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## **Towards a Peaceful Articulation of Grievances: Examining Relationships Between Social Capital and Violent Participation in Contemporary Liberal Democracies**

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Oral Presentation 5.1

**TOWARDS A PEACEFUL ARTICULATION OF GRIEVANCES:  
EXAMINING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL CAPITAL AND VIOLENT  
PARTICIPATION IN CONTEMPORARY LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES**

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Violent political action is a serious concern for contemporary democracies. There is growing documentation that citizens in general are becoming distrustful of government and frustrated with conventional politics. This frustration is only worsened by the prevalence of political violence. A growing body of literature suggests that high levels of social capital may foster successful democracy by promoting norms of interpersonal trust and generalized reciprocity. This paper examines the impact of trust and civic engagement on political violence in a two-part fashion. The first section analyzes the relationship between social capital and individual attitudes toward political violence, while the second section looks at occurrences of violence in the contemporary liberal democracies of Switzerland, Canada, Italy, and Spain. At the individual level, where social capital bridges traditional ethnic, religious, and familial cleavages, people are less likely to support political violence and where social capital reinforces primordial loyalties, people are more likely to support using violence for political means. At the aggregate level, countries characterized by active voluntary membership are less likely to experience acts of political violence, even in the face of contentious political issues.