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Violence against politicians in Ireland: what does it look like and how is it gendered?

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This paper investigates the phenomenon of political violence (harassment, intimidation, threats and abuse) directed at politicians in Ireland. We ask: to what extent is it gendered in scope, form, and consequences? Our analysis finds evidence of gender differences with respect to the prevalence and nature of political violence. In comparison to men, women politicians in Ireland experience political violence more often, are more frequently subjected to psychological violence, and are more likely to be subject to violence with sexual connotations. We also find evidence of gendered consequences, with more women than men reporting that their political engagement has made them feel more afraid and less willing to run for election in future.

Keywords: political violence; gender; women in politics; elections; political parties; representation; democracy

Politically motivated violence is not new to Ireland. Indeed, the term 'political violence' is frequently used to describe violence associated with the revolutionary decade (1912-1922) and the period of 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland (late 1960s to late 1990s). However, political violence can occur in "peaceful, democratic settings as well as in (post)-conflict contexts" (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg, 2023: 5), and in many contexts today, violence directed at political actors is becoming an "all-too-common" occurrence (ibid: 2). As a measure of concern for the level of political violence (harassment, abuse, intimidation, attacks and threats) directed at public representatives in Ireland, the Ceann Comhairle of Dáil Éireann, Deputy Séan Ó Fearghaíl, and the Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Senator Jerry Buttimer, launched the *Report of the Task Force on Safe Participation in Political Life* in May 2024. The report expressed concern about the "potentially serious impact on democracy, and on diverse and inclusive representation" (p.11) of political violence and called for a "strategic and coordinated approach" among various stakeholders[1] to address the issue.

"Violence against political actors in generally characterised as a twofold problem: it inflicts harm on the personal integrity of the victim, and it constitutes a challenge to the overall political system, as perpetrators do not respect the democratic rules of the game" (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg, 2023: 1). In this paper we examine the prevalence, form and consequences of political violence in Ireland through a gendered lens. Using a survey of local and national Irish election candidates and public representatives, we ask: to what extent is political violence in Ireland a gendered phenomenon? We argue that the Irish case presents an ideal opportunity to examine political violence and its gendered nature. Certain features of the Irish political system, most notably its highly localised and personalised political culture, have the potential to increase opportunities for political violence. Furthermore, research examining gendered aspects of political violence (GAPV) suggests that personalised electoral systems (such as PR-STV[2]) and low levels of women in politics[3] may increase the likelihood of gendered political violence. Both are present in the Irish case.

In the sections that follow, we review the literature on GAPV and contextualise the Irish case-study, identifying a series of hypotheses. We outline our research design and methodology, before

[1] Including the Houses of the Oireachtas, Government Departments, relevant government agencies and An Garda Síochána.
[2] Proportional Representation by means of the Single Transferable Vote.
[3] At time of writing, just 23 percent of TDs and 26 percent of local Councillors are women.

presenting the results. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings and future research directions.

Gender, politics and violence

Gendered political violence is understood as a form of structural and cultural violence (Biroli, 2018; Krook, 2022). In recent years, international organisations, women's organisations, and gender and politics scholars have sought to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which violence against women in politics (VAWIP) prevents women from participating in political life (Krook, 2017; Biroli, 2018). For example, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2016) and the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) (2018) *#NotThe Cost* campaign detail the scope of the problem of political violence against women, the forms that it takes, and its implications. Because it undermines free and open participation, gendered political violence is not merely a threat to individual women or women as a group, but a threat to democracy and the electoral system in general (Bjarnegård, 2018). The IPU and NDI reports articulate the defining characteristics of VAWIP, namely: it targets women because of their gender, takes a gendered form, and has the purpose of discouraging or denying women the ability to participate equally in politics.

In the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women* (1993), the United Nations (UN) defined violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (Article 1)[4]. Gendered political violence takes many forms. Researchers have identified at least four: physical, sexual, psychological (UN Declaration 1993, Article 1), and economic (Bardall, 2011). To these, Krook (2022) adds a fifth form, semiotic violence, which relates to the use of words and images to harm and subjugate women, typically by making them feel or look incompetent or invisible. While such violence encompasses a wide variety of acts (*forms*), building on the work of Kelly (1988), feminist scholars describe this violence as being positioned along a continuum, ranging from psychological to physical violence. These different forms are therefore part of the same underlying construct – political violence – and are connected to one another, having similar motivations and effects (Bardall et al., 2020; Krook, 2020; Bjarnegård, 2023).

Early studies on this phenomenon indicate that women in politics were regularly subject to abuse, threats, and harassment. Physical violence, while not as extensive, was not altogether uncommon (UN Women, 2014; IPU, 2016, 2018). Though researchers found a high prevalence of VAWIP, the studies were limited by the fact that they were based on interview and survey samples made up entirely of women. As a result, the studies could not provide insight on how women's experiences differed from those of men (Bjarnegård, 2018; Bardall et al., 2020; Holm, 2020). Subsequent research on the subject has typically included data on men as well as women, allowing for an exploration of its gendered nature.

Research on political violence indicates that both men and women face significant and increasing levels of threats, harassment, and violence in politics (Krook, 2018; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Herrick and Thomas, 2022; Bjarnegård et al., 2022; Bjarnegård, 2021; Rhenault et al., 2019; Ward and McLoughlin, 2020; Erikson et al., 2023). Online abuse is a particularly pervasive problem for candidates

[4] Similarly, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines violence as the "intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (Krug et al., 2002: 5; see also Bardall et al., 2020 and Herrick and Thomas, 2022).

and elected officials regardless of sex because online platforms have made it easy for individuals to target politicians with abuse (Bardall, 2013; Ward and McLoughlin, 2020; Krook, 2022).

Though violence is a problem faced by male and female politicians, there is considerable evidence that violence and abuse directed toward politicians is gendered in terms of motives, forms and impacts (Bardall et al., 2020; Piscopo and Bjarnegård, 2023). Gendered motives make women targets for political violence and abuse *because* they are women. Indeed, research has linked violence against women politicians to perceptions that women politicians are disrupting the male-dominated status quo and threatening male hegemony over the political process (IPU, 2016; Biroli, 2018; Restrepo Sanín, 2018; Spary, 2020; Kim and Kweon, 2022). Women may also face a violent backlash in reaction to institutional efforts, such as gender quotas, that increase women's representation in parties and legislatures (Hughes et al., 2015; Krook, 2015, 2016; Kim and Kweon, 2022).

In some contexts, men are as likely as (and in some cases, more likely than) women to experience physical violence (Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Håkansson, 2021; Bjarnegård et al., 2022 - but also see Herrick and Thomas, 2022). However, numerous studies find that women are more likely to experience psychological violence, threats and harassment (Håkansson, 2021; Bjarnegård, 2021; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021), comments related to their gender (Erikson et al., 2023; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021) and threats of sexualised violence and aggression (Bjarnegård, 2021; Herrick and Thomas, 2022; Bjarnegård et al., 2021). Although the volume of online threats and harassment is high for both men and women, researchers find that women are more likely than men to receive harassing and uncivil messages (Rhenault et al., 2019; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021) and that the abuse they receive is more often gendered and sexualised in nature (Erikson et al., 2023).

