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CONFLICT AND COERCION WITHIN AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES . . . v

LIST OF TABLES . . . vi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . vii

ABSTRACT . . . ix

1 CONFLICT WITHIN AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES . . . 1
- 1.1 The Puzzle of Intra-Party Conflict . . . 1
- 1.2 The Importance of Intra-Party Conflict . . . 2
- 1.3 Conceptualizing Intra-Party Conflict . . . 4
- 1.4 Existing Explanations and their Limits . . . 10
- 1.5 The Argument in Brief . . . 20
- 1.6 Outline of the Dissertation . . . 21

2 A THEORY OF INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT AND COERCION . . . 23
- 2.1 Patronage in African Parties . . . 24
- 2.2 Bargain Breakdown and the Emergence of Intra-Party Conflict . . . 29
- 2.3 Coercion and Violence in Intra-Party Conflict . . . 42

3 CASE AND DATA: POLITICAL PARTIES IN GHANA . . . 56
- 3.1 Elections and Parties in Ghana . . . 56
- 3.2 Case Selection . . . 59
- 3.3 The Data . . . 62

4 THE ORIGINS OF INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT . . . 66
- 4.1 Evaluating Three Assumptions about Patronage . . . 66
- 4.2 Evidence for the Patronage Bargain . . . 70
- 4.3 Bargain Breakdown and Intra-Party Conflict: Evidence from Activists . . . 72
- 4.4 Bargain Breakdown and Intra-Party Conflict: Indirect Evidence . . . 87
- 4.5 Exit Options in the Ghanaian Two-Party System . . . 101

5 VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT . . . 107
- 5.1 Variation in Ghanaian Intra-Party Conflict . . . 107
- 5.2 Additional Risks of Violence . . . 110
- 5.3 Mitigating Risks: Expertise in Coercion . . . 116
- 5.4 Accepting Risks: Dependence on Patronage . . . 121

6 RETHINKING VIOLENCE, DEMOCRACY, AND PARTIES IN AFRICA . . . 130
- 6.1 The Study of Violence and Democracy in Africa . . . 131
- 6.2 Managing Intra-Party Conflict . . . 137

REFERENCES . . . 140

A CODEBOOK FOR EVENT DATABASE 157
A.1 Introduction 157
A.2 Defining Intra-Party Conflict 157
A.3 Unit of Analysis: Event-Day-Location 157
A.4 Physical Sources Consulted 158
A.5 Coding Methods 159
A.6 Variables 160

LIST OF FIGURES

4.1 Demands Made during Intra-Party Conflict 83
4.2 Counts of Intra-Party Conflict Events over Time 90
4.3 Targets of Intra-Party Conflict 98
4.4 Targets of Intra-Party Conflict Sorted by Factionalism 99
4.5 Proportion of Conflict Events by Region 105
4.6 Proportion of 2010 Population by Region 105

5.1 Types of Intra-Party Conflict Events 108
5.2 Arrests in Violent and Non-Violent Conflict 111
5.3 Injuries in Violent and Non-Violent Conflict 113
5.4 Police Response to Violent and Non-Violent Conflict 115
5.5 Perpetrator Organizational Status and Violent Conflict 119
5.6 Perpetrators' Weapons and Violent Conflict 120

LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Duties of Party Activists 7

2.1 Contrasting Predictions of the Factionalism and Patronage Frameworks 42

A.1 Coding Rules for Event Data Variables 160

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ABSTRACT

Since the return of multiparty politics across much of Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, conflict and violence perpetrated by members of political parties have hampered the consolidation and development of democracy. This dissertation asks why conflict emerges within African parties, and why that conflict sometimes turns violent. While a large literature has emerged to explain violence between political parties, intra-party conflict has received far less attention. Existing theories foreground factionalism, suggesting that conflict arises as competing blocs vie for power and control over the direction of the party, and pointing to violence during primary elections as evidence. But these explanations struggle to account for a substantial amount of conflict that takes place long after the polls have closed and new governments have been sworn in. Additionally, they fail to explain why so much intra-party conflict is vertical in nature, pitting activists at the bottom of the party hierarchy against elites and leaders at the top.

This dissertation argues that intra-party conflict is caused by a breakdown in the patronage bargain between party leaders hoping to win competitive elections and the supporters who actively work to ensure their victory. In exchange for activists' labor during election campaigns, party elites offer them access to selective incentives, patronage rewards in the form of jobs, contracts, and educational benefits to which the party gains access when it takes control of the government. Conflict arises between activists and elites when the latter renege on this bargain, failing to deliver promised patronage.

This intra-party conflict can remain relatively peaceful, such as when activists protest, submit petitions, or host press conferences to air their grievances. Or it can turn violent, as when activists invade and vandalize party offices, or when they threaten and even physically assault party elites. Coercion improves the chances that party leaders will ultimately deliver patronage, but violence brings with it additional risks. Activists will be more likely to turn to violence when they can mitigate those risks because of high levels of coercive capacity, or when they are dependent enough on the party's financial support that they are willing to

use violence in spite of its dangers.

Drawing on interviews from fieldwork in Accra, Ghana as well as an original database of intra-party conflict events constructed from over a decade of reports in Ghana's major newspapers, I show that the patronage bargain is central to activists' support of Ghana's dominant political parties, the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party. I analyze the statements of party supporters, the demands they make during intra-party conflict, the individuals they target, and the location and timing of conflict events to demonstrate that Ghanaian activists enter into conflict with their own party's elites because they perceive that the patronage bargain has failed. I then evaluate data on arrests, police presence, and casualties to show that violent intra-party conflict in Ghana is inherently risky. I assess the plausibility of my claim that activists who are better organized, trained, and equipped for violence are more likely to rely on coercion. And I show that even if they lack coercive capacity, Ghanaian activists who depend on patronage for their survival are more willing to use violence to ensure they receive it.

CHAPTER 1

CONFLICT WITHIN AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

1.1 The Puzzle of Intra-Party Conflict

Since the return to multiparty politics in Sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1990s, democratic advances have been tainted by conflict and violence perpetrated by members of political parties. The hopes and dreams that accompanied many of these transitions were dampened, as observers were forced to come to terms with the reality that democracy and competitive elections alone could not eliminate violent politics. Scholars of democracy and political violence have made great strides in categorizing and elucidating much of the violence that has persisted within Africa's multiparty regimes. Most prominent has been the explosion of literature on electoral violence, and we have learned a great deal about how and why states and political parties utilize violence alongside the fundamental institution of elections. But as this dissertation will show, coercion and violence do not always stop once the polls close, and party members fight among themselves as much as they do against their rivals.

In parties across Sub-Saharan Africa active supporters engage in conflict with other members of the same party, often going so far as to target their own party leaders. And unlike the inter-party or incumbent/opposition violence that has attracted most of the attention of scholars, policy makers, and leading non-governmental organizations, intra-party conflict often emerges outside of election season. African party youth play an important role in the development and maintenance of democracy in Africa, mobilizing at the grassroots to inform voters on party policy goals and encouraging political participation. And they participate in healthy forms of conflict, engaging in protests and submitting mass petitions to hold elites accountable.[1] But they also threaten the functioning and stability of democracy by engaging

1. For instance, in March 2015, National Democratic Congress (NDC) party youth allied with local chiefs in Ho Central in the Volta Region of Ghana to plan a massive demonstration against NDC leadership. The youth were upset that despite constant support and their constituency's status as a party stronghold, the area had seemingly been sidelined by party leaders as it had not been given the opportunity to field a single Minister of State since 1992 (GNA 2015).

in destructive conflicts in which party property is destroyed,[2] party and government offices are invaded and locked up,[3] and party leaders are threatened and physically attacked.[4]

This dissertation seeks to expand on our knowledge of African intra-party conflict by providing an answer to two important questions. First, what explains intra-party conflict in young African democracies? In particular, how can we explain the prevalence of conflict between activists and elites within the same political party? Second, when such conflict emerges why does it sometimes involve coercion or violence while at other times it remains relatively peaceful?

1.2 The Importance of Intra-Party Conflict

Intra-party conflict is pervasive in Sub-Saharan Africa. In an expert survey covering 64 parties across 25 Sub-Saharan African countries in 2016, Seeberg, Wahman, and Skaaning (2018) find that threats and violence relating to nominations for representatives occurred in

2. For example, in March 2016, a group of NDC youth vandalized and attempted to burn down their party's constituency office in Atebubu-Amantin, Ghana. The youth were triggered by the arrival of the police to seize the government-issued vehicle of their patron, the District Chief Executive Sampson Owusu-Boateng, after his removal from office by the president. The youth were already on edge since Mr. Owusu-Boateng had been disqualified from contesting primaries in the area by NDC leadership. While the police intervened before too much damage could be done, the youth sent a clear message to NDC elites that they were displeased with the party removing their patron from power and blocking him from potentially becoming a Member of Parliament (Adu-Gyamerah 2016).

3. In February 2010, approximately one year after elections which saw their party come to power, a group of youth activists from the National Democratic Congress party locked up the offices of the National Youth Employment Programme in Wenchi, Ghana. The youth were protesting the failure of the Municipal Chief Executive for Wenchi to dismiss the National Youth Employment Programme coordinator in the town after it was discovered that the coordinator had been selling application forms for employment opportunities to prospective beneficiaries. After locking up the office the youth protested in the streets and submitted a petition to the Municipal Coordinating Director to be forwarded to the president, demanding that the coordinator be fired and replaced (Alarti-Amoako 2010a).

4. In June 2017, just 5 months after the New Patriotic Party (NPP) won back control of the Ghanaian government in closely contested elections, youth from the NPP followed through on threats that they had made previously and stormed the office of the newly confirmed Municipal Chief Executive for Savelugu. The irate youth attacked the offices wielding sticks, machetes, and other weapons, overpowering several police officers before taking control of the Municipal Assembly. Police reinforcements from the nearby regional capital of Tamale were necessary to retake the offices. The youth were upset over the appointment of the new Municipal Chief Executive, Hajia Ayishetu, by their president, Nana Akufo-Addo, because she was not from the constituency and was not known to the youth in the area (S. Duodu 2017).

72% of political parties.[5] These violent nomination proceedings were not confined to parties within a few countries, either. In 19 of the 25 countries sampled, at least one political party experienced violence related to the selection of candidates for parliamentary positions. Moreover, internal violence does not appear to be restricted to parties operating in less democratic states. At least one party in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa saw some intra-party violence in the most recent round of candidate selection.

These findings are all the more troubling considering that nomination violence is but one type of intra-party violence. Intra-party conflict and violence are not restricted to party primaries. In fact, as I discuss in Chapter 4, a substantial amount of intra-party conflict and coercion in Sub-Saharan Africa occurs long after elections have ended and victorious parties have taken over power, and is entirely unrelated to conflicts over who should appear as the party's representative on the ballot.

These internal party conflicts matter beyond the inherent concerns that accompany the use of coercion and violence. Political parties have long been at the center of democratic politics; as Stokes (1999) writes, they are "endemic to democracy." As organizers of public fora, referenda, and primaries, political parties are key to the participatory dimension of democracy.[6] Parties are also the linchpin of democratic representation, meant to aggregate public interests and serve as the primary link between voters and policy makers. And in developing countries in Africa and beyond, parties also play an important role in managing the delivery of government services to citizens. Conflict and violence within political parties, then, is not only problematic in its own right, but also stands as a threat to democratic development and consolidation more broadly.

5. The survey covered 25 of 41 Sub-Saharan African states with multiple parties. The sample excludes states with fewer than one million inhabitants as well as those with exceptionally low levels of democracy.

6. On the various dimensions of democracy, see Coppedge et al. (2011).

1.3 Conceptualizing Intra-Party Conflict

It will be useful to define and describe some of the key variables and concepts used throughout this dissertation. I begin by defining the dependent variable, intra-party conflict. Conflict is an active disagreement or dispute between people with divergent or opposing interests, and intra-party conflict is simply conflict that takes place between members of the same political party. The simple fact that competing or divergent interests exist is not enough to classify party members as being in conflict. Two or more party members may disagree on some fundamental issue, but I define them as entering into conflict only once one takes some outwardly visible action against another.

Conflict requires party members to act on their opposing interests, but those actions can vary widely such that it materializes in myriad forms. In both the theoretical and empirical sections I accommodate a wide range of event types under the broader umbrella of conflict within political parties. Intra-party conflict might be, for example, a peaceful protest, a press-conference in which party members call out and vilify their peers, a raid on a party office in which party property if vandalized, or even a threat or assault by one party member against another. The unifying and defining feature of all intra-party conflict is that it pits members of the same party against each other. Conceptually this definition serves to situate intra-party conflict as distinct from the more commonly studied inter-party conflict, in which members of opposing political parties clash.

In the remainder of this section I expand on some of these concepts to paint a clearer picture of the phenomenon under study. First, I describe the key actors in intra-party conflict, and outline where they fit within the general structure of African parties. Then I expand on intra-party conflict itself. First, I suggest that this type of conflict is best conceptualized as having two dimensions: horizontal and vertical. I argue that vertical intra-party conflict is more common than one might think, and has received far too little attention in the literature. Finally, I discuss the various trajectories that intra-party conflict can take. I claim that although conflict within political parties varies in many ways, one

type of variation deserve special attention. While many intra-party conflicts remain peaceful, others do turn violent, and it behooves us to seek to understand why.

1.3.1 African Party Hierarchies

Because intra-party conflict occurs between members of the same political party, it will be useful to describe the organization of African political parties and to delineate the roles that various members play within those parties. I begin with the model laid out in Stokes et al. (2013), which distinguishes between party leaders, brokers, and voters. This model is a useful starting point because it foregrounds the importance of clientelism to the organization of African political parties, and because it improves on earlier conceptualizations of parties operating under clientelism by introducing new actors, brokers, who sit between party leaders at the top and voters at the bottom. Brokers serve as "local intermediaries who provide targeted benefits and solve problems for their followers; in exchange, they request followers' participation in political activities such as rallies — and often demand their votes" (75). Brokers are sometimes individuals who operate outside the party apparatus, such as chiefs and other local ethnic leaders,[7] community elders,[8] and even religious elites.[9] But the role of party broker in Africa is also regularly occupied by local party members.[10]

Brierley and Nathan (2021, 887-888) expand on this framework by disaggregating the category of party leaders, dividing it into national party elites—who operate at the national and regional level—and local party elites—who operate at the constituency or district level. This expanded hierarchy clarifies that brokers are in fact intermediaries between *local* party

7. See Baldwin (2013, 2016).

8. Berenschot and Aspinall (2020) distinguish between chiefs and other community elders.

9. The marabout in Senegal are a classic example (Fatton 1986). As another example, McCauley (2012) finds that contemporary Pentecostal leaders play an important role in managing non-programmatic political systems.

10. Berenschot and Aspinall (2020) distinguish between two types of clientelistic democracies, those in which brokers are outsiders who negotiate temporary deals around election time, and those in which brokers are tied to party elites through membership in, and loyalty to, the party network. Here I am primarily concerned with the latter.

elites and voters. They obtain their roles as trusted brokers because of their connections up to party leaders at the constituency level and down to voters in their area. I follow Brierley and Nathan (2021) in defining as party elites those members who hold positions at the constituency level or higher, and argue that party members who hold positions at the branch or polling station level should not be classified as party elites. But surely not every party member below constituency elites is either a broker or merely a voter. Who else occupies the bottom rung of the party hierarchy?

This dissertation contributes to the hierarchical conceptualization of clientelistic parties by introducing a new category, that of the *party activist*. Party activists have not received substantial attention in models of clientelism, perhaps because they engage in a range of behaviors that extend beyond the typical purview of machine politics. These local party members are called activists because they actively carry out the party's mission at the grassroots. They are mobilized by party leaders to work on the party's behalf, and it is their active engagement to fulfill the party's goals that sets them apart from the typical voter or party supporter. In Ghana, it is often said that these activists are the "foot soldiers" of the party, because they do the hard work that is necessary to help the party win elections.[11] Their activism takes on many forms, some of which are legal and shared by activists in non-clientelistic democracies, and some of which are not.[12] Table 1.1 presents a list which exemplifies some possible duties of African party activists.

Because of the diverse range of tasks that activists engage in on behalf of the party, situating them within the party hierarchy is somewhat complicated. For one, activists can also be brokers (or aspiring brokers). For instance, many branch-level party executives who serve as brokers would also self-identify as activists, and carry out the duties of a

11. Bob-Milliar (2014) argues that the description of party activists as foot soldiers was popularized around the time of the 1996 presidential primary in the New Patriotic Party. It is now widely used, as evidenced by questions referring to foot soldiers in the country-specific questions for Ghana in Round 5 of the Afrobarometer survey. See Armah-Attoh (2017) for more on Ghanaian public attitudes toward party foot soldiers.

12. Bjarnesen (2020, 302-303) makes this same point, but offers a less comprehensive list of activists' duties in African parties.

Type of Activism	List of Possible Duties
Legal	• Promote party leaders at rallies • Transport citizens to registration centers and the polls • Spread the message of the party door-to-door • Relay the demands of voters up the party hierarchy • Assist in running local party activities • Defend the party's behavior in the media • Provide security for party leaders • Observe counting and aggregation of votes • Participate in protests
Illegal (Coercive or Clientelistic)	• Protect and/or snatch ballot boxes on election day • Coerce voters to stay home on election day • Coerce voters to vote for a specific party at the polls • Prevent potential voters from registering • Solicit votes in exchange for material rewards from voters • Assist in distributing small material rewards to voters

Table 1.1: Duties of Party Activists

typical activist beyond the specific roles laid out by their position. But not all brokers are activists. Plenty of Big Men in African parties have enough clout to sway voters in their area without having to dirty their hands with the daily grind of activism. For instance, former ministers and other retired government and party officials might maintain a retinue of potential voters over whom they still hold influence, but do not engage in the difficult work demanded of activists. For these reasons, it would be inappropriate to conceptualize activists as synonymous with brokers.

Additionally, most of the literature seeks to explain clientelism aimed at vote buying or turnout buying. In this form of clientelism, there is a nonprogrammatic distribution of goods from parties to voters, conditional on the political behavior of voters (typically that they turnout out to vote, and/or that they vote for the party distributing material rewards).[13] For that reason, typical models focus on those party actors who play important roles in managing these resource flows, from the top of the party down to the citizens whose votes they are buying. But there is another form of clientelism typically referred to as patronage,

13. This framing of clientelism as conditional, nonprogrammatic distribution comes from Stokes et al. (2013, 13-14).

in which there is still a *quid pro quo* exchange of material rewards for political behavior, but in which the expected behavior is not voting, but rather support for the party, and in which the recipients of material largesse are not voters, but party members. While activists may not have a central role in clientelistic vote buying, they are key players in party patronage networks where "intra-party flows of benefits" abound.[14]

With all of this in mind, how should we situate party activists within the hierarchical organization of the party? I posit that activists are best located on the same tier in the hierarchy as brokers, between local party elites and voters. They lack the authority that comes from holding an official position at the constituency level, and nobody would mistake them for elites. And although they are clients operating within a party patronage system, they are not merely voters because they offer more to the functioning of the party than simply their vote.

1.3.2 Two Dimensions of Conflict

I argue that intra-party conflict is best conceptualized as occurring across two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. Horizontal intra-party conflict has received the most focus in the existing literature on political parties, and is defined as disputes which cut across cleavages that divide a political party. Parties are not homogeneous, and their members are often divided on religious, ideological, ethnic, or even personalistic grounds. These divisions produce rival factions and blocs that vie for control over the direction of the party. Horizontal conflicts are those in which members on opposing sides of these divides engage in active contests with each other. These horizontal disputes typically involve party members at the same level in the party hierarchy, often with rivals and their supporters from either side of a salient cleavage fighting each other (both figuratively and literally).

Vertical intra-party conflicts, which have received far less academic attention, involve

14. Throughout this dissertation, I follow Stokes et al. (2013, 14) in referring to these flows of conditional material rewards between party members as patronage.

disputes between members from different levels of the party hierarchy. Unlike horizontal conflicts, in which different levels of elites and activists can join together against rivals, vertical conflicts see party members grouped up exclusively with other members of a similar rank. Though conceptually vertical conflict can occur between members from any two or more levels of the party,[15] for this dissertation I focus particularly on vertical conflict between party activists and party elites. First, conflict in which party members at the bottom of the hierarchy target elites is part of the puzzle that inspired this dissertation. Why should clients rebel against their own patrons and in effect bite the hands that feed them? Moreover, there is an empirical justification for foregrounding this type of vertical conflict. I find that activists were the perpetrators in 92.46% of intra-party conflict events in Ghana.[16] When subsetting the data to select only events that had a vertical dimension, their involvement as perpetrators jumps to just over 97%. If we hope to explain the puzzle of vertical intra-party conflict, then the focus should be on cases involving activists on one side and party elites on the other.

1.3.3 Variation and Trajectories of Intra-Party Conflict

A full accounting of intra-party conflicts requires a breakdown of the numerous ways in which that conflict can differ. To begin with, intra-party conflict might be peaceful or violent. Non-violent intra-party conflict is as ubiquitous in democracies as parties themselves. Innumerable examples come to mind, though several major conflicts from the United States make the point well: tea-partyism in the American Republican Party in the early 2010s; and the divide between Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other progressives competing with Nancy Pelosi and other moderate Democrats in the late 2010s and early 2020s. Violent intra-party conflict, however, appears to be less common, though as the introduction to this

15. For instance, intra-elite conflict can occur, pitting constituency elites against their regional or national counterparts.

16. This number comes from my original dataset on intra-party conflict in Ghana, which covers reported conflict within the two major parties—the New Patriotic Party and National Democratic Congress—from 2008 through 2018.

chapter demonstrated it remains a salient problem even in one of Sub-Saharan Africa's most promising democracies.

Intra-party conflict also varies in its scope, both geographic and temporal. Some intra-party conflicts seem to encompass all of party politics at the national level, while others might remain confined to specific regions, districts, or even individual neighborhoods. By a similar token intra-party conflicts might endure for years or decades, or they can fizzle out nearly as quickly as they arise.

In this dissertation I choose to focus on variation in the level of coercion and violence. This is not to say that other aspects of intra-party conflict do not merit the attention of scholars and policymakers. But violence is particularly problematic both for the potential harm it can cause for individuals, and for the risks it poses to a system of government which is meant to avoid the need for violent confrontation to resolve political disputes.

1.4 Existing Explanations and their Limits

The literature has presented several explanations for why conflict occurs within political parties. Unfortunately two issues constrain their applicability to the study of conflict between African party activists and party elites. First, the parties that emerged and evolved in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s differ in important ways from their Western counterparts. While a new wave of research in African politics has begun to situate the study of African parties in the broader endeavor by comparative political scientists to classify party types (Elischer 2013; Gunther and Diamond 2003), these differences limit the generalizability of existing theories which emerged from the study of parties in Western democracies. Second, the dominant approach in the literature on both African and Western political parties emphasizes horizontal conflict, differing primarily on the source of the schisms that divide the party into factions or blocs. Theories within this approach were never intended to explain vertical intra-party conflict, and in this section I demonstrate their limitations in that regard. Through a discussion of these problems I argue that a novel theory of intra-party conflict is necessary,

one that accounts for differences in African political parties and explicitly seeks to explain vertical conflict between activists and elites.

1.4.1 African Parties in Comparative Perspective

African parties differ in important ways from their Western counterparts, and only recently have efforts been made to systematically integrate these differences into the broader comparative party literature. In this section I discuss the key differences, which demonstrate the potential difficulty of exporting theories from the Western context to explain conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Perhaps the most important difference is that African parties are rarely distinguishable in practice along ideological lines. Young (2014, 106, emphasis in original) sums it up when he writes,

> . . . my claim is not that Africans *lack* ideologies or policy preferences. My claim is that, during its recent multiparty era, Africa is unusual in being home to several countries whose politics are *not meaningfully organized around a left-right, ideological type of cleavage.* Political actors tend not to disagree about *programmatic issues*, and appeals made on campaign trails are overwhelmingly valence in nature. Thus, differentiating them by policy is infeasible.

Recent empirical work has indeed shown that African voters are concerned first with the likelihood that politicians will effectively deliver services to their communities (Wantchekon 2003), and Nathan (2015) finds that in urban environments where voters do not believe politicians can credibly commit to large scale programs, they abstain from voting at all. As Riedl (2014, 16) suggests, this aspect of African parties contrasts with the core assumption among major accounts of party formation that political parties are organized around "programmatic issue dimensions."[17] Instead, she concurs that "the driving factor in [African] political identification... is more directly related to group calculations of advantage through state access" (16).

17. These core texts include Downs (1957), Lipset and Rokkan (1967), Lijphart and Grofman (1984), and Kitschelt et al. (1999).

If African parties aren't organized around ideology, how are they organized? Personalism is predominant in African political parties. Some parties are initially structured around the party founder (particularly in the period immediately following the transition from authoritarian rule), and depend for their success on charismatic appeals to the leader's abilities. Personalism can be an important organizing feature regardless of party type as factions and party blocs are often organized around individuals rather than programmatic preferences (Bob-Milliar 2012a).

Ethnicity is another important organizational feature of African parties. As Posner (2005) has shown, African politicians are adept at manipulating existing ethnic cleavages to maximize their chances of election. Ethnicity is more important for some party systems than others (Basedau and Stroh 2012), but a variety of ethnic party types populate democracies across Sub-Saharan Africa. Some parties may be exclusive to one ethnic group, though in majoritarian systems most ethnic groups are too small for single-ethnicity parties to contest elections effectively. The solution has been the creation of two types of multiethnic parties: the multiethnic alliance and the multiethnic catch-all party (Elischer 2013, 28). The ethnic alliance is characterized by the calculated attempt to combine ethnic groups to form a minimum winning coalition, and is prone to infighting as competing groups jockey for superiority.[18] The ethnic catch-all party has longer term ambitions, organizing itself as a bridge across dominant ethnic cleavages while not dismissing the importance of ethnic identities.[19]

Finally, political parties in Sub-Saharan Africa generally lack the strong formal membership structures that many Western parties have. Many supporters consider themselves to be members without being formally registered with the party, while others hold membership cards for multiple parties at the same time. Membership rosters are often not kept current, so party elites at the constituency level depend on local committee members, who can

18. Elischer (2013) compares this type to the "coalitions of convenience" and "coalitions of commitment" described in Horowitz (2000).

19. Elischer (2013) likens this type to the "permanent coalitions of ethnic parties" described in Horowitz (2000).

identify supporters of the party in their neighborhood, to organize political activities and manage grassroots party activities. These differences all pose potential problems for existing explanations for intra-party conflict.

1.4.2 Horizontal Theories of Intra-Party Conflict

Since Duverger (1954) most of the comparative party literature has been concerned with intra-party conflict that is horizontal in nature. This type of conflict pits party members at the same level against each other, varying primarily on which issue divides the party into competing groups. The key debates in this literature center on the dimension across which factional division occurs. In one of the early texts on the subject, Zariski (1960, 33) presented a rather broad conceptualization of factions as "any intra-party combination, clique, or grouping whose members share a sense of common identity and common purpose and are organized to act collectively–as a distinct bloc within the party–to achieve their goals," and suggested that they can form around a diverse set of goals, including: patronage; local, regional, and national interests; policies; influence within the party; or the promotion of any particular set of values. Sartori (1976) attempted to provide some more structure to the differentiation of factions, and suggested that there are four dimensions of factionalism: organizational, motivational, ideological, and left-right. In spite of minor criticism regarding the likely interactive nature of these dimensions (Boucek 2009), Sartori's work has inspired follow-up research. Hine (1982) modifies Sartori's typology, classifying party factions by organization, coverage, and policy or ideology. And in more recent work, Bettcher (2005) expands on these core factional typologies, classifying intra-party groups along two dimensions: their motivation, which can be for patronage or policy; and their organizational stability.

Research on contemporary African parties continues the trend of emphasizing horizontal intra-party conflict, but notably dismisses factional divisions over ideology or programmatic preferences. Much of this conflict is instead alleged to be based on personalistic divisions

within parties. Bob-Milliar (2012a) argues that African party factions are ad hoc groupings which form around individuals, and conflict between them is grounded not in ideology but in disputes over patronage and specific interests. This is unsurprising given the previous discussion on ideology and personalism in African politics, and suggests that horizontal conflict in African parties is based primarily on conflicts between party Big Men. Ashindorbe and Danjibo (2019) show this phenomenon at work in the Nigerian People's Democratic Party during the 2013 national congress, when tensions between elites which had begun to form in 2006 spilled over into open conflict, with state governors, party leaders, and supporters walking out on the congress in protest over internal party disputes over leadership.

Ethnicity is another potential source of conflict within African political parties. Building on the work of Diamond and Gunther (2001), in his typology of African party types Elischer (2013) defines two types of parties in which ethnicity is salient enough to result in factional conflict: mono-ethnic parties and ethnic alliance parties. Mono-ethnic parties are parties constituted primarily of members from a single ethnic group. In these parties, conflicts are likely to be personalistic in nature, since the overwhelming majority of members share an ethnic identity. Ethnic alliance parties are formed of multiple ethnic groups with the intention of obtaining a parliamentary majority, and correspond to what Horowitz (2000) calls a coalition of convenience. In ethnic alliance parties, the multitude of powerful ethnic group presents a fault line for conflict:

> In an ethnic alliance, factions are modeled around ethnic lines headed by leaders from different communities. They have the potential to tear the party apart... Factions might defect, subsequently form new parties, or merge with opposing ones. This danger of defection is particularly poignant if factional leaders represent communities that are located at the opposite end of a dominant ethnic cleavage line (Elischer 2013, 33).

Even for ethnic catch-all parties which span ethnicities to the point that they become unimportant, Elischer (2013) argues that conflict is likely to stem from competing factions, in this case centered on powerful elites with nationwide followings.

A growing literature suggests one important source of intra-party violence is factionalism and competition between party blocs that manifests prior to elections, particularly during primaries when parties are determining candidates for the presidency and the legislature. Reeder and Seeberg (2018) draw on data from multiple countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to show that, contrary to what is expected for inter-party violence, intra-party violence is higher in districts which are less competitive in national elections. This is because when a party dominates a district during national elections, then the nominee from that area is highly likely to win office, shifting the stakes to the candidate selection contest instead. Goldring and Wahman (2018) present evidence from primaries prior to the Zambian general election in 2016, but fail to find a similar effect linking low competitiveness to higher levels of violence. They do, however, find that intra-party violence is lower in places where an incumbent MP from the party is standing for reelection. Bangura and Söderberg Kovacs (2018, 125-126) argue that nominations can produce conflict and violence at the national level as well, finding that the end of President Koroma's term limit in Sierra Leone caused substantial infighting and violence between supporters of Big Men in the APC who hoped to succeed him.

Competitiveness is not the only source of horizontal conflict during party primaries. Wanyama and Elklit (2018) argue that when parties are weakly institutionalized and have not developed effective rules and procedures for candidate nomination, the likelihood that primaries will be accompanied by violence increases. They show that in Kenya, the ad hoc nature of primary elections in the regions produced violence as supporters and candidates clashed over issues ranging from rigging, to the list of names on the ballots, to the eligibility criteria of potential voters and the inability to identify their party affiliations. The turn in the literature to take nomination violence seriously has proven fruitful, but as this dissertation will show, intra-party conflict is not confined to contests over nominees and party leadership, and often takes place after even national elections have concluded.

