IMF Programs and the Distributional Politics of Human Rights Repression

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Abstract: A long-standing research stream demonstrated with evidence at the national level that IMF programs are associated with more protests and human rights violations. Recent micro-level work argues that governments manage adjustment burdens strategically through *distributional politics*, protecting supporters while shifting burdens onto opposition constituencies. Extending this approach to repression, we ask who governments repress to maintain political control over the lifecycle of an IMF program, and how these patterns vary across regime types. We construct a monthly panel dataset of 702 administrative regions in 48 African countries from 1997 to 2021. Combining georeferenced event data from the ACLED database with original subnational election returns, we track state repression and protest at the subnational level during the negotiation and implementation phases of IMF bailouts.

Contrary to standard distributional expectations, our findings reveal a coalition-management logic: rather than targeting the opposition, governments systematically concentrate violence in their own strongholds. Tightening our definition of stronghold from 60% to 70% and 80% incumbent vote share, we find that this repression is most intense in marginal strongholds and often attenuate in overwhelming strongholds. The timing of coercion follows a phased pattern: violence against civilians rises most clearly during negotiations, while repression of protesters becomes more salient during implementation. These dynamics are also strongly regime-conditional. In democracies, we find little evidence of negotiation-phase repression and some evidence of in overt repression of protest during implementation, alongside a pronounced increase in state violence against civilians in strongholds. These patterns may indicate democratic governments substitute toward less visible tactics under stronger domestic and international constraints. In autocracies, negotiations are marked by anticipatory state violence against civilians in strongholds, while implementation is associated with increased repression of protesters in strongholds and heightened use of excessive force.

Keywords: IMF programs; protest; repression; Africa; subnational data
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1. Introduction

In July 2024, at least 39 civilians were killed and hundreds were injured by Kenyan police while protesting the government's proposed 346 billion Kenyan shillings ($2.6 billion) tax increase. The tax bill was intended to generate government revenue, a condition of the $2.34 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) 38-month loan issued to Kenya in April 2021 (Lawal 2024). Citizens protesting the pain associated with IMF lending and governments responding to these protests with repression to maintain control have been documented over decades of research (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007, 2009; Abouharb and Reinsberg 2023; Almeida and Pérez-Martin 2022; Pion-Berlin 1983; Hartzell et al. 2010; Reinsberg and Abouharb 2024; Walton and Ragin 1990).

Nevertheless, gaps in our knowledge remain. While careful reporting from journalists describes how protestors are often met with a rifle butt, rubber bullets, and sometimes much worse, we have little systematic knowledge of *who* is the target of government repression during times of IMF austerity lending. In this article, we build upon long-standing research in human rights on which types of regimes are more likely to violate their citizens' rights (Davenport and Armstrong 2004) and why they do so (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003; Gartner and Regan 1996; Moore 1998; Poe 2004). We consider the periods when governments negotiate an agreement with the Fund and also the subsequent implementation phase as critical times where governments may use repression against their citizens. Earlier work argues that authoritarian governments, in particular, use repression against their citizens, sending a signal to the IMF about their willingness to push through difficult economic reforms and to increase their chances of securing a loan agreement (Pion-Berlin 1983). This links to research elsewhere in international relations that autocrats find it more challenging to send credible signals about their willingness to follow through on policy change (Leeds 1988). Concrete actions targeting potential opponents of liberal economic reforms, such as union leaders, may be one way to demonstrate credibility (Pion-Berlin 1983). Potential austerity measures, job losses, and cuts in subsidies, which often accompany these loans but remain opaque during the negotiation phase, also encourage people to protest (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007). When governments repress during this negotiation phase, they demonstrate their willingness to steam roll opposition to painful economic reforms. Recent advances in the literature have focused on the implementation phase of these reform programs, demonstrating the distributional politics of IMF lending (Abouharb and Reinsberg 2023; Reinsberg and Abouharb 2024). In many cases, these governments seek to concentrate the benefits of these reforms among their support base to the detriment of those who support the opposition. Those targeted by the state for the pain of adjustment often respond by protesting (Reinsberg and Abouharb 2023).

While the previous research on the distributional politics of IMF lending does not examine how governments respond to this protest, a long-standing research stream in human rights indicates that governments respond to a threat to their retention of political power, often manifested in anti-government protest, with repression (Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003; Gartner and Regan 1996; Moore 1998; Poe 2004). In this research, we synthesize insights from these streams to examine government repression during negotiations and the implementation of IMF reform programs. We

argue that governments, particularly those with fewer institutional constraints, primarily repress those who support the opposition during each phase of the program: first to demonstrate their commitment to reform by sending signals to the Fund about their resolve, and later during periods of austerity to maintain control and retain power.

To better understand whom governments repress, we move beyond the existing literature by shifting our analysis to the subnational level of analysis, combined with a finer-grained measurement of time, where we analyse events using the month as the unit of study. This contrasts with almost all quantitative research, which has examined the repression of human rights at the national level and annually during IMF programs. Our move to the subnational level of analysis stems from the insights provided by the distributional politics approach taken in recent research (Abouharb and Reinsberg 2023; Reinsberg and Abouharb 2024). It provides an essential lens for understanding not only how governments reward their supporters and deny the opposition during periods of IMF reform programs, but also for drawing insights into where repression occurs and why. By locating our analysis at more local levels of administration, we can map out where repression takes and under what conditions. Drawing on the logic of distributional politics, we expect that both democratic and autocratic governments will repress constituencies composed primarily of opposition supporters. They are targeted by the state with austerity measures to meet its obligations to the Fund under these programs.

To be sure, autocratic regimes face greater incentives to repress to signal their willingness to act as a reliable partner to the IMF (Pion-Berlin 1983), because they are less credible in their commitments (Leeds 1999) to carry out economic reform agreements with the Fund. While autocratic states must work harder to demonstrate their willingness to undertake painful economic reforms, they also face fewer institutional constraints than their democratic counterparts and use repression to remove impediments and opposition to the economic reform packages agreed with the IMF. We think that both democratic and autocratic governments will concentrate their violence in opposition-held areas of the country, but that democratic norms and institutions may constrain governments in democratic states in their use of violence during these periods.

To test our hypotheses, we construct a monthly panel dataset of 702 administrative regions in 48 African countries from 1997 to 2021. We draw on the detailed event codes from the ACLED database and original data on subnational elections to examine protest–repression dynamics in the context of shifting political allegiances and under economic crises involving IMF bailouts. The ACLED database captures events involving state repression of protest, violence against civilians, and abductions and forced disappearances. To examine *who* is targeted and *when* over the course of the IMF program lifecycle, we build on Tang (2026) measuring whether a subnational region is a stronghold of the incumbent and identifying when a country is negotiating or implementing an IMF loan program.

