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Editorial Note

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The year 2020 marks the hundredth anniversary since the passing of Max Weber, one of the most prominent scholars for studying authority relations. Weber was the first to draw attention to the different sources of authority in societal ordering, and thereby the conflict that may emerge within and between them, with potentially devastating consequences on peace and progress. Today, around the world, the primacy of rules as the source of authority is eroding, and observers witness the (re)empowerment of Weber's two alternative sources of rule: traditions, frequently, although not always directed against progress and development, and charisma, centered around political leaders who may or may not feel bound by laws or traditions.¹ Legitimacy, then, tends to be reduced to a simple consent of the people, understood as the majority at the ballot box, and rules as amendable or at least unenforceable, often to the detriment of the many minorities in contemporary diverse societies (for an exception, see Sadurski, Sevel, and Walton 2019).

Weber's legacy is nowadays abundant in the core of political science scholarship although explicit references to his work are not always present, for instance, in contemporary studies of democratic deterioration. The problem of *reason versus emotions* in contemporary (not only constitutional) politics (see Sajó 2013) leaves much to be uncovered, and this year is likely to supply a rich array of new data for such investigations from many countries which face significant elections or other historical milestones. *IAPSS Politikon* adopts a global focus in offering a platform for analyses, recognizing that there remain several regions of the world that receive comparatively lower scholarly attention and therefore need to be covered in greater proportion of future political science research. As such, the Editorial Board is particularly pleased that the current issue assembles several articles focusing on electoral and party politics in selected African countries and hopes that the current issue demonstrates this focus.

This issue offers primarily empirical studies adopting a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. Still, it has something to offer to readers interested in political theory as well—they should be particularly invited to study Jessica Nuske's article, a fascinating piece on revisiting the concept of representation in contemporary times when the 'electoral connection' between citizens and representatives alone is woefully inadequate to capture the complex relationship between these two subjects. Via critical engagement with current scholarship addressing this challenge, Nuske advocates a revised constructivist account. Here, it is the stipulation of representative claims made by various interest groups and the acceptance (or denial) of these claims by their (themselves constructed) constituencies that are critical for understanding the nature of contemporary representation.

International studies are represented in the issue by the article by Justinas Lingečius, who, similarly to Nuske, uses constructivist theorising to make sense of the changes in Lithuanian foreign and security policy after the Crimean annexation. Analysing outputs by relevant decision-makers, he identifies that the Lithuanian self-identification gradually changed after the annexation because of the increased threat perception of Russia. Security concerns became more central in the policy agenda and Lithuanian independence as a small state has been repeatedly emphasised in

¹ See extensive literature on the rise of populism and nationalism (e.g. Halmai 2019, Bugarić 2019).

foreign policy discourse. This case, Lingevious argues, highlights that state identity in foreign policy can change due to relevant external events.

The series of texts on African politics in this issue opens with Professor Pieter Labuschagne, whose article studies new political parties in the South African party system. His analysis of voter volatility in South African elections does not identify significant differences compared to 'consolidated democracies' as highlighted in existing studies. Although new political parties are rarely successful in South African elections, for reasons Labuschagne terms 'political opportunism' and 'political naivety', they continue to emerge in increased numbers.

The fourth article in the issue, by Kenyan scholars Thomas Ibrahim Okinda, Benson Oduor Ojwang, and Charles Ongadi Nyambuga, is located at the intersection of electoral and gender studies. It uses survey data from female voters in one of the counties for the Kenyan general elections to investigate how socio-democratic and attitudinal variables correlate with their electoral participation. It finds that variables from both categories were relevant for the outcome although it admits limitations in data collection and analysis. Still, the contribution covers a neglected area of research and paves the way towards the authors' recommendations for increasing female electoral participation in Kenya that could narrow the gender gap and facilitate gender equality in the electoral context.

Next, Harrison Adewale Idowu and N. Oluwafemi 'Femi' Mimiko study the relationship between election management systems and peaceful alternation of power in Ghana and Nigeria. They notice that power alternations in both countries were peaceful after the last election where such an alternation occurred, despite the difference in credibility of the election management system that is considered to be significantly more deficient in Nigeria as opposed to in Ghana. Subjecting the relationship to a qualitative explorative analysis inspired by electoral governance theory, they find that the credibility of the election management system has been conducive to the peaceful alternation of power in Ghana. At the same time, other factors explain why despite the lack of such a system in Nigeria, there was a peaceful alternation of power as well after the 2015 presidential election.

The issue concludes with a book review by Idris Buta of an edited collection analysing electoral violence in nine African countries. The review praises the volume for its scope as well as the capacity to recognise the uneven distribution of electoral violence in the cases covered. Buta lists the recommendations provided by the volume but raises the point that they are focused to a large degree on international rather than domestic actors in Africa, which points to a continuing research lacuna on the subject.

As always, this issue has been made possible through the exceptional voluntary commitment of the members of the Editorial Board, helped by the Editorial Assistants and the external peer reviewers. Thanks go to all of them but at this point, particular recognition is due to outgoing members of the Board, Gergana Tzvetkova (Editorial Board member and Senior Editor since 2017) and Karla Drpić (Editorial Assistant since 2018, later Junior Editor and Editor). The contributions of our outgoing Editorial Assistant, Eszter Sággy (Editorial Assistant since 2019), is also much appreciated. As they all become our former colleagues, we are pleased to have some of them continue as external reviewers for the journal.

Last but not least, an announcement: while our journal focuses primarily on individual unsolicited manuscript submissions, we welcome proposals for special issue projects, primarily those offering a set of manuscripts focusing on a particular research subfield or series of related puzzles, ideally adopting an interdisciplinary approach within and/or across the manuscripts. We

also consider special issue project proposals on manuscripts that are tied together by being presented at an academic event. It will be considered an advantage if the special issue project proposal contains coordinators and manuscript authors from diverse backgrounds in terms such as affiliation, academic seniority, and gender.

As each stand-alone issue of the journal features around four manuscripts, for a special issue project at least eight manuscripts should be initially submitted, with those successfully passing the editorial and the external double-blind peer review process being published together in one issue. The coordinators of the given special issue project may submit an introductory, lead article bringing together all the manuscripts that are to appear in an issue, provided that they are meaningfully related. Such a lead article will also be subject to the full peer-review procedure. Provided that fewer than four manuscripts belonging to a special issue project are published, a special section can be created.

Special issue project proposals may be sent through [e-mail](#) and they should clearly outline the rationale behind the proposal, the types and the number of manuscripts expected. Depending on this rationale, the Editorial Board may request further information from the initiators of the proposal. The Editorial Board, however, cannot be expected to conduct active promotion for concrete special issue proposals, as there are nowadays multiple avenues through which the initiators may advertise such an idea in order to receive preliminary expressions of interest from among the members of scholarly communities.

Max Steuer
Editor-in-Chief

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Who gets to judge? Approaching non-elected representative claims from constructivist interest-group theory

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Abstract

Debates on the issue of representation have since long started to transcend elections and topographically bound constituencies by addressing self-appointed representatives in form of interest groups. However, with no elections and a mere claim to represent a constituency, who gets to judge and consequently authorises the claims and demands accountability? Deriving from Saward's constructivist approach on the representative claim, this article introduces a revisited approach to interest groups by adjusting constructivism with respect to crucial insights derived from interest group theory, provided by Montanaro and Strolovitch. Building on this revisited approach, this article re-evaluates questions on who gets to authorise and account representatives and consequently presents a holistic constructivist framework not only on the nature of claim-based representation, but also on its potential and pitfalls. Additionally, it provides incentives for research on the disjunction between constituency and interest groups provoked by a (structural) occurrence of non-authorisation and non-accountability.

Keywords

Constructivism; Interest Groups; Montanaro; Representative-claim; Saward; Strolovitch

Introduction

In democratic societies, interest groups function as the second most significant tool of popular influence on local and national legislation after the participation in elections – they are thus of elementary democratic importance (Grossmann 2012, 42, 51). They inhabit a unique position not only in the legislative process and the broader public sphere as non-elected, self-appointed representatives of distinctive constituencies, but also serve as linkages between numerous segments of a society and policymakers. As such, interest groups can be considered formally composed associations that pursue political goals on behalf of the constituency they claim to represent, without seeking electoral offices in order to exert political influence (Beyers, Eising, and Maloney 2008, 1106). In their function, they help forming latent groups of interests within a society into manifest actors within the political spectrum and thus promote the articulation and representation of a diverse spectrum of interests (Zimmermann and Boeckh 2018, 784) beyond the topographical structure of democratic polities.

Accordingly, interest groups render citizens politically present by making their constituencies visible in and pertinent to legislative as well as public deliberation and decision-making (Montanaro 2018, 7). This process was to hold the promise of a more deliberate and more approachable governmental system by transcending electoral cycles and topographically bound constituencies. In the social capital literature, interest groups were praised as little democracies with great democratising potential (Halpin 2006, 919). Researchers expected them to be intrinsically democratic and thus able to provide voluntary members with deliberative areas for political decision-making and eventually with influence on the political process itself (Halpin 2006, 919-920).

On the contrary, this inherently democratic promise has been in decline. Researchers have been continuously sceptical of the democratic potential of interest groups by arguing that most of them fall short on their inherent democratic structure anticipated by early researchers (Houtzager and Lavallo 2010, 2-3). Research revealed a rising dissonance between an interest groups' leadership and their issue prioritisation and thus lobbying activities (Halpin 2006, 920). As McLaverty put it: there is "nothing intrinsically democratic about civil society organisations" (2002, 310). Today, in light of the ever-increasing relevance of interest groups (or, to refer to the more commonly used term: 'lobbyists') in legislative policy-making processes, questions on the legitimacy of such influential, yet non-elected, intermediary institutions as representatives of numerous constituencies become equally relevant. Yet, the most prominent tools to assess questions of legitimacy, election results, are evidently not applicable to self-appointed

representatives. However, without elections and the mere claim to represent a latent constituency, who gets to judge and consequently authorises a claim and demands accountability?

The aim of this article is to provide a constructivist framework not only on the nature of claim-based representation, but also on the potential and pitfalls of self-appointed representation as well as on the authorisation and accountability of such claims. As theoretical discussion concerning how to approach empirical research on interest groups and on their legitimacy, this article first presents an eclectic overview of the significant milestones concerning the issue of representation. As one of the most significant contributions to interest group theory, the article then discusses Michael Saward's book "The Representative Claim" (2010) and his constructivist angle on representation. Subsequently, deriving from crucial insight provided by the representative claim, a revisited approach on the conceptualisation of interest groups and their legitimacy is presented, by adjusting the constructivist approach with respect to crucial insights derived from interest group theory, provided by Montanaro (2012) and empirical findings, provided by Squires (2008) and Strolovitch (2006). As a final step and building on such a revisited constructivist view on interest groups, the article re-evaluates questions on who gets to judge, and hence authorise and account for claim-based representatives.

The two pursued theses here are that first, it is the authorising and affected constituency which ought to judge a representative claim and not the researcher, the media, or political institutions. Second, it is the researcher who ought to assess the (in)congruity between affected and authorising constituency and evaluate the constructivist idea of a constituency provided by the claim-maker and entailed referent effects. Hence, the question is not who gets the interests right, but how a given constituency is portrayed by the claim-maker and what portrayals are privileged over others and are thus translated into public policy. Additionally, this work provides further incentives for research on a potential dissonance between constituency and interest group, provoked by a (structural) occurrence of non-authorisation and non-accountability by affected constituencies.

Literature review

Social Science approaches towards the legitimacy of self-appointed representatives in form of interest groups who claim to represent civil, economic or institutional groups, are manifold and even contradicting. Debates on the issue of representation in general, which are anchored within the field of democratic theory, tend to overlook interest groups as self-appointed representatives altogether (Näsström 2011b, 502-503; Houtzager and Lavalley 2010, 3) or neglect their diversity (Halpin 2006; Kuyper 2016). In addition, scientific contributions on interest groups tend to preclude the extensive theoretical framework such considerations ought to be embedded in

(Rehfeld 2017, 55-57). Näsström (2011b, 502), for example, argues that the representative turn and with it a new approach towards representation has shifted the attention away from the meaning of representation towards the meaning of democracy itself. In modern democracies, numerous actors (claim to) function as representatives and such plurality of actors merely highlights the uncertainty of equal representation and equality itself. This in turn only exacerbates concerns on how legitimate representation and thus, legitimate advocacy, by such a diverse and rather obscure spectrum of actors is to be assessed (Näsström 2011b, 507). That is why debates on the legitimacy and the consequences of self-appointed representation in form of interest groups ought to be embedded in a broader approach towards democracy and the role and degree of necessity that representation ought to occupy within it. This article embeds its approach on interest groups within Saward's (2010) constructivist framework on representation and its role within democracies. Connecting concerns on legitimate representation practised by interest groups with underlying considerations on representation provided by Saward not only affirms and strengthens the cohesion between these two areas, but gives further credit to and corroborates the approach on (legitimate) representation by interest groups in the first place.

The standard account on representation

Representation as institutionalisation of deliberation within democracies has long been focused on the nation-state, with its government as the single forum of representation and political representation as parliamentary representation modelled around a unidirectional principal-agent relationship. This so-called 'standard-account' is based on the assumption that representation gives presence to absentees by acting in the best interest of the so represented. The represented are portrayed as having a certain set of objectives that ought to be aggregated via a direct link between a topographically bound constituency and their representative. The set of actors is limited to the population represented by parties, which, through election, present a set of interests based on territorially derived patterns of conflict. Through electoral mechanisms, a responsiveness between representatives and represented is assured; however, such responsiveness is portrayed as merely unidirectional (Lord and Pollak 2013: 519; Urbinati and Warren 2008: 389). The standard account has, with one of its most prominent works on representational politics, namely Pitkin's (1967) book "The Concept of Representation", (Rehfeld 2006, 3; Kuyper 2016, 309), acknowledged the complexities of the principal-agent relationship as "the making present *in some sense* of something which is nevertheless *not* present literally or in fact" (Pitkin 1967, 8-9), thereby emphasising the making, or constitution of political representation. However, the standard account still defined this relationship as unidirectional and static in order to be democratic (Pitkin 1967, 140). Yet, an increasingly complex and pluralised political terrain, inhabiting an ever-growing presence of

extraterritorial and non-territorial political issues as well as debates on identity, gave rise to a diverse spectrum of non-elected self-appointed representatives such as civil, economic and institutional interest groups. Eventually, the standard account had been stretched to the breaking point (Urbinati and Warren 2008, 390; De Wilde 2013, 279). The time between elections has become ever-more important with emerging political forums of discussion and deliberation, most prominently on the internet, which is especially volatile in the light of lowering voting rates, rising populism and a decline in party-loyalty (Näsström 2011b, 501, 503). Concerns on who is represented by whom, how actors are being held accountable and by whom and who gets to decide on which issues resulted in an increasingly anachronistic character of the standard account of representation (Disch 2015, 488-489).

However, despite numerous criticisms voiced towards the standard account, contemporary studies concerning the legitimacy of non-elected representation by interest groups build on the concept of ‘responsiveness’ as the ‘congruence of interests’, as normative indicator for legitimate representation (Severs 2010; Klüver and Pickup 2019). The concept of responsiveness is to be traced back to Pitkin’s now mainstream concept of substantive representation (Disch 2010, 20) as “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (Pitkin 1967, 209) and is expressed through a congruence of interests between those of the constituency and those of the representatives. A prominent approach towards responsiveness is the so-called ‘transmission belt function’, which describes the transmission of information between constituency and policymaker via interest groups as intermediate institutions. This conception also builds on the bedrock norm of responsiveness and congruence (here: congruence of information) and thereby implies a unidirectional principal-agent relationship (Disch 2010, 6, 20-21). This normative conception continues to be the hallmark within the research on democratic political representation and is almost ubiquitous to normative interest group research (Disch 2010, 6). Contemporary research building on and investigating the normative concept of responsiveness (or the congruence of interests/information) occurs in much of the contemporary empirical literature (Fossen 2019, 834).

This practice, however, lacks an extensive theoretical groundwork, and is characterised by Disch as “the persistence in contemporary scholarship of an eighteenth-century paradigm that grounds democratic legitimacy on a popular mandate” (Disch 2010, 2). The relationship between representative and constituency is in fact much more complex and elaborate than this ubiquitous emphasis on the unidirectional relationship of responsiveness implies. As this article will demonstrate, the constructivist approach, which builds on both the standard account and the representative turn, rejects this assumption. Since representative claims constitute, shape and

determine the interests of their constituencies in the first place the latter cannot serve as independent benchmarks for evaluating interest groups' actions.

The representative turn in democratic theory

Starting in the mid-1990s, the scientific community has begun incorporating a more dynamic and inclusive set of representatives into their approach. They did so by recognising representation as (1) a matter of judgement rather than will, (2) as constitutive rather than constitutional and (3) as it being both electoral and non-electoral (Näsström 2011b, 502-503, 506; Castiglione 2012, 118-119). Consequently, scholars of the representative turn focussed on the question of how political will is realised instead of on what the will of the people is. Instead of representation transforming the social into the political, it rather constitutes the formation of political groups and identities in the first place. Thus, the represented gets liberated from its passive role entailed within the unidirectional principal-agent relationship of the standard-account. Instead, the representative turn transgresses territorial boundaries of elections and parliaments (Disch 2015, 489) and reframes such unidirectional relationship into dynamic processes of authorisation and accountability, as two formal processes at the foundation of representation (Castiglione 2012, 121). The scientific community however reaches different conclusions on how authorisation and accountability ought to be achieved and who gets to grant authorisation and demand accountability in the first place.

A rather significant and transformative approach within the representative turn was put forth by Iris Young (2000) and her book "Inclusion and Democracy". In the context of her albeit normative approach on representation, she introduced the term 'différance', which conceptualises representation outside a logic of identity but rather inside the logic of a difference between representative and constituency: Young recurs to Derrida's concept of 'democracy's metaphysics of presence' (Derrida, 1973) to corroborate the assumption that democratic representation directly derives from the referent as co-present. Consequently, she addresses concerns of an incompatibility between identities of both representative and represented, by acknowledging a difference or separation between representatives and constituency as inherently given (Young 2000, 126-127). Young justifies this inevitable difference between both representative and constituent due to the diverse, fluid and ever-changing nature of the constituency's interests and perspectives. This notion leads to a crucial insight: "Rather than construe the normative meaning of representation as properly standing for the constituents, we should evaluate the character of the relationship between the representative and the constituents" (Young 2000, 128). The extent of the connection between representative and constituent translates into a degree of representation. Consequently, representatives ought to form and maintain a substantive connection with their

constituency “in determinate ways” (Young 2000, 128) to ensure an ongoing process of authorisation and accountability (Young 2000, 129). Young distances herself from Pitkin’s take on a pre-existing constituency, arguing that it is the representative and the authorisation process which constitute a constituency and call it into action as they “go looking for each other” to distil and debate issues that are important to them (Young 2000, 130).

However, it is exactly this assumption that distinguishes the representative turn from Michael Saward’s work “The Representative Claim” (2010), which facilitated a constructivist turn within representational democratic theory (Disch 2015, 492). Whilst Saward is commonly conflated into the broader representative turn (Disch 2015, 489), instead of neglecting the standard account altogether, he carried over a crucial insight from Pitkin’s work on representation: The notion that the constituent exists “somehow logically prior” (Pitkin 1967, 140) to its representation and exists relatively autarkically from it (Saward 2010, 51). The following sections scrutinise the consequences of this pivotal notion of the relatively autarkically represented. Before that, it introduces the constructivist turn on the basis of Saward’s book, which presents a non-normative view on representation whilst also encompassing a broader definition and conceptualisation of representation including both elected as well as non-elected forms of representation.

A constructivist angle on representation

This article adheres to the constructivist angle on representation and grounds itself on Michael Saward’s book (2010) for three reasons. First, Saward’s work is considered to be one of the most influential contributions on the constructivist approach on representation (Castiglione 2012, 119) and has had a “widespread uptake among scholars of political representation” (Disch 2015, 487). Second, Saward is building upon crucial insights elaborated by scholars of the representative turn as well as the standard account, by focussing on the question of what representation does, rather on what it is (Disch 2012, 114). Third, Saward pursues a non-normative approach by arguing in favour of delaying a normative judgement of representation, since the claim or act of representation itself is neither good nor bad, neither democratic nor undemocratic; it is rather a descriptive image-constructing act of everyday politics (Saward 2012, 124). Instead, he prioritises achieving a “more fine-grinded understanding of representation’s dynamics” (Saward 2010, 29), as is the aim of this article.

Claim-based representation as constitutive events

Building on Pitkin (1967) and Young (2000), amongst others, Saward conceptualises representation as a claim-making event, which constitutes both the representative and the represented constituency by transferring a latent constituency into a manifest one – representation

is not produced via election, but rather via the performative act of claim-making (Saward 2010, 38). His approach transcends a rather contained perspective on representation of the ‘standard account’ and is neither based on territory, nor limited to elected representatives. Rather, it stresses the importance of the construction of representation through the performative act of the representation-claim (Saward 2010, 35). Thus, the constructivist approach, similar to the representative turn, was able to establish a more nuanced view of representation. It dismisses the presumption that the represented having a clear, accessible and stable set of interests to be easily adopted unaltered by the representative (Saward 2010, 10), similar to Young’s concept of ‘différance’ (Young 2000, 127).

Saward, however, elaborated on the constitutive nature of the act of claim-making by comparing the politics of representation to art. Just as an artist merely mirrors and interprets reality by distilling a distinct picture to make it visible to an audience, representatives present a mere picture or idea of what a certain constituency might prefer (Saward 2010, 47-48, 54). Due to the pluralistic nature of constituencies and the diverging, possibly opposing interest within them, claim-makers ought to “pick and choose, propose and fabricate, a distinctive and limited vision of, or set of interests” (Saward 2010, 44).

Building on these assumptions, Saward introduces the following definition of the representative claim: “A maker of representations (‘M’) puts forward a subject (‘S’) which stands for an object (‘O’) that is related to a referent (‘R’) and is offered to an audience (‘A’).” (Saward 2010, 37). A maker of representation can be both an institution, like an interest group, and a singular actor, like a prominent public figure or scholar, that makes a representative claim. With it, a subject (a set of actors or an individual) is put forth as embodiment of the claim. The maker of a claim and the subject may be the same individual, yet maker and subject further imply different aspects of the claim-making. The subject is said to embody a proclaimed set of interests, a merely constructed, selective idea of the reality concerned, which is yet the object of the claim. The object nevertheless relates to that reality – a referent with its actual empirical makeup and interests. Lastly, the claim is presented to an audience as both intended and unintended targets of the claim and its associated interests.

For instance, a claim-maker like an agricultural interest group (M) may put forth an individual (S) who claims to stand for the image of ‘the decent, hard-working farmers’ (O) in front of a given audience (A), which encompasses those who receive and those who are meant to receive a claim, while amongst actual farmers (R) there may be a variety of decency and work ethics. Such a claim illustrates a distinct picture of a farmer as having certain policy preferences, whilst the referent as “flesh-and-blood people of the constituency” (Saward 2010, 37) – in this case, the

entirety of all farmers – may not unanimously identify with the claim; some may even disagree with the respective policy or proposal thereof. Such disagreements may in turn trigger counterclaims by the farmers (R) themselves (Saward 2010, 54).