The overarching problem with all of the aforementioned approaches is that they assume

that party conflict is horizontal, which does not align with the empirical reality of intra-party conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. While parties certainly do experience internal violence related to horizontal conflict, particularly around primaries, the distinct phenomenon of activist-elite violence cannot be explained by appeals to factionalism in any form. The following section examines the limited number of theories which provide some explanation for the causes and dynamics of vertical conflict.

1.4.3 Vertical Theories of Intra-Party Conflict

Very little research seeks to explain vertical conflict within political parties. One important exception is the literature that emerged out of May's Law of Curvilinear Disparity. May (1973, 139) argued that activists or sub-leaders are generally "substantive extremists" relative to party leaders and most voters. Hirschman (1970) goes so far as to suggest that activists' primary purpose in the party is to ensure the ideological accountability of party leaders. This creates a conflict in which activists use their "voice" to pull party policy away from the center (Hirschman 1970), putting them in conflict with party leaders who want to hold the party closer to the median voter.

The challenge with adapting May's Law to contemporary African parties lies in its assumption about the divergent ideological preferences of party elites and activists. May's Law suggests that conflict between party activists and elites is grounded in ideological differences between the two groups, with activists being substantially more radical than both elites and voters. As I argue above, ideology is not an important determinant of party organization or vote choice in African democracies. In this context, party supporters are far less likely to differ substantially from elites or voters in terms of programmatic preferences, so debates over the origins of party leaders or their shifting ideological orientations are unnecessary. Any theory that prioritizes ideology will struggle to explain elite-activist conflict in African parties.[20]

20. As Stokes (1999) notes, the standard objection to May's Law is to dispute the assumption that leaders

Ichino and Nathan (2012) also discuss the potential for conflict between local members and central party leaders, but they emphasize the importance of conflict related to the holding of party primaries. Their argument is unique from horizontal theories centered on party primaries because of its emphasis on bottom-up pressure from local party members and the conflict they generate with central party elites by demanding party primaries. The authors find that party leaders selectively offer democratic primaries in response to pressure from local party members who hope to extract rents from these elections, even when such primaries do not offer electoral benefits to the party. Goldring and Wahman (2018) also claim that primaries can cause vertical conflict, but they focus on the relationship between national and local elites. They find some support for their claim that nomination violence is more likely in places where national party elites ignore the preferences of local party elites.

While these arguments provide valuable insights into vertical intra-party conflict, they are too specific to events surrounding party primaries, and thus cannot explain other forms of vertical conflict. Still, as Ichino and Nathan (2012, 791) claim, their research has important implications for the study of vertical intra-party conflict: "[it] suggests that the evolution and institutionalization of political parties in new democracies today might be better understood with greater emphasis on internal conflicts over rents than on promotion of particular ideological positions." I take this advice to heart in the next chapter as I develop a new theory of intra-party conflict.

1.4.4 Patronage and Violence

As the preview of my argument in the next section will show, in this dissertation I attempt to address the weaknesses in the existing literature through a novel theory that foregrounds the importance of patronage to explaining the behavior of activists and elites within African

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and activists differ in ideological orientation, since leaders come from the party ranks to begin with. Debates over the origins of party leaders or their shifting ideological orientation as they move up the party ranks are irrelevant in a context in which ideology and programmatic preferences have little impact on party organization or vote choice

political parties. In the last two decades scholars have connected control over state institutions and the winner-take-all nature of many electoral systems to the propensity for inter-party violence during elections and electoral campaigns. Fjelde and Höglund (2016) show that electoral violence is more likely in African countries with majoritarian electoral systems than in those with proportional representation in contexts where democracy is not consolidated. They argue that this is because in such cases, patronage incentivizes politicians to win at all costs, raising the stakes even higher than in consolidated majoritarian systems where patronage is absent. This leads party elites to mobilize their supporters to use violence against their opponents to ensure they maintain a grip on the state and the patronage flows that incumbency provides. Mueller (2008) makes a similar claim, arguing that the same institutional weaknesses (non-programmatic clientelistic parties and winner-take-all elections) encouraged political elites to mobilize non-state actors to use violence in the wake of the 2007 Kenyan elections.[21] And Lamptey and Salihu (2012) make a similar claim, arguing that the combination of a winner-take-all system with the potential to receive patronage from party Big Men drives clients to go to great lengths, including using violence, to ensure that their patron gets elected.

Another important subset of this literature connects patronage in the form of land rights to electoral violence, and demonstrates how the incentives of elites and local supporters can align over patronage to cause violence during elections. Boone (2011) shows that a property rights regime in Kenya which gave exclusive land-granting rights to politicians in some areas raised the stakes of the outcome of the election, incentivizing mobilization for violence. Boone and Kriger (2012) expand the argument to Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire, where weak constraints on the use of land as patronage and the ability to manipulate citizenship rights encouraged politicians to use violence to ensure that they would prevail in elections in must-win constituencies.[22]

21. Sisk (2012) makes a similar argument about rent-seeking elites' capture of the state and the mobilization of violence during elections in semi-authoritarian contexts, such as Nigeria in 2007 and Sudan in 2010.

22. Angerbrandt (2018) finds that disputes over land rights and citizenship can also stoke violence in the

Klaus and Mitchell (2015) raise the concern that if political elites hope to use violence to influence elections, they must convince supporters to mobilize to commit violence during elections. They argue that in democratizing, multi-ethnic societies where land rights are weak, party elites can frame elections as a threat to the land security of their supporters, or as an opportunity to reclaim land. Klaus (2017) shows the limits of this strategy; in areas along Kenya's Coast region, she demonstrates that because citizens did not consider their land rights to hinge on electoral outcomes, they had little incentive to mobilize for electoral violence. With evidence from Côte d'Ivoire, Mitchell (2018) indicates that not only can contentious land narratives increase the chances that individuals will join in violence during and after elections, local political actors cynically exploit these issues by participating with national elites in the "joint production" of election violence, especially in areas where questions of indigeneity are salient.

A recent turn, exemplified by the work of Bob-Milliar (2014) in Ghana, shifts the focus even more toward party supporters themselves. He suggests that in neopatrimonial democracies wherein party supporters perceive that elections are winner-take-all, the perception of high stakes and the desire for patronage leads active supporters to "become contentious, aggressive, confrontational, and violent" (Bob-Milliar 2014). His work points to the importance of the motivations of the individuals actually perpetrating the violence, as opposed to much of the preceding literature that emphasizes the interests of elites in mobilizing violence against rival parties.

The work of Agbiboa (2018) in Lagos, Nigeria also demonstrates the importance of studying the incentives and behavior of clients at the bottom of the patronage pyramid to explain violence in African democracies. He emphasizes the reciprocal nature of Big Man patronage politics, and aims to return agency to the loyalists who align themselves to Big Men. In Nigeria, tough young men, known as agberos, make a living acting as enforcers and tax collectors for the corrupt and politicized National Union of Road and Transport Workers, extorting

post-election period, as they did in Kaduna State, Nigeria in 2011.

bus drivers and sharing the wealth with union leaders and the politicians they support. Agbiboa (2018) finds that during election season, these agberos take it upon themselves to cut deals with local politicians, offering to trade threats and physical violence against their political rivals in exchange for continued patronage support. Iwilade (2014) similarly shows that youth in the Niger Delta choose to support Big Men through violence because of the opportunities it affords them, while Ebiede (2018) argues that ex-militants in the Niger Delta region produce violence during elections by aligning themselves with different politicians in an effort to secure patronage. In all of these systems, violence accompanies elections not only because of the interests of political elites, but also because supporters at the grassroots see elections as an opportunity to extract more from their patrons.

In the next section I present an argument which seeks to address the weaknesses in current explanations for intra-party conflict and violence. My argument aims to fill these gaps, and in doing so it draws particular inspiration from the recent focus on patronage and the interests and incentives of the actors at the bottom of the patronage hierarchy to explain violent conflicts within African parties.

1.5 The Argument in Brief

I argue that the emergence of intra-party conflict can be attributed to breakdowns in a patronage bargain made between party elites and activists prior to elections. Party leaders recruit supporters to actively support them during campaigns by committing to deliver them selective incentives after victory at the polls. Once parties take power, they sometimes renege on this bargain by failing to deliver promised patronage. This creates a vertical conflict within the party, pitting those elites who did not uphold their responsibilities to provide jobs and material rewards against the activists who already labored on their behalf.

Once the bargain fails, activists decide how they will respond as they enter into conflict with their party leaders, choosing between peaceful and coercive means to persuade elites to deliver patronage. Violence can be a tempting prospect for angry activists, as it can offer

them a greater chance at convincing elites to uphold the patronage bargain. But violent forms of conflict are riskier than peaceful options. Two characteristics of the aggrieved activists determine when they will accept those risks and choose violence during intra-party conflict. Activists with higher levels of coercive capacity are better equipped to manage and mitigate the risks of violence, so will be more likely to engage in coercive behavior during conflict. And activists with high degrees of financial dependence on the party will be more willing to accept the risks of violence, and will turn to coercion out of desperation.

1.6 Outline of the Dissertation

The remainder of the dissertation is structured as follows. In Chapter 2, I expand on my theory of intra-party conflict. Beginning with three assumptions about patronage in African political parties, I develop a novel theory to answer my two research questions: why intra-party conflict emerges, and why it turns violent. In Chapter 3, I provide background information on Ghana, which serves as the setting in which I test the plausibility of my theory. I offer a brief description of Ghana's political history, its electoral system since the transition to the Fourth Republic in 1992, and its two dominant political parties, the NPP and NDC. In this chapter I also justify my decision to focus the empirical analysis of intra-party conflict in Ghana, and outline the data collected and methods used to evaluate my theory.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide the empirical core of the dissertation. In Chapter 4, I provide evidence to support my explanation for the origins of intra-party conflict. I evaluate the plausibility of the three assumptions I make about African parties, offer evidence that the patronage bargain exists, and show that conflict arises between activists and elites when this bargain breaks down. In Chapter 5, I examine evidence that supports my argument for why conflict within political parties turns violent. I show that violent intra-party conflict is riskier, but also potentially more rewarding. I then show that two factors make party supporters more likely to accept the dangers of coercion in hopes of gaining from its use. First, I provide preliminary evidence to suggest that expertise in coercion leads some activists

to use violence. Second, I analyze the profile of activists to evaluate my claim that financial autonomy makes activists less likely to use violence, while dependence on party patronage drives them to accept the risks and to use violence out of desperation.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation. I take stock of the empirical chapters and reevaluate my theory based on my findings. I then discuss what they mean for our understanding of democracy in Africa, and provide suggestions for future research on intra-party conflict. I wrap up with an assessment of the implications that this dissertation has for policy, and suggest that even well-intentioned efforts to eliminate intra-party conflict and violence might face substantial growing pains.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORY OF INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT AND COERCION

What causes conflict within African political parties, and why does it so often pit activists against party elites? Moreover, why is this conflict sometimes peaceful and at other times coercive and violent? This chapter offers a new theory arguing that intra-party conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa is rooted in disputes over patronage. African party leaders rely on activists at the local level to achieve electoral success. In exchange, party elites offer patronage to activists in the form of jobs, contracts, education, cash, and even food. But such patronage is not guaranteed, and conflict within parties emerges when the quality or quantity of patronage delivered (or not) by party elites fails to meet activists' expectations.

This intra-party conflict, however, is not necessarily violent. Coercion can be an effective means of manipulating the behavior of party elites, but not all party supporters are sufficiently trained to utilize it effectively and to avoid the risks that accompany the use of violence. To choose to engage in violent conflict, activists must either have a high level of coercive capacity that helps them mitigate those risks, or be so dependent on the party for their individual well-being that they are willing to accept them.

This chapter's first section discusses the importance of patronage in African political parties, highlighting the patronage bargain into which elites enter when mobilizing activists. In the second section I develop a novel theory linking political patronage to intra-party conflict. I then provide several possible reasons for which party elites might fail to uphold their patronage responsibilities. Next I discuss the exit option, explaining why activists enter into conflict with leaders in their own party rather than simply switching to another party. In final section of the chapter I shift the focus to variation in the types of intra-party conflict. In it, I provide a two-pronged explanation for why some intra-party conflict remains peaceful while other conflicts involve coercion and violence.

2.1 Patronage in African Parties

At its base, vertical conflict within African political parties is about patronage relationships and their breakdown. I follow Stokes et al. (2013, 14) in defining patronage as the distribution of non-programmatic goods and services within a political party, typically from the leaders at the top of the political machine down to party operatives at the bottom. This definition locates patronage within a broader conceptualization of clientelism as "nonprogrammatic distribution combined with conditionality" (14), but suggests that it is distinct from other forms of clientelism in which parties target potential voters.

While patronage describes any material rewards distributed nonprogramatically within a political party, these rewards can differ significantly. Of particular importance is the scale and timing of patronage largesse. One type of patronage comes in the form of *immediate rewards*, which can be distributed to activists from the moment they take up the party mantle and begin working on behalf of party leaders. While parties vary substantially in their access to goods which can be distributed in the short term, immediate rewards are typically small and material in nature. Small handouts of cash, food, and a place to sleep are examples of immediate rewards commonly provided for activists in the run up to elections.[1]

This type of patronage is certainly valuable, but it pales in comparison to *delayed rewards*, goods and services that depend on continual access by party leaders to the coffers and privileges of the state. Jobs in public service, development contracts which create employment opportunities at the local level, and access to education and vocational training top this list. I refer to this type of patronage as delayed because it is generally not distributed until the party has secured control over the state apparatus. Despite requiring a substantial waiting period, these rewards are the most valuable to operatives from the lowest to the highest levels of the party. At the highest tier, delayed patronage involves appointment to high level public-sector jobs, managerial positions in the largest state-run enterprises, easier access to

1. See Christensen and Utas (2008) and Utas and Christensen (2016) for examples of these small rewards being given to party activists during Sierra Leone's post-war elections.

licenses and permits for business operation and expansion, low-interest loans, and even cabinet appointments (Sandbrook 1985; Arriola 2009; Kopecky 2011). At the lowest level of the party hierarchy, this type of patronage is exemplified by temporary jobs at construction sites funded by state development projects, employment at local state-owned toll booths and bus depots, jobs in the security services, and recommendations or financial support to enroll in technical training programs (Bob-Milliar 2014).

2.1.1 Three Assumptions about Patronage

My theory depends on three assumptions about how patronage functions in African political parties. First, I assume that African party elites depend on the assistance of party activists to win elections. The second key assumption is that potential activists are strongly motivated by a desire for patronage and view political parties as a viable route to obtaining jobs, contracts, and other material rewards. Finally, I assume that victory at the polls offers African political parties access to a large number of jobs and contracts which can be distributed as patronage. Together, these three assumptions describe a system in which patronage is at the center of activist-elite interactions in African political parties, laying the groundwork for my argument that intra-party conflict is rooted in disputes over patronage.

The Necessity of Party Activists

Grassroots activists solve a number of problems faced by political parties in Sub-Saharan Africa. First, African parties generally lack the organizational capacity to conduct nationwide campaigns without the recruitment of local agents to facilitate party activities and aid in mobilizing potential voters.[2] As Gyimah-Boadi (2007, 25) argues, "They tend to have weak bureaucratic and other organizational structures (even where they can boast of physical infrastructure); and they lack organized membership rosters and regular mechanisms for collecting membership contributions." And, as demonstrated by Osei (2012, 2016) in Ghana

2. On the weak organizational capacity of African parties, see Carbone (2007).

and Senegal, even dominant African parties struggle to maintain a physical presence in most constituencies outside of campaign periods.

On top of the inherent limitations of weak parties, certain geographical features of modern African countries also pose unique problems for party leaders trying to maximize votes. In many places communication infrastructure remains limited and substantial sections of the eligible voting population reside in rural areas, restricting the capacity of centralized party operations to ensure that voters understand the party's platform and turnout to vote. These factors also hinder the party's ability to read local contexts and adjust campaign strategy accordingly. Grassroots activists help solve these problems by providing a local link, keeping voters in more constant contact with party messaging.

Patronage as a Key Motivation for Activists

If party activists are foundational to the success of African parties, than how do party elites go about recruiting them? A wide range of factors could motivate potential activists to engage in party work, including ideology, political tradition, and ethnicity.[3] But research on African parties has shown that the overwhelming driver of party youth activism in neopatrimonial democracies is patronage, particularly the prospect of gaining employment after elections are won (Bob-Milliar 2012b, 2014; Christensen and Utas 2008; Enria 2015; Gyimah-Boadi 2007; Kelsall 2003; Pitcher 2012). This claim is prevalent among African citizens as well: throughout my fieldwork in Ghana innumerable individuals in casual conversations about politics cited jobs as the primary motivator for party foot soldier activism; and results from the fifth round of the Afrobarometer survey in 2012 confirm that the majority of Ghanaian citizens believe that jobs are a main driver of party foot soldier behavior (Armah-Attoh 2017).

Patronage is an especially strong motivator in economic contexts wherein unemployment

3. Bob-Milliar (2012b) finds that ideology and political tradition are stronger motivators for Ghanaian activists who engage in party support by making financial contributions, but that "selective incentives" are more important motivators for activists who support the party through their labor.

is high and youth struggle to find access to steady jobs with predictable and reliable income. Even for individuals with little interest in the policies at stake in national elections, active political participation is tempting because parties promise not only the potential for more permanent employment after victory at the polls, but also minor material rewards as support during electoral campaigns (Christensen and Utas 2008; Gyimah-Boadi 2007).

Incumbent Control over Access to Development and Employment

In order for patronage to be an effective tool for mobilization, party leaders must be able to convince activists that they have the capacity to deliver desirable rewards. The neopatrimonial systems that pervade democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa ensure that the party in control of the government gains access to a substantial number of employment opportunities, both directly via appointment power over positions in the public sector and indirectly via control over development contracts which produce jobs and other economic opportunities down to the local level.[4] The weakness of the state in this context results in victorious parties capturing control over state resources; parties regularly dismiss public servants appointed under outgoing administrations and fill those roles with their own supporters, even in the most competitive party systems (Kopecky 2011). While candidacy for state-controlled positions and contracts is allegedly free to all, in reality a large percentage of public sector jobs and development projects are reserved for clients of those in power, and this trend of party patronage only appears to be growing (Lindberg 2003). In many cases, alleged decentralization initiatives have actually expanded the capacity of incumbent governments to control access to state-sponsored employment down to the district level by giving the central government appointment power over local government positions.[5]

4. Neopatrimonialism has been extensively discussed and debated in the literature. See Bratton and van de Walle (1994), and van de Walle (2003). Joseph (1987) offers a similar interpretation, describing African democracy as "prebendalist," implying that politicians view state offices as offering prebends which can be exploited to produce material benefits for themselves and their supporters.

5. In Ghana, for example, Article 243(1) of the 1992 constitution mandates that the president appoint Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives.

2.1.2 The Patronage Bargain

In the previous section I described a system in which party leaders depend on the labor of grassroots party supporters to win competitive elections. I argued that potential activists are strongly motivated by the possibility of receiving patronage from the party in exchange for their activism, and that political parties can provide such patronage when they operate within neopatrimonial systems that grant governments the possibility of filling a wide range of positions in the public service and control over development contracts which provide even more job opportunities. In order to recruit activists in this type of system, African party elites enter into a patronage bargain with potential and existing activists prior to elections, wherein leaders offer patronage to party supporters at the grassroots in exchange for activism during the pre-election period. This bargain might be explicit, in which case a party leader directly offers some reward in exchange for service. Or it might be implicit, in which case specific promises are not made but activist participation is grounded in a mutual understanding that they are doing so in exchange for selective incentives.

This patronage bargain is the defining feature of the relationship between so-called Big Men and small boys in African political parties, and as I will argue below, it is central to explaining the origins and dynamics of intra-party conflict. All neopatrimonial and clientelistic systems are rooted in mutual expectations of exchange, typically with those at the top distributing material rewards down the ladder, and those at the bottom earning rewards through service, labor, or deference.[6] However, the terms of these exchanges can vary across contexts.[7]

The patronage bargain between party activists and elites emphasizes mutual exchange centered on political parties and their role in the electoral process and governance. Party

6. On the mutual nature of neopatrimonialism, see Pitcher, Moran, and Johnston (2009).

7. Berenschot and Aspinall (2020) suggest that the most useful framework for comparing varieties of clientelistic democracies is based on differences in the types of networks that engage in clientelism, the benefits that are provided, and the level of control parties have over the distribution of those benefits. While they focus on clientelistic exchange between parties and voters, the same comparisons are useful when considering patronage exchanges within the party hierarchy.

elites do not offer just any form of material reward, they primarily offer jobs and other selective incentives controlled by the government, or to which they gain better access by controlling the government. Party activists do not serve their patrons in any way they see fit, but rather carry out a particular set of duties at the grassroots which aim to fill gaps in the party's capacity to mobilize voters and win elections. This differentiates party activists from the much more frequently studied party brokers, who facilitate electoral victory by mobilizing blocs of voters to turnout for a particular party on election day. Party activists contribute to electoral victory not as middlemen who deliver swaths of votes, but by engaging in campaign-related tasks which seek to increase turnout and sway potential voters. While a number of patronage-related bargains are clearly possible, throughout the remainder of this dissertation when I use the term "patronage bargain" I will be referring specifically to the set of mutual expectations described above that bind party elites and party activists.

2.2 Bargain Breakdown and the Emergence of Intra-Party Conflict

The patronage bargain is an agreement of mutual exchange which states that conditional on activist participation in party activities during an electoral campaign (and in some circumstances the victory of the party), party elites will provide goods and services as a reward to active supporters. But even with a clear and explicit bargain, patronage is neither automatic nor guaranteed. Victorious party leaders must make conscious choices in the allocation of state resources as patronage, and for reasons both intentional and unexpected they can fail to deliver nonprogrammatic rewards to the degree expected by party activists. The core of my argument is that intra-party conflict arises when party elites renege on the patronage bargain, failing to provide promised selective goods. When the patronage bargain breaks down, activists enter into conflict with the party elites they hold responsible in an effort to hold them accountable and secure expected rewards.

This bargain is prone to conflict because of a disparity in the timing of commitment between party supporters and party leaders. Due to the structure of electoral patronage systems, if activists hope to receive valuable rewards they have no choice but to fully invest their time and labor ahead of elections, since their primary commitment requires active participation in campaign activities intended to mobilize voters. And while party supporters might receive some smaller incentives during electoral campaigns which signal the intent of party elites to uphold their responsibility to provide non-programmatic rewards, the best patronage rewards can only come after the party secures office through victory at the polls. This puts active party supporters in a position akin to creditors waiting for their debts to be paid back.[8] Just as creditors can hardly be expected to sit idly by and allow debtors to fail to repay what they owe, we should not expect party activists who have already committed to the patronage bargain to simply stand by and sulk when party elites fail to uphold their own commitments and deliver promised patronage.

Like other forms of clientelism, electoral patronage presents challenges related to monitoring and enforcement because of this inconsistency in the timing of commitments required by the participants to the bargain. In typical cases of clientelism with *quid pro quo* arrangements over vote buying and turnout buying, political parties provide material rewards to clients (i.e. potential voters) prior to an election in expectation that those clients will support them at the ballot box on election day (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Stokes et al. 2013). Because rewards in these cases are generally distributed prior to election day, the client holds the power to renege on the terms of the bargain by not turning out or by voting for a different party, placing the onus for monitoring and enforcement on the political party.[9] The patronage bargain between party activists and elites flips this monitoring problem on its head. With such intra-party patronage arrangements, party activists must do their work well

8. For more on conceptualizing the relationship between party supporters and elites as one between creditors and debtors, see Utas and Christensen (2016).

9. See Hicken and Nathan (2020) for a summary and critique of the monitoring and enforcement problem in clientelistic democracies.

in advance of receiving expected rewards, particularly the higher value delayed patronage, and it is party elites who hold the power to renege on the bargain by withholding patronage after elections have concluded.

Party activists track the commitment of party elites to the patronage bargain primarily by observing variation in *patronage quality.* Party supporters can sometimes directly observe patronage being distributed, such as when local party leaders provide them with recommendations for jobs. But bureaucracies are complex, and determining whether or not party elites had a hand in providing and promoting local work opportunities can often be more challenging. Party supporters must typically rely on imprecise signals to track elites' commitment to the patronage bargain. The quality of patronage is the most clear and obvious signal to activists of whether or not party leaders are adhering to their responsibilities. The lower the quality of patronage, the more likely are activists to believe that party leaders are reneging by *failing to deliver* promised incentives, and thus the more likely is the emergence of intra-party conflict.

Party elites can also trigger conflict if their behavior signals to activists that they will *remove existing* sources of patronage. One signal that leads activists to anticipate a reduction in patronage by party elites is the removal of local party leaders from government positions that control the distribution of resources at the local level. Parties direct resources to activists by appointing loyal members to a variety of district and local executive positions, such as mayoral offices or local government agencies in charge of youth employment and development. Conflict becomes more likely when party leaders seek to remove local officials who have been efficiently providing patronage to local activists and replace them with party members whom local activists may not trust to uphold the patronage bargain.

Intra-party conflict, in both cases, results from a strategic response by activists to the inability or unwillingness of party elites to deliver sufficient patronage. Both represent instances in which activists determine that elites have reneged on the patronage bargain, and in both situations conflict arises because of a weakening or rupture (real or anticipated) in

the flow of goods from the top of the party hierarchy down to the bottom. As such, this conflict is primarily vertical in nature, pitting activists against party leaders who occupy higher positions, not against other supporters on the same tier of the party organization.

2.2.1 The Origins of Low-Quality Patronage

This argument is generally agnostic about the origins of low-quality patronage; activists do not much care why elites are not delivering selective incentives, only that they are not receiving what they are owed. It is still useful, however, to consider why party leaders might fail to meet their commitments and keep patronage from reaching sufficient levels to appease party activists. I present two likely sources of insufficient patronage: overmobilization of party activists; and corruption and graft perpetrated by local party elites. While the validity of the theory does not depend on either of these sources being more or less prevalent, I argue that each is a plausible source of variation in patronage quality.

Overmobilization and the Party Activist Trap

One important source of poor patronage quality at the local level is overmobilization, which is the recruitment of activists in the pre-election period to the point that it becomes impossible for party elites to adhere to patronage bargains during the post-election period. In other words, one reason that patronage quality can fail to meet activists' expectations is simply because demand for selective incentives outstrips supply. In such circumstances, party leaders are forced to renege on the patronage bargain not because they want to, but because there are simply not enough material rewards to go around.

Why would elites risk conflict by overmobilizing activists? One reason is the party activist trap, or the temptation for party elites to mobilize as many activists as possible in hopes of securing electoral victory. Party leaders desperate to win at the polls are incentivized to mobilize too many activists in order to maximize votes. The winner-take-all nature of many African democracies raises the stakes of elections, such that it is plausible to expect

some party elites to accept the risk of overmobilization in exchange for a greater likelihood of winning elections. Even in cases wherein the central party leadership wishes to avoid overmobilization because of the risk of conflict, they may struggle to do so because local electoral hopefuls will want to mobilize sufficiently large networks in order to win their own elections, and are thus each individually incentivized to enlist large numbers of supporters. If the central party apparatus does not have the organizational capacity to monitor and enforce local recruitment (which they probably do not or they would not be so dependent on activists in the first place), then they cannot keep local party candidates from mobilizing more activists than the patronage supply can afford to satisfy.

Moreover, party elites are not exclusively responsible for the creation of excess demand for patronage, which can also arise if too many supporters mobilize *themselves* into activism. Parties do not have full control over who becomes an activist, and where patronage bargains are less formal and unemployment rates are especially high, supporters will select into activism in hopes of leveraging their work to earn patronage rewards, even if party leaders did not explicitly commit to giving them a job. This creates an additional pool of activists whom party leaders are not committed to supporting, but who will expect to receive patronage anyway.

Graft and Shortfalls in Patronage Supply

Following a similar logic to the creation of excess demand, low-quality patronage can also result from reductions in the supply of goods and services used as selective incentives. These shortfalls can come from exogenous shocks to supply outside the control of party elites, or they can arise as a result of graft and corruption by party leaders. Rapid changes in the availability of patronage resources occur for a number of reasons. Most obviously, unexpected economic shocks can stifle the government's ability to provide sufficient jobs in spite of party leaders' intentions. Likewise, cuts to foreign aid can force cancellations or reductions of national development programs, and even new sources of foreign aid might shift priorities on

development projects, leaving some party elites with fewer goods at their disposal. Foreign aid might also be restructured to include conditionality which limits the amount of jobs that the government controls. In short, whenever external forces reduce the amount of jobs and other key resources that incumbent party leaders control, party elites risk reneging on the patronage bargain even if their original commitment was made in good faith.

Though party leaders may not hold the blame for some shortfalls in supply, the temptation to engage in corruption, primarily in the form of graft, can also restrict the availability of patronage. Even within the bounds of a neopatrimonial system in which the diversion of public resources to private interests is acceptable and expected, party elites can generate conflict by breaking the terms of the elite-activist bargain and divesting patronage away from activists to other private interests. This can be because party elites simply pocket too much from the flow of public resources they control, resulting in a reduction in the total amount of goods available to redistribute to clients within the party machine. If such outright corruption were detected it could trigger conflict between corrupt leaders and party activists. After all, though Big Men are expected to earn from their position of power, they are not meant to do so at the expense of the small boys, since neopatrimonial networks are meant to operate on reciprocity (Pitcher, Moran, and Johnston 2009; Dawson 2014).

Party elites can also affect the supply of patronage by distributing goods to their families, friends, and other undeserving supporters instead of the activists for whom patronage was initially earmarked. Party elites often manage large networks of followers beyond the party activists that worked to get them elected. If Big Men distribute too much of the limited resources that flow from their office to groups and individuals aside from local party activists, they might not have enough left over to appease those who feel they earned a patronage reward, triggering a conflict. This behavior is especially salient when party elites do not originate from the district or town in which they are elected or appointed. When these elite outsiders distribute jobs to their friends and supporters from other districts, they create conflict by leaving local "area boys" out to dry.

2.2.2 The Exit Option as a Moderating Variable

While insufficient patronage should on average increase the likelihood of intra-party conflict, the effect of bargain breakdown is not homogeneous. Once the patronage bargain has broken, angry activists have a variety of tactics available to reconcile the fact that they labored for a party and received little or nothing in return. The seminal work of Hirschman (1970) suggests that disaffected activists need not enter into risky conflict with party elites when they can simply *exit*. Just as consumers disappointed with the declining quality of a producer's goods have the option to switch to a different brand or to stop buying a product rather than exercising *voice*, aggrieved activists could flip to work for a different political party, thereby reducing the likelihood of conflict.

The analogy only takes us so far, however. There are substantial differences between political activism in African patronage democracies and the purchase of goods by consumers in a market economy, some of which present constraints that make exit substantially less appealing. The first difference relates to the timing of exit. For political parties in patronage democracies, exit often involves a substantial delay in activists' ability to reap patronage rewards. While consumers who switch to a new brand can begin purchasing an alternative product immediately, elections are cyclical by design, and exiting a few months after the polls close means activists could be locked out of access to patronage for several years. Additionally, unlike consumers in a broad, open market who are free to switch at will between a number of competing brands, certain characteristics of African democracies can produce an environment in which disaffected activists' are not equally capable of swapping to a new party. First, the *ethnic composition of parties* can constrain some activists from freely flipping between multiple parties. Second, the *competitiveness of parties* can vary such that certain parties stand little chance of winning office, particularly at the regional and local level, rendering the exit option less appealing to activists in those contexts.

