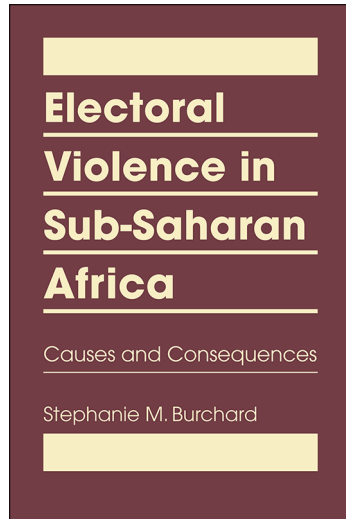


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Electoral Violence in  
Sub-Saharan Africa:  
Causes and Consequences

Stephanie M. Burchard

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# 1

## The Violence of Voting in Africa

On December 30, 2007, it was announced that Mwai Kibaki had been re-elected president of Kenya, the victor of a close and hard-fought election. Jubilation quickly turned to fear as mere minutes later protesters took to the streets in cities around the country, some armed with rocks and pangas. Supporters of Kibaki's chief rival, Raila Odinga, cried foul, claiming that the election was rigged. Within a few hours, violence had spread like wildfire as security forces clashed with scores of protesters in the capital Nairobi, as well as smaller towns such as Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa, and Molo. Within days, the country was in chaos. Fighting continued for two months, despite repeated domestic and international pleas for a return to peace and calm. The violence finally ended in February 2008 once Kibaki and Odinga signed a power-sharing agreement, but not before more than 1,300 Kenyans had lost their lives, hundreds of thousands had lost their homes, and countless were injured. The post-election violence, or PEV as it has come to be known, shook Kenya to its core and placed it at risk of succumbing to the same fate as so many of its neighbors—civil war.

Compared to many other African countries, Kenya was largely considered a “success” story up until the events of 2008, its post-colonial history marked by solid economic growth and political stability under single party rule. While neighboring countries such as Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Somalia experienced wars, rebellions, and coups d'état, Kenya experienced continuity of rule through the successive tenures of founding president Jomo Kenyatta and his hand-picked successor, Daniel arap Moi. In 1991, the government repealed its ban on opposition parties, a development that many interpreted as a move toward democracy. After winning the 1992 and 1997 presidential contests, Moi stepped aside in accordance with the constitution's provision on executive term limits. The 2002 election resulted in an opposition victory and the defeat of Moi's party, the long-ruling Kenya Africa National Union

(KANU). A coalition of smaller parties with Kibaki as its leader decisively defeated KANU's candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta, with 61.3 percent of the vote to Kenyatta's 30.2 percent. The Carter Center's 2002 delegation noted this "milestone for democracy" and congratulated the country on its "democratic and peaceful transfer of power."<sup>1</sup> It is against this backdrop that Kenya's PEV took the world by surprise.

Kenya's success was weighted by its political stability. By adding in other parts of the story, such as adherence to rule of law, respect for human rights, or level of corruption, Kenya's story loses its luster. And if one were to examine the quality of its electoral contests, Kenya would certainly not have been considered such a success. Almost all of Kenya's multiparty elections have been violent, with death totals at times in the thousands. Even the country's most recent elections held in 2013, heralded as a triumph of democracy and a declared a resounding success by many observers including the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), were violent.<sup>2</sup> At least 300 Kenyans died prior to the election as a result of politicking and campaigning.<sup>3</sup>

The election violence that wracked the country in 2007 and 2008 was, unfortunately, not an anomaly—not for Kenya and not for sub-Saharan Africa. As I detail in this book, more than half of all elections held in Africa experience some form of violence or intimidation either before or after election day. And Kenya, although on the extreme end of the spectrum, is not the only country in Africa where intense violence routinely takes place during elections. Large-scale violence frequently accompanies elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe as well.

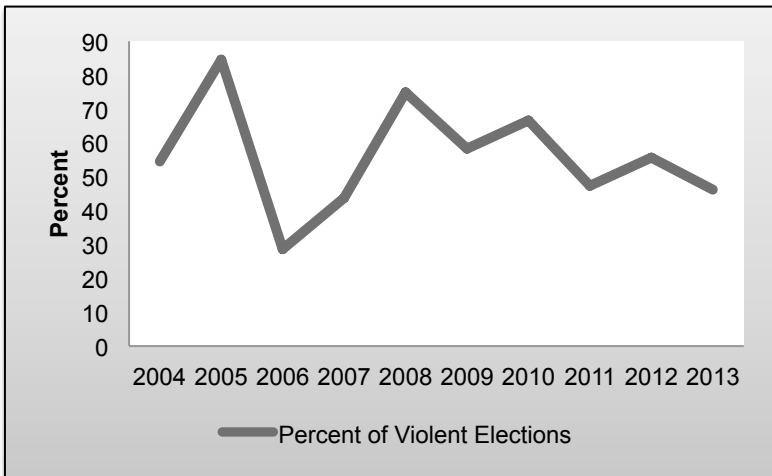
Multiparty elections are a relatively recent phenomenon in Africa. During the post-colonial period, most African countries were ruled by various forms of dictatorship and autocracy. Coups and instability were common. Only Botswana, Mauritius, and The Gambia experienced extended periods of peaceful multiparty elections. Beginning in the early 1990s, a seismic shift in regime type took place. In quick succession, the majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa moved away from authoritarianism and toward multiparty electoral regimes. Benin was one of the first to transition to multiparty elections in 1990. By 1997, almost 75 percent of the sub-continent had adopted multiparty elections.<sup>4</sup>

The spread of electoral regimes across Africa was welcomed and largely celebrated by the international community as a sign that the sub-continent was moving toward democracy. However, the nearly universal embrace of elections across the African sub-continent—only Eritrea has not held multiparty elections since 1990—has brought with it an unanticipated and troubling trend: violence. Since 1990, more than 50 per-

cent of African elections can be characterized as violent with voters experiencing harassment, intimidation, and in some cases, death, as a direct result of the electoral process.

