

Anti-media discourse, partisanship, and violence against journalists: Evidence from Chávez's Venezuela

Authors:

Kyong Mazzaro

The Graduate Center, City University of New York;

Email: kmazzaro@gradcenter.cuny.edu

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Abstract

Can political leaders' anti-media rhetoric encourage violence against journalists and undermine media freedom in democracies? While there is evidence that anti-media public discourse can amplify negative attitudes and behaviors towards the media, there is still uncertainty as to whether and how politicians' verbal attacks against the "lying press" and "fake news" may incentivize non-state actors to physically attack journalists. Building on dangerous speech, populist communication, and hostile media perceptions scholarship, I show that although anti-media public discourse may not feature explicit calls for violence, it increases the incidence of physical attacks against journalists. Using qualitative content analysis and survival models, I analyze original data on the content and timing of 696 anti-media messages featuring government officials and the timing and location of physical attacks by non-state actors against journalists during Hugo Chávez's presidency. Estimates of Cox and instrumental variable models show that the frequency of anti-media messages is positively associated with the hazard of violence against journalists and that the relationship between discourse and violence is likely causal. I also find that the effect of discourse on violence is moderated by local patterns of electoral competition: anti-media discourse's effect on violence against journalists is largest in locations where elections are highly contested.

1. Introduction

During a televised speech in January, 2003, less than a year after having survived a coup attempt, President Hugo Chávez reflected on past and present challenges facing the country. At a time of

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unprecedented political polarization, the president seemed to be opting for a conciliatory tone: “I agree that the majority of Venezuelans who oppose me deserve my respect, have the right to think whatever they want, and defend their beliefs.” However, as the president discussed recent political events, his tone shifted:

I am sure, however, that most Venezuelans who do not agree with me are regaining their rationality, they are slowly opening their way through the garbage that was thrown onto them. Slowly, they are getting rid of the poison that, through brutal campaigns, the Venezuelan media, in particular the Venezuelan television, injected in their souls. There are exceptions, but today I am talking about the four largest television stations in Venezuela: channels 2, 4, 10, and 33. Four horsemen of the apocalypse. Four horsemen of the apocalypse that have spread hatred. They have spread the historic hatred held by this country’s oligarchy against the Venezuelan people.

The day after Chávez’s speech was aired, a group of masked men on motorcycles attempted to set a van from one of the television channels mentioned by the president, *Televén*, on fire. According to witnesses, the men also threw rocks at the reporting crew, all in the presence of National Guard agents who chose not to intervene. This was not the first nor would be the last time that non-state actors would threaten the personal integrity of journalists or that Venezuelan government officials would identify the mainstream media as the enemy of the people.¹ From Chávez’s reinstatement in 2002 until Maduro assumed the presidency in 2013, human rights monitoring organizations registered over 270 cases of physical attacks led by non-state actors against media workers or buildings. Over the same period of time, government officials targeted the media or specific journalists in 696 statements.

Government-sponsored anti-media rhetoric has increasingly become a reason for concern for media freedom monitoring organizations, policymakers, and scholars who caution about the ways official discourse can normalize or even incentivize violence against journalists across the globe (Article19, 2018; ECPMF, 2019; Fawzi, 2020; Obermaier et al., 2018). Research on dangerous speech, populism, and hostile media perceptions shows that although media discourse does not invariably lead to violence, under certain circumstances, it can pave the way to violent behavior.

¹The first time the president targeted media –accusing them of leading a defamation campaign against him– was during the first broadcast of *Aló Presidente*, his weekly talk show, on May 23, 1999 (less than four months after he was sworn in office for the first time).

From mass murder to anti-immigrant attitudes, scholars note that the dehumanizing features of discourse can deepen in-group and out-group cleavages that serve as a justification for violence (Leader & Benesch, 2016; Rojas, 2010; Straus, 2007). Recent research on the impact of anti-media discourse also suggests that, in the context of the rise of right-wing anti-media populist leaders in Europe, journalists are increasingly becoming the target of harassment and violence (Fawzi, 2020; Obermaier et al., 2018). However, empirical accounts of whether and under what circumstances anti-media messages are associated with attacks against media outlets and journalists are limited.

Does anti-media public discourse lead to violence against journalists and media workers? If so, under what circumstances are critical messages more likely to be associated with attacks? In this study, I explore the links between anti-media discourse and spatiotemporal patterns of violence against journalists under Chávez’s Venezuela (2002-2013) by capitalizing on original data on the content and timing of anti-media messages by government officials and the timing and location of physical attacks led by non-state actors against media workers and facilities. Using a mixed methods approach, I theorize that although government officials may avoid making explicit calls for violence against media outlets and journalists, the dehumanizing qualities of anti-media messages can serve as a justification for attacks. Using survival analysis to estimate the effect of messages on violence, I show that the frequency of anti-media messages is correlated with attacks against communicators. Moreover, instrumental variable models suggest that the effect of discourse on violence can be interpreted as causal. I also find that the estimated effect of messages is heterogeneous: anti-media discourse is most likely to be associated with violence in highly competitive districts where electoral margins between the government and opposition are narrow. These results make the case that anti-media discourse is not innocuous and that local levels of electoral competition may explain why the incidence of violence against journalists following verbal attacks by the government is higher in specific locations.

2. The link between anti-media public discourse and violence against journalists

I define anti-media public discourse as the collection of widely disseminated verbal and written communications or critical messages featuring government officials who target the media as a whole or individual journalists, communicators, media workers, online news outlets, television

stations, radio stations, or newspapers. Anti-media discourse is “public” to the extent that it is espoused by elected officials and disseminated through mass or social media. In practice, anti-media messages can range from minor critiques to acrimonious calls for actions against outlets or journalists. Generally, in cases where anti-media rhetoric becomes a government’s staple, discourse has been known to be opprobrious enough to lead to increase polarization and hostility (Article19, 2018; Fawzi, 2020; UNESCO, 2019).

In recent years, research on anti-media rhetoric and its impact on journalism has steadily grown. Scholars have shed light on the determinants of anti-media public discourse (Solis & Sagarzazu, 2020), analyzed the content of right-wing anti-media populist messages (see Schulz et al., 2020, pp. 208–209; Thornton, 2020), and interviewed journalists to assess the consequences of anti-media rhetoric on their work (Obermaier et al., 2018). Although studies show that journalists often perceive anti-media messages as the reason why non-state actors target them, research on whether, under what conditions, and why anti-media messages and violence against journalists may be correlated is at an early stage.

Despite current limitations, evidence from a long tradition of scholarship on media effects and recent studies on populist communication and hostile media perceptions suggest that there might be a link between anti-media public discourse and violence against journalists. These studies, however, make the case that if there are any media effects they are likely indirect (for a full discussion see Straus, 2007). For instance, scholars find that discourse is likely to contribute to conflict escalation to the extent that it leads to hostile attitudes and perceptions at the individual level, internal cohesion at the group level, and increased polarization at the societal level (for a review see Buyse, 2014). Speech can become particularly dangerous when it features certain frames of communication that tend to deepen in-group and out-group cleavages. Diagnostic frames that blame a group for a problem using dehumanizing stereotypes, prognostic frames that highlight the need for violent measures, and motivational frames that call for urgent collective action are the most likely to lead to violence (see Buyse, 2014; Hameleers et al., 2017; Leader & Benesch, 2016).

In the particular case of populist communication –of which anti-media rhetoric is a core feature–, scholars show that individuals exposed to discourse that characterizes an out-group as “violent,” “criminal,” or “threatening” are likely to develop negative beliefs about the out-group.

These beliefs, in turn, can fuel perceptions that out-groups are highly capable of posing a credible threat to the in-group and, as a consequence, potentially justify violence. For instance, looking at the case of anti-immigrant messages, Wirz et al. (2018) find that populist content featuring anti-immigrant statements lead to negative cognitions towards immigrants. Other studies show that anti-immigrant ads can activate negative stereotypes and intergroup anxiety towards immigrants resulting in anti-immigrant attitudes (Matthes & Schmuck, 2017; Schmuck & Matthes, 2017).

Another way in which anti-media discourse could lead to violence against journalists is by eliciting hostile media perceptions. Studies show that when groups perceive news coverage to be hostile, or at least less agreeable with their point of view than with that of opposing groups (see Gunther, 2008; Perloff, 2015), they are more likely to feel alienated (Tsfati, 2007), be passionate about the moral correctness of their cause (Perloff, 2015), engage in political activism (Feldman et al., 2017), feel indignation (Hwang et al., 2008), and become more partisan (Ladd, 2012). Hostile media perceptions also have an indirect effect on individuals' willingness to resort to violence or use an "uncivil" style of communication. Building on relative deprivation theories, Tsfati and Cohen (2005) show that hostile media perceptions negatively affect levels of trust in the media which, in turn, lead to dissatisfaction with democratic processes and increases individuals' willingness to forcefully resist policies. Along the same lines, focusing on individuals' intentions to communicate, Post (2017) shows that individual's belief that the media make members of their in-group look extreme increases their acceptance of incivility. Researchers have also found that when people overestimate the media's harmful influence on others (such as in cases where the media are accused of manipulating "the people"), a phenomenon known as the "third person effect," people are not only more willing to support censorship (Gunther, 1995; Lee & Tamborini, 2005), but also more inclined to engage in corrective behavior to make their voices heard (Rojas, 2010).

Given anti-media public discourse's potential to deepen in-group and out-group cleavages and elicit hostile media perceptions, I theorize that, in contexts where anti-media public discourse has become qualitatively inflammatory, it can incentivize non-state actors to target journalists. Specifically, I expect that anti-media messages will increase the incidence of violence against journalists.

3. Hypothesis testing

To empirically substantiate the claim that there is a link between broadcasts and violence it is necessary, at a minimum, to have systematic data on the content of messages, the outcome, media exposure, and evidence that content correlates to violence in temporal terms (Straus, 2007). I use a combination of qualitative content analysis and statistical modeling capitalizing on original data on the content and timing of messages and microdata on the timing and location of physical attacks against Venezuelan journalists. My goals are to investigate (1) whether anti-media public discourse is indeed framed in terms that may plausibly deepen in-group and out-group cleavages and facilitate violence and (2) whether and under what circumstances anti-media public discourse is more likely to lead to physical attacks against media professionals and facilities.