Across specifications, we find that coercion during IMF episodes is not primarily concentrated in opposition areas; instead, it is systematically more likely to occur in government strongholds. The timing of coercion also varies across the IMF program lifecycle: violence against civilians rises most clearly during negotiations, while repression of protesters becomes more salient during

implementation. Beyond the average effect, we identify a non-linear loyalty-repression curve by testing our findings across different electoral thresholds. We find that the intensification of repression is strongest in secure-but-not untouchable strongholds (60-70% incumbent vote share) and often weaker in overwhelming strongholds (≥80%), suggesting that regimes either possess higher levels of organizational penetration in these areas or fear that visible coercion would be too politically costly among their most loyal constituents. Our baseline comparisons treat swing and opposition regions as the reference category (non-strongholds), but results are substantively unchanged when we instead use a binary indicator for opposition strongholds and estimate strongholds versus opposition areas directly.

These patterns are strongly regime-dependent. In *autocracies*, negotiations are associated with a significant increase in the intensity of state-led violence against civilians in strongholds, signalling a logic of preemptive coercion. During IMF program implementation, autocrats shift to overt repression of protesters. In contrast, *democracies* exhibit a pattern of strategic substitution toward less visible tactics under stronger domestic and international constraints: implementation is linked to increased violence against civilians in strongholds alongside weaker—or negative—evidence of overt repression of protest.

Our findings contribute to two main areas of research. First, we expand on the existing literature on the socio-political effects of IMF programs, specifically regarding protest (Abouharb and Reinsberg 2023; Auvinen 1996; Ortiz and Béjar 2013; Reinsberg et al. 2023). While previous studies often focus on the occurrence of protests, we fill a gap by examining what happens after these events: the government's response. We show that different types of regimes respond to dissent in distinct ways, likely shaped by their respective domestic and international constraints.

Second, we contribute to the literature on human rights violations in the context of economic adjustment (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2009; Mukherjee and Yadav 2024; Nelson and Dinkel 2020). Our study is the first to offer a multi-country, sub-national analysis, moving beyond the typical country-level focus of this research. We demonstrate that patterns of protest and repression are not uniform within countries but follow a logic of partisan alignment. We also demonstrate differences across regime types, so far unaccounted by the literature. We turn to our theoretical argument next.

2. Argument

2.1. IMF Programs and Human Rights

The earlier illustration from Kenya accords with previous research that physical integrity rights violations worsen under IMF lending (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007; Mark 2018). Governments often use repression in response to citizens' protests. These protests are driven by painful adjustment measures agreed between the government and the Fund to facilitate an economic rescue package. Existing work has focused on cross-national metrics of human rights, finding that IMF programs are associated with more frequent use of political imprisonment, extra-judicial

killing, torture, and enforced disappearances. While informative, the national level of focus of existing work leaves unexplored *whose* rights are violated, which we focus on. Earlier research on authoritarian governments in Latin America has shown that these regimes repressed groups opposed to IMF lending, particularly unions, to demonstrate to the IMF that they would implement any agreed-upon reform packages (Pion-Berlin 1983).

The existing research suggests that worsened human rights violations are often associated with IMF lending, with some indication that opposition groups may be the targets of the state. To build upon this, we incorporate insights from the broader literature on distributional politics about who governments favour (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Kopecký 2011; Kopecký et al. 2016; Oliveros 2021; Panizza et al. 2019; van de Walle 2007) and more recent work about how distributional politics manifests in times of economic austerity associated with IMF programs (Abouharb and Reinsberg 2024; Reinsberg and Abouharb 2023). Taken together, they help to better understand who governments may target with human rights violations and who they spare. These insights, as discussed below, lead us to expect that governments will utilise human rights violations primarily against opposition supporters.

2.2. IMF Programs, Distributional Politics, Protest, & Repression

The prevalence of distributional politics across many developed and developing countries provides important insight into how many states function and how this is affected during periods of economic malaise. We think it provides the key theoretical links to understand who is made financially worse off during times of IMF induced austerity, who protests, and ultimately who governments repress to maintain control.

The literature on distributional politics overwhelmingly focuses on the benefits that some groups receive. Governments often fill public-sector jobs with individuals who support them (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Kopecky 2011; Kopecky et al. 2016; Panizza et al. 2018; Oliveros 2021; Van de Walle 2007). In other areas, governments take a more probabilistic approach, tending to spend in the regions that support them with greater provision of public sector infrastructure, including electrification, potable water, the building of schools and healthcare clinics in their constituencies, compared to those who support the opposition (Harding 2015; Harris and Posner 2019; Kramon and Posner 2013).

Extending the logic of distributional politics in the context of IMF austerity, recent work argues that governments target opposition supporters with the burdens of adjustment lending, reserving benefits for their supporters (Reinsberg and Abouharb 2023). Opposition supporters were much more likely to face the economic costs of these programs, including worsened poverty and access to healthcare (Reinsberg and Abouharb 2023). In turn, opposition supporters protest more in countries under IMF programs (Reinsberg and Abouharb 2024). Their findings complement prior research indicating that these programs are associated with more protests (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007; Almeida and Pérez-Martin 2022; Haggard and Kaufman 1992; Ortiz and Béjar 2013; Vreeland 2003; Walton and Ragin 1990).

We argue that this distributional politics takes a darker turn in times of economic distress. When governments face domestic protests, they are more likely to repress opposition supporters. Existing work suggests that governments respond to protests that threaten their retention of political power with repression (Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003; Gartner and Regan 1996; Moore 1998; Poe 2004). However, it does not explicitly examine subnational variation in repression depending on whether individuals or areas support the government or the opposition, which we examine in this research. While the recent work on the distributional politics of protest indicates that opposition supporters protest more (Reinsberg and Abouharb 2024), it does not examine who governments target with repression in the context of IMF lending.

We link these findings that governments respond to threats with repression to the recent distributional politics of IMF lending literature, which suggests that opposition supporters are more likely to be targeted with the burdens of adjustment and then protest more (Reinsberg and Abouharb 2024). This leads us to argue that governments primarily target opposition supporters for repression and our first hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 1*: Governments under IMF lending agreements are more likely to repress opposition supporters' physical integrity rights.

Nevertheless, the literature suggests some crucial factors that may influence governments' responses in such situations. In particular, the large literature on human rights violations indicates that authoritarian regimes, which are less encumbered by institutional constraints, are more likely to repress their citizens (Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Poe and Tate 1994). We explore these mediating factors next.

2.3. The Role of Regimes Mediating IMF Programs, Distributional Politics, & Repression

Democrats face more institutional constraints in their use of repression (Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Poe and Tate 1994; Poe et al. 1999). While both democrats and autocrats may face similar demands to cut spending and meet budgetary cuts agreed upon with the IMF, each will need to consider how to respond to both external and internal pressures.

