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PRECARIOUS PATHS TO DEMOCRACY: ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIZATION



Precarious Paths to Democracy: Electoral Violence and the Struggle for Democratization

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to

The Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA)

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Sammanfattning

Trots att de flesta länder har infört flerpartival, kämpar demokratin fortfarande med att slå rot runtom i världen. Denna Development Dissertation Brief (DDB) är en sammanfattning av en avhandling som undersöker sambandet mellan våld i samband med val och demokratisering med hjälp av en kombination av olika vetenskapliga metoder. Var och en av de fyra studierna som ingår i avhandlingen har ett unikt perspektiv på sambandet mellan val-våld och demokratisering, med fokus på medborgare, politiska partier och konstitutionsprocesser. Avhandlingen ger nyanserade insikter i hur val-våld undergräver demokratisering över flera dimensioner och nivåer. Resultaten belyser vikten av att anta ett partipolitiskt perspektiv för att förstå hur våld påverkar olika politiska aktörer och väljargrupper. Dessutom belyser avhandlingen ett samband mellan val-våld och konstitutionsbyggande som tidigare forskning inte har studerat utförligt. Den visar under vilka förhållanden konstitutionella reformer kan bidra till att mildra våld, och när de misslyckas med detta. Resultaten belyser också hur våld utgör utmaningar för konstitutionsbyggande, vilket understryker komplexiteten i att genomföra demokratiska reformer när våld och polarisering kvarstår. Avhandlingen belyser hur partitillhörighet formar den inverkan som val-våld har på stödet för demokrati. Den visar att medan oppositionsanhängare stärks i sina demokratiska övertygelser i ljuset av regeringsutövat val-våld, förblir regeringens anhängare och partipolitiskt obundna i genomsnitt oberörda. Detta komplicerar ansträngningarna att främja och skydda demokratin, om det interna ansvarsutkrävandet gentemot våldsamma makthavare är lågt.

Abstract

Although most countries have adopted multiparty elections, democracy still struggles to take root in many places. This Development Dissertation Brief (DDB) is a summary of a dissertation that examines the relationship between electoral violence and democratization using a multi-method approach. Each of the four studies included in the dissertation takes a unique perspective on this relationship, focusing on citizens, political parties, and constitution-making processes. First, it offers nuanced insights into how electoral violence undermines democratization across multiple dimensions and levels. The findings highlight the importance of adopting a partisan lens to grasp how violence affects different political actors and constituencies. Second, the dissertation highlights an understudied relationship between electoral violence and constitution-making. It demonstrates the conditions under which constitutional reform can help mitigate violence, and when it cannot. The findings also highlight how violence poses challenges to constitution-making, underscoring the complexity of implementing democratic reforms when violence and polarization persist. Third, the research elucidates how partisanship shapes the impact of electoral violence on support for democracy. It reveals that while opposition supporters may push for democratic reforms or resist autocratization in the face of government-perpetrated electoral violence, incumbent supporters and non-partisans remain, on average, unmoved. This complicates efforts to advance and protect democracy, if intraparty accountability toward violent incumbents is low.

Introduction

Although nearly all states have adopted some form of electoral process to fill their highest offices, democracy still struggles to firmly take root in many parts of the world. Concerns about the global state of democracy have intensified over the past decade. Many countries once seen as on a path toward democratization have either stagnated as hybrid regimes or regressed into authoritarianism. Seventy-one percent of the world's population now lives in an autocracy (Nord et al., 2024). Additionally, since 1945, approximately seventeen percent of all national elections have involved significant violence resulting in civilian fatalities, while approximately fifty percent of post-election protests have witnessed state violence (Hyde and Marinov, 2012). There has not been a year without either of these types of electoral violence, or opposition harassment, globally since 1945, and the number of violent elections has been consistently increasing. In my dissertation "Precarious Paths to Democracy – Electoral Violence and the Struggle for Democratization" (Olafsdottir, 2024), I argue that violence surrounding elections not only damages electoral integrity and inflicts direct harm on those subjected to it, but also threatens to undermine democratization processes more broadly. The dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of the obstacles to democracy by examining the intricate links between electoral violence and democratization.

The topic of the dissertation is particularly pressing given the simultaneous increase in autocratization and challenges toward multilateralism and liberal norms in the global arena. This dissertation highlights the need for concerted efforts to promote and protect democracy in contexts where democracy is fragile, and highlights avenues that might be fruitful to this end.