The claim therefore simultaneously creates both the maker, the subject and the object, yet not the referent, who exists autarkically and “somehow logically prior” (Pitkin 1967, 140). In other words, the claim-maker thus posits a constituency (‘decent hard-working farmers’) which can be, yet isn’t necessarily, congruent with the referent within a political contest (Saward 2010, 37). Such claim-making, however, should not be confused with ‘speaking for’, which implies representation as an active representative, who is speaking for a passive represented constituency (Saward 2010, 42). It is precisely the unidirectional approach of representation that Saward aims to surpass, by instead endeavouring “to reveal processes whereby specific meanings or constructions are naturalized or normalized, rather than questioning the real and material entities out of which meanings are built” (Saward 2012, 126). Consequently, rival and even opposing accounts of an object are also plausible, since there are not only performative but also aesthetic and cultural aspects of representation. Different claims arise from different cultures – some claims to represent women may focus on the universal right to abortion, some may focus on the role of the mother – whilst both fractions claim to represent women (Saward 2010, 138). This notion reflects not only the dynamic, discursive and contested aspects of representation, but also the instability of claims, since “[r]epresentation’s fragility mirrors the fragility of claims that underpin it” (Saward 2012, 124).

The emphasis on the act of constructing an idea of the constituency is the source of most criticism voiced on the lack of democratic potential held by interest groups. It not only questions but also undermines the perhaps naïve idea of a precisely fitting transmission of interests between constituency and representative as intrinsically anchored in the act of representation. The constructivist approach predetermines the possibility of misguided, misused or selective representation of a constituency. By doing so, it provides a more nuanced and holistic, non-normative concept of representation, including its pitfalls. It highlights the volatile nature of representation as a *process*, not as a static relationship between representative and represented. Consequently, the constructivist approach challenges the prominent approach of unidirectional responsiveness because using constructed interests as benchmark for legitimacy is inefficacious. Instead of asking whether representation exists in certain cases, it questions the impact of invoking representation (Saward 2010, 26).

The citizen standpoint

A second aspect of Saward's work that will be discussed here is the citizen-standpoint. By introducing this concept, Saward disables the normative judgement on representation voiced by theorists like Young. He instead reaffirms the concept of the standpoint-theory as introduced by feminist scholars (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002; Rolin 2009). Accordingly, it is up to the citizen to judge representative claims, as it is "the democrats' way" (Saward 2010, 146). This notion draws on the standpoint theory, which highlights the relevance and significance of situated knowledge of the addressed, that an external researcher cannot have and apply (Intermann 2010, 785). Only the citizens subjected to a representative claim can truly assess the claim regarding the constituency's character and its interests (Saward 2010, 147). To clarify on who gets to judge, as in authorise and hold accountable, Saward distinguishes between an intended (Y) and an actual constituency (Z), which together form the appropriate constituency, and an intended and an actual audience, which together form the appropriate audience. The intended constituency is the one the representative aims to speak for. An intended audience is thus the audience the representative aims to speak to. The actual constituency is formed by those who recognise their interest as being reflected in the claim. An actual audience is the audience who actually receives, acknowledges and, especially in case of media outlets, distributes the claim. According to Saward, the audience does contribute to the assessment of claims by deliberating on and disseminating the ideas of the maker of representations, the subject, object and referent, consequently connecting the claim and claim-maker with the appropriate constituency (Saward 2010, 149-151).

The appropriate constituency is then entitled to evaluate and judge the claim, thereby accepting or rejecting it. Such judgement, however, is reduced to a subjective matter of the citizens' self-positioning towards the claim. A claim would gain legitimacy, if acceptance, which here, is "based around nonobjection", arises from a "broadly open society" and sustains "to a credible degree over time amongst a reasonable number of constituents" (Saward 2010, 152). Thus, "provisional authorization" (Saward 2010, 160) is achieved through the process of revising the lack of objection to enable a significant number of constituents to utter their position on the matter. Consequently, deliberative accountability would be guaranteed (Saward 2010, 165).

However, such positioning could solely be legitimately formed within an 'open society' as "a society where the freedom to support and to criticize political figures, claims, and proposals is of paramount value, and concomitantly where pluralism of ideas and values is widely accepted and practiced" (Saward 2010, 154). The theorist, as a "particularly well-informed citizen" (Saward 2010, 147) then enacts a second-order judgement by scrutinising the conditions and circumstances enabling and determining such judgements in order to assess the character of the representative

claim. Such conditions of judgement encompass an evaluation of the openness of a given society and consequently, what effects the nature of the society may have had on a claim. He is then to search for evidence of a sufficient degree of (non-)acceptance by the appropriate constituency to then (de-)validate or refute the claim (Saward 2010, 146-148, 159).

Having presented the core aspects of the representative claim, the next section assesses the implications of Saward's theoretical framework more thoroughly – especially concerning previously introduced aspects of the citizen-standpoint vis-à-vis significant insights from interest group theory. As elucidated below, Saward's take on the citizen-standpoint is prone to several points of critique. Consequently, the aim of the section is to merge fundamental constructivist approaches on representation with the insights provided by Montanaro's interest group theory and empirical findings provided by Squires and Strolovitch.

A revised constructivist view on interest groups

As stated, the representative claim has significantly influenced and reshaped scientific debates on representation (Disch 2012, 118). This article acknowledges important and eye-opening implications of the constructivist approach on claim-based representation as a constitutive act. Saward establishes a much more nuanced view towards representation by scrutinising the context in which claims are being made and what kind of portrayal of a constituency is being introduced. This potential is unfortunately limited by Saward's insufficient notion of the citizen standpoint, particularly the concepts of an actual and an intended constituency and non-objection as authorisation, as well as the omission of the referent effects. The following section elaborates on these points of critique, to then conclude with a revised constructivist view upon interest groups by incorporating the critique voiced by the scientific community as well as crucial insights on interest group theory.

The dual constituency

First of all, it is difficult to discern the scientific value added by the differentiation between intended and actual constituencies. As stated by Saward, such differentiation is based on subjective self-positioning of citizens and as such, reflects on the question of whether an individual *feels* represented, not on whether that individual actually *is* represented (Severs 2010, 416; Severs 2012, 173). Building the evaluation on the legitimacy of representative claims on subjective self-positioning foregoes fundamental questions in interest groups politics: who authorises and accounts and who is affected (Montanaro 2012, 1097)? Saward's distinction may aim to shed light on the notion that a maker of representation and the subject merely construct an idea or even a caricature of a referent rather than precise portrayal of the constituency, since that is not possible.

However, this crucial and valuable supposition ought to be detached from individual self-positioning and instead tethered to question on who authorises, accounts and who is affected by a claim, in order to illuminate on who is actually represented.

Laura Montanaro (2012, 2018) also introduces a dual constituency – albeit incommensurable with Saward’s concept of the constituency. According to Montanaro, once a self-appointed representative has established her claims, she constitutes two kinds of constituencies, first the authorising constituency, which is empowered to exercise authorisation and demand accountability and second, the affected constituency, whose interests are affected or potentially affected by collective decisions (Montanaro 2012, 1095). Montanaro refers to Iris Young’s work in conceptualising the term ‘affected interests’, defining “interest as what affects or is important to the life prospects of individuals [and] as self-referring” (Young 2000, 134) in opposition to ideas, principles and values, arguing that interests are the means to achieve those. Accordingly, a representative claim constitutes and identifies a constituency as being (potentially) affected. The claim-making event thus distinguishes a certain constituency as affected by existing policy framework or as potentially affected by, for example a proposed policy.

Simultaneously, a representative claim further puts forth the authorising constituency, which is comprised of members, followers and donors (Montanaro 2012, 1096, 1104). Due to this differentiation, Montanaro was able to both highlight the democratic potential and the danger posed by self-appointed representatives “by empower[ing] an authorizing constituency, while claiming to represent those who are affected but remain disempowered” (Montanaro 2012, 1095). Montanaro was able to do so whilst introducing an extended catalogue of criteria on the distinction of constituencies and on the mechanisms and pitfalls of authorisation and accountability in reference to both constituencies, which are included in the following section. The article advocates for Montanaro’s dual constituency to be conjoined with Saward’s considerations on the representative claim and thereby replace the citizen-standpoint.

Who gets to judge? Addressing questions of legitimate representation

Saward is correct in arguing that the audience does partake in the assessment of representative claims, by absorbing, rejecting, accepting, distributing, referring to or otherwise addressing the claim or, most significantly, by including the maker (and/or the subject) into legislative processes. Saward thus liberates the audience of its passive role (Saward 2012, 125, 158). Montanaro frames these authorising effects as the recognition of claims, which is required for claim-makers to function as representatives in the first place as they gain political authority.

This conceptualisation of political authority is however irrespective to its legitimacy (Montanaro 2012, 1096-1097; Rehfeld 2006, 4, 8). Authorising effects issued by the audience do

not result in democratic legitimacy, since, in order to legitimately exercise political power, the maker of the claim must be legitimised solely by those affected by the exercise of that power (Kuyper 2016, 308; Montanaro 2012, 1095). Such a notion has been postulated by the ‘All Affected Interests Principle’ of democratic theory, which dates back to the Roman Empire and yet frequently surfaces in democratic theory on representation (Habermas 1992; Young 2000; Goodin 2007; Näsström 2011a). This notion easily adapts to Montanaro’s dual constituency, which highlights the theoretical and empirical necessity of an affected constituency and its power.

In order to address crucial and predominantly normative questions concerning representation (who is and who is not represented, by whom and how) Saward’s concept of the constituency solely addresses the question of who feels represented and who does not. Thus, further incorporation of Montanaro’s approach on legitimate representation is desirable. Accordingly, “[i]f a representative claim functions to give political presence to those whose interests are affected, or potentially affected, by collective decisions, and empowers them to exercise authorisation and demand accountability, then we can say that it has democratic legitimacy” (Montanaro 2012, 1098). The dual constituencies have both means of organisational as well as discursive authorisation and accountability. According to Montanaro, organisational authorisation, which necessarily happens *a posteriori* since it occurs after a claim has been made, encompasses resources the authorising constituency may offer to the representatives such as membership, followership, donations and voting within organisations. Additionally, discursive authorisation can be observed in public support, allegiance and approbation, expressed vocally as well as in action. Organisational accountability is demanded through sanctions wielded by the authorising constituency by withholding or threatening to withhold monetary support and membership. Discursive accountability is insisted upon in vocal dissatisfaction and disagreement. As example for legitimate representation, a professional interest groups claiming to represent bakers may only grant membership rights to professional bakers – consequently only bakers have the means to authorise the claim and demand accountability from the representatives.

Montanaro (2018) introduces further distinct categories and mechanisms subsumed under the umbrella of organisational and discursive authorisation and accountability, which do not concern this article. The crucial inference here is that the affected and authorising constituency do not have the same authorizing power because the authorising constituency most prominently obtains its capacity to authorise and to hold accountable from resources (withholding membership fees, donations), which may not be as accessible to an affected constituency. Although means of discursive authorisation and accountability (public and vocal display of (dis-)content) are of course available to both authorising and affected constituency, members of an authorising constituency

may nevertheless induce a skewed representation to their benefit (Montanaro 2012, 1100-1103, 1105).

Including monetary considerations into the process of authorisation and accountability, whilst connecting a dual constituency to these mechanisms exceeds Saward's approach, which is based on the individual feeling of being represented. Montanaro illuminates crucial discrepancies between constituencies and their consequences for evaluating the legitimacy of interest groups, by pinpointing the dangers and pitfalls inherent in the constitutive nature of the representative claim.

Enhancing the role of the researcher: Addressing referent effects

Adopting Saward's argumentation, it is the task of researchers to scrutinise the conditions of judgement, focussing primarily on the degree of openness of a given society and the conditions of claim-making, receiving and assessing. However, as criticised by Saward himself, his concept of the citizen-standpoint does not include the 'referent effect', thereby not capturing the effects the depiction of would-be constituents may have on representative actions (Saward 2012, 126). Corroborating that notion and building on Saward (2006), Judith Squires (2008) presents the argument that representation-claims concerning gender, for example, constitute gender-relations through various representational practises, as the construction of the object itself participates in the constitution of feminine subject-positions. Her approach is derived from gender-mainstream-literature, which postulates that policymaking presupposes the constitutive representation of gender and she consequently recommends an extension of this approach into the study of representation (Squires 2008, 188-192). Her argument compliments Saward's considerations to include a referent effect.

Building on these considerations and the conclusions derived from previous segments, an adjusted and enhanced role of the researcher can be identified. This role includes to peruse conditions of claim-making and receiving and hence, the degree of openness in a given society, as proposed by Saward. Yet it must also scrutinise referent effects and which particular portrayals of a referent are selective and privileged over others to be then converted into public policy. For example, some claims to represent the unemployed may focus on strategies to re-enter the workforce, whilst others may focus on fighting prejudices and stigmata towards their constituency. Both claims invoke distinct conceptions of the unemployed, whilst both claim to represent the interest of the group as a whole. Building on the inevitability, that "political opportunity structures of a given political system will 'privilege particular conceptions of group relations over others'" (Severs 2010, 415), the questions regarding which socioeconomic groups are going to be affected by a given construction of an object, whether the framing converts into agenda-setting and, ultimately, whether it results in policy proposals ought to be addressed by researchers.

Excuse: Strolovitch's mobilisation bias as empirical example

An empirical study on the construction of an idea, or a partial version of a group put forth by interest groups, can be found in Dara Strolovitch's (2006) research on a new mobilisation bias within intersectional mobilisation due to overlapping inequalities within interest groups. Her article does not draw on Saward's constructivist concept of representation, nor on Montanaro's concept of an authorising and affected constituency. Nevertheless, her findings do provide an interesting and fruitful insight to the proposed revised constructivist theory on representation. Strolovitch reveals that intersectional marginalisation influences the agenda-setting of interest groups claiming to represent women's interests. More specifically, Strolovitch demonstrates a significant negative correlation between the proportion of people affected by the topic and the degree of affirmation on the topic by means of a quantitative analysis with the survey data on 286 US women's advocacy groups. Issues associated with advanced subgroups within an affected constituency (like affirmative action for women with higher education) are significantly more accounted for in agenda-setting procedures than not only those associated with disadvantaged subgroups (like welfare reforms) but also those of the overall affected constituency (like increased social security). Additionally, interviews with the leadership of women's interest group have shown that with regards to agenda-setting procedures, issues concerning the advanced subgroups tend to be framed as majoritarian or even universal issues of the constituency as a whole, whilst issues concerning the disadvantaged subgroups were least likely to be included in the overall agenda (Strolovitch 2006, 895, 898-899).

This realisation compliments Saward's constructivist approach, since, again, representatives do not represent given, ready-to-be-picked-up interests and perspectives of a constituency, but instead merely constitute an idea of these interests – generally benefitting an interest groups' agenda, as Strolovitch has shown. Yet, according to Saward, members of the disadvantaged subgroup, for instance, would have to *feel* the false promise of representation and openly object to the claims made and actions pursued by a given interest group in order to denounce a claim as illegitimate. But instead of arguing which individual identifies with the claim and who is meant to identify with it, Strolovitch focusses precisely on the question raised above: what particular portrayals of a constituency are selected and privileged over others by the interest group or maker of the claim, and are thus reflected on an interest group's agenda and likely converted into public policy, thereby (potentially) benefitting merely a segment of the constituency.

Montanaro directly refers to Strolovitch's findings by using them as an example for so-called 'skewed' representation: Since an interest group disproportionality empowers advanced subgroups, the proclaimed empowerment of disadvantaged subgroups (especially for the

intersectionally marginalised) falls behind (Montanaro 2012, 1105). Nevertheless, Strolovitch's second crucial finding, that issues affecting the advanced subgroups are being framed as issues affecting the overall constituency, which Montanaro does not address, compliments the aforementioned argument on the referent effect. Interest groups claiming to represent women present a certain picture of women's interests, which then determines the issue-prioritisation. Strolovitch investigated this referent effect by illuminating who is presented as being affected by collective-decision making, what kind of portrait of the object is offered to an audience and what issues are converted into agenda-setting. Similar research on the constitution of women's interests through representative claims has been conducted by Celis et al. (2014), or Squires (2008).

Concluding remarks and future research

Building on Saward, Montanaro and the empirical findings provided by Strolovitch and Squires, the author argues for a revised constructivist view on interest groups, by a) reaffirming the constitutive nature of the representative claim, as well as authorising effects in form of the recognition of a representative claim by the audience, whilst b) positing that the judgement of such claims depends on the authorising and affected constituencies with the congruence of both deeming it legitimate. It is then, c) the task of the researcher to examine the conditions under which claims were made and received, the effects of the degree of openness of a given society on the making and receiving of claims and the translation of claims into the agenda-setting of interest groups and eventually into policy proposals. Thereby, the proposed approach discards popular prevalent assumptions on the nature of representation and the relationship between representative and constituency as a responsive and unidirectional transmission of information. The focus on the constitutive image of a constituency presented by a self-appointed representative entails with it a catalogue of questions and research to be addressed by researchers. The proposed revised constructivist approach on interest groups may function as a steppingstone for further analysis especially in view of the lack of representation of disadvantaged interests due to the (possible) structural occurrence of non-authorisation by and non-accountability to the affected constituency, as indicated in the introduction. This research-focus may be conjunct with and profit from research on intersectionalism, gender-mainstream-literature and that on the representation of disadvantaged or 'weak' interests, hence the political exclusion of marginalised groups.

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Identity Discourse within a Geopolitical Crisis: The Case of Lithuania¹

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Abstract

The annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 dramatically changed routine practices and perceptions about Lithuania's foreign policy agenda. The threat to this small state's security marked a new era of active searching for self-definition and policy direction. The article aims to analyse the dominant tendencies of Lithuania's identity in foreign and security policy after 2014. Lithuania is selected precisely because of its vocal reaction and concerns after the annexation of Crimea. This article analyses speeches, comments and statements made within contemporary political discourse by key political leaders in Lithuania's foreign and security policy. It argues that – in light of potential military threat – political leaders advocate for increased self-responsibility and readiness to act as the relations with their respective partners remain both crucial and complicated.

Keywords

Discourse Analysis; Identity; Lithuania; NATO; Russia; Security

¹ The article is based on a presentation made at the 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Baltic independence.

“The fire is opened close to Lithuania’s borders, the territory of a sovereign country is being occupied, and the European map is brutally being redrawn.”

Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania (*Baltic News Service* 2014a)

Introduction

Since regaining independence in 1990, Lithuania’s identity in terms of foreign and security policy has been focused on two dominant pillars. First, its close proximity to Russia is seen as a concern. Second, orientation to and integration with the West are understood as the return to civilisation and political family (Lingevičius 2015, 88). Although the dominant ideas of foreign and security policy varied throughout the ages (scholars distinguish three to four period²), integration into the Western political fabric has been a driving goal motivated by the desire to guarantee the sovereignty and have strategic economic, political and societal shelters. Through this lens, successful integration into the European Union and NATO has become a positive achievement of foreign and security policy because it distances ties to its unstable relations with its Eastern neighbours, particularly Russia. However, in 2014, routine policy practices were shaken by the unexpected annexation of Crimea and military conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Due to this crisis in the region, the issue of Lithuania’s security rose to the top of the country’s political agenda. Moreover, the intense public reflection on preparedness and necessary policy actions³ has raised the question of a new stage of self-definition and foreign and security policy in Lithuania. Has annexation of Crimea affected or changed Lithuania’s self-definition in the context of foreign and security policy? What are the identity tendencies within this political discourse?

This article analyses what the dominant tendencies of Lithuania’s identity in foreign and security policy became after the events of 2014. This analysis of Lithuanian political discourse focuses on the role of a small state’s identity in foreign and security policy. I argue that traditional ‘one-size-fits-all’ explanations – all small states defined by same objective criteria as territory or population have similar *a priori* foreign policy – are not sufficient to explain Lithuania’s shifting reaction relative to other small states in foreign affairs (Gigleux 2016, 27). Rather, allocating greater attention to the nature of small states unique identity helps analysts observe what the key meanings of self-representation are and how they relate to foreign and security policy.

The article focuses on the political discourse of the main foreign and security policy actors in Lithuanian (such as former President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Minister of Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius). The analysis of such a discourse allows us to notice the dominant meanings and the

² First – from 1990 to 2004 (independence and membership at NATO and EU), second – from 2004 to 2009 (period of ambitious visions), starting 2009 (pragmatism) (Brunalas 2016, 195).

³ For example, re-introduction of conscripts, rapid increase of defense spending, cross-party agreement on security measures.

ways they are reflected in this particular context. It reveals emerging tendencies of a potentially new stage of Lithuania's foreign and security policy.

The first part of the article presents theoretical debates on the identity of small states and existing research in the Lithuanian case. In the next section the article discusses the dominant identity tendencies found in contemporary Lithuanian political discourse., The final section provides insights for future analysis and discussions.

The Tendencies of Pre-2014 Lithuanian Identity Development

Lithuania's identity in foreign and security policy has been analysed as it has developed through various theoretical perspectives in response to specific events or periods. Many studies concentrate on the earliest stage, Lithuania's independence, and how the identity in foreign and security policy was first formed. For example, Miniotaitė (2007) mentions that in the early 1990s, different ideas were taken from interwar (neutrality, regional alliance or alliance with powers) and considered as equal options. The continuous discussion on regional dependence over the years has paralleled this tendency. Different leaders stressed the importance of different regions for Lithuania, imposing broader debates on which regional identity – Baltic, Nordic or Central European – is the most suitable for the country (Nekrašas 1998).

Newly gained membership in NATO, and the EU also became important triggers to discuss what Lithuania's identity is in the context of its foreign and security policy. As Paulauskas (2010, 161-162) suggests, the US was perceived as the most significant friend in Lithuanian discourse and practice, whereas the EU was mostly associated with the idea of 'returning to the West' and belonging to the European family. The analysis of the incident with former Soviet military officer M. Golovatov in 2011 revealed that the EU had been considered as a partial Self due to different approaches, including a softer EU position towards historical issues and tensions with Russia (Lingevičius 2015, 105).

In a comprehensive study on Lithuania's foreign and security policy between 2004 and 2014, Jakniūnaitė (2013, 21, 41) suggests that the identification as a 'small state' is a critical determinant of the country's foreign policy, while Russia is one of the most securitized objects. According to Vitkus (2006, 173), self-definition is usually constructed through the distance and antagonistic relation with the Other – Russia. Thus, the existing research of different periods illustrates the key pillars of Lithuania's identity in foreign and security policy as well as the dynamic and tension-ridden environment in which they are operating. As Šešelgytė (2013, 35) concludes, geopolitical position and historical memory have been two factors shaping and influencing Lithuania's self-identification and foreign and security policy. Nevertheless, there is no detailed research of recent

years' tendencies that raises the question of how political developments have regionally and globally affected Lithuania's identity.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology: Defining Identity within a Small State

Compared to traditional approaches in International Relations, postmodernism stresses the importance of identity and its role in foreign and security policy. It allows understanding both concepts of identity and policy as changeable and multi-layered rather than once-established stable factors. Objective criteria are refused because identity is discursive, intersubjective, and formed in a continuous process (Campbell 1992, 12). Therefore, this conception of identity is formed through the adage: *I know who I am, when I know who the Other is* (Lebow 2008, 474). By this logic, identity tendencies may fluctuate according to internal and external processes. For example, in the wake of the regional security uncertainty that followed 2014, Baltic States intensified their cooperation in the search for joint solutions on how to bolster defence capabilities (Szymański 2015). Browning (2006 681-682) also presents that Finland's identity as a small state has changed over time. Its conception of smallness shifted from a limitation to an opportunity throughout the years.

