

The Nexus between Electoral Management System and Post-Election Violence in Kenya Since 1963

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the relationship between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence, which has persisted despite numerous reforms since the country's independence in 1963. The primary aim was to identify structural issues within the electoral administration that contribute to violence following elections. The research analyzed key components of the electoral management system and the causes of post-election violence. Utilizing consociationalism theory, voting theory, and rational choice theory, the study employed a historical design with both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research was conducted from July to December 2022. The target population included eligible voters (260), politicians (50), IEBC officials (40), political analysts (60), humanitarian-aid organizations representatives (10), local election observers (5), international election observers (5), security personnel (10), and county administrative staff (10). A stratified random sampling method was employed to collect data using both questionnaires and interviews. The targeted population established the strata of 641,396, and a random sample was taken from each stratum, arriving at a sample size of 450 respondents. The findings revealed that Kenya's electoral system is primarily based on the First Past the Post (FPTP) model, which is a plurality/majority system. The study identified several key factors contributing to post-election violence, including the "winner-takes-all" nature of elections, disputes over election results due to perceived bias in the electoral management body, and voter incitement by politicians. A statistically significant correlation was established between the electoral management system and post-election violence ($\beta = .685$, $t = 16.225$, $\text{Sig.} = .000$). The findings indicated that the self-interest and impunity of political leaders, along with ethnic divisions and mistrust, hinder the IEBC's ability to conduct fair and credible elections. A significant association was also found between the causes and consequences of post-election violence ($\beta = .757$, $t = 19.088$, $\text{Sig.} = .000$). The study recommends exploring alternative electoral systems, such as proportional representation and mixed-member models, to promote inclusivity and fair representation. By establishing a connection between the electoral management system and post-election violence, this research contributes to peace and conflict studies, addressing a relatively understudied area in Kenya and the broader region.

Keywords: Electoral Management System, First Past the Post Electoral System Kenya, Post Electoral Violence

I. INTRODUCTION

Democratic elections are designed to empower citizens to select their preferred representatives (Brown, 2009). The goal of a democratic electoral system is to ensure that election outcomes genuinely reflect the electorate's will, thereby granting legitimacy to elected officials and minimizing challenges to the results (Dahl, 1989). Political frameworks establish the rules governing democracy, and it is often suggested that the electoral system is particularly vulnerable to manipulation, whether for beneficial or harmful purposes. Essentially, the electoral system determines who is elected and which political party gains authority by translating votes into legislative power (Norris, 2012). In countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe, the majoritarian electoral system is prone to exploitation by unscrupulous majorities and incumbents, leading to political tensions and electoral violence (Lindberg, 2006). Additionally, this system significantly impacts political parties.

Reynolds and Sisk (1995) argue that majoritarian electoral systems foster the development of political parties characterized by patronage and clientelism. Such systems often promote personality-driven politics, affecting party discipline, cohesion, and the unity of party agendas while suppressing dissent. The majoritarian framework influences how parties mobilize for campaigns and shapes the behavior of party elites, which in turn informs their policies and programs. This system may also encourage coalitions among dominant ethnic groups to secure electoral victories. For instance, in Kenya, KANU formed coalitions like KAMATUSA in 1992 and 1997, while Jubilee garnered support primarily from the Rift Valley and Central Kenya in 2013 and 2017, often relying on regional ties, ethnicity, and historical connections to rally support (Brown, 2009).

The majoritarian electoral system can exacerbate tensions and conflicts in Kenya, even if this is not the intended outcome (Bogaards, 2014). Historical elections in 1992, 1997, 2007, 2013, and 2017 have shown how this system can deepen divisions, turning elections into high-stakes contests where the focus shifts from policies to personalities. The electoral process becomes a zero-sum game, where one party's victory equates to another's defeat. This mentality fosters a mindset where winning becomes paramount, often leading to violence as parties vie for power. Since gaining independence in 1963, Kenya has experienced a series of elections, many of which have been marred by violence (International Peace Institute, 2012).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In five out of six elections since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1991, presidential elections have been contested, resulting in conflict and violence, particularly in 1992, 1997, 2007, 2013, and 2017 (Birch & Muchlinski, 2018). The post-election violence between December 2007 and February 2008 was particularly severe, resulting in approximately 1,200 deaths and displacing over 300,000 individuals following the announcement of presidential results (Kenya Human Rights Commission [KHRC], 2018). One of the most tragic incidents involved the burning of a church where 200 internally displaced persons had sought refuge, leading to the deaths of 35 individuals.

Violence reemerged during the 2013 and 2017 elections, establishing a consistent pattern of casualties and displacements (Adhiambo, 2017). Consequently, this study will investigate Kenya's electoral system since independence, focusing on its connection to electoral violence. The majoritarian winner-takes-all mechanism creates a high-stakes environment in a nation with diverse ethnicities, where political campaigns often polarize communities and exclude losing factions from the democratic process (Bekoe, 2012). The stakes are so high that neither side is willing to accept defeat, leading to violence as a strategic option to avoid total marginalization. This dynamic has significantly contributed to the post-election violence observed in Kenya since 1963 (Mozaffar et al., 2003). Despite various reforms to Kenya's electoral systems, post-election violence has persisted, underscoring the need for this research.

1.2 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to explore the relationship between the electoral system and post-election violence in Kenya since 1963. The specific objectives include:

- i. To assess the nature of Kenya's electoral management system and its impact on post-election violence since 1963.
- ii. To analyze the connection between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence since 1963.

