

Fight or Flight? Examining the Electoral Consequences of Violence in Senegal

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Abstract

Voters, as the targets of violence, make up half of the equation when studying electoral violence, yet little is understood about the reactions of these targeted citizens. How do voters respond to electoral violence and intimidation and what electoral outcomes result from such responses? While some research suggests that electoral violence discourages turnout and tilts the electoral playing field in the incumbent's favor, others contend that it mobilizes voters and hurts incumbents at the polls. This project seeks to resolve this disagreement by suggesting that different tactics of state violence and intimidation will provoke different emotional responses from voters. Distinguishing between these tactics based on the primary targets they are employed against, I suggest that more overt, citizen-targeted forms of violence from the state tend to discourage turnout yet hurt incumbents at the polls, while opposition elite-targeted violence does not depress turnout yet helps incumbents make some electoral gains. I assess the effects of this variation in violent tactics, through a comparative analysis of presidential elections in Senegal.

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Introduction

How do voters respond to electoral violence and intimidation and what electoral outcomes are generated by such responses? What actions are available to citizens when mobilizing against repressive electoral tactics? Under ideal circumstances, elections provide a mechanism through which citizens can punish bad representatives and select good ones by giving power to the people to remove leaders who behave in ways that are antithetical to popular support. When elections work to this end, politicians *should* be incentivized towards good behavior as a means of mobilizing electoral support (Dahl 1971, Richards 1999, Richards and Gelleny 2007, Powell 2000, Davenport 2007). However, in many countries, the introduction of multiparty competition has instead created perverse incentives for incumbents to engage in violent repression in order to maintain political dominance (Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski 2013, Höglund 2009, Schedler 2002). Although research on election-related violence has proliferated in the past decade, this work predominantly focuses on understanding the institutional and structural determinants that put countries at greater risk of violent events² and has been limited in its empirical investigations into the behavioral and electoral consequences of government violence and intimidation. Further, existing research has yielded little theoretical and empirical consensus on the effects of violence on voters; some suggest that it discourages turnout and tilts the electoral playing field in the incumbent's favor (Bratton 2013, Collier and Vicente 2012, Mueller 2011, other citations), while others suggest that violence actually mobilizes voters and hurts incumbents at the polls (citations). This project is motivated by the assertion that these divergent theoretical predictions and findings could be resolved by considering how various types of electoral violence may impact voters differently, rather than assuming election violence as a black box concept when assessing its effects.

With a primary focus on incumbents as perpetrators of violence,³ my research proposes an additional dimension of disaggregation of electoral violence that classifies events based on (1) the primary victim of a given violent event or threat and (2) the salience of the tactics of intimidation to the voter. I suggest that when citizens are the primary targets of government violence and the occurrence of such events is particularly overt and salient, such tactics will be more likely to provoke anger and increase the chances of an electoral backlash against incumbents. In contrast, tactics that primarily threaten opposition elites may not provoke the same level of anger since the physical safety of citizens is not directly being compromised. Instead, the targeting of opposition candidates more often constrains the electoral choices of voters by discouraging competition, which I argue may result in more apathetic, or even despondent, voters that will be less likely to successfully remove repressive incumbents.

² Several structural and institutional characteristics such as majoritarian electoral institutions (Fjelde and Hoglund, 2016), poverty (Laakso, 2007), ethnic polarization (Nellis, Weaver and Rosenzweig 2016) and previous conflict (Hoglund, 2009) have been empirically shown to encourage election violence across time and space.

³ Incumbent parties and candidates are most often the main perpetrators of violence, particularly prior to elections in sub-Saharan Africa (Collier and Vicente 2008, Straus and Taylor 2012).

Paradoxically, while such overt and citizen-targeted forms of electoral violence may incite anger against the government, it may also generate a considerable amount of fear for some voters making lower levels of turnout more likely.

To assess how this distinction between citizen and elite targeted violence can help to explain such divergent electoral outcomes, I employ a comparative qualitative analysis of four presidential elections in Senegal (2000, 2007, 2012, and 2019). Senegal represents an important case for empirical analysis as a country that is largely peaceful yet consistently experiences electorally motivated violence and intimidation from incumbent presidents. Existing single-country analyses examining the consequences of electoral violence predominately have focused on cases of mass violence, yet this is empirically a rather rare occurrence (citations). Far more common are instances of low-intensity violence and intimidation that produced few casualties but are still quite detrimental to the integrity of the electoral process. Focusing on a single country, I am able to examine specific instances of government violence to demonstrate how some tactics of violence provoke strong responses from citizens in such a way that electorally hurts incumbents, while some forms of intimidation can be so subtle and targeted that they actually do manage to undermine the integrity of the electoral process. The findings from this project suggest that lower intensity, elite targeted tactics of violence and intimidation, even though they do not generate mass casualties, may be particularly problematic in facilitating occurrences of democratic backsliding.

In the discussion that follows, I first highlight the theoretical and empirical discrepancies in existing studies concerning the effects of electoral violence on voting behavior and electoral outcomes. I then propose a new conceptual distinction between tactics of government violence and intimidation that classifies violence on the basis of whether it primarily targets opposition elites or citizens. I then develop some theoretical predictions for how these distinctions can provoke different emotional responses from voters, shaping voting behavior and electoral outcomes. The following section discusses the comparative qualitative design of the empirical study and provides some background on Senegalese elections and leadership prior to 2000. The subsections that follow detail the empirical narrative linking different tactics of violence and intimidation for these four presidential elections, and the final section briefly concludes.

