FROM PEACE CAMPAIGNS TO PEACEOCRACY: ELECTIONS, ORDER AND AUTHORITY IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Research on Kenya's 2013 elections has suggested that a "peace narrative" was deliberately promoted by an establishment elite to delegitimize protest and justify the use of excessive force. It has also tended to see the Kenyan case as exceptional and to assume that such a narrative was only possible because of the 2007/2008 post-election violence. We agree that peace campaigns are often particularly intense in the wake of violence and that they can be manipulated to generate a "peaceocracy", a system in which an emphasis on peace is used to prioritize stability and order to the detriment of democracy. However, by comparing Kenya to Ghana and Uganda, two countries that have had very different experiences of elections and election-related violence, we demonstrate that peace messaging is neither unique to countries that have experienced recent electoral conflict, nor a recent phenomenon. Instead, we highlight the pervasiveness of peace narratives across the sub-continent, which we show is due to a number of factors. These include but are not limited to the way that elections are used to assert and perform state autonomy and an associated ideal of elections as orderly processes; the capacity of multiple actors to instrumentalize the ideal of orderly elections; a popular fear of electoral violence even in countries where it is rare; a growing tendency to individualize responsibility for peace; and the availability of international funding. Taken together, these factors help to explain the rise of peace messaging. At the same time, we argue that the risk that this messaging will foster a "peaceocracy" varies markedly and that the likelihood

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of incumbent manipulation is greatest in countries with a recent history
of civil conflict and where the quality of democracy is already low.

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FEW COUNTRIES HAVE WITNESSED SUCH A HEAVY and intense focus on
peace as Kenya in the run up to the country's 2013 general election.
Following widespread post-election violence in 2007–2008 in which over
1,000 people lost their lives and almost 700,000 were displaced, political
leaders, civil society groups, media houses and international donors joined
forces to preach peace. The resulting campaigns were initially lauded as
successful, largely because the election and its aftermath resulted in sig-
nificantly fewer deaths. However, '[i]n the wake of the elections, and their
dubious conduct, more critical commentators and civil society groups
began to ask whether the peace narrative was manipulated by the govern-
ment in order to marginalize opposition voices—and whether those who
promoted the peace narrative were therefore complicit'.[1] More specific-
ally, scholars have argued that some actors consciously promoted a peace
narrative in order to justify a closing of the democratic space and delegit-
imization of protest in the name of stability,[2] a situation that Kenyans
began to refer to as "peaceocracy".

This literature draws attention to potential tensions between peace and
democracy, but it tends to see Kenya as exceptional and to assume that
such a narrative was a direct consequence of the severity of the 2007–2008
post-election violence. In turn, scholarship on peace messaging more
broadly has tended to focus on the efficacy of particular programmes,[3] or
when it has identified general shortcomings, to have focused on issues such
as the reinforcement of existing power relations[4] or failure to address the
drivers of conflict,[5] and has said less about peace messaging around elec-
tions or the impact of peace messaging on democracy per se.

Little attention has thus been given to how peace campaigns are neither
unique to countries that have experienced recent electoral conflict, and
the implications of this for processes of democratic consolidation. This is
important since, while peace campaigns may peak in the wake of violence,

1.   Nic Cheeseman, Jacinta Mwende, and Seth Ouma, 'Peace but at what cost? Media
coverage of elections and conflict in Kenya', forthcoming in Katrin Voltmer (ed.), *Media,
Conflict and Democratization* (Palgrave, London, 2019).
2.   Jacinta Maweu, '"Peace propaganda"? The application of Chomsky's propaganda model
to the Daily Nation's coverage of the 2013 Kenyan elections', *Communicatio* 43, 2 (2017),
pp. 168–186.
3.   Gadi Wolfsfeld, *Media and the Path to Peace.* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge,
2004); Robert A. Hackett, 'Is peace journalism possible? Three frameworks for assessing
structure and agency in news media', *Conflict & Communication* 5, 2 (2006), pp. 1–13.
4.   Adam Branch 'The violence of peace: Ethnojustice in northern Uganda', *Development
and Change* 45, 3 (2014), pp, 608–630, p. 609.
5.   Cheeseman et al, 'Peace but at what cost?'.

they have a long history and are an increasingly common feature of multi-party elections across sub-Saharan Africa. This includes peace messaging, whereby politicians and voters alike are called upon to campaign, vote and accept election results without resorting to the use of violence, as well as other targeted peace-building efforts, from inter-community dialogue meetings to activities that seek to engage potential participants in violence. For example, during Sierra Leone's 2018 election there was 'a strong civil society and public response centred on peace and unity messaging',[6] which, among other things, reminded 'political parties of their responsibilities to both preach and practise non-violence'.[7] Similarly, in Nigeria, 'national actors and the international community supported the [2015] electoral process with strong conflict mitigation measures including risk analysis, preventive mediation and peace messaging';[8] while women in Côte d'Ivoire designed peace *pagnes* (local cloths) ahead of their 2015 election as part of a multi-sector campaign for peace.[9]

The near ubiquity of such campaigns across the sub-continent, including in relatively peaceful countries such as Ghana along with mainland Tanzania,[10] along with their long history, demonstrates that the phenomenon is not restricted to "post-conflict" or "transitional" settings and cannot simply be explained by recent experiences of violence. Indeed, from the authors' close observation of elections in Ghana (2016), Kenya (2007, 2013 and 2017) and Uganda (2016), it was notable that the intensity of peace campaigns around Ghana's 2016 election was second only to that witnessed in Kenya in 2013. This reality begs two important questions: why do people invest in electoral peace campaigns across such different contexts, and with what consequences? We draw on the cases of Ghana, Kenya and Uganda to answer these questions because, while these cases are not wholly representative of sub-Saharan Africa, they feature considerable variation in the extent to which they have experienced political

6.   Jamie Hitchen and Kieran Mitton, 'And what for future generations in Sierra Leone' 26 March 2018, *Africa Is A Country*, <https://africasacountry.com/2018/03/and-what-for-future-generations-in-sierra-leone> (11 March 2019).

7.   European Union, 'Election Observation Mission Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council Elections 2018, preliminary statement', 3 April 2018, <https://eeas.europa.eu/election-observation-missions/eom-sierra-leone-2018/41118/preliminary-statement-eu-eom-presidential-parliamentary-and-local-councils-elections_en> (11 March 2019), p. 8.

8.   Nkwachukwu Orji & Kelechi C. Iwuamadi (n.d.), 'Conflict mitigation in Nigeria's 2015 elections: Lessons in democratic development', Unpublished Conference Paper, <http://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Conference-Paper-by-Kelechi-Iwuamadi.pdf> (11 March 2019), p. 2.

9.   *USAID*, 'Fabric Design Sends Message to Côte d'Ivoire's Voters', 7 June 2018,<https://www.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories/creating-fabric-c%C3%B4te-d%E2%80%99ivoire%E2%80%99s-peaceful-future> (11 March 2019).

10.   Bernando Venturi, 'Preventing violence in a "peaceful" country: The case of Tanzania', *Agency for Peacebuilding*, 12 April 2016, <http://www.peaceagency.org/en/2016/04/12/preventing-violence-tanzania/> (11 March 2019).

stability and conflict. While Kenya has experienced both civil conflict and state repression around elections, widespread civil conflict has not taken place in recent Ugandan polls, and Ghanaian elections have been comparatively—though not wholly—peaceful. These three cases therefore exemplify the prominence of electoral peace campaigns in very different contexts. At the same time, they allow us to hold certain important variables constant—such as the colonial power, type of electoral system, and the uninterrupted holding of multiparty elections over the last decade.