1.3 Research Questions

The research is guided by the following questions:

- i. What is the relationship between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence since 1963?
- ii. How has Kenya's electoral management system related to post-election violence since 1963?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored in three interrelated theories: consociationalism theory, voting theory, and rational choice theory, each offering unique insights into the dynamics of Kenya's electoral management system and its relationship with post-election violence. Consociationalism theory, which emphasizes power-sharing among diverse social groups, provides a lens through which to examine how inclusive governance can mitigate ethnic tensions and promote electoral peace. Voting theory contributes to understanding voter behavior and the impact of electoral systems on political engagement, highlighting the motivations behind electoral participation and the potential for violence in competitive environments. Lastly, rational choice theory offers a perspective on the strategic calculations of political actors, elucidating how incentives and disincentives within the electoral framework influence decision-making processes. Together, these theories create a comprehensive analytical framework that guides the investigation of the nexus between electoral management and post-election violence in Kenya, addressing the study's objectives and research questions while informing potential recommendations for reform.

2.1.1 Consociationalism Theory

Consociationalism theory, primarily associated with political theorist Arend Lijphart (1999), suggests that in deeply divided societies, political stability and democratic governance can be attained through power-sharing arrangements among different social groups. This theory emphasizes the importance of inclusive governance, where different ethnic, religious, or cultural groups are represented in decision-making processes. In the context of Kenya, where ethnic divisions have historically influenced electoral outcomes and contributed to post-election violence, con-

sociationalism provides a framework for understanding how an inclusive electoral management system can mitigate tensions and promote peace. By examining the effectiveness of power-sharing mechanisms in Kenya's electoral processes, the study can assess whether such arrangements have been successful in reducing violence and fostering a sense of belonging among diverse groups.

2.1.2 Voting Theory

Voting theory, which encompasses various models and approaches to understanding electoral behavior, is crucial for analyzing how individuals and groups make decisions during elections. Proponents of this theory, such as Arrow (1963, 1970) and Nash (1950), have explored the complexities of voter preferences, strategic voting, and the impact of electoral systems on political outcomes. In the Kenyan context, voting theory can help elucidate the motivations behind voter behavior, including the influence of ethnic identity and the perceived legitimacy of the electoral process. By applying voting theory to the study, researchers can gain insights into how electoral management practices affect voter turnout, engagement, and ultimately, the incidence of post-election violence. This understanding is vital for addressing the research questions related to the causes and consequences of electoral violence.

2.1.3 Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory, associated with economists and political scientists like Buchanan and Tullock (2003), posits that individuals make decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis to maximize their utility. This theory is relevant to the study as it provides a lens through which to examine the strategic calculations of political actors, including voters, candidates, and electoral officials, in the context of Kenya's elections. By applying rational choice theory, the research can explore how the incentives and disincentives created by the electoral management system.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review of the study topic focuses on the relationship between electoral management systems and post-election violence, particularly in the context of Kenya since 1963. Numerous studies have documented the historical patterns of electoral violence in Kenya, highlighting the role of ethnic divisions, political competition, and the effectiveness of electoral institutions. For instance, research by scholars such as Kanyinga (2016) and Oucho (2017) has shown that the manipulation of electoral processes, including voter registration and the conduct of elections, has often exacerbated tensions among different ethnic groups (Kanyinga, 2016; Oucho, 2017). These studies provide a foundational understanding of how electoral management practices can influence the likelihood of violence, aligning closely with the study's objective to establish the essence of Kenya's electoral management system and its influence on post-election violence.

Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that the design of electoral systems significantly impacts voter behavior and political outcomes. Studies by Barkan (2013) and Khamis (2018) have explored how the first-past-the-post electoral system in Kenya has led to winner-takes-all scenarios, intensifying competition among political factions and increasing the stakes of electoral contests. This aligns with the study's research questions regarding the causes and consequences of post-election violence, as it underscores the need to examine how electoral rules and management practices can either mitigate or exacerbate conflict. The empirical findings indicate that reforms aimed at creating more inclusive and proportional electoral systems could potentially reduce the incidence of violence, thereby addressing the study's objectives.

Additionally, the role of international and local observers in the electoral process has been a focal point in empirical studies. Research by the International Crisis Group (2018) highlights the importance of credible electoral oversight in enhancing public confidence in the electoral process and reducing the potential for violence. This is particularly relevant to the study's objectives, as it emphasizes the need for effective electoral management practices that promote transparency and accountability. The findings suggest that strengthening the capacity of electoral management bodies and ensuring their independence can play a crucial role in preventing post-election violence, thus providing a pathway for addressing the study's research questions.

In summary, the empirical review reveals a complex interplay between electoral management systems and post-election violence in Kenya. The existing literature underscores the significance of inclusive governance, the design of electoral systems, and the role of oversight in shaping electoral outcomes. These insights are directly relevant to the study's objectives and research questions, as they provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to electoral violence and highlight potential avenues for reform. By synthesizing these empirical findings, the study can draw informed conclusions and make recommendations aimed at enhancing electoral management practices to promote peace and stability in Kenya.

2.2.1 Electoral Management Systems and Democratic Legitimacy

Electoral management systems are crucial for ensuring that election outcomes reflect the will of the people, Muraoka (2023). According to Norris (2012), effective electoral systems are designed to enhance voter participation and trust in the democratic process. In Kenya, the electoral management system has historically been characterized by the First Past the Post (FPTP) model, which has been criticized for fostering a "winner-takes-all" mentality that can lead to political exclusion and violence (Lijphart, 1999). This system has often been exploited, leading to questions about its fairness and the legitimacy of the electoral outcomes (Blais & Massicotte, 2002).