Explaining the divergent effects of Electoral Violence and Intimidation

Voting, Violence, and Electoral Outcomes

At its most basic definitional level, electoral violence constitutes “coercive or violent acts carried out for the purpose of affecting the process or results of an election,” (Kovacs 2018, p.5). Thus, electoral violence is typically considered a subset of political violence distinguished primarily by its general objective to influence the outcome of an election by shifting the electoral advantage in

the perpetrators favor (Sisk 2008, Hoglund 2009, Bekoe 2012, Kovacs 2018).⁴ While this study focuses specifically on government-instigated electoral violence, incumbent and opposition parties can be both the primary perpetrators and victims of electoral violence.

The potential consequences of electoral intimidation for opposition targets 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). Incumbent parties 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 with 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 (Hoglund, 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 over time (Burchard 2015).

Yet empirical evidence is mixed on whether the use of electoral violence actually has its desired effect or instead produces unintended consequences for incumbent candidates. Some cross-national evidence has suggested that the use of electoral violence and intimidation does help incumbents win elections (Hafner-Burton, Hyde and Jablonski 2016), while others have demonstrated a more prominent pattern of electoral backlash against incumbents, particularly in less authoritarian settings where this can produce significant costs to an incumbent's legitimacy (van Ham and Lindberg 2015). 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).

Not only is the evidence mixed on the effects of violence on electoral outcomes, but there is also little consensus concerning its effect on citizens, specifically with respect to the choices they make on election day in response to violence. Examining the impact government violence on voting behavior in Nigerian elections, Bratton (2013) suggests that poor individuals are particularly susceptible to complying with voting for the ruling party when political intimidation and violence is used, but on average it should entice one to either abstain or vote against the ruling party. Examining elections in Kenya, Rosenzweig (2021) similarly suggests that violence can provoke an electoral backlash for incumbents, finding this relationship to hold despite shared partisanship or ethnicity. Still, some have found that an incumbent's use of violence does afford

⁴ There are additional ways that election violence tends to be conceptually different from other types of political violence which are discussed at greater length in other chapters of this broader dissertation project.

them an electoral advantage (Chaturvedi 2005, Collier and Vicente 2012), with some suggesting that swing voters are the most susceptible to compliance into supporting the party perpetrating the violence (Collier and Vicente 2012, Robinson and Torvik 2009). Burchard (2015) examines the impact of fear of election violence on turnout in 20 countries from 2008 and 2009, in contrast to Bratton, she finds that fear of electoral violence instead mobilizes turnout, with this effect being stronger for opposition supporters and swing voters, when compared to ruling party supporters. Similarly, another study by Burchard (2020) suggests that the fear produced by electoral violence, conceptualizing it as a type of negative campaigning, should provoke anxiety and anger that leads one to vote against the incumbent perpetrator; she finds that fear increase support for opposition candidates among both opposition supporters and non-partisans.

While Burchard's work provides an invaluable contribution by considering how emotional responses of fear, anxiety, and anger can impact how violence effects voting behavior, insights from research in contentious politics and political psychology concerning emotional responses to violence have suggested that fear and anxiety do not always provoke feelings of anger. Indeed, some have suggested that the fear and anxiety produced by threats increase interest in electoral campaigns and spark a desire to seek more information (Marcus et al. 2000, Marcus and Mackuen 1993). In contrast, others have demonstrated that threats of violence instead may lead to feelings of hopelessness (Nadeau et al. 1995) and a decrease in political interest (Söderström 2018). I suggest that accounting for variation in the tactics of government violence and intimidation can explain these contrasting emotional responses from citizens that lead to differences in electoral outcomes. While the existing research discussed in this section has provided an invaluable starting point for understanding the potential consequences of electoral violence, they have typically observed instances of violence as either present or not, thereby assuming that all types of violence have the same causal impact on electoral consequences. I argue this disagreement in the extant literature is likely due to a lack of theoretical consideration for the possibility that different types of violence may impact voters differently.

Disaggregating the targets of government violence

Since the use of electoral violence and intimidation is often used as a strategic tactic meant to influence the outcome of the election, political parties are often considered the primary organizers of violence, with incumbent parties in particular being the most frequent perpetrators. Victimhood, by contrast, most often focuses on tactics and events of violence that effect citizens, including both opposition and incumbent supporters. This is a reasonable point of focus as it is the voter's choices on election day that decide the outcome, not all tactics of violence are meant to *directly* target voters. Opposition elites can often be targeted by the ruling party in an effort to eliminate the competition at its source, usually through imprisonments, torture, or blackmail to either bar a candidate from running or intimidate them into dropping out of the election. Yet voters can still be considered *indirect* victims, since the violence and intimidation used against those elites is meant to ultimately influence their behavior on election day.