Externally, the government will need to comply with the IMF's conditions for lending.[1] The government may also need to respond cooperatively to other interested parties, like the US and the EU, who have frequently made references to the protection of human rights as a linchpin for the continuity of support (Abouharb and Cingranelli 2007). Democratic governments may well be more sensitive to criticism of human rights violations (Risse et al. 2013).

[1] There is debate about the extent to which austerity demands from the IMF, as part of the UN family, can sit alongside other goals including UN SDG 17.15, Respect Each Country's Policy Space And Leadership to Establish and Implement Policies for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda Third International Conference on Finance for Development endorsed by the UNGA in 2015 A/RES/69/313, which links financing for development with the respect of human rights (https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_69_313.pdf).

Internally, the government faces the need to manage often unsavoury cuts whilst preventing any protest from threatening their retention of political power. Authoritarian regimes may face fewer constraints in using repression when faced with domestic threats (Bueno de Mesquita et al 2003; Gartner and Regan 1996; Moore 1998; Poe 2004).

If both democrats and autocrats use a distributional logic to human rights repression, then we would expect both to be sensitive to who protests: the individuals and areas who support the government, compared to those who support the opposition. The development of the literature on protest and repression suggests complex relationships across democracies and autocracies. There is some evidence that nonviolent protest in democracies is perceived as less threatening to a democratically elected regime because it remains within the bounds of everyday politics (Almeida 2019). Authoritarian regimes are also sensitive to domestic protest and can utilise a range of responses, ranging from co-operation to repression (Elfstrom and Li 2019; Göbel 2020). Autocrats, who lack the legitimacy of their democratic counterparts, may view any protest as potentially destabilizing (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003).

This suggests that the constraints faced by democrats, combined with a norm of protest across many democratic societies, make them less likely than their autocratic counterparts to suppress protests. They may also face greater constraints on their ability to repress opposition supporters and in areas they hold. Autocrats have greater flexibility about where they can utilise human rights violations; they may choose to concentrate violence in opposition-supporting areas to prevent protest from spiralling out of control. This leads us to our next hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 2*: Autocratic governments under IMF lending agreements will repress opposition supporters' physical integrity rights more than democracies.

In our research, we also seek to unpack the negotiation and implementation phases of adjustment lending. As noted earlier, we expect repression to occur during both phases, but for different reasons. While we discussed how repression can take place during the implementation phase to maintain control, earlier research on autocratic regimes in Latin America suggests that these governments were willing to use repression during the negotiation phase with the IMF. They did so to signal to the Fund their willingness to undertake painful economic reforms to improve their chances of successfully negotiating a reform package (Pion-Berlin 1983). This leads to our third hypothesis.

> *Hypothesis 3*: Autocratic governments under IMF lending agreements will repress opposition supporters' physical integrity rights more than democracies, particularly during the negotiation phase.

3. Research design

To test our hypotheses, we construct a monthly panel dataset of 702 administrative regions (ADM1) in 48 African countries from 1997 to 2021. Our summary statistics is in the appendix Table A1. Our geographical scope is limited to Africa due to the availability of disaggregated event data on protest and repression as well as subnational election outcomes. This is not necessarily a

disadvantage, as Africa is a region with frequent exposure to balance-of-payments problems and IMF programs while at the same time involving a diversity of political regimes that allow us to test our hypotheses. To avoid over-aggregation, we construct the dataset at the monthly level, which is rare in the literature on the political economy of IMF programs.

3.1. Dependent variables

Our primary dependent variable is constructed using the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which records instances of political violence and protest across Africa with standardized information on actors, event types, location, and timing. ACLED provides geo-referenced data at the ADM1 level, including both administrative region names and precise latitude/longitude coordinates. To ensure consistency with our other datasets, all ACLED ADM1 names are harmonized to match the Global Administrative Areas (GADM) 3.6 administrative boundaries[2] database.

Drawing on the rich coding in the ACLED database, we employ two sets of dependent variables. First, using ACLED's *interaction types*, we count events where state actors confront various kinds of groups in potentially violent ways: (i) state forces against rioters, (ii) state forces against protesters, and (iii) state forces against civilians. To capture political violence beyond direct state–society encounters, we additionally retain counts of (iv) political militia versus rioters, protesters, and civilians, as well as (v) events involving rioters alone or protesters alone. All other categories are aggregated into two broader groups: those involving state actors and those involving non-state actors (rebel organizations, political militias, and identity militias).

Second, we classify events based on ACLED's *event type* categories. As core outcomes, we keep separate counts of (i) excessive force against protesters, (ii) peaceful protests, and (iii) abductions/forced disappearances, and (iv) protests with intervention; as well as separate counts for (v) attacks, and (vi) sexual violence as control variables. Because ACLED's interaction- and event-type codings may not be mutually exclusive, we apply these filters sequentially and then assess whether the resulting counts overlap or remain distinct. Finally, all event counts are aggregated at the ADM1–month level, providing a consistent panel structure that allows us to capture temporal variation in political violence and protest dynamics across regions.

3.2. Independent variables

To understand patterns of protest and repression during economically turbulent times, we employ two key predictors at different levels of analysis. First, we measure if and how a country engages with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), capturing both negotiations for a new loan and the implementation of an agreed loan. In line with our theoretical expectations, we believe that dynamics of protest and repression may be different across these two phases of IMF programs. Therefore, and going beyond previous research on "IMF protests", we carefully trace the timing

[2] GADM wants to map the administrative areas of all countries, at all levels of sub-division. They provide data at high spatial resolutions that includes an extensive set of attributes. https://gadm.org/data.html

of these distinct phases. We draw on the IMF Monitor to measure when a country has been under an IMF program (Kentikelenis and Stubbs 2023). We build on Ferry and Zeitz (2024) to identify the month in which a government started negotiations for a new IMF program; where the data was missing, we had a research assistant compile information about when a program was negotiated based on publicly available sources.

Second, we require a measure of subnational political alignment of an ADM1 region. To that end, we draw on Tang (2026), who assembled an original dataset of presidential and legislative election outcomes at the ADM1 level for 48 African countries between 1997 and 2021. The dataset was constructed by first identifying elections and incumbent leaders prior to elections. Great efforts were made to ensure comparability across countries and over time, including by calculating regional vote shares using GADM 3.6. Due to the uneven preservation of electoral records in Africa, the process required extensive archival work, including the use of web archives and other research strategies to find data not available online.