Post-electoral violence in Kenya has been a recurring issue since independence in 1963, often linked to the electoral management system. According to Kanyinga (2016), the perception of bias within the electoral management body, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), has exacerbated tensions and led to violent outbreaks following elections. The "winner-takes-all" nature of the electoral system has been identified as a significant factor contributing to this violence, as it creates a high-stakes environment where losing parties may resort to violence to contest the results (Oucho, 2010).

Political actors play a pivotal role in either mitigating or inciting post-electoral violence. Research by Wan-yande (1988) highlights how politicians often engage in voter incitement, manipulating ethnic divisions to mobilize support and delegitimize opponents. This manipulation can lead to violence, particularly in a context where the electoral management system is perceived as biased or ineffective (Kanyinga, 2016). The interplay between political rhetoric and electoral outcomes underscores the need for a more inclusive electoral management system that can address these challenges.

The nexus between Kenya's electoral management system and post-electoral violence is complex and multifaceted. The existing literature highlights the need for reforms that promote inclusivity and fairness in the electoral process. Addressing the structural issues within the electoral management system is essential for mitigating post-electoral violence and enhancing democratic legitimacy in Kenya.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a historical mixed-methods research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively understand the relationship between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence (Chukwuemeka, 2024). This design was justified as it allows for triangulation of data, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings. As observed in Chukwuemeka (2024). The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including registered voters, electoral officials, political leaders, administration officials, security officials, election observers, security agents, county administrators, humanitarian agency officials, and civil society representatives, to gather nuanced insights into their experiences and perceptions. The quantitative component involved the analysis of secondary data, including electoral results and reports on post-election violence, to identify patterns and correlations. This mixed-methods approach aligns with the study's objectives by enabling a thorough exploration of the complex dynamics at play, addressing the research questions from multiple perspectives.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Kenya, focusing on regions that have historically experienced significant electoral violence, such as Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, and Eldoret. These areas were selected due to their diverse ethnic compositions and prominence in the country's political landscape. The study was conducted in Kenya, focusing on regions that have historically experienced significant electoral violence, such as Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, and Eldoret. These areas were selected due to their diverse ethnic compositions and prominence in the country's political landscape (Chege, 2008; Nyabola, 2018; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2022). The justification for this choice lies in the need to capture various experiences and perspectives related to electoral management and violence. By concentrating on these regions, the study aims to provide context-specific insights that reflect broader national trends while also acknowledging local variations. This focus is significant for addressing the research questions, as it allows for an in-depth examination of the factors contributing to post-election violence in areas most affected by it.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised members of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) (40), politicians (50), political analysts and experts (60), representatives from humanitarian aid organizations (10), local election observers (5), international election observers (5), security personnel (10), county administration members (10), and voters (260) from the selected study areas. This diverse group was intentionally selected

to provide a comprehensive understanding of the electoral process and its potential implications for violence. The rationale for including various stakeholders stems from recognizing that electoral management is a complex issue involving multiple actors, each contributing distinct perspectives and experiences. Engaging a broad target population is crucial for achieving the study's objectives, as it facilitates a holistic analysis of the electoral management system and its impact on post-election violence, thereby effectively addressing the research questions.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

Cooper and Schindler (2014) define sample size as the number of respondents selected from a target population in a manner that accurately reflects that population. Determining an appropriate sample size is crucial for researchers to obtain reliable results aligned with established study objectives. In this research, the administrative units comprised constituencies from Nairobi County, Kisumu County, Nakuru County, Uasin Gishu County, and Mombasa County, with two constituencies chosen from each county. Specifically, the selected constituencies were Kibra and Mathare from Nairobi County; Kisumu and Kisumu East from Kisumu County; Nakuru and Nakuru East from Nakuru County; Kapseret and Eldoret East from Uasin Gishu County; and Kisauni and Likoni from Mombasa County.

The sampling frame included a total of 641,206 voters, 50 politicians, 60 political analysts, 40 officials from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), 10 representatives from humanitarian aid agencies, 5 local observers, 5 international observers, 10 security personnel, and 10 county administrators. The sample size for this study was calculated using the formula proposed by Nassiuma (2000):

$$n=cv2+(N-1) e2N(cv2)$$

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = population (641,396)
- cv = coefficient of variation (0.424)
- e = tolerance (0.02)

Substituting the values into the formula yields:

$$n= (0.4242) + (641396-1) (0.022) (641396) (0.4242)=450$$

Thus, the calculated sample size for this research was 450 participants, which included 50 politicians (former councilors/MCAs), 60 political analysts, 40 IEBC officials, 260 voters, 10 representatives from humanitarian aid agencies, 5 local observers, 5 international observers, 10 security personnel, and 10 county administrators. This sample size was deemed optimal for conducting interviews and allowed for effective scheduling.

A purposive sampling technique was utilized to select participants for the qualitative aspect of the study, ensuring the inclusion of individuals with pertinent knowledge and experience. For the quantitative analysis, a stratified random sampling method was employed to guarantee representation across various demographic groups within the target population. The significance of this sampling strategy lies in its capacity to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research questions while ensuring that the findings are representative of the broader population.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis for the qualitative component involved thematic analysis, where transcripts from interviews and focus group discussions were coded to identify recurring themes and patterns related to electoral management and violence. This method was justified as it allows for exploring complex social phenomena and provides insights into Participant #39 lived experiences. For the quantitative data, statistical analysis was conducted using software such as SPSS to identify correlations and trends between electoral management practices and instances of post-election violence. This dual approach to data analysis is significant for the study objectives, as it enables a comprehensive examination of the research questions, facilitating a deeper understanding of the factors influencing electoral violence.

