

# Words and deeds: From incompatibilities to outcomes in anti-government disputes

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**Abstract:** Dissidents can choose among different tactics to redress political grievances, yet violent and nonviolent mobilization tend to be studied in isolation. We examine why some countries see the emergence of organized dissident activity over governmental claims, and why in some cases these organizational claims result in civil wars or nonviolent campaigns, while others see no large-scale collective action. We develop a two-stage theoretical framework examining the organized articulation of political grievance and then large-scale violent and nonviolent collective action. We test implications of this framework using new data on governmental incompatibilities in a random sample of 101 states from 1960-2012. We show that factors such as demography, economic development and civil society have differential effects on these different stages and outcomes of mobilization. We demonstrate that the common finding that anocracies are more prone to civil war primarily stems from such regimes being more prone to see maximalist political demands that *could* lead to violent mobilization, depending on other factors conducive to creating focused military capacity. We find that non-democracy generally promotes nonviolent campaigns as anocracies and autocracies are both more likely to experience claims and more prone to nonviolent campaigns, conditional on claims.

**Keywords:** civil war, nonviolent campaign, grievance

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## **Introduction**

Beginning in 2011, a wave of anti-government mobilization swept across North Africa and the Middle East. Protests were generally seen as stemming from frustration with economic stagnation and repressive autocratic rule (e.g. Goldstone, 2011; Lynch, 2012). There was remarkable variation within the region in when and where dissidents articulated grievances against governments, and not all countries saw major mobilization. Moreover, the specific paths anti-regime action took varied dramatically among countries. Dissident tactics ranged from large-scale nonviolent mobilization in Tunisia and Egypt to violent rebellion in Libya and Syria. In Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, smaller initial protests were met with massive repression and dissidents largely stayed quiescent. Countries such as Qatar and the UAE saw almost no organized articulation of anti-regime grievance or collective mobilization.

This variation in dissident articulation of claims against governments and tactical choices is not limited to the Middle East and North Africa. Based on the data in Chenoweth & Ulfelder (2015), eighteen countries saw large-scale nonviolent campaigns in 2013 while twenty-seven experienced violent civil conflict according to the Uppsala Conflict Data Project/Peace Research Institute Oslo Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD) (Melander et al., 2016). However, a much wider set of countries have domestic political organizations demanding major institutional changes or for the government to step down. Mobilization rarely emerges from a vacuum, but is typically spurred by organizations articulating grievances and claims.

We examine why organized dissident activity emerges in some countries and not others, and also why organized dissident activity eventually rises to large-scale mobilization resulting in civil wars or nonviolent campaigns in some cases, but not others. We split the process leading to these outcomes into two stages. In the first, 'claims' stage, organizations articulate maximalist demands on

the government related to regime change, government composition, or electoral legitimacy that seek to fundamentally alter the political order.<sup>1</sup> In the second, ‘contentious outcomes’ stage, dissidents either choose violent or nonviolent means to press demands, or remain quiescent. Dividing the process of mobilization into two stages allows us to develop propositions for why some countries see the emergence of claims and others do not, and why, within the set of countries with organizations advancing maximalist claims, some see violent mobilization, some see nonviolent mobilization, and others experience neither. We test these propositions using new data that identify the yearly incidence of claims over the government for a random sample of 101 countries (excluding consolidated democracies) over the period 1960-2012.

We extend the existing literature in two important ways by examining jointly the determinants of contentious claims, civil war, and nonviolent campaigns. First, most existing studies consider the risk of conflict events in all units (e.g. states or groups), without distinguishing variation in prior motivation and mobilization. Second, there is a large body of literature on particular tactics—such as violent rebellion, terrorism, or nonviolent direct action—but much less comparative work on why actors chose one tactic over another. Many scholars recognize how actors can choose different tactics (e.g. Tarrow, 1994; Tilly, 1978), and some work examines the onset of various tactics or outcomes together. However, existing studies are generally limited to individual conflicts (e.g. Moore, 1998; Pearlman, 2011), specific regions (e.g. Asal et al., 2013; White et al., 2015), data on individual events rather than identifying campaigns or actors (e.g. Salehyan et al., 2012), or limited to

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<sup>1</sup> This conceptualization is similar to Chenoweth & Stephan (2011) who focus on maximalist demands and the Armed Conflict Dataset’s focus on conflicts over either territorial or governmental incompatibilities.

organizations making claims over self-determination (e.g. Cunningham, 2013). We examine the choice between violence and nonviolence within a broad set of disputes over government, providing a more general analysis of tactical choice.

Our findings contribute to our understanding of the processes leading to violent internal conflict and nonviolent campaign in a number of ways. We show that factors such as economic development and urbanization have differential effects on maximalist claims-making as well as whether civil war or nonviolent campaign follows this claims-making. The findings for regime type are particularly striking. While anocracies are more likely to see maximalist claims than democracies, they are not more likely to experience internal armed conflict conditional on claims. However, we find that anocracy promotes nonviolent action in both stages, first by making initial claims-making more likely and subsequently increasing the chance of nonviolent mass-mobilization.

### **A two-stage model of claims and mass mobilization**

Most empirical research has focused on specific observable contentious outcomes—such as nonviolent campaigns or civil war<sup>2</sup>—and how these may be related to motivation and opportunities for mobilization.<sup>3</sup> However, starting with large-scale collective action is akin to fast-forwarding to the first action scene in a movie, since large-scale action generally follows low-level collective action in initial group formation and articulation of demands. We argue that violent or nonviolent

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<sup>2</sup> Hegre & Sambanis (2006) conduct a sensitivity analysis of predictors in country-level analyses of civil war. There are fewer conventions in analyses of nonviolent campaign onset, but Chenoweth & Ulfelder (2015) discuss suggested candidate factors, with a focus on out-of-sample predictive ability.

<sup>3</sup> Young (2013) provides a theory of dissident mobilization prior to conflict crossing the civil war threshold.

campaigns are best understood as the end-stage of a longer process, starting with individuals developing awareness over incompatibilities or motivation over grievances, followed by explicit articulation of claims or demands on state authorities by some organization or group, before we ultimately see large-scale violent or nonviolent action. In some cases this chain may be very quick<sup>4</sup>, in other cases it may be drawn out, and many efforts to take on the state never rise to large-scale action. Yet, the almost exclusive focus on outcomes in existing empirical research neglects how motivation and opportunity structures interact with group characteristics and resources to make certain contentious outcomes more or less likely. We develop a theoretical framework that splits the process leading to large-scale nonviolent and violent mobilization into two distinct stages.