A quick look at the past decade of elections held in Africa demonstrates the nagging persistence of election violence. Figure 1.1 depicts the percentage of elections held between 2004 and 2013 in sub-Saharan Africa where some form of violence took place. From 2004 to 2008, there was substantial year-to-year variation in the frequency of election violence occurring, with some years much more violent than others. Since then, the trend line seems to be decreasing but still remains close to 50 percent.

**Figure 1.1: A Decade of Electoral Violence in Africa, 2004 to 2013**



Electoral violence has, in certain instances, catalyzed prolonged political conflict. Take for instance Côte d'Ivoire's 5-month dispute over the 2010 presidential election in which an estimated 3,000 were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced.<sup>5</sup> Angola also represents a worst case scenario of elections igniting conflict: multiparty elections held in 1992 as part of a conflict resolution process and as a means of introducing democracy led to the resumption of a civil war which did not end until a decade later. Although relatively rare, the fact that electoral violence has been associated with the outbreak or resumption of larger conflicts suggests we urgently need to better understand why it occurs, what it affects, and what measures can be taken to prevent it.

The 2007-2008 PEV in Kenya was the culmination of years of problematic elections and lingering tensions between politicians, parties, and ethnic groups. The 2002 elections brought into power a coalition of opposition parties but within just two years the coalition had fallen apart amid accusations that the president had not honored an informal power-sharing deal with his partners. In November 2005, a constitutional referendum that was endorsed by President Kibaki was defeated, with 58 percent voting against the proposed constitution to 42 percent in favor. Raila Odinga of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), who prior to the referendum had been a coalition partner and minister in the Kibaki government, campaigned extensively against the government's version of the constitution. Shortly after the referendum's defeat Kibaki dismissed his entire cabinet. When he announced his new cabinet two weeks later, Raila and the LDP were conspicuously absent. Raila and several other opposition leaders used the momentum of the "No" campaign to create a new coalition, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), in order to contest the next elections.

By 2007, the animosity between Kibaki and Raila had hardened to an unmanageable degree, but it served as only the most recent polarizing divide in a country where the individual has often trumped party, policy, and ideology. Ethnicity in particular has loomed large during Kenya's political history. The Kikuyu are the largest ethnic group in Kenya, comprising between 17 and 22 percent of the population. Despite representing at most approximately one-fifth of the population of Kenya, there have long been accusations that the Kikuyu have been privileged over other the country's other ethnic groups. The Luhya and Luo compete for position as the second and third largest ethnic groups. The Kalenjin are estimated to be the fourth largest ethnic group in Kenya, comprising approximately 12 percent of the total population.

Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta, who served from 1963-1978, was Kikuyu. Many claimed that he played ethnic favoritism in both politics and business dealings. In Rift Valley specifically, it has been alleged that the Kikuyu disproportionately benefited from Kenyatta's government. Many Kikuyu were sold arable farmlands at favorable prices and at the expense of other groups who had historical claims to the lands.<sup>6</sup> Kenyatta's first vice president, Oginga Odinga, was a prominent Luo chieftain. After approximately two years in office, Oginga had a falling out with Kenyatta and resigned. He then established the Kenya People's Union (KPU) in opposition. In 1969 the government banned the KPU and Oginga was imprisoned for two years. He remained a vocal member of the opposition until his death in 1994.

Upon Kenyatta's death in 1978, his vice president Daniel arap Moi, appointed after Oginga's defection, assumed office and served as president until 2002. Moi was Kalenjin. During Moi's presidency it was alleged that he showed ethnic favoritism, appointing Kalenjin to various important ministerial posts and administrative positions but also promoting Kikuyu over other groups so as to not rock the boat.<sup>7</sup>

The lead up to the 2007 election was tense and hate speech predicated on ethnic stereotypes was rampant. Vernacular radio stations were particularly problematic as some used their broadcasts to call for violence against or the displacement of specific ethnic groups.<sup>8</sup> One of the informal campaign slogans of the 2007 election was "41 against 1," an indirect reference pitting the Kikuyu (led by Kibaki) against the countries remaining 41 ethnic groups. Member of Parliament (MP) William Ruto, a long-standing KANU member from Eldoret North and a Kalenjin, defected from the party after his bid to run for the 2007 presidency was not supported by former president Moi and other KANU leaders. He joined ODM and endorsed their presidential candidate Raila Odinga, son of former vice president and long-time opposition leader Oginga Odinga.

In the months before the elections, political parties were intimidating voters and orchestrating forced displacements around the country. For example, residents of Molo, a town in Rift Valley Province were explicitly told to vote Raila or leave.<sup>9</sup> Leaflets were dropped around the region stating:

Onyo! Onyo! Onyo! Warning! Warning! Warning!...A warning has been issued to the people who are not from this region! This is our land from before!...Time has come for you to leave our land and return to yours!...Whoever disobeys will die! The Rift Valley Land Owners and Protectors army is ready to fight for its right till the last blood drop is shed!<sup>10</sup>

Molo, comprised of Kikuyu, Kisii, and Kalenjin peoples, had a population of around 100,000 in 2007. In previous elections, Molo had voted in favor of the opposition, but the margins had been diminishing over time. In 1992, the opposition parliamentary candidate won with 73 percent of the vote; in 2002, the opposition candidate won the Molo constituency with 54 percent of the vote.