Political analysts, democracy promoters, and scholars alike have noted that electoral violence presents significant challenges to democracy and its consolidation (Akinyetun, 2022; Alihodzic and Asplund, 2018; Klaus, 2020). None-

theless, few have investigated how electoral violence influences democratization. This dissertation adds to existing research by examining how electoral violence relates to liberal, deliberative, participatory, and attitudinal indicators of democracy at different levels of analysis. The studies focus on democracy indicators across levels ranging from citizens to political parties to national institutions.

Methodologically, the studies are varied, using survey data from citizens across Sub-Saharan Africa, expert-coded country-level data spanning the globe or restricted to hybrid regimes, as well as qualitative data collected during field research in Turkey. The dissertation generally focuses on hybrid regimes—i.e. those regimes that contain some democratic institutions, yet are not fully fledged democracies (Diamond, 2002).

Defining electoral violence and democracy

Electoral violence is a distinct form of political violence that is linked to the electoral contest or to political parties engaged in it (Höglund, 2009; Siddiqui, 2022; Staniland, 2014). As this definition suggests, electoral violence is a relatively diverse phenomenon, including acts of intimidation by government security forces towards opposition parties, clashes between supporters of opposing parties, vandalization of party offices or polling stations, and attacks against politicians and voters by illicit armed groups (see, e.g., Harish and Toha, 2017; Staniland 2014). The actors involved are varied. In the dissertation, I disaggregate the perpetrators of the violence to the extent that existing data allows in order to bring out the nuances of the effects of this violence depending on the identity of the perpetrator.

I define democratization as a move upward on a gradient scale of democracy within a given country. Democratization is hence a gradual process in which a

country moves closer to an ideal type of democracy.¹ In general, democracy is a “system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives” (Schmitter and Karl, 1991, 76). It consists of several components: electoral, liberal, majoritarian, deliberative, participatory, and egalitarian (Coppedge et al., 2011, 253).² I conceptualize democratization as a process of growth, taking place along each of the components, or indicators, of democracy. Since citizens’ support is crucial for ensuring democracy’s durability (Claassen, 2020), I also explore this factor as an attitudinal indicator of democracy.

Disposition

In this brief, I present key findings from the four studies in my thesis that investigate how electoral violence influences democratization, and how electoral violence can, in turn be mitigated by democratic efforts. The sections below present summaries of the main findings and implications of each of the studies.

The first study investigates the trajectories of democratization in countries that are affected by electoral violence. The second study explores how government-perpetrated electoral violence shapes citizens’ support for democracy. Using data from Sub-Saharan Africa, it focuses on how proximity to violence affects citizens with different party affiliations. The third study draws on qualitative material from Turkey to understand how violence affects interparty negotiations in constitution-making processes. Constitution-making is often a key component of institutionalizing democracy and enshrining it in formal institu-

¹ This process does not need to be linear or consistently moving in the direction of democracy, however.

² The majoritarian and egalitarian components of democracy are not included as outcomes in the dissertation.

tions. The fourth study assesses the conditions under which constitutional reforms can mitigate further electoral violence in weakly institutionalized regimes.

Summary of the studies

The impact of violent elections: A caveat to the democratization-by-elections thesis

Under what conditions does repeated experience with multiparty elections contribute to democratization? In this study I argue that repeated experience with elections contributes to democratization only when they are peaceful. Hence, when elections are violent, they either impede democratic learning and development or are associated with a turn toward greater autocratization instead. It builds on research suggesting that elections play an active role in spurring democratization by providing regular opportunities for citizens, opposition parties, and civil society to develop knowledge, norms, and capacity to push for democratization (Lindberg, 2006). The government is expected to respond to these demands by granting greater civil rights and accountability mechanisms, alongside other democratizing reforms. In this study I merge insights about the consequences of electoral violence with this line of argument, establishing violence as an impediment to the proposed causal chain. The study takes a macro-level approach, exploring global trends at the aggregate level. I employ regression analysis and build on work by Eggedell et al. (2018) to empirically assess the claim. I hence use cross-national data from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) (Coppedge et. al, 2011), combined with data sources on election violence, economic indicators, and armed conflict ranging from 1946 to 2015.

