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Extending contestation: opposition party strength and dissenting civil society engagement with autocratic elections

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ABSTRACT

How does the strength of political-party opposition affect government-critical civil society organisations (CSOs) engagement with autocratic elections? The question is particularly pertinent in the current context of deepening autocratization and repression of civic dissent. In this article, I explore the argument that strong opposition parties or coalitions facilitate CSOs' acts of dissent by offering robust dual electoral contestation: they credibly compete for power and forcefully politicise electoral regulation. Strong opposition parties thereby change the incentives for dissent and make civic activism more possible and meaningful. The article investigates this through a qualitative comparison of two cases of autocratisation: Kenya with a strong opposition, and Uganda with a weak one. The analysis largely supports the argument. However, the comparison also demonstrates that even with a strong opposition, autocratisation makes CSO dissent a dangerous activity that requires a careful balancing between rewards and risks.

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Introduction

During the current global wave of autocratisation (Hellmeier et al., 2021), many governments in electoral autocracies have consolidated control by constraining the scope of government-critical civic activism, exacerbating already difficult conditions for dissenting civil society engagement. However, political dynamics under electoral authoritarianism do not uniformly stabilise control. Contemporary autocrats certainly base their rule on coercion and co-option, but they also seek legitimacy (Gerschewski, 2013); elections are focal points of active contestations over both government and regime legitimacy. Autocratic stability thus varies over time. Furthermore, electoral dynamics differ across electoral autocracies. In some countries, electoral outcomes are predetermined in favour of the incumbent. In others, where the opposition has greater capacity to mobilise and coordinate support, elections are still not fully democratic, but they are more competitive and more forcefully challenged, sometimes also by civil society organisations (CSOs), and their results are more uncertain.

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Autocratic elections are typically doubly contested: in the competition for power itself, and in disputes over electoral rules. In such two-level contestations, party-based competition is often connected to efforts towards extra-parliamentary mobilisation. Governments and opposition parties seek to gain and sustain the support of various groups in society, including CSOs, as the composition of civil society engagement is important to establishing broad social acceptance or support of autocratic political rule or for fomenting protests against it. CSOs are thus asked by both sides to either support or deny the credibility of electoral regulations and outcomes, and groups respond with loyalty to the government, silence, or dissent.

How are the conditions for CSO dissent during autocratic elections affected by the strength of the political opposition? Previous research shows that CSOs' political activity in electoral autocracies is significantly shaped both by state coercion, co-optation, and legitimation (Buyse, 2018; Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Lorch, 2021; Toepler et al., 2020) and by relations of cooperation, competition, or conflict among themselves (Härdig, 2015; Sjögren, 2022; Sombatpoonsiri, 2020). But research also demonstrates that elections activate mobilisation, and that electoral autocracies exhibit significant differences in terms of the relevance of electoral competition, much due to the character of the political opposition (Bunce & Wolchik, 2011; Haggard & Kaufman, 2016; Schedler, 2013). Thus, we know that opposition strength has a great significance in shaping political contention and competition in electoral autocracies. However, research has not paid sufficient attention to whether and how opposition strength matters in critical CSO political engagement.

This omission is unfortunate in the current context of deepening executive authoritarian control and shrinking space for dissenting CSOs, during which democratic resistance, broadly understood, is more important but also more complicated. While there are reasons to assume that the strength of the political opposition is linked to the vigour of dissenting CSOs, this relationship is not inevitable. Where strong opposition parties can realistically challenge autocratic governments, the electoral stakes are higher, both enhancing the potential rewards of civil society dissent and increasing its risks. Civil society groups, even critical ones, may hesitate to engage openly with sensitive political matters, especially during phases of rapid autocratisation, when government determination to deal decisively with dissent is highly visible.

This article contributes to scholarship on democratic resistance in electoral autocracies with a qualitative comparative analysis of how the strength of political opposition affects the conditions for critical civil society engagement with autocratic elections in contexts of deepening autocratisation.¹ It explores the argument that a strong political opposition enhances critical CSO engagement with elections by extending the two-level political contestation of competing for power and disputing the electoral rules to social actors. A strong opposition that rests on sustained cohesion, organisational capacity, financial resources, and reliable nation-wide support is more likely to extend the scope and incentives for dissenting collective action. Parties or coalitions with the credible capacity to challenge the ruling party in competitive politics are also more able to shift the parameters of political contestation by forcefully politicising issues of electoral integrity and fraud and to mobilise and pursue their demands in relation to disputed electoral regulation.