3.1. *The Venezuelan case*

In recent decades, media freedom monitoring organizations have issued several warnings about the link between presidents' increasing hostility towards the media and attacks by non-state actors against journalists around the world (Article19, 2018; ECPMF, 2019; UNESCO, 2019; UNHRC, 2018). These calls for caution increased after Trump's election in 2016 and the rise of right-wing populist leaders in many Western democracies, but were also a concern more than a decade earlier, when President Chávez was ramping up a war against the Venezuelan media establishment (Freedom House, 2005, p. 559). Chávez's anti-media discourse was so inflamed, that it became paradigmatic of an era when populist leaders would increasingly target critical media. Not for nothing, President Donald Trump has been dubbed an "American Hugo Chávez" (Grillo, 2016).

Although Chávez was not the first president to use restrictions on media freedom to punish political opponents in Venezuela (see Díaz Rangel, 2004), the extent of government-led restrictions and the tone of his anti-media rhetoric were unprecedented. In contrast to other presidents, Chávez was elected by a landslide after the collapse of the traditional party system and openly threatened the interests of the economic establishment, which also included the owners of all major media outlets in the country.² In this context, private media outlets in Venezuela became

²Private media control around 86 percent of newspaper circulation and 70 percent of broadcasting audiences in Venezuela (Centeno Maldonado & Mata Quintero, 2017; Mastrini & Becerra, 2009).

highly critical of the government, to the point of openly supporting a failed coup attempt against Chávez in 2002 (Cañizález, 2002). Although many outlets recognized that they had “crossed a line” and failed to inform the people during the coup (Forero, 2002), since then, the state-media feud only worsened. This rivalry was accompanied by an upsurge in the number of threats, physical attacks, restrictions on access to information, and legal procedures led by both state and non-state actors against media outlets and communicators (for discussions see Alvarez, 2011; Bisbal, 2009; Dinneen, 2012).

Local media freedom monitoring organizations and scholars contend that Chávez’s aggressiveness towards the press, his attacks against critical outlets, media owners, and journalists, and his constant negative commentary on the partisanship of the media, contributed to the increasing violence against the press in Venezuela (Brett et al., 2003; Cañizález, 2002). The argument is that elected officials starting with the president encourage and condone acts of vandalism and violence led by non-state actors, which creates a climate of impunity that lowers the costs of attacks against the press (Alvarez, 2011; Bermúdez, 2007). No study to date, however, has tested whether anti-media messages correlate with patterns of attacks in Venezuela.

Despite the singularities of the Venezuelan case, state-media feuds led by left- and right-wing populist leaders around the world share many features with it. Across cases, state-sponsored anti-media rhetoric seems to emerge in contexts where there is high political polarization, powerful oppositional media outlets (often in media systems with a high degree of media ownership concentration), and at least a partial collapse of traditional party systems that results in the media becoming a viable political opponent (Kellam & Stein, 2016). Given these parallelisms, researching the link between state-sponsored anti-media rhetoric and anti-media violence in Venezuela can be a first step towards understanding the implications of political polarization, anti-media public discourse, and violence against journalists in other countries.

3.2. Features of anti-media public discourse in Venezuela

I theorize that anti-media public discourse increases the incidence of attacks against journalists because by blaming, using negative stereotypes against, and calling for actions to undermine critical media, it deepens in-group and out-group cleavages and elicits hostile media perceptions that increase the probability of violence. In order for this assumption to hold, at a minimum,

public officials' anti-media rhetoric should not only be critical but also highly divisive. To test this assumption, I used a deductive approach to analyze the content of anti-media messages from April 12, 2002, the day after the coup attempt (which marks the start of the state-media feud escalation), until April 19, 2013, the day that Nicolás Maduro officially succeeded Chávez. For each instance, I collected data on the content of the message, the date in which it was broadcast, and the government official involved.

Data on anti-media messages come from two sources. First, I use transcripts of 283 airings of Chávez's weekly program, *Aló Presidente* (Hello, President). The show had national coverage and was aired roughly every Sunday on state media (radio and television).³ Transcriptions amounted to roughly 1,600 hours—the show had, on average, a duration of 6 hours per episode. I used keywords identified by Solis and Sagarzazu (2020) to scan the transcripts for discourse referring to the media and hand-selected the fragments that characterized the media, specific outlets, or particular journalists in a critical way. Given that anti-media messages in Venezuela are inextricably tied to Chávez, transcripts of his weekly show provide a good basis to examine the phenomenon. Anti-media rhetoric, however, has also been espoused by officials at other levels of government. To capture these messages, as a second source, I use reports by two local media freedom monitoring organizations, Espacio Público (EP) and Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS). These organizations publish narratives and frequencies of “violations of media freedom,” a category that also includes instances when government officials use mass or social media to target journalists, media outlets, or oppositional media more generally. Anti-media statements can take place in the context of public events, press releases, or may be disseminated through social media. Combining messages from both sources, I identified 696 messages that involved the president (49.1%), members of the executive (29.9%), legislative (11.1%) and judicial (4.5%) branches, local incumbents (4.7%), and military or intelligence agents (0.7%). As seen in Figure 1, there was substantial variation in the number of messages during the period under study.

³Some portions of the show were also broadcast in *cadena*, in other words, through all public access television and radio channels in addition to state media.

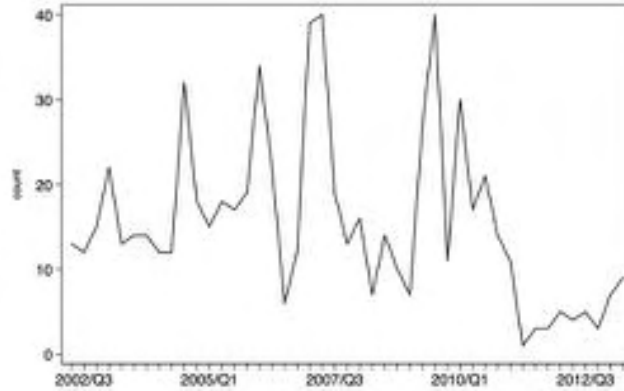


Figure 1: Quarterly counts of anti-media messages

I analyzed the scope of messages, focusing on the types of (1) derogatory characterizations of the media, (2) actual or potential damages attributed to the media, (3) calls to actions to remedy threats posed by the media, and (4) threats against journalists or media outlets. While categories overlap, (1) and (2) broadly capture diagnostic frames that assign blame, and (3) and (4) prognostic and motivational frames that outline tactics and reasons why immediate action against the media may be warranted. To evaluate the extent to which anti-media messages are dehumanizing, legitimize violence, and call for actions against the media, I subsequently identified subcategories under each of the four dimensions above. Although some messages are purely diagnostic, prognostic, or motivational, many feature multiple frames and characterizations. Based on this coding, I measured the share of total messages that fell under each category and sub-category.⁴

In terms of the general scope of anti-media discourse (see Figure 2), I find that Venezuelan government officials use diagnostic frames where the media are characterized in a derogatory way, attributed blame for potential or actual damages, or both, in close to 80 percent of anti-media messages. Prognostic and motivational frames that emphasize the need to take action or feature direct threats against the media are present in just over 40 percent. Overall, I find that although politicians seldom use messages to call for violent actions or explicitly legitimize attacks against journalists, over half of the messages contain extremely negative stereotypes or depict the media as an existential threat to society. These characterizations could plausibly deepen cleavages and elicit hostility. To further dissect the content of messages, I will discuss the extent to which

⁴For a full list of examples, see Table A1 in the Appendix.

messages are dehumanizing, describe existential threats, and contain threats and calls to action.

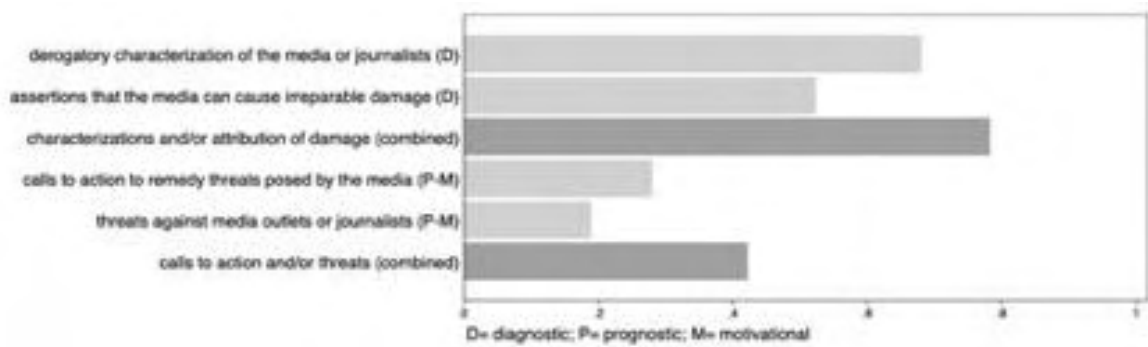


Figure 2: Scope of anti-media public discourse (share of all messages)

3.2.1. *The media as the out-group: derogatory characterizations and blame attributions*

Under Chávez's tenure, government officials used a wide variety of derogatory terms to refer to the media. From ignorant to biased, imperialist, murderers, and diabolic, overall, characterizations were quite vitriolic. Approximately 58 percent of all messages were highly dehumanizing, portraying the media as unethical or lacking basic moral values (evil or criminal), being willing to threaten the life of people (as the leaders of a destabilization campaign), or a combination (see Figure 3, panel A). Blame attributions also varied in their gravity (see Figure 3, panel B). While the damage attributed to the media often related to biases regarding the performance of the government and the lack of diversity in the media, over 30 percent of all messages mentioned existential threats to the survival of the government (electoral fraud, coups, destruction of institutions), threats to the well-being of children and families, or both.