Argument

I argue that electoral violence undermines democratization by distorting political learning and weakening the institutionalization of democratic norms among citizens, political parties, and civil society. When elections are marred by violence—especially when perpetrated by governments—citizens may come to expect undemocratic behavior and adapt accordingly. This leads to reduced participation, lower political knowledge, and eroded trust in the integrity and meaning of elections. Over time, fear and disillusionment can diminish not only turnout but also support for democracy itself, increasing openness to authoritarian alternatives. Violence also fosters social distrust and intergroup hostility, which undermines the civic tolerance and coalition-building necessary for democratic development.

Political parties and civil society actors adapt to violent political environments. I propose that government-perpetrated electoral violence stifles opposition parties, deters the emergence of new democratic parties and practices, and incentivizes undemocratic campaign strategies also among opposition parties. Weak party institutionalization and low levels of intraparty democracy increases the risk that violence becomes commonplace within political competition, in turn undermining the development of democratic party practices. At the same time, civil society organizations (CSOs) often shift toward less confrontational forms of resistance to avoid state repression. While some organizations remain resilient in defending democracy, I suggest that electoral violence limits their ability to push for accountability and liberal reforms due to their incentives to protect themselves. Citizens are also less likely to join CSOs when violence by political parties takes place, rather seeking out more anonymous forums for resistance. As a result, in contexts of repeated electoral violence, the prospects for developing robust democratic institutions, actors, and norms are significantly weakened.

Hence, the idea is that with repeated experience of peaceful elections, citizens gain experience of participating in democracy through voting, while in violent elections those who are at risk of violence refrain from voting and hence the potential for cumulative democratic learning. In turn, when elections are peaceful, opposition parties gain capacity to mobilize voters, develop peaceful party-practices, and coordinate efforts to thwart the government, but when elections are violent opposition mobilization is more likely to adapt to the violent political environment in manners that impede democratization. Similarly, over repeated experience with peaceful elections, civil society groups gain capacity to expose government malpractice, foster accountability, and push for liberalizing reforms. Instead, when faced with violence, the CSOs will struggle to recruit and develop capacity, and adapt their strategies to be less confrontative toward the government, reducing their ability to encourage democratization.

Findings

This study finds support for the hypothesis that while peaceful repeated elections are associated with higher levels of liberal democracy, repeated violent elections are not. The main distinction—between violent and peaceful elections—is robust to a range of model specifications. The study investigates the association between repeated peaceful and violent elections and indicators of the three possible mechanisms through which repeated experience with elections could foster greater democratization: turnout, intraparty democracy, and civil society participation. The results suggest a link between repeated peaceful elections and higher levels of civil society participation and intraparty democracy. In turn, civil society participation and intraparty democracy are associated with higher levels of liberal democracy. However, the study does not find an association between the electoral turnout and liberal democracy or peaceful elections. This may call into question the validity of the argument that citizens' electoral participation increases over repeated elections, and in turn

that this experience fosters democratization. Instead, it shows that the more experience that an electorate has with violent elections, the lower their electoral participation tends to be. It is important to mention that these are correlations, and further research is needed in order to establish causality and test the proposed causal mechanisms.

Implications

The findings have important implications for policy recommendations regarding democracy promotion and electoral management. Beyond the normative importance of quelling violence, the research shows that violent electoral conduct is consequential for the prospect of democratization. As such, efforts to prevent and end cycles of electoral violence must be a priority, also within democracy promotion.

Viewing violence through a partisan lens: How electoral violence shapes citizens' support for democracy

This study, which is co-authored with Hanne Fjelde, explores the impact of government-perpetrated electoral violence on citizens' support for democracy. It emphasizes that a citizens' support for a particular political party shapes how electoral violence affects their support for democracy. Importantly, it also complements many other studies that investigate how the fear of electoral violence impacts this outcome by employing observational data on the occurrence of electoral violence. It thus differentiates between citizens living in areas fraught with electoral violence and those who do not.

Argument

We argue that the partisanship of citizens shapes how they are affected by such violence. The study hypothesizes that government supporters living in close proximity to government-sponsored electoral violence will demonstrate less support for democracy compared to more authoritarian regime types, while opposition supporters will display higher degrees of support for democracy when exposed to such violence in their close proximity. The argument is based on literature that indicates that political violence polarizes populations along the cleavages that the violence follows, such as the partisan divide in the case of electoral violence. We expect government supporters to be in favor of regime types that grant the government greater powers and do not require elections when residing in a violent electoral environment. On the other hand, we expect opposition supporters in such environments to double-down on their support for democracy since democratic advances would provide them with greater safety and prospects for influence.