Through this comparative approach we demonstrate that peace narratives may emerge even in largely peaceful states for five main reasons. First, mass elections by secret ballot perform an imagined distinction between state and society that foregrounds a particular set of ideas about peace and order.[11] Second, multiple actors may instrumentalize the idea of peace for their own purposes , including opposition politicians and activists who can insist on the need for peace to try and discipline incumbents and security forces. These processes have often gone hand in hand with a popular fear of violence even where it is rare; a growing tendency to individualize responsibility for electoral peace; and, the availability of international funding. It is this combination of factors, we argue, and the way in which they reinforce each other, that has made peace campaigns an increasingly central part of contemporary elections. More specifically, while the first three (orderly elections, political instrumentalization and the fear of violence) justify a focus on peace; the fourth (a focus on short-term prevention mechanisms and individualization of responsibility) helps to explain the emphasis on peace messaging instead of, or in addition to, other peace-building efforts; and the fifth (international support) explains the financial backing that has facilitated a proliferation of peace campaigns.

These various factors help to explain the attraction of peace campaigns to a variety of audiences and thus their pervasiveness. But these campaigns have not served everyone's interests equally. Instead, they tend to play to the advantage of incumbent elites. As noted, elections are envisaged as moments of bureaucratic order, when individuals are registered, vote and their preferences are counted.[12] However, they also carry a threat of disorder and instability: campaigns may become divisive, the state's capacity and neutrality may come into question, and citizens may reject results. In turn, while various actors may emphasize the importance of peace in a bid to discipline others, this strategy is particularly appealing to

11.   Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Oliver de Sardan, 'Studying the dynamics of African bureaucrats: An introduction to states at work', in Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Oliver de Sardan (ed.), *States at work. Dynamics of African bureaucracies* (Brill, Leiden, 2014), pp. 3–32.
12.   Justin Willis, '"Peace and order are in the interest of every citizen": Elections, violence and state legitimacy in Kenya, 1957–74', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 48, 1 (2015), pp. 99–116.

incumbent politicians, civil servants and security forces who—due to their relationship with the state—can claim to have a legitimate monopoly over violence and to be able to ensure order and stability. Of course, the ideal of state autonomy that this rests upon often sits in dramatic tension with what the state does: public campaigns for peace can exist alongside substantial levels of violence, whether committed by uniformed forces, state-sponsored militias or thugs. Nevertheless, this ideal facilitates the use of peace campaigns to help sustain the status quo. This occurs when, for example, establishment elites present political continuity as the best guarantor of peace; close off certain topics of debate on the grounds that they might trigger violence; and delegitimize public protests and legal challenges against perceived electoral manipulation in the name of maintaining public order. When this serves to shut down democratic debate and curtail the rights of opposition parties and their supporters a peaceocracy can be said to exist. Our case studies suggest that such manipulation tends to be more pernicious in more authoritarian regimes with a recent history of intense civil conflict in which incumbents are both highly motivated to use every means available to win and better placed to manipulate peace messaging to suppress opposition. This is due, for example, to their considerable control over the media and civil society, and people's heightened concern with stability including that of the international community.

In showing how peace can be manipulated, we draw on Johan Galtung's distinction between 'negative peace', characterized by the absence of direct violence, and 'positive peace', which requires dealing with the underlying hostilities, inequalities, and injustices that can promote conflict.[13] This distinction is important as it highlights how a negative peace can be threatened by the absence of a more substantive positive peace, but also how—against a backdrop of widespread violence—a negative peace can often be regarded as a widely accepted priority. However, popular perceptions of peace and violence are also affected by ideas of legitimate force, with many citizens and leaders accepting that an individual, and in turn a state, can legitimately use force against others if their actions are deemed necessary and proportionate given the threat faced. While such sentiments are central to the idea of the modern state, this understanding of legitimate force opens a grey area for political debate over the source and scale of threat, and the type and level of force that can be deemed necessary and proportionate. It is in this grey zone that the potential violence of peace emerges, in which the idea of peace is manipulated to legitimize the use of power by some and delegitimize ostensibly legal activities by others, such that peace, as Adam Branch has argued,

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13.   Johan Galtung, 'Violence, peace, and peace research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6, 3 (1969), pp. 167–191.

becomes a 'productive political violence, [which pushes] towards specific possible futures, while cutting off others'.[14] As will be shown, incumbents tend to prioritize a negative peace—or short-term political stability and reduction in the level of direct violence and deaths—to delegitimize opposition activities. Moreover, when such violence becomes a peaceocracy—in which certain voices are marginalized and the opposition's capacity to meaningfully participate in the electoral process is curbed—the resulting frustrations and grievances may fuel the prospects of future unrest.

In making these arguments, we do not seek to downplay the value of peace or the costs of violence. Instead, we seek to highlight the capacity for peace campaigns to be repressive: to close off political space, limit debate, entrench the ruling party's hold on power, and justify the use of force against those who might cause disorder. This does not mean that peace campaigns are worthless nor that they should be curtailed. Instead, our aim is to show why they have become so pervasive and how they can come into tension with democracy. However, before turning to these arguments, we briefly outline the electoral experience of the three country case studies.

Peace campaigns in historical and comparative perspective

Peace messaging peaked in Kenya around the 2013 election when the newly instituted National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) worked with local administrators, organizations and networks to monitor hate speech; media houses and international organizations trained journalists on conflict-sensitive reporting and called for peace; theatre groups, musicians, and public advertizing called upon Kenyans to vote in peace; and politicians competed to display their peace-loving credentials.[15] Indeed, while peace campaigns attracted significant funding and support from the Kenyan government, local organizations, external donors, and ordinary citizens also promoted peace messages and admonished those whose utterances or actions they feared might trigger violence.[16] However, while such calls were particularly intense in 2013 in the wake of the 2007/8 post-election crisis, they have a much longer history. On the eve of the country's independence elections in 1963, the departing governor appealed to everyone 'to maintain the peace' and 'ensure that this period

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14. Branch, 'The violence of peace'.
15. Nic Cheeseman, Gabrielle Lynch and Justin Willis, 'Democracy and its Discontents: Understanding Kenya's 2013 elections', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, 1 (2014), pp. 2–24; Joyce Nyairo, 'The circus comes to town: Performance, religion and exchange in political party campaigns', in Kimani Njogu and Peter Wafalu Wekesa (eds), *Kenya's 2013 election: Stakes, practices and outcomes* (Twaweza Communications Ltd, Nairobi, 2015), pp. 124–144.
16. Warigia Bowman and J. David Bowman, 'Censorship or self-control? Hate speech, the state and the voter in the Kenyan election of 2013', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 54, 3 (2016), pp. 496–497.

passes without violence or disorder'.[17] This was later echoed by presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi, with calls for peace becoming particularly central to Moi's one-party state (1978–1992) and to the ruling Kenya African National Union's (KANU's) multi-party election campaign in 1992. It was also evident during the country's most recent elections in 2017 when a mix of dialogue meetings, speeches, music, art and theatre were once again deployed as part of a campaign for peaceful polls.

In Uganda and Ghana, elections have also long been associated with calls for peace. In Ghana's 1969 election, for example, the National Liberation Council (NLC)—which had come to power through the coup that toppled President Nkrumah in 1966—sought a 'peaceful and orderly' electoral process.[18] Similarly, President Museveni's justification of a 'no-party democracy' in the late 1980s rested on the idea that multi-party politics fostered sectarianism, division and conflict.[19] However, as in Kenya, an emphasis on peace during elections in Ghana and Uganda has become more vocal and widespread—and better funded—in recent years. Thus, ahead of Uganda's most recent elections in 2016, media houses, church leaders, civil society organizations and the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM), regularly called upon the country's citizens to keep the peace,[20] while elections in Ghana later the same year were characterized by even more intensive campaigns—from peace adverts on television, radio and billboards and peace marches to touring plays and movies.