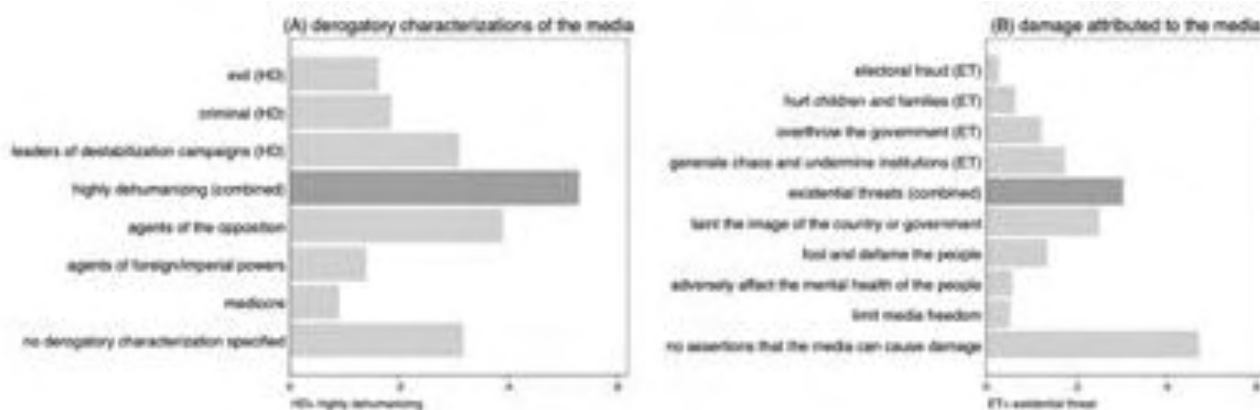


Figure 3: Types of derogatory characterizations and attributions of damage to the media (share of all messages)

Derogatory characterizations are closely related to the types of damages or threats attributed to the media establishment. For instance, media outlets accused of being “committed with overthrowing the government, terrorism, and destabilization” have been touted as “enemies of the people” (Aló Presidente N. 191, May 9, 2004). This is also the case in messages that mention media outlets’ involvement in the 2002 coup. For example, the vice president of the parliament accused journalists who had critiqued the closure of RCTV⁵ of being “coup-plotters” (Espacio Público, June 27, 2007).

In many instances, government officials depict the media as a threat to national security. They are accused of disseminating false reports on the rising criminality and scarcity of basic goods as a strategy to “slow down the economy, generate inflation, (and) weaken the national government” (Aló Presidente N. 303, February 10, 2008). They are characterized as “disgusting,” “macabre,” and willing to hurt the most vulnerable. Anti-media messages that are less dehumanizing, on the other hand, depict the media as highly partisan (as agents of the opposition or foreign powers), or simply mediocre or incompetent (see Figure 3, panel A). Related to the partisan leanings of the media, outlets and journalists are deemed responsible for tainting the reputation of the government and the country, fooling, defaming, and affecting the mental health of the people, and limiting media freedom (see Figure 3, panel B).

⁵ *Radio Caracas Televisión* (RCTV) was a prominent private television channel. In 2007, the government decided not to renew their broadcast concession alleging that the channel was involved in the 2002 coup.

3.2.2. *Facing the enemy: calls to action and threats against the media*

From a prognostic and motivational standpoint, anti-media messages mostly feature veiled threats and very few explicit calls for violence. This is probably because government officials have incentives to use repressive tactics that do not put into question their democratic status but still give them an edge vis-à-vis the opposition (Levitsky & Way, 2010). In fact, Chávez even made a handful of calls for moderation and publicly condemned attacks against journalists and media outlets. On one occasion, the president even reprimanded a specific supporter, Lina Ron, who in 2009 had staged a siege at the headquarters of Globovisión, an outlet often touted as one of the “horsemen of the apocalypse.” This, however, would be the only attack led by a pro-government party supporter against the media to be prosecuted during Chávez’s tenure.

Despite the lack of explicit calls for violence, government officials have used anti-media messages to legitimize attacks against journalists in a number of occasions. For example, while discussing the issue of violence against journalists, the president once stated that journalists “are partially guilty of the inappropriate responses of some people” (Aló Presidente N. 120, September 29, 2002). I also identified seven calls for actions against specific outlets that provided more or less veiled justifications for violence. In 2002, in response to televised reports of vandalism at a government official’s house, the president rhetorically asked if owners of some media outlets would like it if people went to their houses to insult them, their wives, and children (Aló Presidente N. 128, November 24, 2002). In 2003, the chief of national police, Carlos Torres, threatened journalists with sending the *Círculos Bolivarianos* (pro-government grassroots groups) to “make them cry” (Espacio Público, May 28, 2003). On two occasions, Numa Rojas, a mayor in Monagas, called his supporters to march with him to the headquarters of media outlets that he accused of maliciously attacking him and the government (Espacio Público, June 22 and July 12, 2006). Finally Iris Valera, a pro-government congresswoman, asked party supporters in three opportunities to prepare to take over buildings or protest at the headquarters of private media outlets that were allegedly “plotting against the government” (Instituto Prensa y Sociedad, November 29, 2006; Espacio Público 2007, November 7 and 14, 2007).

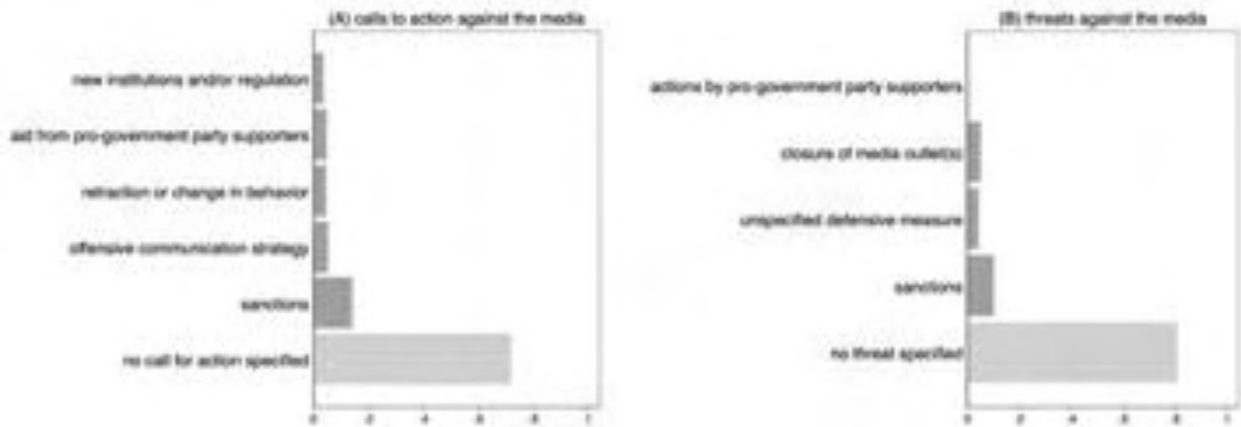


Figure 4: Types of calls to action and threats against the media (share of all messages)

Although most messages that use prognostic and motivational frames tend to emphasize the role of sanctions, regulation, and alternative media (see Figure 4), these messages are often launched along with accusations that are, as shown in the previous section, inflammatory. In many cases, officials mention existential threats that warrant regulation and the full power of the state. For example, in one instance, the president asked the Ministry of Justice to “smear with acid” any outlets that “pretend to generate destabilization and use media terrorism” (Aló Presidente N. 157, July 27, 2003). Similarly, calls for “offensive communication strategies” –a term coined by Chávez to describe the tactic of disseminating counter-narratives through state-owned and community media outlets–, often highlight imminent threats that warrant sustained collective action.

In sum, given the qualitative features of anti-media public discourse in Venezuela, it is plausible to argue that if there is an association between messages and violence against journalists it can be to some degree attributed to the divisive qualities of messages.

3.3. The effect of anti-media public discourse on violence against journalists

Do anti-media messages lead to violence? In this section, I use survival analysis to empirically assess whether anti-media public discourse is correlated with municipal-level violent attacks against journalists. I also explore the moderating role of local patterns of partisanship and electoral campaigns on the effect of messages on violence.

3.3.1. Data

Dependent variable: violence against journalists. I use daily counts of physical attacks led by non-state actors against media facilities and its workers (journalists, crew members, editors, and owners), and individuals seeking to disseminate information through mass media in each of Venezuela's 335 municipalities. To obtain these data I coded the narratives of reports of attacks by human rights monitoring organizations (EP and IPYS) from April 12, 2002 to April 19, 2013. Both organizations collect data of confirmed cases of violations of media freedom published in national and regional newspapers and those reported by unions, academic institutions, human rights organizations, and victims. Using data on individual events has several advantages. Compared to yearly country-level indices of media freedom, my measure takes into account the identity of actors (focusing on only cases featuring non-state actors) and details about the timing and location of specific events. A limitation to keep in mind, however, is that although physical attacks are more likely to be captured than verbal threats, under-reporting may still be an issue.

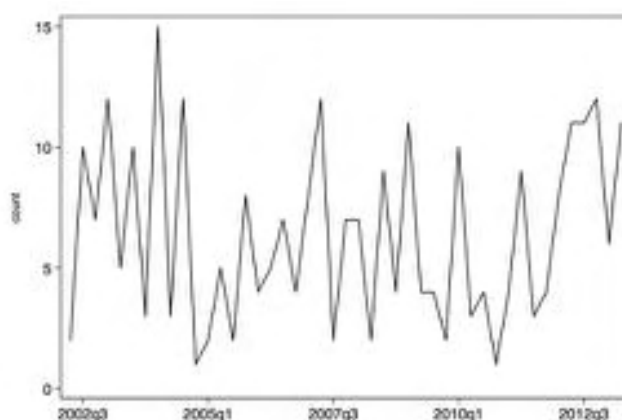


Figure 5: Quarterly variation in counts of physical attacks against journalists by non-state actors

In Venezuela, government actors are responsible for a substantial share of restrictions on media freedom (see Mazzaro, 2020), but physical attacks by non-state actors are quite widespread as well. During the period under study, non-state actors targeted journalists 279 times (an average of 6.3 cases per quarter, see details in Figure 5 and Table B1 in the Appendix). A substantial share of cases involved individuals who were identified as party supporters (45%), while the rest featured either individuals who could not be identified as a supporter of any party or were unknown. The majority of the cases involved reporters or crews that were hit and insulted

by political groups, bystanders, or individuals while covering political events, protests, the sites of police investigations, or public buildings such as hospitals or jails (78.9%). In instances where attacks were led by party supporters, targets were often accused of disseminating fake news, being biased, or agents of the opposition. Other cases resulted in infrastructural damage, including homemade bombs detonated at the headquarters of media outlets or the homes of journalists (9.7%), and the removal or destruction of equipment such as cameras, computers, and antennas (8.2%). Finally, in 9 cases journalists were assassinated (3.2%).

Independent variable: anti-media public discourse. Given that I am interested in assessing the short-term effects of anti-media discourse on violence against journalists, I use a count variable indicating the number of messages broadcast in the last five days. Each message represents an address by a government official containing one or more critical statements about the media.⁶ Five-day counts averaged 0.86 messages, ranging from no messages to 9. Given that there is no consensus on the appropriate cutoff for assessing the frequency of messaging over time, I also test the sensitivity of results to ten-day counts.