Findings

The study combines geo-referenced data from the Afrobarometer, citizen surveys across the African continent, with data on events of electoral violence. Our statistical analyses reveal a robust association between government violence in opposition supporters' proximity and their degree of support for democracy. Conversely, while incumbent supporters overall reported lower levels of support for democracy, those with government violence around them did not differ in their level of support for democracy compared to those who did not experience violence. Non-partisans also remained unaffected. Importantly, opposition supporters living where violence occurred also reported significantly lower levels of trust in electoral institutions, suggesting that opposition supporters react negatively to the government's violent breaches of electoral principles.

Implications

The finding that the effects of government-perpetrated electoral violence differ by partisanship has two implications. First, the lack of reaction among incumbent supporters when the government resorts to violence implies impaired accountability for the government's breaches of democratic principles. Second, opposition supporters do not give up when confronted with a violent government, but rather double down on their support for democracy.

That opposition supporters rally behind democratic principles in situations when these are threatened is an important finding. Much research has highlighted the importance of opposition support – losers' consent – for democratic legitimacy and consolidation (Anderson et al. 2005) and opposition actors are often an important counter-force to democratic backsliding (Arriola et al. 2023). Therefore, the finding that opposition supporters show resilience in their support for democracy in the face of violence has positive ramifications for the persistence of democratic ideals in a country. However, since opposition politicians, candidates and voters are often the targets of electoral intimidation and coercion, government-perpetrated electoral violence might still serve to severely undermine the possibility for opposition actors to mobilize to defend democracy. Cross-national research shows that government-perpetrated electoral violence can increase the probability that the regime remains in power (Hafner-Burton et al. 2018). In this context, the indifference we observe among incumbent supporters to electoral violence by the regime is especially worrisome. Those who voted for the incumbent regime are also those who can directly hold it accountable for democratic violations by placing their vote elsewhere. But this requires that they are willing to call the regime out when it violates democratic norms and condemn the use of coercion and repression. Our results suggest that electoral winners might not be susceptible to shifting their political preferences in the face of violence. Support for democracy might thus increasingly become a 'partisan issue' (Singer 2023).

Constitution-making in the midst of violence: The failure of interparty negotiations in Turkey

The third study focuses on the constitution-making process in Turkey that took place from 2011 to 2013. It examines how the political parties' willingness to make concessions on contentious topics was affected by their experiences of, and links to, political violence. It employs a broader understanding of political violence, requiring violent acts to be linked either directly or indirectly to a political party. The study is an in-depth case study, focusing on the links between violence, parties' political incentives, and a lack of willingness to make concessions in constitution-making processes. It combines interviews with 25 key informants, many of which were directly involved in the constitution-making process, with transcripts from the negotiations during the process. The study was done with significant input and assistance from colleagues at the Center for Foreign Policy and Peace Research at Bilkent University in Ankara, and three Turkish research assistants whom I employed for the project.

Argument

Constitution-making processes are vital stepping stones towards establishing democratic institutions. This study sheds light on how violence and its relationship with political parties can hinder constructive deliberation, thereby rendering an inclusive institution-building pathway of democratization significantly more difficult. I attribute the impact of violence on the failure of the process to a combination of interparty distrust and inter and intraparty processes of polarization which interact with electoral incentives. The barriers posed by violence in reaching a negotiated agreement are exacerbated by a problem of dual responsibility—partisan negotiators must represent the strategic interests of their party even if it hinders the broader objective of drafting a new constitution.

Findings

The study focuses on a deliberative avenue that facilitates—or hinders—liberal democratization by examining the negotiation of a new constitution. I investigate the impact of violence on this process, while recognizing that this was only one of several contributing factors to the failure of the negotiations. In line with previous research suggesting that party interests influence constitution-making processes, this study suggests that while political parties are a vital component of democracies, their short-term electoral incentives may impede concessions in constitution-making processes. I hypothesize that this is especially the case when there are no mediators or prior ruptures to encourage the political will for parties to reach a compromise—as was the case in Turkey at the time. Moreover, in line with findings regarding the consequences of political violence in peace negotiations, this lack of compromise is compounded by the polarization and distrust fostered by political violence. Additionally, the study concurs with previous research on the Turkish case, indicating that the consensus requirement posed challenges by granting each party a veto right. This essentially granted the opportunity to spoil the process for actors that were undisposed to significant constitutional changes and democratization. As such, the design of the process, severe underlying polarization within society that is represented by the participating political parties, and distrust stemming from past and recent violent and repressive behavior undermined the probability of concessions.