3.6 Data Presentation

The presentation of data was conducted through a combination of narrative descriptions, thematic summaries, and statistical visualizations, such as graphs and charts. Qualitative findings were presented thematically, highlighting key insights from participants, while quantitative results were illustrated using descriptive statistics and inferential analyses. This mixed presentation format is justified as it caters to different audiences and enhances the clarity of the findings. The significance of this approach lies in its ability to effectively communicate the complexities of the research findings, making them accessible to policymakers, scholars, and practitioners. By presenting data clearly and engagingly, the study aims to facilitate informed discussions and decision-making regarding electoral management and violence prevention in Kenya.



IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

The study specifically selected 260 voters, 50 elected officials, 60 political analysts, 40 IEBC employees, 10 representatives of the Humanitarian Aid Agency, 10 local and international observers, 10 security personnel, and 10 county administrative staff members. Thus, 450 people from a selected group of counties, including Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret, Nakuru, and Mombasa, comprised the sample size that was established. As a result, 450 instruments in total were administered in accordance with the chosen sample size. 186 of the 260 voter surveys that were distributed were fully completed and returned. This results in a 79% response rate among voters who are registered.

A total of 38 politicians were on the other hand interviewed out of the 50 targeted, resulting a 76% response rate for politicians. Further, out of the 60 interviews targeted with political analysts, a total of 44 were successfully conducted resulting in a 73% response rate for political analysts. 29 interviews were conducted among IEBC officials, out of the 40 targeted which translates to a 73% response rate. The response rate for the Humanitarian Aid Agency officials was, 72%, Local observers 81%, international 81%, security agents, 81%, and Members of county administration 82%. In total, the study achieved a response rate of 77% with 328 respondents reached out of the 450 targeted. The foregoing statistics are broken down in Table 4.1.

The initial focus and study target were 450 respondents. With the help of field research Assistants, 328 respondents responded positively to the questionnaires and interviews, translating to a 77% response, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Response Rate

Response	Frequency		%		
Completed Questionnaires and Interviews	328		77%		
Questionnaires and Interviews Not Returned	122		23%		
Total	450		100%		
Category	Targeted	Response	Non-Response		
		n	%	N	%
Voters	260	186	79	74	21
Politicians (former councilors/MCAs, MPs, and County Governors)	50	38	76	12	24
Political Analyst	60	44	73	16	27
I.E.B.C Officials	40	29	73	11	28
Humanitarian Aid Agency officials	10	7	72	3	28
Local observers	5	4	81	2	19
International observers	5	4	81	1	19
Security agents	10	8	81	2	19
Members of county administration	10	8	82	2	18
Total	450	328	77	122	23

According to Creswell (2013), the established overall and per-category response rates were excellent and sufficient for data analysis and inference drawing. A return rate of 70% or higher is considered "excellent," a return rate of 60% is "good," and a return rate of 50% is "adequate," according to Collis and Hussey (2009). The hiring and training of 10 research assistants to help in the administration of the instruments across the five chosen counties is credited with the high return rate.

4.2 Essence of Kenya’s Electoral Management System

The study sought to determine the essence of Kenya’s electoral management system. To this end, respondents were asked to indicate their levels of agreement with various statements posed in relation to the essence of Kenya’s electoral management system. This was based on a 5-point Likert scale, were 1 denoted strongly disagrees, 2 denoted disagree, while 3 denoted neutral. Number 4 denoted agree while 5 denoted strongly agree.

Table 1*The Essence of Kenya's Electoral Management System*

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Upholds the freedom of citizens to exercise their right to vote	4.186	0.611
Promotes fair representation	4.297	0.485
Promotes equality of vote	4.360	0.578
Supports free and fair elections	4.411	0.588
Establishes mechanisms for settling of electoral disputes	4.106	0.634
Determines how elections and referendums are conducted by the electoral management body	4.377	0.624
Establishes eligibility criteria for voters	4.076	0.482
Establishes eligibility criteria for election candidates	4.191	0.654
Establishes the electoral formula	4.271	0.464
Establishes how election campaigns are conducted	4.275	0.656
Overall Mean	4.255	0.577

The findings in Table 1 depict an overall mean of 4.255 (SD=0.577), implying that most respondents highly agree with most of the items. A majority of respondents particularly affirm that the electoral system in Kenya upholds the freedom of citizens to exercise their right to vote (4.186); promotes fair representation (4.297); promotes equality of vote (4.360); supports free and fair elections (4.411); establishes mechanisms for settling of electoral disputes (4.106); determines how elections and referendums are conducted by the electoral management body (4.377); establishes eligibility criteria for voters (4.076); establishes eligibility criteria for election candidates 4.191; establishes the electoral formula (4.271); and establishes how election campaigns are conducted (4.275).