For countries and years without meaningful elections—typically closed autocracies—the dataset relies on in-depth country-specific literature and the GeoEPR dataset to infer each region's relationship to the central power holder. GeoEPR is used only to identify the strategic importance of regions in these cases, namely when no subnational election data were available. This applies to a limited set of regimes and years, including Chad (pre-2005), Republic of Congo (pre-2012), Côte d'Ivoire (pre-2010), the Democratic Republic of Congo (pre-2005), Egypt (pre-2011), Ethiopia (pre-2005), and Guinea (pre-2010). Following the GeoEPR classification, regions associated with discriminated, powerless, or self-excluded groups are coded as opposition; junior partner groups as swing regions; and senior partner, dominant, or monopoly groups as government strongholds.

To capture both local alignment with national politics and broader dynamics of coalition formation, the dataset provides two key indicators: (1) the vote share won by the incumbent party in the most recent national election (incumbent vote share), and (2) a categorical measure of regional partisan strength (strategic importance), which classifies each region as a government stronghold (≥60% incumbent support), a swing region (40–60%), or an opposition stronghold (≥60% support for the main opposition). All measures are coded to the monthly level, based on the timing of the most recent presidential or legislative election—or, where applicable, a coup or civil war—that could plausibly update citizens' perceptions of the incumbent. For analysis purposes, we focus on government strongholds.

While election results under autocratic regimes may be less reliable, they nonetheless reveal meaningful subnational variation. For example, Ethiopia's 2005 election (its most competitive) exhibited striking regional variation in the EPRDF's vote share compared to 2010, and both Cameroon and Uganda have seen notable fluctuations in incumbent support over time despite long-term incumbency. Two country-specific corrections were made to address known misreporting: in Cameroon, Anglophone provinces are coded as opposition strongholds despite official vote shares above 50% for the incumbent, and in Ethiopia, Tigray is coded as opposition after 2020, when Abiy Ahmed consolidated power under the Prosperity Party.

3.3. Empirical Strategy

Our baseline estimates rely on high-dimensional fixed effects to compare outcomes in government strongholds to outcomes in other regions within the same country and month. Formally, we estimate:

$$Y_{rct} = \beta(IMFPhase_{ct} \times Stronghold_{rct}) + \theta Stronghold_{rct} + \mathrm{Z}_{rct}\gamma + \alpha_r + \delta_{ct} + \varepsilon_{rct}$$

In this specification, Y_{rct} is the ADM1-month count of the relevant ACLED outcome (e.g., state forces against protesters or civilians). $Stronghold_{rct}$ is a binary indicator that takes a value of 1 if the region is identified as a government stronghold and 0 a swing or an opposition region based on the most recent incumbent vote share. $IMFPhase_{ct}$ captures the timing of IMF engagement, and we estimate separate models for program negotiations and implementation. Our primary independent variable of interest is the interaction term $IMFPhase_{ct} \times Stronghold_{rct}$. Because the model includes country-year-month fixed effects, δ_{ct}, any country-wide shocks in a given month—including the main effect of IMFPhase—are absorbed: identification therefore comes from whether stronghold regions experience differential changes in the outcome relative to other regions in the same country-month. Region fixed effects, α_r, account for time-invariant differences across administrative regions. Crucially, the model includes a vector of time-varying control variables, Z_{rct}, which accounts for the simultaneous occurrence of all other forms of conflict, such as non-state actor violence and riots, ensuring that our estimates isolate state-led dynamics. Finally, for inferential purposes, we cluster standard errors, ε_{rct}, at the country-year-month level.

We complement the baseline analysis with an event-study design centered on the month in which a government begins negotiations for a new IMF program. Let T_c denote the negotiation start month in country c. We estimate dynamic effects in a symmetric ±12-month window by interacting stronghold status with event-time indicators for months before and after T_c, while maintaining the same fixed effects structure as in the baseline model. The omitted category is the month immediately preceding negotiations ($t = T_c - 1$), so each coefficient can be interpreted as the difference in outcomes between stronghold and non-stronghold regions in event month, relative to that pre-negotiation baseline. We present these estimates graphically to assess pre-trends and to trace the timing of changes around negotiations.

4. Results

We proceed by discussing the full-sample results, which suggest complex dynamics in protest–repression patterns over the lifecycle of an IMF program as well as between different political regime types. We then examine the robustness of these patterns using an event-study design.

4.1. Main results

Table 1 presents our main results showing how protest–repression patterns evolve over the lifecycle of IMF programs and differently for subnational regions with different political allegiance.

Looking across the models involving the negotiation phase of IMF programs, we find an increase in the number of events involving state forces against civilians in government strongholds. This pattern is consistent with arguments about governments trying to clear the way for painful reforms through anticipatory purges. Our initial results are the opposite of our expectations. Governments appear to target their own strongholds rather than those held by the political opposition.

During program implementation, we uncover a significant increase in events involving state forces against protesters in government strongholds. This result suggests that states repress protest once the painful measures of IMF programs begin to bite.

To examine the consistency of these findings, we draw on our second set of ACLED measures not based on interaction types but event types. Table 2 shows the results. Here we do not find any significant effect of program negotiations in stronghold regions relative to other regions. However, we do find an increase in the use of excessive force—committed by any actor—in political strongholds during program implementation. This finding is consistent with our results in the interaction types.

In sum, we find no support for our first hypothesis which expected that governments are more likely to repress the political opposition over the course of IMF programs. If anything, we appear to find the opposite result: governments are more likely to commit repressive acts in their own strongholds. While governments seem to repress protest in their own strongholds when they implement an IMF program, they already appear to target civilians during the negotiation phase.

Table 1: IMF programs, government strongholds, and violent interactions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DV	State forces-Protesters		State forces-Civilians	
IMF Phase	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation
Stronghold	-0.005***	-0.003***	-0.002	-0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	0.003*		-0.001	
	(0.002)		(0.002)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.001		0.006**
		(0.002)		(0.003)
Observations	187,460	187,460	187,460	187,460
R-squared	0.329	0.329	0.366	0.366
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: The baseline comparison group for stronghold regions are swing and opposition regions. All models include controls for the simultaneous occurrence of other conflict interaction types to isolate the specific violence of interest. These controls include events involving external forces, political militia violence (against rioters, civilians, or protesters), and events involving only rioters, protesters, or civilians. Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 2: IMF programs, government strongholds, and violent event types

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
DV	Excessive force against protesters		Peaceful protest		Protest with intervention		Abduction/forced disappearance	
IMF Phase	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation
Stronghold	-0.001	-0.000	-0.005*	-0.005**	-0.003**	-0.003***	0.001	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	0.002**		0.001		0.001		-0.001	
	(0.001)		(0.003)		(0.001)		(0.001)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		0.001		0.001		-0.002		-0.004
		(0.001)		(0.005)		(0.002)		(0.002)
Observations	187,460	187,460	187,460	187,460	187,460	187,460	187,460	187,460
R-squared	0.263	0.263	0.575	0.575	0.297	0.297	0.365	0.365
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: All models control for the simultaneous occurrence of other conflict event types. These controls include: events involving attack, abduction or forced disappearance, protest with intervention, peaceful protest, sexual violence, and excessive force against protesters. Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Our results so far do not distinguish across regime types and may thus mask considerable heterogeneity. We therefore re-estimate our main results separately for democracies and non-democracies. To that end, we draw on the Regime of the World Indicator from VDem, pooling all democracies (liberal democracy and electoral democracy) and respectively all autocracies (closed autocracy and electoral autocracy) (Coppedge et al. 2023).