This emphasis on peace is common despite very different experiences of elections and election-related violence across our cases. Kenya's unenviable record of electoral violence began from a relatively low level with small-scale confrontations between supporters of rival parties during the independence elections of 1963 and relatively commonplace, but generally localized, intimidation during the country's one-party state elections. Election-related violence then increased following calls for, and then a return to, multi-party politics in the early 1990s. This included ethnic clashes across much of the Rift Valley from 1990 to 1993, the pre-election violence of 1997, the widespread post-election violence of 2007/8, and heavy-handed state security response to post-election protests in 2017.[21]

17.   Cited in Willis, '"Peace and Order are in the Interest of Every Citizen"'.
18.   *Daily Graphic*, 11 August 1969, 'Africa: NLC is encouraged', p. 1.
19.   Nelson Kasfir, '"No-party democracy" in Uganda', *Journal of Democracy* 9, 2 (1998), pp. 49–63; Aili Mari Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda: Paradoxes of power in a hybrid regime* (Lynne Reinner, Boulder, 2010).
20.   Henni Alava and Jimmy. S. Ssentongo, 'Religious (de)politicisation in Uganda's 2016 elections', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, 4 (2016), pp. 677–692.
21.   Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A history since independence* (IB Tauris, London, 2013); Gabrielle Lynch, *I say to you: Ethnic politics and the Kalenjin of Kenya* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2011); KNCHR, *Mirage at Dusk: A human rights account of the 2017 General Election* (KNCHR, Nairobi, 2017)

In Uganda, late-colonial elections were marked by boycotts and intimidation, while the 1980 elections saw extensive interference by the ruling Military Commission, which ultimately led one of the losers—Yoweri Museveni—to take up arms against the government. Following Museveni's rise to power in 1986, regular elections from 1996—and on a multi-party basis from 2006—have seen a highly uneven playing field with a number—especially those in 2001 and 2006 –witnessing significant levels of violence.[22] However, whereas in Kenya much of the election-related violence in the 1990s and 2007/8 pitted local groups against each other, violence around Uganda's elections has largely been deployed by the security forces against the political opposition.

In contrast, Ghana is widely hailed as a democratic success story with elections that are increasingly peaceful, competitive and free.[23] Thus, while pre-independence elections in 1951, 1954 and 1956 were marked by significant violence,[24] the elections in 1969 and 1979 that punctuated military rule saw little conflict.[25] Finally, regular multi-party elections since 1992—though initially characterized by (mostly non-lethal) intimidation in partisan strongholds—have become comparatively peaceful.[26] So what explains why we see vigorous peace campaigns in contexts with such different experiences? To answer this question, the first two factors —orderly elections and political instrumentalization—are discussed in the next section, before we turn to the other three factors—the fear of violence, the individualization of responsibility, and international support.

The instrumentalization of an electoral ideal

In Africa, as elsewhere, elections are meant 'to create the state as a distinct entity and sphere of order, even as it creates the voter as the subject of that order'.[27] However, this ideal of elections as moments when an autonomous state oversees an orderly bureaucratic process is constantly threatened by the possibility, or reality, of disorder—either as a result of unruly campaigns, state failings, or a popular rejection of official results.

22.   Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*.
23.   Peter Arthur, 'Democratic consolidation in Ghana: the role and contribution of the media, civil society and state institutions', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 48, 2 (2010), pp. 203–226
24.   Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana, 1946–60* (Oxford University Press, London, 1970), pp. 273–274, pp. 291–292.
25.   Naomi Chazan, 'African voters at the polls: A re-examination of the role of elections in African politics', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 17, 2 (1979), pp. 136–158
26.   George M. Bob-Milliar, 'Party youth activists and low-intensity electoral violence in Ghana: A qualitative study of party foot soldiers' activism', *African Studies Quarterly* 15, 1 (2014), pp. 125–152; E. Gyimah-Boadi, 'Another step forward for Ghana', *Journal of Democracy* 20, 2 (2009), pp. 138–152.
27.   Willis et al, 'La machine électorale', p. 27

In turn, judgments as to whether elections are free and fair by both observers and commentators alike are heavily shaped by the occurrence of overt violence or its absence, and by the orderliness of the country's citizens.[28]

For example, ahead of Ghana's 1969 election, the NLC sought a peaceful election that would 'demonstrate to the world the political maturity of Ghanaians';[29] while ahead of the country's 1992 elections, a regional administrator declared that the polls were 'an opportunity for us to demonstrate to the whole world that we are mature enough to do party politics'.[30] Similarly, before Uganda's 2001 elections, the government-owned *New Vision* newspaper insisted that: 'We must not embarrass ourselves. Voting in a new leader is supposed to be a very peaceful exercise'.[31] In turn, the same newspaper celebrated the peacefulness of the 2001 poll as evidence of its success.[32]

This call for a performance of order is often explicitly disciplinary: candidates and voters should behave in an orderly fashion as part of a performance of the state's capacity to oversee a sovereign nation and of the citizen's political maturity.[33] It was this logic that led E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo to write—in reference to post-colonial Kenya—of an 'ideology of order' in which political stability is seen as the number one priority and other factors such as civil liberties and political competition are sacrificed on the altar of national unity.[34] For the purposes of this paper such an emphasis on order is important for two key reasons. First, it encourages an evaluation of an election's success that foregrounds order and stability above transparency and credibility, and thus encourages a focus on peace. Second, the inherent appeal of this demand for peace and order—and the difficulty of rejecting it—ensures that peace campaigns can be instrumentalized to advance specific agendas. Indeed, competition for control of peace messaging can be seen across our three country case studies, as incumbents emphasise the state's supposed legitimate monopoly over violence and ability to ensure order, while opposition leaders and civil society groups draw on the public resonance of peace to challenge the legitimacy of a government that relies on violence to maintain control and/or to encourage incumbents to moderate their use of physical coercion by the security forces and militias.

28.   Justin Willis, Gabrielle Lynch and Nic Cheeseman, '"A valid electoral exercise?": Uganda's 1980 elections and the observers' dilemma', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, 1 (2017), pp. 211–238.
29.   *Daily Graphic*, 11 August 1969, 'Africa: NLC is encouraged', p. 1.
30.   Cited in *People's Daily Graphic*, 17 October 1992, 'Educate supporters', p. 3.
31.   *Sunday Vision*, 11 March 2001, 'Editorial: Give democracy a chance', p. 10.
32.   *New Vision*, 13 March 2001, 'Editorial: Peaceful elections', p. 12; advertisement, *Sunday Vision* 18 March 2001.
33.   Willis, 'Peace and order'; Willis et al, 'La machine électorale'.
34.   E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, 'The ideology of order', in Michael Schatzberg (ed.), *The political economy of Kenya* (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1987), pp. 172–202.

