to abuse loyal coercive institutions in perpetuity. Future research could study whether specific factors might sever the incumbent-military ties before or during the transition to multipartyism, as well as factors that might deter the incumbent from abusing the state coercive institutions. Finally, given that previous studies have looked at either demand-side or supply-side factors of electoral violence separately, future research could examine the existence of interactive effects between the two kinds of factors. The existence of ties to the military may satisfy the conditions for violence to be used, but whether violence is deployed will also depend on the incumbent's need to use violence. Thus, future research could expand on this important issue by studying interactive effects between supply-side factors, like ties to the military, and demand-side factors, like fear of losing.

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