This exit option, then, can be conceived of broadly as a set of moderators which change

the effect of patronage scarcity on the likelihood of intra-party conflict.[10] In other words, the effect of a shortfall in patronage on the likelihood of intra-party conflict is different for sub-populations defined by the availability of the exit option: when activists have the exit option, a breakdown in the patronage bargain is less likely to produce conflict within the party; when activists face significant constraints on exit, however, insufficient patronage is more likely to trigger conflict. Following the discussion above, in the remainder of this section I describe two specific factors which can moderate the effect of patronage bargain breakdowns on intra-party conflict: the ethnic composition of parties, and the competitiveness of parties.

Ethnic Composition of Parties

The ethnic composition of parties can restrict activists from exiting their party for another when the patronage bargain fails. African party systems are often characterized by ethnic divisions, though the role of ethnicity in determining party composition varies substantially both across and within those systems. Elischer (2013) provides a useful framework which separates parties into three types based on the role of ethnicity in political party formation and organization: mono-ethnic parties, consisting of a single major ethnic group, though also accepting members from small, electorally inconsequential groups; ethnic alliance parties, formed from multiple large ethnic groups to create minimum winning coalitions; and ethnic catch-all parties, which draw membership from a wide variety of ethnic groups and whose "purposes transcend election day" (29).

These party types vary in how restrictive and exclusionary they are toward members of specific ethnic groups. Party systems dominated by mono-ethnic or ethnic alliance parties present challenges to disaffected activists considering flipping to work for another party. Because these parties are exclusively associated with one or several dominant ethnicities, members of other dominant ethnic groups will generally be excluded and viewed with suspicion,

10. I follow Hong (2015, 133-134) in defining a moderator as a characteristic, whether contextual or individual, which produces different treatment effects for sub-populations defined by that characteristic.

and only members of minority ethnicities which are not clearly aligned with or represented in a specific party can reliably switch to a competing party when the patronage bargain fails. Ethnic catch-all party systems, on the other hand, are populated by parties which transcend ethnic cleavages, and are thus generally more conducive to activists seeking to exit their party. Even if certain catch-all parties are tied to specific ethnicities, these large-tent parties generally maintain representation of multiple ethnic groups, and will be more accepting of activists from outsider groups. Catch-all parties might still be constraining at the local level, however, particularly in ethnic strongholds, and where local intra- or inter-ethnic rivalries are closely aligned with partisanship.[11]

Competitiveness of Parties

A second constraint on exit comes from variation in the competitiveness of political parties. Parties in democracies are not always equally competitive at the national level, and there is typically a great deal of variation in party performance at the regional and constituency level. Activists who campaign with the hopes of getting a job or other selective incentives have a vested interest in their party winning elections, since the best rewards depend on party elites gaining access to the coffers and privileges of the state. Where alternative parties are unlikely to win future elections, flip-flopping is a less attractive option for aggrieved party activists.

In democracies with a lack of competition in national politics, opposition parties are much less likely to gain access to the programs and resources necessary to provide patronage to their supporters. This makes them less viable alternatives to activists from dominant parties who are disaffected with their leadership. For these activists, party swapping is not as simple as switching brands. Thus, the less competitive the national party system is, the

11. For example, in Northern Ghanaian conflicts over chieftaincy, competing factions in intra-ethnic rivalries have aligned themselves with political parties in a bid to further their side's cause. Though Elischer (2013) classifies both major Ghanaian parties as ethnic catch-all parties since 2000, in the context of these chieftaincy conflicts, party switching is much more difficult than elsewhere.

less likely will activists be to flip-flop when they fail to receive patronage.

At the regional and constituency level a lack of competitiveness can also present a constraint on exit, encouraging activists to engage in conflict with party leaders. Not all constituencies are equally competitive. In many constituencies victory at the polls swings between multiple parties, or elections are close enough that one cannot predict who would win the next round of elections. In these contexts, aggrieved supporters can reasonably expect alternative parties to win future elections, so party swapping is a viable exit strategy. In party strongholds where one party's candidate always wins, however, leaving the dominant party to work for a minority party entails substantially more risk in comparison to competitive constituencies, so angry activists will be less likely to see exit as a reasonable strategy.

2.2.3 Patronage or Factionalism: Contrasting Predictions and Hypotheses

This patronage-centric theory of intra-party conflict differs in important ways from the prevailing factionalism framework, both in how it conceives of African political parties and how it explains the emergence of conflict within those parties. The factionalism framework views parties as political organizations constituted by competing blocs, divided across a number of dimensions, and claims that conflict emerges as those blocs compete for power within the party and government. The patronage framework emphasizes the the role of parties as engines of patronage and clientelism, and suggests that conflict emerges when the party fails to effectively provide selective incentives down the party hierarchy.

How can we determine which approach better fits the empirical reality of intra-party conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa? Beyond direct evidence for my theory, the patronage and factionalism frameworks suggest contrasting predictions about the timing, location, and targets of intra-party conflict. The remainder of this section summarizes these competing predictions, and in subsequent chapters I take advantage of these differences to show that a patronage-centric approach complements, and in some cases even supersedes, the conventional factionalist framework for explaining conflict in African political parties.

Timing of Intra-Party Conflict

If intra-party conflict were primarily about competition between factions for power within the party, we would expect such conflict to occur prior to national elections, during party primaries or party leadership competitions.[12] These contests determine who will control the party's strategy in national electoral campaigns, as well as who will contest seats in which districts. And in non-competitive districts, where the same party regularly wins inter-party contests, intra-party elections are all the more prone to conflict since they essentially determine who will win office.

Intra-party conflict over patronage, however, should be focused in the post-election period. Prior to elections activists do not yet have a claim to patronage, and both supporters and elites understand that the best patronage rewards can only be distributed after victory on election day and the subsequent transferal (or renewal) of government control. Political parties, particularly those which do not maintain substantial control over government positions prior to an election, have limited resources available to distribute as patronage.

Pinpointing when vertical conflict is likely *within* the post-election period is more difficult. First, in relation to patronage quality we might expect activists to allow some time for party elites to settle in before the efficient distribution of patronage can begin. How long activists will be willing to wait before determining that elites have failed to uphold the patronage bargain is an empirical question, but the theory predicts that the longer activists go without receiving promised rewards, the more likely they are to enter into conflict with party elites. As for conflict triggered by turnover in local leadership positions, if local institutions (whether formal or informal) determine such events to be regular or scheduled, then we should expect more conflict clustered around those periods. But unanticipated and unscheduled changes to local power configurations of leadership might be even more likely to cause conflict, and

12. This is the argument of a substantial body of literature on intra-party violence. Prominent examples can be found in a special issue on the subject in *Democratization* from 2018. See Giollbhui (2018), Goldring and Wahman (2018), Reeder and Seeberg (2018), Seeberg, Wahman, and Skaaning (2018), and Wanyama and Elklit (2018).

these are unpredictable in their exact timing.

Location of Intra-Party Conflict

Factional conflict should be concentrated in districts where parties are strongest, and have the highest chances of winning competitive elections against competing parties. In such party strongholds, where the outcome of national elections is relatively certain, the stakes of intra-party contests are higher, as they essentially determine who will ultimately win office. Securing candidacy in these districts is a sure bet for increasing the power of a faction within the party, so factional models would predict that conflict should generally be increasing with a party's relative power in a given district or region.

Factional models which emphasize specific schisms predict that intra-party conflict should also be higher where these fault-lines occur. If party blocs are grounded in ethnic divisions within a party, then intra-party conflict should be higher in areas where these ethnicities are both present and stand a reasonable chance of winning intra-party contests. If factions split on ideological lines, then conflict should occur where more extreme factions are strongest. According to the factional framework, intra-party conflict should also be concentrated in locations where party leadership elections and contests are held. Bringing together a substantial number of competing faction members and their supporters to one or few locations creates ample opportunities for conflict and violence between rival groups to break out. This is all the more likely since such events can bring together competing groups which are not typically in close geographic proximity, creating a unique opportunity for violence.

The patronage-centric theory suggests that intra-party conflict should be most likely to occur in places where the patronage bargain has broken down, and elites have failed to deliver a sufficient supply of selective goods to party activists. This is most likely to occur in places where demand for patronage outstrips supply; in areas where overmobilization has occurred; where graft and corruption by party elites are highest; in districts where party leadership turnover has occurred; and in areas affected by shocks to the supply of patronage.

Targets of Intra-Party Conflict

The factional approach emphasizes the role of cleavages within the party in producing conflict. As such, theories within this framework predict that party activists should target supporters and leaders on the other side of such divisions. Activists should primarily target the supporters and leaders of rival factions. In some cases party members might target supporters of the strongest rival factions, in hopes of weakening their opponents and shifting the balance of power in favor of their own faction. In other cases where factions divide along more salient cleavages, such as religion or ethnicity, activists might be more likely to target supporters and leaders of groups in rival camps, regardless of the other factions' positions within the party's configuration of power.

According to the patronage framework, intra-party conflict should instead target those elites who determine access to and distribution of patronage. In most contexts, local party elites hold some degree of power in the granting and allocation of patronage resources: they provide recommendations to government agencies, as well as to educational and technical training programs. But in some cases, decentralization and similar initiatives have granted the power to determine access to jobs and other selective incentives to local government agents, such as mayors, district-level executives, or even government-sponsored development agencies. Elites in such positions have substantial power over flows of patronage to activists, and are thus prime targets for aggrieved party supporters.

Contrasting Predictions

I have presented contrasting predictions from the prevailing factionalism framework and my own patronage-centric theory to explain the emergence of conflict within African political parties. Before turning to the question of violence in intra-party conflict, I summarize these predictions in Table 2.1.

Aspect of Conflict	Theoretical Framework	
	Factionalism	Patronage
Timing	Conflict should occur prior to national elections, during party primaries and party leadership contests.	Conflict should arise after national elections have concluded and winners have taken control of the government.
Location	Conflict should be highest in party strongholds, or in places where salient party schisms are most pronounced.	Conflict is most likely in places where the patronage bargain has broken down.
Targets	The main targets of conflict should be members and leaders of rival factions.	The primary targets of conflict should be elites who control the flow of patronage.

Table 2.1: Contrasting Predictions of the Factionalism and Patronage Frameworks

2.3 Coercion and Violence in Intra-Party Conflict

I have to this point provided an explanation for why activists and elites within the same political party would enter into conflict with one another. But my claim that intra-party conflict stems from a breakdown in the patronage bargain does not explain why that conflict should vary in the shape it takes, and in particular why it should sometimes take on coercive or violent forms. While one would hope that activist-elite conflicts might be born out through peaceful engagement, the reality is that even in predominantly peaceful contexts, coercion and violence by party activists is not uncommon. When activists choose to engage in what Hirschman (1970) called "voice" they choose at the most basic level between coercive and non-violent voice. Non-violent voice typically consists of activists peacefully protesting against elites and submitting petitions to party leaders which outline their grievances and demands. Violent voice is also a signal to elites that party activists are unsatisfied with the status quo, but the form of that signal differs. Some common methods for coercing party elites include: direct threats of violence; physical assault; lockups of party offices, public services, and local government offices; vandalism and the destruction of property; and

attacks targeting minor local rents, such as public toilets or lorry parks.

On the one hand, the fact that activists rely on violence at all might seem puzzling considering that its use against party leaders entails greater risks than those associated with peaceful forms of conflict. When activists use violence and coercion against their own party leaders they accept these substantial risks: violent reprisal, by police, body guards, or loyal supporters of party elites; arrest and possible prosecution without the possibility of protection from the party; and in the most extreme cases, death. These risks can rise as activists move from threats, to violence against property, to violence against individuals or groups. The dangers of violence might also increase as activists directly target higher profile party members. Because these risks are prohibitive for many party supporters, they should act as a strong disincentive for many activists to engage in coercion and violence.

At the same time, however, coercion can be an effective tool for manipulating the behavior of one's opponent in conflict. Activists can use violence and threats of violence as devices to signal party leaders about their dissatisfaction with the patronage status quo, demonstrating their commitment to fighting to obtain expected patronage. Violence can also be used as punishment; threats of personal harm and violent attacks on elites and their property can shift the reasoning of party leaders, raising the costs of reneging on the patronage bargain. Because coercion is useful, we might expect activists who are willing and able to accept the risks of violence to engage in coercive behavior, since in doing so they could improve their chances of forcing party leaders to provide them with expected rewards.

How do we negotiate between these conflicting tensions to explain why intra-party conflict sometimes turns violent? I argue that there are two primary paths to violence, each with a distinct factor that changes the propensity for activists to engage in violet behavior. The first path is primarily a strategic one, and comes from the ability of some activists to recognize and leverage the unique potential of coercion to obtain patronage. Active party supporters vary widely in their experience and training in the use of violence, or more concisely, in their *coercive capacity.* As the ability of activists to effectively deploy violence increases, so

too does their willingness to accept the associated risks, and their ability to mitigate them. Moreover, coercive capacity increases activists' confidence that they can deploy violence effectively to manipulate party elites' behavior. The greater capacity activists have to utilize coercion, the more likely they are to rely on violence as a tool when they enter into conflict with party elites.

The second route to violence we might call the path of desperation, and it stems from variation in the *financial autonomy* of party activists. Though I assume that most activists are motivated by a desire for patronage, their financial reliance on selective incentives from the party varies greatly. Financial autonomy determines the stakes of party patronage, and thus the willingness of activists to engage in riskier behavior to ensure that elites deliver expected rewards. The more activists depend on the party for their individual well-being and (in the limit) survival, the more desperate they become to obtain promised rewards, and thus the more willing they will be to take on the risks of violence. This is a path to violence in which activists threaten or attack elites because the costs of *not* receiving patronage are exceptionally high.

In both of these scenarios, activists are engaging in coercive behavior, utilizing violence and the threat of violence to facilitate a change in party elite behavior. Party supporters in both cases are generally engaging in what Schelling (1960, 195) calls "compellent threats," or "a threat intended to make an adversary *do* something (or cease doing something)." However, while Schelling (1960, 196) suggests that "the threat that compels rather than deters... often takes the form of administering punishment *until* the other acts, rather than *if* he acts," not all intra-party coercion evolves in such a fashion, with violence accompanying an initial threat and then continuing until elites respond appropriately. Superior, less risky options include making a threat alone, or accompanying a threat with a small show of force, but refraining from further violent punishment until the targeted party elites fail to meet demands. Ongoing violence as punishment entails additional risks, so we should not expect activists to take on these risks if they do not have to. Moreover, because not all violence

is equally risky, we might expect party supporters in coercive conflict to attempt less risky forms (such as vandalism or threats) before resorting to more risky types of conflict (such as physical assaults against party elites).

In the remainder of this section I expand on this basic argument. First I discuss activists' coercive capacity. I clarify what it entails, outline how it varies among active party supporters, and then describe how it impacts their choice to use coercion and violence. I then turn to financial autonomy. I explain why it is so important to understanding the behavior of party activists, describe how autonomy affects the stakes of the patronage bargain, and how that in turn drives some activists to violence. I conclude this section with some hypotheses that emerge from my theory.

2.3.1 Activists' Coercive Capacity

The use of violence by party activists against their own party elites is strategic, and is intended to force party leaders to modify their behavior and adhere to the terms of the patronage bargain. If coercion and violence can be useful toward this purpose, then why do all aggrieved activists not choose to employ them against party elites? Activists recognize that violence also comes with risks that peaceful tactics do not entail. Expertise in the use of coercion and violence allows activists both to reduce the risks of violent tactics, and to have a greater chance at success when they do coerce party elites. As such, the more capacity activists have for utilizing violence, the more likely they are to rely on violent and coercive tools when engaging in conflict with party elites.

Coercive capacity encapsulates the broader ability of party activists to organize for and engage in violent behavior in order to achieve a specific goal. Several factors contribute to substantial variation in the levels of coercive capacity among party supporters, including organization, experience, training, and equipment. First, activists vary widely in their level of organization for violence. Some operate in centralized groups with names, formal structures, strong ties between members and group leaders, and established operating pro-

cedures. Others participate in local, informal, ad hoc groups which share a common cause, but lack pre-existing rules and hierarchies. And many activists operate independently of any organizations outside the party they support.

Most activists have little to no experience using violence, especially as part of a broader coercive effort. Still, some party supporters do have a great deal of knowledge and background engaging in violence. Activists in African democracies gain experience in violence through a number of routes, such as fighting in civil wars,[13] participation in organized criminal or vigilante groups,[14] membership in local street gangs, employment in the security forces, or as land and body guards.[15] Some such activists are even mobilized by party leaders explicitly for their experience as wielders of violence, though of course party leaders intend for that violence to be targeted at the opposition, potential voters, or election officials, not back at themselves.

Even among activists with experience in violence, there is variation in terms of their level of training in its effective use. Some party members, such as those who were formerly in the security forces or participated in insurgency, have undergone rigorous training in the art of coercion. But a large proportion of activists, including many with experience in violence as body guards, lack any advanced tactical knowledge.

Finally, party supporters are not equally equipped to deploy violence. In terms of materiel, while some activists might possess the ultimate tool for violence, firearms, most have to make do with machetes, knives, and makeshift weapons. Party supporters also vary in how physically fit they are to engage in violence. Some young men who work for the party

13. Christensen and Utas (2008) find that in Sierra Leone, ex-combatants have been mobilized into activism for both major parties since at least the 2007 general election.

14. Politicians around Sub-Saharan Africa have engaged in what Mueller (2008) calls the "privatization of public violence" by soliciting the services of locally organized groups of young men to manipulate the electoral system.

15. An interviewee at the headquarters of the NPP in Ghana informed me that many party activists that the media claims to be vigilantes are instead young men who are formally employed to act as body guards at party locations and during large party activities, such as rallies. NPP Communications Team Member, Accra, 2017.

are strong and capable of engaging in hand-to-hand fighting, and in fact many so-called macho-men participate in party-sponsored "keep-fit clubs" which promote physical fitness and personal strength (Amankwaah 2013; Lamptey and Salihu 2012). But many activists spend far less time exercising and lack the strength and endurance to rely on force during intra-party conflict.

These differences in coercive capacity affect the propensity for violence in two ways, as I detail in the following section. First, activists with higher levels of coercive capacity will have more confidence that violence or the threat of violence will improve their chances of compelling party elites to fulfill the patronage bargain. Second, coercive capacity provides activists with additional confidence that they can manage the risks of violence.

The Effectiveness of Coercion

I argue broadly that coercive capacity increases the likelihood that party activists will turn to threats and violence when the patronage bargain breaks down. Coercion can be an effective tool for activists seeking to secure expected rewards, but it is not guaranteed to result in desired changes. Consider the difference between peaceful forms of conflict, such as protests and petitions, and coercive ones, such as violent invasions of party and government offices. These require wildly different sets of skills to be deployed effectively. Protests and petitions require the recruitment of mass numbers of participants, the acquisition of permits from government officials, the planning of effective routes to march, and the writing of a compelling petition that clearly and concisely presents the grievances of disaffected party supporters. The violent invasion of party offices, on the other hand, requires the recruitment of a smaller but more loyal and reliable group of activists, the identification of a target that will send a signal to party elites about why activists are angry, the ability to physically enter and lock down a party or government facility, and balancing the level violence so that it is high enough to worry party leaders, but not so high that it provokes a crackdown by security forces. When intra-party conflict breaks out, activists will rely on their pre-existing

expertise, and activists with higher levels of coercive capacity will be more likely to rely on threats and violence to ensure that they receive the patronage they believe they are owed.

We can see more clearly how coercive capacity increases the likelihood that activists will use violence by breaking it down into its constituent parts. First, consider the organization of activists. When party members are already effectively organized for violence, coercing party leaders can be as easy as shifting targets, from members of the opposition to members of their own party. Well organized groups, particularly those with centralized leadership roles and established mechanisms for communication, can determine which elites to target and allocate the personnel and resources needed to do so. They can more effectively communicate critical information to members that facilitates coercion, such as knowledge about where party leaders are most vulnerable. Moreover, members of well organized groups who engage in violence have more confidence that they will receive the backing and support they need to successfully compel party leaders to deliver patronage. Organized groups can also more effectively decide on and communicate specific demands to party leaders.

Perhaps most importantly, organizations help activists overcome the classic free-rider problem.[16] Activists seeking to mobilize for violence against party elites face a unique version of this challenge. While some patronage is directly distributed to individual activists, party supporters also receive selective incentives indirectly through local government programs. Showing one's party membership credentials and being known to the local elites distributing patronage might suffice to gain access to employment opportunities and other coveted rewards. In other words, some valuable patronage can be thought of as club goods.[17] If parties cannot determine which activists actually fought for rewards, then supporters have incentives to sit out and allow others to secure these goods, only to swoop in and benefit from them after the fact.

If aggrieved activists are members of highly organized groups which can act indepen-

16. On the free-rider problem and challenges to collective action, see Olson (1965).

17. Ichino and Nathan (2013, 344-345) argue that a similar logic applies in many rural contexts, where the goods that politicians deliver to clients (voters) are "locally non-excludable," i.e. "club goods."

dently of targeted party elites, then those organizations can reduce free-rider problems and more effectively coerce party leaders by: i) pressuring activists to join in the fight; and ii) ensuring that activists who participate in conflict with party elites are the first to receive patronage once it is delivered. Organizations with highly centralized leadership and effective mechanisms for ensuring member accountability are better equipped to mobilize supporters to participate in conflict events, and to use tactics such as naming and shaming to encourage active participation. Better organized groups are also more capable of monitoring and tracking which activists participate in resistance to party elites, and only rewarding those who did once patronage starts to flow again.

Experience in the use of violence also acts as a positive driver for disaffected party supporters. Activists who have experience in threatening and violent behavior will have more confidence that they can rely on those tools to manipulate elites. Formal training in the use of violence is a multiplier to that effect, lending yet more certainty that party members will be able to use violence to facilitate a real change in the provision of patronage.

Finally, activists who are better equipped to use violence know that they can more reliably utilize force to achieve their goals. During intra-party conflict, party leaders might be protected by their own supporters, by professional or semi-professional bodyguards, and by the state's security forces. Activists who are physically fit and well equipped for violence will be more confident that they can overcome these obstacles to effective coercion.

Mitigating Risks

Of course, activists will not choose to use coercion simply because they are good at it. Although I argue that coercion can be effective for extracting patronage if properly utilized, it comes with additional risks which are prohibitive for many activists. An explanation for variation in the level of violence in intra-party conflict must account for these risks, and I posit that coercive capacity does just that. As the coercive capacity of activists rises, they become more capable of mitigating the risks of violent conflict, or more willing to accept

them.

Consider one of the main risks that activists take on when they attempt to coerce party leaders: arrest or detention by security forces, with the possibility of prosecution. Non-violent forms of conflict can conceivably lead to arrest.[18] But violent conflict poses an elevated risk of arrest in comparison. Security forces are far more likely to seek to arrest anyone who commits assault or murder. And party leaders whose property is destroyed in acts of vandalism by disaffected party supporters have recourse to demand their arrest.

Coercive capacity helps activists to mitigate the risk of arrest, making violent conflict more likely. Membership in a well organized group reduces the risks that an activist will be arrested, and offers them better support in situations where they are detained by security forces. Organized groups of activists are more likely to have accurate intelligence on the likely response of state security forces to violent conflict, and they should be more effective at planning to attack softer targets to avoid arrests.

Training and experience can also help party supporters evade and manage arrest. The more efficiently activists can deliver a threat or perpetrate an act of violence, the less likely they are to be arrested. Preparation in typical police response times and procedures can help party members minimize their exposure to security forces. Activists who are trained and practiced in the art of coercion are also more likely to take preemptive measures to obscure their identities when coercing party elites. In the event they are arrested, party members who have been detained before or briefed on what to expect will know what to do and say to protect themselves and their peers.

Injury and death are two other risks which are far greater for party members engaging in violent conflict, and generally a sizable roadblock to coercion in intra-party conflict. Of course one can imagine scenarios in which party supporters engaging in non-coercive conflict with their leaders might come to bodily harm. For instance, a peaceful protest might be

18. For instance, even in the most peaceful countries, legal protests often result in at least a small number of arrests. As another example, activists staging a peaceful sit-in might also be arrested for trespassing.

met unexpectedly by violent reprisal; and speaking ill of a party leader on the radio might encourage his or her supporters to attack an activist in retribution. But the risks of injury and death when participating in violent confrontations with party elites are much higher. Party Big Men often have body guards, their own retinue of supporters who might be willing to use violence to defend them, and better access to call in the security forces when they are under duress.

Activists with higher degrees of coercive capacity are more prepared to manage the risks of injury and death. Altercations with security forces, who themselves exercise a high degree of coercive capacity, are the most likely to result in bodily harm to activists. Highly organized groups of party supporters are better prepared to avoid such confrontations, since they are more capable of communicating the movements of police to activists on the ground. Experience and training in the use of violence also help reduce the risk of personal injury and death when violent confrontations with public or private actors are unavoidable. Activists who are better equipped are also better prepared to avoid bodily harm.

The previous arguments have tacitly assumed that activists are generally either risk averse or risk neutral. But it is possible that groups of activists with high degrees of coercive capacity also attract risk-acceptant members. A useful parallel can be drawn from Weinstein (2007), who argues in the case of insurgency that different types of individuals are attracted to different types of rebel organizations. Although for insurgency Weinstein argues it is the initial endowments of organizations and the commitment level of individuals that matter, the basic logic in the case of violent intra-party activism is the same. Risk-acceptant party supporters should be more willing to align themselves with activists who are organized for and have engaged in violence because they are less concerned about the increased risks.

Ultimately, I argue that as activists' coercive capacity increases, so too does their ability (and possibly also willingness) to mitigate and manage the risks of violent conflict. At the same time, with increased coercive capacity comes a greater confidence that activists will be able to successfully coerce party leaders. Together, these encourage activists to rely on

threats and violence to ensure that party leaders adhere to the patronage bargain.

2.3.2 Activists' Financial Autonomy

Not all activists who use violence do so because they are capable of mitigating the risks and are tempted by improved chances at patronage. Some use violence because they feel they have no other choice. These party supporters depend so much on the patronage they expected to receive that they are willing to accept the risks of coercion in an effort to secure it. I argue that financial autonomy is the key variable for explaining why party supporters turn to violence out of desperation.

Financial autonomy is the level of dependence of activists on party support for their financial well-being. Party supporters come from a wide range of backgrounds, and while I argue that they begin to actively work for the party in hopes of receiving patronage, the rewards they expect to receive differ, as does their reliance on those rewards for survival. At one extreme are activists with high levels of financial autonomy, such as business owners who give their time and resources to a political party with the expectation that when the party wins power, their businesses will be granted special treatment, improving profits and raising the profile of their enterprise within the industry.[19] At the other extreme are activists with very low degrees of financial autonomy, the poorest activists who survive day-to-day on the small amount of food and money that parties offer in exchange for work, and desperately cling to the hope that when the party wins power they will be provided a job that can sustain them and their family.[20] In between are the activists who contribute their time and energy to the party with the expectation of selective rewards, but who have some independent financial stability and can survive and make do when party leaders fail to deliver patronage.

19. Bob-Milliar (2012b, 670) calls these "patron activists" and claims that "they make substantiate financial contributions and also provide other logistics for the sustenance of party work, nationally and at the constituency level. Activism within this category is seen as an investment."

20. A prominent example are the activists released from prison by the major parties prior to the 2007 general elections in Sierra Leone. Christensen and Utas (2008) describe a situation in which many of these young men depended heavily on the party for food and a place to sleep during the run-up to the election.

These varying degrees of dependence affect the propensity for activists to resort to violent behavior by determining the stakes of failing to receive expected patronage rewards, and thus explain why some activists accept the risks of engaging in violent conflict with party leaders. While I argue that most supporters participate in party work with the expectation of obtaining patronage, they differ greatly in their dependence on the party for access to jobs, income, and other basic material needs. For activists who are seeking promotions or career advancements in exchange for their support,[21] the ability to tap into extra-party networks to gain access to jobs and income means there is little reason to incur the risks of engaging in violence against party leaders. These supporters can afford to choose less risky, peaceful forms of conflict, or even to keep their heads down and maintain hope that, eventually, the party will provide them with the rewards they expect. For activists with low financial autonomy, however, the party is one of few viable sources of income, so exit options are not available, time horizons are shortened, and engaging in conflict with elites is the only pathway to seek the rewards they expected and depend upon. In these cases, the stakes are high enough to offset the risks of violence for aggrieved party supporters.

While financial dependence on the party can raise the stakes of the patronage bargain, increasing the likelihood of violence when the bargain breaks down, the character of that violence might be different than violence that comes from activists with high degrees of coercive capacity. Coercion that stems from dependence on the party is reactionary, more spontaneous, and thus most likely takes place on a smaller and more localized scale.

2.3.3 Predictions and Hypotheses for the Causes of Violence

I conclude this chapter with a summary of the predictions that stem from my explanation for variation in the level of violence during intra-party conflict. I first discuss hypotheses from my argument that violence depends on the coercive capacity of activists. I then summarize

21. Kopecky (2011) shows that a substantial proportion of patronage appointments in even the most promising African democracies go to supporters at the highest levels, including ministerial appointments.

the predictions from my argument that violence depends on the financial autonomy of party activists. I conclude this section with a discussion of the possibility that factionalism plays a role in explaining variation in intra-party conflict.

Coercive Capacity and Violence

My argument predicts that as the coercive capacity of activists increases, so will the likelihood that they use coercion and violence during intra-party conflict. This can be broken down into four distinct predictions. Violence should be more likely when activists who have suffered a breakdown of the patronage bargain are: better organized, more experienced, better trained in the art of coercion, and better equipped to use force.

Financial Autonomy and Violence

My argument also predicts that violence becomes more likely the lower the level of activists' financial autonomy. In other words, the more dependent the activists in a conflict are on the generosity of the party for their well-being and survival, the more likely they will be to turn to violence when they do not receive the patronage they expect.

Factionalism All the Way Down?

Is it possible that what truly drives activists to violence is simply factionalism, but that I am misclassifying instances of vertical intra-party conflict because I cannot observe the machinations of elites behind the scenes?[22] It is certainly plausible to suggest that in some cases, activists are driven to violence against one party elite not strictly based on their own motives, but instead under the orders of a rival party leader. We cannot know for sure that any particular instance of vertical conflict is not horizontal conflict in disguise. By this logic, one might expect that we should see violence when party leaders order their supporters to

22. Thanks to Alexandra Chinchilla for raising this point.

attack rivals.

I argue, rather, that this oversimplifies the relationship between patrons and their followers in African parties. Even if such cases exist, I argue that there is still a great deal of value to incorporating the patronage bargain and its implications into the broader study of intra-party conflict. Though activists may not operate strictly under their own volition, they are also not necessarily loyal automatons who respond without question to the whims of their patrons, especially when those patrons demand that their supporters risk their own lives during conflict. Patronage breakdowns prime activists to become desperate enough to accept the risks of violence. So even in cases where factionalism might explain some post-election intra-party conflict, the predictions of my theory should still hold.