In this way, Kenya's elections since the 1960s have witnessed a constant reiteration of the link between order, peace and development, which the government has used as both a legitimating and repressive device,[35] but which opposition politicians and civil society activists have also drawn on to demand political reform. For example, in 1997, when opposition activists faced constant, almost routine, violence from police, administrators and hired thugs, the opposition and some of the press insisted that changes were needed to enhance security and stability.[36] At the same time, donors publicly called for 'non-violent' elections—a direct criticism of the deployment of militias against voters.[37] More recently, leaders across the political divide sought to use the enhanced concern with peace that followed the post-election violence of 2007/8 for their own political gain.[38]

Similarly, in the Ghanaian elections of the 1990s the ruling NDC responded to allegations of repression by issuing press statements that depicted the government as an agent of peace and claimed that 'the culture of violence in Ghanaian politics' had been initiated by the political antecedents of the main opposition grouping, the New Patriotic Party (NPP).[39] In response, the NPP accused President Rawlings of 'creating a platform for violence'—implicitly arguing that his manipulation of government resources and officials had compromised the state's claim to assert a non-partisan order.[40] Many elections in Uganda have witnessed a similar dynamic as the NRM presents peace as the beneficial result of its rule—and threatens that voting for the opposition could engender violence—while opposition politicians, civil society actors, and donors draw attention to state repression and the need for reform.[41]

The ideal of elections as orderly and the capacity of both governments and opposition parties to use peace narratives to advance their own interests thus helps to explain the persistence of peace messaging across both time and space. However, while leaders often compete for control of the

35. Willis, 'Peace and Order'.
36. For example, see *Daily Nation*, 6 July 1997, 'Editorial: Reforms: dialogue is the only way out', pp. 6; *Daily Nation*, 8 July 1997, 'Editorial: Govt must defuse this ticking bomb', p. 6.
37. *Daily Nation*, 2 December 1997, 'US keen on free poll says Jackson', p. 1.
38. Gabrielle Lynch, 'Electing the "alliance of the accused": The success of the Jubilee Alliance in Kenya's Rift Valley', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, 1 (2014), pp. 93–114; Nic Cheeseman, Gabrielle Lynch and Justin Willis, 'Voting for the devil you know: Kenya's 2017 election', *Review of African Political Economy* blog, 14 August 2017, <http://roape.net/2017/08/14/voting-devil-know-kenyas-2017-election/> (11 January 2017).
39. *People's Daily Graphic*, 12 October 1992, 'NDC press statement', p. 10.
40. *People's Daily Graphic*, 5 October 1992b, 'Rawlings asked to step down', p. 3 *People's Daily Graphic*, 10 October 1992, 'Obeng condemns pastoral letter', p. 3.
41. For example, *Human Rights Watch*, 'Uganda: Suspend 'Crime Preventers", 12 January 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/12/uganda-suspend-crime-preventers> (12 February 2017).

peace narrative, this contest does not take place on a level playing field;[42] an underlying reality that lays the foundations for the rise of peaceocracy. However, before turning to the greater ability of incumbents to instrumentalize these processes, we outline three additional factors that contribute to the pervasiveness of peace messaging.

The terror of history

The ability of a range of actors to instrumentalize peace is only possible because such messages resonate with a wider public, which has consistently exhibited a deep fear that elections will descend into disorder and violence. This is perhaps unsurprising in contexts such as Kenya but it is also evident in countries such as Ghana where elections have been relatively peaceful. Thus, in a nationally representative survey conducted by the authors in Ghana (September 2015), Uganda (December 2015) and Kenya (June 2017), we asked participants 'What is the most important factor for an election to be free and fair?'.[43] Although the question lists a number of factors related to the result, including ballot box stuffing and voter bribery, the most common response in all three countries was: 'A peaceful process' (see Table 1). This prioritization appears particularly stark when one considers that only a small minority of respondents had actually experienced election-related violence during the previous polls (see Table 2).

Similarly in a survey commissioned by the Africa Centre for Open Governance (AfriCOG) shortly after Kenya's 2013 election, 50.9 percent of respondents said that 'peace is more important than free and fair elections'. In line with our own survey findings, people who answered 'yes' to this question were also more likely to assess the election as having been free

Table 1 Most important factor for an election to be free and fair, top three responses (%)

	Ghana	Kenya	Uganda
A peaceful process	20	26	17
Secret ballot	16	20	16
Independent Electoral Commission	15	14	14

42. Lise Rakner and Nicolas Van de Walle, 'Opposition weakness in Africa', *Journal of Democracy* 20, 3 (2009), pp. 108–121.
43. This survey—the same in each country—was conducted as part of the authors' wider project on attitudes towards elections; in each case this was a nationwide face-to-face survey, conducted by a professional polling organization using random sampling techniques. The Ghana and Uganda surveys had national samples of 2,000 respondents; the Kenya survey had a national sample of 1,100.

Table 2 Did you suffer actual violence in the last election?[44]

	Yes	No	Refused
Ghana	6%	94%	0%
Kenya	11%	89%	0%
Uganda	4%	96%	0%

and fair.[45] Significantly, a second survey conducted in the wake of Kenya's 2013 polls also found that when voters were asked 'whether they thought that it was more important to preserve peace, even if the wrong person were declared the winner', the vast majority—85 percent—said yes.[46]

This popular prioritization of peace reflects a widespread sense that electoral chaos is a real and pressing threat. For example, a survey conducted a month before Kenya's 2013 election found that '[m]ore than a fifth of the sample expected election-related violence to occur in their areas in 2013; almost a sixth thought that their own families would suffer because of it; and nearly a sixth reported that violence had already taken place'.[47] This was not an isolated concern: many voters raised fears of widespread election-related violence ahead of the recent polls in Kenya in August 2017,[48] in Uganda in February 2016,[49] and in Ghana in December 2016. Indeed, in the latter a majority of citizens reported concerns that the polls would be accompanied by violence, which turned out not to be the case.[50] In line with popular anxieties, local analysts argued that the greatest threat to the stability of Ghana's democracy 'derives from electoral violence, underpinned by hate speech, abusive language, and the use of spirituality in politics'. More broadly, election-related violence was frequently cast as 'a recurring issue that continues to push Ghana to the brink of all-out violence during the preparations toward each election year'.[51]

44.   Given the timing of the surveys, respondents would have been referring to the 2011 elections in Ghana and Uganda and 2013 elections in Kenya.
45.   Shah, 'Free and fair?'.
46.   James D. Long, Karuti Kanyinga, Karen E. Feree and Clark Gibson, 'Choosing peace over democracy', *Journal of Democracy* 24, 3 (2013), p. 151.
47.   *Ibid.*
48.   William Mwangi, '70% Kenyans in fear of post-election violence in 2017—survey', *The Star*, 2 November 2016, <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2016/11/02/70-kenyans-in-fear-of-post-election-violence-in-2017-survey_c1447872> (12 February 2017).
49.   Human Rights Watch, 'Uganda: Suspend 'Crime Preventers''.
50.   CDD-Ghana, 'Ghana's 2016 Elections: Prospects for Credibility and Peacefulness', 16 November 2016, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByAq4dHfpyAtRlV0aFJJR2ZFcFk/view> (12 February 2017).
51.   Kwesi Aning and Kwaku Danso, 'Introduction', in Kwesi Aning, Kwaku Danso and Naila Salihu (eds), *Managing election-related conflict and violence for democratic stability in Ghana II* (Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, 2016), pp. 1–9, pp. 2–3.

In Kenya and Uganda these fears were shaped, at least in part, by experiences and memories of election-related violence and of political instability—both those experienced first-hand and those recalled through popular narratives and media images. Fear of election violence is thus driven not only by present realities, but also by what Dirk Moses has called 'the terror of history': a fear of the past's eternal return.[52] Ahead of Kenya's 2013 and 2017 elections, this terror focused on the possibility that past conflict would be repeated,[53] a worry that was fuelled by the persistence of grievances that motivated the 2007/8 violence and by an extremely close election that was contested, as in 2007, between an "establishment Kikuyu" and "opposition Luo". It was also informed by the fact that, while the 2007/8 post-election violence had been unprecedented in its intensity and geographic scope, all of Kenya's previous multi-party elections—including the 2002 election, which is often hailed as largely peaceful—had been marked by significant violence.[54]

In Uganda, election-related fears have also focused on past trauma and, more specifically, on the possibility that the country could return to the wars of the 1980s and 1990s, which were prompted by a disputed election in 1980 when Yoweri Museveni—then the leader of the opposition Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM)—rejected the result. As we shall see, President Museveni and the NRM have used the spectre of a possible return to the chaos and disorder of the 1980s as a way to mobilize support, but also to delegitimize the political opposition by presenting it as a threat to the country's fragile peace. At the same time, others fear that an electoral dispute could trigger riots and demonstrations and a heavy-handed security crackdown.[55]