Respondents were further asked to elaborate on what they think about the nature of electoral system in Kenya. It emerged from the responses that a majority of respondents perceive the country's electoral system as being grounded on the principles of being free and fair as well as the equality of vote. A majority of respondents also recognize that the freedom to vote, association with a political party, and the right to stand for elective positions are among political rights provided for in the Constitution of Kenya. A majority further recognize the IEBC as the institution that is constitutionally mandated to govern the electoral process in the country and the judiciary as being tasked by the Constitution to handle any electoral disputes including presidential petitions. A respondent for instance offered that:

"The electoral system in Kenya is headed by the IEBC which is mandated by the Constitution to conduct elections in a manner that is free and fair" [Q7 Voter 29, Nairobi]

Another added that:

"The electoral system in Kenya is such that every citizen who has attained the legal age of eighteen has the freedom and right to register as a voter, to vote and to vie for any elective post as long as they are qualified" [Q7 Voter 72, Kisumu]

It was further discovered in key informant interviews that the electoral system in Kenya is based on the First Past the Post principle which is a form of plurality/majority system. It is grounded on the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, and encompasses an array of actors each with a particular role defined in the Constitution. The main actors in this regard include the voter, who is guaranteed the freedom to vote among other rights; IEBC as the institution constitutionally mandated to conduct elections, by-elections and referenda; the judiciary, which is tasked with addressing all disputes and litigation pertaining to the elections; and parliament tasked with the formulation of legislation and amendments relevant to election laws. Other important stakeholders were found to include the executive and particularly the incumbency; media houses and internal security apparatus.

Respondents were also asked to express their opinions on whether the country's electoral system guarantees free and fair elections. While a majority affirmed that the Constitution of Kenya tasks the IEBC to conduct free and fair elections, they expressed reservations, particularly regarding the incumbency and integrity of the election officials. According to most, the Constitution guarantees free and fair elections. However, it is up to the IEBC through its officials and the incumbent government to ensure that the electoral process is devoid of any malpractices that jeopardize freedom and fairness of the same.

It can be deduced from the findings that the essence of the electoral system in Kenya is embodied by a multiplicity of stakeholders grounded on the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. The Constitution is the overarching law that establishes the institutional and legal frameworks in the electoral system. The main institutional stakeholder in the system is the IEBC which is charged with conducting or supervising referenda and elections. The Judiciary is also a key institution whose role is particularly pronounced in settling electoral disputes. Other key institutions include parlia-

ment, county governments, the executive branch, the interior security docket, and the media. Voters are also key stakeholders in the country's electoral system with their rights pertinent to voting provided in the Constitution.

The study reveals that Kenya's electoral management system has historically been characterized by a lack of inclusivity and transparency, significantly influencing post-election violence. The electoral framework, particularly the first-past-the-post system, has often marginalized minority groups and intensified ethnic competition. This marginalization has led to feelings of disenfranchisement among various communities, contributing to tensions that can escalate into violence during elections. The findings indicate that the electoral management bodies have frequently been perceived as biased or ineffective, further exacerbating public distrust and the potential for conflict.

The research identifies a clear nexus between the electoral management system and post-election violence, demonstrating that systemic flaws in electoral processes have directly contributed to violent outcomes. Historical analysis shows that periods of electoral reform, such as the introduction of new electoral laws or the establishment of independent electoral commissions, have often been followed by improvements in electoral integrity and reductions in violence. Conversely, electoral manipulation, such as rigging or unfair practices, has consistently led to violent reactions from aggrieved political factions. This finding underscores the importance of a robust and impartial electoral management system in mitigating the risks of violence.

The study identifies several fundamental causes of post-election violence, including ethnic polarization, political manipulation, and socio-economic disparities. Ethnic identity plays a significant role in shaping voter behavior, and political allegiance, often leading to violent confrontations when electoral outcomes favor one group over another. The consequences of such violence are profound, resulting in loss of life, displacement of communities, and long-term societal divisions. The findings highlight that the aftermath of electoral violence affects immediate political stability, social cohesion, and trust in democratic institutions.

The research comprehensively analyzes the causes and consequences of post-election violence, revealing that political, social, and economic factors create a volatile environment during elections. The study shows that political leaders often exploit ethnic divisions for electoral gain, which can incite violence among rival groups. The consequences extend beyond the immediate aftermath of elections, leading to entrenched divisions and a cycle of mistrust that complicates future electoral processes. This finding emphasizes the need to address the root causes of violence through inclusive governance and community engagement.

The study concludes that the electoral management system is a critical determinant of post-election violence in Kenya. The findings indicate that when electoral processes are perceived as fair and transparent, the likelihood of violence decreases significantly. Conversely, when electoral management is marred by corruption, bias, or inefficiency, it creates an environment ripe for conflict. The research highlights reforms to enhance the independence and capacity of electoral management bodies. Fostering a more peaceful electoral environment is essential for breaking the cycle of violence.

The research confirms the multifaceted nexus between the electoral management system and post-election violence. It illustrates how electoral rules, electoral officials' conduct, and the electoral process's overall integrity directly influence the behavior of political actors and voters. The study emphasizes that a well-functioning electoral management system can deter violence by promoting trust and engagement among citizens. In contrast, a flawed system can exacerbate tensions and lead to violent outcomes.

The study's findings align closely with its objectives and research questions, providing a nuanced understanding of the relationship between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence. By establishing the essence of the electoral system, examining the causes and consequences of violence, and determining the nexus between these elements, the research contributes valuable insights that can inform future electoral reforms and conflict prevention strategies in Kenya.

4.2 Nexus between Kenya's Electoral Management System and Post-Election Violence

The study sought to determine the nexus between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence since 1963. To this end, both Pearson correlation and regression analysis were conducted. Results are as presented in Tables 4 through 7:



Table 4

Correlation Matrix: Kenya’s Electoral Management System and Post-Election Violence

		Causes	Electoral Management System
Causes	r	1	.685**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
Electoral Management System	r	.685**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation results reveal a significant and strong positive relationship between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence, with a correlation coefficient (r) of .685** and a significance level (Sig.) of .000. This indicates that as the effectiveness or changes in the electoral management system increase, there is a corresponding increase in post-election violence. The double asterisks (**) denote that the correlation is highly significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting a less than 1% probability that this relationship is due to chance. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is a substantial link between the way elections are managed in Kenya and the occurrence of post-election violence.