Therefore, in the case of small states, their identity does not necessarily comprise a category based on similarities (i.e. physical size or some criteria to define the size) that conclude their self-definition. Instead, it can be formed by their relationship to the Other – something that countries find different or do not want to be related to (Andreou 2006, 4).

The postmodern approach also suggests that the relationship between identity and foreign and security policy is constitutive. On the one hand this means that identity does not form before foreign and security policy, but is revealed through the practice of such policies. On the other hand, identity is also necessary for the political process, which continually reproduces it (Hansen, 2006: XIV). Therefore, meanings of identity and foreign and security policy are understood as mutually related and interactive phenomena which might be affected by a diverse spectrum of conditions and experiences (Gigleux 2016, 27).

One of the challenges is how to analyse identity and policy tendencies, which method to apply, and how to collect relevant sources. Again, the postmodern approach suggests considering identity as a discourse – linguistic and non-linguistic practices – that reveal how the world (in this case, Lithuania and its foreign and security policy) is understood and perceived, how meanings transform to facts (Edkins 2007, 88). To define the research design Hansen (2006 2) refers to discourse as written and spoken texts – speech acts which can be chosen as sources for analysis.

Therefore, the research focuses on a case study – Lithuania and its political (foreign and security policy) discourse after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Being a border country in an asymmetric relationship with a big and threatening neighbour, Lithuania has become one of the principal advocates of Ukraine in the international arena while speaking as a harsh critic of Russia. Moreover, these incidents have unearthed sensitive issues regarding the country's security concerns. Bearing in mind existing tensions illustrated in previous research (Table 1) the analysis shows that small state's identity in foreign and security policy varies proving its self-subjectivity.

Table 1. Dominant identity tendencies before and after annexation of Crimea

	Relation/attitude towards Russia	Relation/attitude towards the EU	Relation/attitude towards NATO	Relation/attitude towards itself
Before the annexation of Crimea	Concern of asymmetric neighbourhood;	“Partial Self” where uncertainty and tensions due to the common ground exist;	Reliance on routine practices and burden sharing;	Concentration on integration to the West, changing ideas of pragmatism and regional leadership;
After the annexation of Crimea	Openly stated as a threat described in terms of unpredictability and military aggression; high level of securitization;	“Partial Self” because of the uncertainty of the EU's position and readiness to be united in case of emergency;	A significant part of Lithuania's Self-based on mutual recognition of threats and endeavours to ensure security;	Concentration on hard security, promotion of self-readiness and subjectivity, and active engagement into regional politics.

Source: author.

As mentioned, the primary analytical method chosen in this paper is *discourse analysis*. Although there is no agreed-upon way to exact steps of applying discourse analysis, subjective interpretation of many primary source inputs is usually named as the main instrument for applying this method (Vinogradnaitė 2006, 44-45). In this application, speeches and comments from 2014 to 2018 made by two crucial political leaders in foreign and security policy are chosen as key sources for the discourse analysis. Texts were selected according to these criteria: 1) unique texts made by the political leaders; 2) discussion of international events, processes or foreign and security policy. These texts (232 in total) were taken from official websites and the most popular news outlet determined by the number of unique visitors). After selection, texts were aggregated

by topics and compared by distinguishing and interpreting dominant meanings. These different categories of topics and found meanings show that identity is not necessarily integral, but rather a multidimensional and changing phenomenon.

Dominant Tendencies Emerging after 2014

The analysed discourse has revealed a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, based on a variety of interpretations and speeches delivered. Following the methodological guidelines and interpretation process, four key themes have been distinguished within Lithuanian foreign policy: 1) Russia as the main threat; 2) the need to be an ‘eye-opener’ for Europe; 3) mutual collaboration with NATO to ensure deterrence, and; 4) initiating autonomous endeavours to ensure self-security. All these themes are presented and described below showing what arguments have been used and what identity tendencies are revealed through them. It is important to note that only the dominant tendencies are presented and discussed, meaning that different sources or angles may provide different results.

Russia as a threat

After the annexation of Crimea, political leaders openly recognized Russia as the principal military threat to Lithuania. As the President claims, “we expect that Russia will remain unexpectedly aggressive and unexpectedly destabilizing” (Jakučionis 2018a). Although it is stated that direct confrontation is unlikely, according to the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania suffers from Russia’s blackmailing, provocations and hybrid warfare techniques, such as propaganda or cyber-attacks (“Russia pursues aggressive military, informational and cyber policies against its neighbours” (Delfi 2018)). Despite the harsh rhetoric, politicians argue that Lithuania is willing to have normal relations between the two countries and has nothing against Russia *per se* (“we are open for a dialogue” (Černiauskas 2015)). According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, “we want good relations, especially with the neighbours <...> but they should be improved by those who behave inappropriately” (Plikūnė 2018).

However, following the comments towards Russia’s actions, such as aggression against a sovereign country, supporting of so-called terrorist groups (separatists) (the President argues, “it is an open territorial aggression not from terrorists or separatists, but directly from Russia” (*Baltic News Service* 2015a), the violation of human rights and militarisation of the Kaliningrad oblast (“today Iskander rockets are being deployed in Kaliningrad” (Jakučionis 2018b)) leave a negative perception of Russia. This deep understanding of instability and unpredictability in the neighbourhood intensifies the distinction between *Self* and *Other*. Here, asymmetric relations (small vs. great) become complicated because of the concern for military attacks: according to the President, “as long as Russia treats its neighbours and small states this way, then good, equal and

friendly relations with such a country will be impossible” (Garbačiauskaitė-Budrienė 2018). Thus, this perception leads to the inevitable need to take extraordinary measures and dominates on the political agenda.

Moreover, the concern of Russia’s threat transcends the national level. The President pays attention to Ukraine showing that Russia is not only a threat to a small bordering country, but it also becomes an issue for all of Europe: “Ukraine fights for the peace of the whole [of] Europe and for all of us. If the terrorist state <...> is not stopped, the aggression will spread throughout Europe and beyond” (Černiauskas, Parisas, Golubovas 2015). Russia is presented as violating the rules and laws of the international system, so it should be securitized not only on national but also international – or at least European – levels: “Russia does not act in accordance with the international standards and violates any international commitments. It means Russia becomes a threat to the whole [of] Europe” (*Delfi.lt*, 2015).

For the most part, the President describes Russia as an unpredictable actor that seeks to destroy the European peace project and even represents a different civilisation, referring to the Stalinist regime (“I see not only the Soviet but also the return of Stalinist style” (*Baltic News Service* 2014b)). The argument of a different civilisation further promotes the division between the *Self* and the *Other*. In contrast, the *Self* is defined by honesty, openness, international rules, democratic principles and values rather than size or material capabilities (“there are certain norms, principles that have to be respected in all countries” (Skėrytė 2017)). Otherwise, the *Other*, in this case, Russia is described as denying and destroying these civilizational features. This civilizational division relies on the premise that the post-imperial ambitions to reconstruct the impact in post-Soviet countries remain (“the sick post-imperial ambitions are being demonstrated to the European countries and the world” (Miliūtė 2014)). Therefore, the perception of danger is based on the issue of physical existence (a fear of a military attack) and on the fear that Western political civilization followed by Lithuania for decades can be damaged or even destroyed by continuous post-imperial reminiscences from the East. As the President claims, “we see post-soviet imperialism close to our borders. It is still a fight” (*Delfi.lt* 2015). Therefore, the leaders try to bring the message and influence Western allies to see, as they think, the real political situation and concerning risks.

An ‘eye-opener’ for Europe

Stating the potential danger for the country and Europe, Lithuania’s role of an eye-opener promoted due to the perception that the “security environment has essentially changed before half a year and still changes every day in Europe” (*Baltic News Service* 2014c). Lithuanian politicians constantly seek to convince Western countries to maintain unity and keep pressing Russia to change its course by imposing strict sanctions or sending Russian diplomats out of the country

(the Minister of Foreign Affairs argues that there are sanctions and we need to make them effective that all countries would follow the same policy towards Russia (*Baltic News Service* 2015b).

The idea of being “an expert” of the Eastern European political landscape in Europe is not new. In the case of a regional political crisis, Lithuanian leaders find themselves convincing other EU countries to have a common position and response to provocations or, in their opinion, inappropriate actions. Although Lithuania’s activity in internal EU politics varies, the issues of security or outside political provocations become one of the few national concerns to be received by the highest EU level. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs stresses, “it is important that the big democracies would have the last word because their role might determine not only the situation in Ukraine but the unacceptable precedent that is happening in the 21st century” (*Baltic News Service* 2014d). Thus, the EU and Western countries are understood as those who can counterbalance Russia. In this respect, Lithuania becomes a norm entrepreneur as well as an advocate of Western political principles that have to be defended by the entire EU (“we cannot allow being surprised again, because the price will be even higher than before” (*Baltic News Service* 2014c).

Although on the one hand Lithuania is presented as an equal EU member, which seeks to cooperate and solve security issues together (“as long as Minsk agreement is not implemented, we have agreed that sanctions and critical attitude will dominate in our [the EU – J. L.] positions” (*ELTA* 2017a), on the other hand mistrust and disappointment of the EU reaction is also noticed. As the President claims, “European leaders’ patience has limits. Endeavours to talk with Russia diplomatically have led to negative result” (*Baltic News Service* 2014e). It is clear that Lithuania struggles to influence others to follow a similarly critical position towards Russia; this process becomes a never-ending plea to convince Western countries to evaluate Russia’s actions realistically and protect itself from false impressions. According to the President, “Europe has to understand that Russia seeks to rewrite [the] post-war map and its borders” (*Baltic News Service* 2014f).

Thus, the position and self-definition towards the EU remain controversial. Although the EU is not criticized as, for example, in the case of M. Golovatov’s release⁴, the uncertainty in terms of the EU position towards Russia becomes a litmus test (“today heads of NATO and the EU pass the test of leadership” (*Baltic News Service* 2014g). Therefore, the EU is a ‘Partial Self’ (not accepted entirely as an integral part of identity due to disagreements or disappointment) in the

⁴ In 2011, Austria decided to release Michail Golovatov after detention in Vienna. He was the head of the ‘Alfa’ group that stormed the TV tower and national buildings on 13 January 1991. According to the European arrest warrant, he is wanted for crimes and crimes against humanity. He was however released after less than a day of detention. This incident became one of the dominant topics in Lithuania’s discourse, blaming the EU for failing to follow European values and principles, exchanging political ideals to economic pragmatism.

spectrum of Lithuania's identity where constant tension of being recognized and heard within the EU exists (Lingevičius 2015, 104). Although the EU is associated with specific rules, norms and possibilities to counterbalance Russia, Lithuanian leaders do not see such unity and response to Russia's actions that would be appreciated. Notably, this lack of unified approach to Russia creates a distinction between Lithuania and the EU. In this case, the role of an advocate or a promoter of European values remains limited and based on national insecurity rather than well-established and widely admitted place within the EU. In this context, NATO becomes an even more salient provider of concrete military measures in deterring the threat.

NATO as a Guarantor of Deterrence

In this light, NATO is considered as the key actor to ensure deterrence and the possibility to exist ("we are members of NATO. We have no doubts in terms of security guarantees from the Alliance" (*Baltic News Service* 2014h). In comparison to mentioned uncertainty towards the EU, NATO is reflected as ready to stand for border countries and implement the article V in case of emergency: "we have received a commitment from all 28 states to defend our region if a threat emerges" (*Baltic News Service* 2014j).

While NATO has been significant for Lithuania's security since the beginning of the membership, before 2014, Lithuania relied on consolidated routine NATO practices. Although the Russian-Georgian war in 2008 was a wake-up call for the Alliance, during the Lisbon Summit in 2010 NATO and Russia established their partnership for the first time after the Cold War. At the same time, the defence plan of the Baltic States was also prepared and presented only in 2010. In this context of re-engagement, Lithuania used NATO burden sharing while reducing its own defence spending from 1.11% of GDP in 2008 to 0.77% of GDP in 2013 (*Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Lithuania* 2020). The military was also transformed from conscription to a professional army ready to participate in diverse missions worldwide (i.e. Afghanistan). Thus, concentrating on concrete gains and routine practices, NATO and its role has not been widely reflected and described in terms of Lithuania's identity.

Since 2014 the situation has dramatically changed, reflecting strong confidence in NATO. Baltic security issues are presented as common ("NATO partners have shown that we are not alone in the face of a threat" (*Alfa.lt* 2014)). All doubts have been pushed aside, arguing that NATO understands the new security environment in the region and shows solidarity with the Baltic States ("we strongly trust, and I would suggest others to trust in security guarantees that the Alliance provides" (Liauksminas 2014)). The sharing of security concerns, regardless of the size or location of the country provides a sense of commonality between Lithuania and NATO. Therefore, NATO

and its position become an internal and dominating part of this post-Crimean identity construction.

Since 2014, the interaction between NATO and Lithuania has been increasingly intense materialized by constant high-level political visits and meetings (the Secretary-General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg, former U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden, U.S. Secretary of Defence James Mattis, etc.). NATO has deployed multinational battalions in the Baltic States and Poland and inaugurated a NATO Force Integration Unit. It has also held exercises in the region, simulating defence of the Baltic States (i.e. in summer 2018, the “Saber Strike” were the biggest ever NATO exercise in the region which included soldiers from 19 NATO members). According to the President, attention towards Lithuania and the other Baltic States remains vigilant, as evidenced by the decision to establish a NATO Force Integration Unit, deploy U.S. military machinery, and hold vast military exercises in the region (*Baltic News Service* 2015).

In comparison to reliance on burden-sharing and some free-riding, in this context, Lithuania is presented as actively engaged in strengthening NATO, rather than just being a recipient of all security gains (“during the NATO Warsaw Summit the important decisions for the regional security have been made that we must implement consistently” (*Delfi.lt* 2016)). At the same time, various solutions and even requirements on what should be done have been proposed. Lithuania calls to ensure air defence and avoid military isolation of the region (“the proposals how to avoid any potential military isolation of the region should also be found”) (*ELTA*, 2017b)) and to redeploy troops from the Western countries to the East respond to the real security situation. Lithuania also asks NATO to be ready to transition from a peace regime to a war regime with a collective defence operation (“NATO must prepare constantly updated defence plans, provide military scenarios and reform decision-making process in order to make it faster” (*Baltic News Service* 2017)).

In this context, leaders present and reflect Lithuania as an expert of today’s security challenges in the region whose requirements reflect a necessary adaptation of NATO to the new security issues. “NATO has started to see threats in our region differently and understand what we say” (*Baltic News Service*, 2016). However, in contrast to the reflection of the EU, in NATO, the stress is on practical decisions and activities that have to be implemented rather than on a search for a common understanding (“for the first time during our membership, we will have such a significant package of measures for deterrence in this region” (*Baltic News Service* 2016)). Therefore, NATO is shown as an integral part of Lithuania’s identity because securitization of Russia and mobilization of political resources are presented as mutual interests. As D. Grybauskaitė claims continuously,

“Lithuania, together with the other NATO member states, is ready for challenges <...> that is why we are all together and ready to defend our states together” (*Baltic News Service* 2014k).

In this light, two post-Crimean NATO Summits in Wales and Warsaw are understood as the new stage and direction of both NATO and the collective defence. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs claims, “Lithuania greatly appreciates NATO decisions during the Welsh Summit to strengthen [the] capabilities of the Alliance in order to react to Russia’s aggression”. (*ELTA* 2015). Thus, this new stage is marked by the threat of Russia and intensified cooperation between member states (“NATO must become real defence organisation because it is the time to end the vacation” (*Baltic News Service* 2016)). Despite agitation and requirements to improve some processes and adjust to this new stage, NATO has become a key pillar of Lithuania’s identity in terms of foreign and security policy. The importance of NATO and its role provokes to consider Lithuania’s role and responsibility to take necessary measures and make a more significant contribution.

Lithuanian Autonomy via Defence Resources

In this respect, the willingness to ensure sovereignty and security in itself is the biggest shift in the discourse and policy formation after the annexation of Crimea. Before that, the defence has not been widely reflected in political discourse, especially during the economic crisis when all discussions and policy actions were concentrated on financial issues. After the annexation of Crimea, security became a mobilizing national issue that must be responded to appropriately (“today Lithuania is in the stage of information warfare. Therefore, we must defend ourselves, because democracy cannot be weak” (*ELTA* 2014)).

Due to the increased tension wrought by external threats, security concerns rose to the top of the political agenda. On this issue, the President stresses that Lithuania has taken security into its own hands and will not respond to any provocations: “we have to respond to the changing geopolitical situation in a fast and appropriate way by ourselves independently and together with NATO partners” (*Miliūtė* 2014). In this sense, the smallness of the state and the lack of capabilities become irrelevant because all endeavours are focused on guaranteeing its existence. Asymmetric relation between a small country and powerful antagonistic one are taken as a condition that has to be recognised and solved rather than [be] admitted as an inevitable destiny. As the President says, “I am proud that we do not accept any aggression towards our country <...> this is very important because we face the historic challenges of being on the border between the West and not friendly East” (*Pukenė* 2017).

This shift in the discourse goes along with several very important changes in foreign and security policy. After the annexation of Crimea, Lithuania has begun to significantly increase its defence spending and reached NATO’s requirement in just a few years. As it was mentioned, in

2013, Lithuania spent 0.77% of its GDP on defence, while in 2018, the budget allocated was 2.01% of GDP (from 267.3 to 873 million euros). As the President claims, Lithuania is one of the leaders exceeding the NATO standard to spend 20% of defence expenditures for modernization, because Lithuania already spends 30% (*Lrt.lt* 2017). In 2016, military conscription was reintroduced after more than a decade of building a professional army. In 2017, the updated national security strategy was approved, and tasks for citizens and potential scenarios in case of an emergency were later published. Thus, according to the President, Lithuania and the other Baltic States must do everything to guarantee security by themselves (*Baltic News Service* 2016).

Moreover, these perceptions complement the idea of cooperation and mutual endeavours between NATO and Lithuania. The country is treated as a sovereign state able to concentrate on its national interests, mobilize resources and increase self-confidence. Despite that the necessity of (or at least demand for) deterrence and a significant NATO input, more important perspective to emphasize is self-determination and readiness to act: “any kind of war against us has to be responded with the decisions that can secure Lithuania” (*ELTA* 2014).

The Symbiotic Relationship between Identity and Policy

What do policy tendencies say about Lithuanian’s sense of self, and how does this, in turn, affect foreign and security policy? Lithuania considers itself as a small border state concerned about its sovereignty. Indeed, this aspect of its identity further strengthens Lithuanian resolves to remain an independent state. As it is noticed within the political discourse, Lithuanian politicians strongly reflect the idea that countries still need to be prepared to fight for their statehood and sovereignty, and this right to exist must be proved through self-defence and the ability to mobilise allies. However, *smallness* mentioned directly and indirectly is seen as a condition that should be accepted and realised in political actions rather than limitation.

Therefore, the size is just one of the possible factors strengthening the concern of the asymmetric relation to Russia. Historical memory and experience of being enslaved (for instance references to imperialism or the Stalinist regime) makes instability in the region even more *personal* or *familiar*. Smallness may also explain why so much attention is paid to the discussion of NATO’s commitment to defend while simultaneously mobilizing all internal resources on war readiness.

Compared to earlier years, the annexation of Crimea sparked the realisation that foreign and security policy has to be readjusted and Lithuania must take independent actions, namely by focusing on national defence capabilities, higher defence spending, better and more rapid military modernisation, civil resilience and better cooperation with the regional and international partners. Therefore, as B. Brunalas suggests, post-Crimean policy formation could be described as the new

period of Lithuania's foreign and security policy which is based on the existential threat of Russia (Brunalas 2016 208).

Conclusion

Following the argument that identity in foreign and security policy is not a stable once-described phenomenon but rather a changing and complex process, new identity tendencies can be observed after the annexation of Crimea in Lithuania's case. Discourse analysis shows that the relations with other actors and policy formation are predominantly based on the perception of high insecurity. In the post-Crimean situation, Lithuania's self-definition has been mobilised on the basis of self-preservation as a small state, referring to its territory (the threat of military conflict and territorial occupation) and to the state as a sovereign political subject as well as a member of the Western political family. Therefore, such security concerns are at the highest level of the national agenda. Where all political, financial and societal resources are mobilized in order to defend sovereignty, modern security dominates Lithuanian policy.

Although a broader and more detailed analysis should be conducted in order to identify the more specific aspects of these identity shifts in foreign and security policy over time, new important tendencies and shifts in argumentation can already be observed. As Russia is openly named as a direct military threat to Lithuania, self-determination and self-readiness has become the most significant changes within the discourse. Although attitudes towards the EU and NATO also differ relative to what they were in the recent past, these differences also emphasize the role of Lithuania's subjectivity within the organisations. Therefore, the external shock becomes a litmus test to redefine or reflect routine policy practices and relations with partners and neighbours. It is important to note that all these arguments and actions have emerged as a reaction to an unexpected situation, but not as a consistent long-term plan; therefore, the question of sustainability and resilience remains – considering growing instability of international politics, how unpredictable actions of any major actors would affect those tendencies and political course.

This research also supports the idea that country's identity in foreign and security policy is not a stable nor constant phenomenon but one which varies over time and may be affected by any internal or external processes, such as the annexation of Crimea. In other words, identity and policy can change according to both incremental and sudden changes. Therefore, greater attention to identity issues brings value to foreign policy analysis because it presents a more dynamic and comprehensive picture of contemporary arguments and policies as well as the decision-making process.

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The Dichotomy Between Large and Small Political Parties: A New Perspective on Electoral Volatility in South Africa

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Abstract

This article investigates new political party formation in South Africa within the broader context of voter volatility. The political party system has displayed high levels of stability, but the unrestrained and rampant formation of new political parties that contest in each election could destabilise the system. The number of entrants rose to an unprecedented 28 before the 2019 elections and contradicts the support for older, established parties in each election since 1994. In theory, the within-system stability in South Africa, with an on average 90% voter share between established parties, impedes the scope for the formation of new smaller parties. In reality, support for new parties remains low. This article explores why this does not serve as a deterrent for the formation of new parties. The article shows that despite the increasing number of new entrants, their impact on stability and consolidation in the country is negligible.

Keywords

Democratic Consolidation; Extra-System Parties; Proportional Representation; Vote-Share; Within-System Parties

Introduction

The first democratic elections in South Africa were held in 1994 and from the outset the country's political party landscape has displayed high levels of consistency and constancy. The stability of the political party system is the result of persistent, strong 'within-system' electoral support – a phrase coined by Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera (2017, 612). The term 'within-system' describes electoral support that is channelled *to* established parties, while 'extra-system' support describes the flow of electoral support, in the form of votes, *away from* established parties to newly formed political parties. The perception of consistent stability in South Africa's political party system is the result of continued within-system electoral support that has chiefly been channelled to two or three parties since 1994.

The unrestrained formation of 88 new political parties since 1994 contradicts the initial perception of stability in the South African political party system. The strong within-system support, with an average of above 90 % votes shared between the established parties, should have allowed very little scope for the formation of new, smaller parties. However, during all six election cycles post 1994, despite very low electoral support (less than 7 %) for extra-system parties, increased participation of newly founded parties was not inhibited or discouraged.¹

The cycle of creation and subsequent disappearance of new parties after each election inhibits the potential consolidation, settlement and stabilisation of the political party system. The attrition rate (the rate at which parties disappeared) between 1999 and 2004 also stabilised around 30 %. However, the number of new entrants rose spectacularly over the next few election cycles and eventually peaked at 28 new entrants in the 2019 election. The attrition rate peaked in 2014 as 12 smaller parties disappeared after the 2014 elections, translating to an attrition rate of almost 50 %.