Through their greater bargaining power, strong opposition parties are more likely to modify the effects of autocratic state control and to expand the opportunities and

incentives for CSOs critical of autocratic elections, to defend their scope for contention, and help them to sustain active dissent. Although strong opposition parties may have such direct impacts as to create socio-political electoral coalitions (Trejo, 2014), in many electoral autocracies where dissenting CSOs are relatively few and weak, the current shift towards deepened authoritarianism has made them even more vulnerable. This article therefore interrogates the politicising effects of opposition party strength on the incentive structures for CSOs rather than the presence or absence of manifest alliances between them.

In this article I examine this argument through a comparison of the conditions for government-critical CSO engagement with the regulation of general elections in two electoral autocracies during phases of increasing government repression of critical civil society: Kenya with a strong main opposition party, and Uganda with weak opposing parties. For each country, I analyse how the strength of the political opposition shaped the scope for dissenting political engagement of CSOs through campaigns for electoral reforms during one electoral cycle: 2013–2017 in Kenya and 2011–2016 in Uganda. Within-case analyses reveal the mechanisms at work, and I combine these with a cross-case comparison.

Civil society in electoral autocracies

The diverse political orientation and practices of actors in civil society – the realm of associational life between the state and the family – in electoral autocracies is extensively documented (Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Härdig, 2015; LeVan, 2011; Lewis, 2013; Lorch, 2021; Mietzner, 2021; Toepler et al., 2020). Research shows that overall, incentives structures ensure that the odds are stacked against critical engagement: government capacity to coerce and co-opt dissent is significant, and resistance is often demanding (Haggard & Kaufman, 2016; Reny, 2021; Schedler, 2013; Yabanci, 2019). Of late, attention has been paid to how the repression of government-critical civil society actors has intensified in many places (Buyse, 2018; Gilbert & Mohseni, 2018) as a common component of current processes of autocratisation (Hellmeier et al., 2021).

While conditions for dissenting engagement are difficult, research has nevertheless documented important variation in the composition of civil society mobilisation across different electoral autocracies. A major explanatory factor is the form and extent of state regulation. In some societies, CSOs are repressed and incorporated by governments and the scope for dissent is seriously limited (Buyse, 2018; Gilbert & Mohseni, 2018; Lorch, 2021; Mietzner, 2021; Reny, 2021; Sjögren, 2022; Yabanci, 2019). In other less repressive contexts, organisations and coalitions have played significant roles in challenging autocratic rule (Bunce & Wolchik, 2011) or preventing democratic backsliding (Laebens & Lührmann, 2021; Rakner, 2021; Tomini et al., 2022). In yet others, conditions for engagement are more equivocal, marked by considerable state control, yet containing openings for intermittent critical political agency (Giersdorf & Croissant, 2011; Härdig, 2015; LeVan, 2011; Lewis, 2013; Mietzner, 2021; Toepler et al., 2020).

Electoral authoritarian regimes thus differ. The large number of countries so categorised vary significantly in terms of state control and electoral competitiveness to the extent that they have been classified as hegemonic versus competitive electoral autocracies, based primarily on the degree of ruling party electoral dominance and the level of

institutional uncertainty (Bernhard, Edgell, et al., 2020; Donno, 2013; Morse, 2015; Roessler & Howard, 2009; Schedler, 2013). The scope for political engagement is also subject to more specific variation within countries. Research demonstrates that elections are focal points that introduce more intense dynamics to underlying conditions by generating uncertainty and activating mobilisation (Beaulieu, 2014; Bunce & Wolchik, 2011; Haggard & Kaufman, 2016; LeBas, 2011; Roessler & Howard, 2009; Schedler, 2013; Trejo, 2014).

An intuitively obvious and well-documented feature of and reason for the difference between hegemonic and competitive electoral authoritarianism is the strength of the political opposition, especially when mobilising around elections. Strong opposition parties or coalitions can more effectively contest elections and challenge the frameworks in which they are conducted (Bernhard, Edgell, et al., 2020; Bunce & Wolchik, 2011; Donno, 2013; Haggard & Kaufman, 2016; LeBas, 2011; Ong, 2018; Schedler, 2013). These studies complement the explanatory role of state regulation with a focus on the opportunities and resources available to opposition coalitions. However, while there are theoretical reasons to expect connections between the strength of the political-party opposition and critical civil society engagement, research does not yet address the matter specifically.