Implications

Importantly, political violence is only one factor contributing to the parties' failure to agree. While it may amplify and solidify the cleavages between groups, those cleavages and the ideational rifts between them existed prior to the bouts of violence covered in this analysis. Nonetheless, the mechanisms through which violence impacted the Turkish constitutional negotiations outlined in

this paper are likely to exacerbate these pre-existing challenges, perhaps particularly when the negotiating parties are representatives of political parties. As long as polarization is encouraged by political parties and narratives around violence feed into this, consensus-based constitution-making faces barriers to success.

The process studied in this study failed. Instead, Erdogan was elected president and his Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) party, along with the ultranationalist Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP), passed constitutional amendments that both deepened Turkey's autocratization and eliminated the need for the AKP to make concessions towards the Kurds or other minority groups. The analysis suggests that the success of similar processes requires trust-building and depolarizing measures. Both political parties and their constituencies must have the political will to make concessions that are necessary for agreements to be made. Instead, in the Turkish case, the country underwent significant autocratization during the negotiations, with the violent repression of the Gezi Park protests revealing the true face of Erdogan and the AKP, according to some interviewees. This further eroded trust in the AKP.

Constitutional constraints: The conditions for reducing electoral violence through reform

The final study explores the use of electoral violence as an outcome to understand the conditions under which constitution-making can lead to a reduction in such violence during elections. Employing data on constitutional reforms from across the world spanning 1946 through 2015, the study captures a broad scope of reforms. The scope is limited to hybrid regimes, since those are the regimes of highest relevance to the research question. Even though the study focuses on electoral violence as an outcome, it specifically estimates the change in electoral violence compared to before the reform. As such, it also takes into

account prior levels of electoral violence and recognizes that many hybrid regimes are not necessarily marked by an absolute presence or absence of electoral violence, but rather varying degrees of it. The study offers new insights through three avenues. First, it introduces a dynamic approach that investigates how institutional changes impact the ensuing levels of electoral violence. Second, it investigates the claim that constitutional reform may impact levels of electoral violence by using data that spans beyond single-case studies from the African continent and by honing in on the conditions under which this occurs. Finally, it confirms that electoral violence has diverse causes for different actors.

Argument

The study puts forward two conditions that could lead to a decline in government-initiated electoral violence as a result of constitutional reform processes.³ The first is when constitutional replacements are the result of a negotiated agreement between representatives of distinct interest groups, and the second is greater constraints on the executive. The first condition draws on research indicating that constitution-making processes contribute to peace-making in post-conflict settings, and the opportunities for non-violent conflict-resolution that they entail. I link this with the insight that negotiators in constitution-making are often party representatives, and that such processes often take place outside of post-conflict environments yet in places where electoral violence is carried out by political parties. The second condition draws on insights from previous research regarding how institutions shape the opportunities and incentives for electoral violence. I suggest that given that institutions influence

³ I focus on constitutional replacements, where the full constitution is under reform, rather than constitutional amendments.

the propensity to employ electoral violence, it follows that reforms of key institutions have the potential to alter this propensity.

Findings

The study finds support for the hypothesis that negotiated agreements are more likely to have a decline in government-perpetrated violence in the first elections following the reform. However, there is varied support for the second proposed mechanism. Introducing executive constraints does not necessarily constrain government-perpetrated electoral violence. However, such violence does tend to decrease when a constitution removes the executive's excessive powers, specifically its ability to unilaterally enact a state of emergency. Violence by other actors is, on average, unaffected by these constitutional reform characteristics.

The results underscore that the characteristics of the process itself have an impact on the final outcome. The effect of negotiated agreement is in line with research showing that the level of inclusiveness during the negotiation process and the practice of elite bargaining have a positive impact on the development of liberal democracy following constitutional reform (see, e.g., Eisenstadt and Maboudi, 2019; Negretto and Sánchez-Talanquer 2021). However, the fact that only government conduct appears to be positively affected is a significant limitation to the potential of constitutional reform in bringing out pro-democratic changes in political behavior writ large.