In the first ‘claims’ stage, organized actors articulate maximalist claims for political change. Claims generally fall into two broad categories—‘territorial’ incompatibilities in which organizations call for greater control over some part of the state’s territory and ‘governmental’ incompatibilities, in which organizations make claims related to control of the central government. We focus on governmental incompatibilities, which have received less scholarly attention than separatist disputes, and are particularly likely to be relevant for nonviolent mobilization.<sup>5</sup>

Governmental incompatibilities comprise *organizations* making maximalist claims, by which we mean demands relating to (a) the legitimacy of elections, (b) the composition of the government,

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<sup>4</sup> In a few cases, large-scale nonviolent or violent mobilization and the onset of claims may occur simultaneously.

<sup>5</sup> Cunningham (2014) provides data on organizations calling for greater self-determination for 1960-2005 (i.e. incompatibilities over territory), and Cunningham, Dahl & Frugé (forthcoming) examine the use of nonviolent tactics in these self-determination movements.

or (c) regime change. Most countries have some people that harbor grievances against the government that could be considered ‘maximalist,’ and, in many cases, these individuals may even have articulated grievances in some public arena, such as print publications or online outlets. However, while *individual* claims in this sense are widespread, not all grievances move beyond the individual level to the public articulation of maximalist claims against the government by an organized group. That is, organizations articulating maximalist political grievances (governmental ‘claims’ or ‘incompatibilities’) are not ubiquitous, rather, they vary considerably across countries and time.

Organizations making maximalist claims are important since they generally coordinate the large-scale action resulting in civil war or nonviolent campaigns. Violent rebellion, terrorism, large-scale protest, strikes, and other nonviolent action all require some level of coordination. As such, we see organizations making maximalist claims as a necessary condition for civil war and nonviolent campaigns.

While civil war and nonviolent campaigns imply maximalist claims by organizations, claims are not sufficient for large-scale mobilization. Many claims persist for years and never see large-scale contentious outcomes. For example, Kazakhstan has experienced near-constant maximalist claims-making since independence in 1991. Opposition parties, such as *Alga* and *Azamat*, have alleged widespread fraud in elections and called for the resignation of president Nursultan Nazarbayev, but have never escalated their activity to armed conflict or nonviolent mass mobilization. In other cases, governmental incompatibilities take a long time to emerge or emerge very sparsely, despite clear grievances, such as in the case of the extremely repressive regime in North Korea. In some cases, civil wars or nonviolent campaigns follow very quickly (or begin simultaneously with) organizational claims. In the People's Republic of China, we have the near-simultaneous emergence of maximalist

claims and nonviolent mass-mobilization in such episodes as the ‘Democracy Wall’ movement (1976-79) and the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident.<sup>6</sup> Afghanistan exhibits a similar pattern, with no claims on the central government prior to the civil war beginning in 1978. In yet another group of cases, however, claims emerge and are sustained for a long period, but only much later coalesce into mass mobilization. Ukraine offers an example of this pattern. Since the early 1990s, pro-reform opposition organizations have called for changes in the composition of government in order to reduce the role of politicians from the Soviet era. These claims persisted from the early 1990s and manifested relatively low levels of mobilization until the 2004 Orange Revolution, which saw large-scale protest in Kiev following allegations of electoral fraud by the governing party.

### **Why claims?**

Why do organizations articulate maximalist political demands in some contexts and not in others? We argue there are two main determinants—the degree of grievance with the political system and the likely costs of collective action. The ubiquitous nature of grievances is a foundational assumption in the resource mobilization literature, which sees structural and ideational factors shaping resources as more important for mobilization (e.g. McAdam, 1982; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1978). However, even if all groups have some grievances we do not expect all grievances to rise to the level of maximalist claims. Dissidents in developed and well-functioning democratic systems generally can pursue dissent through regular political channels. In more closed systems, by contrast, avenues for regular political participation are usually blocked, so aggrieved individuals are likely to see fundamental political change as necessary.

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<sup>6</sup> These episodes are recorded as nonviolent, maximalist campaigns in the NAVCO 2.0 data.

While grievance is important, we do not expect a simple, direct relationship between grievance and claims-making. Claims-making will also be influenced by the anticipated costs to collective action, given by the governments' ability and willingness to repress dissent. A large body of scholarship has focused on how individuals' decisions on whether to engage in collective action depend on their expectations about whether others will participate. The literature on thresholds and cascades focuses on how ties between individuals or changes in the information environment shape anticipation that others will participate (e.g. Granovetter, 1973, 1978; Lohmann, 1994). Individual thresholds—i.e. how many other people must be expected to join in mobilization before individuals will participate themselves—will also be a function of the government's repressive capacity. Some governments permit organizational articulation of maximalist political demands through legal political channels without responding with repression. Other governments may have a desire to repress all dissent, but lack the capability to do so. In both of these cases, the costs of collective action are lower. However, in some states, governments have the desire and ability to repress any form of dissent, meaning collective action is likely to be very costly. In these societies, despite private grievances, individuals will see collective action as very risky, and will need to anticipate substantial participation by others in collective action to join in.

In sum, we expect maximalist political demands (claims) to be most likely when (1) political grievances are high and (2) the anticipated costs to individuals of participating in collective dissent are low. In turn, we expect anticipated costs to be driven both by the number of other individuals expected to participate and by the ability and willingness of the government to repress dissent.

This discussion leads to several empirical implications about conditions under which we expect maximalist political demands to be more likely. First, claims-making will be more common in mixed regimes (i.e. anocracies or semi-democracies) than in either autocracies or full democracies. In



full democracies, grievances will be lower, and democracy provides an opportunity for aggrieved individuals to seek redress through the regular political process. In full autocracies, individuals will have high grievances but will anticipate high costs for participating in collective action because full autocracies are generally more willing and able to effectively repress dissent. In mixed-regimes, by contrast, grievances will be relatively high and the costs to participation relatively low, leading to more frequent claims-making.

Second, as states become more developed, claims-making will decrease. Economic development, on average, reduces grievances, as it makes individuals better off. Additionally, as states become more developed, their governments gain greater ability to monitor their populations and respond to dissent, and therefore the costs of collective action rise as well.