Molo also had a history of pre-election violence. Prior to the 1992 and 1997 elections, there were significant Kalenjin and Kikuyu antagonisms believed to have been orchestrated by former president Moi and his supporters.<sup>11</sup> Prior to the 2007 election, at least 16 people were killed

and 300 families displaced in Molo.<sup>12</sup> According to a state-sponsored report conducted in the aftermath of the PEV, youths were ferried in from neighboring towns for the explicit purpose of intimidating voters. The report also found that local politicians were responsible for distributing the leaflets.<sup>13</sup>

The National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS) allegedly had information as early as October 2007 that Kalenjin ODM leaders were planning to attack Kikuyu residents in Kuresoi, Olenguruone, and Molo due to their suspected support of President Kibaki.<sup>14</sup> The NSIS also had information that Zakayo Cheruiyot, MP for Kuresoi, had hired Kalenjin youth to intimidate and displace Kisii and Kikuyu prior to the election.<sup>15</sup> In assessing blame for the violence the Waki Commission, which was impaneled in February 2008 to investigate the causes and perpetrators of the PEV, specifically admonished the provincial administration for ignoring warning signs that violence in Molo was imminent.<sup>16</sup>

After months of tension and violent flare-ups, the official vote took place on December 27, 2007. The tallying process, however, took longer than anticipated which led some to speculate that the election was being tampered with. Three days later, on December 30, 2007 at 5:50pm local time, the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) announced behind closed doors with only the state-run media present that Kibaki was re-elected president. He was sworn in almost immediately. Mere moments after the results were announced violence broke out across the country.<sup>17</sup> In Rift Valley, Kalenjin raiders, backed by some prominent politicians in the area, began attacking and burning down Kikuyu homes.<sup>18</sup> Kalenjin youth were brought into the area, housed and fed by Kalenjin politicians and businessmen in Molo.<sup>19</sup> Kikuyu and Kisii retaliated by responding in kind. In turn, more Kalenjin youth/warriors were brought in from Kericho and Ndoinet.<sup>20</sup>

In a speech televised live the next day, Odinga refused to concede defeat and accused the government of rigging the elections in Kibaki's favor. The government responded by shutting down Odinga's press conference and indefinitely suspending all live television and radio broadcasts.<sup>21</sup> That same day ECK commissioners, using Molo as an example of potential voting irregularities, requested that an independent inquiry be established to investigate electoral fraud. On 2 January, Samuel Kivuitu, chair of the ECK, told reporters that he had made the December 30<sup>th</sup> pronouncement of the victor under duress. Kivuitu told the press that he wasn't sure who had actually won the election.<sup>22</sup>

For more than a month after the election, riots and protests continued around the country. Rift Valley was especially hard hit. On January 24<sup>th</sup>, approximately 400 Kikuyu youths from Molo armed mostly with



pangas decided to attack Sirikwa Farm in Kuresoi in the heart of Kalenjin country.<sup>23</sup> Kalenjin leaders heard of this plan and waged a counter attack, killing 13 Kikuyu before they were able to attack Sirikwa.<sup>24</sup> In total, 150 people were killed in Molo district, 170 people were injured, 1,564 houses were burned down, and 66,000 people were displaced—all as a result of violence that took place before and directly after the election.<sup>25</sup>

It took weeks of negotiations and international mediation for the violence to subside. Ultimately, a government of national unity was established that included Kibaki and Odinga as president and prime minister, respectively. The agreement also called for the writing of a new constitution and a re-assessment of the electoral process in Kenya. Implicit in these decisions was an acknowledgement that the existing institutions and electoral mismanagement both contributed to the post-election violence. According to the EU Election Observation Mission in its official assessment released April 2008, there was at least a 20,000-vote discrepancy between the constituency tally and national tally in favor of Kibaki in Molo alone.<sup>26</sup>

## **Senegal**

Similarly to Kenya, post-colonial Senegal has often been considered one of the sub-continent's more successful countries. Despite a low-level insurgency in the southern region of Casamance that has taken place since the early 1980s, the country has enjoyed stability and peace since independence. After an orderly transition to independence from French colonial rule in 1960, the Socialist Party (PS) remained in power until 2000. Léopold Sédar Senghor, founder of the PS, ruled the country until his voluntary resignation on January 1, 1981. Senghor's prime minister, Abdou Diouf, then took over as president with little controversy. Diouf won presidential elections in 1983, 1988, and 1993. In 2000, long-time opposition candidate Abdoulaye Wade won the second round of presidential elections, garnering 58.5 percent of the vote to Diouf's 41.5 percent. Unlike several other African leaders, Diouf readily accepted the outcome and left office. This election was regarded by many as an indicator of Senegal's democratic progress.

Due in no small part to the country's history of peaceful transfers of political power, many considered Senegal to be an exemplar case of post-colonial state management and democratic development.<sup>27</sup> Thus Wade's attempted power grab ahead of the 2012 elections took many by surprise. When faced with expiring term limits—which he himself had helped to implement—Wade “re-interpreted” the constitution so as to

stay in power. He also endeavored to modify existing electoral rules to ensure an easy victory. Wade's extra-constitutional maneuvering beginning in 2011 led to protests around the country. Many in the opposition were concerned that Wade would not allow himself to lose the 2012 election and would stay in power by any means necessary. These concerns were magnified in January 2012 by increasingly hostile interactions between Wade's security forces and protesters. Wade's security forces and opposition protesters clashed on several occasions, causing injuries and a handful of deaths.