Implications

The findings provide empirical evidence suggesting that while reforming formal institutions may successfully constrain the government and its supporters, other forms of institutional changes or alterations to informal institutions may be more effective for actors not affiliated with the government. This ties into

the debates surrounding the effects of institutional reform in hybrid regimes, highlighting the varying impacts on governments and other actors involved. Sceptics have raised concerns over the true impact that institutional reforms can bring in hybrid regimes (see, e.g., Glinz 2011; Hassan 2015). Oftentimes, informal rules and institutions shape the political landscape and interactions to a greater extent than formal institutions do (Schedler 2013). Many of these states often struggle with corruption, biased bureaucracies, and illicit groups that are willing to use violence. While reforms of formal institutions can constrain leaders, they appear less efficient in constraining actors outside the state apparatus. Further research is needed to disentangle the potentially divergent effects of distinct types of constitutional reform on different types of non-government actors.

These insights are relevant for policymakers, governments, and legal advisors involved in constitution-making and the prevention of electoral violence. They can help identify which features of constitution-making processes are most likely to yield a more peaceful and democratic outcome. They also indicate that there could be challenges in implementing and achieving the desired impact through the introduction of new accountability mechanisms, and they highlight the importance of taking an approach beyond merely *de jure* measures. The temporal scope of the outcome is, however, limited. As such, more research is needed into the longer-term implications of these reforms.

Conclusions and recommendations

This dissertation challenges the assumption that multiparty elections inherently reduce the risk of violence and suggest that electoral violence is not only a symptom of flawed democracy, but also plays a role in undermining democratization itself. The studies demonstrate how electoral violence impacts democratization through an interplay between partisan biases and interests at both the citizen and elite levels. Ultimately, the dissertation emphasizes the importance of addressing electoral violence and its repercussions through a multifaceted approach, as well as the critical role that political parties and partisanship play in shaping the effects of electoral violence on democratization. The findings indicate that:

- Repeated experience with violent elections is associated with lower levels of liberal democracy compared to repeated experience with peaceful elections. Electoral violence hence appears to inhibit the contribution of multiparty elections to democratization.
- Government-perpetrated electoral violence is associated with higher levels of support for democracy among opposition supporters, while it does not influence incumbent supporters or non-partisans.
- Hesitations to make concessions on contentious topics in constitution-making processes are exacerbated by experiences with violence due to distrust and polarization.
- Constitution-making can provide an avenue toward reducing the risk of government-perpetrated electoral violence if it entails negotiated agreement between distinct group representatives and constrains the executive's ability to enact a state of emergency independently.

Taken together, electoral violence impacts citizens and parties in distinct ways, with varying implications for democratization. While the dissertation illustrates the resilience of opposition supporters and party elites in their support for de-

mocracy despite violent circumstances, the dynamics in the third study raise concerns about opposition parties' capacity to encourage democratization unless a greater number of citizens and political parties unite towards this common goal. Moreover, electoral violence has distinct causes and consequences depending on the identity of the perpetrator and the political party and constituency they are associated with, and indicates that partisan groups are affected differently by violence. The variation in the results of the second and fourth studies, for example, demonstrate the diversity of implications of electoral violence and the factors that constrain it based on the perpetrating actor. The implications for practitioners and policy-makers are several:

- In order to promote democracy, electoral violence must be addressed.
- For electoral accountability to be effective against electoral violence, democracy promotion efforts should focus on people who support the ruling party and people who do not strongly support any party.
- Constitution-making processes could be used as fora to bring together political parties in countries with electoral violence to foster non-violent practices of conflict resolution, accountability, and address underlying institutional issues.
- In countries with violence linked to political parties, constitution-making processes should not require full consensus, and trust-building measures and de-polarization efforts are essential.
- Distinct approaches are required to address electoral violence by the government compared to opposition actors.

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This dissertation summary describes the relationship between election-related violence and democratization in four separate studies focusing on citizens, parties, and constitutional processes. Violence undermines democratization, shapes different voter groups' views on democracy, and creates challenges for state-building. The dissertation highlights the challenges of democratic reforms when they are accompanied by violence, analyzed from different perspectives.

Avhandlingen som sammanfattas här undersöker, i fyra separata studier, sambandet mellan valrelaterat våld och demokratisering med fokus på medborgare, partier och konstitutionella processer. Våld underminerar demokratisering, formar olika väljargrupper syn på demokrati och skapar utmaningar för statsbyggande.

Avhandlingen belyser utmaningarna med demokratiska reformer när de kantas av våld utifrån olika perspektiv.

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