Finally, dissidents with political grievances can be influenced by events in other disputes within the country and/or region. In some countries, the government faces challenges from self-determination groups. The presence of other disputes can provide information to dissidents that the government is unable to effectively repress and thus indicate an opportunity for collective action. As such, we expect maximalist political demands over government to be more common when there are violent self-determination disputes in the country.

Dissidents can also receive information about the likely response of governments and their other citizens to claims-making from similar events in the region. Regimes often cluster geographically, and collective action in one country can influence events in its neighbors. Protests in neighboring states can create a demonstration effect for dissidents (Beissinger, 2007; Braithwaite et al., 2015; Gleditsch & Rivera, forthcoming). Indeed, in the Arab Spring, successful protest in Tunisia and Egypt inspired similar action in other countries across the region. We expect maximalist political demands to be more likely following claims in other countries in the neighborhood.

## **Explaining contentious outcomes**

Once we observe maximalist claims, why do we observe nonviolent mobilization in some cases, violent rebellion in others, and (in the majority of cases) no activity? We focus in the discussion below on the distinction between violent versus nonviolent tactics and the specific conditions that make each more likely.<sup>7</sup>

Nonviolent action and violent rebellion are similar in objectives, as both seek to impose sufficient costs on the government that it makes concessions to dissident demands. However, they rely on different techniques to impose costs. One of the clearest conclusions from the existing literature is that effective nonviolence requires large numbers of participants (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Dahl et al., 2017; DeNardo, 1995). Small protests or strikes are unlikely to put sufficient pressure on governments, but large-scale participation in protest campaigns can impose dramatic governance costs. Violent rebellion, by contrast, does not require large-scale participation to impose costs, but rather requires focused military capability and organization.

We assume dissidents will choose strategies that maximize their chance of applying sufficient pressure to gain some or all of what they want. As such, we expect dissidents will engage in nonviolent resistance when they anticipate mobilizing large numbers of supporters, and violent rebellion when they anticipate being able to develop focused military capacity.

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<sup>7</sup> Although these are not necessarily mutually exclusive tactics, and different organizations might use different tactics in a dispute, we show below that it is very rare to see simultaneous nonviolent campaigns and civil war over the government.

### Nonviolent mobilization

Little or no initial training is required to participate in nonviolent dissent, and self-recruitment can be almost instantaneous during campaigns. We would expect to observe nonviolent campaigns following claims where organizations can mobilize large numbers of participants. Their ability to do so is affected by several factors. One important factor is regime type, but the effect here is different from that in claims-making. Once claims have been articulated, we expect nonviolent campaigns to be more likely in both anocracies and autocracies. In anocracies, grievances are high and the costs of protest are relatively low, thus organizing mass mobilization is easier. Although autocracies are less likely to see collective action unless individuals anticipate mass participation, crossing the threshold for claims and incipient collective action should help spur mass mobilization to nonviolent campaign, since individuals become more likely to participate when they observe others organizing. In line with Lohmann (1994) and Kuran (1995), once would-be protesters observe a smaller, dedicated group of dissidents emerging publicly to make claims on the government, they are much more likely to feel comfortable publicly expressing their previously privately-held grievances.

A country's demography also affects the ability to mobilize in a nonviolent campaign. Nonviolent efforts to challenge the government are unlikely to be successful unless there is some dissident presence in the capital city and other important urban centers (Dahl et al., 2017). This implies a greater challenge to mounting nonviolent campaigns in largely rural countries, where it is difficult for dissidents to mobilize against the government in the periphery. As such, we expect nonviolent campaign to be more likely in more urbanized countries.

In addition, given claims, we expect nonviolent campaign to be more likely in more developed countries. An advanced distribution of labor makes individual citizens more dependent on the state, thereby increasing the ability of the state to sanction. But dependence also increases the

vulnerability of the state to non-cooperation and withdrawal of consent from citizens (e.g. Butcher & Svensson, 2016). For example, while a tax boycott has little effect in a rentier state that directly obtains revenue from natural resources, in a more advanced state that relies on taxes, widespread non-cooperation is much more damaging. As such, we expect wealthier states with claims to be more likely to experience nonviolent campaigns.

The ability to organize a nonviolent campaign can also be influenced by social networks (e.g. Granovetter, 1973, 1978). Civil society comprises a set of organizations that can build ties between individuals and facilitate collective action. Given claims, states with a vibrant civil society should see a greater occurrence of nonviolent campaigns. Finally, specific tactics can be promoted by diffusion from events elsewhere. The Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia helped show the feasibility and effectiveness of nonviolent mobilization to individuals in other autocracies in the Middle East, and dissidents elsewhere explicitly emulated its main symbols (Brancati, 2016: 36). Gleditsch & Rivera (forthcoming) find evidence for diffusion of nonviolence across neighboring states and autocracies, and Braithwaite et al. (2015) find that emulation is particularly likely across autocracies when there is no recent history of domestic protests.

Finally, dissident organizations have better prospects for large-scale mobilization when they can operate abroad. Although state repression and media censorship can undermine the ability to mobilize within a country, these features can be partly compensated by operating abroad. For example, Serb dissidents mobilizing against Milosevic in 1999 could organize training sessions in neighboring Hungary. It is more difficult for a government to suppress information about events to forestall mobilization if individuals have access to foreign media.

### Violent rebellion

While effective nonviolence generally requires large-scale participation, mass participation is not necessarily needed for violence. Rather, we expect violence to be more likely in countries with maximalist political demands when these countries have features conducive to organizing insurgency. We do not expect regime type to have an effect on civil war when we focus our analysis on cases with claims, because regime type should not directly affect the ability to organize insurgency. Rather, we expect regime type primarily to affect whether countries experience claims in the first place, not subsequent violence.<sup>8</sup>

A country's demographic structure, by contrast, should influence violence, given claims. A large literature has demonstrated that peripheral insurgency can effectively challenge the government, even with a limited number of fighters (Butler & Gates, 2009; Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Urban guerrilla movements are in principle possible, but have been consistently unsuccessful (della Porta, 2006). As such, for demography, our prediction for violence is the inverse of that for nonviolence—civil war will be more likely in states with a more rural population.

State capacity should also influence civil war. While a higher degree of economic development can make nonviolent campaigns more likely, it should make violent rebellion less likely. As economic development increases, state capacity generally also increases, and states can extend their control further. This repressive capacity allows states to block dissidents from organizing

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<sup>8</sup> A central empirical finding is that anocracies or semi-democracies seem more prone to civil war than either full democracies or full autocracies. However, Vreeland (2008) argues that such findings stem from how the Polity regime data incorporates ongoing political violence into the coding of factionalist characteristics associated with anocracy.

violence, raising the costs of civil war. Indeed, one of the strongest findings in the literature is that civil wars are less common in more wealthy states.