The impact of political violence is also gendered in several ways. First, it is an impediment to equal participation. Women who are subject to abuse, threats and harassment are more likely to fear for their safety (IPU, 2016; Krook, 2017; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Erikson et al., 2023; Collignon et al., 2022), and more likely to report that their experiences made it more difficult for them to participate in politics and fulfil their responsibilities as candidates and officeholders (Felle et al., 2020; Erikson et al., 2023; Verge, 2022). Furthermore, among those experiencing violence, women are more likely than men to limit their speech (Van Bavel, 2022; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024; Håkansson, 2023), curtail their canvassing and social media activities (Collignon and Rüdig, 2021), and make themselves less visible to the public (Håkansson, 2023). Second, violence and the threat of violence against women in politics, discourages women from entering the political arena in the first place and make it more personally costly for them to remain (Krook, 2017). As a result, women who experience political violence are more likely to express the desire to leave politics or not run for office again (Felle et al., 2020; Håkansson, 2023) and election-related violence is associated with lower levels of female descriptive representation (Wood, 2024).

Certain individual characteristics increase the risk of being targeted for political violence. Kosiara-Pedersen (2024) finds that younger politicians are more likely to experience political violence than their older counterparts. Visibility is a particularly important factor. The more high-profile a politician is, the more likely it is for them to be targeted. This can be particularly the case for women politicians. Women who are in higher-level positions (Håkansson, 2021), are well-known, visible or serving in leadership roles, and those who receive more media coverage are more likely to be targets of violence (Rhenault et al., 2019; Ward and McLoughlin, 2020; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024). Researchers have also noted the ways in which the intersection of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation has the potential to make some political actors more vulnerable than others (IPU, 2016; Kuperberg, 2018; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024).

Women who threaten the political, cultural and social status quo are also more likely to find themselves targeted for violence. Researchers find that single women (Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024), women who espouse feminist positions (Krook, 2017; Kuperberg, 2018), those from left-of-centre parties (Kuperberg, 2018; Herrick and Thomas, 2022), and women who represent minority constituencies (Håkansson, 2021) are more likely to experience political violence. Likewise, a number of studies find that women politicians face a backlash, both from the broader public and from within their political party, in reaction to institutional efforts, such as gender quotas, to increase women's representation in political parties and legislatures (Hughes et al., 2015; Krook 2015, 2016; Kim and Kweon, 2022).

Of course, participation in politics does not just entail a risk for the politician themselves. Those who are associated with the politician may also be subjected to political violence as they go about their duties, including for example, staffers, canvassers, supporters or members of the campaign team. Krook and Restrepo Sanín (2016) discuss the various harms (physical, sexual and psychological) that may come to a female politician's family as a result of her political activity and Twemlow et al. (2022: 103) find that "the risk that (an event of) violence would be enacted on members of family was integral to how women [in politics] anticipated violence".

Overall, researchers offer several possible explanations for the prevalence of gendered violence. First, the increased number of women in office and the emergence of highly visible feminist politicians has challenged traditional ideas about who holds power in society while at the same time expanding the number of women who could be targeted (Biroli, 2018; Bardall et al., 2020; Krook, 2022). Second, the implementation of gender quotas in many countries has been accompanied by a backlash from candidates, party leaders and male (and some female) voters who remain embedded within the still-existing institutions (Krook, 2015, 2016; Verge and de la Fuente, 2014; Hughes et al., 2015). Third, the low cost of digital communication, and the anonymous and highly personalised nature of the medium has contributed to the proliferation of online abuse in an environment where threats, harassment, and abuse are commonplace and encouraged (Bardall, 2013; Ward and McLoughlin, 2020).

Gendered Political Violence in Ireland

Country-based case studies contribute to our understanding of gendered political violence by helping researchers gain a better understanding of how political violence is gendered in specific national contexts (see, for example, Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Bjarnegård, 2023; Herrick and Thomas, 2022; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024). In the case of Ireland, a traditionalistic political culture and history of male-dominated politics (Galligan and Buckley, 2023), as well as resistance to a party-based gender quota that went into effect at the 2016 general election (Buckley, 2013; Keenan and McElroy, 2017), suggests there is a strong potential for political violence to be gendered. Additionally, the PR-STV electoral system creates incentives for candidates to cultivate a personal vote, since they are not only competing with opponents from other parties but very often with a running-mate from their own party. Candidates at both the national and local levels are therefore well-known and accessible, participating in public events, casework, and other activities that put them in close contact with members of the electorate (Culhane, 2017; Gallagher and Komito, 2018; Marsh, 2020)[5].

In a traditionalistic, male-dominated political culture like Ireland's, where candidates are highly visible and accessible, we expect women candidates to experience greater levels of abuse, harassment and violence. This is because they undermine well-established gender norms and threaten the status quo of male domination in the political system (see Krook, 2015; IPU, 2016; Krook, 2017; Bardall et al., 2020; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024). Indeed, existing studies suggest that

[5] Data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (2008) found that the level of personal contact between public representative and constituent was highest in Ireland at a rate of 56.3 percent (rates for other select countries include USA 47.4 percent, Iceland 28.3 percent, Belgium 28.1 percent, Britain 25 percent, France 6.9 percent and Spain 5.8 percent).

gendered political violence is pervasive in Ireland, especially online (Felle et al., 2020; AILG, 2021, 2024; Richardson, 2022; Siapera et al., 2024). In addition, we expect that the form of political violence that politicians are subject to will be gendered. As discussed previously, much of the existing scholarship finds that women are more likely to be subject to psychological violence and sexualised violence (see Håkansson, 2021; Bjarnegård, 2021; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Herrick and Thomas, 2022) while men are more likely to experience physical violence (see Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Håkansson, 2021; Bjarnegård et al., 2022). We therefore derive the following expectations:

> ***Hypothesis 1:*** *Female politicians will be more likely to experience political violence than their male counterparts.*
>
> ***Hypothesis 2:*** *Female politicians will be more likely to be subjected to psychological forms of violence, while male politicians will be more likely to experience physical violence.*
>
> ***Hypothesis 3:*** *Female politicians will be more likely than male politicians to experience violence with sexual connotations.*

In 2012, the Irish parliament adopted a candidate gender quota for Dáil elections. The quota requires parties to meet a designated threshold of women candidates (30 percent, rising to 40 percent after March 2023) or lose half of the party's state funding. Research suggests that political elites and entrenched groups often resist the changes that quotas represent, and work to hinder women's participation in politics in a number of ways, including sexism, harassment, abuse, and intimidation (Krook, 2015; Krook, 2016; Hyun Kim and Kweon, 2022). The Irish experience is similar, with much of the opposition to the Irish gender quota stemming from party members and being played out during party selection conventions (Mariani et al., 2021: 235; Keenan and McElroy, 2017; Buckley et al., 2016). This experience of internal party resistance concurs with international research which indicates that women face more constraints and opposition within their own parties and party parliamentary groups than men do (Zetterberg, 2008). Given the resistance to Ireland's party-based gender quota, we expect women will be subject to more hostility from within their political party. We therefore hypothesise the following:

> ***Hypothesis 4:*** *Among politicians who have experienced violence, that violence will originate from within their own political party more often for women than for men.*