Background to the research question

The nature and role of political parties in a democracy are of critical importance and form an essential element of the political dynamics of a democracy. Political parties are in essence complex multilevel organisations, with varied elements, united by a common identity and shared objectives. They are key mobilising devices to pull millions of people into the realms of politics and political processes, and to shape and institutionalise public interests (Duverger 1994, 19).

Political parties perform many tasks in society, but predominantly they add an element of stability to the political system by legitimising the individuals and the institutions that control

¹ The vote share for extra-system parties (small parties) was 6.4 % (1999), 3.6 % (2004), 8.4 % (2009), 9.2 % (2014), 3.7 % (2019) with an average support of 6.26 % (cf. Marrian 2019; Brand South Africa 2014; The South African 2019).

political power. Duverger (1994, 21) explains that political parties are important instruments for societal interest aggregation and articulation because they coordinate and refine the demands that are made on the political system, allowing the system to respond more adequately to those demands. Political parties act as two-way channels for communication, by transmitting information upwards from grassroots level, and downwards from government and/or the party to the constituency.

It thus flows that when the demands of society change, political parties ought to or will change in reaction. If the within-system parties are unable to react successfully to the demands of society in the period leading up to the elections, the political party system will naturally flux. In most cases, this will lead to the formation of new parties.

Understanding how different knowledgeable voters engage in different types of voting behaviour is at the core of the normative democratic theory that underpins the article (Geers and Strömbäck 2018, 362). The volatility of political parties in South Africa remains uncharted territory. The aim of this article is to develop an analytical construct to be used as a benchmark to gauge acceptable levels of extra-system political party formations. This analytical construct will certainly benefit from a comparison of within-system and extra-system parties in selected countries.

The methodology of this article is to approach the research question from a comparative perspective when tracking the frequency of new political party formation in South Africa to determine whether it is acceptable and within international norms. The field of Comparative Politics is premised on the notion that comparisons of different sets of phenomena will uncover distinct patterns, enhance descriptive knowledge and help develop useful theoretical generalisations. This analysis will make possible qualitative judgements based on accurate description and explanation (Bak 2004, 119).

The methodology in this article will be a diachronic approach, which entails data collection over time from the first democratic elections to most recent 2018 general elections, with the aim to form useful theoretical generalisations of voter volatility and political consolidation in the country.

The data collected includes the number of political parties that participated in each election. The increasing phenomenon of new political parties during each election cycle in South Africa from 1999 to 2019 is outlined, and its potential impact on political stability and consolidation in the country is discussed. This article aims to contribute to a better understanding of electoral volatility in South Africa. It investigates the almost unrestrained formation of new political parties

in South Africa – 28 new parties participated in the 2019 elections and a total of 88 new parties have been formed in the post-1994 era.

One of the explanations offered for the high frequency of new political parties is that it is indicative of current dissatisfaction with the old established parties (Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera 2017, 612). However, the current political party system displays persistent high levels of within-system stability and support: the older, established political parties have consistently received more than 90 % of the votes in general elections since 1994. The vote share for new parties throughout the same period has remained well below 10 %, and in two cases that figure was boosted by the split of two bigger parties. In fact, if the split of two bigger parties had not affected voting, the vote share for extra-system parties would have been very low – between 3 % and 5 %. If dissatisfaction with the older, well-established parties contributed to the formation of new parties, why did it not contribute to a substantive increase in the extra-system vote share?

These two factors have been contradicting each other since the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. The dissatisfaction argument certainly does not stand up to scrutiny in South Africa and is incompatible with the contemporary political party dynamics in the country. The benchmark for within-system parties in the discussion in the article was adapted to allow a political party that had partaken for the second time in an election to be included as an established party.

Why new political parties?

On a theoretical level, the question ‘Why are new political parties formed?’ is normally an uncomplicated challenge to address and explain. The functions, purposes and roles of political parties are *inter alia* to serve as important instruments for interest aggregation and articulation. Political parties coordinate and refine the demands that are made on the political system, allowing the system to respond more adequately to those demands. Additionally, political parties act as two-way conduits of communication by transmitting information upwards from grassroots level and downwards from government and/or the party to the constituency (Duverger 1994, xxv).

If political parties fail to meet the essential obligations warranting their existence, the political system then naturally requires new structures and processes in order to articulate the interests and demands that have been left unattended and unrepresented in society. However, political instinct is sufficient to appreciate that the formation of new political parties is not always noble, and that politicians’ personal interests, political opportunism and political ambitions often play an important role.

When scholarly literature on the formation of new political parties is closely scrutinised, it is surprising to see that the advent of small parties, outside the former communist countries, has

received very little academic attention (Szawiel 2009; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Bértoa and Enyedi 2014). This might be the case because the first and second wave democracies in Western Europe and North America date back to 1776 and continued until the 1960s (before the third and fourth democratic waves of the 1970s and the 1990s), and yielded only limited new political party development. Older, well-established parties dominated in most of the older democracies in Western Europe and in the United States of America, where a historic two-party dominance has almost been institutionalised.

Between 1945 and 1991, on average only one political party emerged in within-system political party systems. Furthermore, the single new party's vote share was restricted to only 2 % of the vote (Szawiel 2009, 483–84; Tavits 2008, 113). Stability and the absence of new political entrants before 1970 in the older, more established democracies caused scholars to talk of the 'freezing' of political party systems.

However, global developments and new political party formation outside Western Europe and North America during the third and fourth wave of democratisation have surpassed all expectations. In post-communist countries in the post-1990 period (i.e. during the fourth democratic wave), an average of 5.6 new political parties emerged in each new election cycle for more than a decade (Szawiel 2009, 483). This number of new political entrants per election cycle is high, especially when contrasted with consolidated or advanced democracies where the occurrence of new parties is irregular, inconsequential and insignificant.

The average 5.6 new political parties in post-communist countries, however, pales in comparison to the South African experience with its multiple new political party entrants. The high number of new entrants in South Africa, an average of 15 parties per elections cycle,² has raised the bar significantly.

It is important to look beyond numbers to understand the impact and consequences of the formation of so many new entrants in the political party system. Tavits (2008, 113) emphasises the value of a stable political party system to ensure democratic consolidation in new and developing democracies. It is important to establish a well-balanced development pattern for new entrants and a fair balance between the within-system, extra-system parties. The argument presented by this article is not against the creation of new political parties, but that a sustainability of new parties should be achieved to consolidate the system and enhance its stability. It is important to establish and consolidate channels between voters and parties, but the continuous unbridled formation of new parties is contradictory to this theoretical principle.

² 9 (1999), 9 (2004), 14 (2009), 14 (2014) and 28 new parties (2019) for an average of 14.8 new parties per election cycle (cf. Marrian 2019; Brand South Africa 2014; The South African 2019).

In South Africa the continuous formation of new party entrants creates instability and uncertainty in a new and developing democracy. The 34 new political parties which competed in the most recent election in 2019 in South Africa is beyond reasonable comprehension. The number of new parties, their durability and their ability to expand, endure and persist to the next election cycle, play an important role in ensuring the consolidation of the system. When the percentage of votes awarded to within-system parties remains consistently high and at the same level, but new parties keep appearing on the scene, the logic and rationale behind the formation of these new parties should be questioned.

Explanation for electoral volatility

The extensive literature on electoral volatility dates back to the 1960s and many theorists have contributed to the corpus of knowledge (Birch 2003, 119–35; Powell and Tucker 2014, 105). A number of core hypotheses have emerged to explain electoral volatility or to a certain degree, ‘the absence of electoral volatility’, which could be largely attributed to the lack of new political party formation in first and second waves of democratization.

The limited and restricted formation of new parties in the political party system has prompted Lipset and Rokkan (1967, 115) to describe the phenomenon as the ‘freezing’ of political systems. However, the third and fourth waves of democratisation that swept across the world in the post-1970 period created many competitive democratic regimes. Within-system parties largely disappeared and extra-system parties were vying for political power in newly formed democracies.

In young democracies, newly formed political parties are not the exception but an integral part of the political system. In post-communist democracies (as mentioned earlier) an average of 5.6 parties emerged after the regime change, eager to flex their muscles in the new democratic era. The average share of votes received by new parties in the post-communist area was 19 %, but in some elections new entrants received as much as 50 % of the votes (Szawiel 2009, 483). In Bulgaria (2001), Estonia (2003), Latvia, (1998 and 2002) and Lithuania (2000 and 2004) new parties either formed the government or a government coalition soon after their formation (Tavits 2008, 104).

The upsurge of new entrants and the flow of electoral support to these extra-system parties in post-communist democracies were in sharp contrast to what was happening in more established democracies, where the formation and the impact of new political parties were largely inconsequential and ineffective. An average of only one new party would normally emerge in an advanced democracy, and that party would win only 2 % of the votes in any election (Tavits 2008, 104). Electoral volatility was restricted, with the vote share predominantly focused toward established parties.

Tavits (2008, 120) explains that in new democracies where the political party system is still developing, it is possible that ethnic and religious minorities have not been able to support or associate with a political party effectively. The party they have supported for lack of an alternative, may have suffered an electoral loss, and their demands and interests therefore remained unfulfilled and unrepresented. These ethnic and religious minorities then had to look to newcomers, who might have promised to represent their interests more effectively. This could explain the shifts and the volatility in some systems.

Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera (2017, 612) explain that permeable institutional arrangements, such as fragmented party systems and permissive electoral systems, could also be associated with higher electoral volatility. Electoral volatility is much more likely in fragmented, diverse party systems because they offer more options to voters. The Proportional Representation electoral system makes it easy for new parties to function, because a relatively low number of votes can often guarantee parliamentary representation. In other electoral systems, such as First Past the Post in the United Kingdom, it is much more difficult for new parties to function, because a new party could attract a high number of votes but still lose against another party and fail to get a representative in parliament.

Voters do not easily abandon established parties when they know that their new choice has a limited scope for success. This is certainly the case in older, more established democracies, especially in single-member constituencies. Feree (2010, 778) argued that African countries with one, and only one, majority group should have less volatility than countries with no majority group or countries with multiple nested majority groups.

Fluctuations in voter turnout normally indicate voter discontent, and mostly affects the electoral fate of parties. It has been pointed out in studies that when economically and socially marginalised sections of the population voice their discontent, turnout rises substantially, and voter fluctuation can be observed (Feree 2010, 766). It is accepted that new parties benefit mostly from protest votes (Tavits 2008, 120).

However, the reality in stable democracies work against new entrants. Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera (2017, 612) point out that strong organisations with deep connections with voters developed during the earlier waves of democratisation gave rise to consolidated and established democracies.

Geers and Strömbäck (2018, 363), referencing Dalton (2007) and Mair (2008), indicate that in Western democracies, voting behaviour patterns clearly show signs of volatility which was typified as ‘changes in party preference within an electorate.’ In Sweden this trend of electoral

volatility was largely the result of a greater choice of political parties. The number of parties in parliament has risen from five to eight parties.

The main explanation for the phenomenon was the declining importance of traditional cleavages and weakening attachment between parties and voters (Dalton 2007). This de-alignment of parties could also be attributed to the process of cognitive mobilisation whereby voters, as a result of rising levels of education, have the skills and resources to make independent political choices without reliance on traditional loyalties.

Recent research on the causes of electoral volatility has also found evidence supporting this view of emancipated voters (Ferec 2010, 778). Geers and Strömbäck (2018, 363) also point out the role of election campaigns that have become more important to explain the choice voters made.

The declining factor of traditional loyalties is not the only theoretical explanation but another short term factor for electoral volatility is increased political knowledge. One of the first or earlier empirical studies of voting behaviour concluded that voters who switch parties are uninterested in and uninformed about politics. However, later research has shown that cognitive mobilization or increased political knowledge may be the reason and that voters are able to make autonomous informed political choices without reliance on traditional loyalties. The link between political knowledge and electoral volatility has also been established by various studies, although the evidence is mixed. With respect to intra-campaign volatility, some studies claim that the moderate knowledgeable voters are the least likely to switch from one party to another, whereas others claim that the most knowledgeable voters tend to make more independent choices, leading them to switch occasionally (Dalton 2007, 275). Hence, the group of voters which is most likely to be volatile are the moderately knowledgeable (Kefford 2018, 338).

Previous research has shown that voters with higher confidence in their political knowledge (i.e. political efficacy) are more likely to turn out (Möller et al. 2014, 690). The question remains whether this also applies to voters possessing actual political knowledge, besides having confidence in one's own political knowledge. This line of reasoning allows the following inference to be made: for different reasons, less knowledgeable and highly knowledgeable voters are less likely to change their opinions and preferences. Less knowledgeable voters are less exposed to the political information necessary to change their opinion and are inclined to remain with their historical choices. Highly knowledgeable voters, on the other hand, are more likely to receive this information but unlikely to accept it if it challenges their opinions and preferences. Therefore, both the least and most knowledgeable voters are more likely to remain stable in their party preference during election campaigns (Thapa 1999, 33).

The variance in extra-system and within-system volatility

The electoral success of new parties in democracies can be measured by comparing extra-system and within-system volatility after World War II. Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera (2017, 612) state that the third and fourth waves of democratisation created more competitive and vibrant regimes, therefore it tended to produce many new parties that eventually became important contenders.

The mean vote shares of within-system parties in competitive regimes established before the third democratic wave in the 1970s, was only 2.4 % in all elections from 1945 to 2006 (Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera 2017, 612). The within-system and extra-system columns in Table 1 below indicate electoral volatility in selected countries, including first or second wave democracies and post-1970 third or fourth wave democracies (Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera 2017, 626). The second to last column reflects transfers of votes between within-system parties, while the figures in the last column represent transfer from within-system to new parties. This table shows that volatility is lower in democratic regimes that were established before the third wave of democracy. Higher electoral volatility can be observed for extra-system parties in democracies established during the third and fourth democratic waves in the post-1970 phase.

Table 1. Comparison of electoral volatility of within-system and extra-system parties

<i>Country</i>	<i>Democracy-year</i>	<i>Total volatility</i>	<i>Within-system vote share volatility</i>	<i>Extra-system vote share volatility</i>
USA	1776–1800	3.4%	3.3%	0.1%
Germany	1959	8%	7.8%	0.2%
United Kingdom	1837	7.6%	6.2%	1.4%
Italy	1945	15.4%	8.7	6.7
<i>Latin America</i>				
Chile	1990	13.9%	11.0%	2.9%
<i>Asia</i>				
India	1950	26.7%	13.1%	13.6%
South Korea	1988	36.6%	9.9%	26.7%
<i>Africa</i>				
Botswana	1966	10.6%	6.2%	4.5%
Namibia	1990	13.1%	6.8%	6.3%
Benin	1991	68.3%	26.5%	41.8%
<i>Eastern Europe</i>				
Bulgaria	1990	39.3%	15.5%	23.8%
Slovakia	1993	43.6%	19.5%	24.2%
<i>Other countries</i>				
Israel	1948	20.1%	12.5%	7.6%
Trinidad and Tobago	1962	27.3%	8.7%	18.7%

Source: Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera (2017).

It is evident from this table that the third and fourth wave democracies in the post-1970 era experienced higher levels of electoral volatility. The extra-system parties in these countries were likely to attract more votes away from older, within-system parties.

New political parties in South Africa in the democratic era

The number of political parties that participated in the various elections exclusively for white voters from 1910 to 1994 seldom exceeded ten parties. The advent of new, smaller parties was irregular and ineffectual, and their vote share in the face of single-party dominance was severely restricted (Kleynhans 1986, 85).

The construction of a benchmark for comparing within-system with extra-system parties is a challenge because of the abnormality of the pre-1994 domestic political landscape. It was therefore decided to exclude the 1994 elections for comparative purposes and focus on the second (1999) election in this article.

The 1999 elections and voter volatility

Table 2. Electoral volatility in the 1999 elections

<i>Within-system – vote share of established parties</i>	<i>Extra-system – vote share of new parties</i>
7 parties	9 parties
93.3%	6.4 %

Source: Author.

The second electoral cycle gave clear indications that South Africa's political party system was consolidating because of the overwhelming vote share that went to within-system parties. The extra-system parties only managed to attract 6 % of the vote share. The number of new parties that failed to reach the quota for parliamentary representation dropped significantly from 12 to 3 parties. This high success rate of new entrants explains the relatively low attrition rate between the 1990 and the 2004 elections. The attrition rate dropped from 57 % in 1994 to 31 % in 1999 and only 5 of the new parties that had contested in the 1999 elections failed to register or to partake in the next elections (The Independent Electoral Commission 1999).

The number of within-system parties increased as more parties contested in an election for the second time, thus acquiring a more permanent presence in parliament. They started to institutionalise their presence in parliament when they also partook in the 2004 elections. The new within-system parties were the United Democratic Movement (UDM), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), United Christian Democratic Party (UCSP) and Azanian People's Association (AZAPO). The one omission was the Keep it Straight and Simple Party (Kiss) Party that partook in the 1994 elections, disappeared in the 1999 elections and then reappeared in the next four elections.

2004 elections and voter volatility

The number of within-system parties expanded from seven to 12 with the UDM, ACDP, UCDM, AZAPO and Kiss Party participating in their second election. The number of new parties remained constant with nine new parties that contested in the 2004 elections and a total of 21 parties contested in the elections. The majority of voter support flowed again to the within-system parties who were participating in their second or third elections.

Table 3. Electoral volatility in the 2004 elections

<i>Within-system – vote share established parties</i>	<i>Extra-system – vote share of new parties</i>
12 parties	9 parties
96.4 %	3.6 %

Source: Author.

The only extra-system party that was able to attract some support was the newly formed Independent Democrats (ID) when their leader Patricia de Lille split from the PAC. The ID as extra-system party gained 1.73 % of the votes and obtained seven representatives in the National Assembly. However, the rest of the new parties were obliterated, with ten parties who failed to reach the quota for parliamentary representatives for an aggregate vote of less than 2% support. It was thus not a surprise that seven of the new parties disappeared in the five- year cycle to the next elections in 2009 for a stable attrition rate of 33 % (The Independent Electoral Commission 2009).

2009 elections and voter volatility

The 2009 elections were again hallmarked by another upsurge in the number of political parties that contested in the elections, which grew from 21 parties in the 2004 elections to 28. The number of new parties also increased from nine to 14 new parties. The within-system parties remained basically the same, with the only addition being the ID while the New National Party dissolved within the ranks of the DA. The extra-system parties now totalled 14 and their numbers were enhanced by the inclusion of a sizeable new party, the newly formed Congress of the People (Cope). Mosiuoa “Terror” Lekota, a senior ANC member and former premier of the Free State, broke away with a few ANC heavy weights to form a new party. The Cope Party had immediate success with a vote share of 7.42 % and 30 members in parliament. The new broke-away party boosted the ranks of the extra-system parties and resulted in a substantial number of votes that flowed from the within-system to the extra-system parties. This resulted in a higher electoral volatility of 8.4 %, higher than during previous cycles (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019). However, the majority of votes were again cast for the more within-system parties that contested in their second or third elections.

Table 4. Electoral volatility in the 2009 elections.

<i>Within-system – vote share of established parties</i>	<i>Extra-system – vote share of new parties</i>
12 parties	14 parties
91.6%	8.4 %

Source: Author.

The fluctuation of support to the extra-system parties was predominantly caused by the split of COPE from the ANC and their 7.42% electoral support. The vote share for the rest of the 13 new parties remained at a very low level of only 1 %. The 14 new parties did not attract much support and 12 failed to reach the quota for parliamentary representation. It was thus hardly surprising that 13 parties that contested in the 2009 vanished during the next cycle before the 2014 elections (The Independent Electoral Commission 2014). However, the attrition rate of 13 parties escalated to 46 %, substantially higher than the international trend.

2014 elections and voter volatility

The upward trend in the number of political parties that registered for the 2014 elections broke the previous record of 28 parties when 29 parties registered and participated in the 2014 elections. The number of new parties remained stable at 15 new parties. The ID Party of De Lille amalgamated with the DA, which accounted for the party's non-participation in the 2014 elections.

The within-system parties remained numerically on the same level with two additions, but also two omissions. The two new parties that joined the ranks of extra-system parties were the Azanian People's Convention (APC) and Al Jamah-ah. An interesting newcomer was the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), which had split from the ANC and attracted more than a million votes when it contested in the elections.

The trend established during the previous election cycles continued, with the majority of votes again flowing to within-system parties, which amassed 90.8 % of the vote share. In the 2009 elections, it was the newly formed COPE Party that boosted the support for extra-system parties. In the 2014 elections, the newcomer, the EFF, received 6.35 % of votes (The Independent Electoral Commission 2014). The EFF was therefore predominantly responsible for the loss of electoral support of within-system parties in 2014.

Table 5. Electoral volatility in the 2014 elections

<i>Within-system – vote share of established parties</i>	<i>Extra-system – vote share of new parties</i>
15 parties	14 parties
90.8 %	9.2 %

Source: Author.

The attrition rate of the new parties increased after the 2014 elections. The rate had remained in the 40% bracket in previous elections. With 12 parties that disappeared before the

2019 election, the attrition rate rose to 41 % (The Independent Electoral Commission 2019). The number of parties who failed to reach the quota necessary for parliamentary representation rose to 18 parties. They included the Kiss Party, which had again failed to attract substantial support and disappeared from the scene.

2019 elections and voter volatility

The number of parties continued to skyrocket from 29 parties that participated in the 2014 elections to 48 in the 2019 elections. The number of within-system parties dropped to 14 with the departure of the Kiss Party. The within-system parties again enjoyed overwhelming support, confirming the trend seen since the first elections. The extra-system parties were again annihilated and the attrition rate will certainly rise in the period leading up to the 2024 elections.

Table 6. Electoral volatility in the 2019 elections

<i>Within-system – vote share of established parties</i>	<i>Extra-system – vote share of new parties</i>
14 parties	34 parties
96.3 %	3.7 %

Source: Author.

The number of parties that failed to reach the parliamentary quota and thus lost their deposits rose to 33. It is highly likely that the attrition rate in the 2024 elections will exceed 55 % if the trend continues.

The electoral volatility trend in South Africa in comparison to the international trend

South Africa's electoral volatility within-system and extra-system since the first democratic elections in 1994 yields interesting inferences and extrapolations. To allow an analysis of the electoral volatility, it was essential to adopt an unconventional approach, because democracy and free political party formation were suppressed and impeded for many decades under the apartheid regime. The benchmark for within-system parties was adapted to allow a political party that had partaken for the second time in an election to be included as an established party. The reasons are twofold: South Africa's democracy is still in its infancy and the abnormal circumstances created during the apartheid era necessitate a more accommodating approach. In fact, a political party's second round of participation in an election normally excludes it from the new party category.

The findings of this investigation were that the vote share of the established political parties in South Africa from 1994 to the 2019 elections remained constant. The vote share for the established parties varied between 90.8 % and 96.4 %. The highest vote share deviation in the

extra-system was in 2014, when the votes earned by within-systems parties dropped to 90.8 %, which can largely be attributed to the EFF that had split from the ANC. The EFF got 6.4 % of the 9.2% vote share of extra-system parties. However, in the following election cycle in 2019, when the EFF moved to the within-system category, the vote share of extra-system parties dropped to 3.7 %, while the established within-systems parties' vote share was 96.3 % (The Independent Electoral Commission 2019).