In our discussion of claims-making we argued that concurrent violent territorial disputes should increase claims-making. We also expect the presence of civil wars over self-determination to have similar effects on the likelihood of violent rebellion in governmental disputes, given claims, although with a different mechanism. An ongoing territorial civil war restricts the available governmental forces to prevent a nascent governmental incompatibility from escalating, but it may also make training, weapons, and other military material more accessible.

As with nonviolent campaigns, we also expect that transnational dimensions will influence the ability to organize violence. Research on civil war has shown that violent mobilization is more likely when groups can rely on resources from kin or governments in neighboring states, or if rebels can benefit from access to external bases or sanctuaries (Gleditsch, 2007; Salehyan, 2009). In violent regional neighborhoods, escalating claims to violent mobilization is easier, and we expect violent rebellion to be more likely in such cases.

The above discussion related to how different factors affect dissident choices to articulate maximalist claims against governments and subsequently to organize mass nonviolent mobilization or to violently rebel. In our empirical analysis, we will test these expectations by examining the occurrence of governmental incompatibilities, nonviolent campaigns, and civil war. We appreciate that we test overall outcomes that depend in part on the government responses rather than dissident tactics alone. We may miss attempts at large scale mobilization where deaths or mobilization do not exceed the threshold. However, these outcomes will still allow us to test the implications of our theory, since they imply dissident intent.

In summary, our expectations are that, conditional on an articulated incompatibility, nonviolent campaigns will be more likely in countries that are primarily urban and civil war in countries that are primarily rural. Countries at higher levels of economic development will be more likely to experience nonviolent campaigns and less likely to see civil war. Nonviolent campaigns will be more likely in states with a higher density of civil society organizations, while we do not have a prediction for their effect on civil war. Governmental civil wars will be more likely in countries experiencing territorial civil wars, but we do not have a similar prediction for nonviolent campaigns. Autocracies and anocracies should be prone to nonviolent campaigns, but we do not expect this to extend to civil war. For both civil war and nonviolent campaigns, we expect transnational, 'neighborhood' factors to make mobilization more likely. Table 1 summarizes these expectations.

**Table 1.** Predictions about claims, nonviolent campaigns, and civil war

Concept	Effect on claims	Conditional on claims	
		Effect on nonviolent campaign	Effect on civil war
Regime type-autocracy	No effect	+	No effect
Regime type-anocracy	+	+	No effect
Urban population	No prediction	+	No effect
Rural population	No prediction	No effect	+
Economic development	-	+	-
Civil society	No prediction	+	No effect
Territorial civil wars	+	No prediction	+
Neighborhood effects	+	+	+

### Research Design

We test the predictions in Table 1 using the new Governmental Incompatibilities Data Project (GIDP) dataset. The GIDP provides data on the occurrence of organizations making maximalist claims over government for 101 countries for the period 1960-2012, collected in random order from all countries in the world, excluding consolidated democracies.<sup>9</sup> The GIDP data are, to our knowledge, unique in providing information on dissident organizations making maximalist claims independently from organized violence or large-scale mobilization.

We use a random sample because randomization assures that the cases selected should not deviate in any systematic manner from the population. Excluding consolidated democracies, there are 155 relevant countries, covering about 65% of the population of all states over the period 1960-

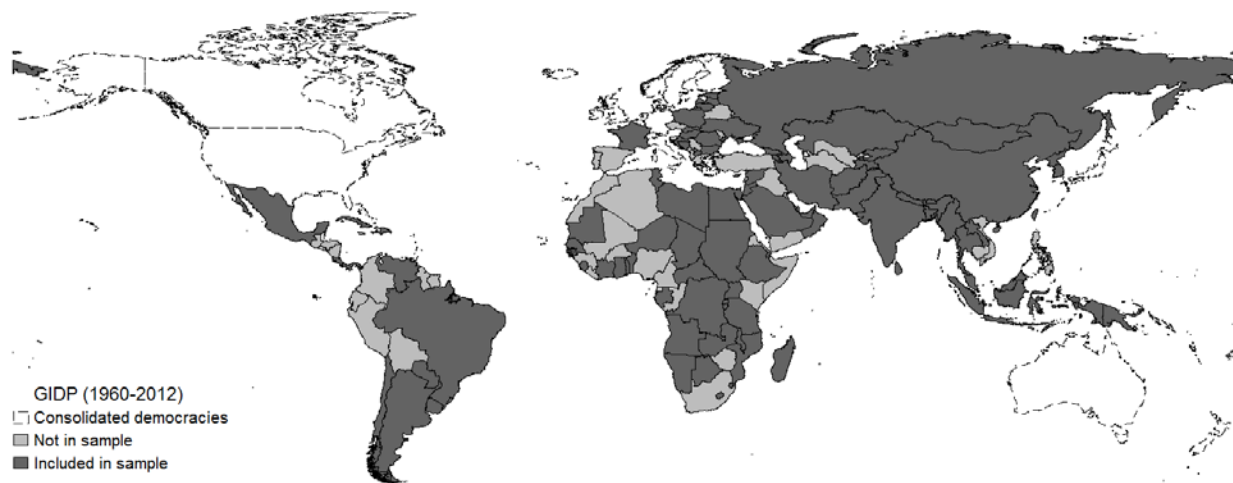
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<sup>9</sup> We define consolidated democracies as countries with a combined Polity score that does not drop below 7 between 1960-2012 and which maintain this score for at least 25 years, and without any disputed elections identified by the NELDA project (Hyde & Marinov, 2012).



2012. Figure 1 shows the countries included in the sample. Our random sample does not over-represent any particular region in the world, and the average values for key covariates in our sample do not deviate from the global average for states other than consolidated democracies, suggesting that it is representative as well as random.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 1.** Random sample of countries included in the GDP (1960-2012)



To identify incompatibilities over government, we focus on the articulation of maximalist claims by *organizations* that exist outside the government that may not reach large-scale mobilization, but entail more than isolated dissidents. Building on the ACD definition (Melander et al., 2016), a maximalist claim over government can be manifested by either claims over *electoral legitimacy* (i.e. the conduct of or circumstances under which elections or referenda took place—e.g. claims of electoral

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<sup>10</sup> More specifically, the average log GDP per capita in our sample is 7.43, compared to 7.55 in the global population of states other than consolidated democracies. The average log population in our sample is 8.95, while it is 8.40 in the global population. And the average Polity score in our sample is -1.36, compared to -0.93 in the global sample.

fraud), *government composition* (i.e. the removal of high-ranking government officials such as the state leader or cabinet-level ministers—outside of regular, institutional processes), or *regime change*, (i.e. calls for fundamental changes to the political system or political institutions). This definition of maximalist claims excludes claims limited to policy, like protest over austerity measures, which typically do not challenge the overall political system *per se*. We provide further details on the coding procedures and sources in the Online appendix.