As the February presidential election approached, tensions continued to mount. Protests devolved into riots. In a country with a reputation for harmonious resolution of its political disputes, the pre-election clashes that took place in 2012 were startling. Even more alarming, as many as 15 fatalities were reported as a result of interactions between protesters and government security forces. Some began to fear that Senegal was on the verge of significant unrest. There seemed to be no way to peacefully resolve the crisis. The situation appeared intractable. Wade was signaling that he would go to extreme ends to win the election and the opposition remained steadfast that they would not allow this to happen.

And then, almost overnight, the violence subsided. Protesters returned to their homes, security forces returned to their barracks and opposition members began preparing for the second round of elections. To what can we attribute the rapid escalation of pre-election tensions and their quick denouement? I argue that protesters were directly responding to the signals that President Wade was sending to the populace. Once Wade announced that a second round of elections was necessary—a significant concession on his part—the opposition knew that Wade could be defeated. This knowledge led to a de-escalation of tensions and a return to calm. Political elites often set the tone for the conduct of elections. What they say, and what they do not say, has a huge impact on the eruption of violence.

As I will demonstrate, the Senegalese case underscores how the transparent management and observation of elections can reduce tensions over the electoral process and promote a peaceful transfer of power. The Senegalese case is also instructive in that the management of elections has undergone significant reform over time, but this progress has been the result of push and pull interactions between the government in power and various opposition groups. The process has been piecemeal and at each phase, the ruling government has sought to undermine the intended effects of reform.

## **Liberia**

Unlike Kenya and Senegal, Liberia's recent history includes significant conflict and civil war. Beginning with a military coup in 1980, Liberia experienced a period of prolonged social and political unrest that did not end until 2003. Unlike most other countries in Africa, Liberia was never under colonial rule. It was established in the mid-1800s by freed American slaves and was governed from 1847 until 1980 by a small elite political class descended from these early settlers. The True Whig Party won every election held in Liberia from 1878 until a master sergeant in the army deposed the government of then-president William Tolbert. Samuel K. Doe ruled in an increasingly repressive fashion until he was killed in 1990 by insurgent forces leading a rebellion against his government.

War between different rebel factions raged on until a ceasefire was reached in 1996. Elections were held in 1997 as a part of the conflict resolution process. Charles Taylor, leader of one of the larger rebel factions, was elected president. While elections were deemed "free and fair" by international observers, most agree that the vote was less a true competition over political power and more a vote against the resumption of war. Taylor was a ruthless dictator and in 1999 the Second Liberian Civil War began by armed groups opposed to his rule.

In 2003, as international pressure against Taylor's regime increased, he finally relented and fled Liberia for exile in Nigeria. A transitional government was installed to prepare the country for a return to multiparty elections. The United Nations (UN) deployed a peacekeeping force with some 15,000 troops. In 2005, Liberia held its first postconflict elections. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who had run against Taylor in 1997, won the second round of presidential elections, although her opponent George Weah disputed the outcome. She was re-elected in 2011 amid an opposition boycott of the second round of balloting. Elections in 2005 and 2011 were close affairs. Fraud was alleged in both cases but election violence was kept to a minimum.

The non-occurrence of electoral violence in such a fragile environment, when many other indicators would have suggested that it should have taken place, requires further explanation. I argue that part of the reason lies with the heavy presence of the international community. The 2005 elections were almost entirely managed by the international community, which provided significant logistical and technical assistance. UN peacekeeping forces provided election security alongside the Liberian National Police. Although the government of Liberia took up much of the responsibility for organizing and administering the 2011 elections, UN peacekeepers remained in country. The international community

has, in effect, taken up many of the key functions of election management for the past two elections. Much like elections in Senegal, capable and impartial management can go a long way to preventing election violence from erupting. However, just below the surface lie myriad grievances and substantial fear of violence on the part of the Liberian electorate. There is little guarantee that future elections will continue to be peaceful.

### **Case Selection**

In this book, I describe in detail the electoral experiences of Kenya, Senegal, and Liberia. When analyzed together, these three countries provide a comprehensive picture of the nature of electoral violence in Africa. Kenya is a country in which electoral violence often takes place. The violence, although varying in intensity over time, is frequently organized at the highest levels of government and with the specific purpose of affecting election outcomes. Violence has occurred at multiple points in the electoral process, both before and after Election Day. In Senegal, moderate violence has broken out sporadically and under very specific circumstances. It is a case in which election violence is less intentional but potentially just as damaging. The 2012 election in particular appeared to have the ability to throw the country into significant political disarray. Liberian elections, on the other hand, have routinely been violence-free. Although many other indicators might suggest that Liberia's postconflict elections should have resulted in violence, peace has reigned. These three cases compliment and help to concretize the quantitative analysis presented in Chapters 2, 6, and 7 of this book. They also exhibit temporal variation and country-specific variation, allowing for some interesting comparisons.

These three cases were selected so that the full array of types, timing and outcomes of election violence could be examined. They were also selected because one of the key factors often associated with electoral violence—the electoral system—is relatively similar across all three cases. However, because I am interested in exploring the causes and, just as importantly, the consequences of electoral violence these three cases also illustrate different experiences with electoral violence which will allow for a more nuanced examination of how electoral violence (or its absence) affects democratic development, the subject of the second half of this book.