With a primary focus on incumbent parties and candidates as perpetrators of violence and citizens as victims, my research proposes an additional dimension of disaggregation of electoral violence that emphasizes differences in the salience of the tactics of violence and intimidation to the voter based on the primary targets in violence during an electoral campaign. Citizens can be *direct* targets of intimidation and violence or *indirectly* effected through the targeting of political leaders. Government bans on peaceful demonstrations and opposition campaign rallies, imprisonment of protesting opposition supporters, and violent policing of protests including both non-lethal tactics (using tear gas and rubber bullets) and lethal tactics where guns are fired and lives are lost, are just a few examples of violence and intimidation directly targeted at the citizenry. These tactics are often employed with the direct objective of encouraging opposition supporters to stay away from the polls, signaling that, based on events leading up to election day, they may likely be targets of violence. In contrast, voters can also be indirectly encouraged to abstain from voting or coerced into voting for the incumbent, when governments target opposition political leaders instead. These tactics may involve political disappearances as well as imprisoning, and even torturing, opposition leaders and political elites. These tactics are often employed with the intent of eliminating the opposition at the source, which can signal to opposition supporters that the election will not be free and fair, though not so explicitly signaling that they will be targeted at the polls.⁵

The impact of targeting on emotions and behavior

A growing body of research on citizen responses to government repression has focused on the role of emotions in explaining political participation, and more specifically acts of dissidence. This has been premised on the recognition that cognition and decision-making are strongly influenced by emotions, particularly when individuals are confronted with highly anxiety-provoking events that engender a fight or flight response; violence and intimidation are considered to constitute such anxiety-inducing events (citation). Much of this work has suggested that under certain conditions, this fear and anxiety resulting from such experiences will also provoke anger and frustration that encourages information seeking, vigilance, civic activism, and political dissent (citations).

In a separate chapter of this broader dissertation project, I find empirical evidence that higher levels of violence, resulting in citizen injuries and fatalities, tend to be more likely to undermine the incumbent's chances of re-election. I suggest that this is due to the blatantly antithetical nature of the tactics and salience of the implications of such events to the citizens' physical integrity rights and personal safety. In other words, more overt and severe violence against citizens imposes higher costs to the incumbent regime's legitimacy. Several studies of protesting

⁵ Another chapter of the broader dissertation considers attacks on the electoral process, as a common first run attempt by competitive authoritarian governments to tilt the electoral playing field. Arguing that certain electoral amendments undermining the legitimacy of the electoral process are more blatantly antithetical to voters (more salient) than those that restrict competition.

against state repression have suggested that more salient and overt forms of incumbent violence can provide a focal point to which citizens can mobilize against the government and overcome collective action problems (Davenport 2007, Kuran 1991, add others). I suggest a similar pattern when voters are the primary targets of violence. Targeting voters primarily, particularly as violence against them becomes a more common occurrence before the election, should likely provoke greater anger and increase perceptions of the illegitimacy of the incumbent government as one that does not respect its citizens. The greater costs imposed by this level of targeting should more likely lead to an electoral backlash against the incumbent and an opposition victory than tactics of intimidation that primarily target opposition elites.

When incumbents primarily target opposition leaders and political elites with short or long-term imprisonments, verbal threats, attacks on their convoys during campaigning, or even torture in some extreme cases, additional considerations are imposed upon opposition leaders when choosing to contest upcoming elections. Some of these tactics can even directly remove would be candidates from electoral contestation and even signal to other potential challengers that they could be potential targets of violence and intimidation. I argue that these tactics can often more effectively undermine the ability of opposition supporters to coordinate around viable candidates. Aside from a coordination problem, this strategic targeting of opposition elites may not provoke the same level of anger and frustration from voters as do tactics which directly impact democratic citizens and activists. As more prominent human rights abuses, violent policing of protests and mass arrests of demonstrators, I expect to be more blatantly antithetical to popular support than short-term arrests, candidate disqualifications or highly targeted attacks against opposition candidates. Further, because elite targeted intimidation tends to also be accompanied with allegations from the government meant to damage opposition reputations, the illegitimacy of these types of intimidation tactics may not be so explicit as more citizen-targeted forms of violence. Taken together, incumbents should be less likely to experience an electoral backlash for intimidating opposition elites at the polls and more likely to make electoral gains over the opposition.

***H1a:** Voter targeted intimidation and violence is more likely to undermine the incumbent's chances of re-election.*

***H1b:** Elite targeted intimidation and violence is more likely to help incumbents win elections.*

For some voters, these types of targeting can also carry implications for their propensity to turn out and vote on election day. When citizens are the primary targets in a violent electoral campaign, potential voters may be more likely to perceive that there is a real chance they could become a target of violence when voting on election day. While some may react to instances of citizen-targeted violence with anger, it is unlikely that every potential voter would have this same emotional response to this type of violence, particularly since fear of violence in the

absence of certain conditions can generate sentiments of hopelessness, despondence, and apathy towards politics that often lead to risk aversion (citation). The development of these risk aversion tendencies should lead such individuals to abstain from voting in an effort to avoid the potential risk of violence and intimidation on election day.

As previously discussed, not everyone feels the same level of fear in repressive contexts, as many have suggested sentiments of anger having a mobilization effect on political participation. A heightened oppositional awareness to repressive government actions that should arise from more blatant attacks on citizens⁶ has been suggested to raise fear thresholds for some. Political psychology research has suggested that psychological differences among individuals can help to explain different responses to repressive environments. Further, some have even suggested that some behavioral and attitudinal characteristics can explain some of these differences in emotional responses to violence (Soderstrom 2018). Specific to the issue of electoral violence, 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. Similarly, examining reactions to state-sponsored electoral violence in Zimbabwe, Young (2020) finds that individuals with a stronger sense of self-efficacy are more likely to feel anger relative to fear as a response to state repression, making them more likely to take actions in support of the opposition. Taken together, these studies suggest that individuals do not feel politically efficacious are more likely to react to violence with fear, and therefore abstention from voting. Thus, this divergence in emotional responses to violence, and voting behavior, should be particularly prominent under circumstances of heightened civic activism and citizen-targeted repression.