CHAPTER 3

CASE AND DATA: POLITICAL PARTIES IN GHANA

In this chapter I provide background on Ghana's electoral system and its two main political parties, discuss my decision to focus exclusively on intra-party conflict in Ghana, and describe the data and methods used to evaluate my theory in the remaining chapters.

3.1 Elections and Parties in Ghana

Ghana has a long history of parties and elections, and has oscillated between multi-party, single-party, and military rule since it gained independence in 1957. The current fourth republic is a presidential system, in which the executive is headed by a single president, and the legislative branch is a parliament consisting of a single house with representatives elected through simple majority in 275 single-member districts.[1] Presidents are elected via a majoritarian run-off system with a single national constituency. If no candidate wins over 50% of the votes for president in the single national-level constituency, a runoff is held between the two candidates receiving the highest votes in the first round. The presidential and legislative elections are held at the same time, and take place every four years. Presidential elections also determine control over local government, including access to local government spending. The president directly nominates the leader of the District Assembly, the District Chief Executive, as well as 30% of the District Assembly members.[2] While parties are de jure banned from participating in politics at this level, in practice this is not the case.

Ghana's two major political parties are the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The NDC formed prior to the 1992 elections out of the Provisional National Defense Council regime which had ruled Ghana since the second coup

1. In 1992 the parliament had only 200 seats. This was expanded to 230 seats in the 2004 elections, and 275 seats in the 2012 election

2. The president also appoints the executive who lead municipalities and larger cities, the Municipal and Metropolitan Chief Executives, which are equivalent to DCEs.

carried out by Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings at the end of 1981, ending Ghana's third short period of democratic rule. The NDC is often described as a social democratic party, and though it has co-opted portions of the political traditions of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party, its roots lie in the "small boy" revolution led by Rawlings (Nugent 1996). The NDC won the first elections following the return to multiparty rule, taking the presidency for Rawlings and gaining control over parliament.[3] The NDC won elections in 1992 and 1996, but lost the presidency and control over parliament in the 2000 elections to the rival New Patriotic Party. The NDC regained power in 2008, won the 2012 elections, but lost again to the NPP in 2016. The NPP is a center-right party which was formed prior to the 1992 return to multiparty politics. The NPP is commonly known to follow the Busia-Danquah political tradition, which was a conservative, pro-business force that emerged to oppose the CPP in the years following independence. The NPP has won 4 elections in Ghana's fourth republic: in 2000, 2004, 2016, and 2020.

The NDC and the NPP are organized in similar fashion. They elect officers to the national, regional, constituency, and branch or polling station level, and have physical office spaces down to the constituency level, though many of these local offices remain closed outside of election time except for meetings, and the opposition party is substantially less active at the lower levels outside of election time (Osei 2012, 138, 143). The same party committee positions are replicated down to the constituency level, including a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and assistant secretary, treasurer, finance secretary, organizer, youth organizer, and women's organizer. Similar positions can also be present at the local level (polling station for NPP, branch for NDC). While hierarchies are clear and well organized from the national down to the constituency level, control over the grassroots is more ad hoc and communication between constituency and local party leaders can be limited.

The NPP and NDC both have permanent membership rosters, but these are fairly weak

3. The opposition parties boycotted the parliamentary elections following accusations of fraud in the 1992 presidential election.

indicators of the either party's size or strength. Membership typically requires the paying of small monthly dues, so many supporters at the local level who consider themselves to be members of a party are unlikely to appear on the roster. There are also no formal mechanisms for ensuring that individuals do not hold membership cards from both parties. Party members on the official rosters do vote in competitive primaries for parliamentary and presidential candidates, though historically these have been irregular across constituencies (Ichino and Nathan 2012).

Both parties are generally associated with major ethnic groups. The Akan/non-Akan divide is the most salient, with the NPP capturing a substantial share of the Akan vote, and typically being referred to as the party of the Akan. Still, the Akan make up under 50% of the Ghanaian population, and many Akan vote for the NDC, so it would be difficult to classify the NPP as an ethnic party.[4] The NDC is more ethnically diverse than the NPP. It garners strong support from the Ewe in the Volta region, which is unsurprising since the party's founder Rawlings is an Ewe, though given the smaller size of the Ewe population the NDC must look elsewhere to compete with the NPP. The NDC has had some success pulling Akan support away from the NPP, but it depends primarily on other ethnic groups to compete, including most of the predominantly Muslim groups in the northern regions of Ghana as well as many of the Ga, the group indigenous to Accra.

On a similar note, the NDC and NPP vary substantially in their strength across regions and constituencies, in terms of both organizational capacity and electoral success. Party strongholds can be found at the regional level (Ashanti for the NPP, Volta for the NDC), but even in swing regions each party has constituencies which vote reliably in their favor. A number of regions and constituencies regularly swing back and forth and are hotly contested each election. Because presidential elections are won through simple majority in one national constituency, parties are strongly incentivized to build a presence even in opposition strongholds, though in these cases the disparity in organizational strength is salient.

4. See Nathan (2019) for more on the role of ethnicity in Ghana's electoral politics.

3.2 Case Selection

The focus of the empirical portion of this dissertation on Ghana offers multiple benefits. First, Ghana experiences less political violence overall than many of its African neighbors, particularly following the conclusion of the 1994 Guinea Fowl War in the northern part of the country. A lower overall level of political violence makes it easier to determine which violent events are specifically related to intra-party conflict. The literature on electoral violence has long suffered from the problem of identifying which violent events ought to be coded as election-related.[5] The solution in much of the literature has been to determine an arbitrary time-frame around elections as the electoral period and to include all violent events in that period from an existing violent event data set, such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) or the Social Conflict in Africa Database (SCAD) (Goldsmith 2015a, 2015b; Salehyan et al. 2012). This might be an appropriate solution in contexts where a large amount of political violence occurs around elections, but such a blunt measure risks including a host of events which are unrelated to the dependent variable of interest. Focusing on a case with less noise allows me to more reliably separate violent events by type.

Second, it draws attention to the dangers of ignoring cases with supposedly low levels of violence. Ghana is often held up as a beacon of democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. But while it has not suffered the same crises that have wracked other African democracies which draw a great deal of attention in the literature on political violence (such as Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire), Ghana has not escaped the coercion and violence that affect many of its neighbors. By studying even supposedly low levels of political violence in Ghana, I aim to avoid the fallacy of "searching where the light shines."[6] As I am sure many have come to appreciate since the events of January 6, 2021 in the United States, the storming of government and

5. For a discussion on the difficulties of determining which violent events are electorally related, see Staniland (2014, 106-107).

6. I borrow this phrase from Anderson (2006), who suggests that scholars of the Middle East missed important political dynamics in the region because they were preoccupied with questions arising out of a focus on American foreign policy and social science's interests in democratization.

party buildings by angry and violent party supporters is something that merits explanation. Studying party-based violence in Ghana is important because it shows us that the threat to democracy lies not only in the large scale post-election violence that threatens to shatter regimes in one fell swoop. The normalization of accountability through violence poses its own challenges, and raises the possibility that democratic regimes can also die a death by a thousand cuts.

Of course, focusing so much on Ghana does not come without limitations. Because most of the evidence in the following chapters comes from Ghana, it is worth considering how broadly one should expect my theory to apply. In the remainder of this section I discuss the external validity of my theory, first with respect to countries beyond Ghana, and second with respect to political parties outside the NPP and the NDC.

3.2.1 External Validity across Countries

My theory assumes that incumbents control some stock of material resources which can be used as patronage to repay activists. These could include public sector jobs, control over private sector contracts, and other desirable goods and services. While in Ghana this is the case, in countries where members of the government have little to offer in terms of employment and patronage, promises of future jobs in exchange for campaign work would not be credible, and activists would not reasonably expect to receive such material benefits in exchange for mobilizing. Thus, the theory is limited to countries in which political elites control a stock of patronage resources after winning national elections.

My argument also assumes that elections are reasonably competitive. Elites enter into the patronage bargain in order to mobilize support at the grassroots to improve their chances of winning elections. I posit that this is true for Ghana as it is for many other contemporary African states. But in single party authoritarian contexts, elites maintain power through non-electoral means, and patronage systems operate differently. Conflict surely arises within parties in non-competitive contexts, but without the dependence on local activists to secure

votes, we should not expect that conflict to follow the dynamics described by my theory.

On a similar note, my explanation becomes less likely to hold in countries wherein parties are able to rely less on local supporters to win elections. If elections are won through mass media campaigns funded by Super PACs and the wealthy, party elites are incentivized to make bargains with other actors who have distinct preferences from those of active supporters in contemporary African political systems.

Finally, my argument is heavily focused on what Berenschot and Aspinall (2020) call party-centered patronage democracies. In such systems, party agents are the brokers and activists whom elites rely on to mobilize and turnout votes. My theory will be less effective at explaining intra-party conflict in community-centered patronage democracies, where party leaders depend primarily on community leaders to facilitate clientelistic exchange with voters. These might be religious leaders, neighborhood leaders, or traditional elites, such as chiefs and village elders.[7] Whatever the identity of these community-based brokers, a breakdown in their patronage relationship with political parties is unlikely to result in conflict through the mechanisms I propose.

3.2.2 External Validity across Parties

My argument assumes that parties have a reasonable chance of winning elections. Activists that work for small non-competitive parties cannot reasonably expect to receive selective incentives in the way that those working for larger, more competitive parties can. Both the NPP and the NDC have held power since the return to multiparty politics, and activists from both believe that their party stands a chance at winning any given election. Even within Ghana, however, there are a number of smaller parties whose grip on political power is minimal at best. For instance, the Convention People's Party (CPP), which was reformed in 2000 and is grounded in the tradition of Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah, held between one and three seats in the parliament from 2000 through 2015. Activists from this

7. See Baldwin (2016).

and other small parties can hardly expect to obtain substantial benefits from party elites after elections, even if they do win a few legislative seats.

I also assume that parties are organizationally weak, and that their sources of funding are limited. Together these drive the demand for activists and allow for the prospect of overmobilization, which leads to breakdowns in the patronage bargain. Parties with extensive resources can simply pay activists for their work, and those which are better organized can successfully campaign without depending as much on an army of activists.

3.3 The Data

I evaluate my theory of intra-party conflict and coercion through a mixed-methods approach, and I draw on two main sources of data in my analyses. First, I created an original, comprehensive data set on intra-party conflict in Ghana. Second, I supplement these quantitative sources with evidence collected over approximately 11 months of field work in Accra, including semi-structured interviews of local party officials and activists. In this section I detail how I collected the data for both sources.

3.3.1 Intra-Party Conflict Events Data Set

I constructed an original data set on intra-party conflict events in Ghana from 2008 through 2018. The database collects information from Ghanaian newspapers on conflict events between members affiliated with the same political party. This includes a wide variety of violent and non-violent conflict events, and was designed to be as comprehensive and inclusive of as many forms of intra-party conflict as possible.

Reports were collected manually by four Ghanaian research assistants from hard copy collections of four major Ghanaian newspapers from 2008 through 2018, including the Daily Graphic (Ghana's newspaper of record), the Daily Guide, the Ghanaian Times, and the Chronicle. From these reports I created a report-level data set, hand coding every variable

in the data with each report getting its own row in the data set. Following that, reports were matched based on date and location and aggregated into an event-level data set. In some cases this was as simple as removing duplicated events, but in others different reports had different levels of detail on some variables, requiring more complex decisions to be made in aggregating the data up to a single event. In some cases, one report was simply an update of a previous article with additional information, such as follow up reporting that arrests had been made in the days following the initial event. In such cases I kept the existing information and changed the values for whatever variables were updated. In more complicated cases, the same event was reported in multiple sources, with different or conflicting information. In such cases, my general rule was to use the report with the most detail (the least amount of missing data), and to update missing or inaccurate data from other reports before eliminating duplicates.

The unit of analysis is the event-day-location, i.e. an intra-party conflict event that occurs on one day in a particular location. Most events were completed within a single day. As in other major conflict event datasets, I recorded the most precise location possible for each event. Thus, for some the location might be a city or town, while for others the location might only be able to be linked to a district or a region. For every event possible, I recorded the district in which it occurred.

The data set includes information on a host of variables relating to intra-party conflict.[8] For each event I determined a perpetrator (the person or persons initiating the event) and the target or targets (the persons or places that the conflict behavior was directed toward). When appropriate, I also coded a signal target, which is the intended recipient of an indirect signal from the event, someone not immediately involved but who was meant to see and react to the event.[9] For each of these three categories of actors I recorded the number involved,

8. Details on coding rules and variables can be found in Appendix A.

9. For instance, activists might attack their local party headquarters, making the immediate target their constituency chairman. But in doing so, they intend for elites at the national level, up to and including the president, to witness the event and to make the changes that activists are demanding. In such a case, the constituency chairman would be coded as the target, and the president as the signal target.

their party, the level at which they worked or operated,[10] and their occupation. I also recorded up to three event types for each event, which describe generally what perpetrators did to their target or targets. I describe the full set of possible events in Chapter 5, but typical event types were assault, vandalism, protests, petitions, and invasions of party and government offices.

I also collected data on the dynamics of conflict events. Naturally I was limited to commonly reported information, but I was able to gather data on the response of police to conflict events, arrest rates, casualties (including injuries and deaths), the use of firearms and other weapons by perpetrators, reasons given by perpetrators for their actions, and even what demands (if any) were made by perpetrators during the event. To my knowledge this level of detail is not present in any existing data set which compiles conflict events in Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.3.2 Interviews with Ghanaian Activists

I also conducted in depth, semi-structured interviews with political party activists in Accra. These interviews were predominately selected based on chance encounters I had with activists while observing political party behavior in preparation for the 2020 general elections. My fieldwork took place in two stages. I took a preliminary trip to Accra, Ghana in August and September of 2017. During that trip I carried out a limited number of interviews and developed the questions and insights that inspired this dissertation. I followed that up with a much longer stay in Accra from August 2018 through May 2019. The interviews and experiences from that trip provided unique insights into the preferences, beliefs, and behaviors of activists struggling to survive and thrive within Ghana's democratic party system.

To sum up, in this dissertation I evaluate a novel theory of intra-party conflict and

10. Levels in increasing order included: the polling station or below; the district/constituency; the regional level; the national level; Member of Parliament; or President.

violence through an analysis of the behavior of party activists in Ghana's Fourth Republic. To facilitate this analysis I collected data through interviews with Ghanaian activists and by constructing an original data set from local newspapers of conflict events spanning eleven years of recent Ghanaian history. In the next chapter I bring both forms of evidence to bear on my argument for the origins of African intra-party conflict, and in Chapter 5 I draw on the same data to evaluate my claims about why that conflict varies between peaceful and violent forms.

CHAPTER 4

THE ORIGINS OF INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT

Why does conflict emerge within political parties in Africa? The literature suggests that factionalism is the prevailing force behind intra-party conflict. But as the evidence in this chapter will show, factionalism alone cannot explain the full range of variation we see in the emergence of intra-party conflict. My theory refocuses the argument on patronage, claiming that conflicts arise within African parties when the patronage bargain between activists and party elites breaks down.

In this chapter I present empirical evidence from Ghana to support this patronage-centric theory on the origins of intra-party conflict. I begin by evaluating the plausibility of the key assumptions of my theory. I then provide evidence to demonstrate that the patronage bargain is real and an important feature of party politics in Ghana. The next two sections test my argument that conflict occurs when the patronage bargain breaks down. First I present several forms of direct evidence from activists themselves: interviews I conducted during fieldwork in Ghana; the reasons activists gave for conflict as reported in Ghanaian newspapers during conflict events; and the demands made by activists during intra-party conflict. I then provide indirect evidence that intra-party conflict is caused by the failure of party elites to deliver patronage through an examination of the timing, location, and targets of intra-party conflict in Ghana.

4.1 Evaluating Three Assumptions about Patronage

My theory is grounded in several claims about the importance and function of patronage within African political parties: first, that local activists are important and maybe even necessary for achieving electoral success; second, that the prospect of receiving patronage rewards is a key factor in motivating individuals to become active supporters of political parties; and third, that incumbent parties dominate access to major patronage opportunities,

including employment and local development contracts, through their control over the state apparatus. In this section I couple findings from my own fieldwork with existing empirical research to show that these assumptions are plausible in the case of Ghana.

4.1.1 The Need for Activists

The first assumption of my theory is that party elites depend on grassroots activists to secure electoral victory in Africa. While the proportion of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa residing in rural areas continues to decline, it still remains above 50%, and was around 70% when Ghana and other countries in the region transitioned to multiparty politics in the 1990s.[1] In rural areas it is more difficult for a central party apparatus to maintain a presence and influence. Voting and registering to vote are also more difficult in rural districts, since citizens must travel greater distances to carry out their civic duties than in cities. In fact, one branch chairman laughed when I asked him why it was so important for the party to bus voters to registration and party rallies:

> They are not walking! 42 kilometers, 30, how do they walk?! You can't walk. Are you getting what I'm saying? So what happens is that you need to deploy buses to go and convey the party people from these places to the center where the program is taking place. And that is that. And you see, normally what happens is that such events are very necessary because beyond the fact that the candidate will come and see them to deliver his message, it also promotes coordination. It brings people together to network, to get to know each other, that they are the same family, they belong to the same party.[2]

Irregular supply of electricity and often impassable roads are two additional challenges that limit the reach of multiple forms of media to many potential voters, restricting the ability of the party to deliver its message and platform. Activists who have boots on the ground help solve these problems through the numerous activities they perform on behalf of the party.

1. Estimates come from the World Bank, based on the United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects.

2. Interview with NDC Branch Chairman, Accra, 2019.

In dense urban areas, where a diversity of interests prevail and political party elites can struggle to "read" the political realities of complex neighborhood dynamics, activists also serve as intermediaries, translating back and forth between the needs of voters and the intentions of the party.[3] They are also crucial to organizing the mass rallies that often serve as the one instance that voters see and hear from their potential representatives. The sheer number of duties performed by activists is in itself evidence that party leaders rely on them to maximize their chances at winning competitive elections.

4.1.2 Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

The belief that activists work for Ghanaian political parties in order to get access to jobs is so widespread that it may as well be considered common knowledge. According to evidence from round 5 of the Afrobarometer survey in Ghana, about 59% of Ghanaians agree that "political party foot soldiers in Ghana toil for their parties because they expect material rewards after winning power," while only 31% believe that Ghanaian activists work for their party because "they believe in their programs" (Armah-Attoh 2017). My fieldwork in Ghana affirmed this mentality. In interaction after interaction, whether with the person sitting next to me on a trotro, my uber or taxi driver, or the person serving me at a roadside food stall, the message was the same: party boys want jobs, and they expect their party leaders to find work for them after electoral victory.

But are these claims supported by party activists themselves? Existing research on the subject suggests that, yes, the Ghanaian public has hit the nail on the head: while there are numerous factors motivating Ghanaian youth to become active supporters of political parties, the prospect of post-election employment is a leading one. Bob-Milliar (2012b) found in interviews with hundreds of Ghanaian activists that the prospect of receiving a job was a prime motivating factor in their decision to work for a political party.

These motives persist in parties outside of Ghana as well. For the ex-combats interviewed

3. Interview with NDC Branch Youth Organizer, Accra, 2019.

by Christensen and Utas (2008, 528) about their activism in Sierra Leone's 2007 elections, "when deciding whether to join politicians' campaigns, it was the promise of jobs, further education and other long term benefits that primarily motivated their participation." Activists from both major parties were promised jobs as security guards, the opportunity to rejoin the military, and employment in other businesses. Similarly, in Kenya, De Smedt (2009, 595) finds that in Kibera and other slums, unemployed young men work for the party Big Man, Raila Odinga, both for immediate pay and with the expectation that they can secure a monthly stipend from Odinga in exchange for their services.

4.1.3 Government Control over Employment

Finally, my theory assumes that upon winning control of the state through elections, political party leaders gain access to jobs which can be allocated as patronage resources to loyal followers. If activists do not believe that victorious party elites can provide them jobs and other selective incentives, then they will not commit a substantial amount of time and energy toward helping the party in exchange for patronage rewards.

Lindberg (2010) finds that party supporters believe that their leaders (MPs) are able to provide jobs as patronage, including "low-skilled jobs in the police (most common) and fire services, the army, or immigration service." Sigman (2015, 74) argues that incumbent African parties are able to deliver jobs at both the elite and public service level, and that their decision to prioritize one over the other is a function of party financing; executive appointments are likely when politicians rely on "key brokers... who can mobilize entire voting blocs," whereas "lower-level public service jobs [are] offered to individual voters in exchange for their support." And Bob-Milliar (2012b, 679, 686) describes the the politicization of the National Youth Employment Programme, finding that many party foot soldiers in Ghana got access to jobs through the program because of the intervention of their MP or constituency executives, and many lost those jobs after a turnover in power saw them replaced with supporters from the other party. Clearly it is plausible to assume, then, that activists believe their party

elites can get them jobs after elections.

4.2 Evidence for the Patronage Bargain

A central component of my theory is the patronage bargain, the deal made between activists and party elites stating that the former will campaign on behalf of the latter in exchange for future selective incentives, overwhelmingly in the form of jobs. In this section I provide evidence that this patronage bargain is real, that it exists in both explicit and implicit forms, and that activists expect party elites to adhere to the bargain after victory at the polls.

The patronage bargain between activists and elites is no secret in Ghanaian politics, and it is regularly and openly discussed by Ghanaian political elites, the media, and party supporters at the local level. Take, for example, the following excerpt from a 2019 speech given by former president John Mahama to party delegates in the Afadjato South Constituency in the Volta Region, a stronghold of the NDC:

> Our foot soldiers and our grassroots are also entitled to the fair share of the national cake. In the past, when we were cadres of the revolution, we sacrificed our lives so that our nation will be better. But we've moved into another era, the era of democracy, and, so, you have party foot soldiers, grassroots who work for the party hoping that when the party wins and comes into power their lives will also get better. And, so, if a party chairman or a party's branch women's organiser or branch chairman also has a child who qualifies as a Ghanaian to be able to get a scholarship, why not? We should give him a scholarship. If he has a son who is qualified to enter the army or police, as long as he's qualified, why not? He should also have the opportunity.[4]

This speech demonstrates a clear understanding and acknowledgment of the patronage bargain not just from any politician, but from a former president and, at the time of the quote, active candidate seeking to win another presidential election.

Interviews with activists in Accra reinforced the idea that party elites trade activist labor for post-election patronage. One branch secretary outlined the patronage bargain directly:

4. Emmanuel (2019).

> Let's take it for instance. Like this election coming, okay? Politicians will come, they will give you promises in your branches, in your constituency. Okay. When we come to power and there is a recruitment in the security services, okay, you will bring your forms and tell us where you want to be. If you want to be in the military, police, or be in INS... so you, you send your CV there and then they will put, they will know where you like and then they will put you there. If there is no vacancy then they will come and check with you, 'Okay there is no vacancy yet, which other area do you want?'[5]

This activist clearly describes a system in which explicit promises are made by party elites to local supporters, which are then directly fulfilled by those elites after victory at the polls. A branch youth organizer corroborated this claim, that party elites make explicit promises of patronage: "Sometimes, if you are looking for power you promise a lot. You promise to the people, 'I will give jobs, especially if I become Minister or DCE, I will put it somewhere.' Yeah then I have jobs that are under me. So that fellow [an activist] will look like, 'ah today you are in power. You have this particular job. So I also want to get my share.' "[6]

Another activist emphasized the *implicit* nature of the patronage bargain. After I asked him what activists receive in return for their party work, he responded, "Assuming I set up a company right now. Are you getting what I'm saying? And I'm running my company, I need to, I, I, I, I need personnel or staff, to hire new people over there, I will hire my people."[7] I asked him whether this commitment to hire party members was made explicitly, and he laughed and responded, "No. It's, it's, it's, it's, it's known... Nobody promises that in platforms. Now we all know it's there."[8] The activist expanded on this claim, giving the following example: "Now, you are working for me. I become a Big Man. You, because you are in the trenches I will go, I will put you [in a job]. That's how it is. Whatever I go and get, if there are benefits you will also benefit. If you come then we will come out together. That's how it is! [laughs]"[9] By describing the nature of the patronage bargain

5. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019.

6. Interview with NDC Branch Youth Organizer, Accra, 2019.

7. Interview with NDC Activist, Accra, 2019.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

as a set of mutual expectations between Big Men and small boys, this activist draws on a common framework for understanding politics in Ghana (and other African countries) and emphasizes that even though a direct promise is not explicitly made, both party elites and party activists recognize that when supporters volunteer their labor, they expect party elites to return the favor.[10]

4.3 Bargain Breakdown and Intra-Party Conflict: Evidence from Activists

My theory claims that intra-party conflict arises in response to the breakdown of the patronage bargain between party activists and elites in the wake of elections. To assess the validity of this claim we must settle on the question of what constitutes a bargain breakdown. I argue that the breakdown of the elite-activist bargain takes two forms in Ghanaian party politics. First, in the most obvious instance elites can simply fail to deliver the promised jobs and other selective incentives that party activists expected to receive. In this case, elites directly renege on the terms of the bargain by not providing sufficient patronage directly to party supporters.

Additionally, party elites renege on the bargain by removing or blocking activists' access to patronage flows. In Ghana this primarily happens through the removal and replacement of members of the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), in particular their leaders, the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs). MMDAs serve the most important role in distributing patronage at the local level. These local government offices receive funding directly from the central government via the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) for the development and maintenance of the district, and they are responsible for providing basic services at the district level (Ayee 2012, 628). This alone grants them the power to create and provide jobs and other forms of patron-

10. For more on the framing of African patronage politics as an interconnected network of Big Men and small boys, see Söderberg Kovacs (2018) and Nugent (1996).

age to party activists. In addition to their role in directly prioritizing and funding local development, MMDAs also coordinate and manage the implementation of programs run by the decentralized offices of national ministries (e.g. Health, Education, Agriculture, and the National Youth Employment Programme under the Ministry of Youth and Sports), even in cases wherein these offices receive funding directly from their national level counterparts (Ayee 2012, 628-629). These functions grant even more leverage to MMDAs over the allocation and management of patronage resources in the districts, and changes in key leadership positions at local Assemblies can have a major impact on activists' ability to receive selective incentives.

In this section I provide direct evidence that these two forms of bargain breakdown are a major source of conflict within Ghanaian political parties. First, I draw on the words of activists themselves from my interviews to demonstrate their belief that conflict arises due to the failure of elites to provide sufficient material rewards. I then expand on these findings with an analysis of data drawn from local Ghanaian newspapers, focusing on the reported reasons for conflict. I demonstrate that a failure to provide expected patronage rewards is commonly cited as the cause of intra-party conflict events. Finally, from those same data I provide quantitative evidence of activists' demands for expected patronage during intra-party conflict, showing that party supporters engaged in conflict with party elites regularly demand patronage, either directly asking for jobs and rewards that were owed, or indirectly in the form of requests for changes to local government leadership.

4.3.1 Activists in their Own Words

Ghanaian party activists do not shy away from discussing conflict with party elites, and in this section I draw on their own words to show that they locate the source of intra-party conflict in the failure of party leaders to provide jobs and other forms of expected patronage. One branch youth organizer claimed, exactly as my theory does, that conflict (in this case in the form of threats and violence) occurs when activists do not receive promised jobs. While

speaking about a hypothetical activist, he said, "So what if he did not get his share? That is trouble you are in now."[11] I asked what trouble, and the organizer responded, "They [the activists] will come! Sometimes they will threaten you!"[12] When asked to clarify how activists would threaten elites who become Ministers or MMDCEs, he described what an aggrieved activist might say: "Like [the activist would say], 'If you didn't give us jobs like you promised us we will come and beat you there. At your office.' "[13] The organizer assured me, "Sometimes they do. Yeah sometimes they do. They go to the DCE office, the Minister's office, and they make sure that they threaten them to get a job," and again later in the interview he reaffirmed, "after election if they don't get a post, they will fight you. If you promised them."[14]

A branch secretary from the NDC made a similar claim, though with additional details on what aggrieved activists do if they do not receive the selective incentives they were promised:

> Um, the violence you are talking about, okay, it really comes in political way, let's assuming you made a promise to me when you come. You give me this job, ok. You give me a job to do [during the campaign]. And now, I've worked HARDLY [hard], and now you are full in power. Here are the keys, and you are not giving me that job which you promised to give me. You are not giving me that job, I'm jobless. So I will be mad at you, it's either I will do something for you to know that I'm hurt, with the promise you made to me and you couldn't fulfill. Yes. You see then I will walk to the party office and destroy things there, destroy papers, and burn things there. You see then I will mobilize people to do demonstration, we will come to your residence, and then we will spoil your things. Your cars, we will break down your car glasses and other stuff, you understand? You see then, the MP in the area, we will mobilize and beat him or her. Oh yes. Because you made a promise, instead of him or her to come to you and then remind you of, it's hard for me here. When Mahama [the presidential candidate] comes to power it will be hard for me to see him, though I'm a party member. They will not even allow me to go to his office or something like that. So what I will do for him to hear that, oh this person have come here or whatever, is to do a violence thing. Destroy things, later... I'm not going to destroy things that

11. Interview with NDC Branch Youth Organizer, Accra, 2019.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

> belongs to NPP, I will destroy things that belongs to my party.[15]

The interviewee makes two important points here. First, he claims that conflict arises because party activists do not receive promised jobs. Second, he draws attention to the idea that this conflict behavior serves as a signal, a method for party supporters at the grassroots to reach party elites at the top of the hierarchy whom they would otherwise have no way of reaching to voice their displeasure and seek redress for their grievances.

Another activist made a similar claim, that failure to receive expected jobs would result in conflict, but he argued that this conflict need not always be violent. When I asked him what he would do if he worked for the NDC and they won but he did not receive a job, he said, "Well, there wouldn't be anything to do at that moment... but I will still fight to get a job."[16] When I asked him how he would fight for a job, he described a more passive approach, involving pestering party leaders at the headquarters in Accra, sitting outside the gates every day and "bothering" the elites as they came and went. But, he clarified, not everyone would respond to not getting an expected job with such a peaceful form of conflict:

> Somebody wouldn't do so. Somebody will start fighting back. They could be rowdy at the party office. They will ask you, 'at the time you wanted us to come and do the work for you, did you ask us to?' You know, there was this notion that after elections when people are looking for jobs they will say 'O, do you have English and Maths?' Somebody was accusing the former Minister of Interior, that they wanted to be recruited into the police service or the security services. That the former minister is asking them, 'do you have English and Maths? Are you qualified? Is your paper good to put you there?' And they [the activists] were asking, 'at the time you were asking us to come and campaign for you. Did you ask us to bring our certificates to come and campaign for you? Now that we are finished and you have won you are asking us, where is our certificate?' So at that moment the person [the foot soldier] gets angry with you [the party elite] and he might not even participate in any [party] activity again. He will forget about you. So the moment, ehh, NPP comes to entice them with a little bit of some money then... [he trails off, then clarifies that such aggrieved activists might defect to the other political party.][17]

15. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019.

16. Interview with NDC Activist, Accra, 2019.

17. Ibid.

This interview illustrated three points: first, that intra-party conflict results from a breakdown of the patronage bargain; second, that this conflict can take a variety of forms, with varying degrees of violence; and finally, that angry party foot soldiers might coerce party leaders not only through agitation and violent disruption, but also by threatening to withhold their services from the party in the future.