By contrast, Ghanaians have experienced relatively low levels of election-related violence since the return to multi-party politics in 1992. Nevertheless, the threat of civil conflict has been powerful, as is evident from a public statement by Ghana's National Commission for Democracy ahead of the 1992 elections in which the research organization confidently asserted that, 'peace to most Ghanaians now is far more important than

52. A. Dirk Moses, 'Genocide and the terror of history', *Parallax* 17, 4 (2011), pp. 90–108, p. 91.
53. International Crisis Group, *Kenya's 2013 Elections*, Africa Report No. 197, 17 January 2013; *The Conversation*, 23 April 2017, 'Kenya's history of election violence is threatening to repeat itself', by Sekou Toure Otondi, <https://theconversation.com/kenyas-history-of-election-violence-is-threatening-to-repeat-itself-76220> (12 February 2017).
54. Africa Watch, *Divide and rule: State sponsored ethnic violence in Kenya* (Human Rights Watch, New York, 1993), p. 1; Peter Kagwanja, 'Politics of marionettes: Extra-legal violence and the 1997 elections in Kenya', in Marcel Rutten, Alamin Mazrui and Francois Grignon (eds), *Out for the count: The 1997 General Elections and prospects for democracy in Kenya* (Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2001), pp. 72–101; Patrick Mutahi, 'Political violence in the elections', in Herve Maupeu, Musambayi Katumanga and Winnie Mitullah (eds), *The Moi succession: The 2002 elections in Kenya* (Transafrica Press, Nairobi, 2005), pp. 69–96, p. 73.
55. Human Rights Watch, 'Uganda: Suspend Crime Preventers'.

who or which political party will win the forthcoming elections';[56] comments that were echoed during our research around the country's 2016 elections. In the absence of widespread electoral violence, this focus on peace has been stoked less by the memory of historical conflict and more by examples of unrest and civil strife in neighbouring states. In turn, concerns that Ghana might follow the path of Côte d'Ivoire or Nigeria have been intensified by a keen awareness that although Ghanaian elections have rarely attracted international news coverage they have often been accompanied by low-level violence.

Thus, even though analysts generally recognize that the country 'has not recorded widespread election violence', they argue that 'the political climate leading up to elections has … been tense,[57] and that 'the increasing incidence of electoral violence … could push Ghana to the brink of armed violence'.[58] Commonly noted problems include the use of abusive language,[59] the pervasiveness of threats and intimidation,[60] the role of hired thugs or "machomen" in disrupting political campaigns or voting,[61] and the relationship between ethnic tensions, chieftaincy battles and electoral logics in parts of the north.[62] These problems are widely interpreted as evidence that, if care is not taken, Ghana could easily suffer the same fate as other less fortunate countries from Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso to Uganda and Zimbabwe.[63] It is therefore clear that both the memory of recent violence and the spectre of violence in nearby states serve as

56.   Cited in *People's Daily Graphic*, 5 October 1992, 'NDC doesn't believe in violence—Rawlings', p. 3.
57.   N. Salihu, J. A. Osei-Tutu and Kwesi Aning, 'Conclusion', in Kwesi Aning, Kwaku Danso and Naila Salihu (eds), *Managing election-related conflict and violence for democratic stability in Ghana II* (Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, 2016), pp. 192–196, pp. 193.
58.   Kwaki Danso and Ernest Lartey, 'Democracy on a knife edge: Ghana's democratization processes, institutional malaise and the challenge of electoral violence', in Kwesi Aning and Kwaku Danso (eds), *Managing election-related violence for democratic stability in Ghana* (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Ghana, Accra, 2012), pp. 33–60, p. 33.
59.   Kwame Asamoah, 'Demons of transitional democracies: Politics of insults and acrimony in Ghana', *Journal of Social Science Studies* 1, 1 (2014), pp. 44–56; Gilbert Tietaah, 'Use of abusive language in Ghanaian politics', in Kwesi Aning and Kwaku Danso (eds), *Managing election-related violence for democratic stability in Ghana* (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Ghana, Accra, 2012), pp. 211–241.
60.   Danso and Lartey, 'Democracy on a knife edge'.
61.   Bob-Milliar, 'Party youth activists and low-intensity electoral violence in Ghana'; F. Edu-Afful and S. Allotey-Pappoe, 'Political vigilantism and electoral violence in Ghana', in Kwesi Aning, Kwaku Danso and Naila Salihu (eds), *Managing election-related conflict and violence for democratic stability in Ghana II* (Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra, 2016), pp. 63–84; p. 72.
62.   Clementina Amankwaah, *Election-related violence: The case of Ghana* (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2013); Jasper Ayelazuno, 'The politicisation of the Mirigu-Kandiga conflict in Ghana's 2008 elections: Questioning the electoral peace paradigm', *Conflict Trends* 2 (2009), pp. 45–50.
63.   Asamoah, 'Demons of transitional democracies'; Jesse S. Ovadia, 'Stepping back from the brink: A review of the 2008 Ghanaian election from the capital of the northern region', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 45, 2 (2011), pp. 310–340.

powerful drivers of a preoccupation with peace. This is significant because it means that peace narratives are not simply reactive; rather, they reflect deeper tropes regarding the potential for instability in Africa[64] and hence the overriding importance of order. In highlighting the complex drivers of popular concerns over electoral violence our intention is not to dismiss people's fears. Indeed, it may well be that the consistent emphasis on peace has, at least in part, helped Ghana to avoid widespread election-related conflict. Instead, we emphasize how such fears are not simply a natural or organic response to intense political competition, and how they reinforce a concern that elections must be peaceful and orderly.

The individualization of responsibility

A fourth factor that helps to explain the pervasiveness of peace campaigns around elections is the widespread recognition that it is extremely difficult to address the structural drivers of conflict and the resulting tendency to emphasize personal responsibility for the outbreak of election violence. In short, oft-cited drivers of unrest such as youth unemployment, narratives of historical injustice, inequality, impunity, rogue security forces, and the presence of militias take decades to resolve, even if they are tackled head on. As a result, popular and media analysis of the prospects for peace often emphasize how, in challenging contexts, any kind of conflict risks escalation and maintaining peace therefore requires the active effort of all citizens. Together with a growing focus on individual legal culpability for political violence and an emphasis of Pentecostal churches on the role of individuals as an agent of change, this has encouraged an emphasis on citizens' personal responsibility to guard against chaos and disorder. This is important as it helps to explain why a focus on the need to avoid violence at all costs is so often articulated in short-term peace campaigns such as peace messaging.

The Kenyan case demonstrates this trend particularly well.[65] It was widely accepted in the wake of the 2007/8 post-election violence that, while the crisis had been triggered by a disputed election, it had been fuelled by much more deep-rooted problems. These included a tendency towards winner-takes-all politics, a culture of impunity, collective narratives of historical injustice, high levels of inequality, a youth bulge, and mass under-employment.[66] The wide-ranging reforms introduced to

64. Nic Cheeseman, *Democracy in Africa: Successes, failures, and the struggle for political reform* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015).
65. This section draws in part from Gabrielle Lynch, *Performances of injustice: The politics of truth, justice and reconciliation in Kenya* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018).
66. Daniel Branch and Nic Cheeseman, 'Democratization, sequencing, and state failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya', *African Affairs* 108, 430 (2009), pp. 1–26; Lynch, *I Say to You*; Susanne Mueller, 'The political economy of Kenya's crisis', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, 2 (2008), pp. 185–210.

address these problems included a new constitution that brought in a devolved system of government and classic transitional justice mechanisms, most notably the intervention of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and establishment of a truth commission. However, as the 2013 election approached, it was clear that these institutional measures had not resolved the mistrust between previously antagonistic communities, narratives of historical injustice, or more general problems of gross inequality and underemployment. As a result, the 'spectre of election-related violence loomed large',[67] and pre-election peace-building interventions came to emphasize the responsibility of all Kenyans—politicians, activists, journalists, bloggers, and voters—to avoid activities that undermine peace.