In contrast, violent campaigns that primarily target opposition elites on the other hand may not engender the same level of fear among potential voters with respect to their physical safety. Since the level at which tactics of intimidation are taking place do not *directly* impact the average citizen, intimidating political elites should not have the same depressing effect on turnout. The mediating effects of political efficacy from contexts of heightened civic activism should be less prominent when opposition elites are targeted, since these tactics should be less likely to provoke emotions that would encourage voters to abstain from voting.

H2: Citizen-targeted violence is more likely to decrease turnout than elite targeted violence and intimidation.

⁶ Such blatantly illegitimate tactics can provide a focal point on antithetical behavior that helps individual to overcome the collective action problem of standing up to a repressive regime (Kuran 1991).

Research Design

A Comparative Study of Senegalese Elections

To understand the impact of different levels of electoral violence and intimidation and the mediating effects of types of civic involvement on electoral outcomes, this paper employs a comparative historical analysis of presidential elections⁷ in Senegal. As previously discussed, aggregating several instances of electoral violence into a few categories has the benefit of generalizability across contexts but runs the risk of missing a lot of meaningful variation in how certain differences in the types of tactics used can generate different sets of electoral consequences. Focusing on elections within a single country offers a considerable degree of control over alternative explanatory factors that would normally vary across country contexts, while also providing some variation on the main independent variables and outcomes to be explained. Further, using qualitative data to examine instances of electoral violence over time allows me to take a much deeper dive into events of intimidation and violence that are tied to an election throughout the entire election cycle rather than limiting the scope of possible events to a particular time frame. This allows for a more informed determination as to which events are electorally motivated and avoid the potential for the conflation of types of political violence with electorally motivated events.

Examining Senegalese elections, specifically, provides a unique opportunity to better isolate the various effects of violence and intimidation on voters and electoral outcomes for several reasons. First, Senegal represents a case that is largely peaceful outside of elections, as generalized repression is not a normal occurrence. Examining the effects of electoral violence in a context that rarely experiences repression that is not electorally motivated has the advantage of avoiding the conflation of the consequences of electoral violence with other forms of political violence. Second, Senegal represents an understudied, but far more common case of low-intensity violence across elections. Several scholars have empirically shown that cases of generalized electoral violence resulting in mass casualties are actually far less common (Bob-Milliar 2014, Straus and Taylor 2012). Though instances of electoral violence in Senegal are often classified as low intensity based on the highly localized nature of violent outbreaks and low number of deaths, there is still considerable variation across elections concerning the tactics of violence and intimidation that are employed by incumbent governments. Finally, Senegal represents a crucial illustration of the potential consequences of these forms of low-intensity violence for democratic backsliding. Initially a beacon of democratic hope for the continent, the continued use of intimidation and violence surrounding elections could very well be an important contributor to democratic erosion over the past decade in Senegal. Looking at this case should have important

⁷ This analysis focuses on presidential elections, as these elections are typically higher stakes and generate a greater degree of violence and intimidation (Straus and Taylor 2012).

implications for many other contexts where the deterioration of the quality of elections has accompanied some degree of democratic backsliding.

The data used for this qualitative comparative study of the 2000, 2007, 2012, and 2019 Presidential elections come from a variety of variety of sources. US State Department Human rights reports, Amnesty International reports, a wide array of news articles, and Freedom House Reports provided evidence of instances of electoral violence across these elections. Data on the electoral outcomes observed came from the African elections database and the Adam Carr election database. Civil society responses and citizen attitudes regarding these particular instances of political violence for the elections observed in this analysis were also drawn from a variety of sources that included academic articles and news reports discussing such responses from civil society movements, descriptive statistic of citizen attitudes from Afrobarometer, and some initial content analysis of the emotional responses to allegations of violence from civil society organization's (CSO) platforms on social media.

The Historical Context of Elections in Senegal

Senegal gained independence from French Colonial rule in 1960 and Leopold Senghor, a Senegalese academic and former député de l'Assemblée nationale française,⁸ was elected as the country's first president. Initially establishing a parliamentary system of democratic government, Senghor governed with Prime minister and political ally, Mamadou Dia. However, disagreements quickly arose between Senghor and Dia. By 1962, Senghor replaced the parliamentary democratic model with a centralized presidential system, abolished the post of the Prime Minister,⁹ and had Dia arrested and sentenced to 12 years in prison under suspicion of fomenting a coup d'état (Beck 1997). While the 1963 constitution theoretically allowed opposition parties to compete, Senghor was re-elected unopposed in the 1963 general elections, along with his party, the Senegalese Progressive Union or UPS (later referred to as the Parti Socialiste or PS), winning all 80 seats in the National Assembly. For the remainder of Senghor's presidency, Senegal would best be described as a de facto one-party state, with Senghor even running unopposed in every election until 1978 following the passing of legislation allowing for a restricted number of political parties to complete.