We know from studies of male and female politicians in other national contexts that violence against women politicians has gendered impacts. Women are more likely than men to limit their exposure to violence by limiting the subjects they speak about, pulling back from social media, or curtailing attendance at public events (see Erikson et al., 2023; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Verge, 2022; Van Bavel, 2022; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024; Håkansson, 2023) and less likely to express an interest in running again or seeking higher office (Håkansson, 2023). In their study of serving and former women members of the Oireachtas, Felle et al. (2020) found that a significant proportion were concerned about their family's safety and did not feel comfortable attending public meetings alone due to concerns about abuse, harassment and violence, while one-in-five respondents considered quitting politics. Accordingly, we hypothesise the following:

> ***Hypothesis 5:*** *Among those experiencing political violence, female politicians will feel more constrained than their male counterparts in their contributions and agenda-setting abilities.*
>
> ***Hypothesis 6:*** *Among those experiencing political violence, female politicians will be more likely than their male counterparts to opt out of politics.*

Extant studies of political violence in Ireland have focused on the local level (AILG, 2021, 2024), the Oireachtas (Siapera et al., 2024), women only (Felle et al., 2020) and online experiences (Richardson, 2022). While these studies have enhanced our understanding of political violence in Irish politics, thus far, no study on Ireland has examined gendered political violence from an all-encompassing perspective. This study fills that gap. It examines the experiences of male and female election candidates and elected public representatives, at both the local council and Dáil levels, capturing their online and offline encounters with political violence, to assess its gendered nature.

Methodology and data

To investigate our six hypotheses, we use data collected from an anonymous survey of candidates running in the 2019 local or 2020 general elections. The questionnaire asked a range of questions about candidates' experiences of and feelings about political violence in Ireland, as well as their background and political experience. Ethical approval for the study was granted by University College Cork's Social Research and Ethics Committee.[6]

A total of 1,977 candidates appeared on the ballot for the 2019 local elections to fill 949 seats (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2020), and 531 candidates ran in the general election to fill 159 seats (Oireachtas, 2020). In addition, 2,259 individuals contested at least one of these elections; after removing names of candidates who were unreachable, the total number of possible respondents to the survey is 2,141.

Data collection took place via the online platform Qualtrics and was carried out in two phases from mid-January to mid-August 2023. The first phase consisted of sending an email invitation to candidates who were successfully elected. The second phase consisted of sending letters (containing a QR code and web link), inviting candidates who were unsuccessful in these elections to participate. All candidates received follow-up reminders. 362 usable responses were returned for a response rate of 16.91 percent[7]. In the sample, women are overrepresented across all parties (except for the Green Party)[8]; they make up 38.29 percent of responses compared with 28.28 percent of the actual population, possibly indicating a higher level of interest in the topic. To account for this we use weighting by gender in our analysis.

Using this data, we test the hypotheses outlined above. Hypothesis 1 tests whether political violence is gendered in its scope, hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 test whether it is gendered in its form, and hypotheses 5 and 6 test whether it is gendered in its consequences.

The survey asks respondents to indicate whether they personally experienced any of the following forms of violence in relation to their political role: 1) physical violence, 2) threats, 3) property damage (to personal or party property), and 4) degrading talk or false rumours being spread. These questions corresponded to three of the different forms of violence outlined above: physical violence, psychological violence (threats, degrading talk and false rumours), and economic violence (property damage). The survey further asked whether anyone associated with the candidate – family members,

[6] Review by the Xavier University Institutional Review Board (Protocol #22-004) determined the project met one or more of the categories for exempt review under (US) Federal Regulation 45 CFR 46 (August 8, 2022).

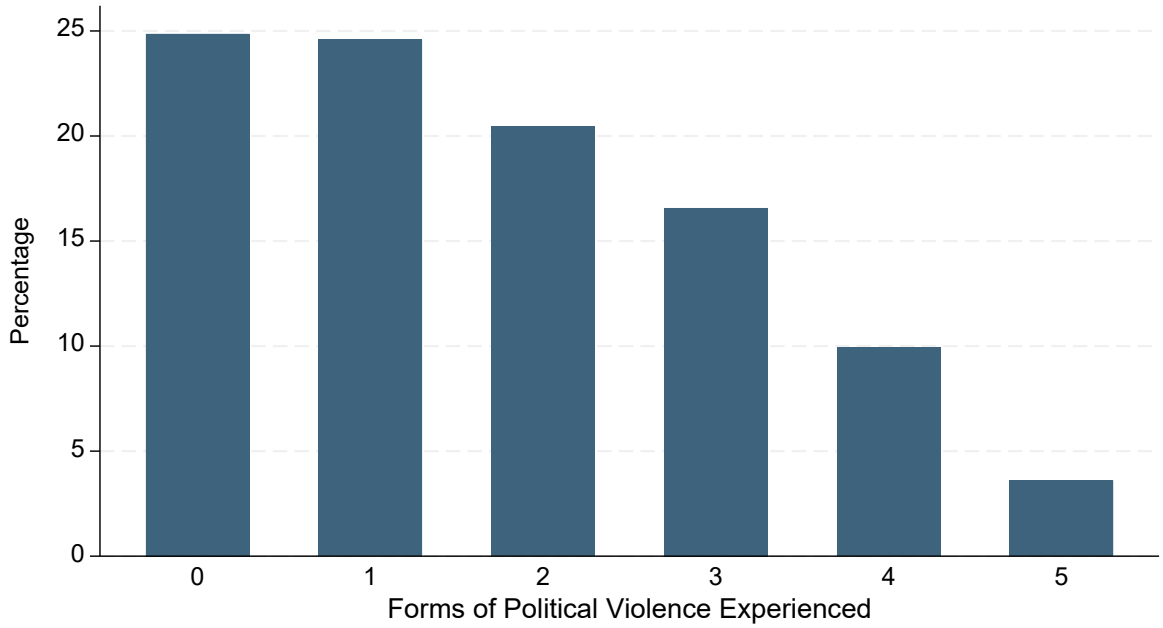
[7] This response rate is low. However, we can compare it with the response rates for the post-election candidate studies that are carried out in Ireland. The Irish *Comparative Candidates Survey (CCS),* which surveys all candidates running in the general election, has seen a decline in its response rate over the past few elections. From a high of more than 45 percent, it has declined to a low just over 22 percent in 2020 (see Keenan and McElroy, 2021 for a full breakdown of response rates by party and over time). This time lag between the election campaign and dissemination of the survey, coupled with a general decline in responses to candidate surveys in Ireland, may account for the low response rate. Furthermore, the topic itself – political violence – may be a difficult one for respondents to engage with. Surveys on the issue conducted with public representatives in Ireland, such as those by the AILG (of local councillors) and Siapera et al. (2024) (for the Oireachtas *Task Force on Safe Participation in Political Life)* recorded response rates of 23.8 and 27.7 percent respectively.

[8] Table 1A in the appendix presents a comparison between the population and the sample along party and gender lines.

friends, or someone working with the candidate during the campaign –experienced any form of violence. Being the subject of degrading talk or false rumours is the most common form of violence; it is reported by 68.29 percent of candidates. Physical violence is reported least often; just 10.57 percent of respondents indicated that they had experienced it. Table 2A in the appendix presents the frequency with which these types of violence are experienced by gender. These measures are used to test hypothesis 2.