## **Types of Electoral Violence**

Electoral violence, while not an Africa-specific phenomenon, is more pronounced on the continent. Globally, it is estimated that violence occurs in roughly 19 percent of elections, with riots and protests accompanying approximately 14 percent of elections.<sup>28</sup> In contrast, violence and intimidation occur in approximately 58 percent of elections in Africa. Even more alarming is the fact that since the proliferation of multiparty elections in the early 1990s the vast majority of African countries—86 percent—have experienced electoral violence. Fortunately, extreme cases such as Kenya's post-election violence are relatively rare—affecting no more than 10 percent of elections held in Africa—but unfortunately, this is not a trend that has substantially decreased over time. The persistence of electoral violence, even in less deadly forms, may have a significant effect on the development of democracy on a continent where democracy as we know it is a relatively new phenomenon. Complicating things even further, democracy advocates often encourage the adoption of multiparty elections as a means of reducing conflict and promoting political stability.

Democracy is often believed to present a peaceful alternative to autocratic rule. Whereas in autocracies there are no mechanisms for the population to influence government behavior short of rebellion or an overthrow of the government, democracy allows individuals periodic opportunities to communicate their preferences to their leaders through regularly scheduled elections. As such, many argue that democratic regimes should be more stable and less violent than autocratic regimes. In the early 2000s, however, researchers such as Snyder (2000) and Fischer (2002) began to take note of the propensity for new democracies and postconflict countries to experience significant violence either as part of a nation-building exercise or as a consequence of fraudulent and untrusted processes.<sup>29</sup> In 2009, Paul Collier concluded that pseudo-democratic countries, ones in which elections are held but without any of the other substantive features of democracy such as a free press and adherence to the rule of law, often experience more generalized political violence than some of their autocratic counterparts.<sup>30</sup>

Electoral violence is a subset of political violence but it has several distinct features that differentiate it from other forms of political violence. It differs in terms of its timing and intent—namely, influencing electoral outcomes. Coups, rebellions, and repression all take place with no regard to electoral processes. In a 2009 article, Höglund makes this particular distinction, arguing that differences in motive, timing, actors, activities, and targets allow us to separate electoral violence from these

other forms of political violence.<sup>31</sup> This point is not trivial as the motivation and means of electoral violence are unique to its ends. Electoral violence intends to affect the outcome of an election; political violence intends to affect a variety of political outcomes ranging from specific policy decisions to outright regime change. Additionally, the timing and motive of electoral violence is tied to scheduled elections and as such is inherently more predictable but also potentially more persistent since elections are by nature recurring.

Electoral violence encompasses any intimidating or harassing action that is directly related to the electoral process. It may take place prior to an election, on Election Day, or immediately after an election has taken place, often as a result of the announcement of the outcome. The definition of electoral violence includes a range of behaviors that includes: the distribution of hate-speech leaflets, the forced displacement of specific groups of voters, political assassinations, and targeted violent attacks. It also encompasses protests and riots that occur as a direct result of elections. Although seemingly disparate acts, these behaviors have one thing in common—they are meant to affect the outcome of an election through force.

Electoral violence is distinct from other forms of politicized violence in that actors use the existing electoral framework in order to achieve their goals. For example, a coup d'état, a common form of political violence, is focused at the elite level and involves the forced removal of a party or individual from political power. Actors generally have no regard for existing laws and as such it is an unpredictable and extrajudicial act. Electoral violence, however, works within existing and established timelines to achieve the acquisition of political power. Electoral violence also shifts the focus from elite level actors to include voters as potential targets of violence.

Although sometimes unplanned (as has been the case in countries such as Guinea and Senegal), electoral violence is often times mobilized by political actors (as in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria). Because of this strategic purpose of electoral violence, political institutions can either constrain or encourage its employ. Complicating things, however, due to the illicit nature of electoral violence political actors have a vested interest in obscuring their role, thus at the time what may seem spontaneous is actually deliberately planned and managed.

Electoral violence can be subdivided into its different forms based on intent, method, timing, target, and actors. Table 1.1 outlines a basic typology of electoral violence. Assuming the likely motivation of the actors, we can separate electoral violence into two distinct categories: incidental and strategic. Incidental electoral violence occurs as a product

of protest around electoral events, either before or after an election. It takes place when tensions are heightened and groups from opposing sides are in close proximity to each other. It may be triggered by the perception (real or imagined) of electoral impropriety. Incidental electoral violence is not strategic. It is not pre-planned but rather a spontaneous occurrence. Typically, this type of violence involves protesters and perhaps over-zealous security forces—as was the case in Senegal in 2012—but it may also arise out of mutual frustration between supporters of rival candidates or parties.

**Table 1.1 Types of Electoral Violence**

Type	Methods	Timing	Perpetrators
<i>Incidental</i>	Protests, Riots	Before, Day of, After	Opposition members, Protesters, Security forces
<i>Strategic:</i> Suppressive or Mobilizing	Threats, Physical attacks, Assassinations, Bombings, Forced displacement	Before, Day of	Politicians and their agents
<i>Strategic:</i> Disruptive	IEDs, Bombings, Riots	Before, Day of, After	Actors excluded or marginalized from the electoral process

Strategic electoral violence, on the other hand, is pre-planned. It is deliberately employed to affect the outcome of an election. Strategic electoral violence can be used for a multiplicity of electoral purposes including suppressing voter intention, mobilizing voter support, or disrupting an election altogether. The first two types of strategic electoral violence, suppressive and mobilizing, can be conceived as part of a larger electoral strategy a candidate or party employs in an attempt to deliberately affect an outcome. Although some argue that electoral violence is primarily meant to suppress voter turnout, I present evidence that shows that violence has been used to suppress turnout as well as to mo-

bilize voters. Both activities can achieve the same goal: the distortion of citizen preference so as to reduce the competitiveness of an election and win office.