A comparison of South Africa's electoral volatility with the international trend makes for interesting reading. South Africa's total electoral volatility is evidenced by the formation of 88 new political parties since 1994 (on average 15 per election cycle). This is much higher than the volatility experienced by established first and second wave democracies. However, the initial expectation was that electoral volatility in South Africa would be lower than in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere in Africa.

Although South Africa experienced a very high frequency of new party formation (on average 15 per election cycle), its political party system electoral volatility is still similar to that of a first and second wave consolidated democracy. The vote share in Europe between within-system and extra-system parties is 98 % to 2 %, while in South Africa it is 94 % to 6 %. In the United States the vote share is 98 % to 2 %, which is just marginally different from the pattern in South Africa.

The electoral volatility in Benin is 20 times higher than in South Africa – the ratio of votes earned by within-system parties to extra-system parties in Benin is 60 % to 40 %. It is interesting to observe that in the Eastern European post-communist countries, there is only about a quarter of South Africa's parties on average in every election, but in these new political parties attract almost 44 % of the aggregate vote share. This is in sharp contrast to South Africa, where only 6 % of the vote share is channelled to extra-system political parties.

Table 7. Electoral volatility comparison between regions and countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Within-system volatility</i>	<i>Extra-system volatility</i>
First and second wave democracies in Europe	98 %	2 %
South Africa	94 %	6 %
Benin (Africa)	60 %	40 %
Third and fourth wave democracies in Eastern bloc (post-communist) countries	56 %	44 %

Source: Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera (2017).

The problem of small parties

An intriguing aspect of South Africa's political party system is that it resembles first and second wave democracies where within-system parties enjoy high support. However, when it comes to the formation of new political parties, the South African system (unlike the political systems of first and second wave democracies) displays low levels of stability and high levels of flux.

The challenge is how to explain the continuous, almost perpetual formation of new political parties despite their low success rate and the high attrition rate. The failure and attrition of new parties does not seem to inhibit the formation of an ever-increasing number of new parties. In fact, the number of new entrants increased to a record 28 in the 2019 elections.

Table 8 contains the number of new political parties that appeared on the scene before each election cycle in South Africa. The number has increased incrementally year by year, from nine new parties in 1999 to 34 in 2019. Despite the lack of electoral support enjoyed by new parties and their high attrition rate, their numbers keep increasing. After an initial stabilisation during the middle period, when the attrition rate stabilised between 30 % and 40 %, the formation rate accelerated and rose sharply to an unprecedented 46 % after the 2014 election cycle.

Table 8. Attrition rate of small parties in South Africa

<i>Election year</i>	<i>New parties</i>	<i>Disappeared after election</i>	<i>Attrition rate</i>
1999	09 new	05 disappeared	31 %
2004	09 new	07 disappeared	33 %
2009	14 new	13 disappeared	46 %
2014	14 new	12 disappeared	41 %
2019	28 new	Not available	Not available

Source: Author.

The initial and reasonable expectation in the article was that the number of new parties would drop to a single figure to align with international trends, indicating that democratic consolidation was taking place. However, the graph pointed in the opposite direction – the figure actually rose to a new record of 14 new political parties before the 2009 elections. The record stood for only ten years. In the 2019 elections, there was a total of 28 new parties. It came as no surprise that more than half of the 28 parties failed to reach the required threshold for a parliamentary representative.

Lipset and Rokkan's (1967, 105) 'freezing' of political parties certainly did not happen in South Africa's dynamic political party spectrum. The average of 15 new entrants per election cycle distorts the picture, because the formation of new parties during the first few elections were certainly within reasonable limits and more restricted. The increase in the number of new parties

created during the 2009 and 2014 elections (14 new parties) and in the 2019 elections (28 parties) gives a much better picture of the phenomenon.

The formation of new political parties in South Africa

It is evident that the reasons for the upward trend in the number of new political parties are multifaceted and that the underlying motivations are difficult to narrow down. The reasons for new party creations observed in most democracies will most likely apply. These reasons include the poor socio-economic performance of the ruling party. New parties may be optimistic and think that they can rectify the country's economic woes and provide voters with an alternative.

Tavits (2008, 95) emphasises that fragmented party systems and permissive electoral systems are normally associated with higher voter volatility and allow the voters to defect to more options. In less fragmented systems, such as in established democracies in Europe, divisions among parties are rarer, it is harder to defect from established parties and voters are less likely to do so (Beetham 1994, 156).

The Proportional Representation electoral system that is used in South Africa certainly encourages new parties to form and participate in the elections (Hague and Harrop 2007, 187). Only a threshold of only about 45 000 votes may be sufficient to ensure a seat in parliament. During the pre-democratic era, the First Past the Post-electoral system yielded disproportionate representation, with parties such as the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP) (Reconstituted National Party) attracting 13% of the national vote in the 1960s without being able to win a single seat in parliament (Kleynhans 1986, 33). If the PR system was in operation, support for the HNP would have translated into 52 members in a 400-member legislative council.

Mainwaring, Gervasoni and Espana-Najera (2017, 612) explain that parties in long established democracies develop strong organisations with deep connections to voters and organised interests, whereas most third and fourth wave democracies lack strong political party systems. Studies point out that volatility was lower in Latin American democracies with strong within-system parties. These studies confirm that older democracies have lower electoral volatility and a lower vote share among new parties.

The formation of new political parties in South Africa is to a certain extent also the result of political opportunism and a varying degree of political naivety. There is also the contributing factor that political figures wish to retain relevance and the attention of the public. Two candidates from small parties certainly overestimated their support, namely Hlaudi Motsoeneng from the African Content Movement (fewer than 5,000 votes) and Andile Mngxitama (fewer than 20, 000 votes) (Electoral Commission of South Africa 2019). Motsoeneng declared at press conferences that he would be the next president of South Africa, but his support was well below the 1% mark

eventually while the latter was of the opinion that his party would obtain 24 seats in parliament (News24 2018).

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to develop an analytical construct as a benchmark for determining acceptable levels of new political party formation. The analysis of established and new democracies suggests that a number of less than ten new political parties is an acceptable standard.

The South African political party system behaves in much the same fashion as the within-system political party system in consolidated democracies that were formed before the third wave of democratisation in the 1970s. In earlier consolidated democracies, the vote share of extra-system parties was restricted and remained very low. However, it is curious that the formation of new parties defies the stability and democratic consolidation indicated by the limited support enjoyed by extra-system parties. There are multiple reasons for the phenomenon. In addition to the conventional reasons, political opportunism and political naivety contribute to the formation of new parties. However, despite the increasing number of new entrants, their impact on stability and consolidation in the country is negligible, and more research into the underlying reasons for this is required.

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Sociodemographic Characteristics and Political Attitudes as Correlates of Women Voters' Electoral Participation in Counties in Kenya: The Case of 2013 Polls

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Abstract

This article examines sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predicting women voters' participation in the 2013 general election in Kakamega County, Kenya. Survey data from 372 women voters were collected from this county, the second most populous among the 47 counties in Kenya. Using these data, a two-stage hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with 13 predictors and electoral participation as the dependent variable. In stage one, sociodemographic characteristics accounted for 27 % of the variation in women voters' electoral participation. In stage two, sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes contributed to 47 % of the variance in women voters' participation in the 2013 polls in Kakamega County. Significant predictors of women voters' electoral participation were: age, education, income, political knowledge, political interest, and sense of civic duty. The article makes recommendations for enhancing women's electoral participation through legal reforms as well as civic and voter education.

Keywords

Electoral Participation; Kakamega County; Kenya; Political Attitudes; Political Efficacy; Political Knowledge; Political Interest; Sociodemographic Characteristics; Women Voters

Introduction

Women's electoral participation is key to promoting gender equality in politics as envisioned in Social Development Goals, Kenya's Vision 2030 and the 2010 Constitution which all advocate for gender equality in political participation. Women's political participation helps to strengthen democracy, advance their agenda and promote their human development (Bouka et al., 2019). According to Jung (2010), the study of political participation entails three approaches. First, the sociological approach which focuses on sociodemographic and cultural factors of political participation. Second, the psychological approach studies political attitudes. Lastly, the communication approach focuses on the effect of news media use and interpersonal communication on political participation.

Most studies apply the sociological approach, yet political attitudes also play a critical role in political participation (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Jung, 2010; Shaikh, 2014; Smith-Lovin, 1979; Verba et al., 1995). This methodological pitfall underpins the knowledge gap that this article seeks to fill. Verba et al. (1995) note that the influence of socioeconomic resources on political participation is moderated by political knowledge, interest, efficacy, information and trust, self-esteem, and party identification. Karuru (2001) adds that women's political participation in Kenya is inhibited by socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors. This shows the multi-faceted nature of electoral participation that underscores the need to examine it using multiple approaches.

Using a socio-psychological approach, this research aims to answer the following research questions: (1) What was the contribution of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes to women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County? (2) What sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes significantly predicted women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan election?

In order for one to vote in general elections in Kenya he or she must be a registered voter. Although voter registration and voting in elections in Kenya is not compulsory, voter registration and turnout is high. For instance, more than 14 million (79.9%) out of 18 million registered voters in the 2013 Kenyan general election, women constituted 49.1 % (Independent and Electoral Boundaries Commission [IEBC], 2013). The national voter turnout in the election was 86 % (IEBC, 2014). By the end of 2013, there were 65 (18.6%) and 18 (26.5%) women legislators in the National Assembly and Senate respectively (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013).

Women's voter turnout in elections in Kenya is higher than men's (Okello, 2010). However, their involvement in other forms of electoral participation in the country is low (Carter Centre, 2013; Kasomo, 2012; Mbeke, 2010; Okello, 2010). Furthermore, Kasomo (2012) notes that there is a dearth of research on women's political participation in Kenya. This article therefore

contributes to knowledge on women's grassroots electoral participation in Kenya. As Smith-Lovin (1979) notes, there is a rising academic interest in discovering determinants of political participation among individual citizens. This is because policy makers intend to discover mechanisms through which to promote citizens' political participation.

The first contribution of this article is to use a socio-psychological approach to study political participation. Through this approach, this article contributes to the understanding of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes inhibiting women's use of their large voting bloc to enhance their political participation and representation in Kakamega County. Therefore, the findings discussed in this article can be used by policymakers, civic and voter educators, and political strategists to implement measures to address sociodemographic characteristics and psychological barriers to women voters' electoral participation in Kakamega County.

Departing from past studies confined to voting, this research considers both voting and election campaign activities. The gap between voting among males and females has narrowed with there being a higher voter turnout among women than men in elections in Kenya (Okello, 2010). By incorporating election campaign activities, this article expands research on electoral participation in Kenya. Thus, the findings contained in this article might be helpful for scholars who wish to gain a holistic understanding of women voters' grassroots electoral participation in Kenya. Most studies on electoral participation emanate from the developed democracies whose socioeconomic and political landscape differ from that in developing countries. This article therefore complements existing literature on electoral participation from the western world and the limited research in Kenya.

Women's electoral participation remains low despite improvements in their levels of education, employment opportunities and income (Shvedova, 2005). Besides voting, women's involvement in other forms of electoral participation in Kenya remains low (Carter Centre, 2013; Kasomo, 2012; Mbeke, 2010; Okello, 2010). This shows that besides sociodemographic characteristics such as education, employment and income, there are other predictors (for example, political attitudes) for women's electoral participation. This justifies the inclusion of various sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes as predictors of women voters' electoral participation in Kenya's 2013 polls.

As Mbeke (2010) notes, inclusion of political attitudes strengthens regression modelling in electoral participation. Thus, the results presented in this article contribute to an understanding of how sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes concomitantly affect women voters' electoral participation in Kenya. This is important in assessing the reasons underpinning the failure

of affirmative actions towards women's electoral participation and representation in counties in Kenya.

This research focuses on the general election held on 4 March 2013. This was the first election under Kenya's 2010 Constitution and the tenth since the country's independence in 1963. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides for affirmative actions toward women's political representation, citizens' political and electoral rights. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) introduced a devolved government structure of 47 counties¹ divided into 290 constituencies and 1,450 County Assembly Wards (CAWs). Thus, women's political participation in Kenya must be understood within this devolved political structure (Bouka et al., 2019).

Kakamega County, the scope of this article, is located in Western Kenya. The county divided into northern, central and southern regions has 12 constituencies and 60 CAWs (County Government of Kakamega, 2013). It is the second most populous in Kenya after Nairobi County (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2010). Kakamega County is dominated by the Luhya tribe (KNBS 2010) whose voting bloc is not homogenous as it has 17 sub-tribes with diverse political formations. During the 2013 polls, women constituted 287, 325 (50.6%) of the 567, 460 voters in Kakamega County (IEBC, 2013). Kakamega County registered a voter turnout of 84% in this election (IEBC, 2014).

Literature review

Empirical evidence shows the influence of sociodemographic characteristics such as age, marital status, education, employment status, income, and residential location on women's electoral participation (Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2011; Rai, 2011; Shojaei et al., 2010). Similar results have been reported in studies on Kenya (Kamau, 2013; Mbeke, 2010; Wafula, 2014; Wainaina, 2013).

In a ten-nation African study, Kuenzi and Lambright (2005) establishes age as a significant positive predictor of voter turnout as older people were more likely to vote than the youth. A research by Mbeke (2010) reveals low young women's participation in the 2007 Kenya polls in Nakuru district due to socioeconomic and patriarchal impediments. Patriarchy is a key cultural impediment to women's political participation (Gallagher, 1981; Karuru, 2001; Okello, 2010). Our article does not focus on patriarchal barriers to electoral participation. However, the impact of patriarchal values on women's marital responsibilities, economic status, political interest and efficacy is considered in this article.

¹ A county is one of the 47 administrative or political units of devolved government into which the Republic of Kenya is divided into, for example, Kakamega County. A county is divided into constituencies which are further sub-divided into county assembly wards, the lowest electoral unit in the country.

Marital status influences women's electoral participation. Drawing on ten case studies in Kenya, Kamau (2010) establishes that the majority of women were of the view that they would join politics only after their children have grown up or after they are widowed. The researcher notes that women participating in politics in Kenya were mainly those that were single/never married, widowed, or divorced. Through patriarchal values in Africa especially rural areas, the majority of women have their roles restricted to household chores. Hence, marital or family responsibilities limit the time available for women to engage in politics (Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Gallagher, 1981; Kamau, 2010; Mbeke, 2010; Norris, 2000; Verba et al., 1995).

Ndirangu (2018) notes that the customs of African communities restrict women's roles as homemakers and thus negate their political leadership roles. According to Coffé and Bolzendahl (2010), women are constrained from working on political campaigns due to their multiple roles in society. These roles affect both married and unmarried women. However, Verba et al. (1997) note that marriage increases interpersonal political discussions that can enhance political knowledge. It is likely that through such discussions, women in Africa's patriarchal societies will be inclined to the political viewpoints of men who are regarded as heads of families.

The level of education also predicts women's electoral participation (Karuru, 2001; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005). Education equips people with knowledge needed to understand politics and internalise political messages and it also affects employment opportunities which in turn affect income. Full-time employment consumes a lot of time (Verba et al., 1995) and when employment is combined with family responsibilities, it greatly impedes women's electoral participation.

Ndirangu (2018) argues that women's poverty caused by among others, their lack of direct control of factors of production such as land and finances limit their electoral participation. Kamau (2013) adds that this poverty constrains women in campaign financing and lowers political volunteerism among the youth (18-35-year-olds) in Kenya. Furthermore, poverty drives youth to engage in certain electoral activities in which they expect monetary rewards. These electoral activities include attending political rallies, distributing and displaying election campaign materials (Kamau, 2013).

Contrary to findings from western democracies, studies from Africa, Asia and Latin America show that the less educated and poor people vote more than those who are highly educated and rich (Isaksson et al., 2013). Such people are easy targets for voter bribery by politicians in developing countries (Stokes, 2005). Generally, the youth, less educated and poor participate less in political activities, albeit with slight differences across different studies (Verba et al., 1995).

Residential location also affects electoral participation. People who reside in politically active urban areas participate more in electoral activities than those in rural areas (Verba and Nie, 1972). Prior research indicates that in developing countries, voter turnout of rural dwellers is higher than that of urban residents. For instance, Rai (2011) shows that during the 2004 general election in India, rural women voted more than those in urban areas. Also, studies conducted by Kuenzi and Lambright in 2005 and 2011 revealed that rural residents vote more than urban residents in Africa. This may be attributed to three factors. First, the majority of rural residents are poor and poverty is a predictor of voter turnout in Africa. Second, most political parties in Africa get their support from rural regions. Third, rural residents are more likely than their urban counterparts to demonstrate partisanship and sense of civic duty.

In addition to sociodemographic characteristics, we consider political attitudes as predictors of women voters' electoral participation. Rai (2011) argues that political attitudes (for example, political knowledge, interest, efficacy, trust and partisanship, and sense of civic duty) affect women's electoral participation. According to Shojaei et al. (2010), women require relatively higher levels of political knowledge before they consider themselves suitable to participate in politics. This indicates the significance of both political knowledge and efficacy on women's electoral participation.

Research shows that women's acquisition of political knowledge shapes their political participation (Delli Carpini, 2000; Norris, 2000; Ondercin and Jones-White, 2011; Shojaei et al., 2010; Rai, 2011; Verba et al., 1995). At higher levels of political knowledge, women are more likely than men to vote, wear a political button or work for a political campaign (Ondercin and Jones-White, 2011). Similarly, Shojaei et al. (2010) say that women's acquisition of political knowledge influences their decision to donate to election campaigns. However, Jung (2010) argues that there is still limited academic research on how political knowledge enhances political participation. Therefore, inclusion of political knowledge in this article helps bridge this research gap.

Rai's (2011) study on the 2004 Indian general election reveals that women with higher political interest reported high voter turnout. Additionally, other scholars have shown that women participate less in election campaigns due to their low political interest (Bennet and Bennet, 1989; Rai, 2011; Verba et al., 1995). Low level of women's election campaign participation is attributed to the focus on conventional forms of electoral activities such as voting, voter persuasion, displaying and distributing campaign materials, as well as donating to and working for political campaigns. However, women also engage in non-conventional political participation activities. According to Kaase (1990), unconventional political participation entails demonstrations of all kinds, engagement in new social movements and creative ways of articulating political interests.

Bouka et al. (2019) observe that women in Kenya have been involved in protest politics since the colonial era and the country has vibrant women's movements in East Africa. However, this has failed to translate into gender equality in Kenya's elective politics. Due to the researchers' financial and time constraints, our article confined itself to conventional political participation activities presented in the Appendix.

Related to political interest is the sense of civic duty which greatly drives women's electoral participation (Bennet and Bennet, 1989; Carreras, 2018; Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Okello, 2010). Women show higher conscientiousness than men and this drives them to dutifully perform tasks and fulfil their obligations such as voting (Carreras, 2018). Voting as a civic duty is often emphasized by the media, political leaders in campaigns and some religious institutions (Carreras, 2018). For instance, during the 2013 Kenyan polls, the media rallied people to register and cast their vote in order to fulfil their civic duty (Carter Centre, 2013).

Based on the 2004 Indian election, Rai (2011) established a positive correlation between political efficacy on the one hand and women's participation in election campaigns and voting on the other. In this article, political efficacy denotes a woman voter's belief in her understanding of politics, participation in political discussions and the responsiveness of politicians to the electorate. Political efficacy is categorized into two: (1) internal political efficacy concerned with an individual's belief that she can influence politics, and (2) external efficacy relating to an individual's belief that politicians actually care about one's opinions (Dalton, 2008).

Overall, women consider themselves less politically efficacious (Carreras, 2018; Shojaei et al. 2010; Wainaina, 2013). In particular, Shvedova (2005: 45) asserts that, "in some countries, women perceive politics as a 'dirty' game. This has shaken their confidence in their ability to participate in political processes". From a feminist standpoint, patriarchy makes women view politics as 'a man's game' (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006).

External political efficacy is related to political trust which reflects the belief that an individual has in the political system, politicians or political institutions (Dalton, 2008; Wainana, 2013). Studies on the relationship between individuals' political trust yield mixed results. For example, Kuenzi and Lambright's (2011) research shows a positive link between political trust and political participation in Africa. However, Beck (1997) argues that citizens who distrust the government may be motivated to participate more in politics in order to control new uncertainties instead of leaving it to professional political actors.

A study by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) establishes that high political trust and political self-efficacy enhances electoral participation. One of the political institutions focused in this article is political parties to which citizens may be attached to. Partisanship predicts electoral participation

(Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Finkel and Opp, 1991; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005). However, as opposed to the developed democracies where political parties are ideologically driven, the Kenyan political party system is largely driven by ethnicity rather than ideology (Kamau, 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg et al., 2015).

Political party affiliation and partisanship in Kenya is largely driven by ethnicity (Kamau, 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg et al., 2015). People therefore get deeply attached to a political party because its leader is from their ethnic community (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2013; Kamau, 2013). Thus, Kuenzi and Lambright (2011: 760) take the view that: “elections and political parties in Africa differ considerably from those in the advanced industrial democracies.”

In spite of the foregoing concerns, Kuenzi and Lambright’s (2011) ten-nation African study found that partisanship predicts voting. Another shortcoming of political parties in Africa is discussed by Ndirangu (2018) who argues that Kenyan politics are associated with masculinity which implies “a men only affair”. This makes men dominate the political parties which are one of the major avenues through which women can enter elective politics.

Partisanship makes people motivated to seek information that supports their political inclinations (Finkel and Opp, 1991). This is what is known as ‘selective exposure’ and it denies the audience a chance to learn from news media’s diverse issues and challenging opinions (Kim, 2013). The information that partisan voters would seek pertain to their political parties, candidates and manifestos. This might deepen their partisanship and raise their voter turnout for parties or candidates they are affiliated with (Finkel and Opp, 1991). Based on the literature review, this article envisages sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes as predictors of women voters’ electoral participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County.

Theoretical framework

This article utilizes civic voluntarism model and feminist theory to identify and explain sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes shaping women’s electoral participation. Civic voluntarism model identifies three key determinants to political participation: socioeconomic resources, psychological resources and “recruitment networks” (Verba et al., 1995). According to Verba et al. (1995), socioeconomic resources such as the level of education and income facilitate political participation

Psychological resources covered in civic voluntarism model and which predict electoral participation are: political knowledge, interest and efficacy. Recruitment networks used to mobilize people politically entail one’s affiliation with voluntary organizations (such as political parties) or workplace communities (Verba et al. 1995). In summary, Verba et al. (1995: 354) notes that, “interest, information, efficacy, and partisan intensity provide the desire, knowledge and self-

assurance that impel people to be engaged by politics. But time, money, and skills provide the wherewithal without which engagement is meaningless.”

Feminist theory recognizes socioeconomic, cultural and political factors as impediments to women’s political participation (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006). These factors are consistent with civic voluntarism which shows socioeconomic factors as deterring women’s electoral participation. In addition, cultural factors impact on women’s political attitudes such as political interest, efficacy and trust which inhibit their electoral participation.

Operationalisation of variables

In this article, the dependent variable is electoral participation which denotes women voters’ engagement in eight non-professional, legal and voluntary political activities (see Appendix) in the 2013 Kenyan polls general election in Kakamega County. A ‘yes’ response to participating in a particular activity was coded as ‘1’ while a ‘no’ response was coded as zero (0). *Electoral participation* is measured through an electoral participation index computed based on a summation of the ‘yes’ responses. This index values range from zero (0) for not participating in any political activity to eight (8) for participation in all the eight activities.