In 1980, Senghor resigned before the end of his 5th term, handing over the presidency to his Prime Minister, Abdou Diouf. Facing pressures to allow for more parties to compete, a multiparty system (without any restrictions as to how many parties could compete) was established by 1981. Still, Diouf and the PS won by a landslide in the 1983 general elections.

⁸ France allowed for some elected members from colonies to be represented in the government, particularly after World War II.

⁹ This post was re-established in 1970 until it was abolished again in 1983. It was then re-established again in 1991 and has remained until recently when current president, Macky Sall, abolished it after his re-election in 2019.

Thus, while the succession of the presidency to Abdou Diouf followed an initial opening of the electoral process to allow for multiparty competition, the electoral playing field was still heavily tilted in favor of Diouf and the PS for several elections to follow. Until 2000, Senegal would continue to be best characterized as a dominant party system.

While the rules of the game still favored an incumbent victory during Diouf's tenure, the opening to allow for multiparty competition created incentives for the use of other tactics of manipulation, such as electoral violence and intimidation, as presidential elections following Diouf's succession became more repressive. While Senghor, predominantly utilized political patronage to co-opt any potential opposition, economic strains and increasing splits within the PS, made the sole use of patronage less viable (Kelly 2002). By consequence, both the 1988 and 1993 presidential elections experienced a considerable degree of electoral violence and intimidation from the incumbent government of Abdou Diouf. Extensive torture of the main opposition and political activists, significant numbers of political imprisonments, consistent intimidation and harassment, and a potential politically motivated killing characterized the years following these elections (Amnesty International Reports). At the same time that Diouf's repression of political opponents surrounding elections became a more common occurrence due to the uncertainty imposed by multiparty competition, he continued to open the political system amidst increasing pressures both domestically and internationally.¹⁰ As discussed in a previous chapter of this broader dissertation project, despite Diouf's best efforts in the late 1990's to retract some of these expansions that had evened the electoral playing field, his presidential tenure (and 40 year legislative dominance of the PS) came to an end in 2000 when he lost to opposition leader of the Parti Démocratique Sénégalais (PDS), Abdoulaye Wade. This alternance of power was heralded as a significant step towards democratic consolidation in Senegal (Freedom House, 2001).

Targets of violence and electoral outcomes in Senegalese presidential elections since 2000

The discussion in this section seeks to illustrate the empirical connections linking different tactics of violence and intimidation employed by incumbent presidents to different electoral outcomes. The 2000 and 2012 elections represent cases where the tactics of violence and intimidation used directly targeted the citizenry. In the period leading up to both of these elections, civil society was highly mobilized by a desire for change. Repressive crackdowns on protest asore with this proliferation democratically driven civic organizations, and citizens responded with anger and frustration that motivated an alternance of political power in both elections, with a particularly depressing effect on turnout in 2012 due to heightened levels of for less politically active individuals. In contrast, presidential incumbents in 2007 and 2019 primarily employed tactics of intimidation targeted against opposition elites. While some

¹⁰ This is a common tactic from the dictator's toolkit; as authoritarians have come to face pressure to liberalize political systems, they adopt certain democratic features to gain domestic and international legitimacy.

incidental outbreaks of violence among citizens occurred in 2019, the incumbent Macky Sall used strategic targeting of the most viable opposition candidates to effectively constrain the electoral playing field and secure a victory, despite considerable discontent among public opinion. Similarly, incumbent president Abdoulaye Wade targeted opposition elites almost exclusively and undermined their electoral viability to ensure a runoff. Tactics of intimidation during these elections which were not predominantly targeted at citizens were associated with a higher turnout and less fear of violence, particularly when compared to 2012.

The results to be detailed in the sections that follow are summarized below in Table 1. The table also reports some control indicators of economic conditions for the year prior to each of these elections. Poor economic conditions are not only consistent predictors of decreased voter support for the incumbent government/ political turnover (citation) but have also been suggested to mediate the effectiveness of violence and intimidation as an electoral tactic (citation). In order to reject this alternative hypothesis with some initial confidence, I account for a few economic considerations highlighted in the summary table. The similarly poor conditions prior to elections in 2007 and 2012 and comparatively better values in 2000 and 2019, suggest that economic conditions alone prior to each election cannot explain these divergent outcomes.

Table 1: Summary of Empirical Results

<i>Election Year</i>		<i>2000</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2019</i>
<i>Explanatory Variables</i>	Primary Targets?	Both citizens and elites	Opposition Elites	Mostly citizens	Mostly Elites
	Civil Society mobilization	High	Low	High	Moderate
<i>Controls</i>	GDP per capita growth	3.829	-0.296	-1.431	3.295
	Unemployment	5.66	10.03	10.36	6.53
	Youth Unemployment	8.7	14.73	12.7	7.74
<i>Outcomes</i>	Turnout	62.23%	70.62%	51.58%	66.23%
	Incumbent re-elected?	No	Yes	No	Yes

2000 presidential elections: The first alternance of power

Extensive violence against an increasingly popular PDS and allegations of torture against prominent activists in the opposition characterized the aftermath of the 1993 presidential elections, as waning support for the ruling party and Abdou Diouf had become increasingly evident. The incremental opening of the electoral system to opposition gains facilitated the rise of new forms of civic associations that focused on strengthening democratic practices and institutions that could hold leaders accountable (Geller 2004). Further, the expansion of the independent press allowed for more effective communication by many of these initiatives of such democratic principles as inclusiveness, political participation, and respect for human rights. Evidence from a survey conducted in the year leading up to the 2000 presidential elections further suggests that sentiments of interpersonal trust and political efficacy were particularly high among opposition supporters, possibly contributing to this alternance of power (Vengroff and Magala 2001).