Table 3 Panel A presents our findings on the link between IMF programs, government strongholds, and protest–repression dynamics for *democracies*. Considering the negotiation phase, we find few significant results, except that democracies appear to reduce the intensity of forced disappearances in government strongholds. Considering the implementation phase of IMF programs, we find evidence of more (peaceful) protest in strongholds in democracies, but less state repression against such protests.

At the same time, we witness a stark increase in state-led violence against civilians. The interaction between IMF implementation and government strongholds is 0.016 in ln(1+y) form of violence against civilians, implying an approximate 1.6% increase in 1+y. In real units, this represents an additional 16 events per 1,000 region-months above the baseline. While the absolute increase in any single month is small, when aggregated across the 702 regions in our sample over a typical three-year IMF program, this represents a systematic and statistically significant shift toward covert state-led violence against civilians in loyalist areas.

These patterns may be well explained by the constraints of democratic governments under political pressure. These governments cannot openly attack mass protests, as this would violate a core principle of democratic governance which would be punished by the Fund and its major shareholders. However, democratic governments may still try to engage in covert violence, which is harder to link to the regime (Payne and Abouharb 2016). In other words, democratic governments under the pressure of pushing through painful economic reforms appear to substitute overt forms of violence with covert ones. They may be seeking to maintain the benefits of appearing to co-operate with the democratic norms to facilitate the continued inflows of monies into their countries (Barry et al. 2013).

Panel B allows us to study these dynamics in *autocracies*. In the negotiation phase, we find strong evidence of anticipatory violence of civilians. The interaction term of 0.007 suggests an additional 7 events per 1,000 region-months in strongholds. This suggests a strategy of preemptive pacification: autocratic governments may be demonstrating their credibility to the IMF by sending a signal of their willingness to maintain order in loyalist areas before the deal is even finalized.

In the implementation phase, autocratic governments pivot toward significantly more force against protesters in their strongholds. In the implementation phase, autocratic governments pivot toward significantly more force against protesters in their strongholds. The interaction coefficient of 0.004 implies a 0.4% increase in the intensity of state-led violence against protesters, or roughly 4 events per 1,000 region-months to government strongholds compared to other areas. Looking at event types, we find a concomitant increase in the use of excessive force in government strongholds, while the number of peaceful protests decreases. Hence, the protest–repression patterns in

autocracies are essentially the mirror image of those in democracies. While democratic leaders shift toward covert violence to avoid international and domestic accountability, autocrats rely on a logic of survival that involves overt, concentrated repression in their own backyards to prevent dissent from gaining a foothold in their core power bases.

Overall, the negotiation-phase results in Table 3 are consistent with our third hypothesis (H3) regarding regime differences in early-stage coercion. While democracies show no significant change—and even a slight reduction—in violence during negotiations, autocracies exhibit a statistically significant surge in state-led violence against civilians in their strongholds. These results also lead us to reject our second hypothesis while confirming that autocrats rely on a much more aggressive and overt logic of survival than democratic leaders during the early stages of the IMF lifecycle.

Table 3: IMF programs, government strongholds, and violent interactions in *democracies* and *autocracies*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DV	State forces-Protesters		State forces-Civilians	
IMF Phase	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation
	Panel A: Democracies			
Stronghold	0.004	0.002	-0.012***	-0.004*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	-0.003		0.016***	
	(0.003)		(0.004)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.001		0.004
		(0.004)		(0.003)
Observations	49,788	49,788	49,788	49,788
R-squared	0.264	0.264	0.225	0.224
	Panel B: Autocracies			
Stronghold	-0.008***	-0.007***	0.003	-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	0.004**		-0.006**	
	(0.002)		(0.002)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.002		0.007*
		(0.003)		(0.004)
Observations	137,672	137,672	137,672	137,672
R-squared	0.354	0.354	0.388	0.388
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: This table presents the results of OLS regressions with high-dimensional fixed effects across two subsamples. Panel A restricts the sample to democracies (liberal democracy or electoral democracy in V-Dem), while Panel B includes only autocracies (closed autocracy and electoral autocracy). The variable *Stronghold* is a binary indicator identifying regions where the incumbent's vote share in the most recent election exceeded 60%. All models include controls for the simultaneous occurrence of other conflict interaction types to isolate the specific violence of interest. These controls include events involving external

forces, political militia violence (against rioters, civilians, or protesters), and events involving only rioters, protesters, or civilians. Robust clustered standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

To ensure our findings are not dependent on a specific definition of government stronghold, we re-estimate our models using more stringent criteria for political alignment. Tables A2 and A3 in the Appendix report the results using a 70% and 80% incumbent vote share threshold, respectively. These extreme thresholds allow us to test if the distributional logic of repression holds even in areas of near-total political dominance.

The results at the 70% threshold (Table A2) largely mirror our main findings but with increased substantive intensity in certain areas. In democracies (Panel A), we find that governments continue to exercise relative restraint in the use of overt force against protesters within their strongholds (β =-0.009). This implies that even under the intense pressure of a 70% loyalist base, democratic leaders reduce the intensity of overt repression against protesters by approximately 0.9% compared to the baseline. Conversely, the pivot toward covert violence remains robust, with a significant increase in violence against civilians during implementation (β= 0.012). This represents a 1.2% increase in intensity, adding approximately 12 events per 1,000 region-months of state violence against civilians in strongholds during implementation.

In autocracies (Panel B, Table A2), the 70% threshold confirms the logic of survival. During implementation, we see an 0.4% increase in repressive intensity against protesters. Most notably, during the negotiation phase, the intensity of violence against civilians in these "super-strongholds" jumps significantly (β= 0.011), which is a 1.1% increase in the intensity of state-led violence, or an additional 11 events per 1,000 region-months. This reinforces our argument that autocrats use the shadow of an impending IMF deal to preemptively secure their most vital political bases through coercion.

When we push the threshold to 80% (Table A3), the findings remain remarkably consistent. In democracies, the coefficients for protecting protesters in strongholds increase in magnitude (β = -0.012), suggesting that the more loyal a region is, the more constrained a democratic leader becomes in using overt force. In autocracies, while the interaction for protesters during implementation loses some statistical significance due to the smaller number of regions meeting this extreme 80% threshold, the relative restraint towards civilians remains highly significant. This represents a 0.9% reduction in violence against civilians, suggesting that autocrats at the implementation stage try to shield these ultra-loyal civilians from direct state violence while focusing repression elsewhere.