In order to test hypothesis 1, we construct a dependent variable using these five measures. *Aggregate political violence* captures the extent to which respondents reported political violence taking place, summing the responses to these items by respondent, to create an aggregate measure. This measure takes a minimum value of 0 (if no violence occurred) and a maximum value of 5 (if every form of violence occurred). This approach is in line with the continuum of political violence approach, which constructs political violence as ranging from physical to psychological violence, capturing the range of acts resulting from involvement in politics (Bjarnegård, 2023). These acts are part of a single underlying construct: political violence. Figure 1 presents the distribution of this dependent variable; 75 percent of candidates indicated that they had experienced at least one form of political violence.

Fig. 1. Prevalence of Political Violence



Hypotheses 3 and 4 test whether the form of violence experienced by candidates is gendered, both with respect to its content (violence with sexual connotations) and with respect to the source from which it derives (from within the political party). As outlined above, we expect that women will be more likely to experience violence with sexual connotations. We use three variables to test this hypothesis. Respondents who reported that they had experienced degrading talk or false rumours, threats, or physical violence were asked to report how often these forms of violence were sexual in nature. These three variables were measured on a five-point scale, ranging from never (1) to very often (5). We recode these variables to be binary measures. For people subjected to degrading talk or false rumours, 40.43 percent of the time these were sexual in nature. For those who experienced threats, these were sexual in 25 percent of cases. Respondents report physical violence occurring very rarely, but when it does occur, it is typically non-sexual in nature (82.93 percent).

We also expect women to experience more violence from within their political party. We test this hypothesis using four items in the survey. Presented with a list of options (including family members, community members, and supporters of another party), respondents were asked to report where the violence they experienced originated (i.e. the source(s)). The political party is a significant source of political violence; nearly 71 percent of those who were subjected to degrading talk and false rumours say it was started by another party, while these originated from within their own party for almost a third.

We subset the data to retain only respondents who were affiliated to a party at the last election they contested. We are specifically interested in the sources of violence that relate to a respondent's own party – leader(s) of their party, member(s) of their party, and supporter(s) of their party – and construct two variables to capture this. First, we sum all items related to own party sources of political violence, meaning each party respondent receives a score of between 0 and 12[9]. This gives us a total count measure of the number of instances when political violence originated in a respondents' party (*total party source*). Second, we recode this measure into a binary measure, which takes the value 0 if the respondent never experienced own party originated political violence, and value 1 if political violence came from the respondents' political party in at least one instance (*any party source*).

Hypotheses 5 and 6 test for gendered impacts of political violence. First, we investigate the issue of constraints using two semantic differential scales, capturing the effect that respondents' political participation had on the level of fear they experienced and their willingness to speak out about controversial issues. For the fear item (*less fear*), the opposing statements on the scale were more afraid (1) and less afraid (10). For the willingness to speak out on controversial issues item (*speaking out*), the opposing statements were decreased willingness (1) and increased willingness (10). For both items, a higher score indicates that political engagement has a positive effect.

We use a single item (*ambition*) from the survey to explore the question of whether women are more likely to opt out of politics. Again, the item is a ten-point semantic differential scale, with respondents being asked whether their engagement in politics makes them less willing (1) or more willing (10) to run again.

All hypotheses are tested using regression analysis. Being a female candidate is the key independent variable across all models. Based on our review of the existing literature, we include four control variables. First, a continuous variable, *age* of respondent, measured in years. In accordance with extant literature, for example Kosiara-Pedersen (2024), we anticipate younger candidates will be more susceptible to political violence. Second, we include two variables in order to capture the prominence of the respondent (see Håkansson, 2021; Rhenault et al., 2019 and Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024). The first is a categorical measure of the *number of elections* that the respondent has previously contested; those who have contested more elections being more well-known and therefore more likely to be the subject of violence and/or intimidation. This variable ranges between one election contested (1) to at least four (4). Only 37.36 percent of respondents had contested one election, while more than three-in-ten had run in at least four elections. The second is a binary variable capturing whether the respondent *won* a seat at the last election they contested; 56.06 percent of respondents won the last election they contested. Finally, we include a *party identification* variable. The party variable consists of the following categories: Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, the Labour Party, Sinn Féin, the Green Party, Other Party (including the Social Democrats, Aontú, Renua), and Non-Party/Independent candidates.

[9] A score of 0 would mean that a respondent experienced no violence from within their political party. A score of 12 would mean that the respondent had experienced all four forms of political violence (degrading talk and false rumours, threats, physical violence, and property damage) and that, for each of these four types, the three sources from their own political party (the leader(s), the member(s), the supporter(s)) had been responsible.

We test these six hypotheses below.

Findings

Prevalence and content of political violence in Irish politics

Table 1 presents the results of the negative binomial regression model testing **hypothesis 1**. The results indicate that gender predicts the intensity of political violence experienced: women who run for election in Ireland experience it more often than men. The incidence rate ratio (IRR)[10] provides a substantive interpretation of the coefficient in the table; holding the other variables (age, political prominence, party affiliation) constant, women experience political violence at a rate that is 1.27 times greater than that of men. This finding supports hypothesis 1.

Table 1. Predictors of prevalence of political violence

	Model 1: Aggregate political violence
Female	0.24**
	(0.11)
Age (years)	-0.03***
	(0.00)
Prominence	
Number of elections contested	
Contests (2)	0.56***
	(0.13)
Contests (3)	0.52***
	(0.16)
Contests (4 and over)	0.67***
	(0.15)
Elected	0.32***
	(0.11)
Party	
Fine Gael	0.01
	(0.15)
Labour Party	-0.11
	(0.20)
Sinn Féin	-0.17
	(0.19)
Green Party	-0.36
	(0.27)
Other party	-0.09
	(0.23)
Non-party	0.15
	(0.15)
Constant	1.27***
	(0.23)
Observations	252

Standard errors in parentheses.
Gender weights applied.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

[10] The IRR is computed by dividing the incidence rate of the treated or exposed group (in this case, women) by that of the control or unexposed group (here, men). An IRR of 1.0 indicates that both groups have the same incidence rate (i.e. there is no difference between the groups), values less than one 1.0 indicate that the exposed group has a lower incidence of a given event compared with the unexposed group. Incidence rate ratios for all of the statistically significant coefficients in Model 1 can be found in Table 3A of the appendix.