Against the backdrop of significant violence against the opposition as an early attempt at tilting the electoral playing back in Diouf's favor following a marginal incumbent victory in 1993, the opposition began to coordinate efforts and civil society organizations began to gain strength. At the same time, Diouf's ties to the Sufi Brotherhood were waning and political patronage was dwindling (Geller 2004). In addition to the expansion of pro-democracy movements and civic organizations, the decline in support for Diouf and PS led to a shift in the way civil society was being activated to participate in elections by religious sects among the caliphs of the Sufi Brotherhood (Herzog 2016). The emphasis became more focused on peaceful conduct and a general obligation of political participation for most religious leaders in communication with their followers.

While the months leading up to the 2000 presidential elections were characterized by more incidental outbreaks of minimal violence, the political motivations for Abdou Diouf's use of violence and intimidation following the 1993 elections, may have been carried out with the intent of influencing the next presidential elections.¹¹ Some scholars have contended that even when pre-election violence is absent, significant violence and intimidation following the previous election can still have an influence on electoral mobilization and voting behavior in the election that follows (Wantchekon 1999, Ellman and Wantchekon 2000). Bell and Murdie (2016) refer to this as a "memory of violence" that voters do not quickly forget, particularly when the repressive incumbent is contesting the following election. Still, the isolated outbreaks of violence that did erupt in the months leading up to the next presidential elections did predominately target citizens

¹¹ This intent is inferred on the basis of targets of violence primarily being opposition supporters and activists who have protested and spoken out against the incumbent government following elections prior to 2000. Public opinion concerning fear of violence and discontent can only be assumed however since survey data of such perceptions is not available.

(need detail and citations). I contend that in the case of the 2000 presidential elections, the potential for even greater violence from the Diouf regime was likely still a salient concern for voters, that could have affected both perceptions of personal safety and the illegitimacy of the regime's use of such tactics. At the same time, we see an increasingly active civil society promoting democratic inclusiveness to a greater extent than any particularistic agendas. An increasingly democratically motivated civil society, a coordinated opposition, unintended consequences of formal electoral rule changes, and the significant use of repression in past elections¹² all contributed to the incumbent president's ultimate electoral defeat in 2000. After a second-round run-off, Abdoulaye Wade of the PDS (Parti Démocratique Sénégalais), with the support of the rest of the opposition united by the message of Sopi (meaning change in Wolof), won the presidency with 58.5 percent of the popular vote.¹³

2007 Presidential Elections: Opposition targets and Wade's re-election

Though the alteration of power in the 2000 elections initially carried considerable optimism and hope concerning the prospects for democracy in Senegal and good governance, disappointment with misplaced priorities and broken promises within the first few years of the new PDS dominated government, left Abdoulaye Wade already vulnerable to electoral sanctioning in the upcoming 2007 presidential elections. Thus, early on in his first term, Wade began strategically targeting the most viable candidates that would likely contest elections in 2007, namely his former prime minister¹⁴ and PDS supporter, Idrissa Seck. Suspecting Seck would challenge him for the presidency, Wade dismissed Seck in 2004 from his post. In 2005, his dismissal, along with charges of embezzlement and threatening national security was supported by the National Assembly and Seck was sent to jail to await trial. After six months in jail, he was released, and charges were dropped. The imprisonment, and subsequent release, was clearly perceived as a tactic of intimidation by Wade to supporters of Idrissa Seck. However, these events were perceived differently by other opposition party leaders, given Seck's history with PDS as a political insider and his sudden and curious release from prison in early 2006 (Kelly 2020). Particularly since Wade visited Seck in prison several times leading up to his release, the rest of the opposition grew suspicious that Seck was being co-opted to undermine an opposition victory. Despite his repeated attempts to explain that no such deal was made, his isolation from the rest of the opposition was already instilled, even though he remained the most viable candidate to contest Wade in the upcoming presidential elections.

¹² Abdou Diouf may have faced too many constraints in the run-up to the 2000 presidential elections to see electoral violence as a viable tactic.

¹³ Electoral results data comes from the African Elections Database.

¹⁴ In Senegal, the president can appoint and dismiss the prime minister at his own discretion, pending approval from the National Assembly. However, the sitting president's party has historically held a majority in the legislature. During Abdoulaye Wade's first term in office, he went through 5 different prime ministers.

In the weeks leading up to the 2007 elections, tensions at political demonstrations and campaign rallies were high, but violence never broke out between party supporters. In the days leading up to election day however, opposition elites became clear targets of violence in a couple of notable instances, with one involving an attack on Idrissa Seck's convoy by Wade supporters that left 10 injured. Another attack targeted PS candidate, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, when his home was set on fire. Both Seck and Dieng suggested these were assassination attempts ordered by Abdoulaye Wade.