One activist also argued that conflict within the party can arise when activists at the bottom of the party hierarchy don't get jobs, but he clarified that in his mind, conflict occurs not just because activists don't get expected jobs, but because party supporters see that jobs are given *instead* to friends and relatives of party elites, or even to supporters of another party. In line with my argument that graft is one source of shortfalls in patronage supply, this activist suggested that MMDCEs and other Big Men might give jobs to activists from competing parties in exchange for bribes, money which they do not expect to receive from supporters in their own party:

> The MCE thinks that 'ah, if I give the, uh, contract to you, an NPP person, you will come and pay me something, we call 10% extra. But if I give it to an NDC person he won't give me anything, will not give me anything. He will tell me 'ah, we were all in the party together, yeah we all fought for the party, and the party came to power, so why should I?'[18]

This claim provides support for my argument that graft is one important source of shortfalls in patronage supply, and in turn intra-party conflict.[19]

Of course, my theory also claims that patronage jobs can be lacking because of overmobilization, and and NDC branch secretary provided an example of exactly that as a cause for conflict and violence. After telling me that not getting promised jobs was a source of conflict for party activists, he added, "And also um, let's assuming, the other side is to, is that, you and I we're NDC members. People know that we're together. And that at the end of the

18. Ibid.

19. I would also suggest that this interview provides evidence that even if graft does not cause real shortfalls in patronage supply, the perception among activists that elites are distributing goods to their friends, relatives, or even members of opposition parties is sufficient to incentivize conflict.

day they will give you a job and they won't give me. You think I will be happy? So that will bring the violence."[20] I asked the activist whom he would attack in such a situation, and he told me he would target the person who gave another activist the job he expected: "You [the party leader] knew that I and [the other activist] were working together to help the party, so why did you give him the job and then I am out, I'm not doing anything? So I will attack him [the party leader] first because maybe at the end of the day when we get inside he will take [give] me something."[21]

An interview with a branch secretary demonstrated that while jobs might be the most coveted form of patronage for party foot soldiers in Ghana, even the withholding of smaller resources can be enough to trigger conflict:

> The thing is, the thing is we are all working together. Though it's volunteer work we are doing. But those in national level, ok? They get paid for it. So let's assume you [an elite] are doing the same job, and at the end of the day you get paid. And instead of you [an elite] to dash me [an activist] something small,[22] I'm not saying you should share your salary with me, but at least something little to maybe... Let's say I'm the communicator, I'm in Osu here, I need to go to Teshie to communicate with the people there. I don't have transportation. Okay. But I still need to do a party job. So the little that you [an elite] can do to support me, [if you don't give it] that's what people get angry with it. Then they will go, they will be burning party offices and other stuff. Because the little that, they don't need much from you [the elite], but the little they are supposed to get to, they are not giving them. You understand? You would be mad! You would be mad. So that is how it happens.[23]

While I argue that the patronage bargain can break down and cause conflict when party elites fail to deliver jobs and other selective goods, my theory also suggests that the bargain can fail because activists perceive the appointment of specific elites to key government positions as a breach of the their arrangement with party elites and a threat to their prospects for receiving patronage in the future. In one interview, an NDC branch chairman (who

20. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019.

21. Ibid.

22. To "dash" is to give something extra as a tip or a gift.

23. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019.

was also formerly a constituency chairman) corroborated this claim by sharing an anecdote about an instance in his area when the youth locked up their party's local constituency office in response to the appointment of someone they did not know to a position central to the management of patronage flows:

> In this particular case, you see, there was a job for uh youth employment coordinator. The coordinator who was in the constituency was not from the constituency. And uh the youth feel that because he is not from the constituency he doesn't know them. They are those who are in the constituency and they know each other very well, and they have people who are even much more qualified than guy who is there, in that regard. So what they want to do is that they want somebody among them, who knows them, to be there. So when they come to the office they don't need to introduce themselves. [laughs] Are you getting what I'm saying? They don't need to introduce themselves, they don't need to uh uh 'where are you from' and all that stuff. No, no, no, no, no, no.[24]

The activists in this case were aggrieved because they worried that having an outsider in charge of youth employment would result in a breach of patronage flows, since the new coordinator would not know which youth deserved the employment opportunities that his position could offer. The branch chairman claimed that such conflict events were not simply due to activists' disappointment, that while conflict does serve as a mechanism for youth to "vent [their] frustration," it is also used to "send a message across [to leadership] to get what you want in that particular regard."[25] When I asked if such events work, the activist chuckled and replied, "Yes, and they did it and it worked... It got across and the person left [laughs]. The person was transferred to work in a regional office."[26]

Another activist, a former NDC branch chairman, corroborated this idea that the appointment of so-called outsiders to positions that control patronage can create conflict between activists and elites. He claimed that the appointment in Ashanti of an outsider to the position of national security liaison caused a conflict with local NPP activists.[27] Envisioning

24. Interview with NDC Branch Chairman, Accra, 2019

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Security jobs are important sources of patronage for party foot soldiers in Ghana, since they often do

himself as one of those aggrieved activists, he said,

> So, because he doesn't know how we, he does not understand our chemical, listen, our chemistry, body chemistry. But if he were, he was with us and we were all working at the same time moving from gutter to gutter as we would normally call it... Doing the gutter politics... he would understand that, 'oh, these boys really worked hard and brought the [party to power], so let me get them some jobs to do.'[28]

In drawing on this example, the activist demonstrated that party activists can view the appointment of outsiders as a betrayal by party elites of the patronage bargain.

As distinct as each of these examples might seem, they all provide evidence that conflict breaks out when activists perceive that party elites have failed, or will fail, to uphold the patronage bargain. These interviewees offer valuable insights, but in the next section I sample from a broader swath of activists. I draw on the reasons that activists were reported to give during actual conflict events and find that they corroborate my interviews and support my argument that failure to receive expected patronage drives activists to conflict with party leaders.

4.3.2 Reported Reasons for Intra-Party Conflict

Ghanaian activists often make statements about the reasons for their actions during intra-party conflict events, either directly to the press, or indirectly through chants and signs displayed at protests and office lock-ups. For every event in my newspaper data set, I coded the reported reasons given, and here I analyze these to corroborate the claims made in interviews: activists regularly engage in conflict with party elites because they believe that the latter have reneged on (or will renege on) the patronage bargain.

In many cases, activists directly referenced a failure to receive patronage as the source of their ire. For example, in 2014, angry NDC youth invaded the office of their party in

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not require advanced levels of education.

28. Interview with former NDC Branch Chairman, Accra, 2019.

Abuakwa South in the Eastern region of Ghana, stating that they did so because the party's constituency and regional executives had failed to provide them with jobs (Bampoe 2014). In 2015, NDC party activists in Nima, Accra who had stoned their MP claimed they were upset because of the hardships they continued to face in spite of having sacrificed for their party in the previous election (Gomda 2015). In another incident, an NDC activist in Tamale threatened the Aide to the Roads and Highways Minister by firing a gun into the air, stating that he and other NDC youth activists had been promised jobs in return for their service and that the party had failed to deliver (Kombat 2016). Nearly a year after the NPP took power in 2017, activists from the party locked up the office of the DCE for Sissala West in the Upper West region. The reason for the lockup according to reports on the ground was youth anger at the DCE for not having appointed their preferred candidate for coordinator of the Micro-finance and Small Loans Centre in the district (Kombat 2017). I counted at least 20 intra-party conflict events in which party activists explicitly cited a lack of patronage as the trigger for their actions[29]

In other cases, activists did not directly refer to patronage, but did use coded language that is often used to describe elites' delivery of patronage, such as claiming that an elite is bad for the party or will hurt the party's chances in upcoming elections. Such language was used by a group of NDC youth who protested their DCE in the streets of Nkwanta North and burned a fleet of government vehicles (F. Duodu 2015). In another event, NDC party activists brawled in the streets in Kumasi when a group of supporters protested the nomination for the DCE of Kwabre East, alleging that offering him another term would harm the NDC since he had not helped the party in the constituency (Alhassan 2013). Unfortunately without more detail such cases do not provide strong evidence, because activists' interests in the party's success are overdetermined: they want the party to succeed both because they believe in the party's platform and because they know that the best patronage rewards require their party

29. See also Nonor (2011), Boateng (2013), Anane (2017), Graphic (2011), Darko (2011), Zoure (2009), Alarti-Amoako (2010a), Awuah Jr. (2010), Zoure (2011a), Awuah Jr. (2011), Abubakar and Kubi (2011), Bruce-Quansah (2015), Gomda (2015), Dayee (2016), Kombat (2016), and Adu (2018).

to win power.

The reported reasons for intra-party conflict also support my argument that patronage fails because elites engage in graft, angering activists who perceive this behavior as a betrayal of the patronage bargain. In one telling example, NDC activists from a group calling themselves the Interim Constituency Executive Committee demanded the removal of the DCE for Ada East in Greater Accra, claiming that he had used Assembly funds to provide vehicles for his cronies and relatives at the expense of the district (Kubi 2013). In another case in the NDC, party activists chased their constituency executives from the party's office in Atebubu Amantin and locked the offices up. They then released a statement to the press asserting that the party executives had exploited the resources of the municipality and contracts there for their own personal gain, instead of supporting the party activists in the area (Dayee 2016). In a similar event, the Nima Boys, a group of NDC activists in Brong Ahafo, stormed the home of the MCE for Berekum and ransacked the place, then threatened to disrupt the upcoming Independence Day parade. The reason, they claimed in a statement targeted at the president, was that the MCE had used government money to enrich himself, and in doing so neglected the NDC youth in the area (Alarti-Amoako 2010b).

Party activists were also quick to point out the corruption of other government officials. NDC youth activists in Wenchi locked up the offices of the National Youth Employment Programme, protested in the streets, and presented a petition to the Municipal Coordinating Director, demanding that it be sent to the president. In the petition they claimed that the coordinator of the program had sold employment forms to prospective beneficiaries rather than offering the available jobs to deserving youth, and demanded the removal of the MCE for covering up these corrupt practices (Alarti-Amoako 2010a). In a similar event, hundreds of NDC youth protested in the streets of Kadjebi in the Volta region, vandalized the district assembly, and attempted to burn it down. They claimed that their DCE had been following improper procedures to award contracts to his girlfriend and that he had embezzled funds meant for the district (Donkor 2010).

4.3.3 Demands Made during Intra-Party Conflict

Demands made by disaffected activists provide even more evidence for my claim that intra-party conflict results from a breakdown of the patronage bargain. Party supporters regularly make demands of party elites during conflict, and the content of these appeals can help us understand the goals activists hope to achieve by engaging with party higher-ups. In this section I analyze the reported demands of party activists and find that while the content of these demands vary widely, party supporters do regularly demand patronage, both directly and indirectly.

In my data on Ghanaian intra-party conflict, I find that perpetrators made demands of party elites in 79.37% of cases. Of course there is a substantial amount of variation in the content of these demands, so for every conflict event I coded the type of demand being made by perpetrators in the event. These calls for elite action spanned a wide range, and the proportions of demands made by type are shown in Figure 4.1.[30] How well do these results support my theory?

Explicit Demands for Patronage

The first two categories directly capture demands for patronage, and while only 3.93% of demands were direct appeals for payment that was owed, 12.66% of demands made were for patronage more generally. Combining the two, I find that nearly 17% of demands made by activists during intra-party conflict were direct appeals for patronage. While this is nothing to scoff at, my theory expects substantially more demands to be related to patronage. I posit that one reason for such a low proportion of direct demands for patronage is that activists wisely mask such demands as calls to remove the individuals responsible for allocating selective goods. Such appeals come across publicly not as selfish requests for material rewards,

30. In some cases multiple demands were made by perpetrators. I coded both the primary and secondary demands when relevant. For this figure and the subsequent analysis I pooled primary and secondary demand types before calculating proportions.

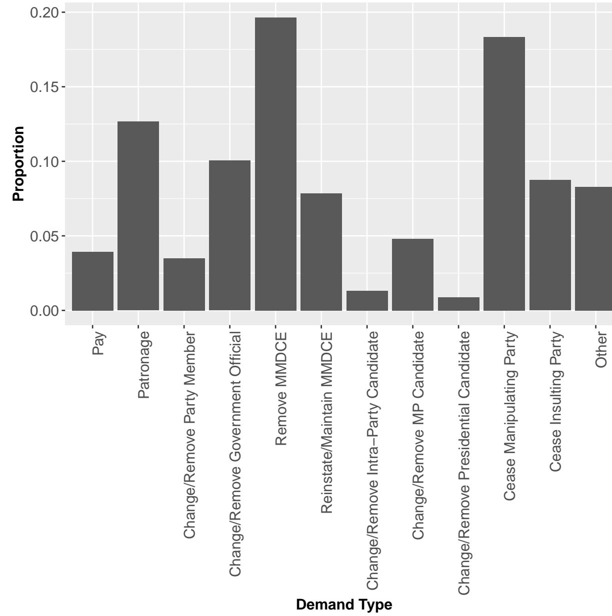

Figure 4.1: Demands Made during Intra-Party Conflict

but rather as selfless appeals to improve the party's standing and chances at maintaining power, even if ultimately they would lead to improvements in the supply of patronage for the concerned activists.

Indirect Appeals for Patronage

Three types of activist demands are most likely to be indirect appeals for patronage, and were commonly made during intra-party conflict events. First, 10.04% of demands were requests for elites to change or remove individuals from their position as officials in government offices. At the highest level these included demands to remove individuals from their position as Minister, and at the lowest level these were often demands to remove officials in offices that provide and manage high-value patronage goods, such as jobs, training programs, and contracts which create employment opportunities. Second, the most popular demand was the removal of an MMDCE or other member of the MMDA from his or her position in local government, at 19.65% of all demands made during intra-party conflict. The opposite demand, to reinstate or maintain an MMDCE in office, was made 7.86% of the time.

The challenge is that while administrators and local government leaders do play a key role in distributing patronage,[31] they have a host of other legitimate duties which might drive party activists to seek their removal (or, in some cases, to demand their reinstatement). To bring more clarity to the content of these demands, I revisit the reasons given by perpetrators for conflict, drawing on accounts of events in which these demands were made to show that in many cases (though not all) activists demand that these leaders be removed *because* they have failed to deliver patronage.

First, out of 23 total instances of demands to remove a government official, only four cases were clearly unrelated to patronage. In eight cases perpetrators cited patronage or selective rewards as a reason for demanding that the official be removed. In the remaining 11 cases perpetrators used language which made it difficult to decipher whether patronage was a motivating factor in their demand to remove a government official. In this last category, one major reason given by perpetrators for the conflict event was that the targeted official was not from the area.[32] Other unclear language included claims that the official was not doing enough to develop the district,[33] and that the official was mismanaging their responsibilities.[34]

When it came to demands to remove MMDCEs or other members of Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies, a similar pattern held. Out of 45 total cases wherein such a demand was made, in only five did the reasons given by perpetrators indicate nothing related to patronage. Perpetrators explicitly cited some form of patronage as a reason for their demand to remove MMDA members in 16 of 45 cases, and in the remaining 24 cases they used imprecise or coded language that could be innocuous, but could also mask an underlying

31. I cover the patronage roles of local government administrators and members of the MMDAs in more detail later when I discuss the targets of intra-party conflict.

32. Examples of this claim can be found in Amenuveve (2015), citifmonline (2017), and Nyarko-Yirenkyi (2017).

33. See Kwawukume (2011).

34. This reason was given by perpetrators targeting the CEO of the Tamale Teaching Hospital. See Abdul-Majeed (2018).

disappointment in the level of patronage being distributed by the MMDA. When perpetrators demanded the removal of MMDA members, common justifications clearly linked to patronage included: withholding jobs or the granting of jobs and contracts to members of an opposing party;[35] using government resources to enrich themselves at the expense of party activists;[36] and not including the youth in decision making on the awarding of local jobs and contracts.[37] Common examples of reasons that could be rooted in grievances related to the breakdown of the patronage bargain, but are couched in more legitimate terms, include claims that the MMDCE was corrupt,[38] that the MMDCE was not from the area,[39] that they were not helping development in the district,[40] and that they were hurting the party's reputation and chances for reelection.[41] Each of these reasons could be taken at an altruistic face value, but each also has the potential to mask an underlying grievance rooted in unmet expectations of patronage rewards. Perpetrators may cite corruption because they know it is wrong, but also because when MMDCEs skim off the top they withhold resources to which activists feel entitled. MMDCEs from outside the area may be unfit to serve because they lack the specialized knowledge needed to effectively develop the district, but they also don't have existing relationships with the local political actors needed to effectively distribute patronage. Even defending the reputation of the party can serve a double purpose, since activists stand to receive valuable patronage only so long as their party continues to win and hold power.

Finally, in the 18 cases in which activists demanded that MMDCEs remain in office or be reinstated once they were removed, only some reasons given could be reasonably linked

35. See Gyebi (2009), Alhassan (2010), Nonor (2011), and Opoku (2015b).

36. See Alarti-Amoako (2010a), Alarti-Amoako (2010b), Opoku (2015b), and Kombat (2017).

37. See Freiku (2013) and Zoure (2009).

38. See Donkor (2010), Bruce-Quansah (2011), Kubi (2013), F. Duodu (2013), and Adu (2015).

39. See S. Duodu (2017) and 3news (2017a).

40. See Kwawukume (2011), Bruce-Quansah (2011), Zoure (2013), F. Duodu (2015), Opoku (2015a).

41. See Alhassan (2013), Zoure (2011c), Zoure (2013), F. Duodu (2015), Adu (2015), Opoku (2015a), 3news (2017b).

to patronage. In 11 cases the reasons given were not linked in any clear way to selective incentives, while in only 7 such cases did perpetrators use language that could even be tied to patronage, generally matching the tone when demands were made to possibly remove MMDCEs, for example claiming that the DCE was good for the party in the area,[42] or that the DCE was not approved because other Assembly members were corrupt.[43] In no case did perpetrators explicitly cite patronage as a reason to keep or return an MMDCE to office.

In sum, upon closer inspection it is clear that many demands to remove government officials and members of local governing bodies were essentially demands for patronage. There is less support for considering demands to keep or return MMDCEs to office to be appeals for patronage. Still, activists appear to regularly demand patronage indirectly in Ghana by appealing to party elites to remove government officials and members of their Metropolitan, Municipal, or District Assembly.

Demands Related to Primaries

Contrary to the expectations of the prevailing literature, only a small proportion of demands were direct calls to change or remove an individual contesting an intra-party election (1.31%), a parliamentary primary (4.80%), or a presidential primary (0.87%). However, perpetrators did regularly call for the targets of intra-party conflict to stop meddling in and manipulating intra-party affairs (18.34%). Generally such demands were made by local party activists and contestants in either intra-party elections or party primaries. These activists were upset because party elites were allegedly manipulating candidacy lists and disenfranchising certain candidates.[44] Even if we assumed that most demands for a halt to intra-party manipulation were linked to either primaries or local elections for branch positions, then only just over a quarter of all demands made were linked to factionalism.

42. See Zoure (2010) and Chronicle (2016).

43. See Quansah (2013) and Agbey (2016).

44. For example, see Adams (2018).

Other Types of Demands

The remaining two categories are demands that someone stop publicly insulting or damaging the reputation of the party (8.73%), and a residual category for all other cases (8.3%).

In all, the demands made by perpetrators in Ghanaian intra-party conflict provide additional support for my theory. Nearly half of all demands made by activists were either direct appeals for patronage, or demands to remove or retain in office individuals who control the flow of patronage resources at the local level. On the other hand, even a generous interpretation of the results would find that only just over one quarter of activists' demands were related to primaries or factionalism.

4.4 Bargain Breakdown and Intra-Party Conflict: Indirect Evidence

Up to this point I have presented direct evidence that intra-party conflict results from a breakdown in the patronage bargain between party activists and party elites. But my theory suggests additional expectations which differ from those that arise from the dominant framework emphasizing factionalism as a source of party conflict. In the remainder of this chapter I contrast hypotheses from my theory with some general predictions of factional models, presenting indirect evidence linking intra-party conflict to patronage breakdowns. First, I analyze the timing of conflict within Ghanaian political parties, showing that such conflict is likely to occur well after elections are over, in contrast with the factional model which suggests that intra-party coercion should peak during intra-party contests prior to general elections. Second, I shift focus to the location of intra-party conflict, showing that it is not only concentrated in areas where factional fault-lines occur but rather in areas where patronage is more likely to be lacking. Finally I present evidence on the targets of intra-party conflict, demonstrating that party activists regularly target political elites that maintain control over patronage, not only the heads of rival factions.

4.4.1 The Timing of Intra Party-Conflict

My theory makes predictions distinct from those in the existing literature on *when* conflict is likely to occur within African political parties. I argue that conflict breaks out when elites renege on the patronage bargain, which necessarily occurs *after* elections have been completed and the new government has taken power. Factional theories of intra-party conflict suggest instead that conflict within political parties should happen *prior* to general elections, during intra-party leadership elections and party primaries when contests between competing party blocs shake out. In this section I analyze the timing of intra-party conflict events in Ghana and find that while Ghanaian parties do experience their fair share of conflict during internal elections and primaries, a great deal of intra-party conflict in the country occurs well after the polls have closed.

Contrasting Hypotheses on Timing

The existing literature on factionalism and intra-party conflict suggests that conflict events should occur during party primaries or other intra-party contests that determine leadership and power in the party (Goldring and Wahman 2018; Reeder and Seeberg 2018). In Ghana, general elections for Members of Parliament and the president are held simultaneously every four years. Primaries in advance of these elections have grown increasingly more common,[45] and in the period under study were held by both major parties, though not at fixed times. Regardless, factionalist theories claim that intra-party conflict should spike during these nomination contests.

A factionalism approach also suggests that internal party leadership elections should bring about a rise in the number of intra-party conflict events, since they determine leadership of the party at the regional and national level, and are thus another important arena in which competition between competing partly blocs plays out. However, there is little regularity to

45. On the increase in party primaries in Ghana, see Ichino and Nathan (2012).

the holding of such elections in Ghana, so evaluating whether intra-party conflict aligns with them in a systematic way is impossible.

My theory, on the other hand, argues that intra-party conflict emerges when the patronage bargain breaks down. Unfortunately predicting or measuring the exact timing of all such breakdowns is impossible, but in the broadest sense my theory predicts that intra-party conflict should occur *after* national elections take place. Only after the votes of inter-party contests have been counted and winners have taken office can party activists hope to begin receiving promised rewards. And only after they fail to receive such patronage does my theory predict conflict will break out. In Ghana, the inauguration of the victorious presidential candidate occurs on January 7, one month after the national election. If my theory is correct, than intra-party conflict events should occur after January 7 2009, 2013, and 2017.

Timing: Findings from Ghana

To evaluate these hypotheses, in Figure 4.2 I plot counts of all intra-party conflict events over time, grouped by month and year. Solid vertical lines indicate the inauguration dates of new governments in January 2009, 2013, and 2017 following national elections for the president and parliament in December 2008, 2012, and 2016. It is difficult to pin down precise dates for primaries for MPs and presidential candidates, because they were not held regularly during the period under study. Rather, nominations for candidates occurred during party congresses, with presidential candidates generally being nominated approximately one year prior to elections. Dashed lines are depicted one year prior to each national election (in December 2007, 2011, and 2015) to approximate when primaries would generally have been held.

My theory expects intra-party conflict to occur *after the solid lines*, when general elections have concluded, victorious party members have taken their seats in the new government, and elites must uphold the patronage bargain or suffer the consequences. Factionalist approaches, on the other hand, expect conflict to peak *around the dashed lines*, when competition within

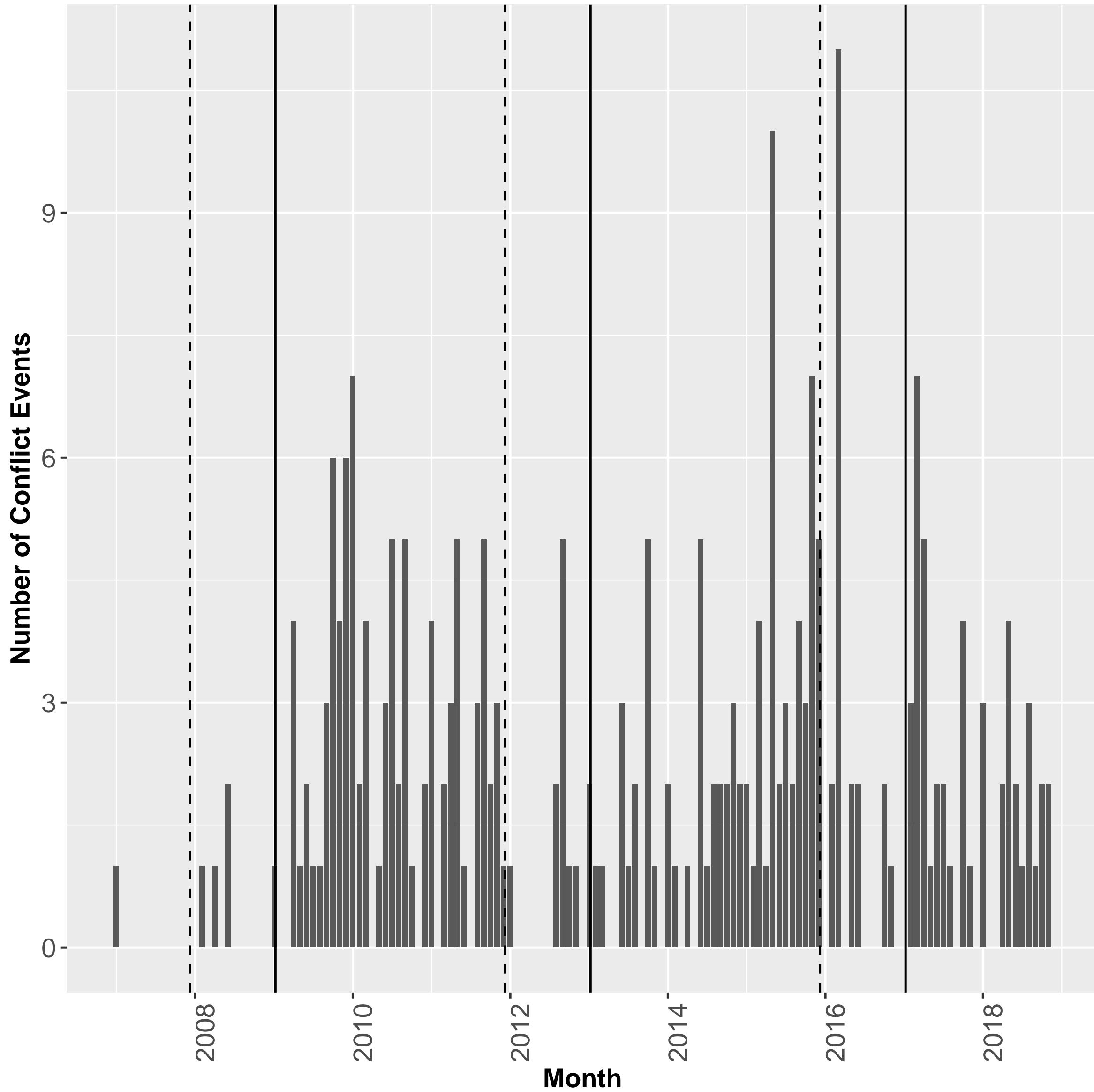

Figure 4.2: Counts of Intra-Party Conflict Events over Time

the party over nominations is at its highest and party blocs struggle for control.

Figure 4.2 appears to provide some support for both arguments. First, there is some clustering of cases before and after the dashed lines in December 2011 and December 2016, which is approximately when primaries would have been held. There are very few cases of intra-party conflict just after December 2007, though unfortunately the data set begins in January 2008, so the only events that could appear in or before December 2007 would be those still covered in the newspaper a month later.

Importantly for my theory, there are a great number of intra-party conflict events that take place after the three inauguration dates in the data. There is a substantial spike in cases in the months following the 2009 turnover in power from the NPP to John Atta Mills' NDC, which continues through early 2010. There is also a small increase in conflict events following the 2013 inauguration (when the NDC and Mills won a second term), and another large spike in cases following the 2016 election, in which Nana Akufo-Addo and the NPP took back control of the presidency and parliament. In addition, there are a substantial number of cases peppered throughout, indicating that intra-party conflict persists long after elections, a phenomenon which aligns with the expectations of my theory but not dominant theories grounded in factionalism.

Because the specific timing of primaries was difficult to generalize, for every event in the data I also explicitly coded whether the incident took place during, or in relation to, a party primary or internal leadership election. I combine these into one variable which captures whether an event was related to any intra-party contests over nominations. 69% of events could not in any way be linked to the nomination of a candidate, either to run as an MP, as the president, or to some leadership position in the party. 31% of events in the data were related to nominations, though not all of these events necessarily occurred during party congresses.

Unsurprisingly, data from Ghana support what the literature has shown for Sub-Saharan Africa more broadly: primaries and other nomination contests are one important source of conflict and violence within political parties. But, as the data on the timing of conflict within Ghana's political parties shows, a substantial amount of violence also occurs when my patronage-centric approach expects, after new governments have taken power and the spoils of the state are available to be distributed (or not). This supports my claim that we cannot rely on factionalism alone to explain the entirety of African intra-party conflict.

4.4.2 The Location of Intra-Party Conflict

Where does intra-party conflict occur? According to my theory, intra-party conflict should break out where the patronage bargain has failed. Factionalism, on the other hand, suggests that party members should fight where factional conflicts are salient. To evaluate these competing claims I collected data on the division of districts in Ghana, a process which created additional patronage flows and allows me to approximate differences in the level of patronage available across districts.

Contrasting Hypotheses on Location

If factional theories of intra-party conflict are to be believed, then we should see disputes arising where horizontal divides are salient, or at the sites of competitive intra-party elections. My theory predicts instead that intra-party conflict should emerge where elites fail to deliver sufficient patronage.

Location: Findings from Ghana

Unfortunately, systematically measuring the location of breakdowns in patronage supply is a challenging task. Patronage is disguised and opaque by its nature. While it is well known to exist, parties understandably do not keep physical records of what is owed to whom, or which selective incentives have been distributed in a particular area. Instead of attempting to approximate some level of patronage in every district, I leverage the splitting of Ghanaian districts to compare locations with higher than expected patronage to others.

The Ghanaian government has expanded the number of districts in the country several times since the return to multiparty politics. During the time period covered in my data the total number of districts was increased from 170 to 216, and in order to create new districts, existing ones had to be divided. In those districts that were split, the division effectively doubled the supply of patronage goods by creating twice as many MMDAs and,

as such, twice as much money flowing from the central government in the form of District Assembly Common Funds. These increased resources provided even more opportunities for jobs and other selective incentives in areas which previously only received one line of central government funding. As such, my theory expects that these split districts should experience fewer conflict events compared to others that were not divided, since they should be less prone to the shortfalls that lead elites to renege on the patronage bargain.

I created unique identifiers for every district in Ghana, as well as a variable to identify which districts were the result of a split in the 2008 or 2012 expansions, i.e. which districts were "children" of a "parent" district. Sometimes when districts were divided, one of the new districts received the same name as its parent district, but in these cases the child district still received a new unique identifier. Every event in the data was assigned one of these unique identifiers, allowing me to determine which events occurred in split districts, and which occurred in districts that had not been divided.