Table 2. Predictors of political violence by type

	Model 2: Degrading talk and false rumours	Model 3: Threats	Model 4: Physical violence	Model 5: Property damage	Model 6: Intimidation of associates
Female	0.99***	0.19	0.39	0.25	0.57*
	(0.36)	(0.35)	(0.57)	(0.35)	(0.33)
Age (years)	-0.06***	-0.08***	-0.06***	-0.04***	-0.03**
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Prominence					
Number of elections contested					
Contests (2)	0.59	1.26***	1.19	1.35***	1.35***
	(0.42)	(0.43)	(0.74)	(0.42)	(0.40)
Contests (3)	1.25**	1.22**	1.10	0.91*	0.75
	(0.53)	(0.51)	(0.85)	(0.51)	(0.47)
Contests (4 and over)	0.86*	1.93***	1.98***	1.33***	0.85*
	(0.46)	(0.49)	(0.75)	(0.46)	(0.44)
Elected	0.86***	0.98***	0.31	0.21	0.55*
	(0.33)	(0.34)	(0.54)	(0.33)	(0.32)
Party					
Fine Gael	-0.23	-0.00	1.13	0.22	-0.23
	(0.49)	(0.48)	(0.87)	(0.46)	(0.45)
Labour Party	-0.07	0.38	-0.46	-0.04	-1.49**
	(0.63)	(0.57)	(1.42)	(0.58)	(0.67)
Sinn Féin	-1.06*	0.09	-0.07	-0.46	0.07
	(0.56)	(0.57)	(1.24)	(0.59)	(0.52)
Green Party	-0.86	-0.16	-	-1.02	-0.92
	(0.69)	(0.75)		(0.89)	(0.76)
Other party	-0.78	0.43	0.20	-0.43	-0.12
	(0.66)	(0.66)	(1.45)	(0.70)	(0.62)
Independents	-0.05	-0.00	2.03**	0.18	0.40
	(0.51)	(0.49)	(0.84)	(0.47)	(0.45)
Constant	2.73***	1.65**	-1.66	0.31	0.05
	(0.76)	(0.73)	(1.18)	(0.72)	(0.69)
Observations	252	252	237	252	252

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Gender weights applied.

The coefficients for the control variables are also largely in line with our expectations. While we do not find evidence for differences in prevalence of political violence across political parties, we do find the likelihood of experiencing political violence decreases as candidate age increases. Candidate prominence – measured by the number of elections contested and successfully winning a seat – is also an important predictor of political violence. The IRR for this coefficient indicates that the magnitude of this effect is not small; respondents who won the last election they contested experience a rate of political violence that is 1.38 times greater than for those who did not win.

Hypothesis 2 states that male and female politicians will experience different forms of violence; we expect that women will be more often subjected to psychological forms of violence, while men will be more likely to experience physical violence. To investigate this, we ran logistic regressions for each of the five types of political violence discussed in the previous section: degrading talk and false rumours, threats, physical violence, property damage, and intimidation of associates.

Table 2 presents the results of this analysis. Across all five models, the coefficients for the key independent variable – female – are positive, though they are only statistically significant in only two models. Using odds ratios enables us to comment on the substantive effects of these coefficients .[11] For Model 2 (investigating gender differences with respect to the experience of degrading talk and false rumours), we find that women are 2.68 times more likely to experience this type of political violence than are men. However, we do not find any gender difference between men and women with respect to the level of threats received (Model 3). Model 6 tests whether candidate gender predicts whether intimidation of associates took place. We find that women are 1.76 times more likely to report this than their male counterparts. Contrary to our expectations, men are not more likely than women to report having experienced physical violence, and we find no gender differences with respect to the models examining threats received or damage to personal or party property. Hypothesis 2 is therefore only partially supported.

Hypothesis 3 relates to the content of violence; we expect that female politicians will be more likely to experience violence with sexual connotations. Table 3 present the results of the logistic regressions in Table 3.[12] The results are consistent across all models. Again, we use odds ratios to capture the substantive effect (see Table 5A in the appendix for the odds ratios for all of the statistically significant coefficients). Of those who experienced degrading talk or false rumours, women are 7.14 times more likely than men to have experienced a sexual component to this type of violence (Model 7). For respondents who reported having been subjected to threats, women were 6.99 times more likely than men to report having been subjected to threats of a sexual nature (Model 8). Finally, among those who reported physical violence (Model 9), women were 6.94 times more likely than men to have experienced physical violence that was sexual in nature (controls are omitted due to the low number of observations). This analysis lends support to hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 states that women will face political violence from within their party more often than men. Restricting the sample to party candidates who have experienced political violence, we test this hypothesis using two dependent variables; a count measure of the number of reported sources of violence related to a respondents' party (*total party source*), as well as a binary measure (*any party source*). Table 4 presents the results of the negative binomial model and logistic regression.

[11] Similar to the IRR discussed above, odds ratios are a measure of the likelihood of an event happening in a treated or exposed group compared with the likelihood of that event happening in the untreated or non-exposed group. In logistic regression, the odds ratio gives the effect of a unit change in the independent variable on the dependent variable. Table 4A in the appendix presents the odds ratios for all of the statistically significant coefficients in Models 2-6.

[12] Controls are included for only two of the models due to the low frequency with which this form of violence occurs.

The results of Models 10 and 11 support hypothesis 4; among party candidates who experienced political violence, women experience violence from party sources at a rate 1.60 times higher than that of their male counterparts (Model 10)[13]. Further, when they experience political violence, they are 2.09 times more likely than men for that violence to have originated from at least one party source.

Table 3. Gender differences in sexual violence

	Model 7: Sexual rumours	**Model 8: Sexual threats**	**Model 9: Sexual physical violence**
Female	1.97***	1.94***	1.94**
	(0.46)	(0.74)	(0.94)
Age (years)	-0.07***	-0.04	
	(0.02)	(0.04)	
Prominence			
Number of elections contested			
Contests (2)	1.24**	2.53**	
	(0.55)	(0.99)	
Contests (3)	1.16*	1.16	
	(0.66)	(1.02)	
Contests (4 and over)	2.02***	1.25	
	(0.64)	(1.09)	
Elected	-0.30	-0.73	
	(0.44)	(0.70)	
Party			
Fine Gael	0.76	-1.10	
	(0.57)	(0.94)	
Labour Party	-0.92	-	
	(0.77)		
Sinn Féin	-0.68	-1.49	
	(0.78)	(1.17)	
Green Party	0.95	-1.90	
	(1.02)	(1.91)	
Other party	0.59	-0.45	
	(0.84)	(1.23)	
Independents	0.46	-0.31	
	(0.58)	(0.84)	
Constant	1.07	0.28	-2.53***
	(0.96)	(1.60)	(0.68)
Observations	165	77	41

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.
Gender weights applied.

[13] Table 6A in the appendix presents the incidence rate ratios (IRR) and the odds ratios (OR) for the statistically significant coefficients in Models 10 and 11 respectively.

Table 4. Predictors of prevalence of political violence

	Model 10: Number of party sources	**Model 11: Any party source**
Female	0.47*	0.74*
	(0.27)	(0.42)
Age (years)	-0.03*	-0.02
	(0.01)	(0.02)
Prominence		
Number of elections contested		
Contests (2)	0.81*	0.56
	(0.43)	(0.55)
Contests (3)	0.27	0.19
	(0.50)	(0.69)
Contests (4 and over)	-0.07	-0.13
	(0.39)	(0.57)
Elected	-0.62*	-0.99**
	(0.34)	(0.48)
Party		
Fine Gael	-0.21	-0.24
	(0.30)	(0.48)
Labour Party	-2.07***	-2.10***
	(0.66)	(0.71)
Sinn Féin	-0.83**	-0.68
	(0.41)	(0.60)
Green Party	-16.61***	-
	(0.55)	
Other party	-0.90	-2.37**
	(0.84)	(1.09)
Constant	1.36*	1.29
	(0.79)	(1.05)
Observations	152	144

Standard errors in parentheses.
Gender weights applied.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Consequences of political violence in Irish politics

Finally, we test two hypotheses related to the gendered consequences of political violence. **Hypothesis 5** states that women who experience political violence will feel more constrained than men with respect to their contributions and agenda-setting abilities. We test this with two scale measures; the first capturing the extent to which a respondent felt less afraid as a result of their participation in politics (*less fear*) and the second is the extent to which they were willing to speak about controversial issues (*speaking out*).