Against this backdrop, the ongoing ICC cases against Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto—who had come together in the Jubilee Alliance—helped to shape the way in which the peace narrative evolved. In short, the Jubilee Alliance and its supporters were motivated to guard against violence as a means to undermine the ICC's case against their leaders,[68] while journalists and civil society activists were trained on their responsibility not to publish stories or broadcast messages that might promote violence lest they also be held to account.[69] More generally, the confirmation of charges against some of those alleged to be responsible for facilitating violence in 2007/2008 emphasized that personal responsibility should be understood as a legal imperative as much as a moral one.[70]

This emphasis on the role of the individual in ensuring peace was then reinforced by popular strands of evangelical religious thought, which shaped popular discourse through a variety of channels. According to these theological perspectives, in the face of problems or "evil" it is the individual, rather than the broader socio-economic or political context, that is tasked with effecting change through the redemptive power of welcoming Christ in and casting the devil out.[71] The heavy focus of this religious teaching on the internal moral work done by the individual, combined with prosecution of those accused of inciting the 2007/8 clashes and memories of that crisis, left Kenyans in no doubt about their personal responsibility in assisting the country to avoid electoral violence.

67.   Nic Cheeseman, Gabrielle Lynch and Justin Willis, 'Decentralization in Kenya: The governance of governors', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 54, 1 (2016), pp. 1–35, p. 10.
68.   Sabine Höhn, 'New start or false start? The ICC and electoral violence in Kenya', *Development and Change* 45, 3 (2014), pp. 565–588.
69.   Cheeseman, Mwende and Ouma, 'Peace but at what cost?'.
70.   The cases against Kenyatta and Ruto later collapsed, but not until well after the election.
71.   Gregory Deacon, 'Driving the Devil Out: Kenya's Born-Again Election', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 45, 2 (2015), pp. 200–220; Gregory Deacon and Gabrielle Lynch, 'Allowing Satan in? Moving toward a political economy of neo-Pentecostalism in Kenya', *Journal of Religion in Africa* 43, 2 (2013), pp. 108–130.

A similar combination of factors has played out in Uganda and Ghana where a deep-rooted scepticism about politics and the political class— together with the prevalence of evangelical ideas and rituals—has meant that much of the responsibility for peace has been placed on individuals at all levels of society. Thus, ahead of Uganda's 2016 polls, President Museveni made repeated calls for individual citizens to keep the peace,[72] while civil society organizations launched a 'Let peace prevail' campaign that 'called upon every individual and organization to ensure that they work towards a peaceful electoral process'.[73] Similarly, while Ghanaian elections have often witnessed demands for a credible process and social inclusion,[74] there has also been a tendency for the focus of messaging to shift to the responsibility of individual citizens and politicians to be peaceful as the polls draw near. In this vein, a 2016 advert sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme called on Ghanaians to 'go to our polling stations, join the queues, wait our turn, and vote peacefully for our preferred candidates'. Such an approach was said to be essential, since 'when the dust settles Ghana must be the only winner. This responsibility to our country is sacred. Shun violence. Vote in peace. Love Ghana'.[75]

This individualization of the responsibility to promote and maintain peace is significant, because it helps to explain how peace campaigns, which stem from a deep fear of disorder, come to emphasize the roles and duties of ordinary citizens. Maintaining peace comes to be viewed not simply as something that is the preserve of governments or political leaders, but as the individual duty of every citizen, which feeds into widespread messaging that seeks to discipline the entire population. It is also important not to underestimate the impact of such messages, given that they are communicated to voters' day and night through multiple mediums from radios and televisions to mobile phones and social media, from church services and prayer meetings to community functions and popular discourse, and from political speeches and government advertising to civil society statements and donor pronouncements. However, this emphasis on individual responsibility can also be used to the advantage of incumbents as—in the name of order and stability—government's can take action against those who they claim represent a threat to peace.

72.   Alava and Ssentongo, 'Religious (de)politicisation in Uganda's 2016 elections'.
73.   Uganda National NGO Forum, 'Civil society launch the "let peace prevail" campaign', 19 February 2016, <http://ngoforum.or.ug/civil-society-launch-the-let-peace-prevail-campaign-2016/> (11 January 2017).
74.   Salihu et al, 'Conclusion', p. 195; also Asamoah 'Demons of transitional democracies', p. 47.
75.   UNDP, 'Ghana Election Advert', 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSIBZlZiPNk> (11 January 2017).

International support

Although the rise of peace messaging has been internally driven, it has often been externally funded with peace programmes supported by a range of international actors—from bi-lateral and multi-lateral aid agencies, such as USAID and UNDP, to international non-governmental organizations, such as World Vision and Saferworld. In Kenya, the international community has been involved in supporting peaceful elections at least since the return of multi-party politics, through the civic education programmes of the early 1990s and through (limited) financial support to local organizations' reconciliation efforts following the ethnic clashes of 1991 to 1993.[76] However, international support for peace messaging reached a peak between the country's 2007 and 2013 elections, as various actors sought to avoid a repeat of the 2007/8 post-election violence. Most notably, the US government provided more than $150 million to Kenya between these two elections through the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance programme, which included a 'robust portfolio that supports peace messaging and conflict [early warning and early response] efforts'.[77] As USAID recognized:

> Others in the donor community also supported the call for peace, both diplomatically and through development programming. Peace messages were disseminated using all available methods: SMS (text message) blasts, fliers, radio, TV, billboards, training journalists on peace messaging, comic books, national TV shows and local engagement of community-based groups.[78]

The international community has also been heavily involved in supporting peace-messaging activities in Ghana. For example, ahead of the country's 2016 elections, UNDP sought to strengthen the 'capacity of actors in the national peace architecture [most notably the National Peace Council] to prevent and manage electoral and political violence', and to 'enhance peace education' including through various peace messages.[79] Such donor support for peace messaging has persisted despite mounting criticism that

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76. Stephen Brown, 'Quiet diplomacy and recurring "ethnic clashes" in Kenya', in Chandra Lekha Sriram and Karin Wermester (eds), *From promise to practice: Strengthening UN capacities for the prevention of violence conflict* (Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 2004), pp. 69–100.
77. Larry Garber, Elizabeth Dallas and Johanna Wilkie, 'USAID support for Kenya's 2013 elections: Rapid assessment review', (USAID, Washington, February 2014), pp. 5 & 14, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Kenya%2527s%25202013%2520Elections.pdf> (11 January 2017).
78. *Ibid*, p. 14.
79. UNDP, 'How UNDP supported Ghana's peaceful election 2016', 3 January 2017, <http://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/ourperspective/ourperspectivearticles/2017/01/03/how-undp-supported-ghana-s-successful-election-2016.html> (11 January 2017); also USAID Ghana, 'Annual Report Fiscal Year 2015', <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/USAID%20Ghana%20Annual%20Report%202015_with%20508%20compliance_FINAL%2011.16.2016.pdf> (11 January 2017).

this strategy tends to overlook the importance of accountability and justice, and encourages 'strategies of extraversion' that have distorted civil society activities.[80] Regarding the latter, one common complaint is that donor funding for peace has gone hand-in-hand with a 'toolbox' approach that has encouraged local organizations to develop similar projects in very different contexts.[81] Support for peace messaging has also been said to encourage African organizations to propose projects focused on peace, whether these are necessarily merited by the situation on the ground or not, encouraging an associated 'peace industry' even in relatively non-violent contexts.[82]