We code claims as present as long as there are not two years without observed claims-making. This two-year intermittency rule was adopted to appropriately code the *absence* of a governmental incompatibility.<sup>11</sup> Table 2 shows the distribution of this binary variable in the data. Maximalist claims are relatively common, but certainly not ubiquitous—occurring in slightly more than half of country-years. We see substantial within country variation as well. In Oman we identify claims in 12 out of 53 years (22.6%), while in Iran we identify them in 40 out of 53 years (75.5%). We find no claims in only two countries—Latvia and Qatar.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Since we rely on secondary sources, it is unlikely that a single year without claims-making between two periods of observed claims-making truly reflects a clear end of a prior claim.

<sup>12</sup> We provide a list of all countries included and number of years with claims in the Online appendix.

**Table 2.** Yearly claim incidence of government incompatibilities in 101 countries (1960-2012)

No	2,158 (47.93%)
Yes	2,344 (52.07%)

In the analysis we consider the onset and emergence of claims as well as the likelihood of specific contentious outcomes, given claims. In the claims stage, we examine how factors influence both the onset and incidence of governmental incompatibilities, using the binary indicator of claims-making. Examining onset and incidence in separate models allows us to consider how variables affect the start of claims as well as their propensity to continue once started.<sup>13</sup> In the second set of analyses, we use censored probit to examine the onset and incidence of nonviolent and violent mobilization, given claims. Censored probit allows for correlation between errors between the equations, which may arise if unobserved factors in the first stage also exert an outcome at the second stage. The ‘selection’ stage considers whether a country experienced claims in a given year, and the outcome stage whether we have violent or nonviolent mobilization. In total, we have two logistic regressions for the likelihood of claims onset and incidence in a given country-year, and four

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<sup>13</sup> In the claims onset analysis, the sample is all country-years following two years without any claims recorded and in the claims incidence analysis all country-years are included.

censored probit regressions for nonviolent campaign and civil war onset and incidence, conditional on the existence of claims in a given country-year.<sup>14</sup>

Table 3 shows the number of years in which we identify claims in our random sample of 101 countries and whether we observe civil wars and nonviolent campaigns. We identify violent civil conflicts over the government based on the ACD data, i.e. excluding territorial civil wars. We also exclude civil wars that are merely particularly violent coups to ensure we focus on violent rebellion by dissidents rather than intra-elite violence (based on Thyne & Powell, 2011). Our measure of nonviolent campaign is from the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes Data (NAVCO, Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013), excluding nonviolent campaigns over issues other than the government such as secessionism, anti-occupation movements, or regional autonomy.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 3.** Civil war and nonviolent mobilization during years with claims

Civil war	Nonviolent campaign	
	No	Yes
No	1,457 (73.88%)	116 (5.88%)
Yes	389 (19.73%)	10 (0.51%)

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<sup>14</sup> In the civil war and nonviolent campaign onset analyses, the sample includes all claims-years following two years without a governmental armed conflict or nonviolent campaign, respectively. The two incidence models include all country-years.

<sup>15</sup> We include one anti-occupation campaign—the 1968 Czech Anti-Soviet Occupation—since the protests also involved claims related to the Czech puppet regime.

Table 3 shows that a large majority of years in which countries had organizations making maximalist claims saw no civil war or nonviolent campaigns (73.88%). It also shows country-years with civil war (399) are far more common than those with nonviolent campaigns (126). The higher frequency of civil wars is in part due to their longer duration, as nonviolent campaigns tend to either succeed or fail relatively quickly and mass mobilization is difficult for long time periods.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Table 3 shows that simultaneous nonviolent campaigns and civil war over the government are quite rare (10 of 1,972 country-years).

Our theoretical framework identifies regime type as a first factor influencing contentious outcomes. We measure regime type using the three subcomponents from the Polity IV index (Marshall et al., 2002) —Competitiveness of Executive Recruitment (XRCOMP), Executive Constraints (XCONST), and the Openness of Executive Recruitment (XROPEN), which Vreeland (2008) uses to construct his XPOLITY measure. We modified the XPOLITY measure slightly to incorporate the Polity2 variable's decision-rules for dealing with missing values for foreign occupations, transition periods, and interregnums.<sup>17</sup> This produces a 14-point Polity scale ranging from -6 to 7 (including 0). From this we generated binary indicators for autocracy (ranging from -6 to -3) and anocracy (from -2 to 3), which we compare to democracies (between 4 and 7) as the base category.

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<sup>16</sup> There are 41 country-years with civil war onsets relative to 81 country-years with nonviolent campaign onsets.

<sup>17</sup> We coded foreign occupations as missing, interregnums as the ‘neutral’ value of 0, and ‘pro-rated’ (i.e. linearly interpolated) transitions between the beginning and end of the transition periods.

The second set of variables focuses on demography and economic development. For the first, we consider the total urban population and total rural population (both log-transformed) from United Nations data (2014), and for the second we use the natural log of GDP per capita from Gleditsch (2002).

To examine the effect of civil society strength, we use a measure of international connectivity based on Smith & Weist (2012), counting the number of international NGO (INGO) chapters in a particular country-year. The data accounts for 2-3 years for each country; accordingly we linearly interpolate missing values for the intervening country-years.

We create two variables for neighborhood effects. In the armed conflict model, we include a binary indicator of whether there was an armed conflict over government in a neighboring country within 500 kilometers of the country's borders.<sup>18</sup> A similar variable was included for neighboring nonviolent campaigns over the government (from NAVCO) in the nonviolent campaign model. We cannot conclusively examine the effect of the diffusion of claims without global data. However, to see if nonviolent campaigns in neighboring countries make claims more likely, we include the measure of transnational nonviolent campaign in the claims model as well. To measure the effect of territorial conflict within the country, we use the ACD to generate a dichotomous measure of whether the country is experiencing an internal armed conflict over territory in the year. The Online Appendix reports the descriptive statistics of the variables.