As civil society worked to bring Wade and the PDS to power in the 2000 and 2001 presidential and legislative elections, respectively, Wade appointed several leaders and activists to ministerial posts when initially forming his government. In the years that followed, however, he dismissed several of these leaders while retaining others, effectively fragmenting civil society between those who enjoyed the spoils of office under Wade and those outside the patronage network. Further, while most religious leaders seemed to have veered away from endorsing specific candidates in 2000, some caliphs made public appeals to their voters endorsing Wade's re-election in 2007 (Mbow 2008). This is not necessarily to say that Senegalese citizens were not involved in civic engagement or active members in civil society organizations, or even that civic organizations were not able to operate freely, but rather that there seemed to be less motive and opportunity for civic engagement that would bridge divides and unite citizens, and a stronger prevalence of bonding social capital through clientelist networks.

The outcomes of the 2007 Presidential elections were a first-round victory for Abdoulaye Wade with 55.9% of the popular vote along with a relatively high turnout of 70.62% of registered voters. The elite-targeted nature of electorally motivated violence by the Wade government leading up to these elections, illustrates how targeting elites, rather than supporters, isolates and fragments the political opposition at its source, thereby indirectly imposing constraints on voter coordination to leverage a vote against a repressive regime. This election not only illustrates how elite-targeted violence seems to help incumbents win, but also suggests that the separation of violence from the experiences of the voter makes one less fearful that they would be a target of intimidation if they turned out to vote. Finally, while civil society was not absent in this election, its influence was less motivated by societal ties that bridge, such as democratically motivated movements. Thus, while civic engagement may have motivated turnout, the social capital generated by more exclusionary CSO involvement through clientelist networks did not create incentives for outreach that would significantly undermine the regime's legitimacy due to repressive actions.

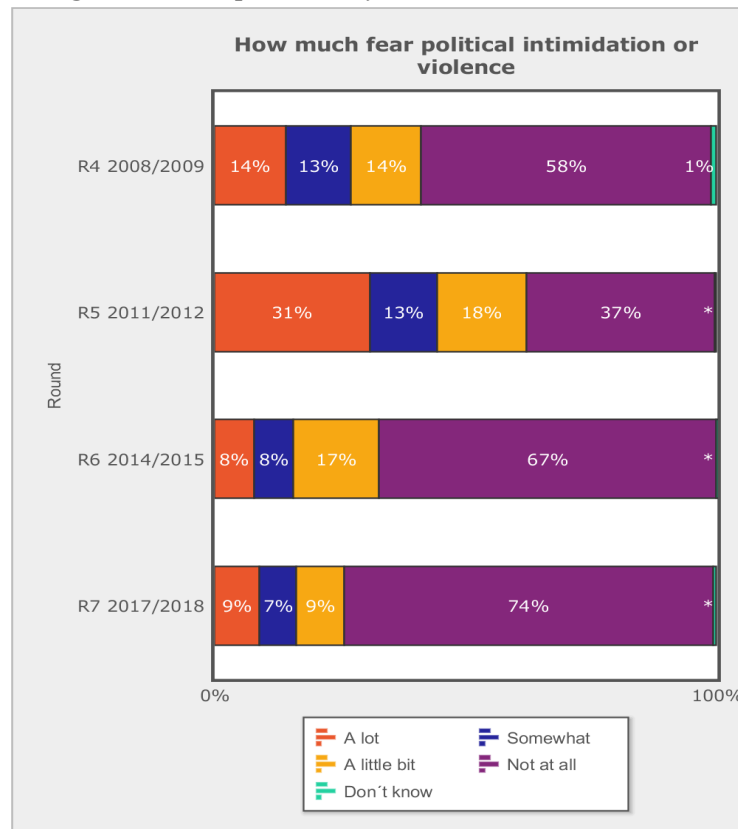
2012 Presidential Elections: Wade's failed attempt at electoral dominance

Discussed in a previous chapter of this dissertation project, Wade's attempted power grab at a constitutionally questionable 3rd term and attempt to introduce the post of vice president for the suspected purpose of securing political power for his son, Karim Wade, sparked the formation of several civil society oppositional groups that would work to take action against these perceived attacks on the constitution. In fact, civil society was so well organized that leaders made it a point to meet every week leading up to the 2012 presidential elections and held regular protests and gatherings to put pressure on Wade. These regular demonstrations were often met with violent, though mostly non-lethal, policing to disperse protestors (Burchard 2013). Nonetheless, the constitutional court ended up officially ruling in favor of a 3rd term for Abdoulaye Wade a mere month before the election, allowing him to legally contest the 2012 elections. This sparked further demonstrations and riots across the country. By the end of the pre-election period, several violent clashes had occurred between demonstrators and police forces that resulted in hundreds of injuries and even a handful of deaths (several news sources, specific examples needed). In addition, several civil society activists had been attacked and even temporarily detained in prison (Amnesty International reports). Some civil society activists contend after their release, that they had been subjected to methods of interrogation while detained that could be considered forms of torture (need to find quote Alouine Tine).