This article considers sociodemographic characteristics as independent variables. Seven sociodemographic characteristics based on the reference date of the election (March 4, 2013) were measured. *Age* is measured based on a respondent’s number of years lived as of 4 March 2013 since date of birth using the categories (see Appendix). *Marital status* is measured by a respondent’s status of her marriage as at 4 March 2013. The Appendix presents categories used in measuring this variable.

Level of education is measured based on the highest level of formal schooling completed by a respondent as at 4 March 2013. For *employment status*, a respondent’s main mode of employment was used. *Income for self* is measured on the basis of the approximate 2013 individual respondent’s monthly income (in Kenya Shillings). For *household wealth status*, the researchers used the approximate 2013 monthly income (in Kenya Shillings) for a respondent and her spouse/partner or parents (if single). The categories used to measure each of these four sociodemographic variables are presented in the Appendix. *Residential location* of a respondent is measured as either rural or urban as considered in Kakamega County Development Profile (2013).

Six political attitudes were considered as predictors in this article. *Political knowledge* is measured based on a woman voter’s scores of correct answers to six open-ended questions pertaining to the 2013 Kenyan polls (see Appendix). Correct answers were coded as “1” while incorrect answers, Don’t Know (DK) and No Response (NR) answers were all coded as “0”.

Correct answers to the six political knowledge questions were summed up to yield a political knowledge index with scores ranging from zero (0) to six (6).

Political interest is measured by a respondent's indication of her level of interest in politics in the three months prior to the 4 March 2013 general election based on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all interested) to 4 (very interested) (see Appendix). *Sense of civic duty* is operationalized as a respondent's agreement or disagreement regarding her decision to participate in politics based on a five-point scale (1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree) (see Appendix).

Political efficacy is measured base on an additive scale based on a respondent's agreement or disagreement with four political efficacy statements (see Appendix) based on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). *Political trust* is derived from an additive scale of a female voter's indication of her level of trust in eight political institutions (see Appendix) within the last three months to the 4 March 2013 polls using a three-point scale ranging from 1(distrust) to 3 (trust). Lastly, *partisanship* is measured by a respondent's strength of loyalty to a political party she identified with during the 2013 Kenyan polls based on a three-point scale ranging from 1 (not so strong) to 3 (very strong) (see Appendix).

Methodology

The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design as it saves on time and money in data collection from a large population. The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = desired sample size

N = the finite size of the population

e =maximum acceptable margin error as determined by the researcher

1= a theoretical or statistical constant

The required sample size considering a 5% margin error and given 287, 325 registered women voters was computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{287,325}{1+287,325(0.05)^2} = 400$$

This study therefore sampled 400 women registered as voters for the 2013 general election in Kakamega County. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select these women voters from two constituencies drawn from each of the three regions of Kakamega County, namely, the northern, central and southern regions.

Data was collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire and analysed by means of SPSS Version 21.0. Respondents' profile by sociodemographic characteristics and political

attitudes were examined using univariate data analysis based on descriptive statistics. The study model was developed based on a two-stage hierarchical multiple regression analysis. In stage one, sociodemographic characteristics were added to the model while political attitudes were added in stage two. This method was selected for it allows measurement of the effect of multiple predictors on the dependent variable. The data was presented using tables.

Study model

The prediction equation for the regression results was specified as follows:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1^{AG} + \beta_2^{MS} + \beta_3^{ED} + \beta_4^{ES} + \beta_5^{IN} + \beta_6^{HW} + \beta_7^{RL} + \beta_8^{PK} + \beta_9^{PIT} + \beta_{10}^{SC} + \beta_{11}^{PE} + \beta_{12}^{PT} + \beta_{13}^{PA} + \varepsilon_1$$

In this equation, EP denotes overall electoral participation, β_0 represents intercept which is the expected mean value of the outcome variable (Y) when all predictors (X) are equal to 0. β_{1-13} which indicates regression coefficients that show a positive or negative correlation between X and Y. The predictors in this equation are: (1) age, (2) marital status, (3) level of education, (4) employment status, (5) monthly income for self, (6) household wealth status, (7) residential location, (8) political knowledge, (9) political interest, (10) sense of civic duty, (11) political efficacy, (12) political trust, and (13) partisanship. ε_1 denotes the margin of error (error term) in the study model.

Results

Out of 400 questionnaires administered in this study, 372 (93 %) were returned and used for data analysis. This shows a high response rate.

Respondents' profile

The minimum age requirement for registering as a voter in Kenya is 18 years. There is no upper limit on who is not eligible to vote in the country. Table 1 shows that 72.1 % of the respondents were aged 18-50 years, 74.8 % were married, divorced, separated and widowed, 62.7 % had primary school and no formal education, and 61.8 % were employed. A total of 41.9 % of participants were earning approximately Kshs. 5,000 and below per month and 65.9 % of the respondents from low wealth status households. A total of 41.7 % and 58.3 % of participants were residing in rural and urban areas respectively.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by sociodemographic characteristics

<i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Age (years)	18–35	162	43.5
	36–50	106	28.5
	51+	104	28.0
Marital status	Single	92	24.7
	Married	222	59.7
	Separated, divorced and widowed	56	15.1
	NR	2	0.5
Level of education	None	72	19.4
	Primary school	161	43.3
	Secondary school	71	19.1
	Tertiary and university education	66	17.7
	NR	2	0.5
Employment status	Unemployed	142	38.2
	Full-time employment	148	39.8
	Part-time wage employment	82	22.0
Monthly income (Kshs.)	5,000 and below	156	41.9
	5,001–10,000	88	23.7
	10,001 and above	104	28.0
	DK/NR	24	6.4
Household wealth status	Low	103	32.8
	Medium	104	33.2
	High	18	5.7
	DK/NR	89	28.3
Residence	Rural	155	41.7
	Urban	217	58.3

Source: Authors.

Table 2 reveals that the political attitudes that were highly and least rated were sense of civic duty ($M=4.07$, $SD=0.72$) and partisanship ($M=1.73$, $SD=0.81$) respectively. The level of women voters' electoral participation had a mean of 3.53 ($SD=2.34$).

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by political variables

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Political attitudes	Sense of civic duty	372	4.07	0.72
	Political knowledge	372	3.06	1.81
	Political efficacy*	371	2.92	0.62
	Political interest	372	2.38	1.03
	Political trust	372	1.68	0.50
	Partisanship**	268	1.73	0.81
Electoral participation	Electoral participation activities	372	3.53	2.34

*One missing entry.

** Applies to those affiliated to a particular political party.

Source: Authors.

Sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predicting women voters' electoral participation

Prior to regression analysis, the researchers examined the correlation between each of the predictors and electoral participation. Table 3 indicates that the p-values for the correlation between each of the sociodemographic characteristics and electoral participation are below the study's chosen significance level ($\alpha = .05$). This confirms that each of the sociodemographic characteristics is correlated to women voters' electoral participation.

Table 3. Chi-square test results for the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and electoral participation of women voters

<i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>X²</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Age	372	179.658a	6	.000
Marital status	370	76.044a	6	.000
Level of education	372	75.233a	12	.000
Employment status	372	30.501a	6	.000
Monthly income	372	38.883a	9	.000
Household wealth status	314	36.087	9	.000
Residential location	372	10.963a	3	.012

Source: Authors.

From Table 4, it can be observed that political interest ($r = .66, p < .001$) and political knowledge ($r = .63, p < .001$) each strongly positively correlated with electoral participation. There was a low positive correlation between partisanship ($r = .18, p < .001$), sense of civic duty ($r = .24, p < .001$) and political trust ($r = .29, p < .001$) and electoral participation. Political efficacy and electoral participation were negatively lowly correlated ($r = -0.20, p < .001$).

Table 4: Correlation between political attitudes and electoral participation

No.	Variables	Test results		
			Political knowledge	Electoral participation
1a	Political knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	0.63**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
		N	372	372
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.63**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Political interest	Electoral participation
1b	Political interest	Pearson Correlation	1	0.66**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
		N	343	372
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.66**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Sense of civic duty	Electoral participation
1c	Sense of civic duty	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	351	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.24**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Political efficacy	Electoral participation
1d	Political efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	372	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	-0.20**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Political trust	Electoral participation
1e	Political trust	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	372	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.29**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
1f	Partisanship	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	252	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.18**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372

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

Source: Authors.

Tables 5 and 6 show that in Model 1, sociodemographic characteristics contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(7, 141) = 8.74, p < .001$ and accounted for 27% ($\Delta R^2 = .27$) of the variance in respondents' electoral participation. This implies that sociodemographic characteristics predicted women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County. This is consistent with prior studies that have established that sociodemographic characteristics predict electoral participation in Kenya (Kamau, 2013; Karuru, 2001; Mbeke, 2010; Wafula, 2014; Wainaina, 2013). It is also in harmony with civic voluntarism model and feminist theory. Civic voluntarism model identifies socioeconomic resources as determinants of political participation (Verba et al., 1995). Feminist theory identifies socioeconomic factors as determinants of women's political participation (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006).

As shown in Tables 5 and 6, Model 2 with sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes as predictor variables contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(13, 135) = 11.09, p < .001$ and accounted for 47% ($\Delta R^2 = .47$) of the variance in respondents' electoral participation. This demonstrates that sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predicted women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County. These results are supported by civic voluntarism model which demonstrates that sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predict electoral participation (Verba et al., 1995). Feminist theory also identifies sociodemographic characteristics and political factors (in this article, political attitudes) as determinants to women's electoral participation (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006).

Table 5. Model summary for the prediction of electoral participation from sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R square</i> <i>R²</i>	<i>Adjusted R square</i> ΔR^2	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	0.55 ^a	.30	0.27	0.92
2	0.72 ^b	.52	0.47	0.78

a. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location

b. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location, political knowledge, political interest, sense of civic duty, political efficacy, political trust, partisanship

c. *Dependent variable:* Electoral participation

Source: Authors.

The difference between adjusted R^2 values for Models 1 and 2 in Table 5 revealed a positive change ($\Delta R^2 = .20$). Therefore, after controlling for sociodemographic characteristics, political attitudes accounted for 20% of the variance in women voters' electoral participation. This is consistent with past studies which have found that political attitudes predict women's electoral

participation (Bennet and Bennet, 1989; Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Okello, 2010; Ondercin and Jones-White, 2011; Rai, 2011; Shoajei et al. 2010; Wainaina, 2013).

Table 6. ANOVA results for the prediction of electoral participation from sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

Model		Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.*
1	Regression	51.70	7	7.39	8.74	0.000 ^b
	Residual	119.17	141	0.85		
	Total	170.87	148			
2	Regression	88.25	13	6.79	11.09	0.000 ^c
	Residual	82.62	135	0.61		
	Total	170.872	148			

a. *Dependent variable:* Electoral participation

b. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location

c. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location, political knowledge, political interest, sense of civic duty, political efficacy, political trust, partisanship

*P ≤ .05 shows a significant correlation.

Source: Authors.

Table 7 shows regression coefficients and multicollinearity test values for Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Newbert (2008) notes that where there is no collinearity, Tolerance value should not be less than 0.10 and VIF should not be more than 10. The values of Tolerance and VIF shown in Table 5 meet this threshold for the models under consideration.

Table 7. Regression coefficients for the prediction of electoral participation from sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.*	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	3.64	0.53		6.86	0.000		
	Age	-1.05	0.18	-0.48	-5.72	0.000	0.733	1.364
	Marital status	0.08	0.18	0.03	0.42	0.677	0.793	1.261
	Level of education	-0.28	0.13	-0.22	-2.18	0.031	0.592	1.690
	Employment status	0.14	0.19	0.06	0.72	0.471	0.965	1.036
	Income	0.62	0.25	0.26	2.53	0.012	0.557	1.796
	Household wealth status	0.14	0.15	0.08	0.94	0.352	0.621	1.611
	Residential location	0.23	0.16	0.11	1.43	0.154	0.920	1.087
2	(Constant)	2.44	1.1		2.22	0.028		
	Age	-0.49	0.19	-0.22	-2.62	0.010	0.536	1.864
	Marital status	0.14	0.15	0.06	0.91	0.363	0.777	1.267
	Level of education	-0.22	0.11	-0.17	-2.01	0.047	0.540	1.852

Employment status	0.10	0.16	0.04	0.58	0.565	0.919	1.088
Income	0.49	0.21	0.20	2.29	0.023	0.536	1.867
Household wealth status	0.07	0.13	0.04	0.53	0.595	0.600	1.667
Residential location	0.16	0.14	0.08	1.19	0.235	0.892	1.121
Political knowledge	0.70	0.16	0.33	4.38	0.000	0.442	2.261
Political interest	0.64	0.18	0.29	3.61	0.000	0.434	2.302
Sense of civic duty	-0.41	0.20	-0.13	-2.01	0.046	0.781	1.281
Political efficacy	-0.25	0.25	-0.06	-0.99	0.323	0.840	1.191
Political trust	-0.24	0.47	-0.03	-0.50	0.617	0.942	1.061
Partisanship	0.20	0.14	0.09	1.46	0.147	0.897	1.114

Dependent variable: Electoral participation

*P ≤ .05 shows a significant correlation.

Source: Authors.

In Model 1, Table 7 indicates that significant sociodemographic predictors of electoral participation were: age ($\beta = -0.48$, $p < .001$), level of education ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = .031$) and income ($\beta = .26$, $p = .012$). Model 2 shows significant predictors of electoral participation were: age ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = .010$), level of education ($\beta = -0.17$, $p = .047$), income ($\beta = .20$, $p = .023$), political knowledge ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$), political interest ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), and sense of civic duty ($\beta = -0.13$, $p = .046$). The best fitting regression model for predicting the influence of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes on women voters' electoral participation would be the linear combination of the constant, age, level of education, income, political knowledge and interest, and sense of civic duty. This regression for Model 2 is thus simplified as follows:

$$EP = 2.44 - 0.22AG - 0.17ED + 0.20IN + 0.33PK + 0.29PIT - 0.13SC$$

Limitations of the study

The findings, conclusion and recommendations of this article have to be seen in light of some limitations. First, this article focuses on the 2013 general election which represents the 2007-2013 electoral cycle in Kenya. Second, this article focuses on one county (Kakamega County) in Kenya. Therefore, its findings may not be generalised to other elections and counties in Kenya. Third, the research did not consider the correlation between sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes. Finally, the researchers did not assess causal relationships between political attitudes and electoral participation. Examining more than one election in all counties in Kenya, the correlation between sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes, and causal relationships between political attitudes and electoral participation could have augmented the

research findings. However, given the wide range of variables considered in this article and limited time and financial resources, this could have made the research unmanageable.

The research limitations did not impact on the overall goal of this article of assessing sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes influencing women voters' electoral participation. By focusing on the first general election after the implementation of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, this article is instrumental in determining the effect of the affirmative actions towards women's electoral participation implemented after this Constitution. Multiple regression analysis adopted in this article helped to statistically manipulate the multiple predictor variables on overall electoral participation of women voters.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conformity with outcomes from past studies, this research demonstrates that sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predict women voters' electoral participation in Kakamega County. Sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes accounted for 47 % of the variation in women voters' electoral participation. Age, level of education, income, political knowledge, political interest and sense of civic duty were the significant predictors of women voters' electoral participation in Kakamega County during the 2013 Kenyan polls.

The significant role of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes has important implications for political actors in Kakamega County interested in promoting women's electoral participation. In order to adequately promote women's electoral participation, there is need to address sociodemographic characteristics impeding their electoral participation consistent with feminist theory. In turn this and other measures might enhance women's political attitudes and ultimately electoral participation. This article recognises that to improve women's sociodemographic characteristics and change their political attitudes is a long-term endeavour. Thus, the researchers make four recommendations for the short term and long term.

First, the Parliament of Kenya should enact laws that enforce the provision on gender equality in elective politics at Senate and National Assembly levels as articulated in Article 81(b)² of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. These legal reforms will help bridge the gender gap in elective politics in the short-term. Provisions under Article 177³ of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya has a mechanism for realising this principle of gender equality for County Assemblies.

² Article 81(b) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) states that "not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender" (p. 38).

³ Article 177(1)(b) provides for the creation of special seats to ensure the fulfillment of Article 81(b) for the membership of the county assembly. Articles 177(2) and 177(3) note that after the declaration of election results, the electoral body nominates members to these special seats. This nomination is based on political party lists submitted

Second, there is need for giving equal opportunities for both women and men during election campaigns by enacting campaign financing and spending law, providing state funding for election campaigning and access to the state news media.

Third, comprehensive gender-sensitive civic and voter education be incorporated in the educational curricula right from primary schools (basic level of education) to university education. Such education can help in shaping deficiencies in women's political knowledge and attitudes. Lastly, civic and voter education with specific focus on women should be offered throughout Kenya's five-year electoral cycle.

Future research

A research similar to the current one but focusing on all counties in Kenya could be conducted based on future general elections in the country and applying various linear and multivariate statistical analyses. The researchers also recommend further research on the relationship between women's sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes. Future studies can also focus on the causal relationships between political attitudes and women's electoral participation both as voters and candidates.

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Appendix

Description of study variables

No.	Variable	Description
1	Electoral participation	The study focused on the following eight conventional electoral participation activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Persuading people to vote for or against candidates and political parties ii. Donating and buying promotional materials to support candidates and political parties iii. Attending political meetings or rallies iv. Distributing election campaign literature v. Displaying election campaign materials vi. Political volunteerism vii. Discursive participation through interpersonal political discussions about election campaign issues viii. Voting
2	Age	Each respondent was asked to select her age as at March 4, 2013 from the following categories: 1=18-25 years; 2=26-30 years; 3=31-35 years; 4=36-40 years; 5=41-45 years; 6=46-50 years; 7=51 years and above.
3	Marital status	Each participant was asked to state her marital status of her marriage as at 4 March 2013 categorized as follows: 1=single; 2=married and 3=separated; 4= Divorced; and 5=Widowed.
4	Level of education	A respondent's indication of her highest level of formal schooling completed as at 4 March 2013 categorised as follows: 1=none; 2=primary school; 3=secondary school; and 4=tertiary and university education. Tertiary and university education encompass post-secondary qualifications at certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
5	Employment status	A participant's main mode of employment based on the following categories: 1=unemployed; 2=full-time employment (working a minimum of eight hours per day); and 3=part-time employment (working below eight hours per day).

6	Income for self	Each respondent was asked to select her monthly income (after taxes) as at March 4, 2013 based on their 2013 earnings (in Kenya Shillings) under the following options: 1=low (Kshs. 5,000 and below); 2=medium (Kshs. 5,001-10,000); and 3=high (Kshs.10, 001 and above).
7	Household wealth status	Each respondent was asked to select the monthly income (after taxes) for herself and spouse/partner if married or parents if single as at March 4, 2013 based on 2013 earnings (in Kenya Shillings) under the following options: 1=low (Kshs. 20, 000 and below); 2=medium (Kshs. 20,001-50,000); and 3=high (Kshs. 50,001 and above).
8	Residential location	A respondent's place of residence in Kenya categorised as either 1=Rural or 2=Urban during three months preceding the 4 March 2013 general election in Kenya
9	Partisanship	Question asked to measure this variable: At the time the 2013 Kenyan polls were held, how strong was your support for the political party of choice? (Options given were not so strong, strong and very strong).
10	Political efficacy	Question asked to measure this variable: For the 2013 Kenyan polls, please tell me for each statement below if you: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree (neutral), agree or strongly agree: i. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on. ii. When political issues or problems are being discussed I usually have something to say. iii. Elected political leaders and government officials care a lot about what we think about new laws, policies and projects. iv. In this country, a few people have all the political power and the rest of us have nothing to say.
11	Political interest	Question asked to measure this variable: How interested [not at all interested, not very interested, fairly interested or very interested] in politics and public affairs were you three months prior to the 4 March 2013 Kenyan polls?
12	Political knowledge	Question asked to measure this variable: i. What is the official document that a citizen should present to the electoral clerk when registering as a voter in Kenya? (Correct answer is a valid National ID or Kenyan passport) ii. What percentage of valid votes cast in a general election in Kenya must a presidential candidate get in order to be declared a winner? (Over 50% of the votes cast). iii. How many County Assembly Wards make up Kakamega County? (Correct answer is 60 CAWs). iv. Which political coalition promised free maternity services in its election campaign manifesto in the Kenya's 2013 general election? v. What is the name of the female presidential candidate who participated in the 4 March 2013 Kenya general election? vi. What is the name of the presidential candidate who vied on the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) ticket in the 4 March 2013 general election in Kenya?
13	Political	Question asked to measure this variable:

	trust	<p>Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 3 (where 1= Distrust and 3= Trust) how much trust you had in each one of them three months before the March 4, 2013 Kenya general election in Kenya.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mass media ii. National government iii. Local government iv. National Assembly v. Judiciary vi. IEBC vii. Political parties viii. Civil Society Organizations
14	Sense of civic duty	<p>Question asked to measure this variable: 'It is the duty of every citizen to participate in political attitudes during elections in Kenya so as to fulfil her constitutional rights'. Please tell me if you strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree or strongly agree with the above statement in regard to your own motivation for voting in the March 4, 2013 general election in Kenya.</p>

Election Management Systems and Peaceful Alternation of Power between Incumbent and Opposition Governments in Ghana and Nigeria

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Abstract

Across most democracies in Africa, election management is largely problematic, and peaceful alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments is usually infrequent and rancorous. The role of election management systems in such power alternations, specifically in Ghana and Nigeria, is not adequately covered in literature. Adopting an exploratory research design and qualitative methodology, this article explores the role of election management in the peaceful alternation of power between incumbent governments and opposition parties in the countries. It relies on primary data sourced from semi-structured interviews and secondary literature. The results show that, in Ghana, election management system is largely credible, thus, influenced incumbents' willingness to peacefully hand over power to opposition, whereas, in Nigeria, peaceful alternation took place despite flawed election management system. The study concludes that while election management was significant for peaceful power alternation in Ghana, it was not for Nigeria.

Keywords

Alternation of Power; Election Management; Election Management System; Ghana; Government; Incumbent; Nigeria; Opposition

Introduction

The article compares the role of election management systems in the peaceful alternation of power in Ghana and Nigeria. The political landscape in Africa witnessed significant change during the 1990s when an unprecedented wave of democratization swept across the continent (Omotola 2010, 1-19). Although multi-party politics with periodic elections seem to have been widely embraced, however, elections for many leaders remain mere veneers to hold on to power. It is for this reason that many scholars are of the view that though democracy has emerged in Africa, it is still not being practiced in the true sense of the word (Marc et al. 2015; Omotola 2011; Sanusi and Nassuna 2017).

Furthermore, despite the claim to democratic practice, alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments is few and far between on the continent. In many of the instances where such alternations took place, they were neither peaceful nor voluntary – rather, they were ‘forced’ (Idowu 2018). Such were the cases in Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire and the Gambia. The excuse given by leaders in these countries for their attempts to deny peaceful alternation of power is often related to the manner in which the elections were managed (BBC News 2016; Independent Electoral Commission of Gambia 2016; The Guardian 2016). In many instances, however, leaders manipulate the electoral process in their own favor so as to remain in power like Denis Sassou Nguesso of Republic of Congo and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda.

Existing literature posits that peaceful alternation of power occurs as a consequence of credible elections, to the extent that winners and losers can accept electoral processes and results as binding if elections are credibly managed. The relationship between these two variables has, however, not been established specifically for Ghana and Nigeria. The critical question is to what extent election management influences the transfer of power from incumbents to opposition.