In total, only 89 (35.32%) conflict events occurred in districts that had been born from the division of another district during the 2008 or 2012 split, whereas 163 (64.68%) conflict events occurred in districts that were never split. However, it seems reasonable to expect that the increase in patronage flows to an area will have the strongest suppressing effect on the likelihood of conflict in the years immediately following the splitting of a district. Focusing on *recently* split districts, the effect on the likelihood of conflict appears to be greater.[46] Only 19.05% of all conflict events occurred in recently divided districts, while just over 80% of Ghanaian intra-party conflict occurred in districts that had not been divided in the last several years.

While far from ideal, this roughly corresponds with my theory's expectations regarding the location of intra-party conflict. Places where the patronage supply increased as new

46. I define an event as happening in a recently split district if it occurred in a split district within one to three years of the division that created the district (2009-2011 for districts created in the 2008 split, 2013-2015 in districts born during the 2012 split). This provides ample time to capture potential intra-party conflict events after district divisions without butting up against the next electoral cycle.

funding flowed in from the central government were less likely to experience intra-party conflict than those where the flow or resources did not change. Without better data on the locations of salient factional schisms it is difficult to evaluate my approach against factionalist theories. Fortunately I collected a substantial amount of data on the targets of intra-party conflict, which provides yet more indirect evidence for my theory.

4.4.3 Targets of Intra-Party Conflict

Whom do activists target during intra-party conflict? The factionalism approach suggests that party supporters should focus their ire on members of rival factions, either targeting members of the strongest competitors in hopes of weakening their opponents, or targeting supporters of competing factions across ideological, religious, or ethnic schisms irrespective of the rival faction's relative power. My theory predicts, instead, that party supporters should target those elites who control access to patronage. In Ghana, patronage flows from the central government to local activists primarily through two channels: the local government offices of the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs); and Members of Parliament. I discuss the predictions from each model in turn, and then analyze data on the targets of Ghanaian intra-party conflict to support my claim that patronage is a more important source of conflict than factionalism within African political parties. I find evidence that perpetrators do sometimes target elites and non-elites who could be members of rival factions. However, 72.62% of cases were not tied to factionalism, and in these cases perpetrators were more likely to directly target elites who control the supply of patronage resources.

Contrasting Hypotheses on Targets

The prevailing approach to intra-party conflict emphasizes the importance of factionalism, and I posit that if horizontal divisions within the party are indeed the cause of intra-party conflict, then two types of targets should dominate. First, if conflict stems from factional

disputes then we should expect perpetrators to target supporters and leaders of rival factions, particularly those which are competitors within the distribution of factional power. Perpetrators might target dominant factions at the national level in hopes of shifting the balance of power in the party as a whole, or they might instead focus on rivals who are weaker overall, but dominate locally. In any case, this hypothesis captures the general claim that conflict within African parties is ultimately about factional competition for power. Second, if factionalism is grounded in salient social, ethnic, or religious cleavages then we might expect perpetrators to target supporters and leaders in camps across the relevant divide, even if those factions are not powerful political competitors. This hypothesis emphasizes the content of party factions over their relative position in the power structure.

Factions in Ghana share similar characteristics to those in many African multi-party systems. The predominance of so-called Big Man politics creates spheres of power centered on dominant personalities within political parties which could provoke conflict as these power blocs vie for control.[47] Ghana also shares similar geographical divides with many of its West African neighbors that pit a more developed and urbanized South against a more rural and less developed North. Religious factions are not as strong as elsewhere, but ethnic divisions matter in contemporary Ghanaian politics, as they do in much of the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. While broader ethnic affiliations coalesce around different parties and are thus more likely related to inter-party conflict,[48] local disputes over chieftaincy can spill over into democratic politics and could provide flash points for conflict within Ghanaian parties.

My patronage-centric theory instead implies that the targets of intra-party conflict should be party elites who control access to the flow of patronage resources from the state down to local activists. In the previous section I argued that MMDAs are central to the allocation of selective incentives to party supporters. Who precisely should be targeted if party activists

47. See Bob-Milliar (2012a) and Ashindorbe and Danjibo (2019).

48. In general the NPP draws strong support from the Akan, while the NDC is supported by the Ewe and many of the Muslim groups in the north. However, these are not as strong as ethnic-party associations elsewhere, and differences in local ethnic geography can incentivize individuals to support a different party from their co-ethnics (Ichino and Nathan 2013; Nathan 2016).

are disaffected with the distribution of patronage from their local Assembly? Members of the District Assemblies in Ghana are selected through a mix of elections and appointments, and substantial power rests in the hands of the leaders of the Assemblies, The Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs). Importantly, MMDCEs are appointed *directly* by the president, as are 30% of the Assembly members. The remaining 70% of Assembly members are elected directly by voters in the district through elections in which political parties are forbidden from participating by Article 55(3) of the 1993 Constitution of the Fourth Republic.

From a strategic perspective, then, we should expect activists seeking a change in local patronage policies to primarily target MMDCEs. First, MMDCEs are the elites deemed responsible for the distribution of expected patronage, and they are the actors capable of manifesting change in the flow of patronage resources. Second, the fact that they are directly appointed by the president means that threats by activists against the MMDCE are more likely to facilitate real change: they are immediately replaceable by the president, so activists should know that if coercion does not succeed in changing the behavior of MMDCEs, it might still lead to the appointment by the president of a new Executive more amenable to their demands.

The theory could also be supported by Ghanaian Members of Parliament being targeted during intra-party conflict. For one, MPs have a small amount of financial resources allocated to them by the central government, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), that they can direct toward the support of projects in their districts (Debrah 2016, 155; Lindberg 2003; Ofosu 2019). These funds are somewhat limited, however, and local government officials regularly interfere in the disbursement of CDFs at the district level (Debrah 2016, 155-156). In spite of these limitations, MPs can also distribute patronage to activists by leveraging their political power, writing letters of recommendation and helping individuals get access to training programs which serve as roadblocks on the path to job access for hopeful party

supporters.[49]

Targets: Findings from Ghana

I asked a branch secretary to describe whom party foot soldiers would target if they were aggrieved about not getting jobs, specifically if they would try to work through the MP to resolve such a dispute. He claimed that party activists would not target the MP, but rather MMDCEs who provide a more direct line to the president:

> Yes, they would rather go through the, not the MP. They mostly use the MCE and then the DCEs, yeah, to get to the president and then the president will give them position. Because president cannot know everybody in the party, and president will not know who helped the party most. Through someone, through people who are closer to the president they will refer you, say 'Oh this man is from here, he helped the party a lot, he did this, he did that,' and the government, the president will give appointment, at the end of the day to get something from what he spent on the party. That is how it happens.[50]

To more systematically test these claims I collected data on the targets of intra-party conflict events in Ghana from 2008 through 2018. For every event I coded who the primary and secondary targets of the event were, as well as the targets' occupations and positions within the party hierarchy. An analysis of these data shows that perpetrators in Ghana overwhelmingly targeted party elites, in many cases those who directly control access to patronage.

Party elites made up 80.47% of targets in the intra-party conflict events I studied from 2008 through 2018, whereas party activists were only targeted 19.53% of the time. Breaking down the distribution of elite level targets by occupation, I find that MMDCEs were targeted

49. For more on letters of recommendation from Members of Parliament as a form of patronage in Ghana, see Bob-Milliar (2014, 133).

50. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019. This interviewee's comments point to the importance of the president and his appointees in managing patronage in contemporary African multiparty systems. This centralization of power and clientelism around the president was observed by van de Walle (2003, 313), though I would argue that the findings in this dissertation run counter to his claim that "it is more useful to think of clientelistic politics as constituting primarily a mechanism for accommodation and integration of a fairly narrow political elite than as a form of mass party patronage."

18.37% of the time, while MPs were the focus of only 4.42% of events. Perpetrators also focused their ire on additional bureaucrats within the MMDAs (4.08%) and other local government offices (5.78%). Constituency, regional, and national level party executives were targeted more than any other group at 40.14%.[51] The overall distribution of targets in Ghanaian intra-party conflict is summarized in Figure 4.3.

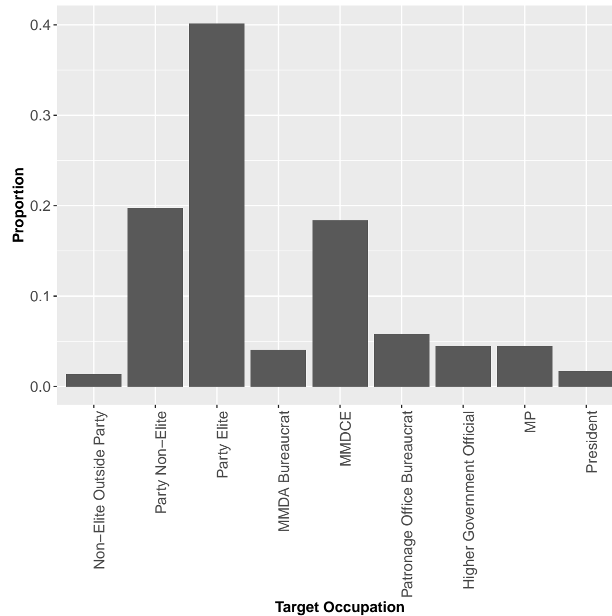

Figure 4.3: Targets of Intra-Party Conflict

How well do these results support my theory? On the one hand, MPs, MMDCEs, and other elites responsible for the distribution of patronage were common targets of intra-party conflict in Ghana, as my theory expects. On the other hand, it is possible that MMDCEs, MPs, and especially local constituency elites are targeted not because they control access to patronage, but instead because they are considered by perpetrators to be leaders of rival factions. Additionally, 19.73% of targets were non-elites who play little to no role in the distribution of patronage, something which my theory does not expect.

To address these concerns, I bring in data on factionalism. For every event, I coded

51. These executives include positions such as chairman/chairwoman, secretary, youth organizer, women's organizer, etc. The number reported here only includes executives at the constituency level and above. I consider individuals holding these positions at the branch level (immediately below the constituency level) to be activists, not party elites.

whether the conflict at stake was related to factionalism.[52] I find that who gets targeted does depend on factionalism, but in ways consistent with my theory, as shown in Figure 4.4.[53] When an event is tied to factional conflict, perpetrators target local party elites 40.79% of the time and only target MMDCEs 10.53% of the time. On top of that, in factional conflict perpetrators target party non-elites (activists and other supporters) in 42.11% of cases, more than any other group. But when events are not related to factionalism, the proportion of the time that MMDCEs are targeted is higher at 21.10% and perpetrators target more actors involved in patronage distribution, such as bureaucrats in offices that provide patronage (7.80% of non-factional cases) and other members of MMDAs (5.50% of non-factional cases). During non-factional conflict perpetrators are also far less likely to target non-elites in the party (11.93%) than they are during factional conflict, wherein non-elites are targeted more than any other group (42.11% of targets).

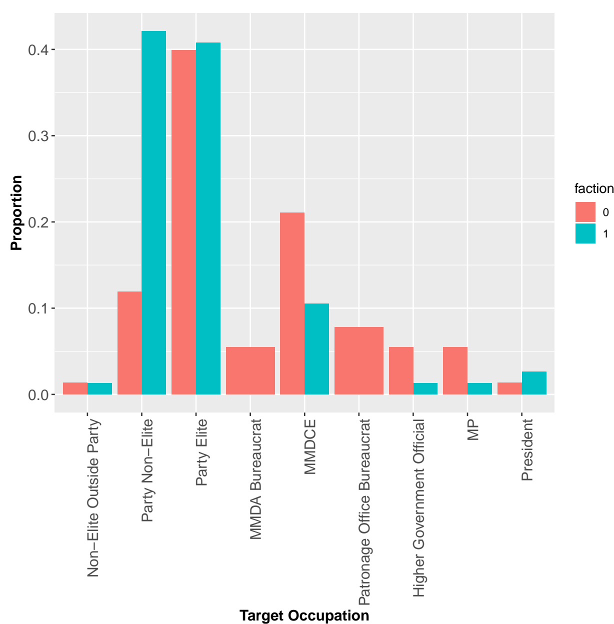

Figure 4.4: Targets of Intra-Party Conflict Sorted by Factionalism

52. I coded as 1 any event that was explicitly reported as involving conflict between rivals or competing factions or groups. Many reports also included references to histories of conflict between perpetrators and targets, and whenever such information was provided I also coded the event as involving factional conflict.

53. A Fisher's exact test of independence between the factionalism dummy variable and target occupation suggests that the two are significantly related, with a two-tailed p-value of 2.06×10^{-7}. I use a Fisher's exact test because the sample is relatively small and numerous cells have a frequency count of less than 5.

These findings provide evidence to support both factionalist approaches and my own patronage-centric theory. In Ghana the targets of factional conflict were overwhelmingly made up of party-non elites and non-governmental party elites. In many cases targets were rival local elites and their supporters, as predicted by the personalistic approach to party factions described by Bob-Milliar (2012a).

In the many cases that were not factional in nature, however, the shift in the targeting profile provides strong support for my theory that conflict was caused by a breakdown in the patronage bargain. Non-factional conflict events included new types of targets in the form of MMDA bureaucrats and other government officials staffing the offices that provide patronage. Additionally, MMDCEs were targeted about twice as frequently in non-factional conflict events as they were in events tied to horizontal disputes. And lastly, party non-elites were far less likely to be targeted when intra-party conflict was not related to factionalism.

The data on targeting in Ghana does not reject existing accounts that foreground horizontal disputes between rival factions as the source of intra-party conflict. But my analysis of the targets of intra-party conflict does suggest that a substantial amount of intra-party conflict is non-factional in nature, and that the individuals who provide patronage, or who fail to do so, are at the center of these conflicts.

The indirect evidence that I presented in this section all points to the same two conclusions. First, factional conflicts are a part of Ghanaian political life, but they do not account for all, or even most, of the fighting that occurs within the NDC and NPP. Second, within that large set of cases that factionalism cannot explain, there are strong indications to support my argument that conflict arises when the patronage bargain fails. An analysis of the timing of intra-party conflict shows that the period following elections can be as heated as the period before. Data on the division of districts suggests that when patronage flows increase, conflict is far less likely, as my theory expects. And data on the targets of intra-party conflict shows that the focus of non-factional conflict is often on those elites who manage the purse strings of patronage.

4.5 Exit Options in the Ghanaian Two-Party System

In this final section I provide some limited evidence to support my claims about the exit options available to disaffected activists in Ghana, and how they might suppress the emergence of intra-party conflict. I posited that the effect of bargain breakdown might be moderated in African parties by two variables: the ethnic composition of parties, and the competitiveness of parties. First, I argue that in contexts where ethnicity is at most only loosely tied to party affiliation and political parties are accepting of members of all ethnic groups, disaffected activists can switch parties instead of entering into conflict with elites in their current party. When ethnic groups are more closely aligned with particular parties and parties are suspicious and exclusionary of outsiders, party switching is no longer a viable fallback and activists are more likely to resort to conflict within their own party to resolve patronage disputes. Similarly, the competitiveness of political parties varies both across and within party systems. Activists operating in party strongholds have little reason to switch parties when the patronage bargain fails because they stand even less chance of obtaining patronage by supporting a party that is destined to lose in future elections. By this logic, intra-party conflict should be even more likely in party strongholds among activists supporting the dominant party.

4.5.1 Ethnic Composition of Parties

Because the ethnic composition of parties typically varies across party systems but not within them, it is difficult to evaluate its effects with a sub-national study like this one. While Ghana's political parties do have general alignments with some of the bigger ethnic groups, they are not exclusionary, and they aim to be broader-based and welcoming of all supporters.[54] In this section I draw on some interview evidence to show that ethnicity is not

54. Elischer (2013, 175-178) classifies both the NDC and the NPP as ethnic catch-all parties from the 2000 election onward, and argues that both seek to appeal to broad-based, nationwide forces without appeal to ethnicity to entice voters.

a barrier to party membership and activism in Ghana. While this suggests that activists in Ghana should be more capable of party switching than supporters in places with ethnic alliance parties, I also present evidence from one interview that points to another factor not present in my theory, local knowledge, which can constrain activists from easily flip-flopping to gain the benefits of patronage.

First, ethnicity was generally not a topic raised by party activists when I asked them why they supported a particular party. In fact, as a youth organizer told me, "Yeah for activists I want everybody to join me, if you are political I want you to join us, I will convince you."[55] When I asked him if he would recruit anyone regardless of ethnicity, he responded, "Anybody, yeah."[56]

To get a handle on the role of ethnicity in party switching, I asked a branch secretary if it is more difficult to switch parties for an activist who is an Ewe, the ethnic group from which the NDC's founder J.J. Rawlings hailed and which generally supports the NDC. He responded as follows:

> Um the thing is, every party has its own stronghold where it gets more votes from. So let's assuming that we know that as for the Ashanti, they are for NPP. I'm an Ewe. And I going to be the position as a secretary in the NPP. In this case, what they will do is, they will follow your roots or they will go back to your constituency and be asking people, Do you know this guy? Do you know the party he supports? They will find out everything before, yes. Yes, NPP, fine, then they will give you the position, you understand. So they will do the cross-check.[57]

This activist raises two important points. First, while there may be some suspicion for members of certain ethnic groups, and switching might initially be difficult, if one establishes a history of voting for and supporting the other party, they can be accepted and even win official positions in the other party in the future. Second, this activist hints at an important

55. Interview with NDC Youth Organizer, Accra, 2019.

56. Ibid.

57. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019.

factor that was omitted from my theory that is potentially an even stronger moderator: local knowledge.

Party politics, particularly at the local level, is a small world. Activists know who in their area supports which party, and in fact activists are mobilized explicitly because they can provide local knowledge to improve the party's chances at obtaining votes in their area. As one branch chairman told me, party youth in the area know each other well: "the youth organizer organize all the youth within the constituency, will know each other, will know each other within the community."[58] A branch youth organizer confirmed this, claiming, "We have, we know our party members, those affiliated to the party, we know them. Particular my area, I know these boys, these people, their affiliation to the party, to this party, the great NDC, and we know those who are in the NPP."[59] And a branch secretary agreed, claiming in our discussion about the recruitment of polling station agents, "You see it's like, we know ourselves already. You understand. So when that time comes like, we are going to do a national election. What we do is we select people from the branch then we take them to training places."[60]

This local knowledge could be a significant constraint on party-switching once the patronage bargain has broken, since activists competing over patronage opportunities after elections are over will know who fought for the party and who is attempting to swoop in and receive selective incentives without having earned them. This same dynamic prevented activists from the losing party in Sierra Leone from benefiting from patronage if they tried to switch parties after the election, even though flip-flopping was a relatively common practice before the election (Christensen and Utas 2008, 537-538).

58. Interview with NDC Branch Chairman, Accra, 2019.

59. Interview with NDC Branch Youth Organizer, Accra, 2019.

60. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019.

4.5.2 Competitiveness of Parties

My theory also argues that variation in the competitiveness of parties can moderate the effect of breakdowns in the patronage bargain. Even if activists can overcome ethnic-based constraints and the local knowledge that might prevent them from obtaining patronage by flip-flopping parties, they might still not perceive exit as a viable option if the other parties in their area do not stand a chance at winning future elections. Activists operating in highly competitive districts should be freer to choose which party to support, knowing that electoral victory and a chance at the resulting rewards are possible even in a party that lost the previous election. In party strongholds, activists have a good idea about which party will win the next election, and if they are motivated by the prospect of patronage, joining the perennially losing party is less attractive.

I evaluate this claim through an analysis of conflict event data. It is possible get a rough estimate of the effect of party competitiveness on intra-party conflict by comparing the proportion of events that actually occurred in a given region with some baseline expectation. I use as a baseline the proportion of events we would expect in each region if conflict were distributed evenly by population.

For every event in the data, I coded the district and region where it occurred. I use this information to get the proportion of conflict events occurring in each of Ghana's ten regions during the period under study. For a baseline, I use population data from Ghana's 2010 census, which was the final census conducted prior to the creation of new regions.[61] Figure 4.5 depicts the proportion of conflict events by region, while Figure 4.6 presents the proportional population of each region. If competitiveness of parties moderates the effect of patronage bargain failures on the likelihood of conflict, then Ashanti, Volta, and the Northern region should all experience more conflict than would be predicted based on population alone, since these are the major strongholds of the two dominant parties (Ashanti for the NPP, Volta and Northern for the NDC).

61. Regional population data come from the final report of the 2010 census in Ghana (GSS 2012).

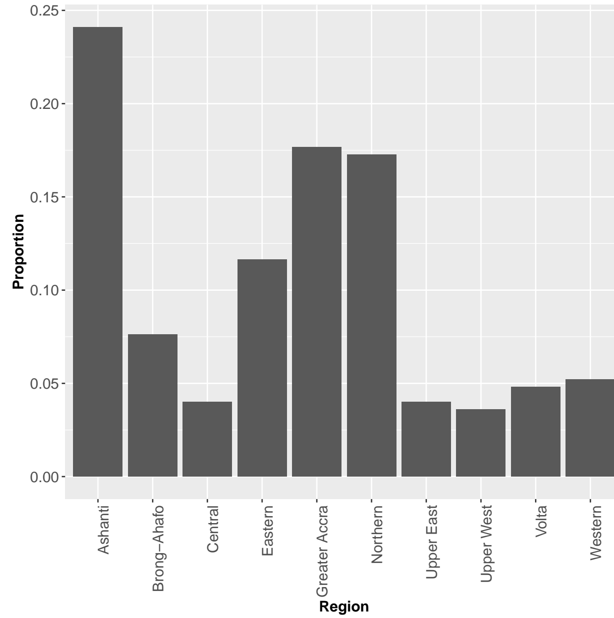

Figure 4.5: Proportion of Conflict Events by Region

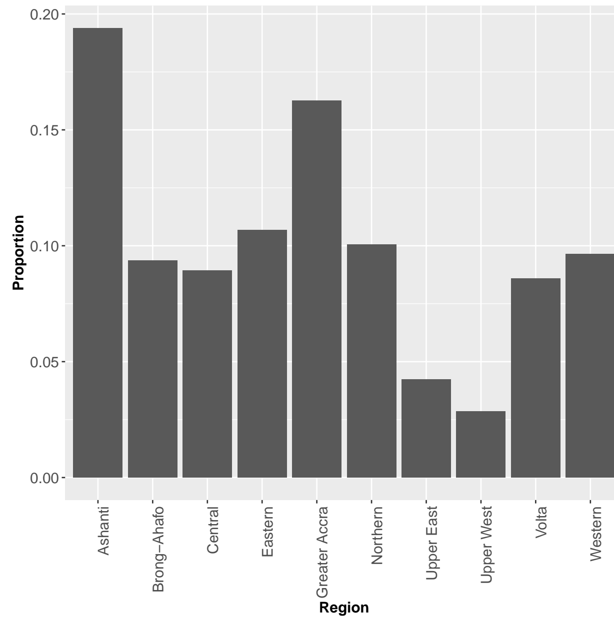

Figure 4.6: Proportion of 2010 Population by Region

What can these results tell us about party competitiveness? The NPP's stronghold region, Ashanti, experienced 24.10% of all conflict events which, as expected, was more than we would predict based on its relative population (19.39%). The NDC's strongholds, however, were a mixed bag. The Northern region witnessed 17.27% of intra-party conflict

events, while only making up 10.06% of the total population. Contrary to expectations, only 4.82% of conflict events happened in the NDC's main stronghold, Volta, which actually contains 8.59% of the overall population.

Two issues could be at fault for this inconsistency. First, regional approximations for party competitiveness are clearly too blunt to capture variation in the the ability of parties to compete and win elections across space in Ghana. Future research could draw on more precise data on relative party strength, such as constituency-level vote margins in previous elections, to better evaluate its effect on the likelihood of intra-party conflict. This would better capture the reality faced by activists on the ground, who would know in general how their party and rival parties performed in recent elections.

Second, as suggested above, party switching may simply not be a reasonable strategy for activists to take if local knowledge prevents them from obtaining patronage rewards after elections are over. In contexts where activists and local elites can effectively identify who deserves to receive patronage between elections, switching parties would lock activists out of patronage until the next electoral cycle. This would mean committing to an even longer time waiting for patronage rewards.

CHAPTER 5

VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT INTRA-PARTY CONFLICT

How does intra-party conflict evolve once it emerges? Why does it sometimes turn violent and at other times remain peaceful? I argue that an explanation for variation in the level of coercion during intra-party conflict must reckon with the fact that while violence has the potential to be an effective tool for compelling party elites, it is also inherently riskier than peaceful forms of conflict. My theory presents two paths to violence. First, activists can strategically elect to use violence when they have high levels of coercive capacity, and can thus mitigate the risks of violence. Second, activists can choose to use violence out of desperation. The more activists depend on the party and its patronage for their personal financial well-being, the more likely they will be to accept the risks of violent conflict.

This chapter evaluates this argument for why intra-party conflict becomes violent. I begin by breaking down variation in the forms that intra-party conflict takes in Ghana, paying special attention to how conflict events differ in terms of coercion and violence. I then provide evidence to support a key claim of my theory, that violent conflict brings with it additional risks. Next I provide evidence for my argument that coercion becomes more likely when activists have higher degrees of coercive capacity, which allows them to mitigate the risks of violence. Finally, I show that financial dependence on the party raises the stakes of the patronage bargain for some activists, and in doing so increases the chances that they will accept the additional risks of violence when they enter into conflict with party elites.

5.1 Variation in Ghanaian Intra-Party Conflict

Intra-party conflict generally varies widely in the forms it takes, as my data on conflict events in Ghana demonstrate. Figure 5.1 depicts the distribution of all conflict event types in Ghana from 2008 through 2018. There are 15 distinct types of intra-party conflict events in the data, and I summarize each in turn below.

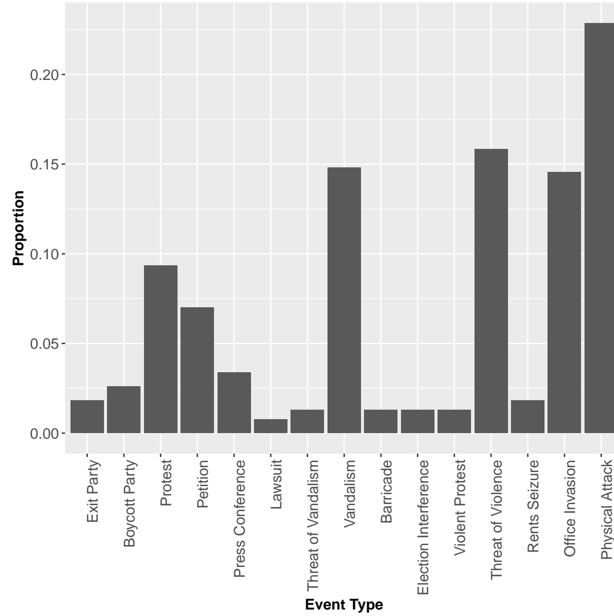

Figure 5.1: Types of Intra-Party Conflict Events

Exit Party is the threat by a party member to leave the party, and makes up 1.82% of intra-party conflict events. Boycott Party is a boycott of party activities or an abstention from voting, and makes up 2.60% of conflict events within Ghanaian parties. Protest (9.35%) is self-explanatory, and Petition (7.01%) is the submission of a petition with demands, typically to party leadership at the end of a protest march. Press Conference includes both press conferences and formally released press statements by party supporters protesting against the behavior of other members of the party, and make up 3.38% of conflict events. Lawsuit captures any formal legal proceedings between members of the same party covering disputes over party operations, of which there were three in the data (0.78% of events).

Vandalism, one of the more common event types, is the destruction of property and makes up 14.84% of intra-party conflict, while the Threat of Vandalism makes up 1.30% of events. Barricade (1.30%) is any event involving a barricade or roadblock set up to threaten and physically prevent party members from engaging in party activities. Election Interference, such as snatching ballot boxes or destroying ballots, covers only 1.30% of intra-party conflict in the data, which is as rare as Violent Protest. The Threat of Violence is the second

most common form of intra-party conflict in the data at 15.84%. One of the rarer forms of violent conflict is Rents Seizure (1.82%), or the taking by force of properties which the party controls and produce rents (such as toll booths and bus stations). Another common form of intra-party conflict is Office Invasion (14.55%), which encompasses all cases where party members take over, lock up, or otherwise attack offices, belonging to the party or government. Finally, the most common type of Ghanaian intra-party conflict is a Physical Attack on another party member, making up 22.86% of reported events.

It is relatively simple to classify most of these event types as either violent or non-violent. Threats to exit the party and boycotts of party activities are clearly non-violent. Protest was divided already in the data set into its violent and non-violent forms. And there is nothing violent about the submission of petitions, the hosting of press conferences, or the filing of a lawsuit. Election interference is classified as non-violent because this type only involved attempts to manipulate or destroy ballots. Intimidation or attacks on voters were classified as threats of violence or physical attacks. As for violent conflict, barricades are violent because they come with the inherent risk of attack if individuals attempt to break through them. Threats of violence have to be taken at face value, and so are included along side actual physical attacks. And the seizure of rents and office invasions must also be classified as violence since they involve the use of force, and often also entail implicit or explicit threats to the people present.

This leaves vandalism as the only challenging conflict event type to classify. The destruction of property can manifest as non-violent, particularly when it takes on innocuous forms such as spray painting over the poster of a party leader or defacing the walls of a local party headquarters,[1] or the deflating of the tires on a party elite's vehicle.[2] But in many cases the destruction of property is violent, such as when activists use brute force to smash the

1. As happened in Wa and Tamale in 2014, and in Tamale in 2015 (Zoure and Bruce-Quansah 2014; Kombat 2015).

2. See Abgewode (2009) and Adams (2015).

windows of a car with a party leader inside,[3] or when they attempt to burn down a party office,[4] or a fleet of party vehicles.[5] Unfortunately, reporting on the extent of damage is rare and my data lumps together all cases of vandalism. However, cases where vandalism includes the use of force are common enough that I include all cases of destruction of property in the category of violent or coercive intra-party conflict events.

Among all reported intra-party conflict events in Ghana from 2008 through 2018, 78.17% included some amount of violence or the threat of violence. Even if vandalism and the threat of vandalism were considered non-violent, 73.02% of events would involve some violence or the threat of violence. This variation demands an explanation, particularly in light of the risks of violent conflict, to which I turn in the following section.

5.2 Additional Risks of Violence

Activists take on risks whenever they engage in conflict with party elites, but not all conflict behavior is equally risky. Part of my explanation for variation in the form of intra-party conflict hinges on the assumption that coercion and violence bring additional risks, beyond those faced by activists engaged in more peaceful forms of conflict. In this section I provide some evidence to substantiate this claim from data on intra-party conflict in Ghana. I make use of data on arrests, injuries, deaths, and police response to demonstrate the plausibility of this assumption.

3. Violent attacks on the vehicles of low-ranking party members, particularly MMDCES, were not uncommon (GNA 2009; Asante 2012). Even the General Secretary of the NPP was not safe from having his rear windshield destroyed by angry activists at the NPP's national headquarters in 2015 (Jafaru 2015).

4. Party offices were burned in 2016 when NDC supporters attacked the MP for Atebubu-Amantin after their local DCE was removed from office (Chronicle 2016). Three months later, NDC grassroots activists in Wa burned party offices after their preferred candidate for DCE of Wa West was not selected (Farouq 2016).