This high level of citizen-targeted violence in the pre-election period was associated with the lowest voter turnout of any presidential election (51.58%), possibly due to sentiments of fear for personal safety as citizens were not only the primary targets of excessive police force, but the consequences of dissent were highly visible. Indeed, in Afrobarometer surveys following the 2012 elections, 31 percent of respondents said they feared election violence a lot, compared with less than 10% soliciting the same response in every other round with this same survey question. Figure 1 below illustrates this spike in strong sentiments of fear of electoral violence in 2012 compared to other survey rounds. At the same time however, though these outbreaks of violence may have depressed turnout for voters who were dominated by emotions of fear rather than anger, Abdoulaye Wade was ultimately held accountable for these attacks on the electoral process and repressive policing targeting opposition supporters. The perceived illegitimacy of his tactics of violence and intimidation against both citizens and the integrity of the electoral process served as a focal point for opposition coordination and the mobilization of pro-democracy civic movements that ultimately undermined the efficacy of his tactics as he lost to opposition candidate, Macky Sall, in the second-round run-offs. Sall, also a former prime minister of Abdoulaye Wade,¹⁵ won with 65.8 percent of the popular vote.

¹⁵ Macky Sall became Prime Minister under the Wade government in 2005 and held the position until 2009 when he left to pursue his own political agenda as an opposition leader and aspiring presidential candidate for the next elections.

Figure 1: descriptive survey statistics of fear of violence



Source: Afrobarometer

2019 Presidential Elections: Strategic Intimidation gives Sall another term

The challenges anticipated by Macky Sall in his 2019 bid for re-election were not unlike those faced by his predecessor in 2007. His victory in the 2012 presidential elections, as a second alternance of political power, was seen as yet another positive step towards democratic consolidation in Senegal (Freedom House 2012). However, after the first few years of his term in office, citizens were again disheartened by unmet expectations, particularly as youth unemployment levels were rising – with jobs being particularly difficult for educated young people to come by – and water shortage issues across the country were inadequately dealt with. As the prime minister replacing Idrissa Seck in 2006 and primary coordinator of Abdoulaye Wade’s presidential campaign in 2007, Macky Sall likely learned a few lessons in electoral manipulation that would be helpful to him in 2019.

Macky Sall took a similar approach to Abdoulaye Wade’s tactics intimidation in 2005 by targeting the most viable potential challengers to his re-election in 2019 early on in the election cycle. Similar to Wade, he imprisoned his two most viable opposition candidates – Khalifa Sall,

former mayor of Dakar, and Karim Wade, son of former president Abdoulaye Wade – based on politically fraught convictions for embezzlement of public funds (Freedom House 2020). Opposition supporters and civil society activists contended that these charges were politically motivated to undermine the opposition prior to the 2019 presidential elections. This seemed particularly evident to government critics since the constitutional court, packed with incumbent supporters, sentenced both of these potential candidates to 5 years in prison – a convenient amount of time given that the constitution in Senegal says that any candidate who has received a prison sentence of 5 years or more is barred from running in any election. The subsequent pardons that were ultimately given to Khalifa Sall and Karim Wade after they had already been barred from running in the 2019 presidential elections generated further suspicion that many of the charges may have been fabricated for the purpose of isolating the opposition. As discussed in a previous dissertation chapter, Macky Sall also proposed changes to the electoral code that he argued to be of benefit to voters, yet they significantly raised barriers to entry for the opposition. By consequence, only 7 candidates managed to meet these requirements and contest the 2019 presidential elections, with two being Khalifa Sall and Karim Wade who were barred from running.

Similar to the lead up to the 2007 presidential elections, initial observations into the activities of pro-democracy civil society organizations suggest less extensive mobilization efforts aimed at reaching a variety of voters ahead of the 2019 elections. While activists in pro-democracy movements like *Y'en a marre*¹⁶ remained active in civil society in the pre-election period, no significant new movements were created in response to institutional and elite-level targeting of intimidation tactics. Demonstrations and campaign rallies were common in more urban areas in the month leading up to the elections and tensions were sometimes high. Indeed, a few instances of violence erupted in clashes between incumbent and opposition supporters. While 2 deaths and several injuries can be attributed to these clashes, the level of violence was still not even close to that of 2012. It is unlikely that a significant portion of the population felt threatened enough to stay away from the polls, since voter turnout was much higher in these elections (66.23%) particularly compared to turnout in 2012. Referring back to Figure 1, some insights from Afrobarometer data also suggest that voters were not so much deterred by fear, as 73.5 percent of respondents contended that they did not fear electoral violence at all in 2018, compared to only 37.5 percent who had the same response back in 2012. By undermining the oppositions ability to coordinate their efforts around a viable contender, Macky Sall ultimately won the election in the first round with 58% of the vote.

¹⁶ This is a movement of Youth activist that began in 2011 in opposition to Abdoulaye Wade's bid for a 3rd term.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has demonstrated that (1) the tactics of electoral violence and intimidation employed by incumbent governments can be separated into three different levels of targeting and (2) the context of civil society's involvement can explain divergent electoral outcomes by comparing four presidential elections in Senegal. The 2000 and 2012 presidential elections served to illustrate how a high prevalence of citizen-targeted violence may have been associated with lower voter turnout, but also produced conditions for alterations of power. The proliferation of pro-democracy civil society movements and the overt nature of violent tactics increased perceptions of illegitimacy of the incumbent government. In contrast, the 2007 and 2019 elections highlight how elite targeted-violence and more subtle forms of institutional manipulation of electoral processes allow incumbents to limit and even eliminated the opposition leadership at its source, making it a more effective means of electoral intimidation that is less likely to produce backlash. While these findings are not generalizable beyond these elections in Senegal, they carry implications for other contexts where violence and intimidation during elections is a regular, yet also varied, occurrence in a context that is otherwise, largely peaceful.

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