This article probes the argument that opposition party strength counters state repression and co-optation and creates incentive structures for CSOs. The study builds on and connects the above-mentioned insights about the impact of state regulation on interest group mobilisation and the general importance of opposition strength for electoral competition, and it contributes to existing scholarship by a comparative analysis of the mechanisms that relate opposition strength to the scope of civil society activism.

Opposition party strength and civil society engagement with autocratic elections

In this article, the ability of strong opposition parties or coalitions to facilitate government-critical civil society activism is theorised in terms of specific mechanisms. A strong opposition can offer robust dual electoral contestation by credibly competing for power and forcefully politicising electoral regulations. Forceful politicisation in turn affects incentive structures for dissenting engagement and makes civic activism more possible and meaningful.

The theoretical argument centres on incentive structures for collective action in electoral autocracies. It begins with the proposition that strong opposition parties or coalitions with sustained cohesion, organisational capacity, financial resources, and reliable national reach and support are better equipped than weak ones to resolve coordination and collective action problems and to counter government demobilisation efforts. A strong opposition raises the costs of repression, restricts the autocratic regime's scope for co-optation, and is better equipped to counter the effects of autocratic assault (Donno, 2013; Roessler & Howard, 2009).² A significant feature of autocratic elections that reinforces their roles as focal points for mobilisation is that they are nested games: they involve simultaneous and interacting competition for votes and contestation over rules (LeBas, 2011; Schedler, 2013). Strong opposition parties or coalitions that make

credible claims to being electorally viable are more able to challenge the rules that underpin the political regime (Lindberg, 2009; Schedler, 2013).

The argument posits that the ability of the opposition to shift the parameters of contestation at the metagame level of institutional regulation of elections is a key dimension of the forceful politicisation of electoral regulation. It further holds that these features of party-political dynamics can be expected to spill over into the realm of associational life. Since regulatory frameworks are biased in favour of incumbents, opposition parties need to engage governments at both levels of the nested game and in various political arenas, including extra-parliamentary ones, and they can be expected to try to mobilise broad support for doing so (Trejo, 2014). Correspondingly, government-critical CSOs are also in need of allies. An opposition party with a credible capacity to compete for power and to challenge the rules changes CSOs' incentives for strategic electoral engagement.

A strong opposition is more likely to modify the effects of autocratic state control of dissent in ways that indirectly insulate and encourage government-critical CSOs. Forceful politicisation by way of agenda-setting and demand-making makes CSO engagement more possible and meaningful than in contexts where the chances of removing the incumbent appear small (Trejo, 2014). When the opposition is successful in raising, framing, and giving new meaning and salience to issues of electoral integrity, the opportunities and the motivation for CSOs to voice their grievances are amplified, which can make governments and more cautious civil society actors take opposition demands more seriously and adapt to them.

Weak opposition parties, on the other hand, with challenges to cohesion, limited organisational capacity, restricted financial resources, and uneven geographical reach, face profound coordination and collective action problems that render effective politicisation of electoral integrity through agenda-setting and demand-making difficult. The opportunities, inducements, and capacities of government-critical CSOs to engage are limited. Weak opposition parties facilitate government divide and rule strategies and limit the scope for coalitions between and among opposition parties and critical CSOs (Sjögren, 2022). In such contexts deepening autocratisation shifts the balance and relations among civil society groups. Organisations previously critical of the government expect or face hardships and they adapt, while pro-government organisations emerge and thrive.

Occasionally, links between opposition parties and CSOs are direct and manifest, as when electoral coalitions involve coordinated opposition parties and strong civil society movements with mass mobilisation capacity (Sato & Wahman, 2019; Trejo, 2014). However, in many electoral autocracies, government-critical CSOs are relatively few, small, and evidently vulnerable to autocratic onslaughts, as in the cases examined here. In such contexts, open alliances between opposition parties and civil society groups are complicated. Parties and CSOs often operate according to different logics of strategy and objectives, sometimes to the point of relations marked by mutual suspicion (Sishuwa, 2020; Trejo, 2014). Cooperation also comes with risks and dilemmas: many CSOs cannot afford to be seen as political; they hesitate to declare partisan support at the subgame level of electoral politics and prefer to address overarching issues of electoral regulation. Furthermore, heightened electoral competitiveness through a strong opposition increases not only the possible rewards of civil society dissent but also the potential risks. The argument therefore assumes that the effects of opposition party strength on critical CSO engagement are to change incentive structures rather than to create open

electoral alliances. This tension also anticipates more subtle than clear-cut and categorical differences between the cases studied here.