The significant and strong positive correlation between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence indicates that deficiencies or inefficiencies in the electoral system are closely linked to the occurrence of post-election violence. This finding aligns with previous studies in Kenya and other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, which have documented how flawed electoral processes, such as voter intimidation, ballot rigging, and lack of transparency, can lead to violence (Kanyinga, 2009; Klopp & Kamungi, 2008). For instance, the 2007-2008 post-election violence in Kenya has been attributed to widespread perceptions of electoral fraud and mismanagement (Cheeseman, 2008). Similar trends have been observed in countries like Nigeria and Zimbabwe, where electoral malpractice has frequently led to violent conflicts (Collier & Vicente, 2012). Table 5 presents the model summary, an output of regression analysis:

Table 5

Model Summary: Kenya’s Electoral Management System and Post-Election Violence

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.685 ^a	.469	.467	3.81242

a. Predictors: (Constant), Electoral Management System

The model summary presents key statistics that describe the strength and fit of the regression model. The correlation coefficient (R) is .685, mirroring the Pearson correlation result and reaffirming the strong relationship between the electoral management system and post-election violence. The R Square value of .469 indicates that approximately 46.9% of the variance in post-election violence can be explained by the electoral management system. This is a considerable proportion, suggesting that nearly half of the variability in post-election violence can be accounted for by changes or characteristics of the electoral management system. The adjusted R Square, slightly lower at .467, accounts for the number of predictors in the model and the sample size; confirming the model's robustness. The standard error of the estimate (3.81242) provides a measure of the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, indicating the precision of the predictions.

The model summary reveals that the electoral management system accounts for approximately 46.9% of the variance in post-election violence (R Square = .469). This substantial explanatory power underscores the pivotal role that electoral management plays in ensuring peaceful elections. Comparative studies in sub-Saharan Africa have shown that electoral reforms and effective management can significantly reduce the incidence of electoral violence (Lindberg, 2006; Bekoe, 2012). For example, Ghana's successful electoral reforms and the establishment of a credible electoral commission have been credited with minimizing election-related violence (Gyimah-Boadi, 2009). Globally, the positive impact of robust electoral management systems on reducing violence is well-documented, with countries like India and Brazil illustrating how transparent and well-managed elections contribute to political stability (Banerjee et al., 2010). Table 6 presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA), an output of regression analysis:



Table 6

ANOVA: Kenya’s Electoral Management System and Post-Election Violence

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3826.084	1	3826.084	263.241	.000 ^b
	Residual	4331.286	298	14.535		
	Total	8157.370	299			

a. Dependent Variable: Post-election violence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Electoral Management System

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table provides insight into the overall significance of the regression model. The regression sum of squares (3826.084) reflects the variation explained by the model, while the residual sum of squares (4331.286) represents the variation not explained by the model. The sum of squares (8157.370) is the sum of these two and indicates the total variation in the dependent variable, post-election violence. The mean square values are obtained by dividing the sum of squares by their respective degrees of freedom (DF). The F statistic (263.241) is the ratio of the mean square regression to the mean square residual, and the significance value (Sig.) of .000 suggests that the regression model is highly significant. This means that the electoral management system significantly predicts post-election violence, supporting the hypothesis that the two variables have a meaningful relationship.

The ANOVA results (F = 263.241, Sig. = .000) confirm that the regression model is highly significant, indicating that the electoral management system is a crucial predictor of post-election violence. This finding is consistent with the theoretical framework that posits the quality of electoral management as a determinant of election outcomes and associated violence (Schedler, 2002). In Kenya, the implementation of the IEBC aimed to address electoral malpractices and reduce violence (Kanyinga, 2014). However, the recurrent violence, especially during the 2017 elections, suggests that further reforms are needed (Mueller, 2018). In sub-Saharan Africa, the effectiveness of electoral bodies differs significantly; however, those that demonstrate greater independence and transparency are generally associated with lower levels of violence (Norris, 2014). Table 7 presents the Coefficients, an output of regression analysis:

Table 7

Coefficients: Kenya’s Electoral Management System and Post-Election Violence

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	21.898	1.235		17.735	.000
	Electoral Management System	.488	.030	.685	16.225	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Post-election violence

The coefficients table provides specific information about the regression equation, which predicts the dependent variable, post-election violence, from the independent variable, the electoral management system. The constant (21.898) represents the expected value of post-election violence when the electoral management system score is zero. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for the electoral management system is .488, indicating that for each one-unit increase in the effectiveness or score of the electoral management system, post-election violence is expected to increase by .488 units. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of .685 confirms the strength of this relationship in standardized terms. The t value (16.225) and its associated significance level (Sig.=.000) further affirms that the electoral management system predicts post-election violence significantly.

The coefficients indicate that for each unit increase in the effectiveness of the electoral management system, post-election violence increases by .685 units ($\beta = .685$, Sig. = .000). These results underline the critical impact of electoral management on post-election violence, emphasizing the need for improvements in the electoral process to mitigate violence. Literature from sub-Saharan Africa supports the notion that while electoral management is critical, other factors such as ethnic divisions, political party dynamics, and socioeconomic conditions also play significant roles in election-related violence (Straus & Taylor, 2012). Similar findings have been observed globally, where multifaceted approaches combining electoral reforms with broader political and social interventions are necessary to mitigate violence (Reilly, 2008).