We illustrate our findings by returning to our July 2024 example in Kenya (Lawal 2024). The article describes protests in the counties of Garissa and Kisumu. These are counties where the opposition candidate, Raila Odinga, won 74.01% and 97.4% of the vote in the 2022 Presidential Election, respectively. Protests also took place in the swing opposition county of Nairobi, where Odinga won 57.3% of the vote, and spread into Ruto-aligned areas of Uasin Gishu County, where Ruto won 77.99% of the vote in the 2022 Presidential Election, including Ruto's hometown of Eldoret. The majority of police violence appeared to be concentrated in Nairobi and Uasin Gishu Counties.

Protests occurred mainly, but not exclusively, in opposition-held areas. Opposition/competitive areas may show more protest because mobilization capacity is high there, while our regressions show that the IMF-linked marginal increase in state coercion is concentrated in government strongholds relative to those non-stronghold areas. The examples from Kenya suggest that the state does repress opposition areas. During IMF episodes, leaders appear to invest coercive effort into preventing defection and unrest inside their own base.

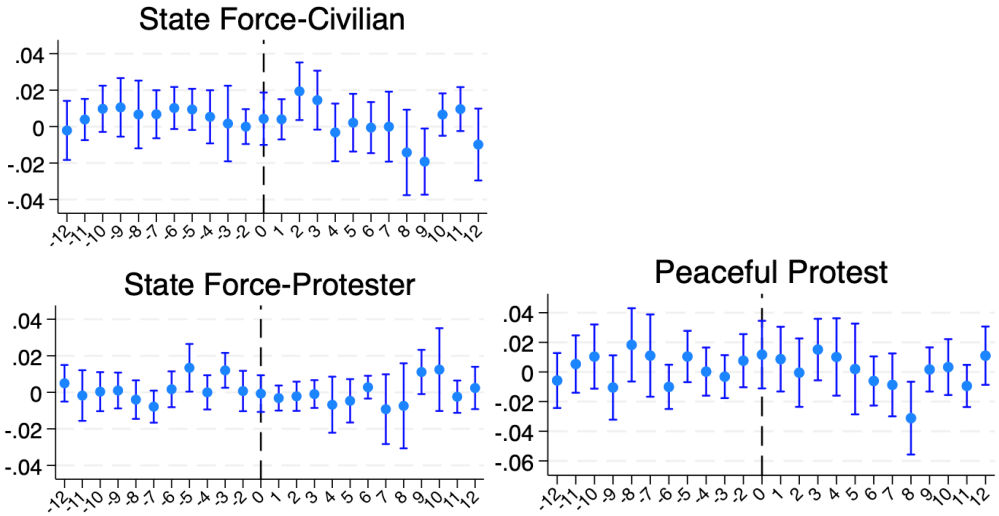
To ensure our results do not hinge on our choice of a specific democracy indicator, we probe robustness using two alternative measures of political accountability. Appendix Table A4 splits the sample using the World Bank Voice & Accountability index (Kaufmann et al. 2009). It reproduces the core regime-conditional sequencing: in low-accountability settings (index<0), state violence against civilians in government strongholds rises during IMF negotiations (consistent with anticipatory coercion), while repression of protesters in strongholds becomes more pronounced during implementation; in high-accountability settings, we find no comparable negotiation-phase increase in violence against civilians and weaker—sometimes even restrained—patterns of overt repression of protest. Appendix Table A5 repeats the analysis using Polity score (democracy≥6) and confirms several core features of the implementation-phase contrast across regimes.

4.2. Event-study analysis

We now turn to our event-study analysis based on all IMF programs in African countries for which data on the timing of negotiations and implementation were available (1,466 onset-months at ADM1 level). We study the protest–repression patterns 12 months before and after the specific month at which a government entered negotiations with the Fund for a new loan program (t=0). In the event-study graphs shown below, estimates to the left of the dashed vertical line represent pre-treatment trends, while estimates to the right show treatment effects relative to the month before a country started negotiations with the Fund (t-1). Since repression episodes can be relatively short, we do not expect consistently significant effects in all post-treatment years. However, at least some post-treatment years should be significant if we were to find evidence of state repression. While it is no longer possible to identify the implementation phase in an event-study setup, we can assume that most countries begin implementing their IMF programs after three months of negotiations.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of violence against civilians in stronghold areas of the government. It shows that state violence against civilians reaches its peak in the negotiation phase, before decreasing again in the implementation phase, about four months after negotiations had begun. These patterns are consistent with our earlier findings. The overall patterns do not appear to be systematic in that state violence against protesters in strongholds seems to spike already in the months preceding the program negotiations, while increasing toward the end of the first year following them. The number of peaceful protests appears to decrease after the government engages the Fund.

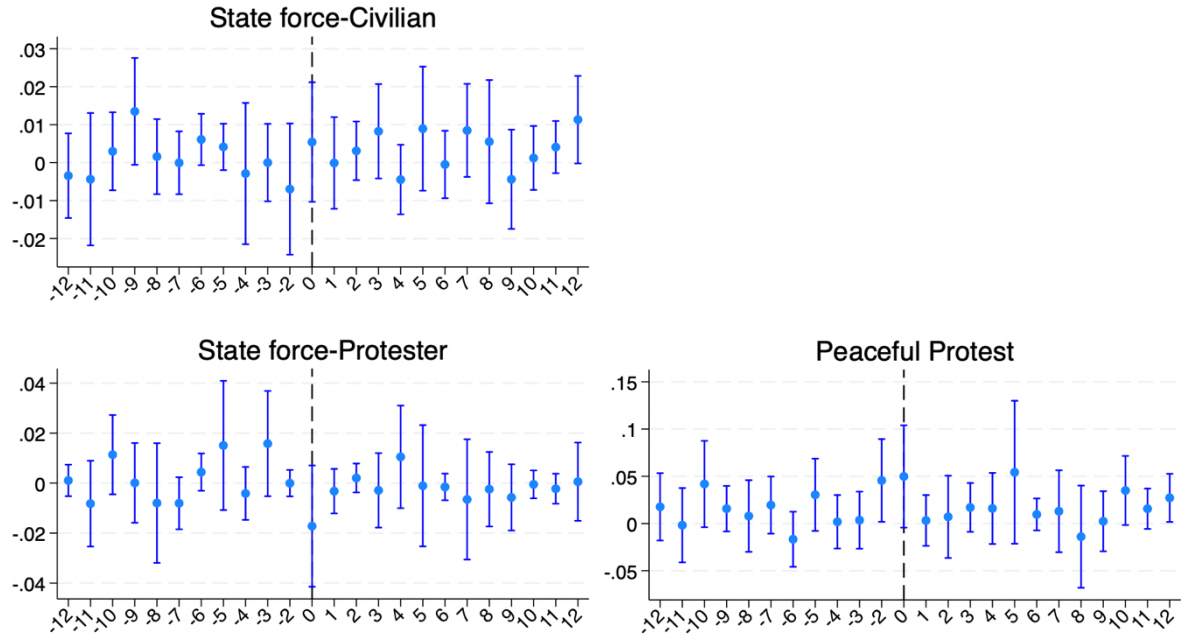
Figure 1: Event-study analysis around program negotiations for strongholds



Notes: Each panel shows coefficients (with 95%-CI) for event time interacted with stronghold region for the outcome shown in the figure heading. The baseline is *t-1*.