Politicians in Kenya have used violence to both suppress and mobilize votes, sometimes in the same election. In 1992, it is believed that Kenyan president Moi and his party supporters killed 1,500 and forced the displacement of approximately 250,000 residents in Rift Valley in order to prevent them from voting for the opposition.<sup>32</sup> Moi won the 1992 with 36.4 percent of the total vote and a margin of victory of approximately 500,000 votes. In the lead up to the 2007 elections some residents of Rift Valley stated that they were told to vote for Raila Odinga or else, with the “else” being interpreted as a veiled threat. In the Kenyan context, it is an easy message to interpret. This type of violence is mobilizing, using threats to force voters to cast their ballot for a certain candidate. Political assassinations, those that target both aspirants and activists alike, can either be suppressive or mobilizing depending on the context. Assassinations in the most direct sense of the act suppress candidacies but they may also serve to mobilize voter support through fear of future attacks.

Disruptive violence is meant to prevent a vote from taking place or to change an already-announced outcome. The perpetrators may be marginalized electoral actors seeking to expand their influence beyond the agreed upon electoral arena. If the allegations in the Waki report are to be believed, members of Kenya’s political elite organized the electoral violence after the 2007 elections in order to force the ruling party to enter into a governing coalition with the announced losing party, ODM.

Actors outside of the electoral process, such as rebel groups or terrorist organizations, also perpetrate disruptive electoral violence. In Kenya’s Coast Province, the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), a small separatist movement seeking independence, waged a pre-election campaign in 2013 meant to prevent the election from ever taking place. Their stated goal was to deprive the process of legitimacy in order to demonstrate lack of support for the existing governance structures.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in Nigeria the terrorist organization Boko Haram was accused of engaging in electoral violence as a means of discouraging voters from participating in the 2011 and 2015 elections. Because these actors are generally external to the process, acts perpetrated by groups such as Boko Haram and the MRC are more akin to terrorist attacks. As such, their activities are largely outside of the scope of this book.

In theory, strategic pre-election violence is meant to influence voter behavior (namely vote choice and/or voter turnout) before an election. Displacement, intimidation, and targeted political assassinations are the



most frequent tactics used to influence an electoral outcome through suppression or mobilization; however, if pre-election violence were to become too pervasive, too obvious, and perhaps too deadly, it could derail an election altogether as the government or even external actors would be expected to intervene. If the goal is electoral disruption, this is not a problem but if the goal is to strategically influence voter behavior and hence, an outcome in favor of one candidate or party over another, violence entrepreneurs must find an equilibrium that achieves influence but does not require immediate attention or intervention.

In contrast, post-election violence occurs after an election and is used as a way to either punish victors and their supporters or, if strategically employed, used to force victors into negotiations with losers to share political power. Because this method is extra-judicial and outside of the purview of the accepted rules of the electoral “game”, levels of violence must reach such a level that it forces action on the part of the winning party. As such, election violence after the fact should be significantly more intense than violence that takes place before an election. The Kenyan case conforms to these expectations.

Although these categories are conceptually and theoretically distinct, as was stated before, strategic electoral violence can at the outset appear to be incidental as its entrepreneurs seek to affect the outcome of an election with as little recrimination as possible. The inherent desire to evade punishment, even if it is a remote possibility due to weak criminal justice systems, often makes the exact measurement and quantification of electoral violence difficult. Thus it is necessary to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches in the study of electoral violence. Empirical analysis allows us to broadly identify patterns and relationships associated with the causes and consequences of electoral violence that hold across countries and time periods, but it does not always allow for a detailed analysis of the different types or motivations behind electoral violence. Contextualizing electoral violence in specific electoral environments allows us to better identify the actors and likely culprits behind its use and to assess what these actors might hope to gain from it use. The case studies in this book do just that.

For example, in the immediacy of the post-election violence in Kenya in 2008, it was believed that the violence was a spontaneous reaction to a close and contentious election. The investigations that took place after the violence subsided, however, revealed a more complicated picture, one where opportunists from both main presidential candidates’ camps organized violence. The losing side planned violence in order to leverage itself into a post-election governing coalition. The government then responded in kind., this tactic was successful in forcing a govern-

ment of national unity be formed to quell the violence. Thus the post-election violence can be considered disruptive as it resulted in the use of extra-judicial means to force a change in the outcome of the elections and how elections are conducted in the future. All of these types of violence can take place within a single election, and in the case of Kenya, they have.

Electoral fraud is intimately related to electoral violence in several ways but the nature of the relationship is determined by the type and timing of violence. Fraud and election violence often occur in the same election. Fraud affects post-election violence as post-election violence is a response to an electoral outcome. Perceived unfairness, manipulation or the belief that fraud is likely to take place can trigger an emotive response prior to an election which can translate into incidental violence. However, electoral fraud is not necessarily a trigger for strategic violence—the type of violence that requires organization and planning—but rather it is a companion strategy. The same politicians who are willing to win at any cost—including using violence and intimidation to influence votes—also frequently employ fraud to win. Fraud and violence are both illicit strategies that complement each other as they are both meant to achieve the same goal—ensuring electoral victory. Elections in Senegal have rarely experienced strategic violence, but fraud, manipulation, and incidental violence have frequently occurred.

The role of election fraud is common to the experiences of all three countries examined in this book. Although it was a confluence of factors that led to the 2007 and 2008 post-electoral violence in Kenya, electoral fraud was a contributing cause. The opposition insisted that widespread irregularities and vote tampering took place that amounted to the theft of the presidency by the incumbent Kibaki and his supporters. In both the 2012 Senegalese elections and the 2013 elections in Kenya, however, the widespread presence of election observers made fraud and violence untenable electoral strategies. Unlike Kenya, however, the electoral reforms that have been adopted in Senegal were adopted incrementally, giving actors and institutions time to get used to their new roles. While fraud has been alleged in Liberia, there has been insufficient evidence to substantiate these claims.

In order to better contextualize electoral violence, Chapter 2 describes in greater detail the patterns of electoral violence in Africa through a systematic examination of the political and institutional factors associated with its occurrence. As will be detailed, executive and legislative elections both experience significant levels of electoral violence, suggesting that violence is not just the purview of strongman presidents as some have asserted. Additionally, electoral institutions and

the political environment under which elections are held affect both the occurrence of pre-election violence and which variant (strategic or incidental) is most likely to take place.

Chapter 3 delves further into the nature of electoral violence in Kenya, beginning the 1960s and continuing through the most recent elections held in 2013—the first general election to be held after the PEV. Because the Kenyan experience encompasses so many of the different types of electoral violence in terms of timing, intent, and severity, it makes an excellent case study. Additionally, because strategic violence has occurred quite frequently in Kenya, a closer look at Kenyan elections allows me to uncover the factors that encourage or impede the use of strategic violence in particular.

Chapters 4 and 5 put electoral violence in a comparative perspective by extending the analysis to Senegal and Liberia in order to examine how and why incidental forms of electoral violence occur and what factors may prevent new democracies on the precipice from descending into widespread violence. The 2012 Senegalese elections, although nowhere near as violent as those in Kenya, were arguably the most violent in that country's history with multiple fatalities, hundreds of injuries, and countless protests. Many were concerned that mounting violence could lead Senegal down a dangerous path; however, the electoral violence eventually subsided and calm returned to the country. The reasons why have to do largely with the quality and conduct of elections. Over the course of multiple decades the opposition agitated for reforms that improved the transparency of elections and reduced opportunities for fraud, culminating in the peaceful resolution of the 2012 election crisis. The Senegalese case may be instructive for other newly democratizing countries seeking to improve electoral management.

Liberia's experience with elections is complicated and the outcomes in terms of peace are varied. The country has held elections since the mid-1800s but competition was restricted to an elite ruling class who rarely shared power. After civil war broke out in 1989, elections were organized in 1997 as a means to resolve the conflict. A fragile peace was constructed but voting was far from free or fair. There was an implicit threat of the resumption of war if one of the candidates did not win the election, transforming it from a simple contest between politicians into a referendum on peace. The peace, unfortunately, lasted less than two years before civil war began again. Elections were held in 2005 after another peace accord was struck but these elections were managed much differently and the outcome was much more positive. Peace has endured since and another relatively calm electoral contest took place in 2011. The past two Liberian elections appear much more peaceful than those

in Senegal and Kenya but lying just beneath the surface are grievances which could threaten to derail the progress that has thus far been achieved.

## **Conclusions**

Although from a normative perspective, we may believe that electoral violence is undesirable it is still not known exactly how electoral violence affects the democratization process. Electoral violence has the potential to cause serious instability and conflict. It may even lead to adverse regime change. In its most extreme form, it has triggered the resumption of war, as in the case of Angola. Even in its less intense forms, electoral violence may bring about the weakening of representational ties between politicians and voters and may ultimately undermine the consolidation of democracy.

By examining effects on individuals, upon whose consent democracy depends, I am better positioned to assess this relationship. Chapters 6 and 7 analyze how electoral violence affects voter turnout and attitudes toward democracy. The analytic lens is broadened and the experiences from several other African countries are included in cross-national analyses to explore the effects of electoral violence on voter behavior and democratic dispensation. Electoral violence seems to have a null effect in the aggregate on voter turnout. This is likely due to the multitude and sometimes crossed purposes of electoral violence and the difficulty in assessing when exactly coercive voting is taking place (i.e., casting a ballot for a candidate or party that one would not support in the absence of violence). Electoral violence is, however, significantly related to stated willingness to vote in future elections, but this relationship is complicated and based on partisan attachments and the type of electoral violence that takes place. Electoral violence is also significantly related to individual assessments of democracy, support for democracy, and trust in governing institutions.

Chapter 8 builds upon the previous chapters to address why electoral violence is so problematic and what can be done to prevent it. Some have argued that electoral violence serves as a catalyst to needed changes in the conduct of elections and leads to improvements in democratic quality over time.<sup>34</sup> To them, while violence is not necessarily a desirable part of the electoral process, it is a normal part of the democratization process and to be expected as countries seek to get the institutions right. There are two main problems with that approach this book seeks to address. First, electoral violence can be traced to very specific environments, institutions, and triggers that are associated with its

prevalence. Because we can identify antecedent causes we can also identify specific and targeted responses to prevent it from taking place. When electoral violence takes place, it is the intervention after the fact and NOT the violence that is important. Second, electoral violence in new democracies may be common but it is not preordained, nor is it a necessary part of the democratization process. It may be a byproduct of transitioning away from a more authoritarian regime to a more open and liberal regime but this does not mean that it cannot be prevented.