Hypothesis 6 states that women who experience political violence will be more likely than men to opt out of politics in the face of political violence; higher values on the *ambition* measure indicate that a respondent's political engagement has made them more willing to stand as a candidate in a future election. Table 5 presents the results of six ordinary logistic regression models; three for all candidates and three restricting the sample to those experiencing violence.

In general, women were less likely than men to report that their political engagement had made them less afraid (the mean for women is 5.45, substantially below the mean for male respondents at 6.53) (Model 11). When we restrict the sample only to respondents who have experienced political violence,

this gender difference remains (Model 12). Yet, with respect to willingness to speak out about contentious matters, we do not find evidence of any gender difference; women do not report that they are less willing than men to speak about controversial topics as a result of their engagement in politics (Model 13) and this remains the case, even when we restrict the sample to those who experienced political violence (Model 14). Therefore, hypothesis 5 is not supported. However, with respect to hypothesis 6, women's willingness to run for office in future is lower than that of men for both the full pool of candidates (Model 15) and for those who experienced political violence (Model 16).

Robustness checks

A potential limitation of findings for Model 1 (aggregate political violence) is the inclusion of *intimidation of associates* in the dependent variable. Intimidation of associates is considered to be political violence since these individuals are being targeted as a result of their ties to the candidate, it is possible that the responses in relation to this item are less accurate. Further, it could be argued that this type of violence does not form part of the same underlying construct. We therefore ran the analysis again, excluding intimidation of associates from the index. This did not alter the results, so the original variable is retained.

Next, we ran all the models without the gender weights. Tables 7A, 8A and 9A in the appendix presents these unweighted results for all of the models for which we found statistically significant results. With the exception of Model 7A, testing for gender differences with respect to the source of political violence (*number of party sources*) the statistically significant effects for all of the coefficients on the female variable remains.

We also explored whether the results are being driven by the coding of the party identification variable. We created a new variable, coding the parties as ideologically on the left (Sinn Féin, the Green Party, the Social Democrats, Solidarity-PBP, and the Labour Party) or right (Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Renua, and Aontú) of the political spectrum and ran the analysis again. It is important to note that using this variable necessarily leads to a reduction in the number of observations; it is not possible to code independent candidates since there is no item asking respondents to place themselves along the ideological spectrum. The results for all but three of the models remained the same for this alternative specification. The gender difference in political ambition among those who experienced political violence is no longer statistically significant (the number of observations drops to 144), though the direction of the relationship remains the same. In addition, the coefficients for both of the party violence models lose their statistical significance, though the direction of the relationship does not change. Since there is no theoretical reason to drop independent candidates from the analysis, and since this robustness check indicates that the coding of party identification is not driving these results, we retain the original variable.

Table 5. Predictors of political violence by type

	Model 11: Less fear	Model 12: Less fear (violence)	Model 13: Speaking out	Model 14: Speaking out (violence)	Model 15: Ambition	Model 16: Ambition (violence)
Female	-1.18***	-0.87**	0.01	0.15	-1.07**	-0.88*
	(0.33)	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.48)	(0.42)	(0.49)
Age (years)	0.06***	0.06***	0.03*	0.03	0.08***	0.07***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Prominence						
Number of elections contested						
Contests (2)	-0.96**	-0.99*	0.06	-0.12	0.02	-0.29
	(0.42)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.61)	(0.51)	(0.60)
Contests (3)	-0.10	-0.14	-0.14	-0.09	0.22	0.53
	(0.45)	(0.60)	(0.60)	(0.74)	(0.69)	(0.87)
Contests (4 and over)	-1.06**	-1.21**	0.36	0.07	-0.47	-0.56
	(0.44)	(0.57)	(0.54)	(0.69)	(0.55)	(0.69)
Elected	-1.06***	-0.69	-0.60	-0.32	0.84**	1.20**
	(0.35)	(0.45)	(0.42)	(0.54)	(0.41)	(0.52)
Party						
Fine Gael	0.19	-0.15	-0.82	-0.84	-0.66	-0.43
	(0.52)	(0.57)	(0.65)	(0.74)	(0.68)	(0.76)
Labour Party	0.61	0.77	0.45	0.87	0.75	1.48
	(0.60)	(0.65)	(0.70)	(0.74)	(0.81)	(0.89)
Sinn Féin	1.15*	0.89	1.07	0.72	0.51	0.76
	(0.61)	(0.70)	(0.67)	(0.74)	(0.71)	(0.83)
Green Party	-0.43	-1.32	0.30	0.77	-0.30	-1.02
	(0.75)	(0.87)	(0.75)	(0.83)	(0.89)	(0.84)
Other party	0.37	-0.39	0.11	-0.85	-0.63	-1.29
	(0.72)	(0.94)	(0.94)	(1.25)	(0.92)	(1.12)
Independents	0.69	0.60	0.40	0.50	0.37	0.77
	(0.59)	(0.69)	(0.65)	(0.75)	(0.69)	(0.79)
Constant	4.04***	4.05***	5.08***	5.00***	1.46*	1.55
	(0.74)	(0.90)	(0.89)	(1.09)	(0.85)	(1.06)
Observations	235	179	236	180	236	180
R-squared	0.22	0.17	0.08	0.07	0.21	0.20

Standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Gender weights applied.

Finally, we produced two further robustness checks. We ran all of the models again, this time including robust standard errors, as well as applying gender weights[14]. The inclusion of these standard errors does not impact our results overall; the gender differences are unchanged. Further, we ran all of the models again, this time using the jackknife method[15], an alternative approach to estimating the standard error in the model. When we use the jackknife in the estimation of our models, all but two of the female coefficients in our models remain statistically significant. For both of the models investigating hypothesis 4 (violence originating from the party), the coefficients lose their statistical significance. The coefficients in these models were already statistically significant at the ten percent level, indicating this finding warrants further investigation.

Discussion and conclusion

Overall, we find that the prevalence of political violence in Ireland is high - some three-quarters of respondents experienced at least one form of political violence - and it is gendered in its scope, form and consequences. In line with our expectations, we find that women are more likely than men to experience political violence (**hypothesis 1**). There is also evidence of gendered differences in its form (**hypothesis 2**); women more likely to experience psychological violence, in particular degrading talk and false rumours, and to report that their associates were subject to intimidation. Further, women were more likely to experience violence with sexual connotations (**hypothesis 3**), and party women appear to be more likely to experience internal-party political violence than men (**hypothesis 4**). Our results also indicate that women are consistently more likely than men to say that their political engagement has made them more afraid but contrary to **hypothesis 5**, women do not feel more constrained than men in their public and political utterances. However, they are more likely to express lower levels of political ambition (i.e. being less willing to run in the future) as a result of their experiences, offering support for **hypothesis 6**.