We use a slightly different specification in the two stage models than the logit models of claims onset and incidence. To ensure identification, a censored probit should have at least one predictor for the selection equation not related to the outcome. Accordingly, since we expect

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<sup>18</sup> Based on minimum distances from *Cshapes* (Weidmann et al., 2010).

diffusion to be limited to the specific type of mobilization, and not diffusion across tactics (see Gleditsch & Rivera, forthcoming), we include the neighboring civil war over government variable only in the selection (claims) stage of the nonviolent campaign model, and the neighboring nonviolent campaign variable only in the selection (claims) stage of the civil war model.

We lag the independent variables by one year to avoid simultaneous influences from the outcomes we examine. Since the errors may vary systematically by country, we report robust standard errors clustered by country. To deal with temporal dependence, we include—but do not report—cubic polynomials of the time since each outcome in each model (Carter & Signorino, 2010).<sup>19</sup> Table 4 reports the results of the logit analyses of claims onset and incidence, while Table 5 reports the results of the censored probit analysis of civil war and nonviolent campaign conditional on claims.

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<sup>19</sup> In each of the selection equations we included a cubic polynomial of time since claims—which did not appear in the respective outcome equation.

## Results

**Table 4.** Logit analysis of claims incidence and onset

	Claims incidence	Claims onset
Autocracy	0.336* (0.139)	0.121 (0.205)
Anocracy	0.904** (0.186)	0.656** (0.244)
GDP per capita	0.080 (0.082)	-0.006 (0.087)
Urban population	0.032 (0.084)	0.005 (0.093)
Rural population	0.147 (0.102)	0.090 (0.095)
INGO chapters	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)
Territorial civil war	0.624* (0.306)	0.690* (0.273)
Neighboring nonviolent campaign	0.358** (0.135)	0.559** (0.152)
Constant	-1.143 (0.918)	-2.745** (0.789)
Observations	3,353	1,666

Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , +  $p < 0.1$ .  
Cubic polynomial estimates of risk-time not shown.

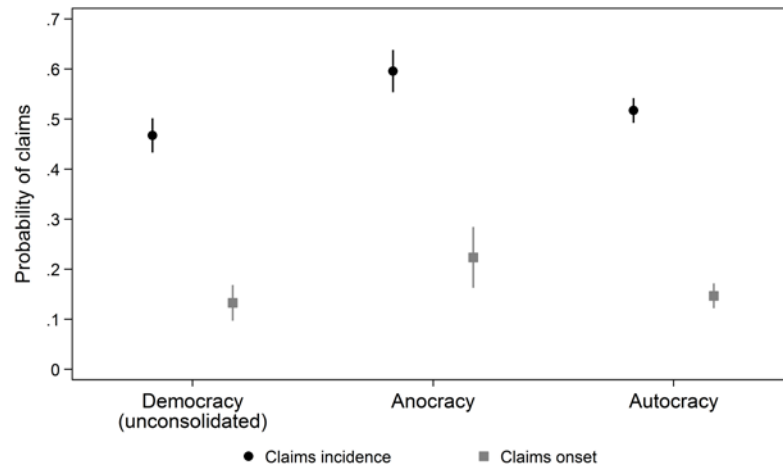
The logit analyses of claims incidence and onset in Table 4 generally support the predictions in Table 1. With regards to regime type, we find as expected that anocracies are the most likely to experience both the onset and incidence of claims, as the variable is positive and significant, and the coefficient is quite large relative to autocracy and democracy—the base category. Autocracy is significant at conventional levels in the incidence model, but the coefficient is less than half the size of that of anocracy and it is insignificant in the onset model. This insignificance suggests that, in line with our theoretical expectations, it is difficult for overt claims-making to be established in autocracies relative to anocracies. The positive and significant finding for autocracy in the claims



incidence models suggests that once maximalist claims are made in autocracies they last longer than in democracies.

In Figure 2 we plot the predicted probabilities from the claims models, conditional on regime-type in the prior year. These results show that, on average and holding other factors constant, a democracy has a likelihood of 46.72% of claims incidence and a likelihood of 13.26% of seeing the onset of claims. For anocracies the likelihoods are 59.56% (incidence) and 22.34% (onset), and for autocracies, they are 51.69% (incidence) and 14.67% (onset). Put differently, anocracies are, on average, 27.49% more likely to see claims incidence than democracies, while autocracies are only 10.66% more likely. The difference is much starker for the onset of claims: anocracies are 68.49% more likely to see the onset of claims than democracies, while autocracies are only 10.64% more likely.

**Figure 2.** Predicted probabilities of claims incidence and onset for different regime-types



*Note:* Bars next to point estimates indicate 95% confidence intervals.

**Table 5.** Censored probit models of claims and mobilization outcomes

	Nonviolent campaign				Civil war			
	Onset	Claims	Incidence	Claims	Onset	Claims	Incidence	Claims
Autocracy	0.779*	0.122	1.179**	0.154+	-0.141	0.115	0.161	0.194*
	(0.316)	(0.082)	(0.324)	(0.080)	(0.169)	(0.083)	(0.144)	(0.082)
Anocracy	0.432	0.498**	0.814*	0.510**	-0.116	0.429**	0.143	0.528**
	(0.350)	(0.107)	(0.341)	(0.107)	(0.229)	(0.117)	(0.169)	(0.108)
GDP per capita	0.071	0.039	0.079	0.045	0.034	0.028	-0.075	0.045
	(0.101)	(0.046)	(0.096)	(0.045)	(0.102)	(0.049)	(0.090)	(0.047)
Urban population	0.069	0.015	0.124	0.016	-0.108	0.060	-0.173*	0.011
	(0.093)	(0.048)	(0.100)	(0.046)	(0.098)	(0.049)	(0.071)	(0.049)
Rural population	0.067	0.081	-0.042	0.088	0.152	0.029	0.146+	0.092
	(0.097)	(0.059)	(0.089)	(0.057)	(0.110)	(0.056)	(0.086)	(0.059)
INGO chapters	0.003*	-0.000	0.006**	-0.000	-0.003+	-0.001	0.001	-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Territorial civil war	-0.615+	0.330+	-0.395	0.308+	0.187	0.274+	0.223	0.357*
	(0.342)	(0.173)	(0.319)	(0.173)	(0.263)	(0.155)	(0.153)	(0.175)
Neighboring nonviolent campaign	0.332*		0.316*			0.220**		0.210**
	(0.134)		(0.138)			(0.079)		(0.075)
Neighboring civil war over government		0.192**		0.176*	0.083		0.336**	
		(0.074)		(0.071)	(0.120)		(0.110)	
Constant	-4.958**	-0.578	-3.117**	-0.669	-1.854+	-0.390	0.589	-0.633
	(1.103)	(0.534)	(0.879)	(0.522)	(0.998)	(0.494)	(0.884)	(0.526)
Rho		0.115		0.045		-0.193		-0.166
		(0.167)		(0.182)		(0.189)		(0.146)
Observations	3,265	3,265	3,373	3,373	2,852	2,852	3,353	3,353