Ghana and Nigeria share certain specificities. In the West African sub-region, Ghana and Nigeria were the first set of countries to gain independence (1957 and 1960 respectively), they are both in their Fourth Republics and they both experienced their first military coups in 1966. They have endured the highest number of incidents of democratic disruptions in the form of military intervention, five in Ghana (same with Sierra Leone and Niger), and six in Nigeria (same with Benin) (Souaré 2010). Both have experienced alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments, but, while Ghana made significant progress in its electoral process over the years (Idowu 2018) with three alternations from incumbent parties/presidents to opposition parties, Nigeria’s electoral process is still largely fraught with irregularities and has had one such transition in 2015. These circumstances justify the choice of the countries for this study.

This article is structured as follows: after this introduction and the literature review, it will present its theoretical framework and the conceptualization of the terms employed. The following sections will present and analyze the data and discuss the findings. This will be followed by the conclusion and implications for future research.

Literature Review

The role of election management and election management bodies (EMBs) in democratic transfer of power has been detailed in the literature. Lopez-Pintor (2000) examined EMBs as permanent public institutions of governance in a democratizing world and their role in ensuring credible elections and transfer of power in a study adopting a combination of thematic and country-specific analytical methods. Its major findings are that prospects for a free, fair and credible election lay in the hands of electoral bodies that are independent of the executive and have permanent professional staff, that elections run by independent electoral bodies are preferable to those run by the executives and that elections administered with permanent staff are more cost effective than those substantially run with temporary staff. The study also posits that intervention by the international community has generally been effective in helping both the democratization/transition process, and the establishment of EMBs. There are also a number of guiding principles like independence, impartiality, integrity, transparency, efficiency, professionalism and service-mindedness (Ace Project 2018) that are crucial to the work of electoral authorities.

Dunne and Smith (2012) examined the role of electoral management in transition from authoritarian regimes to democracies. Their study finds that elections are milestones occupying a special place in democratic transition. Accordingly, “the electoral management body (EMB) that supervises, administers and manages free and fair elections fosters trust in the electoral process and improves the prospects of democratic consolidation” (Dunne and Smith 2012, 5). It further establishes that most countries which have experienced transition from authoritarian rule to multiparty democracy have chosen multiparty based EMBs during their transition.

Jinadu’s (2014) comparative study examined the role of electoral commissions (ECs) in strengthening democracies in West Africa. With Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone as case studies, the study adopts interviews, focus group discussions and comparative method to identify and explain similarities and differences among the structures and operations of EMBs in the six countries. It establishes that EMBs with varying histories, political cultures and operating within varying political economies act as independent and intervening variables and points out key historical and material forces that helped frame and shape the electoral management processes in the six countries. These include the state as a site for zero-sum politics, progressive

violation of the principle of isolation of administration from politics and combination of political and legal influences that help foster a culture of impunity (Jinadu 2014). Among the challenges that face EMBs in the West African sub region are the increasing cost of elections, controversy over electoral dispute adjudication and institutionalizing partnership with stakeholders (Jinadu 2014, 6-16). All these equate to contradictions between the political economy and mainstream ethical values not just in the six countries, but across the African continent.

Oliva (2011) explored the conditions that could determine how actors at elections may handle electoral outcomes – that is, whether such a process engenders alternation of power or not. He argues that elections cannot be perfect and that the acceptance of results by all major political parties is crucial for legitimizing the whole electoral process. Acceptance of election results by the losing party/ies is predicated upon certain conditions. Adopting document analysis approach, the study finds that one of such conditions may include the extension of a hand of fellowship to losers on the part of winners. Doing otherwise could provoke losers to react negatively, which may result in stalemate in the power alternation process and in the post-election political crises which have often marred electoral processes. According to Nadean and Blais (1993, 553), what the foregoing suggests is that while winners' enthusiasm towards the political system is predictable, losers' endorsement is "less obvious", especially in cases of profound, close and hard-fought contests.

While the context and variables of these studies vary, one overarching conclusion is that a direct relationship exists between transparency and credibility of elections and the tendency of losers to concede defeat and facilitate peaceful transfer of power. This article will test the validity of this theoretical proposition for Ghana and Nigeria, two countries with broadly similar histories and political trajectories.

Theoretical Framework

In order to fully capture and analyze the role of election management in peaceful alternation of power between incumbent and opposition in Ghana and Nigeria, the article adopts the rule application (election management) model of electoral governance theory. The theory, as conceptualized by Mozaffar and Schedler (2002, 7) consists of "the wider set of activities that creates and maintains the broad institutional framework in which voting and electoral competition take place." According to the proponents, electoral governance is a comprehensive and multi-tasked activity, involving the three levels of rule-making, rule application and rule adjudication. While rule-making involves designing the basic rules of the electoral game, rule application deals with implementing these rules to organize the electoral game, and rule adjudication entails resolving disputes arising from the contest.

Winners and losers can accept electoral processes and results as binding provided elections are effectively managed. Effective management is only possible if the EMB has autonomy in terms of its structure, composition, funding and capacity (Catt et al. 2014). This also explains why one of the hallmarks of a mature democracy is professional, independent and non-partisan election administration. In addition, Omotola (2010, 1-19) asserts that other relevant institutions, like political parties, mass media, security agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs), are also required to play their own roles effectively, including the provision of logistical support which is vital to the operation of the electoral body. The oversight functions of the legislature and judiciary are also crucial.

The article also adopts the law application (election management) model of electoral governance theory in exploring the nexus between election management and peaceful alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments in Ghana and Nigeria. The theory suggests that the fairness of election management often determines how winners and losers will react to the outcome. This theory is explored to show the link, if any, between election management and political power alternation in Ghana and Nigeria.

Conceptualization of Election Management System and Alternation of Power

Election management system refers to the plans/processes put in place to ensure that election management is conducted seamlessly. It is a system that enables an election management body to provide services (election management) at the time they are needed (Idowu 2018), in order for the process, the procedure and outcome of the elections to be acceptable. An election management system contributes to transparent and credible electoral processes when it gives room for free and fair elections and credible voters' register, does not ensure incumbent recycling, does not provoke electoral/democratic frustration through violence, discourages voter inducement and ensures that the electoral process is free from intimidation, repression and fraud.

Political alternation of power occurs when there is a transfer of power from an incumbent to an opposition government who emerged victorious in a transition election. In an electoral democracy, political power alternation is only guaranteed via elections (Idowu and Mimiko 2020). For Cho and Logan (2013, 6), political power alternation occurs when incumbent governments and parties lose a transition election and demonstrate that they accept the will of the people by conceding defeat and handing over power to the opposition who won the election. Mbaeze, Okoli and Okonkwo (2017, 19) referred to political power alternation as a

“situation where the opposition political party takes over power from the incumbent via a democratic election. Hence, where the incumbent party [or leader] loses an election to the

opposition party [or candidate] and hands over power to the opposition, then the country has experienced alternation in power.”

Idowu and Mimiko (2020) identified two forms of power alternation. The first takes place between incumbent leader/president and opposition parties, and the other is a transfer of power from incumbent political parties to opposition parties. Furthermore, Little, Tucker and LaGatta (2015) identified democratic and semi-democratic alternation of power: while democratic alternation is spontaneous and done willingly by losing incumbent parties and leaders, semi-democratic power alternation is affected and made possible by citizens' protest and pressure from other stakeholders. For this article, alternation of power refers to a situation whereby the incumbent government loses the election, concedes defeat to the opposition and hands over power to an opposition government.

Methodology

The article adopted an exploratory research design. It relied on primary and secondary data sourced from Ghana and Nigeria. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews. A total of 20 Key Informant Interviewees (KIIs) were purposively selected from top officers of election management bodies (EMBs), heads of election observer groups, key officers of electoral institutes and high-ranking members of key political parties in Ghana and Nigeria. The sample size and sample technique adopted is predicated upon the principle that in a qualitative research of this nature, statistical representativeness is not the aim. Rather, respondents are selected because they are likely to generate useful data (Patton and Cochran 2002, 9). Thus, respondents were selected based on their specialization, expertise, experience and practical involvement in election management/observation and the peaceful alternation that occurred in the countries of study. Interviews in both countries lasted between 18 to 54 minutes. While the personalities who lost and won elections in both countries could not be interviewed directly, efforts were made to speak with some of their closest aides. Secondary data was sourced from relevant literature like textbooks, journal articles, newspapers and magazines, official gazettes and documents, and the Internet. Data collected was subjected to discourse analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Overview of Election Management Systems in Ghana and Nigeria

The Electoral Commission of Ghana is responsible for the country's election management. It is charged with the responsibility of organizing elections in Ghana and supported by some major

stakeholders such as social-political groups.¹ Interviewees pointed out the role and need for support to the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) by other stakeholders: Another respondent averred that election management in Ghana is a collective effort involving state agencies, civil societies, local and international media and international organizations.²

In the Ghanaian election management system, civil society groups have been identified to play the significant role of ensuring the electoral process' credibility, thus aiding election management and power alternation in the country (Gyekye-Jandoh 2016, 35-62). Corroborating the literature, for instance, during elections, a civil society group, CODEO, conducts Parallel Vote Tabulation: a scientifically designed technology which CODEO uses to check and cross examine the results released by the EC.³ The election management system in Ghana created an atmosphere where elections are very important and are now mostly seen as a national festival; as such, most Ghanaians love elections and follow the process with passion according to one District Electoral Director interviewed.⁴ This democratic and electoral atmosphere has also helped the Ghanaian democratic process as it strengthens the credibility of the process.

The Ghanaian election management system produces transparent and credible elections/electoral processes. An interviewee affirmed, with regards to transparency, that

“The process is so transparent from the electoral cycle. From the registration to the results declaration, throughout the process... So that gives that confidence to people. And that is also one of the reasons why people find it difficult to question election results in Ghana.”⁵

Nonetheless, because elections cannot be perfect (Oliva 2011, 19-31), the Ghanaian election management system is not an exception when it comes to electoral challenges. Specifically, the literature states that there are evidences of electoral fraud in the elections the Ghana EC has presided over since 1992 (Asante-Kissi 2012; Debrah 2001, 75-85). Also, the ineffectiveness in the recruitment and training of temporary staff, as well as the non-compliance to the dictates of the designed electoral rules by the temporary staff have been identified as some of the factors which continue to contribute to the major problems encountered at the registration and polling centers, a situation which affects the EC's performance in electoral management (Asante-Kissi 2012; Ayee 1997; Debrah 2001; Gyimah-Boadi 1999). Corroborating these findings, some interviewees also gave their opinions on some of the challenges the Ghanaian election management system faces.

¹ Telephone interview with the Director of Research and Election for Eastern Region of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Ghana. 14.11.2018.

² Telephone interview with the Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Ghana. 15.11.2018.

³ Telephone interview with a Research Officer at Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), Ghana and Coalition of Domestic Election Observation (CODEO), Ghana. 5.11.2018

⁴ Telephone interview with the District Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 3 December 2018; Interview with the Deputy Country Director, NDI, Nigeria, 18.12.2018.

⁵ Telephone interview with the District Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 3.12.2018.

An official of NDC stressed that no election can be 100 percent perfect and so, the Ghanaian elections still experience some hitches.⁶ In spite of that, and although there are always attempts to manipulate the electoral process, including vote buying, Ghana has vigilant electorates who are always ready to protect their mandate.⁷ The ‘vigilant electorates’ here refer to the ordinary citizens who want to see their votes count and not the ‘macho men’ (political thugs) which Bob-Milliar (2014, 132) avers could undermine the democratization process.

Election management in Nigeria involves some major stakeholders like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, civil society organizations, the media and the entire populace.⁸ The role of civil society groups and the media in election management has been established in the literature. It is through civic organizations that people participate in politics and development. Civil societies also provide networks of communication among citizens and between citizens and the state (Bratton, 1997). According to a respondent:

“In Nigeria, there is the Nigeria election situation room for example. That is a coalition of civil society that come together to engage INEC on all aspects of the electoral process... INEC uses the opportunity to give update about what they are doing and the civil society people also use that platform to ask questions, make inputs and give advice.”⁹

As Schedler (1998) and Whitehead (2003) posit, in addition to elections, the media are seen as instrumental to political accountability and, accordingly, has been a very important tool to both INEC and political parties during electioneering periods.¹⁰

On the transparency of the process, one TEI official noted that the electoral process is transparent to the extent that all electoral stakeholders participate in all stages of the electoral process.¹¹ Nevertheless, the challenges with the Nigerian election management system identified by most of the interviewees negate the above submission. Since the 1999 election, election management in Nigeria has been fraught with challenges like corruption of INEC officials, vote buying, bribery of Electoral Commissioners, unpreparedness of INEC, late arrival of materials at polling stations on election-day and unending litigations.¹² Other challenges include problems at the collation center, problem with accreditation and registration of voters, malfunctioning of the

⁶ Telephone interview with the Director of Research and Election for Eastern Region of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Ghana. 14.11.2018.

⁷ Telephone interview with the Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Ghana. 15.11.2018.

⁸ Interview with the National Coordinator, TMG, Nigeria, 15.12.2018.

⁹ Interview with the Deputy Country Director, NDI, Nigeria, 18.12.2018.

¹⁰ Interview with the National Publicity Secretary, PDP, Nigeria, 15.12.2018.

¹¹ Interview with the Deputy Director, Administration, TEI, Nigeria, 21.12.2018.

¹² Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria, 27.12.2018.

electronic card reader devices, uneven distribution of permanent voters' card and underage voting.¹³ The problem of padded/inflated voters register has also been identified.¹⁴

On the part of INEC, they are faced with challenges such as logistics, management of ad hoc staff, training, ensuring credible voters' register, procurement of materials and resources, political parties and candidates' management and election-day support.¹⁵ Most of these challenges have also been highlighted in the literature (Transition Monitoring Group 2003; Human Rights Watch 2007; Carter Center 1999; Oyekanmi 2015; Kurfi 2005, 34-36; National Democratic Institute (NDI) Report 2008, 8; INEC 2014). Notwithstanding these numerous challenges with the Nigerian election management system, the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, is of the opinion that there has been significant improvement with the system, especially with the introduction of the new technology – the Electronic Card Reader.¹⁶ He added that the reforms have closed the margin of large extent fraud, especially during accreditation.

Election Management System and Peaceful Alternation of Power in Ghana

From 1996, Ghana has moved from opaque to transparent balloting and, in order to curb cases of impersonation during voting, the voters' ID card now bears its owner's thumb print and picture.¹⁷ In line with the recommendation that transfer of power should be anchored on a clear and unambiguous policy and guided by a culture of tolerance, accommodation and respect for fundamental human rights (Huntington 2009, 31-69), Ghana seems to have done its part. Prior to 2012, before the country adopted a Transition Act, alternation had been rancorous and marked by incidences of conflict between the incoming and the outgoing governments.¹⁸ The shortness of the period between the elections (usually held 7 December) and the transition programme (usually 7 January of the following year) often hampers a proper political power alternation between incumbent president and opposition party.¹⁹ During transition periods in Ghana, there are always few instances of supporters of defeated candidates trying to take laws into their hands; albeit, these have been isolated cases.²⁰

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria, 19.12.2018.

¹⁵ Interview with the Special Adviser to the Chairman, INEC, Nigeria, 20.12.2018.

¹⁶ Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria, 19.12.2018.

¹⁷ Telephone interview with the Director of Research and Election for Eastern Region of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Ghana, 12.12.2018.

¹⁸ Telephone interview with the Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Ghana. 15.12.2018.

¹⁹ Telephone interview with the Eastern Regional Deputy Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 7.12.2018.

²⁰ Telephone interview with a Research Officer at Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), Ghana and Coalition of Domestic Election Observation (CODEO), Ghana. 5.11.2018.

According to an NDI official, Ghana has an “office that manages transition, it is already institutionalized... So, it is not a period of rancor.”²¹ The transition success which Ghana enjoys today is not a mirage – rather, it has come through series of reforms to a point where the culture of democracy is now been largely instilled in the people. According to another interviewee:

“Ghana has escaped probably a decade of any military challenge. There is strong public pressure. We [Ghana] have a history of a culture of vibrant civil societies, endearing civil societies that will tell coup or soldiers by whatever trick to quit.”²²

In recent times, Ghana has been referred to as the pride of Africa when it comes to peaceful alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments, having witnessed three of such alternations in 2001, 2009 and 2017 (Songwe 2015; 2016). According to Kerevel (2009, 3), when election management has perceived credibility, the confidence of citizens and politicians in the election outcome receives a boost and there is increased electoral participation and acceptability of election outcome by both winners and losers, making it easier for incumbents to concede defeat and peacefully hand over government to opposition. Al Musbeh (2011) is also of the view that lack of credibility in election management will usually result in diminished public confidence in election results and vice versa. Interviewees reaffirmed these views with specific reference to Ghana: an IDEG official, for example, averred that what makes a result acceptable to a candidate, whether the incumbent president or an opposition candidate, is the credibility of the process.²³ On the other hand, when elections lack credibility and result in incumbent’s loss, it breeds grounds for people to challenge the process and reject the outcome, hence the need to ensure that elections are well managed.²⁴

In all instances when incumbent presidents/parties accepted election results, conceded defeat and handed over power to the opposition in Ghana, it has largely been as a result of a transparent electoral process in which the incumbents had confidence.²⁵ The Ghanaian electoral process is so transparent that most times, even before the EC declares results, political parties and other keen observers already have the results from their collations at various polling stations. Given such transparency, incumbents are left with no option than to relinquish power when they lose elections.²⁶

²¹ Interview with the Deputy Country Director, NDI, Nigeria, 18.12.2018.

²² Telephone interview with the Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Ghana. 15.12.2018.

²³ Telephone interview with the Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), Ghana. 15.11.2018.

²⁴ Telephone interview with a Research Officer at Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), Ghana and Coalition of Domestic Election Observation (CODEO), Ghana. 5.11.2018.

²⁵ Telephone interview with the District Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 3.12.2018.

²⁶ Telephone interview with the District Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 3.12.2018.

Election management system was a major factor that had ensured the peaceful alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments in the country. The transitions were possible mostly because the election management systems were transparent and produced credible elections, which made rejection of results, especially by the incumbents, difficult.²⁷ Specifically shedding light upon the 2008 presidential elections and the subsequent alternation in 2009 between incumbent President John Agyekum Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the opposition presidential candidate John Dramani of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), an interviewee opined that even though the vote difference for the runoff election was only 40,000, the incumbent accepted the result because the process was transparent. The incumbent, thus, believed and had confidence in the election management system.²⁸

Referring to the 2016 elections, an official of CODEO averred that:

“The elections were conducted in such a transparent, peaceful, free and fair manner that both the opposition and incumbent governments had no reason to doubt the integrity of the process... Again, the transparency of the process was such that the National Democratic Congress (NDC) had no option but to concede defeat, as the process was free, fair and result at every stage verifiable.”²⁹

Nothing could have warranted an incumbent sit-tight attempt in Ghana as the electoral processes were transparent and produced free, fair, transparent and credible elections. President Dramani would have had no reason to reject the election results, given that the process was transparent and there were also avenues to address challenges at every stage of the process.³⁰ Incumbent presidents who have conceded defeat and handed over power in Ghana could have (attempted to) hold onto power if the elections were not transparent and credible, and if they felt their votes were tampered with.³¹ Beyond interviewees’ claims on the election management system, a citizens’ survey on trust on the EMB and on the election management system in Ghana shows that a larger percentage of the sampled respondents (28.8%) ‘somewhat trusts the system’; 25.1% ‘trust the system a lot’; 22.9% ‘trust the system just a little’; and 18.2% ‘do not trust the system at all’ (Afrobarometer 2016/2018, Ghana).

Some of the interviewees agreed that although the elections leading to alternation of power in Ghana were not perfect (as stated by Oliva 2011, 19-31), they nevertheless played a significant role in those peaceful transitions. With specific reference to the December 2016 presidential elections, an official of NDC, avers that:

²⁷ Telephone interview with the Eastern Regional Deputy Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 7.12.2018.

²⁸ Telephone interview with the District Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 3.12.2018.

²⁹ E-mail interview with the National Coordinator, CODEO, Ghana, 24.11.2018.

³⁰ Telephone interview with a National Director of Elections, Ghana EC, 24.11.2018.

³¹ Telephone interview with the Eastern Regional Deputy Electoral Director, Ghana EC, 7.12.2018.

“The former president [John Dramani] had stated that the elections were not transparent and of course, at a point in time, the Electoral Commission’s system at the time was hacked... So, yes, you might have problem with the electoral process, but it still does not dispute the fact that our [Ghanaian] system here is very, very transparent.”³²

As such, a few of the interviewees disagreed that electoral credibility was a significant factor in the alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments in Ghana. For another respondent, in all three alternations between incumbent and opposition governments so far experienced in the country, democratic culture rather than electoral credibility had been largely responsible.³³ Also, the Communication Specialist of President Dramani, argued that the President did not hand power over because of clean elections, as there were legal grounds to reject the results. Rather, he accepted them because of his personal conviction that the peace of Ghana was greater than his personal ambition.³⁴

Election Management System and Peaceful Alternation of Power in Nigeria

Right from 1999, there has been significant progress in election management and transitioning in Nigeria.³⁵ The introduction of technology for the 2015 elections greatly improved the system and produced a more credible electoral outcome, which in turn birthed a unique transition in contrast to the 2007 election, regarded as the worst in the history of the country.³⁶ Such technological innovations included the introduction of the smart card reader, permanent voter card and biometric register of voters. However, even though the election management system recorded improvements over past experiences, the system did not seem to play any significant role in the 2015 alternation in Nigeria.³⁷ A citizens’ survey on trust on the EMB and election management system in Nigeria shows that a larger percentage of the sampled respondents (33.6%) ‘do not trust the system at all’; 30.6% ‘trust the system just a little’; 22.3% ‘somewhat trust the system’; and just 12.4% ‘trust the system a lot’ (Afrobarometer 2016/2018, Nigeria).

The 2015 peaceful alternation of power is most significant in Nigeria, being the first power transfer from an incumbent president to opposition party in the country. Hate campaign, ethno-religious conflict, unending communal clashes in several Northern states and parts of the North Central and Boko Haram insurgency were some of the intrigues and the circumstances surrounding

³² Telephone interview with the Director of Research and Election for Eastern Region of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Ghana. 14.11.2018.

³³ Telephone interview with the National Director of Research and Elections, NPP, Ghana, 17.11.2018.

³⁴ Telephone interview with the Communication Specialist to President Dramani and member of the Ghanaian Parliament, 18.11.2018.