Our results correspond with many of the trends in other country cases and cross-national studies, suggesting that the prevalence and gendered nature of political violence in Ireland is not only due to its highly personalised, localised and male-dominated political culture, though these features of the political system may facilitate it. Indeed, in the context of these characteristics of the political system, women in Irish politics are already positioned as disruptors of the political status quo. The adoption of legislative gender quotas for general elections – a measure that enjoyed lukewarm support among large segments of the political elite (Keenan and McElroy, 2017) – increased the extent to which women represent a threat to that status quo (see Krook, 2015). Indeed, meeting the quota has necessitated political parties prioritising the selection of some women over men, and the nature of the electoral system – PR-STV – pits these women in direct competition with male running-mates. We hypothesised that political violence might be one expression of a resistance or backlash to women's presence. While an absence of data from the period prior to the gender quota's introduction means that we cannot test for a quota effect (i.e. that the gender quota has led to an increase in abuse or harassment of women by members of their own party), our analysis suggests that women may experience hostility towards them from within the party (hypothesis 4). It is worth noting, however, that this finding is not constant across all model specifications.

When we use an alternative measure of party identification (left-right ideology), this statistically significant effect disappears. Similarly, using the jackknife method of standard error estimation – a more conservative method – we do not find evidence of an effect. In part, this instability of estimates is due to the comparatively low number of party candidates reporting violence coming from a party

[14] Robust standard errors can provide a more accurate estimate of the coefficients in the regression model where the model has been mis-specified.

[15] This approach is known as the 'leave out' method since it involves estimating standard errors by omitting one observation at a time in sequence. This method produces a standard error that is normally more conservative than similar approaches such as the bootstrap method.

source – 77 individuals who did compared with 140 who did not – making it more difficult to detect a significant effect. In light of that, these results should be treated as suggestive and in need of further exploration. The question will be worth revisiting after the next general election when the gender quota rises to 40 percent for the first time; will the increased quota threshold be met with even more hostility directed towards women from within the party?

With respect to the consequences of political violence, we find some evidence that these are gendered. One of the core concerns of scholars working in this area is the impact that political violence is having on democracy. It may cause existing politicians to alter their behaviour, impacting their ability to fully participate (see, for example, Van Bavel, 2022; Verge, 2022; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021), and it may deter certain cohorts from entering politics in the first place (Krook, 2017). If the consequences of experiencing political violence are gendered, then this has implications for the extent to which women will be represented in both descriptive and substantive terms.

Our results show that women in general are more likely than men to report having lower levels of political ambition (i.e. being less willing to run in the future). This finding is in line with existing scholarship on the gender gap in political ambition which finds that women are less inclined to run for office (Fox and Lawless, 2005; Fox and Lawless, 2014). However, this result does not appear to be explained by women being more likely to experience political violence[16]; when we examine only those respondents who were subjected to violence, a gender gap remains. We suggest that further examination of this finding is warranted. As we have discussed above, there is a difference with respect to the content of the violence that women experience; it is more often sexual in nature when directed towards women. It is worth considering the extent to which the *content* of the violence matters For example, do threats of a sexual nature impact candidates in the same way as threats of physical violence? And is the impact of threats of sexual violence the same whether the recipient is male or female?

On the whole, we must be cautious with respect to over-interpreting these results. While three-quarters of the respondents report experiencing some type of political violence, in many instances the numbers of individuals experiencing a particular form are low. This makes it difficult to detect effects that are small in size. In addition, emerging scholarship in this area is exploring the circumstances under which some women will attract disproportionate levels of political violence. The intersection of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation has implications for the extent to which an individual will be targeted (IPU, 2016; Kuperberg, 2018; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021; Kosiara-Pedersen, 2024). Minority and gay women are more likely to face abuse (Collignon et al., 2022; Collignon and Rüdig, 2021), while women are more likely than men to face racial harassment (Collignon and Rüdig, 2021). In the Irish context, data limitations and issues around small sample sizes make such effects difficult to examine using quantitative methods and suggest a need for qualitative research to further our understanding.

This study is an exploration of the content of political violence faced by politicians in Ireland. We show that this political violence is gendered, aligning the Irish experience with those of many other country case studies and cross-national studies, and giving rise to concerns for the state of democracy. Krook (2017: 83) warns of the potentially "devastating impact on democratic institutions and practices" of political violence, especially that directed at women in politics, while Kosiara-Pedersen (2024: 2) reminds us that such violence "not only risks descriptive representation, that is, the exclusion of a society's talents and resources, but may also have a negative impact on substantive representation, that is, the inclusion of all interests and varied life experiences". Securing the diversity, integrity, legitimacy and effectiveness of representative politics requires that political violence is tracked, its

[16] Only 18.66 percent of them reported that they had not experienced violence of any form, compared with 25.93 percent of men

varied forms are documented, and its differential consequences for women and men are understood. This study contributes to achieving that ambition.

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Appendix

Table 1A. Political affiliation by gender (sample and population)

	Women		Men	
Political party	**Sample**	**Population**	**Sample**	**Population**
Fianna Fáil	20 (34.48)	98 (21.88)	38 (65.52)	350 (78.13)
Fine Gael	36 (42.86)	132 (28.82)	48 (57.14)	326 (71.18)
The Labour Party	15 (46.8)	44 (37.61)	17 (53.13)	73 (62.39)
Sinn Féin	18 (41.86)	82 (33.61)	25 (58.14)	162 (66.39)
The Green Party	8 (40.00)	38 (42.70)	12 (60.00)	51 (57.30)
Other party	17 (54.84)	140 (39.89)	14 (45.16)	211 (60.11)
Non-party	17 (21.79)	91 (18.09)	61 (78.21)	412 (81.91)
Total	131 (100)	625 (100)	215 (100)	1585 (100)

Table 2A. Experiences of political violence (by gender)

	Women		Men	
Type of violence	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**
Degrading talk and false rumours	36 (26.87)	98 (73.13)	75 (34.72)	141 (65.28)
Threats	90 (67.16)	44 (32.84)	132 (61.11)	84 (38.89)
Physical violence	121 (90.30)	13 (9.70)	192 (88.89)	24 (11.11)
Property damage	94 (70.15)	99 (28.29)	157 (72.69)	59 (27.31)
Intimidation of associates	83 (61.94)	51 (38.06)	148 (68.52)	68 (31.48)

Table 3A. – Model 1 Aggregate political violence – incidence rate ratios (statistically significant coefficients)

	Model 1A: Aggregate Political Violence
Female	1.27
Age (years)	0.97
Prominence	
Number of elections contested	
Contests (2)	1.75
Contests (3)	1.68
Contests (4 and over)	1.95
Elected	1.38
Party	
Fine Gael	NS
Labour Party	NS
Sinn Féin	NS
Green Party	NS
Other party	NS

Table 4A. – Predictors of political violence by type – odds ratios (statistically significant coefficients)