An assumption in this study is that exposure to anti-media messages in terms of access to broadcasts and press is equal across the country. Although incorporating a measure of media exposure that takes into account both infrastructural features and media consumption habits in different locations would be ideal, there are no reliable measures at the municipality level. Characteristics of the Venezuelan media system and the forms of dissemination of anti-media messages, however, make plausible the assumption that messages reach the entire territory. In general, access to media is high, around 95 percent of Venezuelan households have access to a television and 73 percent to a radio. Moreover, only 2.5 percent of messages were disseminated through social media (which would require internet access) and at least 31 percent were simultaneously broadcast on all state-owned television and radio channels.⁷ Finally, although I do not formally incorporate a measure of exposure, I indirectly address the issue by testing for heterogeneous treatment effects taking into account the electoral context (times when individuals are likely to rely more on the media) and the strength of anti-media politicians' parties at the local level (locations where individuals are more likely to seek messages).

⁶For details about the operationalization see Appendix A2.

⁷*Radio Nacional de Venezuela*, the government's radio network, is the number one in the country in terms of national coverage. The government also owns three television channels with national coverage and one local channel.

Controls. In addition to anti-media public discourse, a host of factors may shape patterns of violence against journalists by non-state actors. For instance, it could be argued that the incidence of attacks changes depending on local levels of electoral competition (Mazzaro, 2020). Attacks may be more likely in locations where anti-media politicians have most support, or perhaps in locations where elections are highly contested. To measure the level of mobilization of anti-media politicians at the local level, I use municipal-level electoral margins of victory from 15 elections (see Table B3 in the Appendix). Under Chávez, the Venezuelan electoral system became highly nationalized and integrated around two major factions: the opposition and the government. Given that government supporters largely espouse Chávez’s anti-media rhetoric and opposition members condemn it, vote margins provide a good measure for assessing the extent to which anti-media messages may reach a receptive audience. To account for potential non-linear effects, I created a five-level categorical variable in which I classify municipalities where the winning faction had a margin of over 20 points as either government or opposition strongholds, municipalities with a margin of 3 points or fewer as marginal districts, and municipalities with margins between 3 and 20 points as moderate. Given that there is no consensus on what constitutes a landslide victory or a close race, in my assessment of heterogeneous treatment effects I also test the sensitivity of results to a 30-point cut-off for strongholds and a 2- and 4-point cut-off for marginal districts.

It could also be argued that attacks are sensitive to changes in levels of electoral competition at the national level. At times when the government party has high levels of support, militants may feel more empowered and therefore be more likely to attack who they perceive as their opponents in the media. To account for changes in the level of electoral competition at the national level, I use monthly data on party identification from Datanalisis, Venezuela’s leading survey research firm. I use a one-period lagged three-level variable, which accounts for times of high contestation, i.e. when there is less than a three-point difference between the opposition and the government, and instances where either party is in the lead (more than 3 points).

In addition to levels of electoral competition, attacks against journalist may become more prevalent during electoral campaigns and change depending on the type of election. Elections in Venezuela are regulated by the electoral authority, the *Consejo Nacional Electoral* (CNE). For each election, the CNE publishes a calendar with official campaigning dates. During the period

under study, voters were called to participate in two types of elections. In what I call national elections, voters elected the president or decided whether they would approve reforms that could terminate or extend the president's tenure (referenda). During local elections, on the other hand, voters elected local representatives for sub-national governments or for the parliament. Given that national and local elections are held non-concurrently, and considering that presidential elections can be more consequential for the survival of incumbents, using the CNE's official calendars, I created a three-level categorical variable to control for periods between elections, local campaigns, and national campaigns.

Another explanation for patterns of attacks against journalists is that they may simply be more prevalent in locations where individuals are less likely to be punished for transgressions (Waisbord, 2002). Although human rights monitoring organizations make the case that attacks against journalists in Venezuela are generally committed with impunity nationwide (Espacio Público, 2019), differences in the level of criminal violence at the municipality level may be behind patterns of attacks by non-state actors. I control for this factor using yearly municipality-level data on homicide rates collected by Kronick (2020). In addition to crime, a close read of case narratives of attacks indicates that in many instances individuals physically attack journalists in the presence of local police forces that do nothing to impede the violence. Given that mayors have the authority to oversee the local police in their municipality, the partisanship of local incumbents may be relevant. I use a dummy to account for municipalities with opposition mayors where journalists might be more likely to be protected.

Finally, I control for municipality-level factors that could affect patterns of attacks, including logged measures of population from Venezuela's 2011 national census and estimates of the number of private media outlets at the local level from Mazzaro (2020).

3.3.2. Modeling strategy

To estimate the degree of association between anti-media public discourse and the incidence of violence against journalists in Venezuelan municipalities, I use Cox regression with robust variance estimation (D. Y. Lin & Wei, 1989). Two considerations are at the basis of this choice. In regard to the level of analysis, the focus on the municipality-day allows me to estimate the effect of messages controlling for temporal changes (electoral campaigns, which take place on

specific days) and spatial differences (local levels of electoral support for the government). At higher levels of aggregation, precision about the time periods that correspond to official electoral campaigning and local contextual factors would be lost. Given the localized nature of attacks against journalists, this level of detail is conducive to more precise estimation and accurate interpretations.

The second consideration concerns the features of the dependent variable. The distribution of attacks against the media at the municipality-day level is right skewed. In 94 percent of the municipality-days where an attack took place, there was only one count, which indicates that it is reasonable to treat the outcome as dichotomous. Also relevant is that only 0.02 percent of municipality-days include at least one attack, which indicates that rare event biases should be taken into account (King & Zeng, 2001). To analyze this kind of data, at least two strategies are appropriate: penalized logistic regression and Cox regression. Cox regression, just as logistic regression, models the probability of an event occurring. But in contrast to logistic regression, survival estimators also model the duration of time between a starting state and the occurrence of an event using data gathered across time, and not just at a single point in time. Therefore, while in logistic regression odds ratios predict the probability of an event occurring given a unit change in a predictor, in Cox regression, hazard ratios refer to the probability of an event occurring at each point in time, given that same unit increase.

In this study, Cox regression has three advantages over logistic estimation. First, given that I do not have theory-driven expectations about the functional form of duration dependence, I find that the semi-parametric Cox approach is more appropriate for handling the baseline hazard. Second, the Cox model has the advantage of capitalizing on data on times-to-events. I contend that both the occurrence of attacks and their timing is informative when it comes to studying the determinants of violence against journalists. Finally, although the rarity of events can also lead to bias in Cox regression, the power of a test in survival analysis depends on the number positive events (failures) per predictor, not on the proportion of observations that experience events (I. F. Lin et al., 2013). The rule of thumb is to have around 10 events per covariate (Peduzzi et al., 1995), which is the case for the main predictors in my analysis.

The Cox proportional hazard model has numerous extensions. Given that municipalities can experience more than one instance of violence against journalists, events do not have a

particular order, and most of the predictors vary over time, I use Cox regression for recurrent events and time-varying covariates using gap time. This means that I account for the number of days between events (attacks) from April 12, 2002 to April 19, 2013 and split the data into an episode for each time a covariate changes or an event occurs. To account for within-municipality dependence, I estimate cluster robust standard errors (D. Y. Lin & Wei, 1989). The base model where I estimate the effect of messages controlling can be expressed as:

$$h_{ij}(t) = h_0(t)exp(\beta_1 m_{ij} + \beta_2 X_{controls_{ij}}) \quad (1)$$

where $h_{ij}(t)$ is the hazard rate of violence against journalists for the j th observation in the i th municipality at time t , and h_0 is the unspecified baseline hazard. Next, m represents anti-media messages that, as discussed above, I operationalize in terms of the number of messages in the last five days. The parameter of interest in equation (1) is β_1 . Lastly, $X_{controls}$ stands for the control variables.

3.3.3. Results

Regression results from a basic model that estimates the effect of the proximity and intensity of anti-media messages controlling for electoral and demographic factors (see Table 1) provide evidence that the frequency of anti-media messages is a statistically significant predictor of violence against journalists. The estimated effect of a one-unit increase in the number of messages over the last five days is associated with a 17 percent increase in the hazard of attacks against journalists ($p < 0.01$). The effect of anti-media messages is clearest in Figure 6 where survival curves for different frequencies of messaging are plotted. The y-axis represents the probability of failure (a physical attack against a journalist or media outlet) and the x-axis represents time in days. Over time, the probability of survival decreases at different rates for different levels of messaging. It is clear that the estimated effect of messaging increases with the frequency of messages. Compared to times of no anti-media messages, a four- and nine- unit increase (the maximum number of messages recorded) results in an estimated increase of 87 percent and a 400 percent increase in the hazard of attacks respectively.

Results are sensitive to the choice of operationalization of frequency of messaging— although

Table 1: Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists (hazard ratios)

	1		2	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	1.17***	(0.05)		
Messages - frequency (10-day count)			1.08***	(0.03)
Party identification				
high contestation	1.4*	(0.28)	1.4*	(0.28)
opposition in the lead	1.11	(0.26)	1.11	(0.26)
Campaign type				
local	0.97	(0.16)	0.96	(0.16)
national	1.83***	(0.31)	1.85***	(0.31)
Local levels of competition				
gov moderate (1)	0.81	(0.13)	0.81	(0.13)
close races (2)	1.02	(0.19)	1.01	(0.19)
opp moderate (3)	1.17	(0.31)	1.17	(0.31)
opp landslide (4)	1.97**	(0.68)	1.97*	(0.68)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.84	(0.19)	0.84	(0.19)
Population (log)	1.81**	(0.44)	1.81**	(0.44)
Media outlets (log)	2.25***	(0.57)	2.25***	(0.57)
Homicide rate	1.004	(0.001)	1.004	(0.001)
number of clusters	335		335	
number of events	266		266	

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

estimated effects continue to be positive and statistically significant when looking at the frequency of messages over the last ten days (column 2), the size of the estimated effect is smaller (8 percent). This suggests that a “recent” history of frequent messaging may be more relevant than messaging over longer periods of time.