We suspect that the lack of clear patterns is due to heterogeneity across regime types. We therefore conduct event-study analyses separately by regime type. Figure 2 shows the event-study results for democracies. Consistent with our regression findings, we see little systematic evidence of increased repression during IMF negotiations. If anything, democratic governments seem to hold back on the use of force against protesters, with estimates turning negative in the implementation phase. At the same time, peaceful protest activity tends to rise modestly in government strongholds once programs are in place. These patterns confirm that democratic governments under IMF oversight are constrained in their ability to overtly repress protest.

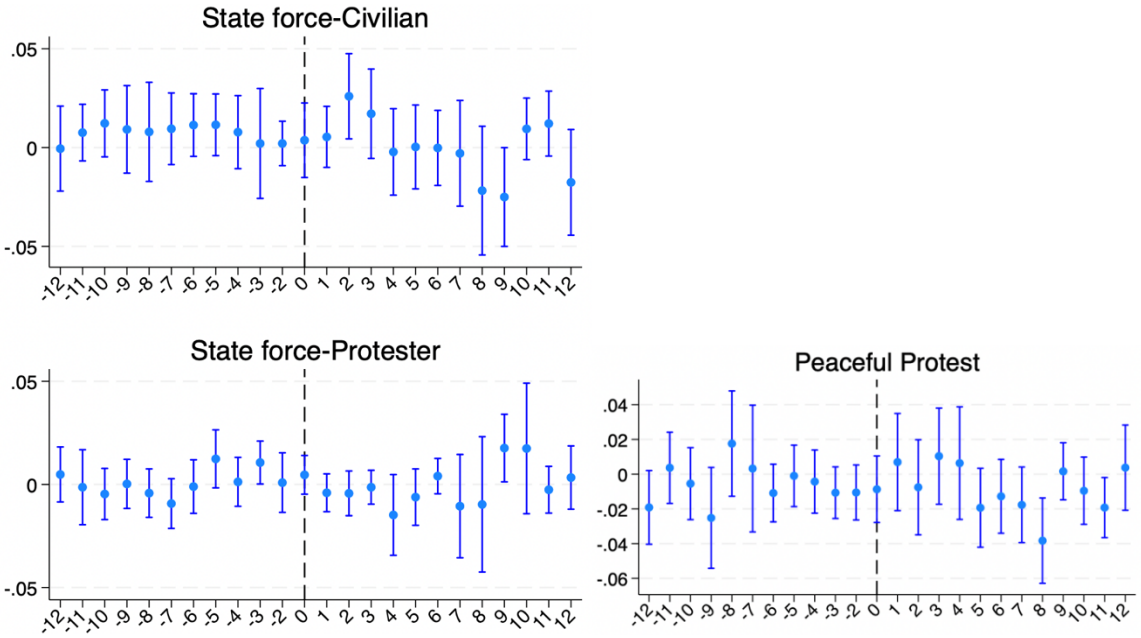
Figure 2: Event-study analysis in democracies



Notes: Each panel shows coefficients (with 95%-CI) for event time interacted with stronghold region for the outcome shown in the figure heading in democratic regimes (VDem indicator). The baseline is *t-1*.

Figure 3 shows the event-study results for autocracies. Here we find a clearer pattern of anticipatory violence: state-led attacks against civilians increase already in the months leading up to IMF negotiations, and repression of protesters appears to intensify in the aftermath of program onset. At the same time, peaceful protests decline in strongholds during the negotiation phase, suggesting that autocratic governments succeed in discouraging collective mobilization. Interestingly, direct state violence against civilians diminishes somewhat after negotiations.

Figure 3: Event-study analysis in autocracies



Notes: Each panel shows coefficients (with 95%-CI) for event time interacted with stronghold region for the outcome shown in the figure heading in autocratic regimes (VDem indicator). The baseline is *t-1*.

4.3. Summary

In sum, our findings reveal complex dynamics of protest and repression over the course of an IMF program. These dynamics unfold differently across democracies and autocracies, reflecting their different constraints for engaging in these practices. Box 1 provides an overview of the findings.

Box 1: Overview of findings

	State Forces - Protestors	State Forces- Civilians	Excessive Force to Civilian	Peaceful Protest	Protest with Intervention	Abduction
Gov vs other						

IMF Negotiation		+				
VDem		**A+**	D+			**D-**
IMF Implementation	+		+			
VDem	**A+**	D+,A-	**A+**	D+,A-	(D-)	(D+)

Notes: Column heads indicate ACLED event types. IMF Negotiation refers to results for the negotiation phase, and IMF Implementation for the implementation phase. For conditional effects, A indicates autocracies and D indicates democracies. Bold cells indicate robustness of the VDem indicator to the WBGI measure of Voice & Accountability. Bracketed entries only appear for the WBGI measure but not the VDem measure.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Our analysis refines what we know about the political consequences of IMF programs by shifting attention from national averages to subnational, month-to-month dynamics of state repression. The central empirical takeaway is that governments do not primarily repress the opposition during IMF episodes; instead, violence systematically concentrates in government strongholds. This contradicts traditional distributional expectation that leaders discipline opponents while protecting loyalists. These findings suggest that the logic of political survival during austerity extends beyond simply punishing opponents; it also involves pre-emptively managing and containing potential dissent from the incumbent's own support base.

Furthermore, our research adds a crucial temporal dimension to the protest–repression dynamic. We demonstrate that governments employ a nuanced, phased strategy: targeting civilians with violence during the program negotiation phase, and then repressing protestors once the program is implemented. This sequencing is consistent with an anticipatory strategy in which leaders clear the ground as negotiations unfold, and then respond more directly once adjustment costs become politically salient and protest activity rises. However, this phase dynamics differ sharply by regime type. In democracies, implementation is associated with a pronounced increase in state violence against civilians in strongholds alongside weaker or negative evidence of direct repression of protest, indicating that democratic leaders face constraints on overt coercion and may substitute toward less visible forms of violence. In autocracies, by contrast, the negotiation period is precisely where we observe the clearest increase in state violence against civilians in strongholds, consistent with a logic of preemptive coercion and credibility signalling before the agreement is finalized. This pattern indicates that the degree of institutional constraint significantly shapes the type and timing of repressive tactics.