³⁵ Interview with the National Publicity Secretary, APC, Nigeria, 20.12.2018.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Interview with the National Publicity Secretary, PDP, Nigeria, 15.12.2018.

the 2015 transition (Adebiyi 2015). There were also predictions that the alternation process would not happen should the incumbent president lose the elections (The Nation 2015; Ameh 2014). They suggested that the country was going to break up (Oladesu 2014; Oyekanmi 2015). The opinions of interviewees on the 2015 election management and transition confirmed the literature. For instance, a respondent recounted that during the 2015 election, there was a lot of tension and people threatened that if their candidates did not win, there would be bloodshed.³⁸ By virtue of President Jonathan's concession, however, the tension was minimized and impending crisis was abated. Prior to the 2015 presidential election, incumbent presidents/parties had never lost elections in Nigeria and, as such, there had not been any alternation of power in the country. The tide turned during the 2015 presidential election when incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan contested in the election, lost, conceded defeat and handed over power to the victorious opposition party's (APC) presidential candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari (Idowu 2018). This marked the first transfer of power from an incumbent government to an opposition government in the history of the country. The 2015 elections had improved immensely over the past ones – as such, the incumbent president could not have done otherwise than to allow the alternation process.³⁹ President Jonathan was aware that he had lost his support in the country and also knew he had credibly lost the elections –hence, he was left with no option than to relinquish power.⁴⁰

Despite the issues recorded with the 2015 presidential election, it was largely adjudged as credible by local and international observers and, as such, paved the way for the 2015 alternation of power.⁴¹ Although not everyone thought that the process was perfect, the prevailing opinion seemed to support the thesis that the election was credible.⁴² Many reasons accounted for Jonathan's concession, one being that the electoral process was transparent and appeared credible, especially the new technology that was introduced to prevent electoral fraud.⁴³

Pressure from the international community is believed to have also played a huge role in the transition (Idowu 2018). Furthermore, even among those interviewees who felt the 2015 election management system was relatively credible, some felt that the then incumbent People's Democratic Party (PDP) had plans to scuttle the entire alternation process. This implies that, although the election was largely credible, that was not sufficient to convince the incumbent to concede and hand over power seamlessly (Idowu 2018). Hence, some interviewees were of the

³⁸ Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria, 27.12.2018.

³⁹ Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria, 19.12.2018.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Interview with the National Coordinator, TMG, Nigeria, 15.12. 2018; Interview with the Deputy Director, Election Monitoring Department, INEC, Nigeria, 18.12.2018.

⁴² Interview with the National Publicity Secretary, APC, Nigeria, 20.12.2018.

⁴³ Interview with a Senior Fellow, CDD, Nigeria, 15.12.2018.

opinion that free and fair elections alone do not guarantee successful governance or a peaceful transition/alternation, and that the disruption of the national result collation exercise during the 2015 election was an attempt to cause confusion and stall the process.⁴⁴

For most of the interviewees, rather than electoral credibility, factors such as the personality of incumbent President Jonathan, efforts of the National Peace Committee (NPC) and pressures from domestic and international community played a significant role in the peaceful alternation of power (Idowu and Mimiko 2020). For instance, speaking as an insider, an interviewee argued that President Jonathan's concession and handing over of power was not about the credibility of the election, but about protecting the country, as he believed there was a conspiracy against him.⁴⁵ With all the irregularities associated with the 2015 elections and complains from the camps of the major contending parties (APC and PDP) regarding the results in some states, it could not have been said that electoral credibility was a significant trigger of the willingness of the incumbent president to concede defeat and hand over power.⁴⁶ Rather, the desire of President Jonathan to ensure peace in the country and pressures from local and international constituencies were major factors (Idowu and Mimiko 2020).

Although the election was relatively credible, the incumbent president did not believe the results, had lost faith in the INEC and believed there were underage voters in the North (opposition stronghold).⁴⁷ On his part, a PDP chieftain opined that it was obvious that INEC determined the outcome of the election because whereas card readers were used in the South (incumbent stronghold), they were not used in the North (opposition stronghold), which gave room for indiscriminate and underage voting.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, President Jonathan conceded defeat irrespective of those irregularities. It would, therefore, be misleading to believe that the election management system had a significant effect on the alternation. Furthermore, a respondent asserted:

“I think another factor is that the nature of Jonathan himself... He was not someone who wanted to desperately hold onto power... If it was Yahya Jammeh for example, or Laurent Gbagbo..., the story may have been different.”⁴⁹

President Jonathan only conceded defeat and handed over power because he had continuously stressed before the commencement of election that “his own personal ambition was not worth the blood of any Nigerian, he therefore, relinquished power to allow peace reign.”⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigeria, 19.12.2018; Interview with the Deputy Director, Election Monitoring Department, INEC, Nigeria, 18.12.2018.

⁴⁵ Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria, 27.12.2018.

⁴⁶ Interview with the Deputy Country Director, NDI, Nigeria, 18.12.2018.

⁴⁷ Interview with the National Publicity Secretary, APC, Nigeria, 20.12.2018.

⁴⁸ Interview with the National Publicity Secretary, PDP, Nigeria, 15.12.2018.

⁴⁹ Interview with the National Publicity Secretary, APC, Nigeria, 20.12.2018.

⁵⁰ Interview with the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Goodluck Jonathan, Nigeria, 27.12.2018.

Interviewees' submission that the personality of Jonathan and other factors were key to the alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments in Nigeria have also been stressed in the literature (Adeniyi 2017; Araba and Braimah 2015; The Nigerian Voice 2015; Premium Times 2015).

Discussion

This study found that, in Ghana, the election management system put in place for the various transition elections was key to the peaceful alternations of power between incumbent and opposition governments so far experienced in the country. The election management system produced free, fair and credible elections which largely made it difficult on all occasions for the incumbent presidents/parties who had lost elections to attempt to hold on to power. In line with established facts in the literature (Heywood 2002; Jinadu 1997, 2), the system determined how the incumbents who had lost elections in the country reacted by conceding defeat and handing over power. Peaceful alternations were largely possible because the election management system was transparent. This is as also established in literature: when the election management system has transparency and credibility, there is increased acceptability of election outcome by both losers and winners (Al Musbeh 2011; Kerevel 2009, 3; Mozaffar and Schedler 2002, 7-10). Although the Ghanaian election management system still faces some challenges, it still maintains very high degree of credibility and transparency to invoke acceptability, and the degree of flaws do not undermine the credibility of the process. The system thus played a significant role in all three alternations. Other factors which contributed to the peaceful alterations include the personality of the defeated presidents and their desire to preserve national interest and security, the role of civil societies, the Inter Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) and the international community, the democratic culture in Ghana and the vigilance of Ghanaians (Idowu 2018; Idowu and Mimiko 2020). All these factors worked together to instill electoral credibility and integrity which in turn, ensured that defeated incumbents had no excuse but to peacefully hand over power to opposition governments.

On the other hand, the election management system put in place for the 2015 presidential elections played a rather insignificant role in the peaceful alternation in Nigeria. Although there were several innovations in the election management system in 2015 to improve electoral credibility and transparency, they did not significantly influence the decision of incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan to peacefully and willingly concede defeat and hand over power to opposition leader Muhammadu Buhari, who won the election. The elections were fraught with varying degrees of irregularities like underage voting, malfunctioning of the smart card readers in some parts of the country, especially in some areas believed to be the strongholds of the incumbent president,

temporary hacking of INEC's website and violence. We found that these irregularities were strong enough to cast aspersions on the credibility of the process. These findings have also been established in the literature (Adeniyi 2017, xxii, 117; Alade 2015; Kuna as cited in Adeniyi 2017, 178): with all the irregularities associated with the 2015 election with complaints coming from the camps of the major contesting political parties (APC and PDP), it could not be said that the election management system played significant role in the willingness of the incumbent president to concede defeat and hand over power to the opposition. Hence, factors such as the personality of Jonathan, the National Peace Committee (NPC) set up to ensure a peaceful transition and pressure from international and domestic communities were largely responsible for a successful transfer of power from incumbent president to an opposition party in Nigeria (Idowu 2018).

The personality of the then incumbent President Jonathan as a major factor in the 2015 peaceful alternation of power has often been buttressed in the literature and even by the incumbent president himself (Jonathan 2018). Despite the irregularities recorded in the 2015 presidential election, it has been argued that the major reason why there was no total breakdown of the entire process was President Jonathan's commitment to allowing INEC a free hand (Araba and Braimah 2015). The foregoing could also have accounted for by his willingness to concede defeat in spite of series of irregularities linked with the electoral process (Idowu 2018; Jonathan 2018; Mimiko 2017, 402). Furthermore, President Jonathan, who constantly stressed that his ambition was not worth the blood of any Nigerian (Jonathan 2018), thus, displayed a real sense of sportsmanship even when he had reasons (due to observed irregularities) to act otherwise.

President Jonathan himself attributed his action to concede defeat to opposition party not to election management system but to the need to check his ambition as the consequences of not doing so may have been dire not only for Nigeria but for Africa (Premium Times 2015). He was concerned about his personal ambition obstructing the democratic system. In his words,

“Democracy has to be nurtured to grow. Strong democratic institutions are the backbone and future of our democracy. They must be protected and nurtured. As for me, as a matter of principle, it is always the nation first” (Jonathan in Premium Times 16 April 2015).

Adeniyi (2017, xxi), however, painted a picture of the then incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan being begged to accept the election results and concede defeat. The Attorney General and Justice Minister, Mohammed Adoke, the Aviation Minister, Osita Chidoka, and the Special Assistant to the President on Domestic Affairs, Waripamo-Owei Dudafa, were all kneeling before the President, begging him to concede defeat. They persuaded President Jonathan to call to congratulate his opponent. This account has, nevertheless, received some repudiations (Nwosu 2017; Olawoyin 2017).

Conclusion and Future Research

This article has established that because the election management system produced credible elections in Ghana, it was able to influence all three peaceful alternations of power between incumbent and opposition governments. That is, incumbent governments peacefully and willingly conceded defeat because they felt the elections had integrity. In Nigeria, the system is still largely flawed, and so the peaceful alternation of power in the country could not be traced to the role of a credible election management system. In other words, the incumbent president peacefully and willingly conceded defeat in spite of a largely flawed election management system. The personality of the incumbent was therefore identified as one of the main factors influencing the peaceful alternation of power in Nigeria. The general lesson from these findings that needs to be explored in future studies, therefore, is that there might be different pathways that secure peaceful alterations of power, one of them requiring a credible election management system, another the willingness of the incumbent candidates to concede defeat despite a largely flawed election management system.⁵¹

Our study is limited by its time frame. At the time of research, Nigeria had had only one experience of peaceful alternation of power between incumbent and opposition governments, so the study was conducted as a test case. The 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria saw the incumbent president and party winning. Future election management and transitions in Nigeria and Ghana will present opportunities for further research, to update the trends and examine whether indeed both countries have made advances on the path to democratic consolidation by experiences of credible elections and alternation between incumbent and opposition.

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⁵¹ Sufficient empirical data could serve as a basis of a qualitative comparative analysis of several cases.

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Appendix

1. Operationalizing the Dependent and Independent Variables *Independent Variable*

Election management system is operationally defined as the plans/processes or system put in place to ensure that election management is conducted seamlessly. It produces transparent and credible elections when it gives room for free and fair elections and credible voters' register, does not ensure incumbent recycling, does not provoke electoral/democratic frustration through violence, discourages voter inducement and ensures that the electoral process is free from intimidation, repression and fraud.

Dependent Variable

Peaceful alternation of power is operationally defined as a situation wherein an incumbent leader or party loses an election, concedes defeat and willingly hands over power to an opposition party/candidate who had won the election. It occurs when there is a seamless transfer of political power from an incumbent government to an opposition government. This is similar to Little Tucker and Lagatta's (2015) 'democratic' power alternation.

2. Question Guide for Ghanaian Respondents

1. Does election management have any effect/impact on peaceful alternation of power?
2. How are elections managed in Ghana? What is the entire process involved in the elections (pre-election period, the election proper and the post-election period)? How do political parties, candidates, the electorate and the EC conduct themselves during these periods?
3. Would you say that the alternations of power between incumbent and opposition parties/presidents so far experienced in Ghana were peaceful?
4. Would you say the way the elections were conducted had any influence on the alternation of power between incumbent and opposition in Ghana? For example, can you say that the manner in which the 2016 presidential election was conducted had any impact on the willingness of the President John Dramani of the NDC to concede defeat and hand over power to the opposition, and how? In other words, do you think his concession and handing over of power was a result of his conviction that the election was free, fair and credible?
5. What do you think would have made these presidents to behave otherwise (to refuse to concede defeat and hold on to power)?

3. Question Guide for Nigerian Respondents

6. Does election management systems have any effect/impact on peaceful alternation of power?
7. How are elections managed in Nigeria? What is the entire process involved in the elections (pre-election period, the election proper and the post-election period)? How do political parties, candidates, the electorate and INEC conduct themselves during these periods?
8. Would you say that the alternation of power between incumbent and opposition parties/presidents so far experienced in Nigeria was peaceful?
9. Would you say the way the elections were conducted had any influence on the alternation of power between incumbent and opposition in Nigeria? For example, can you say that the manner in which the 2015 presidential election was conducted had any impact on the

willingness of the Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP to concede defeat and hand over power to the opposition, and how? In other words, do you think his concession and handing over of power was a result of his conviction that the election was free, fair and credible?

10. What do you think would have made him (President Jonathan) to behave otherwise (to refuse to concede defeat and hold on to power)?

4. Information on Political Parties and Election Results leading to Alternation of Power in Ghana

Table 1. Results of the 2000 Ghanaian Presidential Election

<i>Party</i>	<i>Name of candidate</i>	<i>Votes received at 1st round</i>	<i>% of votes received at 1st round</i>	<i>Votes received at 2nd round</i>	<i>% of votes received at 2nd round</i>
NPP	John Agyekum Kufuor	3,131,739	48.17%	3,631,263	56.90%
NDC	John Evans Atta Mills	2,895,575	44.54%	2,750,124	43.10%
PNC	Edward Mahama	189,659	2.92%	-	-
CPP	George Hagan	115,641	1.78%	-	-
NRP	Augustus Obuadum	78,629	1.21%	-	-
GCPP	Daniel Augustus Lartey	67,504	1.04%	-	-
UGM	Charles Wereko-Brobby	22,123	0.34%	-	-
		<i>Total valid votes=</i> <i>6,500,870</i>		<i>Total valid votes=</i> <i>6,381,387</i>	

Source: Authors' Compilation from 2000 Presidential Election in Ghana (African Elections Database).

Table 2. Results of the 2008 Ghanaian Presidential Election

<i>Party</i>	<i>Name of candidate</i>	<i>Votes received at 1st round</i>	<i>% of votes received at 1st round</i>	<i>Votes received at 2nd round</i>	<i>% of votes received at 2nd round</i>
NDC	John Evans Atta Mills	4,056,634	47.92%	4,521,032	50.23%
NPP	Nana Akufo-Addo	4,159,439	49.13%	4,480,446	49.77%
CPP	Paa Kwesi Nduom	113,494	1.34%	-	-
PNC	Edward Mahama	73,494	0.87%	-	-
DFP	Emmanuel Ansah-Antwi	27,889	0.33%	-	-
	Kwasi Amofo-Yeboah	19,342	0.23%	-	-
DPP	Thomas Ward-Brew	8,653	0.10%	-	-
RPD	Kwabena Adjei	6,889	0.08%	-	-
		<i>Total valid votes=</i> <i>8,465,834</i>		<i>Total valid votes=</i> <i>9,001,478</i>	

Source: Authors' Compilation from 2008 Presidential Election in Ghana (African Elections Database).

Table 3. Results of the 2016 Ghanaian Presidential Election

<i>Party</i>	<i>Name of candidate</i>	<i>Votes received</i>	<i>% of votes received</i>
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NPP	Nana Akufo-Addo	5,755,758	53.72%
NDC	John Dramani Mahama	4,771,188	44.53%
PPP	Paa Kwesi Nduom	106,092	0.99%
CPP	Ivor Kobina Greenstreet	25,552	0.24%
PNC	Edward Mahama	22,298	0.21%
NDP	Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings	16,935	0.16%
	Jacob Osei Yeboah	15,911	0.15%
		<i>Total valid votes=</i> <i>10,713,734</i>	

Source: Authors' Compilation from 2016 Presidential Election in Ghana (Ghana web, 2017; Ghana EC).

5. Information on Political Parties and Election Results leading to Alternation of Power in Nigeria

Table 4. Results of the 2015 Nigerian Presidential Election

<i>Party</i>	<i>Name of Candidate</i>	<i>Votes received</i>	<i>% of vote received</i>
APC	Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtd)	15,424,921	53.96%
PDP	Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	12,853,162	44.96%
APA	Ayeni Musa Adebayo	53,537	0.19%
ACPN	Alh. Ganiyu o. Galadima	40,311	0.14%
CPP	Chief Sam Eke	36,300	0.13%
AD	Rafiu Salau	30,673	0.11%
ADC	Dr. Mani Ibrahim Ahmad	29,666	0.10%
PPN	Allagoa Kelvin Chinedu	24,475	0.09%
NCP	Chief Martin Onovo	24,455	0.09%
AA	Jci sen. Tunde Anifowose-kelani	22,125	0.08%
UPP	Chief (Dr.) Chekwas Okorie	18,220	0.06%
KOWA	Comfort Oluremi Sonaiya	13,076	0.05%
UDP	Godson Mgbodile Ohaenyem Okoye	9,208	0.03%
HOPE	High chief Ambrose	7,435	0.03% M
		<i>Total valid votes=</i> <i>28,587,564</i>	

Source: Authors' Compilation from 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria (Africa Elections Database; INEC)

Book review

Violence in African Elections: Between Democracy and Big Man Politics. Edited by Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs and Jesper Bjarnesen. Uppsala, London: Zed Books, 2018, pp. 273.

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Keywords

African Elections; 'Big man' Politics; Bjarnesen; Democracy; Electoral Violence; Söderberg Kovacs

Since the end of the Cold War, holding periodic elections has emerged as the dominant mechanism of distribution of political powers. As political power means reliable access to state resources in many African countries, the stakes in elections are exceedingly high. As a result, political elites mobilize and deploy actors and strategies including electoral violence to win elections. The edited volume entitled *Violence in African Elections: Between Democracy and Big Man Politics* is a vital contribution to understanding electoral violence in Africa. The overall objective of the volume is to explain “when and where we see electoral violence in Africa’s emerging democracies”, and more importantly “to empirically trace the processes through which such events occur” (p.4). Through eleven case studies drawn from nine countries (Kenya and Nigeria two cases each, Uganda, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zimbabwe and Ghana), the volume presents in-depth arguments as to how micro-level factors and local actors give rise to electoral violence and how they are related to political elites and institutions at the national level. A well-written introduction by Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, a senior researcher at Uppsala University and Nordic Africa Institute, sets the stage for the succeeding eleven case studies, while the conclusion knits them together well.

The first chapter provides a macro-level case study on Kenya that traces back the underlying causes of electoral violence to the history of real or perceived injustices and victimization by identity-based networks. The authors argue that “elite strategies to mobilize people on divisive ethnic issues in order to secure political and economic resources in the pre-democratic era pave the way for violent political mobilization when competitive multiparty elections are instituted” (pp. 29-30). The history of Big Man politics in Kenya began during the presidency of Jomo Kenyatta, the first leader of the Republic of Kenya, who favored elites from his Kikuyu ethnic group and other affiliated minority groups while marginalizing elites from major ethnic groups like Luo. His successor, Moi, did the same by favoring elites from his Kalenjin ethnic group and affiliated minorities while alienating and victimizing other identity groups including the Kikuyu. This exclusionary identity-based political system led to ethnic-based political mobilization when multiparty elections were introduced. This resulted in identity-based mass voting and electoral violence in 1992 and 2007. In this otherwise well-argued account, the authors did not account for the legacy of colonialism and the problematic restructuring of the Kenyan state which was implemented in a manner that increased identity politics and risk of conflict.

The micro-level approach cases, chapters three to eleven, link the drivers of electoral-related violence to political elites’ strategies of deploying local non-state actors to secure electoral votes in exchange for the distribution of private goods and access to state resources. Informal criminal networks like Chipangano in Zimbabwe and Mungiki in Kenya recruited and employed

desperate youth to win elections for political employers who pay gangs through access to the state resources and impunity from prosecution for their role in election-related violence. Similarly, post-war rebel networks in Liberia, ex-militants in Niger Delta and local gang networks in Sierra Leone weaponized their combat experience to secure votes for their patrons while thwarting the chance of opposing parties in exchange for power and access to state resources. What makes ex-militants unique is their capacity to take initiative and help central political elites win the election for subsequent recognitions and rewards.

Another interesting case study in Nigeria shows the interplay of election-related violence and Big Man politics in the transportation sector of Lagos. Here, a legal association called the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) employs street gangs called Agberos to collect its dues. During elections, the Agberos are dispatched to intimidate and coerce candidates and voters of opposing parties to their Big Man to facilitate his electoral victory in return for private gains, job security and impunity. Irrespective of variations in actors and contexts in the examples presented above, these gangs share a similar intention to affect the process and results of elections on behalf of the political elite in return for access to resources.

The other important contribution of this volume is that it highlights the peculiar and uneven distributions and patterns of geographies of electoral violence in Africa. The case of Bujumbura in Burundi shows that the areas that did not cast a majority vote for the incumbent leaders in the past elections or areas that are a stronghold of the opposition become the targets of extensive state reprisals. We can observe that these areas tend to have a large young population with low incomes and bleak prospects. On the other hand, areas that the incumbent came from, areas that voted for the incumbent in the past elections, areas that share the ethnic identity of the incumbent and areas of the well-to-do population and minorities are relatively unaffected by government-sponsored election-related violence. The case of the Kono district in Sierra Leone highlights another dimension: when a close race is expected, a swing area that determines national elections become the epicenter of electoral violence. Similarly, when an intense electoral race is expected, electoral violence is higher in areas with underlying land-related conflicts as evidenced by the case study about the Côte d'Ivoire's far west region.

Finally, the editors identify five recommendations to reduce electoral violence in Africa. First, the stakes in elections should be lowered through decentralization and redistribution of political and economic resources, and “political losers” (p. 259) must have a role and access to state resources. Secondly, other aspects of the democratization process like respect for the rule of law and independence of civil society need to be supported. Thirdly, the “concept of and practice of election observation and monitoring” need to be expanded to include electoral violence that

occurs on an everyday basis, “in-between general elections” and “within political parties” (p. 260). Fourthly, since the incumbents are the main perpetrators of electoral violence, security measures invoked in the name of election need to be scrutinized. Finally, unresolved local grievances like land-related disputes need to be addressed.

One problem with these policy recommendations is that they are not addressed to African agents who are both directly affected by electoral violence and better placed to understand and solve the problem sustainably. On the contrary, the recommendations are addressed to international actors that are engaged in election monitoring, assistance and support in Africa. For instance, the editors advise international organizations that work on election monitoring to devote time and resource to the “period between general elections” and “to domestic election observation” (p. 260). The editors also advise “international actors involved in electoral assistance and support” to be aware of the securitization of the electoral process by incumbents and to “ensure that civil liberties and rights are not circumvented too easily under the guise of security measures” (p. 261). These recommendations could have better principally been addressed to the African voters, political elites, and Pan-African institutions like the African Union. Then, the recommendations could have simultaneously or subsequently been addressed to the international actors that support African actors to solve the problems related to electoral violence.

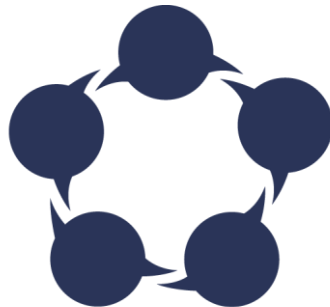
In conclusion, the volume provides a comprehensive account of election-related violence in Africa through a combination of micro and macro-level case-studies. Students of electoral violence, conflict studies and democracy benefit significantly by reading this volume that effectively addresses how the institutionalization of multiparty elections and Big Man politics work hand-in-hand to produce electoral violence. Finally, for policymakers, practitioners and those who want to understand the processes, factors and actors that give rise to election-related violence in Africa, this book is informative and engaging.

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