Something to notice in these models are the estimated effects of electoral campaigns and local levels of competition. Controlling for anti-media messaging, the hazard of attacks against journalists in opposition strongholds is almost two times higher than the hazard in government strongholds (p<0.05). Electoral campaigns are also a statistically significant predictor of violent attacks: the estimated hazard of attacks increases by 83 to 85 percent during national campaigns compared to times between elections (p=0.01). These results are consistent with studies that have found that patterns of partisanship and elections have an effect on restrictions on media freedom (Kellam & Stein, 2016; Mazzaro, 2020).

The positive and statistically significant effect of messages on the hazard of non-state physical attacks against journalists is robust. I test the sensitivity and consistency of results fitting the same model with a subset that excludes the capital (where around 30 percent of attacks

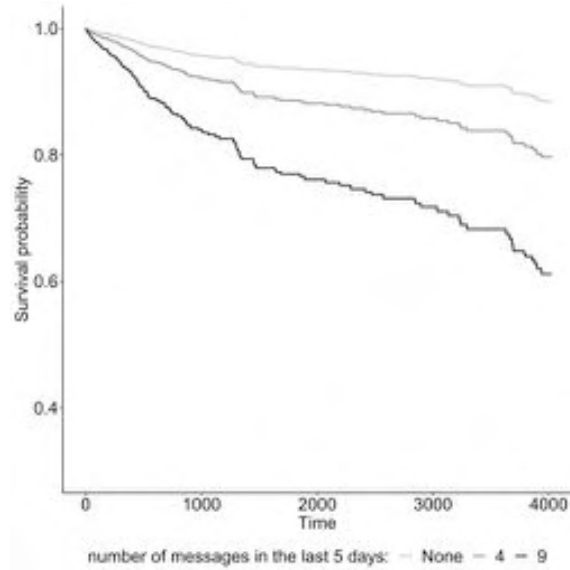


Figure 6: Survival analysis of time to attacks against journalists given levels of anti-media public discourse

took place) and using four alternative specifications: stratified Cox regression (fixed effects), Cox regression with random effects (gamma-distributed shared frailties), logistic regression with cluster robust standard errors, and penalized logistic regression. For a discussion and full models see Appendix C1.

3.3.4. Instrumental variable Cox regression model

Although I show that the statistical relationship between the frequency of anti-media messages and physical attacks against journalists is significant and robust, the evidence so far presented is insufficient to make causal claims. Omitted variable bias is still a concern. One could argue that the relationship between anti-media rhetoric and attacks against journalists is likely endogenous: politicians capitalize on the existence of anti-media sentiments and violence against communicators when they decide to charge against the media and anti-media public discourse, in turn, leads to more violence. This endogenous relationship can be inferred from the content and context of some anti-media messages. For instance, government officials have been prompted by attacks against journalists to emphasize that the cause of attacks is likely the media’s biased reporting (see the section on derogatory characterizations and blame attribution).

Given the issue of endogeneity, the results presented so far may underestimate the effect

of anti-media discourse on attacks against journalists. To overcome this potential issue, it is possible to use instrumental variable methods that would make causal inference in the presence of unmeasured confounding possible. A feature of Chávez communication habits provides a potential instrument for the exposure variable, the frequency of anti-media public discourse. During his tenure, Chávez was the leading actor when it came to anti-media messages.⁸ Roughly every Sunday during his talk show, *Aló Presidente*, the president would take some time to target the media. These messages would often be endorsed by other government officials, who would defend the president or incorporate critiques of their own. As a result, the frequency of anti-media messages increases if the five-day window used for calculation includes a Sunday.⁹ The presence of a Sunday in the 5-day window, in turn, is plausibly exogenous. Although, in the absence of random assignment, instrumental variables may not be sufficient to rule out endogeneity entirely, theoretically, there are no apparent connections between the day of the week and unobserved determinants of attacks by non-state actors against journalists in Venezuela.

To estimate the effect of messages, I use two-stage estimation for Cox regression.¹⁰ In the first stage, I use Poisson regression to regress the frequency of anti-media messages in the last five days (the exposure) on a dichotomous variable equal to 1 when a Sunday falls into the 5-day window used to calculate the frequency of messages (the instrument), controlling for electoral campaigns and national levels of party identification. For the second stage, I estimate the hazard rate of violence against journalists following equation (1), the main model, but substituting m (anti-media messages) with the predicted values of the first stage.

Table 2 reports the estimated hazard ratios for the instrumental variable models. First stage estimates are in Table C1 in the Appendix. These models confirm the positive and statistically significant relationship between anti-media public discourse and violence against journalists. Estimated hazards are substantially larger than in the model that does not take into account the endogeneity. For a unit increase in the total number of messages in the last 5 or 10 days (columns 1 and 2 respectively), the hazard of attacks is 2.8 and 1.3 times larger ($p < 0.01$).

⁸Close to 50 percent of all anti-media messages feature the president.

⁹The effect of there being a Sunday in the five-day window is a substantial and statistically significant predictor of anti-media messages, which dispels concerns about weak instruments. See Table C1 for details.

¹⁰Two stage estimation leads to biased estimates in nonlinear models. To reduce bias, I use Sjolander and Martinussen (2019) implementation of two-stage estimation with time-to-event outcomes with an added control function.

Table 2: Instrumental variable Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists (hazard ratios)

	1		2	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	2.76***	(0.17)		
Messages - frequency (10-day count)			1.32***	(0.12)
Party identification				
high contestation	1.45***	(0.04)	1.44***	(0.04)
opposition in the lead	1.13**	(0.07)	1.12*	(0.06)
Campaign type				
local	0.96**	(0.02)	0.95***	(0.01)
national	2.42***	(0.08)	2.13***	(0.17)
Local levels of competition				
gov moderate (1)	0.81***	(0.01)	0.81***	(0.01)
close races (2)	1.02	(0.02)	1.01	(0.03)
opp moderate (3)	1.17***	(0.05)	1.17***	(0.05)
opp landslide (4)	1.96***	(0.18)	1.96***	(0.18)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.84***	(0.03)	0.84***	(0.03)
Population (log)	1.81***	(0.19)	1.81***	(0.19)
Media outlets (log)	2.25***	(0.23)	2.25***	(0.23)
Homicide rate	1.004***	(0.001)	1.004***	(0.001)
number of clusters	335		335	
number of events	266		266	

legend: * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$

3.3.5. Heterogeneous treatment effects

The effect of messages disseminated through the media on violence is seldom direct and largely context dependent. In the case of anti-media messages, there can be differences in the level of exposure across groups. Especially in light of the polarizing nature of anti-media rhetoric, not everyone is equally likely to consume anti-media content or agree with it enough to consider it a reasonable justification for violence. Given the influence of people’s prior beliefs and political inclinations on their choice of media, especially in the case of anti-elite messages (see Hameleers et al., 2018), it is possible that anti-media content is consumed, resonates, and therefore is more likely to be associated with violence depending on local electoral dynamics.

Indeed, studies find that partisans tend to attribute blame to opponents with whose identity they do not feel attached (Hameleers et al., 2017), and adopt attitudes that align with those espoused by their party of choice, especially in the case of populist discourse (Müller et al., 2017; Rooduijn et al., 2017). Along the same lines, perceptions that the media are hostile or biased are mostly shared by those with strong partisan identities (Fawzi, 2019; Hartmann & Tanis, 2013; Lodola & Kitzberger, 2017; Matthes et al., 2010; Reid, 2012) and are positively correlated with

the degree of identification with the party or in-group (for reviews see Gunther, 2008; Schulz et al., 2020). This is especially true in highly polarized electoral systems (Feldman et al., 2017).

In addition to the role of prior beliefs, media effects on violence against journalists can also increase at times when people become more reliant on mass media for information (Kellow & Steeves, 1998). For instance, during elections media consumption tends to increase and, with it, the probability of exposure to anti-media rhetoric. It is possible that the effect of messages on the incidence of violence against journalists will also increase during electoral campaigns. By heightening perceptions of threat and bias, electoral campaigns could amplify the effect of anti-media public discourse on the incidence of attacks against journalists.

Aside from increasing exposure to anti-media messages, campaigns increase electoral engagement, a factor that has been found to predict hostile media perceptions (Oh et al., 2011). Moreover, elections are potentially a threat on the survival of incumbents. The prospect of anti-media politicians being electorally displaced can amplify party supporters' perceptions that information disseminated by the "lying press" constitutes an actual existential threat to their in-group. Finally, during electoral campaigns, oppositional media have incentives to double-down on critical reporting, which may confirm perceptions that the media is hostile or biased against the candidate of "the people."

To examine whether partisanship and the electoral context moderate the effect of anti-media public discourse on violence against journalists, I fit two instrumental variable Cox models, one with an interactive term for the frequency of messages with local levels of electoral competition and another with types of elections. In Table 3 are the estimated hazard ratios for a unit increase in the frequency of messages (5-day window) in government strongholds, marginal districts, and opposition strongholds and at times between campaigns, local campaigns, and national campaigns (see Tables C2 and C6 in the Appendix for full models).

I find that the estimated effect of the frequency of anti-media public discourse on violence against journalists changes depending on the local level of mobilization of anti-media politicians' parties. While the estimated effect of messages is positive in all locations, it is consistently larger in marginal districts (municipalities where the margin of victory in the last election was not larger than 3 percentage points). In substantive terms, in marginal districts, a one unit increase in the number of messages in the last five days results in over a 800 percent increase in the probability

Table 3: Instrumental variable Cox regression estimated hazard ratios for one unit increase in the frequency of anti-media messages (5-day count)

Local patterns of electoral competition		
government strongholds	2.15***	(0.09)
marginal districts	8.55***	(0.53)
opposition strongholds	1.41**	(0.21)
Electoral context		
between campaigns	2.91***	(0.29)
local campaigns	2.98***	(0.96)
national campaigns	1.24	(0.27)

Estimates in bold are robust to alternative specifications.
For details see Appendix C2

of violence against journalists by non-state actors ($p < 0.01$). In contrast to marginal districts, the estimated effect of anti-media messages is smaller and inconsistent in government and opposition strongholds (for a discussion see Appendix C2). This suggests that anti-media messages might be most dangerous in locations where electoral competition is high.

I also find tentative evidence that electoral campaigns may play a moderator role. Estimated effects of messages on violence against journalists are only positive and statistically significant between campaigns (HR=2.91, $p < 0.01$), not during local or national electoral campaigns. Although in a model that includes all municipalities the hazard of attacks decreases during local campaigns, this estimated effect disappears when excluding the capital. This suggests that the effect of anti-media messages may be most consequential outside of electoral contexts. Given the sensitivity of results to alternative specifications, however, it is not entirely clear.