Another key contribution of our finding is to show where repression is most likely to occur within the incumbent coalition by testing if the loyalty-repression curve changes in marginal versus overwhelming strongholds. When we redefine strongholds using stricter electoral thresholds—raising the incumbent vote share cutoff from 60% to 70% and 80% —repression is often more pronounced in secure but not untouchable strongholds (60% and 70% thresholds). These are areas where the incumbent is clearly dominant, yet where loyalty may still be politically consequential and vulnerable to erosion during austerity. One interpretation is that such marginal strongholds contain many core supporters whose expectations are most likely to be disrupted by reform,

creating incentives for leaders to prevent dissent from taking root inside the coalition. By contrast, in overwhelming strongholds (≥80%), the incumbent may face less need for overt coercion because local control and organizational penetration are already high, or because visible violence risks alienating core supporters. Ultimately, our threshold exercises reinforce our central finding that repression under IMF engagement follows a coalition-management logic, not simply a government-versus-opposition cleavage.

Our article makes two core contributions to the political science literature. First, by examining the government's response to protest—a gap in the literature on the socio-political effects of IMF programs—we show that the politics of adjustment are deeply subnational and coalition-centred. Second, we demonstrate that across regime types, IMF engagement is associated with strategically patterned coercion that often targets the regime's own electoral base. Democracies and autocracies manage the political costs of adjustment differently—democracies shifting away from overt repression of protest and toward civilian targeting during implementation, autocracies showing clearer anticipatory coercion around negotiations and more overt repression of protest during implementation. Future research could build on our findings by examining the specific mechanisms through which repression in strongholds is carried out and by exploring how this strategic logic might apply to other forms of externally-imposed economic reform.

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Appendix

Table A1. Descriptive statistics

Variable Description	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	N
Logged Dependent Variables					
State-led Violence against Protesters (log)	0.017	0.127	0	4.663	187,496
State-led Violence against Civilians (log)	0.027	0.172	0	4.06	187,496
Peaceful Protest Events (log)	0.072	0.305	0	4.949	187,496
Excessive Force against Protesters (log)	0.004	0.063	0	4.564	187,496
Protest with Intervention (log)	0.014	0.114	0	3.258	187,496
Abduction/Forced Disappearance (log)	0.013	0.118	0	3.219	187,496
Attack	0.078	0.097	0	4.357	187,496
Political Militia against Civilians (log)	0.053	0.251	0	4.304	187,496
Political Militia against Protesters (log)	0.001	0.019	0	1.609	187,496
Independent & Binary Variables					
Government Stronghold (Incumbent Vote >60%)	0.434	0.496	0	1	187,496
IMF Program: Negotiation Phase	0.042	0.201	0	1	187,496
IMF Program: Implementation Phase	0.429	0.495	0	1	187,496
Democracy (VDem: Liberal democracy and electoral democracy)	0.266	0.442	0	1	187,496

Note: The unit of analysis is the administrative region-month. All dependent variables are log-transformed using the ln(1+count) formula to account for the skewed distribution of conflict events. Data on violent events and protests are sourced from the ACLED.

Table A2. IMF programs and state violence in government strongholds (≥70% incumbent vote share), by regime type (V-dem)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DV	State forces-Protesters		State forces-Civilians	
IMF Phase	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation
	Panel A: Democracies			
Stronghold	0.009*	0.004	-0.008	-0.001
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	-0.009*		0.012**	
	(0.005)		(0.005)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		0.003		-0.004
		(0.007)		(0.003)
Observations	49,788	49,788	49,788	49,788
R-squared	0.264	0.264	0.224	0.224
	Panel B: Autocracies			

Stronghold	-0.007***	-0.005***	0.007***	0.004**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	0.004**		-0.007***	
	(0.002)		(0.003)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.000		0.011***
		(0.003)		(0.004)
Observations	137,672	137,672	137,672	137,672
R-squared	0.354	0.354	0.388	0.388
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table A3. IMF programs and state violence in government strongholds (≥80% incumbent vote share), by regime type (V-dem)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DV	State forces-Protesters		State forces-Civilians	
IMF Phase	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation
	Panel A: Democracies			
Stronghold	0.015**	0.009***	0.004	0.005
	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	-0.012*		0.002	
	(0.006)		(0.005)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.003		-0.003
		(0.007)		(0.003)
Observations	49,788	49,788	49,788	49,788
R-squared	0.264	0.264	0.224	0.224
	Panel B: Autocracies			
Stronghold	-0.005***	-0.004**	0.009***	0.005**
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	0.003		-0.009***	
	(0.002)		(0.003)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.003		0.006
		(0.002)		(0.004)
Observations	137,672	137,672	137,672	137,672
R-squared	0.354	0.354	0.388	0.388
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table A4. IMF programs and state violence in government strongholds (≥60% incumbent vote share), by World Bank Voice and Accountability Index (high accountability > 0)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DV	State forces-Protesters		State forces-Civilians	
IMF Phase	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation
	Panel A: High Accountability			
Stronghold	0.008*	0.004*	-0.001	0.000
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	-0.007*		0.002	
	(0.004)		(0.003)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.006		-0.001
		(0.005)		(0.002)
Observations	44,448	44,448	44,448	44,448
R-squared	0.306	0.306	0.223	0.223
	Panel B: Low Accountability			
Stronghold	-0.007***	-0.006***	-0.002	-0.003*
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	0.004**		-0.002	
	(0.002)		(0.002)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		0.001		0.009**
		(0.003)		(0.004)
Observations	143,012	143,012	143,012	143,012
R-squared	0.339	0.339	0.379	0.379
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table A5. IMF programs and state violence in government strongholds (≥60% incumbent vote share), by polity score (democracy≥6)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DV	State forces-Protesters		State forces-Civilians	
IMF Phase	Implementation	Negotiation	Implementation	Negotiation
	Panel A: Democracies			
Stronghold	0.000	0.000	-0.001	0.003*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	-0.000		0.008**	

	(0.003)		(0.003)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.001		0.005
		(0.004)		(0.005)
Observations	72,792	72,792	72,792	72,792
R-squared	0.341	0.341	0.405	0.405
		Panel B: Autocracies		
Stronghold	-0.007***	-0.006***	0.001	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
IMF Implementation×Stronghold	0.003*		-0.007***	
	(0.002)		(0.002)	
IMF Negotiation×Stronghold		-0.003		0.000
		(0.003)		(0.004)
Observations	114,668	114,668	114,668	114,668
R-squared	0.349	0.349	0.390	0.390
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country-Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes