Voting Against Violence: The Role of Civic Engagement in African Elections

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Abstract

How does electoral violence influence voting behavior in African elections? What types of voters are least susceptible to the negative impact of violent electoral campaigns? While multiparty elections are considered the cornerstone of democratic accountability *in theory,* for many countries, they have come at a high price *in practice.* This reality is evident in the electoral context of sub-Saharan Africa, where the introduction of multiparty competition has often encouraged insecure leaders to resort to intimidation and violence to undermine opposing electoral forces. The recent proliferation of research on electoral violence has predominantly investigated the institutional and structural conditions that put some countries and elections more at risk of violence than others. Yet few empirical studies have explored the consequences of such intimidation and harassment for the African voter. This project seeks to understand what types of individuals are less susceptible to the deleterious effects of violence, such as electoral abstention or intimidation into voting for a repressive incumbent, by examining variation in levels of civic engagement, outside of voting. I argue that socially and politically engaged voters, are (1) more likely to turnout when threatened with violence, and (2) less likely to be intimidated into voting for a repressive incumbent, I suggest that this relationship exists due to the different types of social capital that citizens derive from various forms of political behavior. Using Afrobarometer survey data, I find some tentative evidence that violence does result in an electoral backlash for incumbents, which this effect being heightened by active civic engagement.

Introduction

How does electoral violence influence voting behavior in African elections and what types of voters are least susceptible to the negative impact of violent electoral campaigns? Under ideal circumstances, elections provide a mechanism through which citizens can punish bad representatives and select good ones, since power resides in the people to remove leaders who behave in ways that are antithetical to popular support, politicians are incentivize towards good behavior in order to gain support (Dahl, 1971; Richards, 1999; Richards and Gelleny, 2007; Schedler, 2002; Davenport, 2007). But while multiparty elections are often considered the cornerstone of democratic accountability, for many countries, the introduction of electoral competition has instead created new incentives for incumbents to engage in violent repression in order to maintain political dominance (Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski, 2013; Höglund, 2009). In sub-Saharan Africa, where violence surrounding elections has been particularly salient since the expansion of multi-party elections across the continent in the 1990's (Bekoe, 2012), this reality is all the more evident. Although research on electoral violence in sub-Saharan Africa has proliferated in the past decade, this work predominantly focuses on understanding the institutional and structural determinants of this sub-set of political violence and is limited in its empirical investigations into the behavioral and electoral consequences of government violence, particularly factors that may mediate the deleterious effects of violence to the electoral process. I argue that this necessitates an understanding of the attitudinal impact of violent behavior from the government on the voter's perceived capacity to hold incumbents accountable. To do this, I suggest that different forms of civic engagement, outside of voting, should create citizens that are less likely to be intimidated by violence by engendering sentiments of social trust and political efficacy that empower voters to turnout and vote against violence.

The recognition that elections may actually be a double-edged sword for many emerging democracies in Africa, has led many researchers to investigate the determinants of violence surrounding electoral competition on the continent. Several structural and institutional char-

acteristics such as majoritarian electoral institutions (Fjelde and Höglund, 2014), poverty (Laakso, 2007), and previous conflict (Höglund, 2009) have been empirically shown to encourage election violence in sub-Saharan Africa. This has been important to understanding some potential factors that may put countries at risk of violence during elections, but has been limited in investigating the consequences of this type of political violence. More specifically, little attention has been paid to how different coercive strategies of voter (de)mobilization can effect the behavior of voters on election day and, by consequence, electoral outcomes. While there have been some single-country case studies that have shown how electoral violence has undermined the ability of the opposition to participate or coerced voters into either abstaining or supporting the incumbent (Bratton, 2013; Collier and Vicente, 2012; Mueller, 2011), little empirical research has been devoted to understanding the conditions under which violence and intimidation *may not work* as a means of securing an electoral victory. Further, potential factors that may mediate how violence influences voting behavior, possibly leading to an electoral backlash, have been underdeveloped to date.

While it has undoubtedly been useful to understand the various institutional structures that can encourage violence, the best way to de-incentivize this tactic, more fundamentally, may require changing the perception of its effectiveness as an electoral strategy and removing that incentive to maintain power at all costs. This project is motivated by the assertion that in order to understand how best to prevent election violence, and other forms of violent conflict more broadly, we need to understand what citizens actually think about the impact of violent behavior from the government, why some voters see this as illegitimate, and whether this informs their behavior on election day. For this reason, a more complete account of the dynamic relationship between election violence and democratic consolidation necessitates the inclusion of the micro politics of individual attitudes and behaviors (Bratton, 2013).More specifically, if we can better understand the role of civic engagement in African society, and identify the types of individuals who are less susceptible to the negative consequences of violence, we may be able to better understand ways to bolster this type of democratic

engagement with a concerted effort towards empowering civil society organizations. Finding that these factors make electoral violence less effective, policy-makers may be able to invest in efforts that enhance a participatory civic culture even outside of elections, rather than focusing solely on the promotion of specific institutional configurations which may not even have their desired effect. Examining instances of intimidation and violence in sub-Saharan African elections, this project seeks to understand what factors may mediate the impact of electoral intimidation on voting behavior. After surveying the literature on electoral competition and violence in Africa in the following section, I develop a theoretical argument for the mediating role of civic engagement, arguing that (1) higher levels of civic engagement requiring social interactions, should make one more likely to turnout, when threatened with violence, and (2) more active forms of engagement, such as participation in protests, should encourage a vote *against* violence. Using Afrobarometer survey data, I test these arguments using logistic regression analysis and discuss some initial empirical insights that can be drawn from this analysis. I conclude with some potential avenues moving forward with this research with a closer look into instances of electoral violence in Senegal.

Electoral Competition, Voting Behavior and Violence

Electoral Violence and its Consequences

With the growing recent literature that has sought to explain instances of election-related violence, many scholars have come to conceptualize electoral violence as a particular subset of political violence that is distinguished by it's timing, the perpetrators and victims, objectives, and the methods used (Höglund, 2009; Bekoe, 2012). Election related violence can take place before, during or after an election,[1] though this timing alone is not enough to classify violence as election specific (Bekoe, 2012). It must also be implemented with the

[1]With respect to timing, interestingly, the actual election day is often observed to be the most peaceful period. As Daxecker (2012) illustrates, this is typically the result of international election observers more keenly monitoring this period.

objective of influencing the outcome of the election by shifting the electoral advantage in the perpetrators favor. Thus, the motives for the use of violence arise from a perceived risk of losing office in heightened stakes, with the primary objective being an electoral victory. Additionally, because political parties are often the primary instigators of violence, both incumbent and opposition parties may use violence as a tactic surrounding elections.[2] Further, as Laakso (2007) points out, the timing of violence carries with it different objectives from the perpetrators. Before elections, violence may be used for the purpose of intimidating voters and political opponents in order to effect their choice. Post-election violence, however, is usually used with the purpose of either contesting results (usually wielded by the opposition) or destabilizing protests.

Tactics used by perpetrators of election violence can also vary considerably, but are typically thought of in two distinct forms: (1) severe and overt violence (ie. violent suppression of demonstrations and political killings) and (2) low-level less-overt forms (ie. intimidation and harassment of political rivals, confiscations of newspapers, short-term arrests of political opponents). Some research has suggested that these different forms of election violence will be used on different victims depending on the timing surrounding the election. Bhasin and Gandhi (2013) find that incumbent parties and candidates are more likely to resort to harassment and intimidation targeting opposition elites prior to an election, though more likely to resort to violent repression of opposition supporters (ordinary citizens) in the post-election period. Aside from opposition parties and their supporters, Robinson and Torvik (2009) suggest that swing voters are the primary targets of violence in the pre-election phase, particularly when elections are highly competitive. Contrary to this finding, Chaturvedi (2005) finds that as the number of swing voters increase, elections will become less conflictual.[3]

[2] In the pre-election period however, incumbent parties are most often the perpetrators.

[3]Focusing specifically on the context of African elections, Straus and Taylor (2012) identify four general patterns of election related violence: (1) Most violence takes place before an election, (2) some form of election related violence is a regular occurrence in most African countries (though only in about 20 percent are the most severe forms present), (3) the incumbent is usually the perpetrator, and (4) presidential elections are slightly more violent than legislative ones.

For the victims of violence, whether opposition supporters or undecided voters, the potential consequences of electoral intimidation can be both immediate and far reaching. Incumbents may use various forms of political intimidation and harassment in the pre-election period in an effort to eliminate the opposition from participation in the electoral process entirely, thereby minimizing the risk of a loss. This is either done by imprisoning opposition candidates to bar them from running or employing enough violence to encourage the opposition to boycott the election, thus ensuring an incumbent victory (Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski, 2013). Incumbents may also employ violence against opposition supporters through repressive policing in an effort to intimidate these voters into either abstaining or voting for the incumbent, sending the message that there will be consequences to voting for the opposition (Bekoe, 2012). These immediate consequences can also have far reaching effects concerning the integrity of the electoral process and democratic consolidation in general (Höglund, 2009). The continued use of violence may not only decrease the quality of electoral competition in the future, but may cause citizens to lose their faith in the electoral process, leading to a decrease in political participation. While all of these consequences hold strong theoretical merit, little empirical evidence suggests that these outcomes always result from violence. More specifically, we know little concerning the different conditions under which government instigated violence leading up to an election can produce different sets of consequences. Further, few studies have investigated potential individual-level and societal factors that may mediate whether violence actually has it's desired effect or leads to electoral backlash for the perpetrator.

Voting Behavior and Violence in African Elections

Electoral Competition has come at a high price for many emerging democracies. Instead of holding incumbent governments accountable for antithetical behavior, for many countries, multiparty elections have created motives for incumbents to engage in violence and intimidation in an effort to influence the outcome of the election by shifting the electoral

advantage in their favor. In other words, violence and intimidation constitute an illicit electoral strategy that incumbents may choose to use because they believe it will help them win elections where the outcome is otherwise uncertain (Bhasin and Gandhi, 2013; Höglund, 2009; Laakso, 2007; Mehler, 2007; Mueller, 2011). For incumbents employing violence, minimizing this risk of a loss can involve imprisoning opposition candidates to bar them from running or employing enough violence to encourage the opposition to boycott the election (Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski, 2013). Incumbents may also employ violence against opposition supporters through repressive policing in an effort to intimidate these voters into either abstaining or voting for the incumbent, signaling that there will be consequences to voting for the opposition (Bekoe, 2012).

Some cross-national empirical work has examined the impact of government violence on electoral outcomes, with conflicting results. Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski (2016) examine the relationship between electoral violence and incumbent support, finding that, on average, the use of violence and intimidation can help incumbents win elections. Contrary to this finding, van Ham and Lindberg (2015) find evidence that incumbent governments begin to experience an electoral backlash for using violence as the level of democracy increases, examining elections in sub-Saharan Africa. They contend that, in more democratic settings, incumbents using violence prior to elections can produce costs to their legitimacy and actually undermine their chances of re-election. Still, other cross-national work contends that the use of violence and intimidation has no effect on voter turnout or incumbent support (Bekoe and Burchard, 2017). These contradicting findings suggest that existing research cannot provide a definitive answer as to whether these consequences of violence actually come to fruition to aid the incumbent.

Because citizens do have the final say on election day, some have examined whether violence and intimidation actually undermines the voter's capacity at the polls. Bratton (2013) examines the impact of vote buying and government violence on voting behavior in Nigerian elections, suggesting that poor individuals may be particularly susceptible to

compliance in voting for the ruling party when political intimidation and vote buying are used. However, on average, exposure to electoral violence should entice one to either abstain or vote against the ruling party, suggesting that government violence can produce an electoral backlash. Some research on elections in Kenya have similarly suggested that violence can produce an electoral backlash, despite shared partisanship or ethnicity (find this citation). However, these represent cases of extreme electoral violence; and as some scholars have noted, these extreme cases may not be generalizable to most instances of electoral violence since the vast majority of cases are characterized more by violent intimidation and harassment rather than mass displacements and high death counts (Bob-Milliar, 2014; Burchard, 2020; Straus and Taylor, 2012).

To address this problem of generalizability, some have sought to examine individual-level variation in voting behavior for multiple cases of electoral violence across different country contexts. Burchard (2015) examines the impact of fear of election violence on vote intention in 20 countries from 2008 and 2009, finding that fear of electoral violence has a stronger effect on mobilizing turnout for opposition supporters and swing voters, when compared to ruling party supporters. In a recent study examining vote choice in African Elections, Burchard (2020) contends that since extreme violence is far less prevalent, it may be useful to think these cases of more low-intensity violence as a form of negative campaigning. Based on the research that has suggested negative campaigns can effect vote choice, Burchard suggests that the fear produced by electoral violence as a type of negative campaigning should provoke anxiety and anger that leads one to vote against the party that has caused these negative sentiments. Indeed, the authors finds that fear does increase support for opposition candidates among both opposition supporters and non-partisans. While this captures voter's perceptions of electoral violence, it does not account for any variation in the degree of violence. While it may be reasonable to expect fear to be a natural response to violence for individuals under some circumstances, it is unlikely that voters are always fearful of violence where it manifests. As the extant work on negative campaigning also

suggests, negative electoral campaigns can also increase interest in the campaign and spark a desire to seek more information, instead of provoking fear; and these mechanisms may also drive voting behavior.

In attempts to resolve these inherent conceptual and measurement issues, others have investigated the impact of violence on voting behavior by making use of formal modeling. Collier and Vicente (2012) examine how electoral intimidation may influence voting behavior by estimating a formal model that distinguishes between swing voters and party loyalist. However, unlike Bratton and Burchard, they find no backlash effect. Instead, they contend that violence can be an effective strategy for mobilizing swing voters, but not party loyalist. Others have suggested that the anticipation of continued violence after an election may influence voting behavior (Wantchekon, 1999; Ellman and Wantchekon, 2000), finding that voters will support the incumbent over the opposition, regardless of their use of pre-election violence, if they anticipate that violence will be less likely after the election, under the incumbent government. Taken together, these contradictory findings suggest that there is a lack of consensus in the extant literature, as some have found violence to discourage turnout and undermine incumbent accountability, while other studies have shown this tactic to mobilize turnout and generate an electoral backlash. Assuming that no citizen wants to be repressed by their government, the question remains, why would some individuals vote against violence while others may not?

Theoretical Expectations

Reviewing the extant literature suggests that government intimidation and violence does not offer a consistent prediction to how it should effect voting behavior in African elections; sometimes it will have its intended effect on voters, and sometimes it will backfire. While some voters may place a primacy on their personal safety and either stay away from the polls or vote for the incumbent (for fear of reprisal if their vote choice was discovered), others may instead place a primacy on expressing their preferences regardless of the potential

costs. Additionally, some voters may have more information about others discontent with repressive government behaviors, to feel more certain that turning out to the polls and voting against the violence is worth it, since they anticipate others will do the same. This suggests that certain political values and information should mediate the impact of violence on voting behavior.

Why Civic Engagement?

There are several reasons to expect civic engagement would have important mediating effects on how voters react to political intimidation and violence. Scholars of political participation and civic engagement have often noted both theoretical and empirical connections between participatory civic action and sentiments of interpersonal trust, political efficacy, and a general commitment to democratic principles (Almond and Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993, 2000; Shah, 1998; Ikeda, Kobayashi and Hoshimoto, 2008). For many scholars, civic engagement activities bring with them some sense of commitment to one's community, whether this comes through the types of activities that entail some form of collective action or by means of a motivation for bettering one's community (Adler and Goggin, 2005; Fujiwara and Wantchekon, 2013). It has been noted that civic engagement has the capacity to foster a stronger sense of trust in others, since working with others towards a common goal entails frequent cooperation (Shah, 1998). In addition, taking civic actions for the betterment of one's community, whether this may involves contacting representatives about an issue or working with others to raises these issues, can also enhance one's sense of political efficacy by engendering a differentiated perception of political choice and that participation can make a difference (Ikeda, Kobayashi and Hoshimoto, 2008). In addition, these sentiments of political trust and efficacy have also been linked to higher voter turnout, most often with a focus on institutional trust (Andrews, 2009; Cox, 2003). Specific to the context of electoral violence in Africa, Obakhedo (2011) finds in Nigeria, that political education can actually curb the negative effects of electoral violence by providing citizens with the political knowledge concerning the

most effective means of participation for impacting, or even changing, the political system. Thus, a greater degree of civic knowledge, that would undoubtedly develop through engagement, can potentially have some mediating effects on deterring the negative impacts of violence. Given what civic engagement can do for democratic citizens, it can be expected to have some important mediating effects for how voters respond to violence and intimidation from their government.

Mediating Effects of Civic Engagement on Turnout

While electoral violence has been shown to depress turnout in some instances as a tactic meant to demobilize the opposition (Bratton, 2013; Höglund and Piyarathne, 2009; Bob-Milliar, 2014), as Burchard (2020) suggests it may instead have a mobilizing effect on voters. While she suggests that this effect is likely motivated by fear, there are some compelling reasons to suggest that, for many individuals, this may not be the primary sentiment driving a mobilization effect. As Burchard notes, there are parallels in the emotional responses we may expect between uncivil negative campaigns and voting behavior[4] Just as negative campaign adds can produce fear, anxiety, and anger that drives turnout, so might electoral violence and intimidation. However, as the negative campaigning literature also suggests, there are other sentiments that violence may evoke during an election. Examining the effects of uncivil negative campaign on turnout in the American context, Brooks and Geer (2007) find that these types of inflammatory campaigns actually generate interest and mobilize voters. Marcus and Mackuen (1993) argue that negative campaigns force people to seek more information that increases their political knowledge, stimulating their interest and involvement in the electoral process. Drawing connections to reactions to electoral intimidation and violence, voters may be driven by interest to seek information instead of by fear. Additionally, if electoral intimidation and violence ignites interest and information seeking,

[4]Though she does note that cases of extreme violence would not be considered comparable due to the objectively high level of threat. However, most cases of electoral violence in Africa do not fall into this category.

it may also produce perceptions of illegitimacy over this antithetical behavior that may even provoke anger.

I suggest that voters who are more embedded in existing political and social networks where political issues are more frequently discussed will be more likely to react by seeking information and increasing their interest. Again, we know that higher levels of social engagement and integration into civil society organizations tends to increase interpersonal trust, political efficacy, and political knowledge in a way that encourages political participation. Habitual civic engagement that involves discussing political issues regularly and having active memberships in civil society organizations creates social networks of democratic citizens that who's political actions are more likely to be motivated by an interest in public affairs. Thus, when electoral campaigns use violence and intimidation, I suggest that these individuals will be motivated by interest in the electoral campaign to turnout, rather than being intimidated into abstaining on election day. Additionally, those who are regularly socially engaged in civic organizations may be more likely to seek information from others in their social network concerning perceptions of the ilegitimacy of such violence. This information seeking response to electoral violence, provides a motive for exchanging perceptions of this illicit behavior, which may have the effect of igniting anger and motivating action, specifically turnout on election day. In contrast, as voters become less embedded in civil society and social engagement in political discussions decreases, the cost of potential violence at the polls may simply be too high for them to justify turning out to vote. In the absence of habitual social and political engagement, fear of election violence may no longer have a mobilizing effect, but instead have the unfortunate consequence of discouraging turnout for those who are concerned about their safety.[5]

> ***Hypothesis 1:*** *Electoral violence increases their likelihood of voting for those with higher social engagement, when compared to those with low engagement.*

[5]While Daxecker (2012) does show that the actual election day tends to be the most peaceful time, that does not necessarily mean voters share that perception.

Disaggregating Civic Engagement

While social ties to civil society should encourage electoral turnout in response to violence and intimidation, different types of civic engagement may also lead to differences in voting behavior. As several scholars have noted, civic engagement can encompass a wide range of types of politically motivated behaviors, from engaging in strikes and demonstrations to contacting one's representative, in an effort to communicate grievances (Almond and Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993). Adler and Goggin (2005) distinguish between private and public forms of civic engagement, where the former refers to more individually centered actions, such as discussing politics with friends and family, while the later involves more collective activities, such as working for a campaign, active membership in civic organizations, or joining others to raise an issue. Similarly, Ekman and Amna (2012) develop a typology for what they refer to as latent and manifest forms of civic engagement, with the former emphasizing more of an interest in politics rather than behavior, and the later emphasizing active political participation such as voting and protest. While these, and other, conceptual distinctions between types of civic engagement have their differences, most seem to categorize civic activities into more passive and individually motivated versus active collectively motivated categories.

These types of civic engagement may have qualitatively different mediating effects, as these different activities and behaviors may engender different political motives and values. For instance, engagement in more collective and overt forms of participation, such as participation in protest demonstrations, tend to signal a desire for larger systemic changes in policy and even leadership Adler and Goggin (2005). While those who engage in more passive and individualistic activities, such as signing petitions, may also be motivated by a desire for some sort of policy change, citizens who engage in political activism requiring a greater degree of collective action and exposure are likely motivated by stronger desires for systemic political changes. Further, active engagement activities, such as attending/organizing protests, going to community meetings, and in general joining others to raise issues, may not only signal

a desire for more systemic types of political change, but also present more opportunities to know others preferences for that change, given the collective nature of these kinds of activities. This knowledge of shared preferences, should increase one's confidence that this could manifest itself in similar political behaviors across a civic community (Kuran, 1991).

In the context of government-instigated violence, this tendency should become even more prevalent, with the use of violence and intimidation providing a focal point for motivating the necessity for political change. As Tucker (2007) finds when looking at electoral manipulation, such antithetical behavior can serve as a focal point for solving the collective action problem faced by citizens when deciding to protest, in that it can lower the perceived cost of engaging in such an activity. With respect to a government's use of violence before an election, a backlash effect may manifest similarly to where voters perceive the cost of a vote for the opposition to be lower. Therefore, assuming that government violence is viewed as antithetical behavior, these active engagement individuals, who already participate in civic action motivated by a desire for social or political change Adler and Goggin (2005), may be even more likely to punish the repressive incumbent for such behavior on election day. More specifically, assuming these types of voters view government repression as illegitimate and are already more willing to take the risk of expressing this discontent through these more overt form of civic engagement, they should also be more likely to express this as a vote against the incumbent government when it resorts to violence before an election.

> ***Hypothesis 2:*** *Civic engagement activities involving collective action and political exposure increase the chances of a vote against the incumbent, when the government employs violence and intimidation, with higher likelihood than civic engagement activities that are more passive and autonomous.*

Data and Measurement

Because this project seeks to explain voting behavior at the individual level, the data used to conduct this analysis will come from the Afrobaromenter surveys. However, measuring instances election violence will entail the use of data from the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD) for sub-Saharan Africa. While Afrobarometer data is comprised of 7 rounds of surveys, the present analysis is currently limited to using only Round 6 (2014-2015), since it provides the greatest overlap in questions relevant to conceptual measurements and more accurate model specifications.[6]. Therefore, this analysis includes only survey data from Round 6 of the Afrobarometer, which was collected in the years 2014 and 2015, and includes 25 Sub-Saharan African countries.[7]

Because I am looking at whether citizens turnout to vote *and* upon deciding to vote, who they would choose to support, my analysis requires the specification of two different dependent variables from Afrobarometer data, *turnout* and *vote choice. Turnout* is measured from a survey question asking whether the respondent voted in the last national election. This is therefore measured as a dichotomous outcome coded 1 if the respondent voted and 0 otherwise. *Vote Choice* captures whether an individual supports the incumbent or an opposition party. This is coded from a question in the Afrobarometer that asks: *If an election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?* Thus, a unique code for each political party is assigned to the respondent based on which party they claimed they would support. Therefore, I collapsed this variable into a binary outcome, assigning respondents a code of 1 if they chose the incumbent party in their respective country, and 0 if an opposition party was chosen. While using a measure of a hypothetical vote may not be the most direct way to assess voting behavior, and more specifically incumbent support, the Afrobarometer unfortunately does not ask respondents which party they voted for in the most recent na-

[6]Many survey questions in the Afrobarometer vary from one round to the next. For this reason, it is sometimes difficult to find questions that stay the same on multiple rounds. Though continued work on this project will seek to identify more specifications that allow me to incorporate more rounds.

[7]A list of the countries included the analysis can be found in the Appendix.

tional elections, only whether they voted or not. Therefore, this hypothetical vote is closest representation of vote choice available.

Since this project seeks to understand how voters react to electoral violence, data capturing this phenomena was collected and coded for each country in the analysis from the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD). This data covers a wide range of social conflict (both violent and non-violent) and provides extensive coverage of sub-Saharan Africa. While the data identify a wide rage of types of conflict, it does allow me to identify which conflicts were related to elections. In addition, this dataset provides information on where each conflict took place within countries, when it started and ended, how many deaths resulted, whether repression was employed (and what type, lethal or nonlethal), as well as a brief qualitative description of each event. Using this information, I am able to identify if election violence occurred in each respective country in my analysis as well as the severity of the violence. To avoid endogeneity issues, I identify and code instance of the most recent election violence that took place in each country in this analysis[8] *prior to* the month and year that surveys were carried out. This is done to be sure that the election violence being referenced took place before the Afrobarometer surveys were conducted and not after.

With the information provided by the SCAD database, I create a 5 point scale (coded 0 to 4) for election related violence, coding each country into one of these 5 categories. Overall, increasing values indicate more violence, with some additional specific qualifications. First, following Bob-Milliar's (2014) distinction between low-intensity and high-intensity electoral violence, I code countries as high-intensity violence (category 4) if the number of deaths related to this violence exceeds 10 and lethal repression (ie. police shooting) is exercised. In contrast, if lethal repression is used, but the number of deaths does not exceed 10, the country will receive a score of 3 for what I will refer to as *contained* high-intensity violence. If the number of deaths remain below 10 and *non*-lethal repression is used (taser and stun guns), then a score of 2 is assigned to indicate low-intensity violence. Cases are coded as

[8]Fortunately, the Afrobarometer provides the start and end dates of fieldwork in each country.

low-intensity *conflict* (category 1) if violence occurs and non-lethal repression is used, but this resulted in no deaths. Cases are assigned a score of 0 if none of these conditions are present, suggesting that there was *no election violence.*[9] It is, of course, highly possible that respondents who are in closer proximity to election violence may be effected differently by the experience than those who observe it from a greater distance. Fortunately, SCAD data also identifies where violence took place in each respective country. Thus, I include a binary indicator for *proximity to violence* that is coded 1 if a respondent is located in a district where violence took place, and 0 otherwise.

Since this project seeks to understand the mediating effects of two different types of civic engagement, what I refer to as social engagement and collective civic action, I create two different indicies to capture these concepts based on several questions from the Afrobarometer that capture different observable components of these concepts. I use exploratory factor analysis to capture these latent concepts of civic engagement. First, to capture social engagement I collect survey data examining how more habitual civic activities, such as discussing politics or organizational membership, can have a mediating effect on the impact of violence on turnout. I use responses of three Afrobarometer survey questions capturing more habitual associational forms of civic engagement, such as discussions of politics with friends and family and membership in voluntary community organizations or religious organizations.[10] The discussion of politics question asks *how often the respondent discusses politics with friends and family* so higher values indicate more frequent discussions. The additional two questions inquire about *membership in (1) religious groups and (2) other voluntary associations or community groups in general.* This is a categorical variable indicating no membership if coded as 0, *in*active membership if coded 1, active membership if coded 2,

[9]There is probably a better way to code this, particularly since this does not account for other forms of electoral intimidation harassment that present a severe detriment to the electoral process but don't produce deaths, such as unlawful and indefinite arrests of opposition candidates. Future iterations may make some theoretical distinctions on this and entail additional measurements and coding criteria and will be discussed in a latter section.

[10]I include the question about religious organizational membership since some scholars studying civic society in Africa have suggested these types of organizations to play a vital role.

and if in a leadership role the respondent is coded as a 3. Based on these measures, a *social engagement index* is constructed from the first factor in the pattern matrix (eigenvalue = 1.41). Higher values suggest greater social engagement.

I have also suggested that more active forms of civic engagement requiring some degree of collective action should have an important mediating effect on how violence effects vote choice. To test this theoretical prediction, I again use exploratory factor analysis to create a *civic action index* based on responses from five Afrobarometer questions that inquire about particular activities that require a higher degree of collective action and political exposure. These activities include *attendance of community meetings, joining others to raise an issue, joining others to request government action, attendance of protests or other peaceful demonstrations, and group contact with government officials.* These questions not only ask respondents to report whether they engaged in any of these types of activities within the past year, but they also ask them to report the frequency of their participation in these activities. Based on these measures, a latent variable for civic action is constructed from the first factor in the pattern matrix (eigenvalue = 2.26). Higher values suggest greater collective civic action.

Of course there are several other factors that can influence whether one would turnout to vote, and even how they would vote. I also employ a range of controls from Afrobarometer data to address some competing explanations. However, in order to avoid saturating the model with too many variables, I only account for factors that I argue are most most theoretically relevant. First, particularly when considering vote choice, positive evaluations of government performance are undoubtedly important to account for in gauging incumbent support. As the economic voting literature has consistently found, positive economic evaluations increase support for the incumbent government (Bratton, Bhavnani and Chen, 2012; Posner and Simon, 2002; Carlson, 2015). I account for this consideration in predicting vote choice, since it is possible that, despite the use of violence, one will still support the incumbent if they consider the economy to be doing well. Therefore, I include a measure

for *retrospective economic evaluations* to capture individual evaluations of past economic performance. I use a question from the Afrobarometer that asks respondents whether they *perceive the economy to be doing better or worse than it was 12 months ago.* Responses are coded on an ordinal scale from 1 to 5 with 1 indicating that the economy looks much worse than before and 5 indicating that it has gotten much better. So higher values on this measure reflect more positive evaluations of economic performance.

In addition to retrospective economic perceptions, one's general livelihood should effect their vote choice. I control for one's *level of poverty* with a basic proxy variable from the survey data that asks respondents how often they go without food, where one indicates this never occurs and 4 indicates always.[11] I also account for the possibility that voters may choose to vote on the basis of their ethnic identity. Though as Posner (2004) notes, this should go beyond mere ethnic affiliations and account for the social and political dynamics that reflect how fairly one's ethnic group is treated. The Afrobarometer provides a question which asks respondents whether they believe their ethnic group is treated unfairly by the government. If it is, one could expect that the voter would be more inclined to vote against the incumbent party. *Ethnic Inequality* is coded from 0 to 3, with 0 indicating that the respondent never feels their ethnic group is treated unfairly and 3 indicating that they feel this is always the case. *Partisanship* should undoubtedly play a role in shaping one's perceptions of violence. I create a three category variable indicating whether respondents more closely align with the incumbent, the opposition, or are close to no party.

Perceptions concerning the quality of elections may also matter. I account for perceptions of the freeness and fairness of elections, since voters who perceive the quality of elections to be poor may see no point in turning out to vote. *Election Fairness* is coded from 1 to 4, with higher values indicated more favorable perceptions regarding the freeness and fairness of the most recent national election. Similarly, voters may also be influenced by how regular of an occurrence they perceive vote-buying to be during elections. Indeed, vote-buying may not

[11] Continued work will involve developing a more nuanced measure for livelihood.

only decrease turnout, but may even effect support (whether it is in a negative or positive way) for an incumbent who is distributing patronage for votes (van de Walle, 2003, 2007; Wantchekon, 2003; Arriola, 2009; Beck, 2008; Lindberg, 2010; Gottlieb, 2017). *Vote-buying* comes from an Afrobarometer question asking respondents *how often they think voter are bribed during elections*, with 0 indicating that they think this never happens and 3 reflecting the view that this always happens.

Models also include several controls for socio-economic status (gender, education, rural/urban residence, age) that consistently tend to have significant relationships with turnout and vote choice (citations). To account for the possibility that civic engagement may be much higher in urban cities, *Urban* is coded 1 if the respondent is living in an urban area, and zero if located in a rural community. A quadratic term for the *Age* of the respondent is used, since the effect of age on voting behavior is often non-linear. The *Gender* of the respondent is also included, coded 1 if the respondent is female and zero for males. Finally, *Education* is included since more educated individuals may be more likely to question the status quo. This variable is coded from 1 to 8, with 8 indicating the highest level of educational attainment.

Additionally, I control for some country-level characteristics that may be important to consider. First, I account for *ethnolinguistic fractionalization* using the measure developed by Alesina et al. (2003) since African countries with a higher degree of such diversity may experience heightened tensions surrounding elections. Additionally, voting behavior and civic engagement may also be altered by severe restrictions on civic liberties, to the point where social engagement and civic action may not give citizens the same sentiments of trust and efficacy that such behavior may engender in more free societies. To account for concerns regarding the influence of *civil liberties restrictions,* I include a measure from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Database, where higher values indicate fewer restrictions (more freedom).

Empirical Analysis

Given the binary nature of my dependent variables, I employ logistic regression in all my models. Further, given the hierarchical nature of the data, I estimate mixed effects models to account for differences in variance not only between countries, but within them as well. Using multilevel logistic regression, I first estimate models to assess the effects of violence on turnout and the moderating effects of social engagement and discuss the models predictions. I then test the effects of violence on vote choice by assessing the moderating effects of active civic engagement (referred to as Civic Action in the reported results). The results of this individual-level analysis are reported below for 25 sub-Saharan African countries.

Results

To test my first hypothesis, I am primarily concerned with the interaction between social engagement and election violence to explain turnout. Table 1 reports the results of a baseline model with no interaction (Model 1), a full model with the interaction (Model 2), and a model without the social engagement moderator. Overall, the results appear to be somewhat counterintuitive to expectations, since election violence does not appear to be statistically significant in any of the models. However, the model estimates a negative and statistically significant interaction term. Additionally, social engagement is positive and statistically significant in both the base and full model, suggesting that when election violence is 0 (so no election violence) social engagement increases the probability of turnout. In addition, the full model estimates several control coefficients that do not achieve statistical significance. However, the coefficients for both election fairness and age are positive and statistically significant, suggesting that perceptions of fairness in the electoral process encourage turnout. The coefficient for Urban areas is statistically significant as well, but negative, suggesting that individuals in urban areas are less likely to turnout.

While the constitutive terms in the full model allow for a substantive interpretation of the interaction, they cannot say much concerning the magnitude of the effect. Table 2

Table 1. Effects of Election Violence and Social Engagement on Turnout

	Base	Interaction	No Moderator
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Election Violence	0.02	0.02	0.03
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Social Engagement	0.2***	0.26***	
	(0.02)	(0.02)	
Election ViolenceX Social Engagement		−0.033**	
		(0.01)	
Partisanship	0.2***	0.2***	0.22***
	(0.01)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Poverty	0.02	0.019	0.017
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Proximity to Violence	−0.057	−0.057	−0.081*
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Vote-Buying	−0.025	−0.025	−0.025
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Election Fairness	0.28***	0.28***	0.28***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Gender	−0.053*	−0.053*	−0.076**
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Age	0.001***	0.001***	0.001***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Urban	−0.15***	−0.15***	−0.17***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Education	−0.012	−0.012	−0.003
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Ethnic Fractionalization	−0.44	−0.43	−0.35
	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.39)
Civil Liberties	0.52	0.52	0.53
	(0.51)	(0.51)	(0.51)
Intercept	−0.6	−0.602	−0.75
	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.44)
Observations	33,363	33,363	33,788
Log Likelihood	−16983.613	−16979.007	−17336.011
AIC	33997.23	33990.01	34700.02
BIC	34123.45	34124.66	34818

Note: All models include mixed effects; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

reports the change in the predicted probability of voting across values of social engagement for each degree of election violence, in order to understand the substantive impact of the interaction between social engagement and election violence on turnout a bit more clearly. As the constitutive terms suggested, increasing social engagement appears to have the greatest impact on increasing the probability of turnout when there is no election violence. However, the substantive gains from increasing social engagement appear to lessen as the instances of violence become more severe. For instance, moving from the lowest to highest values on the social engagement scale will result in a 0.098 increase in the probability of voting even when the highest level of election violence has occurred. However, moving from the lowest to highest values of social engagement when experiencing no violence results in a 0.181 increase in the probability of turning out to vote, which is a substantively larger increase. All in all, it would appear that passive forms of civc engagement will increase increase the chances that one will turnout to vote regardless of violence, but the magnitude of its impact is dampened as violence becomes more prevalent in elections. Further, the lack of statistical significance for the electoral violence coefficient produced by all models and inconsistent direction of the effect in Table 1 suggests that electoral violence itself has no statistically discernible effect on turnout. It appear to neither mobilize nor suppress turnout on its own.

To test my second hypothesis, I turn to look at the mediating effects of more active and collective forms of civic engagement on incumbent support. Therefore, I am mainly interested in the interaction between election violence and active engagement. The results are reported in Table 3. Again, Model 1 includes only the interaction between civic action and election violence and the constitutive terms, while Model 2 brings in all theoretically relevant controls for predicting vote choice. I also include a model with social engagement (Model 3) instead of civc action to assess whether more habitual civic engagement has a mediating impact on how violence effects vote choice. Indeed, Model 3 estimates statistically significant coefficient for both social engagement and election violence, but not for the interaction term. So while social engagement may mediate the effects of violence in explaining turnout, it does not

Table 2. Predicted probabilities of Turnout across values of Social Engagement

	Increases in Social Engagement	**Turnout**
EV=0	*+1 st. dev*	0.043***
	range	0.181***
	base	0.756
EV=1	*+1 st. dev*	0.038***
	range	0.16***
	base	0.76
EV=2	*+1 st. dev*	0.033***
	range	0.139***
	base	0.763
EV=3	*+1 st. dev*	0.028***
	range	0.119***
	base	0.767
EV=4	*+1 st. dev*	0.023***
	range	0.098***
	base	0.770

Notes: EV stands for Election Violence. All other variables are being held at their means.
*p-value < 0.05; ** p-value < 0.01; *** p-value < 0.001

appear to carry this mediating effect when it comes to vote choice.

Overall the model estimates suggest some modest support for my second set of hypotheses. In both the base and full models, civic action is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that when election violence is at 0, increasingly active engagement individuals are more likely to support the incumbent. In other words, in the absence of violence, having actively engaged citizens helps incumbents. However, the negative and statistically significant coefficient estimated for election violence suggest that when active engagement is 0 (so no active civic behaviors) increases in election violence, nonetheless, decrease support for the incumbent. In other words, it seems that violence has a backlash effect for incumbents, regardless. Surprisingly, again, the full model estimates (Model 2) show that proximity to violence does not appear to have a statistically significant effect on vote choice. However, the

majority of the rest of the controls do achieve statistical significance and in the theoretically expected direction, with the one exception being civil liberties restrictions which appear to be statistically insignificant.

Again, to assess the magnitude of the interactive effect between civic action and election violence, I examine the predicted probabilities of incumbent support across values of civic action and election violence. These results are reported in Table 4. Looking at increases in violence for high, average, and low active engagement individuals, the changes in predicted probabilities in Table 4 show a pattern. As the coefficient the constitutive term for election violence suggested, violent actions appear to decrease incumbent support no matter what. However, increases in civic action among voters makes this effect stronger. For instance, for individuals with above average active civic engagement, increasing election violence by one category results in roughly a 0.12 decrease in the predicted probability that such a voter would vote for the incumbent. Even more drastic, moving from no election violence to the highest levels, results in roughly a 0.45 decrease in the probability that an above average active engagement voter would vote for the incumbent. Comparing this to a voter who takes little to no active civic actions, violence still decreases incumbent support, but for this type of voter the magnitude of the effect is lessened, with the largest increase in violence resulting in a slightly smaller decrease in the probability of voting for the incumbent (about 0.37). While this is not a large effect, the results do suggest that the backlash effect against violence is at least somewhat stronger for citizens who engage in more collectively active forms of civic engagement. Some small yet surprising differences in effects exist across partisanship as well.[12] For opposition supporters and bi-partisans, when election violence increases by a standard deviation, there is roughly a 0.13 and 0.135 decrease in the predicted probability of voting for the incumbent. Oddly enough, the same increase in violence produces an even larger decrease (0.152) decrease in the probability of voting for the incumbent among incumbent supporters. This suggests that supporters are more quick to punish their own

[12]These results are not reported in a table but worth a discussion.

Table 3. Effects of Election Violence and Civic Engagement on Incumbent Support

	Base	Full (Civic Action)	(Social Engagement)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Election Violence	−0.54***	−0.53**	−0.54***
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)
Civic Action	0.19***	0.24***	
	(0.02)	(0.03)	
Election ViolenceX Civic Action		−0.03*	
		(0.01)	
Social Engagement			0.11***
			(0.028)
Election ViolenceX Social Engagement			−0.02
			(0.01)
Partisanship	−0.97***	−0.97***	−0.95***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Poverty	−0.06***	−0.06***	−0.06***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Proximity to Violence	0.07	0.068	0.08
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Econ. Retrospective	0.22***	0.244***	0.244***
	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Vote-Buying	−0.272***	−0.281***	−0.285***
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.015)
Ethnic Inequality	−0.39***	−0.414***	−0.411***
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Gender	0.09**	0.127***	0.12***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Age	0.001***	0.004***	0.005***
	(0.00)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Urban	−0.18***	−0.178***	−0.2***
	(0.038)	(0.036)	(0.035)
Education	−0.093***	−0.087***	−0.086***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Ethnic Fractionalization	2.16*	2.2*	2.23*
	(1.02)	(1.04)	(1.03)
Civil Liberties	−1.1	−1.2	−1.2
	(1.02)	(1.03)	(1.02)
Intercept	1.35	1.33	1.38
	(0.99)	(0.99)	(0.99)
Observations	23,951	23,951	24,301
Log Likelihood	−12092.976	−1209.609	−12341.595
AIC	24217.95	24215.22	24717.19
BIC	24347.29	24352.64	24854.86

Note: All models include mixed effects; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 4. Predicted probabilities of Incumbent Support across values of Values of Election Violence

	Increases in Election Violence	**Incumbent Support**
High Civic Action	*+1*	−0.118***
	range	−0.448***
	base	0.506
Average Civic Action	*+1*	−0.106**
	range	−0.408***
	base	0.484
Low Civic Action	*+1*	−0.095**
	range	−0.37**
	base	0.465

Notes: Civic Action is set to different values, the first is a standard deviation above the sample mean (1.15), the second is based on the sample mean (0.1), and the third is a standard deviation below the mean (-1). All other variables are being held at their means.
*p-value < 0.05; ** p-value < 0.01; *** p-value < 0.001

party for engaging in electoral violence, than are opposition supporters and undecided voters.

In sum, these results suggest that (1) electoral violence alone does not explain variation in the probability that one will turnout to vote, (2) electoral violence hurts incumbent governments to some degree regardless of the individuals level of civic action, and (3) civic action seems to increase the likelihood of electoral backlash for incumbents. This is not to say that violence has such a uniform effect or that civic engagement doesn't matter, but additional work may require refinement of these concepts and the development of some more nuanced theoretical expectations. The rest of this paper takes a deeper dive into postulating some potential nuances by taking an initial look into the case of Senegal.

A Comparison of Senegalese Elections

Since Senegal's first peaceful transfer of power in 2000, this emerging democracy has been lauded for its overall strong protections of individuals political and civil liberties, particularly when compared to many other countries in the region. Additionally, Senegal has been noted

to have particularly vibrant associational civic organizations (Makumbe, 1998; Kelly, 2012; Villalon, 1994), that provide considerable variation in types of civil society organizations and frequency of civic activism. Yet, electoral contestations often produce some degree of violence and intimidation that is seemingly uncharacteristic of Senegal's otherwise peaceful context. Further, electoral campaigns will often exploit clientelistic societal linkages to mobilize voters, particularly in more rural settings (Beck, 2008; Gottlieb, 2017). This section will compare the 2012 and 2019 presidential elections in Senegal to in an attempt to begin unpacking some more nuanced theoretical expectations that may be leveraged in future quantitative analyses relating to this project.

The most recent Senegalese presidential elections in February 2019 were marred by a more considerable amount of electoral intimidation and isolated spurts of violence than had been expected. There were some accounts of violent harassment of opposition supporters (particularly journalists), some violent (though mostly non-lethal) policing of protest, as well as short-term imprisonments of a few opposition candidates. Similarly, the presidential elections in 2012 mirrored definitions of what is typically considered to be low-intensity violence; there was significant harassment of journalists and opposition party supporters, attacks on opposition candidates, and isolated outbreaks of violence between government and opposition supporters. Additionally, civil society was active and engaged in the run-up to both the 2012 and 2019 elections. While these similarities will be further demonstrated in this broader dissertation project as additional data is collected, through some initial investigation into the engagement of civil society organizations on social media from these periods in time, there seems to be considerable activism and very similar messages and activities being circulated. For instance, a pro-democracy organization based in Dakar, Senegal, Yen ak Marr, similarly criticized incumbents Abdoulaye Wade (2012) and Macky Sall (2019) in reaction to their use of intimidation and harassment prior to these elections. The explanatory factors between these two elections are seem remarkably similar. Yet, each election produced different outcomes. The most obvious being that Abdoulaye Wade lost

the 2012 election, while Macky Sall won in 2019, but in addition, turnout was a mere 53 percent in 2012, while it was roughly 65 percent in 2019. Both candidates used intimidation because they were concerned about their prospects of reelection. Yet despite similarities in civil society's involvement between these cases, we see different outcomes. So why might this be the case? What variation is not being explained by these two explanatory factors?