A plausible explanation for why messages are associated with violence only between elections may be that the qualitative features of anti-media public discourse change in electoral contexts. Perhaps, given that governments are more closely monitored during electoral campaigns, anti-media rhetoric becomes less acrimonious. Although I find that mentions of existential threats and calls for actions by supporters are less common (-0.35 and -0.64 percentage points respectively) a slightly larger share of messages is highly dehumanizing or contains threats of weaponizing supporters during presidential campaigns in comparison to times between elections (an 11- and 4.32-point difference respectively). This suggests that the overall scope of anti-media public discourse is similar during and between elections (see Table B4 in the Appendix). In sum, whether and how campaigns may moderate the effect of anti-media messages on non-state violence against

journalists is unclear.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Over the last two decades, the number of politicians who have become vocal about the evils of mainstream media seems to be on the rise. In light of the apparent normalization of anti-media rhetoric in the political arena, media freedom monitoring organizations and policymakers have raised flags about the role of anti-media public discourse in normalizing violence against journalists in many democracies worldwide. Whether and how this kind of discourse can become a threat to the physical integrity of communicators, however, is unclear. In this study, I used original data on anti-media messages by public officials and on physical attacks against journalists in Chávez's Venezuela (2002-2013) –a paradigmatic case– to empirically assess whether, under what conditions, and how anti-media public discourse is associated with non-state violence against journalists. The evidence presented here suggests that anti-media public discourse increases journalists' exposure to physical harm.

Building on recent scholarship on dangerous speech, populism, and hostile media perceptions, I theorized that the potential link between anti-media public discourse –understood as widely disseminated critiques of the media by government officials– and violence against journalists has its roots in the divisive qualities of anti-media messages. First, through an iterative process of qualitative content analysis of 696 messages by Venezuelan government officials, I explored the dimensions of anti-media public discourse. I found that although government officials may avoid legitimizing or making explicit calls for violence against communicators and outlets, the dehumanizing features of anti-media messages could plausibly lead to the deepening of in- and out-group cleavages.

In the second part of the study, I used survival analysis to explore correlations between the proximity and frequency of anti-media messages and attacks against journalists in Venezuelan municipalities. I found that compared to times when the government is relatively silent about the media, the hazard of attacks against journalists increases with every message. Using instrumental variable models to account for endogeneity, I found that the relationship between anti-media discourse and violence can be interpreted as causal. I also found that the impact of messages is heterogeneous: the estimated effect of the frequency of messages on violence is largest in marginal

districts where electoral rivalries are salient. These results suggest that the deleterious effects of anti-media rhetoric might be exacerbated by electoral factors such as partisanship and electoral competition.

Although suggestive, this study has limitations to keep in mind. One is related to the measurement of violence against journalists, which is based on human rights monitoring organizations' reports of physical attacks against communicators and media facilities. Whether attacks against journalists are registered depends almost exclusively on the willingness of victims to report. This could lead to reporting biases: perhaps journalists are more likely to report after anti-media messages are broadcast, or in locations where electoral rivalries are strong. The results presented here suggest that it is not likely the case –it is improbable that reports only increase in marginal districts after messages, especially given that, overall, violence is most prevalent in opposition strongholds. However, it is not possible to fully account for reporting biases.

Finally, while Venezuela is to a large degree a paradigmatic case, it is also in many ways unique. The role of anti-media public discourse on violence against journalists may be different depending on levels of democratization, the ideology of leaders, party system and electoral institutions, and the singularities of media systems, just to name some potential variables. Given these considerations, future research is necessary to ascertain whether similar dynamics take place cross-nationally.

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A. Appendix A. Coding and operationalization of anti-media public discourse

A.1. A1. Qualitative analysis

Table 1: Scope of anti-media public discourse: categories, sub-categories, and examples

Derogatory characterizations of the media	
evil	promoters/representatives of anti-values, club of immorality, diabolic/evil, rotten pot, horsemen of the apocalypse, fascist, depraved, enemies of the people, pornographic, mean/cruel/macabre, immoral, unethical.
criminal	assassins, extortionists, murderers, blackmailers, liars/false, necrophiliac, clandestine, snipers, spies, fraudulent, corrupt, criminal, homicidal, racist, arms traffickers, hit-men, oligarchy, conspirators, thieves, cheaters, manipulators, enemies of media freedom, slanderers, violate communication laws, tax evaders, murderer, crime apologist.
leaders of destabilization campaigns	manipulation (election polls), paramilitary, leaders of a destabilization campaign, assassins of presidents, promote destabilization, promote racial hatred, promote war, hatred, and terrorism, leaders of disinformation campaigns, provoke pro-government groups, psychological terrorists, manipulation through media domination (violence without noise), promoters of psychological and economic warfare, fascists, coup plotters, promoters of hatred, saboteur, enemies of the constitutional order, creators of false opinion matrices, enemies of democracy.
agents of the opposition	kidnappers of the opposition, leaders of anti-government campaigns, <i>escuálido</i> (emaciated), biased lords of the right, hegemonic media, media landlords, media as a political party, instrument of the opposition, only highlight the negative, counterrevolutionary, mercantilists, publicity agency of the opposition, representatives of the interests of the opposition, members of the oligarchy/bourgeoisie.
agents of foreign powers	armed arm of a communication policy orchestrated from abroad, CIA agents, US agents, funded by the US/the empire.
mediocre	mercenaries, irrational, bad journalism, mediocre, vulgar, with mental health issues, cowards, miserable and disgusting, irresponsible/sensationalist, garbage/produce garbage, grotesque, shameful, ignorant, speculative, uninformed, stupid, seller of trash.
Damage attributed to the media	
electoral fraud	boycott (elections), create an undesirable scenario (elections), undermine elections, create the impression that the government does not have electoral support to justify a coup.

hurt children and families	disseminate adult content during the day, threaten the life/safety of children, undermine the psychological well-being of children and adolescents, target Venezuelan mothers, violate the rights of children and adolescents, disrespect women.
overthrow the government	conspire against the government, destabilize the country, overthrow the president, undermine Venezuela and its authorities, execute a coup/conspire to overthrow the government, kill the president, destroy the fatherland, lead a coup backed by the US.
generate chaos and undermine institutions	burn down the country, generate/instigate violence/conflict, subvert the public order, instigate gangs to commit crimes, incite conspiracy and violence, instigate violence in jails, disseminate false information about the availability of basic goods (to generate chaos), incite/organize looting, exalt crimes, generate divisions, promote death, undermine the peace of the country, generate confusion/despair/panic, sponsor protests, undermine state security, disseminate an opinion matrix designed in the US, undermine democratizing reforms, taint the image of public officials, undermine the Bolivarian revolution, destroy public officials- ethically and morally, undermine local governments, hurt the country, undermine criminal investigations/judicial proceedings, instigate/convince foreign forces to invade the country, undermine public institutions.
taint the image of the country/government	defame the country, spread lies about the Venezuelan people and its government, discredit the country, taint the image of the country at the international level, belittle the achievements of the revolution, disseminate only negative news about the government, breed uncertainty about the health of the president, hurt the reputation of the government, hide matters of national interest, create a negative opinion matrix about the government, hide the success of government programs, manipulate foreign journalists into reporting about the negative, taint the image/reputation of the president.
fool and defame people	falsely accuse make fun of the people, undermine the honor and reputation of people, hide the truth from/confuse the people.
adversely affect the mental health of the people	manipulate the people, generate despair in the population, negatively affect the mental health of citizens, create doubt, generate fear and stress, generate unhappiness, demobilize and dominate the people by hurting their morale and self-esteem, model public behavior through unconscious motivation.
limit media freedom	suppress the voice of the people, hide and ignore the people, undermine media freedom, limit what we can see, prevent small newspapers from printing, prevent reforms that allow the government to guarantee media freedom.

Calls to action against the media

new institutions and/or regulation	creation of committees/organs, call for new media regulation, call for reforms.
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aid from pro-government party supporters	citizens to monitor the media, people and institutions to remain alert, educate children about media biases, protest against the media, identify oppositional media outlets, increase mobilization against oppositional media.
retraction or change in behavior	change reporting, media to calm down, media to pick a side, follow regulation, media to become objective, retract statements, media to behave themselves, media not to interfere with legal proceedings.
offensive communication strategy	<i>cadenas</i> (government broadcasts) to defend the government, create alternative media, devise strategic communication offense, form communication guerrillas, establish a new communication order, wage/win the media war.
sanctions	call for sanctions, detention/imprisonment of journalists or owners of media outlets, fines, legal action, withdrawal of concessions, closure of media outlets.

Threats against the media

actions by pro-government party supporters	send supporters to protest at the headquarters of media outlets, deploy <i>colectivos</i> (pro-government armed grassroots groups).
closure of media outlets	close outlets, revoke broadcasting licenses.
unspecified defensive measures	actions to defend the revolution, ruthless actions, media will regret their actions, no one is untouchable.
sanctions	detention/imprisonment of journalist or owners of media outlets, new regulation, fines, criminal/administrative investigations, legal sanctions, withdrawal of licenses or concessions, withdrawal of publicity funds, ban from accessing buildings.

A2. Notes about quantifying anti-media public discourse

Both the qualitative and quantitative analyses focus on anti-media messages. Each message takes place in the context of a government official's statement that is disseminated in mass or social media. As such, messages may contain a single or several critiques, these critiques may be clustered or peppered throughout the statement, and may constitute a small or a large share of the statement. I make the methodological choice of counting critiques that take place in the same statement, regardless of their number or length, as a single anti-media message.

It could be argued that the number or the proportion of critiques in a statement, rather than a

Table 2: Descriptive statistics (continuous variables)

	mean	SD	min	max
violence against journalists (attacks, quarterly)*	6.29	3.89	0	16
violence against journalists (attacks, daily)*	0.07	0.29	0	4
anti-media messages (quarterly)	15.47	10	1	40
anti-media messages (daily)	0.17	0.43	0	4
anti-media messages (5-day count)	0.86	1.09	0	9
anti-media messages (10-day count)	1.71	1.75	0	13
population (10,000 inhabitants)*	8.11	16.69	0.2	189.6
number of media outlets*	1.15	3.49	0	32
homicide rate (violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants)*	37.66	32.87	0	319.18

*Municipality-level variable

measure that classifies a statement as a whole as being anti-media, could be a more accurate measure of anti-media public discourse. This operationalization, however, is not reflective of the mechanism I hypothesize. I have no theoretically-motivated reasons to contend that the number of critiques within a message, rather than their overall content and tone, deepen anti-media cleavages that could lead to violence against journalists. As Solis and Sagarzazu (2020) explain by describing Chávez’s comment on the smell of sulfur left by Bush (the “devil”) at the podium of the United Nations General Assembly, a single sentence of a speech, regardless of the critiques that preceded or followed it, has the potential of resonating beyond any other.