Methodological approach

I explore the theoretical argument through a comparison of Kenya and Uganda, two countries that for the period under study exhibited features of similarity important to the inquiry. Following the return of multi-party politics to Kenya in 1991 and Uganda in 2005, elections in both countries have almost always been flawed and disputed, and opposition parties and coalitions have consistently mobilised around demands for electoral integrity. Both countries were electoral autocracies throughout the previous decade (Alizada et al., 2021, p. 31), and have arguably been so for longer than that. After having won elections (in 2011 in Uganda and in 2013 in Kenya) that were strongly refuted by the opposition, both governments developed increasingly autocratic tendencies, including deepening intolerance of political dissent in general and intensified hostility and intimidation towards challenging CSOs.

Kenyan politics have sometimes been characterised by greater openness, less repressive exercise of executive power, and a stronger civil society than in Uganda (Okuku, 2003). However, the defining features of the electoral cycles under study illustrate convergence in terms of autocratic government control and corresponding assaults on evermore vulnerable activist CSOs. This was mainly due to rapid autocratisation in Kenya, as manifest in the introduction of restrictive legislation to regulate media (Gichohi & Arriola, 2023), address security threats (Lind et al., 2017), and threaten dissenting CSOs (Berger-Kern et al., 2021; Cheeseman & Dodsworth, 2023). Furthermore, the structure of government-confronting civil societies in the two countries has gradually become more similar, as opposed to the 1990s, when important sections of Kenyan faith-based organisations (FBOs) challenged the government. In both Kenya and Uganda, dissenting civil society activity is confined to a relatively small number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that lack mass mobilisation capacity. An outstanding difference between the countries is however that the Kenyan political opposition is strong while the Ugandan is weak, as I elaborate later.

I explore the theoretical argument through within-case analyses and a cross-case comparison of the two cases. As the argument points to nuances of the scope for government-critical civic engagement in hard times, careful within-case analyses are essential for tracking variation over time to explore the proposed mechanisms. Assessments of whether opposition party strength extends the scope for government-challenging collective action by civil society requires analytical specifications. Combining propositions from previous literature (Arriola, 2012; Bernhard, Hicken, et al., 2020; LeBas, 2011), the article defines opposition party or coalition strength in terms of their degrees of sustained cohesion, organisational capacity, financial resources, and reliable nation-wide reach and support. This may translate into electoral outcomes (Donno, 2013), but in view of the uncertain validity of poll results in electoral autocracies, I treat outcome as a complementary indicator of party strength rather than a criterion.

Kenya's main opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), and the subsequent coalitions revolving around it, the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) (2013–17), and the National Super Alliance (NASA) (2017–18) are strong in terms of all the

dimensions above, and Uganda's main opposition party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) is weak. In Kenya, ODM has been intact and based on nation-wide membership and leadership since 2005: the subsequent coalitions it has spearheaded have held together during the respective elections and have extended its geographical presence; ODM and its coalitions have sufficient economic resources to run strong campaigns; and in terms of election results, ODM, CORD, and NASA all performed well in three subsequent general elections up to 2017 and have reliable strongholds across the country. ODM's presidential candidate, Raila Odinga, received more than 40 per cent of the votes in all three of those elections, and the opposition coalitions have controlled about 40 per cent of the parliamentary seats during that time. In Uganda, FDC and other opposition parties suffer a shortage of financial and organisational resources, are internally divided and unable to sustain coalitions, and are limited in geographical reach (Beardsworth, 2018; Bertrand, 2020). Since 2006, they have performed poorly in elections, holding only between 10 and 15 per cent of the parliamentary seats between them, although the FDC's presidential candidate, Kizza Besigye, however performed better.