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of the electoral management system in mitigating or exacerbating post-election violence in Kenya. The statistically significant association between the electoral management system and post-election violence indicates that the quality and effectiveness of the electoral management system are pivotal in influencing the occurrence and intensity of post-election violence. This suggests that deficiencies in the electoral management system, such as lack of transparency, inadequate preparedness, and perceived or actual biases, can significantly contribute to electoral disputes and subsequent violence. Addressing these deficiencies through re-

forms to enhance transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in the electoral process can reduce the incidence and severity of post-election violence. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of robust electoral institutions in maintaining peace and stability during electoral periods.

The statistically significant relationship between the causes and consequences of post-election violence highlights the interconnected nature of the factors leading to and resulting from post-election violence. The strong positive association indicates that addressing the root causes, such as ethnic tensions, political exclusion, and socioeconomic disparities, is essential in mitigating the adverse consequences of post-election violence. This implies that comprehensive approaches that address violence's structural and immediate triggers are necessary for sustainable peace. These findings are consistent with broader research in sub-Saharan Africa and globally, showing that tackling electoral violence's underlying causes can significantly diminish its harmful effects. Therefore, policymakers and stakeholders in Kenya and similar contexts should prioritize holistic strategies encompassing electoral reforms and broader socio-political interventions to address the multifaceted nature of post-election violence.

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the relationship between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence, aligning with and expanding upon existing literature in the field. The reviewed literature provides a foundational understanding of the dynamics at play, while the study's findings offer empirical evidence that reinforces and nuances these theoretical perspectives.

4.2.1 Electoral Management and Inclusivity

One of the study's primary findings is the critical role of inclusivity in the electoral management system. This aligns with the work of Kanyinga (2016) and Oucho (2017), who argue that the marginalization of certain ethnic groups within the electoral process can lead to heightened tensions and violence. The literature emphasizes that electoral systems that fail to represent diverse interests often exacerbate feelings of disenfranchisement among minority groups. The study's findings corroborate this by demonstrating that the first-past-the-post electoral system in Kenya has historically favored dominant ethnic groups, leading to a cycle of exclusion and conflict. This connection underscores the need for electoral reforms that promote proportional representation and inclusivity, as suggested by Barkan (2013), who advocates for systems that reflect the country's ethnic diversity.

4.2.2 Causes of Post-Election Violence

The study's exploration of the causes and consequences of post-election violence resonates with the findings of the International Crisis Group (2018), which highlights the interplay of political manipulation, ethnic polarization, and socio-economic disparities as critical drivers of violence. The literature suggests that political leaders often exploit ethnic identities to mobilize support, which can incite violence when electoral outcomes are perceived as unjust. The study's findings reinforce this notion, revealing that political actors frequently engage in divisive rhetoric and strategies that exacerbate ethnic tensions. Furthermore, the consequences of violence, including loss of life and long-term societal divisions, are consistent with the literature, which emphasizes the detrimental effects of electoral violence on social cohesion and trust in democratic institutions.

4.2.3 The Role of Electoral Oversight

Another significant finding of the study is the importance of electoral oversight and transparency in mitigating post-election violence. This finding aligns with the literature on electoral integrity, which posits that credible oversight mechanisms can enhance public confidence in the electoral process (Khamis, 2018). The study highlights that when electoral management bodies are perceived as biased or ineffective, public trust erodes, leading to increased potential for conflict. This observation is supported by the work of scholars who argue that independent electoral commissions are essential for ensuring fair elections and preventing violence. The study's findings suggest that strengthening the capacity and independence of these bodies is crucial for fostering a peaceful electoral environment, echoing recommendations made in the literature.

4.2.4 The Nexus between Electoral Management and Violence

The study's conclusion regarding the nexus between electoral management and post-election violence is particularly significant. It confirms the assertions made by previous researchers that a well-functioning electoral management system can serve as a deterrent to violence (Ochieng, et.al 2023). The literature indicates that electoral integrity is closely linked to political stability, and the study's findings provide empirical support for this relationship. By demonstrating that improvements in electoral management practices can lead to reductions in violence, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse on governance and conflict resolution. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive reforms that address electoral management's structural and procedural aspects to create a more stable political environment.

The study's findings reveal a complex relationship between Kenya's electoral management system and the incidence of post-election violence. Key findings indicate that the lack of inclusivity in the electoral process, particularly in the context of ethnic divisions, significantly contributes to tensions and violence during elections. The research highlights that the first-past-the-post electoral system exacerbates competition among political factions, leading to heightened stakes and increased potential for conflict. Additionally, the study finds that inadequate oversight and transparency in electoral management practices undermine public confidence, further fueling the likelihood of violence. The findings underscore the critical need for reforms to create a more inclusive and transparent electoral framework.

In brief, the discussions of the research findings against the reviewed literature highlight the complex interplay between Kenya's electoral management system and post-election violence. The study corroborates existing theories and empirical evidence and provides new insights that can inform future research and policy interventions. By situating the findings within the broader context of the literature, the study underscores the importance of inclusive, transparent, and accountable electoral processes in promoting peace and stability in Kenya.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The research paper delved into the correlation between the electoral management system and post-election violence in Kenya since independence in 1963. The study identified various contributing factors to violence, such as disputed election results, tribalism, inadequate conflict resolution mechanisms, and the "winner-takes-it-all" election system. The significance of the research lies in shedding light on the critical issue of electoral violence in Kenya's democratic processes. Understanding this relationship between electoral systems and violence allows policymakers to make informed decisions to prevent and mitigate violence during elections. Furthermore, the research opens avenues for further exploration, including electoral reforms, media influence, and community-level dynamics. In conclusion, this research contributes significantly to building a more peaceful and democratic electoral environment in Kenya, emphasizing fair representation and inclusivity.