	Model 2: Degrading talk and false rumours	**Model 3: Threats**	**Model 4: Physical violence**	**Model 5: Property damage**	**Model 6: Intimidation of associates**
Female	2.68	NS	NS	NS	1.76
Age (years)	0.94	0.92	-0.94	-0.04***	0.97
Prominence					
Number of elections contested					
Contests (2)	NS	3.54	NS	1.35***	3.85
Contests (3)	3.49	3.38	NS	0.91*	NS
Contests (4 and over)	2.37	6.88	7.27	1.33***	2.13
Elected	2.36	2.65	1.37	NS	2.33
Party					
Fine Gael	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Labour Party	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Sinn Féin	0.35	NS	NS	NS	NS
Green Party	NS	NS	-	NS	NS
Other party	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Independents	NS	NS	7.62	NS	NS

Table 5A. Gender differences in sexual violence – odds ratios (statistically significant coefficients)

	Model 7: Sexual rumours	**Model 8: Sexual threats**	**Model 9: Sexual physical violence**
Female	7.14	6.99	6.94
Age (years)	0.93	NS	
Prominence			
Number of elections contested			
Contests (2)	3.46	12.55	
Contests (3)	3.20	NS	
Contests (4 and over)	7.52	NS	
Elected	NS	NS	
Party			
Fine Gael	NS	NS	
Labour Party	NS	-	
Sinn Féin	NS	NS	
Green Party	NS	NS	
Other party	NS	NS	
Independents	NS	NS	

Table 6A. Predictors of prevalence of political violence – substantive interpretation (statistically significant coefficients)

	Model 10: Number of party sources (IRR)	**Model 11: Any party source (OR)**
Female	1.60	2.09
Age (years)	0.97	NS
Prominence		
Number of elections contested		
Contests (2)	2.26	NS
Contests (3)	NS	NS
Contests (4 and over)	NS	NS
Elected	0.54	0.37
Party		
Fine Gael	NS	NS
Labour Party	-0.13	0.12
Sinn Féin	0.44	NS
Green Party	6.15E-08	-
Other party	NS	0.09

Table 7A. Predictors of political violence – prevalence and type (unweighted regression models)

	Model 1A: Aggregate Political Violence	Model 2A: Degrading talk and false rumours	Model 3A: Intimidation of associates	Model 4A: Sexual rumours	Model 5A: Sexual threats	Model 6A: Physical sexual violence
Female	0.23**	0.96***	0.55*	2.04***	1.95***	1.94**
	(0.10)	(0.34)	(0.31)	(0.45)	(0.69)	(0.92)
Age (years)	-0.03***	-0.06***	-0.03**	-0.07***	-0.04	
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.04)	
Prominence						
Number of elections contested						
Contests (2)	0.55***	0.70*	1.34***	1.27**	2.30**	
	(0.13)	(0.42)	(0.39)	(0.53)	(0.95)	
Contests (3)	0.49***	1.19**	0.83*	1.28*	0.98	
	(0.16)	(0.54)	(0.47)	(0.65)	(1.01)	
Contests (4 and over)	0.65***	0.95**	0.81*	1.92***	1.12	
	(0.15)	(0.46)	(0.44)	(0.62)	(1.04)	
Elected	0.28***	0.74**	0.52*	-0.21	-0.69	
	(0.11)	(0.32)	(0.31)	(0.42)	(0.67)	
Party						
Fine Gael	-0.00	-0.15	-0.31	0.74	-1.40	
	(0.15)	(0.49)	(0.44)	(0.56)	(0.94)	
Labour Party	-0.12	-0.10	-1.63**	-1.36*	-	
	(0.19)	(0.62)	(0.66)	(0.77)		
Sinn Féin	-0.17	-0.83	-0.09	-0.51	-1.42	
	(0.19)	(0.55)	(0.52)	(0.73)	(1.09)	
Green Party	-0.43	-0.98	-1.14	0.52	-1.81	
	(0.27)	(0.68)	(0.76)	(1.05)	(1.73)	
Other party	-0.09	-0.69	-0.06	0.60	-0.79	
	(0.22)	(0.64)	(0.59)	(0.79)	(1.18)	
Independents	0.12	-0.01	0.27	0.67	-0.45	
	(0.15)	(0.51)	(0.45)	(0.58)	(0.86)	
Constant	1.26***	2.84***	-0.00	1.04	0.45	-2.53***
	(0.24)	(0.79)	(0.71)	(0.98)	(1.62)	(0.73)
Observations	252	252	252	165	77	41

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 8A. Predictors of source of political violence (unweighted regression models)

	Model 7A: Number of party sources	**Model 8A: Any party source**
Female	0.45	0.78*
	(0.31)	(0.41)
Age (years)	-0.03*	-0.03
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Prominence		
Number of elections contested		
Contests (2)	0.74*	0.57
	(0.38)	(0.51)
Contests (3)	0.50	0.48
	(0.47)	(0.64)
Contests (4 and over)	0.14	0.20
	(0.45)	(0.60)
Elected	-0.67**	-1.06**
	(0.34)	(0.44)
Party		
Fine Gael	-0.25	-0.17
	(0.35)	(0.49)
Labour Party	-1.87***	-1.85**
	(0.60)	(0.72)
Sinn Féin	-0.84*	-0.57
	(0.46)	(0.58)
Green Party	-16.00	
	(747.43)	
Other party	-1.15**	-2.59***
	(0.58)	(0.91)
Constant	1.54*	1.55
	(0.83)	(1.06)
Observations	152	144

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 9A. Consequences of political violence (unweighted regression models)

	Model 9A: Less fear	**Model 10A: Less fear (violence)**	**Model 11A: Ambition**	**Model 12A: Ambition (violence)**
Female	-1.18***	-0.86**	-1.08***	-0.86*
	(0.33)	(0.39)	(0.40)	(0.48)
Age (years)	0.06***	0.05***	0.08***	0.07***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Prominence				
Number of elections contested				
Contests (2)	-0.94**	-0.91*	-0.04	-0.27
	(0.42)	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.59)
Contests (3)	-0.02	-0.04	0.13	0.52
	(0.52)	(0.61)	(0.61)	(0.73)
Contests (4 and over)	-1.01**	-1.11*	-0.52	-0.55
	(0.47)	(0.57)	(0.57)	(0.69)
Elected	-1.06***	-0.74*	0.95**	1.31***
	(0.33)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.48)
Party				
Fine Gael	0.11	-0.16	-0.70	-0.38
	(0.50)	(0.56)	(0.61)	(0.68)
Labour Party	0.72	0.90	0.89	1.61*
	(0.62)	(0.69)	(0.75)	(0.84)
Sinn Féin	0.90	0.71	0.24	0.49
	(0.58)	(0.67)	(0.70)	(0.81)
Green Party	-0.67	-1.35	-0.30	-0.99
	(0.75)	(1.02)	(0.90)	(1.23)
Other party	0.30	-0.40	-0.99	-1.44
	(0.66)	(0.80)	(0.79)	(0.97)
Independents	0.66	0.65	0.14	0.60
	(0.53)	(0.60)	(0.63)	(0.72)
Constant	4.22***	4.15***	1.53	1.53
	(0.80)	(0.97)	(0.95)	(1.16)
Observations	235	179	236	180
R-squared	0.21	0.16	0.21	0.21

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.