More broadly, funding for peace activities can be seen as one element of the international community's oft-criticized tendency to prioritize stability and order over human rights and democracy. In this vein, Stephen Brown has detailed European and US acceptance of sub-standard elections in Kenya in the interests of stability, incremental change and cordial diplomatic relations.[83] Similarly, in neighbouring Uganda, President Museveni has proven adept at using a record of economic recovery and issue of regional security to minimize international criticism of his domestic governance record.[84]

However, it is not true that donors are unaware of these challenges, or that they employ the same strategies in every context. For example, donor support for elections in Uganda has come to place less emphasis on peace messaging over time. This can be seen from the Democratic Governance Facility—a donor basket established by various European partners in July 2011—which purposefully separated out 'rights, justice and peace' as distinct from 'deepening democracy' ahead of the 2016 election. Work on the latter explicitly emphasized the imperative of working towards political responsiveness and accountability; a democratic culture, space and values; and improving the integrity of democratic processes.[85] This more

80.   Cf. Jean-Francois Bayart, 'Africa in the world: A history of extraversion', *African Affairs* 99 (2000), pp. 217–267.
81.   Patricia Daley, 'Challenges to peace: Conflict resolution in the great lakes region of Africa', *Third World Quarterly* 27, 2 (2006), pp. 303–319.
82.   As argued, for example, in the Ghanaian context by *Daily Guide*, 10 September 2016, 'Election peace industry', <http://dailyguideafrica.com/election-peace-industry/> (11 January 2017).
83.   Stephen Brown, 'Authoritarian leaders and multiparty elections in Africa: How foreign donors help to keep Kenya's Daniel arap Moi in power', *Third World Quarterly* 22, 5 (2001), pp. 725–739; Stephen Brown and Rosalind Raddatz, 'Dire consequences or empty threats? Western pressure for peace, justice and democracy in Kenya', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, 1 (2014), pp. 43–62.
84.   Tripp, *Museveni's Uganda*; Jonathan Fisher, 'Managing donor perceptions: Contextualizing Uganda's 2007 intervention in Somalia', *African Affairs* 111, 444 (2012), pp. 404–423.
85.   Democratic Governance Facility, 'Areas of Focus', 2011, <https://www.dgf.ug/areas-of-focus/deepening-democracy> (11 January 2017).

balanced approach appears to have been adopted in recognition of how peace messaging was working to the incumbent's advantage. In turn, where money was invested in peace activities, it was largely channelled through non-state actors, such as the Citizens Election Observation Network (CEON). This practice stands in marked contrast to the considerable international assistance given to government parastatals such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in Ghana in 2016 and NCIC in Kenya in 2013 and 2017.

However, while the donor community learns from experience, it is unlikely that funding for peace activities will disappear any time soon. After all, it is well known that violence and political disorder are usually regarded as significantly worse outcomes for donors than democratic backsliding. Civil war and political instability can lead to the loss of thousands of lives, have adverse consequences for a range of health and educational indicators, and can also threaten western interests—from business investments to concerns with regional security and the 'war on terror'. Moreover, with limited power to ensure that governments play by the rules of the game and facing heavy criticism for any actions that are seen to interfere with state sovereignty, it is far easier for donors to promote peace than substantive democracy. Nevertheless, while donor support for peace messaging may be understandable and helps to explain the ubiquity of peace campaigns across the continent, it has also helped incumbents to turn such such projects to their own advantage.

The violence of electoral peace

The ability of governments to shape how peace narratives unfold, combined with the individualization of responsibility for peace and the steady flow of donor funds, is significant because it enables more authoritarian regimes to use the fear of violence as a justification to censor and repress individuals and groups that might cause disorder. In the context of an election, this may include journalists investigating electoral malpractice, opposition parties protesting results, and civil society actors who investigate human rights abuses. By legitimizing the marginalization of dissent, peace narratives may close off political space and contribute to the advantages of incumbency enjoyed by African governments—advantages that are significant, as sitting presidents win 88 percent of the elections that they contest.[86]

The potential for peace strategies to constrain the options available to opposition parties is well demonstrated by our cases. In all of the most

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86.   Nic Cheeseman, 'African elections as vehicles for change,' *Journal of Democracy* 21, 4 (2010), pp. 139–153.

recent elections held in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, the main fear expressed by the media and citizens was that opposition candidates would reject an incumbent victory and then call their supporters out onto the streets in protests that would degenerate into widespread civil unrest. To some extent, of course, this is grounded in the knowledge that opposition leaders rarely win. However, these fears have also been deliberately fostered by ruling parties who have sought to depict their rivals as a threat to national security and stability. Thus, ahead of Kenya's 2017 elections, a Jubilee-funded social media campaign dubbed 'The Real Raila' sought to depict the opposition leader as violent, divisive and ethnically biased.[87]

Although such strategies have been common across our cases, it is notable that such negative depictions and associated delegitimization of protest by opposition elements is interwoven with a much more repressive logic in Uganda and Kenya than in Ghana. The explanation for this lies in the quality of democracy and the proximity and intensity of conflict in the three countries. In Kenya and Uganda, limited progress towards democratic consolidation has resulted in governments who are not willing to lose power, and who face relatively few barriers to the use of coercion to retain control. At the same time, recent (Kenya) and particularly intense (Uganda) civil strife makes it easier for ruling parties to legitimate repressive strategies. This is because in these cases the negative consequences of conflict are fresher in the minds of citizens and journalists, and also because the international community is more likely to be willing to tolerate the closing of political space in the name of regional stability in the wake of recent or particularly intense unrest.

In this regard, it is significant that in recent elections in Kenya and Uganda, the ruling party has called on citizens to unite behind the government in the interests of stability and development, and to stave off chaos and disorder, in language which echoes that of the 1960s and 1970s.[88] For example, during Uganda's 2016 elections there was a strong push by President Museveni and the NRM to assert how they had brought peace to the country; how only the NRM could maintain that peace; how anyone who threatened to cause chaos would be dealt with accordingly; and how, if the government were to lose the election, the country could return to war. Such messaging was supported by a public relations campaign that featured vivid images of the country's past. This included the NRM's decision to run adverts that featured pictures of piles of skulls belonging to the victims of the civil war of the early 1980s—a technique first used

87.   Privacy International, 'Kenya President's viral 'anonymous' attack campaign against rival, new investigation reveals', 15 December 2017 <https://privacyinternational.org/feature/954/texas-media-company-hired-trump-created-kenyan-presidents-viral-anonymous-attack> (11 March 2019).
88.   Lynch, 'Democratisation in trouble'.

in 1996.[89] The same strategy was also deployed in 2001, when the NRM repeatedly accused opponents of seeking to bring *kavuyo*, or 'chaos', while the army—which is deeply entwined with the ruling party—asserted its right to 'stamp down violence' in the interests of peace.[90] Each time, the warning that a vote for the opposition would lead to chaos was combined with a powerful display of force by the state, which included the deployment of thousands of security forces, organization of politicized community policing efforts, intimidation of journalists and civil society activists, and arrest of opposition politicians.