The study concludes from the findings that the essence of the electoral system in Kenya is based on the First Past the Post principle, a form of plurality/majority system embodied by a multiplicity of stakeholders grounded on the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. The Constitution is the overarching law that establishes the institutional and legal frameworks in the electoral system. The main institutional stakeholder in the system is the IEBC which is charged with conducting or supervising referenda and elections. The Judiciary is also a key institution whose role is particularly pronounced in settling electoral disputes.

It is further concluded from the findings that among the significant causes of post-election violence in Kenya dating back to 1963 is voter incitement by politicians. Politicians are found to prey on ignorant and unemployed youths to cause violence to intimidate and punish perceived supporters of the opponents. This is mainly catalyzed by ethnicity, in which case voters of a particular tribe are perceived to have voted for the opponent and are therefore attacked in retaliation.

The study's overall finding is that Kenya has used an ineffective electoral management system since 1963, marked by a perceived bias. This system has been observed to significantly contribute to post-election violence and exacerbate mistrust and fear of exclusion because it forces electoral losers to incite their core supporters to contest election results, which in turn causes political instability, social unrest, and economic turmoil.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends several vital actions: First, adopting a more proportional electoral system that encourages inclusivity and representation of diverse ethnic groups should be prioritized. Second, strengthening the independence and capacity of electoral management bodies is essential to ensure fair and transparent elections. Third, enhancing the role of local and international observers can help build public confidence in the electoral process. Finally, promoting civic education initiatives to foster a culture of peaceful political engagement is crucial for reducing the potential for violence.

Based on the statistical findings, it is recommended that Kenya undertakes comprehensive electoral reforms to strengthen the electoral management system, ensuring greater transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. This includes investing in advanced electoral technologies to reduce fraud, enhancing the training and capacity of electoral officials, and fostering independent oversight mechanisms to build public trust. Additionally, addressing the underlying socio-political factors contributing to post-election violence, such as ethnic divisions and socio-economic disparities, is crucial. Implementing inclusive policies that promote political participation, and equitable development can help mitigate these root causes. Engaging in continuous dialogue with political actors, civil society, and the public is essential for creating a shared vision of peaceful and fair elections. Robust legal frameworks and enforcement mecha-

nisms should support these measures to hold accountable those who incite or perpetrate violence. By adopting these comprehensive strategies, Kenya can reduce the incidence and severity of post-election violence and foster a more stable and democratic society.

Based on the research findings, specific policy recommendations are proposed to mitigate the association between the electoral management system and post-election violence in Kenya. Firstly, electoral reforms are vital. It is imperative to bolster transparency and credibility throughout the electoral process by promptly publishing detailed election results that are easily verifiable. Additionally, strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms through the swift and impartial handling of election-related disputes by independent tribunals or courts is essential. Moreover, promoting inclusivity in electoral management bodies to ensure representation from diverse backgrounds fosters trust. Voter education should be prioritized to enlighten voters about their rights, the electoral process, and the significance of peaceful participation. Lastly, enforcing strict codes of conduct for politicians, parties, and media during elections to discourage hate speech and incitement is crucial. Political dialogue and mediation are also instrumental. Encouraging dialogue among political leaders to facilitate discussions on electoral reforms, power-sharing, and conflict prevention is imperative. Furthermore, mediation efforts can help resolve disputes before they escalate into violence. International support is pivotal. Collaboration with global partners such as the United Nations and regional organizations to seek technical assistance for electoral reforms is crucial. Additionally, the presence of international election observers can elevate credibility and serve as a deterrent to violence. Lastly, long-term peacebuilding efforts are essential. Addressing underlying social divisions beyond elections through promoting inter-community dialogue, reconciliation, and historical justice is crucial. Furthermore, investments in education, economic opportunities, and infrastructure are imperative to reduce grievances. It is essential to implement these recommendations within the specific context of Kenya and continuously evaluate their effectiveness. Through adopting these measures, Kenya can progress towards more peaceful and democratic elections.

The study recommends that the current divisive plurality electoral management system be fixed by investigating alternative options such as proportional representation, two-round voting for the first and second-place presidential candidates, and mixed-member representation models, as they are more inclusive and produce fair representation. This is based on the findings and conclusions from the first study objective. These alternate voting systems aim to reduce vote waste by making practically all votes count toward influencing the outcome. A system like this reduces electoral disparity and raises voter turnout.

The study suggests that, to increase transparency for future elections and Kenyans' confidence in the elections, the IEBC should also improve the transparency of its decisions and processes through coordinated stakeholder engagement, the participation of observers, and effective communications. To keep the public informed of its choices and votes, the commission should openly conduct itself, have public meetings, and publish and distribute meeting minutes. Every significant choice, including how to resolve disputes, ought to be disclosed.

The IEBC should create two separate results pathways, one paper-based and the other electronic, to allay concerns about the transparency and integrity of the tabulation process that were voiced during the general elections in 2013, 2017, and 2022. To promote transparency and accountability in the tabular process, it is crucial to give stakeholders and independent observers the capacity to compare the intermediate results of the electronic results path with the paper-based results path at critical points in the process.

Additionally, the IEBC needs to distinguish between the county, parliamentary, and presidential elections. As a result, the electoral commission will have fewer votes to count. Since the burden will be reduced and the costs associated with the voting process will decrease, this will guarantee efficiency.

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