Robust standard errors in parentheses. \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , +  $p < 0.1$

Cubic polynomial estimates of risk-time not shown

Turning to the two-stage models of civil war and nonviolent campaign (Table 5), results from the censored probits are also consistent with the theoretical expectations in Table 1. Both autocracy and anocracy are highly significant with large coefficients for nonviolent campaign incidence, meaning that once claims are observed in both types of non-democracies, they are much more likely to experience large-scale protest campaigns than democracies with similar maximalist political demands. This shows that anocracy, in particular, can have a dual effect on nonviolent campaigns—we are more likely to see the start and endurance of collective articulation of maximalist political demands in anocracies, and it is much more likely that nonviolent campaigns take place subsequent to claims in such states.<sup>20</sup> Curiously, the anocracy indicator is insignificant in the onset model for nonviolent campaigns, although it is positive (the expected direction).

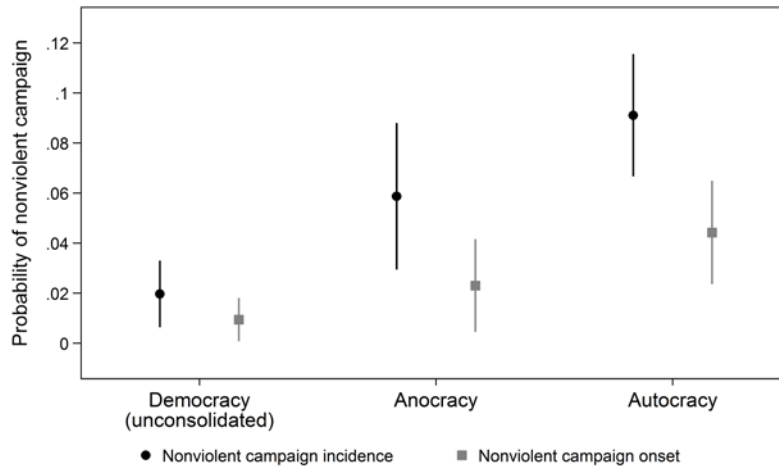
Figure 3 plots the predicted probabilities generated from the nonviolent campaign onset and incidence models, depending on regime-type in the prior year and conditional on claims. These results show that an (unconsolidated) democracy has a likelihood of 1.97% of nonviolent mobilization, while anocracies and autocracies have a 5.87% and 9.10% chance, respectively. For

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<sup>20</sup> The estimated correlation between the errors is modest and insignificant in all the models in Table 5. Since the efficiency of the selection model may be questionable in this case (see Vance & Ritter, 2014), we provide alternative two-part estimates in the Online appendix, treating the second stage outcomes for country-years as independent of the first stage. Our main findings do not generally change from the censored probit, although autocracy and anocracy become significantly positively associated with civil war incidence, and the positive coefficient for territorial civil war becomes marginally significant.

onset, the probabilities are lower—given the rarity of the onset of nonviolent campaigns, but the same overall pattern holds: 0.94% for unconsolidated democracies, 2.30% for anocracies, and 4.42% for autocracies.

**Figure 3.** Predicted probability of nonviolent campaign incidence and onset for different regime-types, conditional on claims



*Note:* Bars next to point estimates indicate 95% confidence intervals.

Neither autocracy nor anocracy, meanwhile, are statistically significant for either the incidence or onset of civil war, given claims. This is striking, given the general (if disputed, per Vreeland, 2008) finding in the civil war literature that *anocracies* are most prone to civil war (e.g. Hegre et al., 2001). By splitting the process leading to civil war into two stages, we find that anocracies are more likely to experience maximalist political demands that *may* lead to civil war, but, conditional upon these claims being present, civil war is not more likely. This suggests that anocracy provides an opportunity structure for initial mobilization that might become violent *or* nonviolent

rather than a direct effect on civil war *per se*. Other factors influence whether or not nascent disputes over government in anocracies escalate to civil war.

The findings on demography provide weaker support for the expectations from our theory, possibly reflecting that they provide crude measures of resources. Neither the urban nor the rural population terms are statistically significant for either the onset or incidence of claims, as expected. Conditional upon claims, the coefficient for urban population is positive (as expected), suggesting a higher likelihood of nonviolent campaign, but this does not reach the conventional statistical significance threshold in the onset or incidence models.<sup>21</sup> And while not anticipated, countries with large urban populations are less likely to see the incidence of civil war—though this finding does not extend to onset. This suggests that urbanization does not exert a significant impact on whether dissidents initially resort to violence in pursuing maximalist claims, but reduces the likelihood that violent mobilization is able to continue in the years after the onset of violence.<sup>22</sup> We see some evidence for our expectation that rural population makes violent conflict more likely (the coefficient

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<sup>21</sup> Some of this may be attributed to the United Nations data on demographics, which does not include defunct states. This excludes East Germany and Czechoslovakia—which were relatively urbanized and saw large-scale nonviolent mobilization in the late-1980s. Another factor is the relative rarity of civil war onsets (55) versus incidence (397) in our sample, which inevitably will increase uncertainty over coefficient estimates.

<sup>22</sup> In separate analyses, we replaced the urban and rural population measures with a single measure of total population (logged, from Gleditsch, 2002) and find no substantive change to the main results. Total population was significant and positive in the claims incidence model only; in all other models it was insignificant.

is positive and significant at the .10 level in the incidence model). Economic development, meanwhile, is not significant in any of the models.<sup>23</sup>

Our measure of civil society shows effects generally consistent with expectations. The number of international NGOs present in the country is highly significant and positive for nonviolent campaign onset and incidence, and has no effect on claims-making. Interestingly, while we anticipated no effect for civil society on civil war, given claims, the impact is actually negative and significant at the .10 level in the civil onset model. This suggests that civil society can play an important role in mobilizing citizen participation in large-scale protests in countries with maximalist demands, but makes violent mobilization less likely by providing a more favorable opportunity structure for nonviolent mobilization.