B. Appendix B. Descriptive statistics

Table 3: Descriptive statistics (categorical variables)

	percentage of time	percentage of municipalities**	percentage of municipality-days
partisanship (20 point cutoff)			
government strongholds (>20 points)		86.27	51.14
marginal districts (<=3 points)		43.58	7.52
opposition strongholds (>20 points)		15.82	4.14
moderate margins (<20 and >3 points)		88.35	37.2
campaign types			
local campaigns		100	6.67
national campaigns		100	8.62
between campaigns		100	84.71
party identification*			
high contestation (<=3 points)	9.84		
government in the lead (>3 points)	64		
opposition in the lead (>3 points)	26.16		
opposition mayor		66.26	27.68

*National-level variable

**Percentage of all 335 municipalities that fall under the category at least once

Table 4: Venezuelan elections and electoral campaigns (2002-2013)*

Date		Type	Campaign period	Municipalities
15-Aug	2004	referendum (presidential)	June 3- Aug 12, 2004	All
31-Oct	2004	regional	Sep 19-Oct 28, 2004	All
7-Aug	2005	regional	June 7- Aug 5, 2005	All
4-Dec	2005	parliamentary	Oct 30- Dec 2, 2005	All
21-May	2006	regional	April 12- May 19, 2006	Nirgua (Yaracuy), Carrizal (Miranda)
22-Oct	2006	regional	Aug 20- Oct19, 2006	Miranda (Trujillo)
3-Dec	2006	presidential	Aug 4- Nov 26, 2006	All
7-Oct	2007	referendum (municipal)	Sep 17- Oct 5, 2007	Atures and Manapiare (Amazonas), Pedro Chien (Bolívar), Anzoátegui and RÁ³mulo Gallegos (Cojedes), Sucre (Falcón), Guaribe (Guárico), Pedro Gual (Miranda), Onoto (Portuguesa)
2-Dec	2007	referendum (constitu- tional)	Nov 2- Nov 29, 2007	All
23-Nov	2008	regional	Sep 23- Nov 21, 2008	All except 9 municipalities that held regional elections in 2005 and 2006
15-Feb	2009	referendum (constitu- tional)	Jan 17- Feb 13, 2009	All

26-Sep	2010	parliamentary	Aug 25- Sep 23, 2010	All
5-Dec	2010	regional	Nov 23- Dec 2, 2010	All municipalities in Amazonas and Guárico, and 11 municipalities across the country
7-Oct	2012	presidential	July 3- October 4, 2012	All
16-Dec	2012	regional	Nov 1- Dec 13, 2012	All
14-Apr	2013	presidential	April 2- April 12, 2013	All

*Note that the measure of local levels of electoral competition excludes electoral margins from the 2005 parliamentary election because it was boycotted by the opposition and does not provide an accurate measure of competition at the time.

C. Appendix C. Full models and robustness tests

C.1. C1. Main model

C.1.1. Robustness tests

Robustness tests for the main model (excluding the instrumental variable Cox specification) can be found in Table 6. Across all models, the estimated effect of the frequency of anti-media messages on violence against journalists is positive, of similar magnitude, and statistically significant.

In column 1, results are from a fixed effects Cox model where I control for unobserved municipality-level features that may be behind attacks against communicators. Fixed effects in Cox regression are implemented by using municipality-level strata, which allows for the estimation of baseline hazards that are unique to each unit (see Allison, 2009). In other words, with the stratified Cox model it is possible to gauge, for each municipality, why some intervals are longer or shorter than others but not

Table 5: Shifts in the qualities of anti-media public discourse: frequencies and percentage of all messages by electoral context

		between elections	local campaigns	national campaigns
scope	characterizations, damage	473 (78.1%)	36 (75%)	36 (83.7%)
	calls to action, threats	262 (43.3%)	17 (35.4%)	15 (34.9%)
characterizations	highly dehumanizing	324 (53.6%)	18 (37.5%)	28 (65.1%)
	existential threats	185 (30.6%)	15 (31.3%)	13 (30.2%)
calls and threats	aid from party supporters	32 (5.3%)	0	2 (4.7%)
	actions by party supporters	2 (0.3%)	0	2 (4.7%)

wny intervals are different across municipalities.

In column 2, results are from a Cox gamma-distributed shared frailty model. In this specification, I introduce random effects (instead of estimating cluster-robust standard errors) to account for intra-municipality dependence. Municipality-level random effects are used to rescale hazards to heterogeneity levels (Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2003), which allows me to take into account contextual factors that shape risk levels of experiencing restrictions that may be unique to specific municipalities.

In column 3, is the output of the original model (Cox regression with clustered standard errors) but ran in a subset that exclude the capital, a potential outlier. Around 30 percent of all physical attacks by non-state actors took place in this location. And in columns 4 and 5, I use standard logistic regression with clustered standard errors and penalized logistic regression (a specification that is appropriate for rare events).

Instrumental variable Cox regression

Results from the first stage Poisson regression model used to estimate the exposure for the instrumental variable Cox can be found in Table 7. Models are nested, in column 1 are results from a model that excludes the instrument and and in column 2 results from one that incorporates it. Both models include national-level variables that are associated with the frequency of messages: levels of party identification and the electoral context. Compared to times when the government is in the lead in terms of party identification, messages are less likely at times of high contestation or when the opposition is strong. Similarly, messages are less likely at times of national campaigns than between elections. The estimated effect of the instrument is substantial and statistically significant, which should provide evidence that weak instruments should not be a concern. Based on a likelihood ratio test, I reject the null that the simpler model is outperforms the model that includes the instrument ($p < 0.01$).

C2. Heterogeneous treatment effects

Partisanship

In Table 8 are results from an instrumental variable Cox regression interactive model that estimates the effect of the frequency of anti-media messages given different levels of local electoral competition. In each column, regression results correspond to a different baseline: government strongholds (column 1), marginal districts (column 2), and opposition strongholds (column 3). In all three models, the estimated hazard ratio of a unit increase in the frequency of messages is positive and statistically significant. Not all of the estimates, however, are robust to alternative specifications.

The only consistent estimate is that of messages in marginal districts. In Table 9, it is clear that regardless of whether the capital is excluded (a potential outlier), or whether I operationalize marginal districts using a 2-, 3-, or 4-point cut-off, the effect of messages is large and statistically significant (HR = 8.55-0.47, $p < 0.01$).

In the case of government strongholds, the estimates of the effect of messages on violence are very sensitive to the operationalization of landslides. When using a 30- rather than a 20-point cut-off, the effect is substantially smaller and no longer statistically significant (see Table 10). In opposition strongholds, on the other hand, the effect practically disappears and is no longer statistically significant when I exclude the capital (Table 11, column 1) and becomes negative when I use a 30-point cutoff for landslides (column 2).

Electoral campaigns

In Table 12 are results from an instrumental variable Cox regression interactive model that estimates the effect of the frequency of anti-media messages given the electoral context. In each column, regression results correspond to a different baseline: times between elections (column 1), local electoral campaigns (column 2), and national campaigns (column 3). In these models, the estimated effect of messages on violence is statistically significant between campaigns and during campaigns. However, the estimated effect is only robust between elections. When excluding the capital (see Table 13), the effect of messages during local campaigns is no longer substantial nor statistically significant (column 2).

Table 6: Robustness tests: effect of anti-media discourse on violence against journalists (hazard ratios and odds ratios)

	Cox fixed effects 1	Cox frailty 2	Cox without the capital 3	Logistic (clustered) 4	Penalized logistic 5
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	1.18*** (0.07)	1.16*** (0.06)	1.17** (0.09)	1.12** (0.06)	1.13** (0.01)
Party identification					
high contestation	1.33 (0.35)	1.44* (0.31)	1.45 (0.38)	1.45** (0.24)	1.46* (0.07)
opposition in the lead	1.6** (0.30)	1.23 (0.20)	0.9 (0.31)	1.4 (0.29)	1.4** (0.05)
Campaign type					
local	1.15 (0.39)	0.97 (0.27)	0.95 (0.23)	1.11 (0.22)	1.13 (0.03)
national	2.31*** (0.57)	1.87*** (0.38)	1.87** (0.47)	1.8*** (0.26)	1.82*** (0.11)
Local levels of competition					
gov moderate (1)	0.84 (0.21)	0.83 (0.16)	0.91 (0.20)	0.79 (0.15)	0.79 (0.04)
close races (2)	1.53 (0.40)	1.14 (0.25)	1.08 (0.31)	1.06 (0.20)	1.07 (0.01)
opp moderate (3)	1.62* (0.44)	1.4 (0.30)	1.48 (0.50)	1.12 (0.31)	1.13 (0.02)
opp landslide (4)	3.26*** (1.38)	2.35*** (0.71)	2.48** (1.01)	2.27** (0.82)	2.28*** (0.20)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	1.8 (0.75)	1.29 (0.30)	0.93 (0.20)	0.8 (0.20)	0.8 (0.04)
Population (log)	-	2.5*** (0.38)	1.71*** (0.37)	2.03*** (0.51)	2.03*** (0.07)
Media outlets (log)	-	2.02*** (0.30)	2.07*** (0.49)	2.46*** (0.67)	2.46*** (0.11)
Homicide rate	1.004 (0.001)	1.004 (0.001)	1.004 (0.001)	1.004 (0.001)	1.004 (0.001)
number of clusters	335	335	334	335	335
number of events	266	266	187	266	255

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

Table 7: First stage Poisson model (DV= 5-day anti-media messages count)

	1		2	
5-day window includes a Sunday (0/1)			0.42***	(0.002)
Party identification				
high contestation	-0.04***	(0.003)	-0.04***	(0.003)
opposition in the lead	-0.03***	(0.002)	-0.03***	(0.002)
Campaign type				
local	0.01*	(0.004)	0.001	(0.004)
national	-0.44***	(0.004)	-0.45***	(0.004)
intercept	-0.11***	(0.001)	-0.42***	(0.002)