5. See F. Duodu (2015).

5.2.1 Arrests

For each conflict event I coded whether or not any perpetrators were arrested or detained by police, either during the event or in the aftermath. Arrests sometimes take time as police seek out witnesses to get descriptions of perpetrators, and in some cases the eventual arrests were reported in follow-up articles. The reported arrest rate across all events was 11.50%. Of course, what really matters for my purposes is whether that rate differs between coercive and non-coercive conflict. Indeed, as I argue the use of coercion does appear to bring with it a higher risk of arrest for activists engaged in intra-party conflict. Arrests were reported in 14.56% of cases when perpetrators used coercion, but in only 5.80% of events which remained peaceful.[6] These findings are summarized in Figure 5.2.

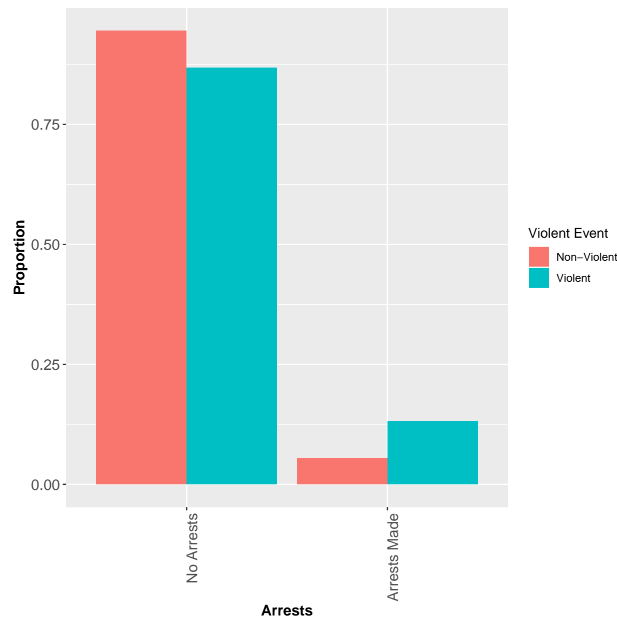

Figure 5.2: Arrests in Violent and Non-Violent Conflict

It is worth further investigating the types of events in which arrests were made to ensure that my assessment of the risks is valid. The only recorded arrests in the data from non-violent events were from events involving protests or interference in the electoral process.

6. A Fisher's exact test finds that the relationship between violent conflict and arrests is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.05.

Protests often lead to arrests in even the most open democracies, and it should come as no surprise that the attempted manipulation of election results would result in arrest as well. As for violent events, nearly every event that led to arrests involved some combination of physical attacks, the invasion of party offices, threats of violence, and vandalism.

5.2.2 Injuries and Death

The most consequential risk for participants in intra-party conflict is that of injury or death. I claim that these dangers are higher for activists who choose to use coercion during conflict. Newspapers do not always report precise numbers of injuries, so for simplification I sort all events into three categories: zero reported injuries; injuries probably numbering fewer than ten; and ten or more injuries.[7] Unfortunately, my data set only includes the total number of reported injuries or deaths during an event, so there is no way to determine separate injury and death rates for perpetrators and victims. I present aggregate injury and death rates, but because of that the results here should be taken as merely suggestive, and it should come as no surprise that when violence is brought into intra-party conflict, the overall chance for casualties increases. After all, it only takes a physical assault on one party leader for an event to be coded as having a small number of injuries.

In total, 66.27% of events had no reported injuries. When injuries did occur, they generally numbered fewer than 10, with 29.76% of cases involving a small number of injuries. Ten or more individuals were reported injured in only 3.97% of cases overall. As with the data on arrests, of greater interest to this dissertation is the difference in injury rates between violent and non-violent conflict events. As seen in Figure 5.3, injuries are indeed more likely to arise during violent intra-party conflict.

There is clearly a substantial and significant difference in the rate of injury between violent and non-violent events.[8] There were no reported injuries in 94.20% of non-violent

7. When a precise number of injuries was not reported, I estimated the scale of casualties based on the number of participants in the event.

8. A Fisher's exact test was used to assess the statistical significance because of the small sample size,

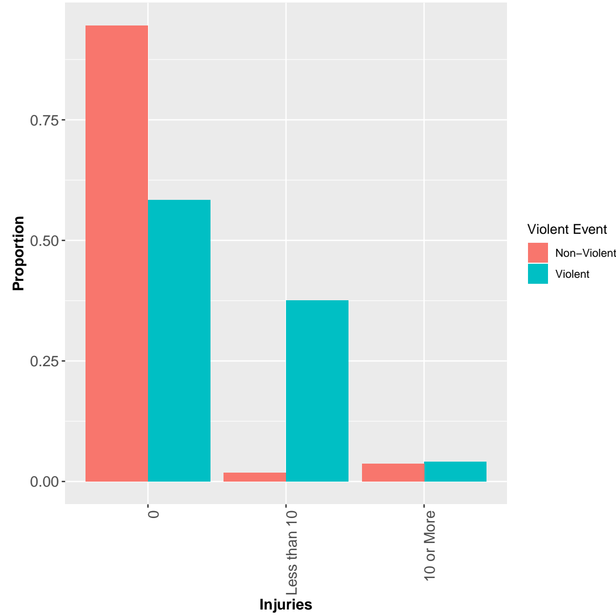

Figure 5.3: Injuries in Violent and Non-Violent Conflict

events, but only 58.86% of violent events had no injuries reported. On the other hand, while there were a small number of injuries in only 1.45% of non-violent conflict events (1 case), when intra-party conflict was violent the proportion of events that involved a small number of injuries increased to 36.69%. Cases with a large number of injuries (10 or more) were much rarer. There were only 3 cases of peaceful events where high numbers of injuries were reported (4.35% of non-violent cases), and only 15 instances of violent conflict resulting in ten or more injuries (4.75% of violent cases).

As for deaths, there were only three reported in the data set, but notably each happened during an event in which perpetrators used violence. In all three cases it was an activist who was killed, not the target of the conflict event. In one case, NDC youth rioted in response to their party leaders barring them from entering the elections grounds during constituency elections. When police arrived, the rioters threw stones at them and gunshots were fired in response, killing one activist (Owusu 2009). In another case, NDC youth took to the streets in Tamale, burning down their own party's offices and the regional secretariat. Armed security

and reported a p-value of 1.31×10^{-10}.

forces responded, shooting and killing one party activist and injuring many others (Zoure 2011b). In the third case, an NPP supporter was killed by activists from his own party during a dispute over a lock-up at the NPP constituency office in Asawase. The activist who died had locked the office up the previous day, and when he learned that the NPP constituency chairman had unlocked the office, the activist traveled back to the premises where he was ambushed and stabbed by supporters of the chairman (Awuah Jr. 2015).

5.2.3 Police Response

It is also worth investigating more broadly the response rates of police and other state security forces to intra-party conflict events. As the preceding discussion on deaths makes clear, the mere presence of police presents an additional risk, since they are explicitly sanctioned to detain perpetrators, and as representatives of the state they are generally the actors most capable of inflicting substantial bodily harm.

For each event I coded the reported response of police over three levels: no police response; police response with limited or no force; or police response with force. Just over half of all intra-party conflict events (54.76%) had no reports of police presence or response. Overall, police responded to 42.06% of events with limited to no force, and were only reported to respond and utilize excessive force in 3.17% of events.

Again, the question of interest is whether conflict events in which activists use violence were more likely to solicit security forces. Data from Ghana does provide support for my claim that activists take on additional risks by inviting the intervention of police and other state security forces when they utilize coercion. As Figure 5.4 shows, when activists engage in violence, the risks of police presence increase substantially.[9]

Police did not respond at all to 69.57% of non-violent events, while they only failed to respond to 47.47% of violent events. They responded without any reports of excessive

9. The results are statistically significant, as a Fisher's exact test returns a p-value of 0.001. As with arrests and injuries, a Fisher's exact test is justified given the small sample size and small number of cases in which police used excessive force.

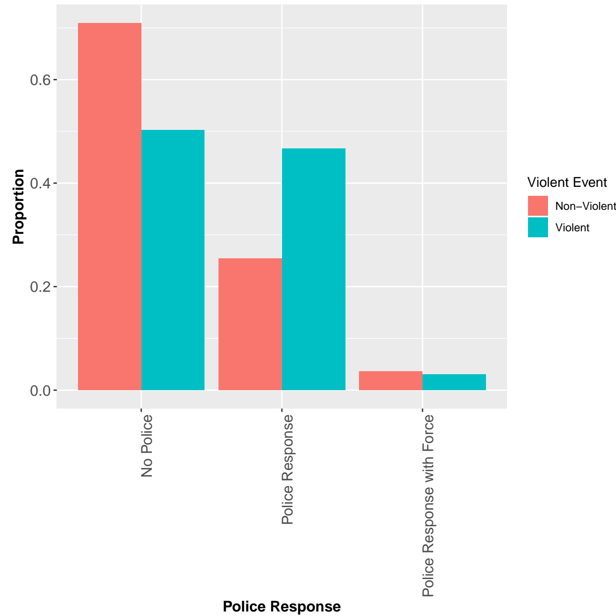

Figure 5.4: Police Response to Violent and Non-Violent Conflict

force to 26.09% of non-violent conflict events, as compared to 49.05% of violent events in which they responded. It's clear from these two comparisons that the presence of police and security forces increases significantly when perpetrators introduce coercion into intra-party conflict. Finally, there were very few cases of both violent and non-violent conflict in Ghana wherein the police reportedly responded with excessive force. Excessive use of force by the police was only reported in three instances of peaceful intra-party conflict (4.35%) and in 11 cases of violent conflict (4.75%).

Before transitioning to an evaluation of my theory, it is important to discuss some potential biases in the data on risks. Two potential issues pull the data in different directions. First, all of the events in the data were reported in Ghanaian newspapers. In general, newspapers are more likely to report on high profile events. The intervention of state security forces or high numbers of injuries and deaths might make potential stories more likely to be covered and published. This could bias the data, making violent intra-party conflict events seem riskier than they actually are, since violent events might be more likely to be covered when more people are injured or die, or when the state responds with more force. I attempt

to reduce this problem by relying on local newspapers as opposed to international news wires.[10] Ghanaian papers are more likely to cover intra-party conflict events regardless of the severity of the violence and the scale of police response.

Second, a core part of my argument is that activists are more likely to choose to use violence when they are better equipped to mitigate the risks that coercion poses to their safety and well-being. If this claim is true, then activists are selecting into coercion when risks are lower, and then further depressing those risks based on their experience and training. This would bias the number of arrests, injuries, and deaths of activists downward, implying that violent conflict is in fact riskier than the data presented here indicates.

In spite of these challenges, there is enough evidence to demonstrate the key assumption of my argument: violent intra-party conflict is inherently riskier. In the remainder of this chapter I provide evidence for my argument that there are two paths to violence during conflict within African political parties. First, I show that expertise in coercion helps activists to mitigate the risks of violence, increasing the likelihood that they will rely on coercion when pursuing patronage from party elites. Second, I show that activists can choose coercion even when they lack coercive capacity if they are so dependent on the party for their financial well-being that they are willing to accept the additional risks of violence.

5.3 Mitigating Risks: Expertise in Coercion

The first path to violent intra-party conflict is one of temptation, a strategic attempt by activists to maximize their chances at manipulating party elites into adhering to the patronage bargain. In this section I provide evidence to support my argument that party supporters utilize coercion and violence because it is an effective tool for modifying the behavior of party elites, and that they are more likely to do so in conflict when they have higher levels of coercive capacity. I draw on data on some of the key factors that make up coercive capacity to evaluate these claims.

10. On the advantages of local news sources over international news wires, see Demarest and Langer (2018).

5.3.1 Measuring Coercive Capacity

My argument posits that coercive capacity is best conceptualized as a multi-dimensional variable and emphasizes variation in the organization, experience, training, and equipment of perpetrators in intra-party conflict. Because my event data are drawn exclusively from newspaper reports, some aspects of coercive capacity were difficult to measure simply because reporters did not think to report on them, or because editors did not deem them worthy of the limited space on a printed page. None of the variables were reasonable approximations of either the experience of party activists in the use of violence, or their formal training in coercion. Still, I was able to collect data on several variables in an attempt to operationalize the capacity for activists to use threats and violence.

First, the best measure for the level of organization of perpetrators in the data is Perp_Group_Status. For every event, I coded whether or not perpetrators were part of an organized group, and what that group's relationship was to the relevant political party. Some activists were not reported to be part of an organized group at all.[11] Other perpetrators were reported to belong to organized groups, and were sorted into categories depending on that group's status. Some organizations are clearly outside of the party structure (e.g. church groups). Other organizations operate under the umbrella of the political party, but differ in the degree to which they are formally recognized and supported by the party. Many party groups are locally organized, self-named groups of concerned activists which exist prior to the conflict event, but operate without the supervision of, or aid from, party leaders.[12] Some groups, however, have a stronger affiliation with the party, either because they are formally organized by party leaders (e.g. official party youth wings) or because they have some form of formal or semi-formal recognition by party leaders (such as the personal security or so-called vigilante forces that have sprung up in Ghana in recent years).

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11. Perpetrators acting alone in a conflict event were placed in this category unless the reporter explicitly mentioned their membership or participation in a relevant group.

12. Such groups typically consist of youth activists from an area, and often name themselves according to the general formula: Concerned Youth/Citizens of Constituency/District/City.

The overwhelming majority of perpetrators in the data were not reported to belong to a specific organization (83.94%). In only one single event were perpetrators reported to belong to an organized group outside the party apparatus. 10.04% of events were perpetrated by individuals belonging to unrecognized groups in the party, while only 5.62% of all events were perpetrated by members of formally recognized party organizations.

Another dimension of coercive capacity is how well equipped perpetrators are for violence. In my conflict event data set the best approximation for this is Perp_Armed. This is an ordinal variable that codes for the most sophisticated level of weaponry reportedly utilized by perpetrators during the conflict event. In most conflict events (72.11%) perpetrators were not reported to be armed. However, in 15.94% of events they were reported to be wielding makeshift weapons, while in 9.16% of events perpetrators carried knives or machetes. Perpetrators rarely brought firearms to intra-party conflict, as they were only reported to do so in 2.79% of events.

5.3.2 *The Effects of Coercive Capacity on Conflict Behavior*

What effect did variation in coercive capacity have on the likelihood that conflict events were violent in Ghana? My argument predicts that as the coercive capacity of activists increases, so should the proportion of events that turn violent. I first examine the relationship between activists' organizational status and their propensity to use violence during conflict, then turn to an investigation of the possible association between weapons and the likelihood of violence.

There was a statistically significant relationship between the organizational status of perpetrators and whether or not an event was violent.[13] 19.14% of events in which activists were not members of organizations were non-violent. When shifting to organized but informal party groups, the proportion that were non-violent increases to 48.00%, while formally

13. As elsewhere, a Fisher's exact test was appropriate here given the small sample size. The p-value from said test was 0.01.

recognized party groups were non-violent in 14.29% of cases. These results are notably problematic for my argument. 85.71% of cases with perpetrators in formally recognized party organizations were violent, as one might expect. But only 52% of cases with organized but informal groups experienced violence while a shocking 80.86% of cases with unorganized perpetrators were violent. These findings are summarized in Figure 5.5.

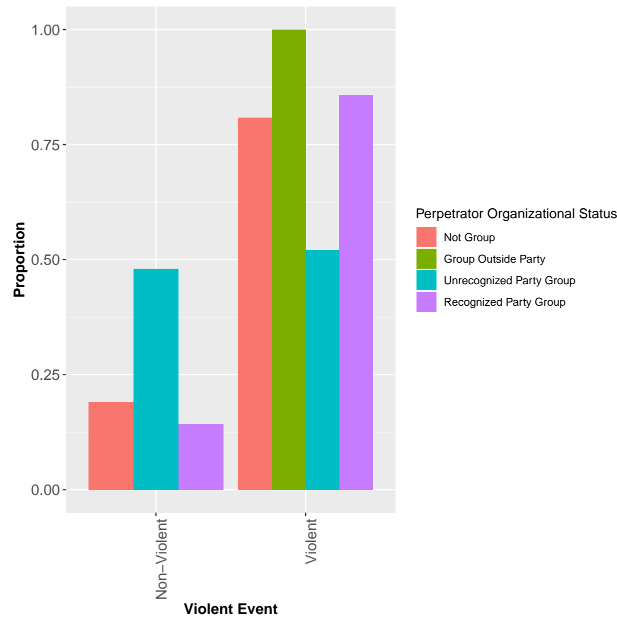

Figure 5.5: Perpetrator Organizational Status and Violent Conflict

There is also a clear relationship between the level of arms activists brought to events and whether or not those events were violent, as seen in Figure 5.6.[14] Unfortunately, not much can be gleaned from the data here. Activists were violent 100% of the time when they were reported to have wielded makeshift weapons, knives and machetes, or firearms. On the other hand, they were violent in 69.61% of the cases where they were unarmed. These data seem to be demonstrating the relatively simple point that activists who choose to use coercion show up prepared to do so by arriving armed with weapons.

In all, these results are muddy at best, and there could be several reasons for that. First,

14. The results are statistically significant, as a Fisher's exact test returns a p-value of 1.20×10^{-7}. A Fisher's exact test is justified given the small sample size and the number of cells with fewer than 5 observations.

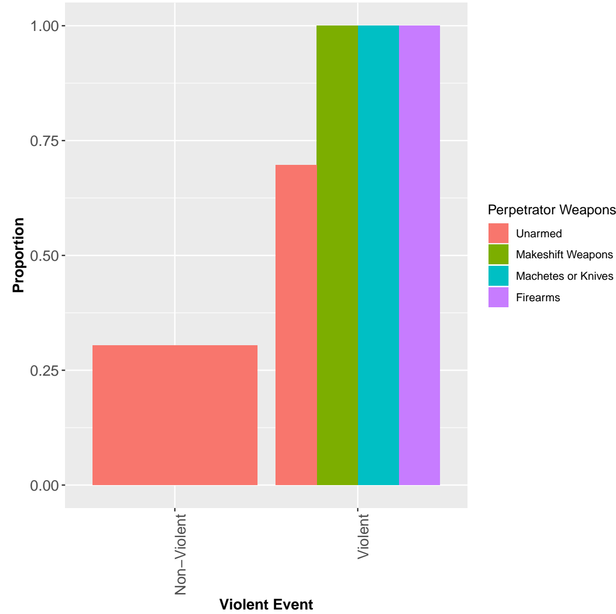

Figure 5.6: Perpetrators' Weapons and Violent Conflict

it could be the case that the data are simply ill-equipped to analyze the predictions stemming from my argument. This is likely the case for the data on perpetrators' weapons.

But why is violence so likely both for well organized and unorganized activists? Part of the reason may be that so many of the reported conflict events were violent, and that in reality there were far more instances of non-violent conflict by disorganized activists that do not show up in the data because they were not newsworthy. On the other hand, it could be that my argument is simply wrong, and that coercive capacity has no bearing on the propensity for intra-party conflict to become violent. But a more compelling explanation is that a substantial proportion of the cases of disorganized activists using violence are in fact explained by the second part of my argument, which claims that activists who are desperate enough for patronage will use violence in spite of their inability to effectively mitigate the risks through high levels of coercive capacity. I assess the evidence for this claim in the following section.

5.4 Accepting Risks: Dependence on Patronage

The second part of my explanation for violent conflict is that the more activists depend on party patronage for their personal financial well-being, the more likely they will be to trade the risks of violence for a greater chance at securing expected rewards. In this section I present evidence of this claim through an examination of the profiles of activists and the choices they make to use violence or non-violence during intra-party conflict. Unfortunately, systematic data on the financial autonomy of party supporters is lacking, and while some of the evidence presented here is compelling, it is more suggestive than validating. As such, it should be taken as an indication that the logic of my argument regarding autonomy is sound, and that future research should be confident that seeking better quality data on activists' financial dependence is a worthwhile enterprise.

I first provide support for my argument from interviews with party activists in Accra, who referenced alternative sources of income and jobs as factors that prevented them from turning to violence. These activists represent one side of the spectrum, occupied by supporters who are not financially dependent on the party and who should thus avoid the risks of violence. I then present qualitative evidence from additional sources, first drawing on reports of violence perpetrated by activists in Ghana and then discussing the use of violence by activists in other states in Sub-Saharan Africa. The cases discussed in this last section reinforce the idea that some activists use violence not because they are tempted by greater rewards, but because they depend on party patronage for their livelihood.

5.4.1 Evidence from Interviews with Activists

Although in the previous chapter I presented quotes from activists in which they demonstrated an acute awareness of the reasons for which conflict broke out within political parties, I found in follow up questions that activists struggled to provide an explanation for why that conflict varied in the form it took. When asked why conflict was sometimes violent, activists

often repeated similar explanations for why it occurred in the first place. Still, some responses do hint at an understanding that the likelihood of violence increases with the stakes of receiving patronage.

For example, one activist implied that because of his level of education, he need not resort to attacking party leaders or seizing local rents by force: "Depending on your level of education, your background, if NDC should come to power, you don't expect me to go and be struggling to take charge of a toilet facility. You don't expect me to go there to be fighting for a toilet facility. I should carry my CV, go and lobby to get a place to be placed..."[15] When I asked that same activist what he would do if he took his CV to the party headquarters and they had no job for him, he said, "Well, there wouldn't be anything to do at that moment... But I will still fight to get a job."[16] When I asked him how, he said, "Yes, I would keep bothering them. Keep bothering them. Every day I will sit there. Every day I will sit there. Every day I will sit there. Somebody wouldn't do so. Somebody will start fighting back."[17] This activist was confident he could remain patient, pester the party leaders, and rely on his education to carry him to a job, and that he need not risk violence to obtain the patronage he expected.

This activist's response also points to a common phenomenon, the seizing of public facilities such as toilets, toll booths, and transportation hubs after elections are over. Some such incidents might be classified as inter-party conflict, as activists supporting the political party that just came to power attack supporters from the outgoing party who control the public facilities at the time of transition (Adams 2017; Hope 2017). In other cases, however, activists seize toilets from people appointed by their own party (Amponsah 2010; Vigah 2017). In most of these incidents, desperate young men in need of work take it upon themselves to forcibly claim potentially lucrative positions, believing that because they are

15. Interview with NDC Activist, Accra, 2019.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

from the area and worked for the party, party elites will allow them to keep and run the facilities. As the activist mentioned above told me, "When you have taken it and you belong to that community they know you. That's all. Same with the tollbooths."[18] This is the path of desperation taken to the extreme, as activists do not even use violence to compel their leaders to give them jobs, but rather try to seize income streams themselves.

Another activist, who had recently served as a constituency chairman and was a branch chairman at the time of our interview, also emphasized patience when confronted with a breakdown in the patronage bargain. He told me about a time when he stopped a violent demonstration from occurring, which is worth quoting at length:

> We were about 17 of us who applied for the job for appointment. We went through a series of uh, uh screening process. Eventually we were left with two. Myself and the [other]. So then the two names were forwarded to the office of, office of the president. The entire youth, young people in the place, wanted me. Everybody wanted me. Not everybody, not everybody, not 100%. But majority of the young people wanted me. Eventually the president didn't appoint me. So when he didn't appoint me umm other people who influenced that and other stuff, the young people felt that they'd show their disapproval... to destroy things. And it's obvious that when they do that it is me who is the beneficiary.[19]

When I asked him why he would not want their violence connected back to him, he said:

> You see, I did it, one, not because I was happy I wasn't appointed, but I did it because I felt, I felt that his disapproval would amount to disappointment or embarrassment to the president. And to not also send a good signal to the outside. To, they will, they will send a signal of disunity within the party. And then also it would not also be, if I am seen to be agitating it will peg me as somebody who is immature in the game. Because I know that when it comes to leadership, it rotates.[20]

Importantly, just as my argument claims, that same branch chairman also spoke extensively about the importance to him of obtaining financial independence. He claimed that at

18. Ibid.

19. Interview with NDC Branch Chairman, Accra, 2019.

20. Ibid.

this point in his career as an activist, "I'm not going to be part of the executives who are in charge of day to day activities working for the party. We are part of the party now, but 20% of your time for party activities, 80% of your time for economic independence."[21] He stated that his financial independence was beneficial both for his own well being, and as a means to rising through the ranks of the party hierarchy:

> You see, you secure your economic independence, then you become a party financier. Now when you become a party financier along the route you have garnered the network and experience as far as the party work and activism and everything's gone, you've seen it all... Come back, then you are able to finance the activities of the party down from the grassroots up to the top. Then at that point you become a colossal... A colossus. In terms of your voice.[22]

This branch chairman's story exemplifies the distinct advantage of activists with financial independence, who expect patronage in exchange for their support, but do not depend on the party for their survival. These supporters can afford to, as he described it, "appreciate the game" of politics, and not resort to violence when they do not get their due.[23]

A branch secretary that I interviewed made an even more extreme call for patience in the face of elites reneging on the patronage bargain. He told me that "when you are working in a society or in a group, when you are in a particular group or organization, don't think of what you will get today or tomorrow. If I don't get it today, maybe in future my children will enjoy that. So I will still work hard to support the party or help the party... Next time, there's always a next time, you understand. Next time, my children or my grand-children, because of my hard working for the party, they will remember and then they will pay them for that."[24] This branch secretary had a job as a driver, so he was nowhere near as financially secure as some activists, but felt secure enough to avoid the risks of violent conflict (or to avoid intra-party conflict altogether).

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Interview with NDC Branch Secretary, Accra, 2019.

As a final example, I asked a branch youth organizer if he would ever use violence during intra-party conflict. He responded, "For me, I will never do that. So far as me, I'm doing something end of the month, I have a job."[25] This youth organizer worked full time as a teacher, and while he told me that he hoped to be supported in winning a council seat in exchange for his party service, this patronage was not necessary for his survival. As such, there was little need for him to face the risks of violent conflict.

5.4.2 Financial Dependence: Additional Evidence

Unfortunately, finding examples of activists who choose to use violence because of their financial dependence on the party is a difficult task. There are not particularly compelling variables in the data that could even stand as a proxy for financial autonomy, since pulling personal information about party activists out of Ghanaian newspaper reports was challenging. Often little is reported about the backgrounds of the perpetrators of intra-party conflict, and Ghanaian journalists have a habit of referring to violent offenders as "thugs" and "machomen" without providing other details beyond their names and which politician they allegedly support.

A qualitative assessment of some of the reports in the data does provide suggestive evidence linking the dependence of activists on the party's support to a willingness to use violence. In one incident of a factional attack, the driver and two bodyguards of the MP for Berekum assaulted the NPP constituency chairman from the area and several other constituency executives (Boateng 2009). The attack was allegedly driven by the MP's fear that the constituency executives were attempting to mobilize polling station executives (activists) against him. The purpose of this example is simply to point out a common trend: three men employed by the MP decided to use violence during an intra-party dispute. Their livelihood depended on continued employment by the MP, and so they were willing to use violence to keep their jobs. Unfortunately, as with most other reports, we have no information about

25. Interview with NDC Branch Youth Organizer, Accra, 2019

where these men came from, or what their options were for employment and income outside the party, so examples like this are far from conclusive evidence for my claim.

In another incident which represents a broader trend in Ghana, NDC party youth desperate for jobs seized a lorry park in Ashaiman, attacking the manager and demanding he hand over the keys (Abubakar and Kubi 2011). This was the second time that year that disaffected youth activists had attempted to seize the lorry park by force. The perpetrators reported that they had waited too long for jobs they were promised, and that they were greatly concerned that the NDC would not win the next election, blocking them from future employment. These young men, two of whom were arrested, were reportedly so desperate for the jobs they had been promised that they resorted to violence and threats to seize work for themselves.

One possible proxy for financial dependence in the data is the use of the word Zongo to describe the perpetrators of intra-party conflict. Zongos are communities in major Ghanaian cities of historically marginalized migrants, typically Muslims originating from Northern Ghana and beyond, which have their historical roots in trade networks. Without diving too deeply into African urbanization, suffice it to say that today's Zongo communities are typically underdeveloped, and are often the landing zone for poor northerners who come south in search of work. The informal economy is ever present, and many Zongo youth struggle to find and maintain reliable sources of income. For my purposes, it is reasonable to assume that when an incident of intra-party conflict is perpetrated by Zongo youth, those perpetrators have very low levels of financial autonomy. There were a number of events in the data reportedly involving Zongo activists or perpetrated by residents of Nima, the largest Zongo community in Accra. All of these events involved perpetrators using violence, and I discuss each below.

In one event in 2012, Zongo youth in New Edubiase discovered that their preferred candidate for MP did not pass the vetting process when he went to register as a contender in the primary, apparently because he had failed to pay his party dues (Asante 2012). Blaming

the constituency chairman for the disqualification, the youth resorted to violence, blocking the road to his residence, forcing him out of his vehicle, and destroying the windows of his car and his house. If their status as Zongo youth is indeed indicative of their low financial autonomy, then this event aligns with the expectations of my theory. A group of marginalized party youth were so desperate for their preferred MP candidate to stand a chance at winning and sharing the spoils of office with them that they were willing to risk violence.

In another example, 24 NDC activists from the Zongo community in Kumasi attacked the NDC's Ashanti regional party office, locking it up and chasing out the executives who were present. The perpetrators claimed that they attacked the office to protest against the NDC Regional Chairman, and wanted to send a message to President Mahama that the chairman was responsible for the decay of the party in the region. Notably, the men who attacked the office alleged that the NDC executives in Ashanti cared more about being rich than the success of the party. Again, if these party supporters were financially dependent on the party as I argue they were, then this is another prime example demonstrating the lengths to which activists will go when they need patronage to survive.

In one telling event from 2014, angry NDC youth from the Zongo community in Abuakwa South marched on the office of the party there, broke in, and destroyed windows, ceilings, furniture, and shelves while defacing portraits of then President Mahama. The youth had reportedly informed their constituency and regional executives that they would vandalize the party's office if they were not provided with jobs. Again, young men from a small Zongo community resorted to violence when the party failed to provide them with the patronage they expected.

Finally, in 2010 the Nima boys, named for the largest Zongo community in Accra from which they hale, stormed the residence of the MCE for Berekum. Although he was not home, they destroyed windows and property and threatened to disrupt an upcoming Independence Day parade. They claimed that the MCE was using government money to enrich himself, rather than to provide jobs for the NDC youth in the area. Five years later, youth in

Nima itself stoned the MP for Ayawaso East. The youth were upset at the party since they continued to face substantial hardships and rolling power outages, even after having suffered to help the party win power. In both of these cases, disenfranchised young men from Nima resorted to violence against their own party leaders over the lack of patronage and job prospects.

These vignettes are far from systematic, but I present them here to demonstrate the plausibility of my argument. A substantial amount of violence in Ghanaian intra-party conflict was perpetrated by activists who likely lacked the capacity to effectively minimize the risks of coercion. This demands an explanation, and I claim that when activists are dependent on the party for their financial well-being, they are more willing to accept the risks of violence. The examples show, as did the interviews in the preceding section, that this is a plausible argument, and that the pursuit of better evidence linking financial dependence to the use of violence by party activists would be of great value.