The effect of territorial civil war in the country is generally consistent with our expectations with regards to the onset and incidence of maximalist claims. We argued that territorial civil war would provide opportunities to challenge the regime, and we find a statistically significant and positive effect on claims. However, while the coefficient for territorial civil war is positive in both the incidence and onset models of governmental civil war, neither reaches significance at conventional levels.

The neighborhood variables show interesting patterns generally consistent with our expectations. Neighboring nonviolent campaigns are significant and positive in both the onset and incidence models for claims and for nonviolent mobilization, while neighboring civil war over government is significant and positive in the civil war incidence model, and positive but insignificant

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<sup>23</sup> By excluding consolidated democracies, we have removed some of the most developed states, which might have contributed to this null result.

in the onset analysis. Generally, the results suggest that armed conflicts over government are more likely when an armed conflict over government occurs in a country in that state's neighborhood—consistent with literature on the diffusion of civil war (Gleditsch, 2007). The findings in the nonviolent mobilization models are consistent with studies showing nonviolent campaigns diffuse spatially (Braithwaite et al., 2015; Gleditsch & Rivera, forthcoming), but the finding that nonviolent campaign in the neighborhood makes claims more likely suggests a further mechanism for diffusion. Large-scale challenges to governments in one state can serve as an initial spark to dissident challenges in others and then also increase significantly the chances of mass mobilization.<sup>24</sup>

### **Further analyses**

We conducted a battery of robustness checks on both our analysis of claims and of mobilization outcomes, conditional on claims (reported in the Online appendix). We consider possible crossover effects of civil war and nonviolent campaign, by including the number of years since the other type of contentious outcome. We found no substantive change to our main results, save for a slight decrease for the civil society measure on the nonviolent campaign onset model. We also looked at leader tenure as another measure of stability (Goemans, Gleditsch & Chiozza, 2009). Leader tenure is positively and significantly associated with the incidence of maximalist claims, however, including tenure did not lead to any substantive changes to our findings.

When restricting violent mobilization models to conflict-years that exceed 1,000 battle-deaths we find that autocracy becomes significant at conventional levels in both the onset and the

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<sup>24</sup> We also tested the effect of neighboring armed conflict over government on claims-making and found a positive and significant effect for incidence and a positive, but insignificant result for onset.



incidence models, while anocracy achieves weak significance in only the incidence model. This suggests that violent contests over government can escalate at a greater rate in autocracies. Still, the results remain consistent with our main findings and expectations for anocracy; the effect of anocracy on civil war is primarily at the claims stage, rather than at the escalation to civil war.

In addition, we replaced GDP per capita with two alternative measures of state capacity—the Relative Political Reach index (RPR, Kugler & Tammen, 2012)<sup>25</sup> and Hendrix & Young's (2014) latent measure of military capabilities. Our findings regarding anocracies' large effect on claims remain unchanged. Greater bureaucratic capacity is significantly and positively associated with the onset and incidence of nonviolent campaigns, given claims. Military capacity is negatively and significantly associated with the onset of claims—though not incidence.

Finally, there is a plausible concern that our use of the 'neighboring' mobilization indicator in the selection (claims) stage may be affected by claims in a given country, as well as affect the likelihood of mobilization overall. To provide added confidence that reverse causality does not drive our finding, we introduce an indicator for whether *a neighbor of a neighbor* was experiencing either civil war or a nonviolent campaign (see Braumoullé et al., 2009). These analyses do not lead to any substantive change to our main findings.

## **Conclusion**

Civil wars and nonviolent campaigns rarely explode out of nowhere, rather, they typically arise out of a prior interaction between regimes and dissidents in which dissidents advance maximalist goals

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<sup>25</sup> We also drop urban and rural population from these models, since total population and the proportion of the population that is urbanized are components of the index.

and regimes try to respond to them. Much of the literature on civil war and nonviolent campaigns, however, ignores this initial claims-making phase and instead focuses directly on the latter stage. In so doing, it cannot explain why some countries do not have organizations making maximalist political demands and others do, and why, within the set that do, some see large-scale mass mobilization, others see peripheral insurgency, and still others avoid large-scale outcomes.

In this article, we develop a theoretical framework that examines these two stages separately and test empirical implications arising from that framework using new data on incompatibilities over government. These analyses reveal interesting insights into the effect of factors such as economic development, civil society, and diffusion on nonviolent campaigns and civil war. The findings on regime type are particularly striking. We show that the common finding that anocracies are more prone to civil war primarily stems from them being more prone to maximalist political demands that *could* lead to violent mobilization, depending on other factors conducive to creating focused military capacity. Being a non-democracy has a double effect at promoting nonviolent campaign, however, since anocracies and autocracies are both more likely to experience claims and, given claims, more prone to nonviolent campaigns. The relationship between regime type and contentious politics is complex, and analyzing the process leading to large-scale action in two stages enables us to more clearly identify the mechanisms behind the correlations between factors such as regime type, demography, and civil war and nonviolent campaigns.

The data that we present here has the additional potential to contribute to our understanding of external actions that make violence more or less likely. A large body of scholarship has examined how different international actions—such as peacekeeping, mediation, and military intervention—contribute to conflict resolution. However, there is little work on how these factors might make the outbreak of civil war more or less likely since it is difficult to identify disputes with the potential to

be civil wars but with variation in violence. These governmental incompatibilities can be seen as a sample of *potential* civil wars, and research could examine how actions taken in dispute years influence the likelihood of violence.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, future research could focus more directly on the organizations articulating maximalist political demands, and examine how characteristics of these organizations influence whether or how large-scale mobilization occurs. The literature on civil war has advanced in recent years through analysis of characteristics of actors such as rebel groups (see, for example, Cunningham, Gleditsch & Salehyan, 2009). However, studies of civil war onset and nonviolent campaigns generally lack information on dissidents themselves, and typically do not incorporate features of these organizations into analysis of these outcomes. Through identifying governmental incompatibilities we can analyze why organizations adopt different strategies.

### **Replication data**

The dataset and do-files for the empirical analysis in this article, as well as the Online appendix, can be found at <http://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets>.

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<sup>26</sup> Beardsley, Cunningham & White (forthcoming) adopt a similar approach in territorial disputes.

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