

Voter Backlash and Elite Misperception

The Logic of Violence in Electoral Competition

STEVEN C. ROSENZWEIG

Boston University





CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi - 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009354882

DOI: 10.1017/9781009354905

© Steven C. Rosenzweig 2023

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2023

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Rosenzweig, Steven C., 1985- author.

TITLE: Voter backlash and elite misperception : the logic of violence in electoral
competition / Steven C. Rosenzweig.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge
University Press, 2023. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2022062006 | ISBN 9781009354882 (hardback) |
ISBN 9781009354905 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Voter intimidation - Kenya - Case studies. |
Political violence - Kenya - Case studies. | Political crimes and
offenses - Kenya - Case studies. | Presidents - Kenya - Election - Case studies.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC JC328.6 .R68 2023 |

DDC 362.88/931096762-dc23/eng/20230315

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022062006>

ISBN 978-1-009-35488-2 Hardback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>List of Tables</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Election-Related Violence	3
1.2 Existing Explanations	8
1.3 Violence as a Result of Elite Misperception	11
1.4 Empirical Strategy	14
1.5 Plan of the Book	18
2 Election-Related Violence in Kenya and around the World	21
2.1 Election-Related Violence around the World	22
2.1.1 Varieties of Violence in Electoral Competition	23
2.1.2 Motivations for Violence in Electoral Competition	28
2.2 Election-Related Violence in Kenya	30
2.2.1 A History of Election-Related Violence	31
2.2.2 Colonial and Early Independence Kenya and the Roots of Ethnic Conflict	33
2.2.3 Elections and Violence in the Multiparty Era	35
2.2.4 The Central Role of Political Elites	38
2.2.5 The Case of Kenya in Comparative Context	40
2.3 The Special Role of Ethnicity in Political Violence	41
3 Theorizing Election-Related Violence: Toward a Theory of Elite Misperception	44
3.1 Structural Explanations	46

3.2	Strategic, Microlevel Explanations	50
3.2.1	Violence as Coercion	50
3.2.2	Violence as Persuasion	56
3.3	Violence as a Result of Elite Misperception	58
4	Violence and Election Outcomes	75
4.1	Violence and Election Outcomes in Kenya in the 1990s	76
4.2	The 2007/08 Post-election Violence and 2013 Election Outcomes	80
4.3	Summary of Findings	84
5	How Violence Affects Voting: Coercion, Persuasion, and Backlash	86
5.1	Violence as Coercion	87
5.2	Violence, Persuasion, and Voter Backlash	91
5.2.1	The Effect of Violence on Vote Choice	93
5.2.2	Testing Potential Mechanisms of Persuasion	105
5.2.3	The Effects of Ethnic Rhetoric on Voting and Violence	109
5.2.4	Implications for Voting and Elections in the Real World	113
5.3	Summary of Findings	114
6	Elite Misperception and Election-Related Violence	115
6.1	Politicians' (Mis)Perceptions about the Effects of Violence and Ethnic Rhetoric on Vote Choice	115
6.1.1	Politicians' Perceptions about the Effect of Violence on Vote Choice	117
6.1.2	Politicians' Perceptions about the Effect of Ethnic Rhetoric on Vote Choice	119
6.2	Is It Actually "Misperception?" Addressing Alternative Explanations	121
6.3	Are Politicians' Misperceptions due to Lack of Information?	124
6.4	Summary of Findings	128
7	Voter Backlash, Elite Misperception, and Violence beyond Kenya	130
7.1	Elite Misperception, Founding Elections, and Cross-National Variation in Election-Related Violence	132
7.2	Case Studies of Elections and Violence beyond Kenya	135
7.2.1	Indonesia	137
7.2.2	Pakistan	140
7.2.3	Ghana	143
7.2.4	Nigeria	147
7.2.5	Brazil	151
8	Conclusion	156

Contents

ix

<i>Appendix A Sampling Strategy for the Survey in Nakuru, Kisumu, and Narok</i>	165
<i>Appendix B Supplementary Analyses</i>	167
<i>Appendix C Candidate Vignettes and Outcome Questions</i>	175
<i>Appendix D Politician Information Experiment Memo and Contact Scripts</i>	181
<i>References</i>	185
<i>Index</i>	199