Additionally, while there are instances of seemingly spontaneous or emotive violence that have manifested around elections, there are also many instances in which political actors mobilize supporters or hire gangs to terrorize electoral actors. If actors are deliberately organizing violence, then efforts to prevent them from doing so can be pursued. Even in cases in which the violence is decentralized and there is no deliberate organization for its perpetration, it is possible to identify ways in which tempers could have been reduced and violence could have been mitigated.

Furthermore, over the past few decades electoral violence in Africa appears to be more frequent and more intense than other types of politically-motivated violence that may occur between elections. Since 1997, election years in Kenya, Senegal, and Liberia have been significantly more violent than years without elections. According to the African Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED), between 1997 and 2014, Kenya experienced on average 210 violent incidents in non-election years.<sup>35</sup> During election years, the average number of violent incidents increased to 360. The average number of fatalities per year also increased—by almost double—from an estimated 330 in non-election years to 640 fatalities in election-years. Even controlling for the 2007 election, which could be argued to be anomalous due to its intensity, the average number of fatalities in Kenya during election years was 430.

In Senegal and Liberia, a similar pattern repeats as election years experienced, on average, significantly more violent incidents than non-election years. Although the violence was lower in frequency and intensity in both countries compared to Kenya (closer to 50 incidents in each country per year and with fatalities relatively rare), there is still a significant difference between election years and non-election years in terms of violence. In Senegal, election years experienced an average of 54 violent incidents compared to 42 in non-election years.<sup>36</sup> In Liberia, the number of incidents almost tripled during election years, from 23 in non-election years to 61.<sup>37</sup> Elections may be displacing other patterns of political violence and channeling incidents and efforts into specific peri-

ods of time so as to take advantage of the electoral cycle. This is a very troubling trend.

Some have argued that flawed elections, including those in which violence takes place, when held in unbroken succession will eventually result in advances in freedoms and civil liberties and can contribute to the democratization process. I argue that flawed elections undermine the process necessary for democracy to take hold and to flourish.<sup>38</sup> When voters come to associate elections with predictable patterns of violence, their appetite and support for democracy eventually wanes.

The acceptance of electoral violence as a normal part of the democratization process suggests that there is nothing that can be done prior to electoral violence taking place but these interventions and remedies could have absolutely been adopted prior to the violence. Violence is a blunt, imprecise tool. In some cases it can create new grievances and can spiral out of control. Additionally, because it masquerades as a part of the democratic process, it can have serious deleterious effects on democratic development in terms of attitudes and behaviors of the people it is meant to protect. Ignoring or accepting electoral violence may, in the end, undermine democracy to the point where the international community, rather than promoting democratic development, is actually preventing it from taking root.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> "Observing the 2002 Kenya Elections."

<sup>2</sup> Sweeney, Jr., "Kenya's 2013 Elections: an Effective Assistance Model?"

<sup>3</sup> "High Stakes: Political Violence and the 2013 Elections in Kenya."

<sup>4</sup> Adejumobi, "Elections in Africa."

<sup>5</sup> "They Killed Them Like It Was Nothing."

<sup>6</sup> Boone, "Land Conflict and Distributive Politics in Kenya."

<sup>7</sup> Lynch, *I Say to You*.

<sup>8</sup> "Kenya: Spreading the Word of Hate."

<sup>9</sup> Burchard, "The Resilient Voter?"

<sup>10</sup> "Kenya: Clashes, Elections and Land."

<sup>11</sup> Lynch, *I Say to You*.

<sup>12</sup> "The Waki Report."

<sup>13</sup> "The Waki Report."

<sup>14</sup> "The Waki Report."

<sup>15</sup> "The Waki Report."

<sup>16</sup> "The Waki Report," 85.

<sup>17</sup> Gettleman, "Disputed Vote Plunges Kenya into Bloodshed."

<sup>18</sup> "The Waki Report."

<sup>19</sup> "The Waki Report."

<sup>20</sup> "The Waki Report."

<sup>21</sup> “Odinga Rejects Kenya Poll Result.”

<sup>22</sup> Berger, “Kenya’s Poll Chief Does Not Know if Kibaki Won.”

<sup>23</sup> “The Waki Report.”

<sup>24</sup> “The Waki Report.”

<sup>25</sup> “The Waki Report,” 89.

<sup>26</sup> “Kenya: Final Report General Elections December 27, 2007,” 34.

<sup>27</sup> Galvan, “Political Turnover and Social Change in Senegal.”

<sup>28</sup> Norris, “Why Electoral Malpractices Heighten Risks of Electoral Violence.”

<sup>29</sup> Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*; Fischer, “Electoral Conflict and Voting: a Strategy for Study and Prevention.”

<sup>30</sup> Collier, Wars, Guns and Votes.

<sup>31</sup> Höglund, “Electoral Violence in Conflict-Ridden Societies.”

<sup>32</sup> Barkan and Ng’ethe, “Kenya Tries Again.”

<sup>33</sup> “Briefing: Kenya’s Coastal Separatists—Menace or Martyrs?”

<sup>34</sup> Ross, “Violent Democracy.”

<sup>35</sup> Data on political violence incidents taken from the African Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED). The data is coded so as to include violent events such as battles, riots, violent protests, and remote attacks perpetrated by groups such as governments, rebels, militias, ethnic groups, political organizations, and civilians.

<sup>36</sup> ACLED.

<sup>37</sup> ACLED.

<sup>38</sup> Lindberg, “Democracy by Elections.”