Evidence from outside Ghana provides yet more general support for my argument and the logic linking violence to dependence. Take, for instance, the marginalized young men who were mobilized by the dominant political parties in Sierra Leone in advance of the 2007 general elections. Many of these activists were ex-combatants who were desperately struggling to survive on the streets, and others were wholly dependent on the party for their well being because they were literally freed from prison in order to work for the party (Christensen and Utas 2008). Knowing full well that their livelihood depended on the whims of the politicians they served, they were more than willing to engage in violence and threats in an effort to manipulate the election to favor their patrons. They risked arrest and bodily harm, believing that this was their "last chance" to escape their destitute situation (522-524). While this is an example of inter-party violence, it demonstrates a similar logic to my theory. The more activists depend on the success of the party for their survival, the more risks they will take to ensure that they have a chance at receiving patronage rewards.

Research on remobilized ex-combatants in Nigeria similarly finds that party supporters

are willing to use violence when they depend on their patrons for their financial well-being. Ebiede (2018) shows that a substantial amount of election-related violence in the Niger Delta was perpetrated by ex-combatants who depended on the support of their former military leaders for their survival in a difficult scenario. This dependence was born in part from the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program, which unintentionally reinforced the link between ex-militants and their leaders by requiring the consent and acknowledgment of former militant leaders to enroll in the program. One ex-militant described nearly the exact same logic of dependence as my theory. In describing their interview, Ebiede (2018, 142) wrote "He note[d] that his loyalty also guarantee[d] his livelihood, as the limited payment from the DDR programme [was] not enough to sustain him. For this reason, he believe[d], he and other ex-militants will always remain loyal to their leaders and do their bidding if the need arises." This example also offers one promising path forward for measuring financial autonomy more systematically in certain contexts. If we can assume that ex-militants' lives would be substantially more precarious if they were not able to remain enrolled in DDR programs, and their continued participation in these programs depends on the consent of their former superiors who have made themselves into party Big Men, then ex-militant status could serve as a reasonable proxy for capturing the extreme low end of financial autonomy.

CHAPTER 6

RETHINKING VIOLENCE, DEMOCRACY, AND PARTIES IN AFRICA

Coercion and conflict in African political parties originates from the breakdown of a patronage bargain forged between elites and activists. Party leaders rely on the labor and support of activists to win competitive elections, and in return they promise to leverage their access to the state to distribute patronage to those activists who helped them win power. The most valuable and sought after rewards are jobs, contracts, and educational incentives which parties distribute after winning power. Party elites sometimes fail to uphold their responsibilities under this bargain, either because they mobilized too many activists, because they succumbed to the temptations of graft, or because outside forces reduced the expected supply of patronage. When elites break the patronage bargain, conflict arises between them and the activists they betrayed.

Once activists enter into conflict with their party leaders, they select from a menu of strategies ranging from peaceful protest to violent assault. In doing so, they are presented with a dilemma. Coercion holds the most promise as a strategy for compelling elites to deliver patronage, but violence brings with it additional risks, such as arrest, injury, and even death. Activists who opt for violence during intra-party conflict must either find ways to mitigate these risks, or be desperate enough for patronage that they are willing to accept them. Activists with high levels of coercive capacity–those who are organized, experienced, trained, and equipped for it–are able to manage the dangers of violent conflict, and so are more likely to choose coercion than others. At the same time, activists who are financially dependent on the party and the patronage it offers are more willing to take on the risks of coercion, and thus are more likely to use violence than their fellow supporters who desire patronage, but do not rely on it to survive.

In this dissertation I evaluated this new framework for explaining conflict within African

political parties, and contrasted it with the prevailing approach in the literature which locates the origins of intra-party conflict and violence in competition between rival factions. I drew on interviews with activists in Accra, Ghana and an original data set covering eleven years of intra-party conflict events in Ghana to show that a patronage-based argument can explain a substantial amount of intra-party conflict that factionalist approaches cannot.

First, I found that activists did make patronage bargains with party elites, and that conflict emerged when those patronage arrangements failed. Activists regularly reported the failure of elites to deliver selective incentives as the source of conflict, cited the lack of patronage as a motivation for their decision to fight with party elites, and often demanded patronage, both directly and indirectly, during intra-party conflict. Activists in Ghana were more likely to engage in conflict with members of their own party in areas with less patronage, they did so after elections when elites should have been delivering the best rewards, and they regularly targeted those elites who controlled the flow of patronage at the local level.

Additionally, the evidence suggested that activists were more willing to use violence when their livelihood depended on party patronage, and though the data on coercive capacity was too limited to be convincing, it offered some promising signs that variation in the coercive capacity of activists has some effect on the likelihood of violence during intra-party conflict. In the remainder of this chapter I present various implications for the study of violence and democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa and offer some fruitful directions for future research. I conclude the dissertation with a discussion of how my findings can inform policy, and offer a warning for those who hope to combat intra-party conflict in the future.

6.1 The Study of Violence and Democracy in Africa

The argument and evidence presented in this dissertation have important implications for the direction of research on conflict and coercion in African democracies. In this section I make a broad call to continue incorporating patronage into the study of democratic conflict and violence. Whatever its normative value, patronage remains pervasive across many political

domains in Africa and beyond. Serious scholarship on democracy and violence in Sub-Saharan Africa must grapple with the role and impact of formal and informal patrimonial relationships between political actors, and in this section I offer some guidance on where to focus to achieve that goal.

6.1.1 *Integrating the Patronage and Factional Frameworks*

Throughout this dissertation I have used factionalism as a foil, and I presented substantial evidence to support my argument that a large amount of intra-party conflict is related to disputes between activists and elites over patronage. But I also find a good deal of evidence to support the prevailing claim in the literature that competition between factions in African parties causes violence, particularly in relation to nominations. These findings need not be contradictory. For one, my theory was developed explicitly to explain the variation in intra-party conflict that factionalism could not, namely that which occurs after electoral contests have concluded.

Additionally, however, the findings in this dissertation suggest that not only does patronage play an independent role in causing conflict in the post-election period, it is also probably a key factor in explaining conflict prior to elections. The literature on factions and nomination violence suggests that primaries should be violent in less competitive districts because in these party strongholds, the winner of the primary is almost guaranteed to win in the national election. This explains why the candidates in winner-take-all systems might be willing to resort to illegal methods to ensure their victory. But typically it is the candidates' supporters who are the ones fighting it out on the ground, not the candidates themselves. A more complete theory of pre-election violence requires an explanation for why supporters would be willing to stick their own necks out to help a candidate win the party's nomination. This dissertation offers a promising answer: activists are strongly motivated by the prospects of patronage, and if they want to have a chance at receiving selective rewards after their party wins, they first need their Big Man to win both the primary and general election.

The challenge for future research in integrating these two approaches is the difficulty of observing patronage at work during factional conflicts. As I argued previously, patrimonial relationships are simultaneously well-known and secretive. Everyone knows that party activists expect material rewards in exchange for their service, but these same supporters are also keen to have outsiders perceive that they have the party's and the country's interests at heart. They want to believe, or at least have observers believe, that their support is grounded in ideological principles and the belief that their patron will improve the livelihood of the citizens he or she represents. The key to integrating the patronage and factionalism frameworks is developing tools to effectively measure the contrasting and complementary motives of the party members who support party elites in their quest for power.

6.1.2 Reciprocity and Big Man Politics

In the preceding discussion I alluded to the issue of agency in patronage relationships. The argument and evidence that I've presented in this dissertation imply that future scholarship should pay greater attention to the reciprocal nature of patronage and the role that clients play. It is easy to assume, as much of the literature does, that Africa's Big Men have the power to manipulate their followers into doing their bidding. And while in some cases this may be the reality,[1] in most cases supporters at the base of the patronage pyramid have some capacity to make choices about whom they will support and how. Researchers must take seriously the agency of activists and other grassroots supporters, wile recognizing that agency is not binary. Activists may have autonomy in some domains but not in others.[2] Scholars can begin to appreciate and account for this issue by digging into the motivations of Africa's so-called small boys, as well as the limits on their ability to act independently

1. As Ebiede (2018) suggests is the case for some ex-fighters in the Niger Delta, whose status in their disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program depends on the whims of superiors who now act as local Big Men.

2. For instance, while Staniland (2015) demonstrates the importance of foregrounding variation in the autonomy of armed actors, he emphasizes the importance of the *organizational* autonomy of electoral actors, while my theory argues that *financial* autonomy is what matters for explaining intra-party conflict.

from their patrons.

Moreover, scholarship on violence in Africa's developing democracies must pay closer attention to the reciprocity that underpins patronage relationships. Reciprocity is a fundamental aspect of the patrimonial relationship (Le Vine 1980; Pitcher, Moran, and Johnston 2009). Big Men are not simply gift givers who offer their largess at no cost. But neither are their followers simply loyal automatons who act without question or expectation for recompense. Rather, all patronage relationships are characterized by arrangements and agreements between leaders and their supporters involving mutual expectations of exchange. And while this dissertation has shown the importance of one particular patronage bargain that defines the relationship between party elites and the activists who work on their behalf, surely there are others that influence different aspects of democratic politics in Sub-Saharan Africa. Disentangling these relationships should serve as a promising avenue for research, particularly if we hope to avoid the trap of assuming that models of representation, accountability, and other aspects of democracy translate directly to non-Western contexts.

6.1.3 Democratic Violence

Finally, this dissertation demonstrates the importance of shifting scholarship away from focusing exclusively on "electoral violence". While elections are a critical institution, democracy does not end when the polls are closed and the votes have been tallied, nor do conflict and violence. We need a more comprehensive accounting of the ways in which violence intervenes in and interacts with the entirety of the democratic process. One promising path forward is to take an actor-focused approach. In this dissertation I concentrated my efforts on political parties and their members, placing particular emphasis on activists, who had previously gone understudied. This proved valuable both because the role of parties and activists in facilitating violence has been underappreciated, and because parties are a key feature of all modern democracies. Future work should continue this focus, but also be open to other actors who are involved in doing the daily work of democratic governance.

Brokers are one promising place to start, as they too sit at a key intersection in clientelistic politics: between party machines and the voters they court. Brierley and Nathan (2021) have started the ball rolling by investigating who party-based brokers are and how they get selected. But other individuals and institutions also play an important role in brokering votes in African democracies. Churches and their leaders and members can be an important political force, particularly in urban Africa.[3] For example, in an interview in Accra, one activist told me that she met most of the women she worked with in support of the party through her church group, and that they now meet after church to organize political activities and support the party together.[4] Beyond churches, Baldwin (2013, 2016) offers compelling evidence to suggest that traditional chiefs are another force that could either help or hamper democracy in Africa. A number of chieftaincy conflicts in northern Ghana have been politicized since the return of democracy, as competing groups align themselves with rival political parties, and the violence between these groups is now intertwined with democracy. Expanding our focus beyond the actors that drew the eye of the early electoral violence literature, such as states and voters, should open new pathways to understanding how and why violence interacts with democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa.

6.1.4 The Effects of Intra-Party Conflict

Just as Staniland (2014) and Fjelde and Höglund (2016) have recommended for electoral violence more broadly, future work on intra-party conflict should also examine the effects it might have on other variables of interest in the literature. Two areas that may prove particularly fruitful are the effects of intra-party conflict on democratic representation and on democratic accountability.

One of the fundamental purposes of democratic governance is to improve the representation of citizens in political decision making. Representation is a complex issue, but for

3. See McCauley (2012), and McClendon and Riedl (2019).

4. Interview with NDC Activist, Accra, 2019

the sake of expedience consider the simple claim that politicians are generally representative when the policies they enact match the preferences of their constituents. Does intra-party conflict help or hurt representation? According to this dissertation, the answer to this questions depends on what party activists demand of politicians during conflict, and whether those demands align with the preferences of the electorate. If elites respond to activists' demands for jobs by funneling them into existing positions at the expense of other potential workers in the constituency, then intra-party conflict damages representation. The interests of violent activists are placed above those of voters, and the quality of the work done in those jobs suffers as it is no longer based on merit. But if elites respond to conflict by redirecting development projects to areas where activists demand, then policy outcomes might match constituents' preferences (in those areas at least), though not through the typical channels of democratic institutions. If we hope to understand the effects of party conflict on representation, future research should begin by investigating how elites respond to violent and non-violent pressure from party activists.

Intra-party conflict likely also exhibits interesting effects on accountability. Democratic accountability is a mechanism for enforcing representation, linking the outcomes of policies enacted by the government to some form of sanctioning available to constituents, generally the ability to vote an incumbent out of office in the next election.[5] The behavior of party activists described in this dissertation could also be construed as a form of accountability. They use conflict and coercion with party elites to ensure that their preferred policy, the delivery of promised patronage, is implemented. But this form of accountability is surely undemocratic, particularly if, as I suspect, violence is a more effective tool than votes in manipulating the behavior of politicians. This is all the more reason to delve deeper into the motivations of party activists and the effects of intra-party conflict on the varying accountability pressures that elected officials face in Sub-Saharan Africa.

5. On the link between accountability and representation, see Manin, Przeworski, and Stokes (1999).

6.2 Managing Intra-Party Conflict

This dissertation provides important insights into the dynamics of conflict within African political parties, and raises important implications for how policy makers can manage and mitigate that conflict. I suggest that there is little reason to expect that conflict and violence between party activists and elites will disappear on their own, but in this section I offer some broad recommendations on how policy might be crafted to reduce the likelihood of intra-party violence, and also provide some warnings about the growing pains that might accompany well-intentioned efforts to stamp out intra-party coercion.

6.2.1 Early Warning Signs

Policy makers and non-governmental organizations seeking to reduce violence within political parties can benefit from early warning signs of intra-party conflict. Identifying the potential triggers of conflict within parties allows for the possibility of preemptive measures to reduce the likelihood of a violent incident. The most prominent warning sign that emerges from my research is a sudden drop in the availability of patronage. Examples include restrictions of resource flows from the central government, the relocation of a planned development project from one district to another, or spending cuts to programs that politicians use to provide jobs for the youth in their district. These types of changes can easily spark conflict as activists recognize them as signals that elites are reneging on the patronage bargain.

Policy makers should also be wary about changes that might be perceived as shocks to the supply of patronage, even if objectively they might not be. Turnover in leadership of local government or agencies that manage patronage flows may seem innocuous to elites, but this dissertation suggests that these events can be interpreted by activists as a betrayal of party leaders' responsibilities under the patronage bargain. Particularly troubling in Ghana have been the removal of MMDCEs from office. Decisions of this nature should not be taken lightly, and when turnover does occur, elites should consider how to effectively reassure

activists that the changes will not impact their reception of selective benefits.

6.2.2 Where to Focus Interventions

My argument suggests that the likely location of intra-party conflict varies with the electoral cycle. Prior to elections, factional logics dominate and intra-party violence is most likely to occur where nomination proceedings are held. In countries with open, regularly scheduled primaries, policy makers should focus preventive efforts around primary dates. Special attention should be paid to party stronghold constituencies, where internal contests are likely to be hottest, as well as areas where important party cleavages are most salient. In countries without open primaries, intervention to prevent intra-party violence may be easier, since policy makers can focus resources on pacifying the party congresses where nominations are made.

After elections, locating intra-party conflict hot-spots becomes more difficult. My theory expects that intra-party conflict will be more likely in places where patronage shortfalls arise. Unfortunately, this can happen anywhere, making long term preventive efforts targeting patronage-based conflict challenging. If policy makers hope to "harden" targets against violent activists, regional and national party headquarters, and local government offices are excellent places to start. My theory and evidence suggest that activists use violence to signal their displeasure to party elites, and the places where these leaders congregate are the most likely to experience violence between election periods.

6.2.3 Growing Pains

This final section serves as a warning about what to expect as African parties continue to improve their organizational capacity and as African states make advances toward rooting out corruption. First, this dissertation posits that intra-party conflict arises in part because political parties need mass armies of activists to help them win elections. Of course, parties around the world benefit from the hard work of committed activists, but in most places those

activists are not offered the same level of rewards in return. If the organizational capacity of African parties continues to improve, their reliance on party foot soldiers may ebb as well. While this could reduce the likelihood of conflict by the mechanisms outlined in this dissertation, it could also present new opportunities for violence, as already disaffected youth feel even more left behind by democratic politics. Integrating activists and encouraging their commitment to the party's success while the party becomes less dependent on them may prove a challenging task.

Additionally, concerted efforts are being made by policy makers and supported by non-profits to continue to root out and eliminate corruption in African democracies. From a normative perspective, this seems an admirable task. But if these efforts are successful, intra-party conflict could get worse before it gets better. My theory suggests that the likelihood of conflict and violence increase when elites fail to deliver promised patronage. In the short term, reductions in the capacity of party elites to tap into and manipulate the resources of the state could produce a situation in which many party leaders would be incapable of delivering the level of patronage necessary to appease all activists. In the long run, elites may adjust their mobilization strategies to match the reduced level of patronage available for them to distribute. But until then, the risks of intra-party conflict and violence may actually increase as sources of patronage are eliminated.

Some of these challenges will be inevitable, and should not necessarily discourage those who are doing the hard to work to reduce corruption and improve the capacity of parties in Sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, these problems reveal just how important it is to continue research on the causes of intra-party conflict and coercion. Only with logically sound theories tested against the best available evidence can we hope to understand and manage the unintended consequences of well-meaning interventions. This dissertation offers a step toward a better explanation for intra-party violence so that policy makers can implement measures now to detect, mitigate, and manage these issues as they arise.

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APPENDIX A

CODEBOOK FOR EVENT DATABASE

A.1 Introduction

This event dataset contains information on approximately ten years of intra-party conflict in Ghana. The database collects data from Ghanaian newspapers on conflict events between actors affiliated with the same political party and includes all reported forms of violent and non-violent conflict. The database currently includes events occurring across all of Ghana from 2008 through 2018. This includes three presidential and parliamentary election cycles, as well as the campaigns that preceded them (December 2008, December 2012, December 2016).

A.2 Defining Intra-Party Conflict

Conflict is an active disagreement or dispute between people with divergent or opposing interests, and intra-party conflict is simply conflict that takes place between members of the same political party. Data collection was designed to be as inclusive as possible, compiling any report that could reasonably be construed as an event in which party members were in conflict.

A.3 Unit of Analysis: Event-Day-Location

The unit of analysis is an intra-party conflict event that occurs on one day in a particular location. If an article reports multiple events, they are coded as separate event-day-locations. Events reported as multiple days (e.g. three day siege on party office) are coded as separate events. For articles reporting on national level events, if the article also mentions specific examples in particular locations those are coded as separate event-day-locations and the national level event is not coded. If the article only mentions an even at the national level

without more precise location information, it is coded as one event. The location is coded as "No specific location reported," and the precision variable indicates that the event can only be linked to the national level. Finally, some events can be multi-dimensional, for example when one group locks an official out of his office and also beats him in the process. I code such cases as one event with multiple types, not as multiple events. I do my best to code event types in the order they are reported to have occurred. So if a group locks an official out of his office first and then proceeds to assault the official, event_type1 will be coded as "Takeover or lock-up of offices" and event_type2 will be coded as "Physical attack on group/individual."

A.4 Physical Sources Consulted

A team of Ghanaian research assistants searched through hard copies of the following newspapers to find relevant reports:

- Daily Graphic
- Daily Guide
- Ghanaian Times
- The Chronicle

The Daily Graphic is Ghana's newspaper of record. It is state owned and is the most read daily paper in the country with a circulation over 1.5 million.[1] The Daily Guide is the second most read daily newspaper in Ghana, and is the most widely circulated privately owned newspaper in the country with approximately 726,000 readers. The Ghanaian Times is another state owned daily paper, and is ranked third in readership with just over 500,000 readers. Finally, the Ghanaian Chronicle is another major independent newspaper and has a circulation of just under 175,000.

1. All circulation ranks and estimates come from a mobile survey conducted by GeoPoll and reported in the Daily Graphic. See Zurek (2018) and Elliot (2018).

Research assistants were given a set of instructions for searching, identifying, and pulling relevant articles, and were told to pull any article they thought might involve conflict. Photographs were taken of all reports that mention conflict between at least two members of the same political party. While articles reporting on calls for peace by religious authorities are common during electoral seasons in Ghana, these were only photographed when they referenced in detail specific relevant events.

A.5 Coding Methods

Because coding events from multiple reports inherently involves some degree of uncertainty, I follow the guidance of Weidmann and Rød (2015) by coding reports first, and then aggregating these into a final event data set which is used for analysis. Having a separate database of reports provides several advantages. First, it allows anyone to determine which events could be triangulated across multiple independent sources. This provides more precise information on how much uncertainty there is, and also improves prospects for replication by facilitating the matching of specific events to the exact references from which they were coded. Second, coding reports individually provides additional transparency to the data generation process. Multiple reports often have conflicting or missing information. Maintaining a separate database of event reports allows anyone to easily apply different rules for combining conflicting information into a single aggregated measure at the event-day-location level. Without a separate database it is difficult or impossible to evaluate the robustness of any analyses to different aggregation procedures.

To assist in the access of source material, in the report level database I assign a unique identifier to every report. This identifier matches the original file holding the high resolution image of the newspaper article or screenshot of the online article.

The standard code for missing data is -99, even if that value is not listed specifically in the description of variables in Table A.1 below.

A.6 Variables

Table A.1: Coding Rules for Event Data Variables

Variable Name	Description
report_id	Unique identifier: sourcecode_YYYY-MM-DD dgr = Daily Graphic dgu = Daily Guide gt = Ghanaian Times ch = The Chronicle ukn = Unknown
source	Name of the original source from which the event data was coded
source_type	Medium in which the source was published 1 = Print 2 = Online
ra	Research assistant who found and photographed the report 1 = Nana Serwaa Asiedu 2 = Barbara Asunka 3 = Juliana Fobi
title	Title of the source report
author	Author of the source report
inter-party	Dummy variable indicating whether the report is exclusively about inter-party conflict 1 = Inter-party conflict 0 = Not inter-party conflict
irrelevant	Dummy variable indicating whether the report is about intra-party conflict 1 = Report is irrelevant and should be eliminated from the sample 0 = Report is relevant and should remain in the sample
date_report	Date on which the event was reported (YYYY-MM-DD)
date_event	Date on which the event occurred (YYYY-MM-DD)
location	Most precise name of the location where the event occurred
location_type	Code for type of location where the event took place 1 = Capital city 2 = Other major urban area (population >100,000) 3 = Rural (population <100,000) -99 = No specific location reported
location_precision	Most precise location information available 1 = Exact location is known 2 = Event is near an exact location 3 = Event can be linked to a second order administrative unit (district or constituency) 4 = Event can be linked to a first order administrative unit (region)

Table A.1 Continued

Variable Name	Description
	5 = Event can only be linked to the entire country
constituency	Constituency in which the event occurred
district	District in which the event occurred
district_id	Unique identifier for the district in which the event occurred (for districts that were split, parent and child districts with the same name have separate identifiers)
region	Region in which the event occurred
event_description	Description of the event that occurred
event_type	Categorical variable for the type of event 1 = Threat of exit from the party 2 = Threat of exit from politics 3 = Boycott of party activities or abstention from voting 4 = Protest 5 = Petition 6 = Press statement or conference 7 = Lawsuit/threat of lawsuit 8 = Threat of vandalism/destruction of property 9 = Vandalism/destruction of property 10 = Roadblock or barricade (with threat of violence) 11 = Election Interference (snatching ballot boxes, destroying ballots, disrupting election) 12 = Violent protest/riot 13 = Threat of violence (physical attack on group/individual or lockup of offices) 14 = Brute force seizure of rents (e.g. lorry park, public toilets) 15 = Invasion and takeover or lock-out/lock-in of offices 16 = Physical attack on group/individual
event_type2	Categorical variable for second type if the event is multidimensional. Coded the same as event_type
event_type3	Categorical variable for third type if the event is multidimensional. Coded the same as event_type
primary	Dummy variable indicating whether the event was linked to a primary election for candidates for parliamentary elections 1 = Event was related to a primary election 2 = Event was not related to a primary election
leadership_election	Dummy variable indicating whether the event was linked to an internal party election for leadership positions 1 = Event was related to internal party elections 2 = Event was not related to internal party elections
faction	Dummy variable indicating whether the event was reported to be about factionalism 1 = Event was reported as involving competing factions or rivals

Table A.1 Continued

Variable Name	Description
	2 = Event was not reported as involving competing factions or rivals
vertical	Dummy variable indicating whether there was a vertical dimension to the conflict 1 = Event included a vertical dimension (perpetrator and at least one main target were of different levels) 0 = Event did not include a vertical dimension
horizontal	Dummy variable indicating whether there was a horizontal dimension to the conflict 1 = Event included a horizontal dimension (perpetrator and at least one main target were of the same level) 0 = Event did not include a horizontal dimension
event_scale	Reported scale of the conflict event 1 = Isolated incident 2 = Part of broader set of events spanning a local area 3 = Part of broader set of events spanning a regional area 4 = Part of broader set of events spanning the national level (multiple regions)
perpetrator	Reported name or description of the threatening/coercing individual or group
perp_number	Reported number of perpetrators in the event. If exact number of perpetrators is not given, the following codes apply. -99 = Unknown and no indication of size -88 = Unknown but probably small (less than 10) -77 = Unknown but probably large (10 or more)
perp_party	Reported political party affiliation of the threatening/coercing individual or group 1 = NDC (National Democratic Congress) 2 = NPP (New Patriotic Party) 3 = Other
perp_level	Ordinal variable that codes for the level at which the primary perpetrator(s) work at the time of the incident. Activists are coded as 1 unless the report specifically cites them as working at a different level. 1 = Polling Station/Branch 2 = Constituency/District 3 = Regional 4 = National 5 = MP 6 = President
perp_group_status	Categorical variable for whether were part of a named group, and that group's relation to the party hierarchy

Table A.1 Continued

Variable Name	Description
	1 = Not members of an organized group 2 = Members of a group outside the party structure 3 = Members of a named but unrecognized group in the party 4 = Members of a named and organized/recognized group inside the party structure (e.g. Invincible Forces)
perp_vigilante	Dummy variable for whether any of the perpetrator(s) are reported to be member(s) of a political vigilante group 1 = Yes 0 = No
perp_group_name	Reported name of the group of the perpetrator(s)
perp_leader_status	Reported leadership of perpetrators 1 = No reported leader 2 = Reported leader who is not party elite 3 = Reported leader who is party elite
perp_leader_level	Ordinal variable that codes for the level at which the perpetrator's leader worked at the time of the incident. Activists are coded as 1 unless the report specifically cites them as working at a different level. 1 = Polling Station/Branch 2 = Constituency/District 3 = Regional 4 = National 5 = MP 6 = President
perp_leader_name	Reported name(s) of the leader of the perpetrators
perp_armed	Ordinal variable that codes for the most sophisticated level of weapons reportedly utilized by the perpetrators. 1 = Unarmed 2 = Makeshift weapons or clubs 3 = Machetes or knives 4 = Firearms
target	Reported immediate target of the event
target_number	Reported number of targets. If exact number of targets is not given, the following codes apply. -99 = Unknown -88 = Unknown but probably small (less than 10) -77 = Unknown but probably large (10 or more)
target_party	Reported political party affiliation of the immediate target of the event 1 = NDC (National Democratic Congress)

Table A.1 Continued

Variable Name	Description
	2 = NPP (New Patriotic Party) 3 = Unknown
target_level	Ordinal variable that codes for the level at which the immediate target works at the time of the incident 1 = Polling Station/Branch or below 2 = Constituency/District 3 = Regional 4 = National 5 = MP 6 = President
target_occupation	Categorical variable indicating the occupation/status of the target at the time of the incident 1 = Non-elite outside party hierarchy 2 = Non-elite in party hierarchy 3 = Elite in party hierarchy 4 = Bureaucrat in office of the MMDA (Metropolitan, Municipal, or District Assembly) 5 = MMDCE (Metropolitan, Municipal, or District Chieft Executive) 6 = Bureaucrat in state-sponsored office providing patronage (e.g. development, health care) 7 = Bureaucrat in higher-level government office (e.g. Minister) 8 = MP 9 = President
target2	Reported secondary target of the event
target2_number	Reported number of secondary targets. Coded the same as target_number
target2_party	Reported political party affiliation of the secondary target of the event. Coded the same as target_party
target2_level	Ordinal variable that codes for the level at which the secondary target works at the time of the incident. Coded the same as target_level
target2_occupation	Categorical variable indicating the occupation/status of the secondary target at the time of the incident. Coded the same as target_occupation
signal_target	Reported intended recipient of an indirect signal from the event, someone not immediately involved but who is meant to see and react to the event
signal_party	Reported political party affiliation of the signal target of the event 1 = NDC (National Democratic Congress) 2 = NPP (New Patriotic Party)

Table A.1 Continued

Variable Name	Description
signal_level	Ordinal variable that codes for the level at which the signal works at the time of the incident. Coded the same as target_level
signal_occupation	Categorical variable indicating the occupation/status of the reported intended recipient of an indirect signal from the event. Coded the same as target_occupation
signal2_target	Reported second intended recipient of an indirect signal from the event, someone not immediately involved but who is meant to see and react to the event
signal2_party	Reported political party affiliation of the second signal target of the event 1 = NDC (National Democratic Congress) 2 = NPP (New Patriotic Party)
signal2_level	Ordinal variable that codes for the level at which the second signal target works at the time of the incident. Coded the same as target_level
signal2_occupation	Categorical variable indicating the occupation/status of the reported intended recipient of an indirect signal from the event. Coded the same as target_occupation
president_party	Variable indicating party of the sitting president 1 = NDC (National Democratic Congress) 2 = NPP (New Patriotic Party)
demand	Categorical variable for whether the perpetrator made a specific demand 1 = Demand made and reported in article 2 = Demand implied but not reported in article 3 = No demand made or implied
demand_type	Categorical variable for the type of demand made or implied 1 = Demand for pay that is owed 2 = Demand for new/more jobs, contracts, or other patronage 3 = Change/Remove member from official position within party 4 = Change/Remove individual from position in the government (non-MMDA) 5 = Removal of MMDCE or other member(s) of MMDA from office 6 = Reinstate/Maintain MMDCE in office 7 = Change/Remove candidate from intra-party election 8 = Change/Remove candidate from Parliamentary race 9 = Change/Remove candidate from Presidential race 10 = Cease manipulating intra-party affairs 11 = Cease making derogatory comments about certain party member(s) 12 = Other

Table A.1 Continued

Variable Name	Description
demand_type2	Categorical variable for the second type of demand made or implied. Coded the same as demand_type
reason_given	Reported reason for the event occurring
deaths	Total number of deaths reported in the event. If exact number of deaths is not given, the following codes apply. -99 = Unknown -88 = Unknown but probably small (less than 10) -77 = Unknown but probably large (10 or more)
injuries	Total number of injuries reported in the event. If the number of injuries is not given, the following codes apply. -99 = Unknown but probably 0 -88 = Unknown but probably small (less than 10) -77 = Unknown but probably large (10 or more)
police	Categorical variable indicating whether police responded to the incident and whether that response was violent. 1 = No reported police response 2 = Police responded with limited to no force 3 = Police responded forcefully, with some likely injuries or deaths
arrests	Dummy variable indicating whether arrests of perpetrators were reported 1 = Reports were made that some or all perpetrators were arrested 0 = No reports were made of arrests
previous_threat	Dummy variable indicating whether the perpetrators had previously threatened or warned the target 1 = Previous threat/warning by perpetrator reported 0 = No previous threat/warning by perpetrator reported
time_since_threat	Variable indicating the amount of time since the reported threat was made