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

Table 8: Instrumental variable Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists given local levels of competition (hazard ratios)

baseline	gov strongholds		marginal districts		opp strongholds	
	1		2		3	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	2.15***	(0.09)	8.55***	(0.53)	1.41**	(0.21)
Competition (local)						
gov landslide (0)			3.27***	(0.13)	0.36***	(0.06)
gov moderate (1)	0.67***	(0.04)	2.19***	(0.14)	0.24***	(0.05)
close races (2)	0.31***	(0.01)			0.11***	(0.02)
opp moderate (3)	0.73*	(0.13)	2.38***	(0.49)	0.26***	(0.07)
opp landslide (4)	2.77***	(0.47)	9.02***	(1.33)		
Party identification						
high contestation	1.45***	(0.05)	1.45***	(0.05)	1.45***	(0.05)
opposition in the lead	1.13**	(0.07)	1.13**	(0.07)	1.13**	(0.07)
Campaign type						
local	0.97**	(0.02)	0.97**	(0.02)	0.97**	(0.02)
national	2.41***	(0.09)	2.41***	(0.09)	2.41***	(0.09)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.85***	(0.03)	0.85***	(0.03)	0.85***	(0.03)
Population (log)	1.81***	(0.20)	1.81***	(0.20)	1.81***	(0.20)
Media outlets (log)	2.25***	(0.23)	2.25***	(0.23)	2.25***	(0.23)
Homicide rate	1.004***	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)
Messages*Competition						
Messages*0			0.25***	(0.01)	1.52***	(0.18)
Messages*1	1.25***	(0.08)	0.31***	(0.03)	1.9***	(0.30)
Messages*2	3.97***	(0.13)			6.04***	(0.60)
Messages*3	1.71***	(0.28)	0.43***	(0.07)	2.6***	(0.570)
Messages*4	0.66***	(0.08)	0.17***	(0.02)		
number of clusters	335		335		335	
number of events	266		266		266	

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

Table 9: Robustness tests: Instrumental variable Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists in marginal districts (hazard ratios)

baseline: marginal districts	excluding the capital		2-point cut-off		4-point cut-off	
	1		2		3	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	9.47***	(0.87)	8.55***	(0.53)	8.55***	(0.53)
Competition (local)						
gov landslide (0)	2.79***	(0.32)	3.26***	(0.13)	3.26***	(0.13)
gov moderate (1)	2.12***	(0.27)	2.19***	(0.14)	2.19***	(0.14)
opp moderate (3)	5.33***	(0.74)	2.38***	(0.49)	2.38***	(0.49)
opp landslide (4)	15.63***	(2.20)	9.02***	(1.33)	9.02***	(1.33)
Party identification						
high contestation	1.45***	(0.06)	1.45***	(0.05)	1.45***	(0.05)
opposition in the lead	0.9	(0.10)	1.13**	(0.07)	1.13**	(0.07)
Campaign type						
local	0.94***	(0.02)	0.97**	(0.02)	0.97**	(0.02)
national	2.29***	(0.13)	2.41***	(0.09)	2.41***	(0.09)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.94**	(0.02)	0.85***	(0.03)	0.85***	(0.03)
Population (log)	1.7***	(0.15)	1.81***	(0.20)	1.81***	(0.20)
Media outlets (log)	2.08***	(0.19)	2.25***	(0.23)	2.25***	(0.23)
Homicide rate	1.0004	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)
Messages*Competition						
Messages*0	0.28***	(0.03)	0.25***	(0.01)	0.25***	(0.01)
Messages*1	0.35***	(0.04)	0.31***	(0.03)	0.31***	(0.03)
Messages*3	0.21***	(0.02)	0.43***	(0.07)	0.43***	(0.07)
Messages*4	0.11***	(0.01)	0.17***	(0.02)	0.17***	(0.02)
number of clusters	335		335		335	
number of events	187		266		266	

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

Table 10: Robustness tests: Instrumental variable Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists in government strongholds (hazard ratios)

baseline: government strongholds	excluding the capital		30-point cut-off	
	1		2	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	2.68***	(0.17)	1.13	(0.15)
Competition (local)				
gov landslide (0)	0.76***	(0.06)	0.65**	(0.12)
gov moderate (1)	0.36***	(0.04)	0.25***	(0.04)
opp moderate (3)	1.91***	(0.26)	0.51***	(0.02)
opp landslide (4)	5.6***	(1.28)	19.95***	(5.13)
Party identification				
high contestation	1.45***	(0.06)	1.37***	(0.04)
opposition in the lead	0.9	(0.10)	1.1*	(0.06)
Campaign type				
local	0.94***	(0.02)	0.95***	(0.01)
national	2.29***	(0.13)	2.58***	(0.07)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.94**	(0.02)	0.83***	(0.02)
Population (log)	1.7***	(0.15)	1.97***	(0.15)
Media outlets (log)	2.08***	(0.19)	2.04***	(0.15)
Homicide rate	1.0004	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)
Messages*Competition				
Messages*0	1.22**	(0.11)	2.74***	(0.59)
Messages*1	3.54***	(0.36)	7.9***	(1.09)
Messages*3	0.74***	(0.08)	4.48***	(0.33)
Messages*4	0.38***	(0.07)	0.16***	(0.08)
number of clusters	334		335	
number of events	187		266	

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

Table 11: Robustness tests: Instrumental variable Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists in opposition strongholds (hazard ratios)

baseline: opposition strongholds	excluding the capital		30-point cut-off	
	1		2	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	1.01	(0.19)	0.19***	(0.09)
Competition (local)				
gov landslide (0)	0.18***	(0.04)	0.05***	(0.01)
gov moderate (1)	0.14***	(0.03)	0.03***	(0.01)
close races (2)	0.06***	(0.01)	0.01***	(0.00)
opp moderate (3)	0.34***	(0.08)	0.03***	(0.01)
Party identification				
high contestation	1.45***	(0.06)	1.37***	(0.04)
opposition in the lead	0.9	(0.10)	1.1*	(0.06)
Campaign type				
local	0.94***	(0.02)	0.95***	(0.01)
national	2.29***	(0.13)	2.58***	(0.07)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.94**	(0.02)	0.83***	(0.02)
Population (log)	1.7***	(0.15)	1.97***	(0.15)
Media outlets (log)	2.08***	(0.19)	2.04***	(0.15)
Homicide rate	1.0004	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)
Messages*Competition				
Messages*0	2.65***	(0.51)	6.11***	(3.09)
Messages*1	3.25***	(0.68)	16.75***	(7.29)
Messages*2	9.38***	(1.19)	48.25***	(22.21)
Messages*3	1.95***	(0.37)	27.36***	(12.53)
number of clusters	334		335	
number of events	187		266	

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

Table 12: Instrumental variable Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists given the electoral context (hazard ratios)

baseline	between campaigns		local campaigns		national campaigns	
	1		2		3	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	2.91***	(0.29)	2.98***	(0.96)	1.24	(0.27)
Campaign type						
between campaigns			1.06	(0.38)	0.25***	(0.05)
local	0.94	(0.34)			0.23***	(0.06)
national	4.03***	(0.84)	4.28***	(1.11)		
Party identification						
high contestation	1.44***	(0.04)	1.44***	(0.04)	1.44***	(0.04)
opposition in the lead	1.13**	(0.07)	1.13**	(0.07)	1.13**	(0.07)
Competition (local)						
gov moderate (1)	0.81***	(0.01)	0.81***	(0.01)	0.81***	(0.01)
close races (2)	1.02	(0.03)	1.02	(0.03)	1.02	(0.03)
opp moderate (3)	1.17***	(0.05)	1.17***	(0.05)	1.17***	(0.05)
opp landslide (4)	1.96***	(0.19)	1.96***	(0.19)	1.96***	(0.19)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.84***	(0.03)	0.84***	(0.03)	0.84***	(0.03)
Population (log)	1.81***	(0.20)	1.81***	(0.20)	1.81***	(0.20)
Media outlets (log)	2.25***	(0.23)	2.25***	(0.23)	2.25***	(0.23)
Homicide rate	1.004***	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)	1.004***	(0.00)
Messages*Campaign						
Messages*0			0.98	(0.38)	2.36***	(0.72)
Messages*1	1.03	(0.40)			2.42***	(0.71)
Messages*2	0.42***	(0.13)	0.41***	(0.12)		
number of clusters	335		335		335	
number of events	266		266		266	

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01

Table 13: Instrumental variable Cox regression analysis of anti-media discourse as predictor of violence against journalists given the electoral context outside of the capital (hazard ratios)

baseline	between campaigns		local campaigns		national campaigns	
	1		2		3	
Messages - frequency (5-day count)	2.57***	(0.43)	0.79	(0.37)	1.12	(0.38)
Campaign type						
between campaigns			0.37*	(0.21)	0.26***	(0.09)
local	2.72*	(1.53)			0.7	(0.21)
national	3.87***	(1.27)	1.42	(0.43)		
Party identification						
high contestation	1.48***	(0.06)	1.48***	(0.06)	1.48***	(0.06)
opposition in the lead	0.92	(0.11)	0.92	(0.11)	0.92	(0.11)
Competition (local)						
gov moderate (1)	0.91***	(0.01)	0.91***	(0.01)	0.91***	(0.01)
close races (2)	1.08*	(0.04)	1.08*	(0.04)	1.08*	(0.04)
opp moderate (3)	1.47***	(0.07)	1.47***	(0.07)	1.47***	(0.07)
opp landslide (4)	2.47***	(0.27)	2.47***	(0.27)	2.47***	(0.27)
Opposition mayor (0/1)	0.94**	(0.02)	0.94**	(0.02)	0.94**	(0.02)
Population (log)	1.71***	(0.15)	1.71***	(0.15)	1.71***	(0.15)
Media outlets (log)	2.07***	(0.19)	2.07***	(0.19)	2.07***	(0.19)
Homicide rate	1.0004	(0.00)	1.0004	(0.00)	1.0004	(0.00)
Messages*Campaign						
Messages*0			3.24*	(2.01)	2.29*	(1.08)
Messages*1	0.31	(0.19)			0.71	(0.22)
Messages*2	0.44	(0.21)	1.42	(0.44)		
number of clusters	334		334		334	
number of events	187		187		187	

legend: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.01