Significantly, these efforts to politicize and manipulate the peace narrative have also been reinforced—sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally—by the work of non-state actors. This was evident, for example, ahead of the country's 2001 polls when the chair of the Electoral Commission 'appealed to Museveni to ensure peace and harmony so as to save the democratic process from disintegration'.[91] Similarly, Henni Alava and Jimmy Ssentongo argue that the pre-electoral messaging by the country's clergy in 2016 placed an 'over-emphasis on peace' that helped to shut down political debate, and which 'underemphasised the violence that undergirds' the Ugandan political system.[92]

As we have seen, a similar albeit less extreme scenario played out in the Kenyan context ahead of the 2013 elections, when a particular framing of the "good citizen" helped to constrain the scope of legitimate political debate and contestation.[93] More specifically, pervasive peace messaging helped to ensure that opposition supporters and the media felt constrained in what and how they could protest or report, as the imperative of peace-at-all-costs 'suppressed frank discussion of critical reform issues' during the campaigns.[94] Among other things, this led media houses to engage in extensive self-censorship and to heavily emphasize peace to the neglect of reportage and efforts to expose the abuse of power.[95] The

89.   Rebecca Tapscott, 'Where the wild things are not: crime preventers and the 2016 Ugandan elections', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, 4 (2017), pp. 693–712, p. 694; Pauline Bernard, 'The politics of the Luweero skulls: the making of memorial heritage and post-revolutionary state legitimacy over the Luweero mass graves in Uganda', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 11, 1 (2017), pp. 188–209.
90.   *New Vision*, 10 February 2001, 'Bidandi warns over alliances', p. 5; *New Vision*, 27 February 2001, advertisement *New Vision*, 8 March 2001, 'UPDF deploys for elections', p. 1.
91.   *New Vision*, 26 February 2001, Kasujja wants military out of campaign', p. 1.
92.   Alava and Ssentongo, 'Religious (de)politicisation', pp. 684 & 882.
93.   Jessica Pykett, Michael Saward and Anja Schaefer, 'Framing the good citizen', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 12, 4 (2010), pp. 523–538.
94.   International Crisis Group, '*Kenya's 2013 Elections*', Africa Report No. 197, 17 January 2013 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/kenya/kenya-s-2013-elections> (11 March 2019), p. 3.
95.   Elder et al, *Elections and violent conflict in Kenya*, p. 13; Sammy Gakero Gachigua, 'Fueling the violence: the print media in Kenya's volatile 2007 post-election violence', in Godwin Murunga, Duncan Okello and Anders Sjögren (eds) *Kenya: The struggle for constitutional order* (Zed Books, London, 2014), pp. 44–65; Galava, 'From watchdogs to hostages of peace'.

common complaint was that the media had 'gagged itself … for [the] sake of peace'.[96]

The peace narrative around Kenya's 2013 election also helped to justify a large-scale deployment of security forces in opposition strongholds during both the announcement of the election results and Supreme Court decision on the opposition's petition against the official result. It was also invoked to legitimate an unconstitutional ban on political meetings and demonstrations in the wake of the elections on the basis that they constituted a threat to peace. The latter followed the announcement of a shoot-on-sight policy for those causing 'unrest' by the head of police, and was accompanied by the use of force to quell dissent when it occurred—with six confirmed fatal police shootings during the demonstrations that followed the Supreme Court's validation of the presidential election on 30 March 2013.[97] This fostered unease over the 'tyranny of peace messaging', as many 'resigned themselves to the fate of the numbers game and to the apparent violence of proficiency and procedure'.[98] A similar scenario played out in 2017, when limited protests in opposition areas following the announcement of President Kenyatta's re-election on 11 August were met with a heavy-handed security response against both protestors and those perceived as potential protestors, resulting in the fatal shooting of at least 24 citizens in that weekend alone and the beating of many others. Further deaths occurred around the time of the fresh elections in October and subsequent announcement of the presidential election results.[99]

The situation in Ghana has been very different. There, a series of transfers of power have increased elite trust in the political system, while the low levels of violence around elections limit what the ruling party of the time can claim to be necessary in the interests of peace. At the same time, the emergence of more independent political institutions has reduced the executive's ability to manipulate the security forces for partisan ends.[100] Partly as a result, peace narratives have been vibrant but less problematic and have historically been pushed by politicians from across the partisan divide in very similar language. Today, it is relatively rare for candidates to be targeted, or for opposition supporters to be systematically beaten and harassed, on the basis that they constitute a threat to peace. Instead, demonstrating a strong personal commitment to peace and upholding the country's constitution has become part of the way in which elites seek to present themselves as good and patriotic leaders capable of building and developing the country.

96.   Interview, clergyman, Eldoret, 26 March 2013.
97.   Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis, 'Democracy and its discontents'.
98.   Chome, 'Democracy and the tyranny of numbers'.
99.   KNCHR, *Mirage at Dusk*; Patrick Mutahi & Mutuma Ruteere, 'Violence, security and the policing of Kenya's 2017 elections', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 13, 2 (2019), pp. 253–271.
100.   Arthur, 'Democratic consolidation in Ghana'.

However, even in Ghana, where these processes have been relatively benign, a preoccupation with peace has led to episodes in which evidence of electoral manipulation and the abuse of power have been overlooked. As one candidate in the 2016 elections in Cape Coast explained: 'most civil society organisations and institutions preach peace, peace … but when the Electoral Commission [does something that contravenes the rules and so threatens to undermine the quality of democracy] … these organisations … they all remain mute … just preaching peace'.[101] The implication: an emphasis on peace affects ideas of legitimate and illegitimate behaviour in ways that can help to limit political action and justify state violence. The risk that peace messaging will facilitate peaceocracy is particularly acute in countries with a recent history of violence and a strong authoritarian government, as under these conditions incumbents are both more likely to try, and to be able, to effectively abuse the idea of peace to strengthen their own position and close off the political space available to their opponents and critics.

Conclusion: guarding against peaceocracy

This article has argued that peace campaigns in sub-Saharan Africa result from five inter-related factors: the ideal of orderly elections and potential to instrumentalize peace encourages a diverse range of actors to invest their time and energy in such campaigns; a fear that elections will descend into violence guarantees a responsive public; the difficulty of addressing the underlying drivers of violence encourages an individualization of responsibility; and donor funding helps to ensure the pervasiveness of peace campaigns. In this way, our analysis has underscored how peace campaigns have been so durable precisely because they have been driven both from within and from without, are communicated through multiple channels including religious leaders and the mass media, and resonate with the concerns of individual citizens as well as with the self-interest of politicians. This is not to say that such narratives are present everywhere —there was less evidence of such a preoccupation in the most recent election in Namibia, for example—but especially where elections are keenly contested they are remarkably common.

There is much that is positive about this trend. Peace messaging appears to have contributed to lower levels of violence around elections in Kenya in 2013,[102] Nigeria in 2015,[103] and the peaceful transfer of power

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101. Interview, Political candidate, Cape Coast, Ghana, 28 November 2016.
102. Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis, 'Democracy and its discontents'.
103. Orji and Iwuamadi, 'Conflict mitigation in Nigeria's 2015 elections'.

in Ghana in 2016.[104] However, an emphasis on peace can be problematic, because it may strengthen the hand of authoritarian governments and so facilitate the emergence of a peaceocracy , in which the fear of conflict is used to prioritize stability and order to the detriment of democracy. The power of this discourse and attendant insistence on peace and reconciliation lie, at least in part, in the vivid memories of violence and instability that exist in many countries, and in the difficulty of contesting these narratives. It is difficult and often dangerous for individuals to publicly set themselves *against* peace, reconciliation and order; or *for* their opposites: violence, division and disorder. As a result, pro-democracy activists and engaged academics have often struggled to challenge the emergence of peaceocracy.

Significantly, most of the factors that we argue drive an emphasis on peace have been features of African politics for some time, and radical change seems unlikely any time soon. Given this, it is worrying that peace messaging has worked to silence dissent in countries such as Uganda and Kenya, where democracy is already relatively weak. In these competitive-authoritarian states—of which there are many on the continent—the promise of peace is interwoven with the threat of repression. Under these conditions, peace campaigns become less likely to genuinely resolve existing disputes and societal tensions, and more likely to store up further grievances and problems for the future. It is therefore imperative that academics, activists and domestic and international players re-think how best to promote peace without eroding democracy.

104.   Emmanuel Gymiah-Boadi, 'A peaceful turnover in Ghana', *Journal of Democracy* 12, 2 (2001), pp. 103–117.