Rethinking Electoral Violence

Thinking a bit more critically about the particular types of intimidation and harassment occurring prior to these two elections highlights some interesting distinctions that are not commonly made when disaggregating the conceptual differences between types of electoral violence. What follows needs further development, but these are just some initial observations in these two elections in Senegal and thoughts on some new conceptualizations of election violence. I suggest that the main difference between intimidation and harassment prior to elections in each of these cases, was not so much the severity or frequency of the tactics used (because again, these tactics were overall fairly similar), but more about the targets of harassment and the order in which these tactics were carried out. Due to the fact that Abdoulaye Wade was running a questionable (though not illegal so deemed by the courts) third term, he began his campaign instigating rather blatant and obvious restrictions on civil liberties in an attempt to crackdown on discontent. He placed bans on peaceful demonstrations and opposition campaign rallies, imprisoned several journalists, allowed for the violent policing of protests and subsequent imprisonment of a few peaceful protesters. Again, this is just an initial assertion, but these examples suggest that his tactics were largely overt and targeted at opposition supporters.

The targets and sequence of tactics were different for Macky Sall prior to the 2019 election. While he also faced a context of growing discontent and dissatisfaction with his performance as president, he didn't explicitly target any part of the population. Instead, he kept his tactics of intimidation more subtle and confined predominantly to the elite level. He first raised

barriers for entry into the presidential race, while this kept the pool of candidates rather small, he decided to diminish the viability of the opposition by taking things a step further and imprisoning the two main opposition candidates on charges of corruption, barring them from running. By the time the official campaign period began, there were only 4 presidential contenders. Tensions rose, and outbreaks of violence ignited in isolated events over the course of a month between incumbent supporters and opponents. This will be parsed out more clearly in the dissertation project, but the main observation I want to make is that Macky Sall subtly circumvented any overt manipulation because he kept most of the intimidation to the elite level. This seemed to diffuse responsibility elsewhere when tensions arose within the population from a contentious environment he created. What I aim to demonstrate by parsing out this distinctions, is that motives and objectives of violence may not always be the same in the pre-election period. Further, the timing, sequence, and targeting of these illicit tactics may require more thoughtful consideration.

Competing Effects of Civil Society

I would also contend that a possible reason that civic engagement does not have a stronger substantive effect with these initial results, is because there may be some additional competing effects within civil society that are unaccounted for. While a considerable amount of research has suggested that civic engagement and participatory civic cultures encourage positive democratic outcomes, some have recognized that a vibrant civil society may not have such a positive effect in the absence of deeply held democratic principles (Berman, 1997; Bratton and Logan, 2013; Diamond, 1999; Patterson, 1998). Civic engagement activities that are not motivated by democratic principles of accountability, equality, and fairness, which seek provisions meant to benefit all citizens, regardless of their social identity, may not generate the political attitudes necessary for leveraging a vote against violence. More specifically, civic engagement in organizations that are exclusive to representing the interests of a fixed identity or social group (religious, ethnic, etc.) often has the effect of "bonding"

in-group members together, rather than "bridging" across social divisions (Berman, 1997; Putnam, 2000; Varshney, 2007).

Particularly in the African context, some have been skeptical of the positive impacts of civil society (Lo, 2006; Patterson, 1998). Considering the pervasiveness of clientelistic linkages between politicians and voters that often exploit ethnic, religious, regional, and community divisions in African societies (Arriola, 2009; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Keefer, 2007; van de Walle, 2003; Wantchekon, 2003), civil society organizations distinguishing themselves on the basis of these fixed identities, may not be motivated to sanction antithetical government behavior, such as violence (Miodownik and Nir, 2015; Posner, 2005). Particularly in Senegal where clientelism is still prevalent in many electoral campaigns, it may be the case that where civic engagement activities do not place a primacy on promoting democratic principles of accountability and inclusion, the motive to vote against government violence is undermined. Thus, in examining the relationship between government intimidation and voting behavior, the mediating impact of civic engagement may also be dependent on the type of civil society organizations in which one participates.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results from the quantitative analysis of this study suggests some support for my general argument that civic engagement has a mediating effects for how voters respond to violence. However, the substantive impact of both social engagement and civic action appear somewhat less substantial than expected. There are several possible reasons for this. This could of course be a measurement problem since the survey questions provided by the Afrobarometer do not allow for a lot of conceptual precision. At this point however, I have tried a few alternative measurements that have not changed the overall results. That being said, another possibility is that there is an additional theoretical explanation to account for, as I tried to address in the previous section, with acknowledging the possible competing effects of civil society. A deeper dive into analyzing the case of Senegal may shed more light on this

possibility and even lend some support to this notion that not all facets of civil society will have a positive impact on democracy. I aim to do this in the coming months of research by investigating the online website content, any published online reports, and social media sites to hopefully uncover some sort of causal connection. Additionally, ethical considerations permitting, I hope to make use of virtual interviews with various civil society leaders in the coming months to not only shed light on this bonding vs. bridging dynamic, but maybe get better insight into these concepts of social engagement and civic action to improve these measures in future analyses.

Finally, some different coding schemes for election violence could be explored, particularly since the current measure being used does not include other tactics of intimidation and harassment that are often used during electoral campaigns in Africa, such as unlawful or indefinite imprisonments of opposition candidates prior to elections. I aim to explore this possibility by collecting some additional data and trying some alternative coding that is more encompassing of the variety of tactics that can be used to intimidate and harass political opponents during elections. In addition, as I discussed in reference to Senegal, there may be other dimensions of electoral violence that can be captured, which we may currently be missing with existing measurements.

Appendix

Table 5. Countries Included in the Analysis

Benin	**Mali**
Botswana	**Mozambique**
Burkina Faso	**Niger**
Cameroon	**Nigeria**
Cote d'Ivoire	**Senegal**
Gabon	**Sierra Leone**
Ghana	**South Africa**
Guinea	**Tanzania**
Kenya	**Togo**
Lesotho	**Uganda**
Liberia	**Zambia**
Madagascar	**Zimbabwe**
Malawi	

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