The argument thus proposes that a strong opposition through forceful politicisation of electoral regulation changes the incentive structure for government-challenging collective action in civil society and makes the latter more likely.³ Forceful politicisation is defined as the capacity to set, widen, or transform the agenda on issues of electoral regulation, and beyond that, to forcing the government to negotiate and make concessions. This extends the opportunities and raises the incentives for CSOs by making their active dissent more possible and meaningful. Critical civil society engagement with elections, finally, is defined as CSOs articulating problems with electoral regulations, raising demands for change, and, importantly, taking daring and government-challenging actions to promote these demands. This is likely to be expressed as groups advancing new and more ambitious issues or campaigning for old ones in more extensive or intensive ways, or in additional arenas.

This analysis is based both on secondary sources and primary data collected during fieldwork. The secondary sources consist of a rich academic literature on both countries, media material, and civil society documents and reports. The fieldwork data comprises more than 40 interviews with politicians, civil society representatives, academics, political analysts, and journalists that I conducted in Uganda (21 in 2018) and in Kenya (24 in 2019). Interviews were conducted to capture actors' perspectives as well as the nuances of the processes under study, both of which are central for exploring the research question. Interviewees were strategically selected: they had key functions and experiences and could speak authoritatively about the topic. The selection of relevant organisations and interviewees was facilitated by my years of fieldwork on similar issues in both countries. The interviews were conducted in English. They normally lasted about an hour and centred on key aspects of electoral regulation, opposition strength, and civil society engagement. For safety and ethical reasons, the interviewees remain anonymous.

The argument is explored through within-case analyses followed by a cross-case comparison. Each case analysis begins with a brief background, followed by an in-depth exploration of changes in opposition strength and capacity for politicisation during the electoral cycle and corresponding changes in critical civil society engagement. As the

conditions for forceful politicisation shifted with changing circumstances and aims, the within-case analyses are divided into different phases, focusing on campaigns for electoral reform, on the elections themselves, and on the post-election period.

Kenya: a strong opposition and politicised contestation by 'evil society'

Almost all of Kenya's general elections following the return of multi-party politics in 1991 have been controversial. In 1992 and 1997, elections were marred by extensive administrative malpractice and violence orchestrated by the Kenya African National Union (KANU) government (Rutten et al., 2001; Throup & Hornsby, 1998). The 2002 elections were the exception, being peaceful and producing a new government after a united opposition defeated KANU in the presidential and parliamentary elections (Oyugi et al., 2003). The 2007 elections took Kenya to the brink. The announcement that the incumbent Mwai Kibaki had been elected president triggered protests and large-scale violence (Long, 2020). The main opposition party, ODM, who with the support of affiliates had won the parliamentary majority, claimed electoral fraud, as did a vocal civil society coalition, Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice (KPTJ) (Kanyinga, 2011).

After two months of violence and international mediation, a power-sharing formula was agreed, generating a grand coalition government of national unity mandated to undertake constitutional and institutional reforms. These reforms included changes to the electoral framework, eventually producing a new electoral management body, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). The combination of unanimous support for these institutional changes and a strong peace narrative stressing the importance of avoiding violence at all costs (Odote, 2020) resulted in limited politicisation of electoral integrity ahead of the 2013 general elections. The main exception was voiced by critical civil society groups linked to KPTJ, who opposed the candidacy of Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, accused of aiding crimes against humanity and on trial in the International Criminal Court (Long, 2020). On different sides during the 2007–2008 conflict, Kenyatta and Ruto joined forces in 2013 as the Jubilee Alliance. After another controversial vote tallying process, the IEBC declared Kenyatta elected president with Ruto as his Deputy, defeating Raila Odinga of ODM. Odinga and the CSO African Centre for Open Governance (AfriCOG) petitioned the Supreme Court to overturn the result, but they were denied (Odote, 2020).

Opposition mobilisation and civil society engagement around electoral integrity, 2013–2017

How did the strength of the opposition shape the incentive structure for critical civil society engagement with elections? During the 2013–2017 election cycle, this shifted over phases. After a first year of passivity, a gradually more intense opposition-led campaign for electoral reforms eventually forced the government into concessions and increasingly invigorated government-critical sections of civil society. During the early stages, CSOs engaged by sharing ideas with the opposition. As the elections approached, they also confronted the government with reform demands similar to those of the opposition. Encouraged by the opposition, they pursued legal actions to advance these aims. In addition, the strength of the opposition campaign forced more cautious and pro-

establishment sections of civil society, such as FBOs and business groups, to plead with the government to negotiate. When the government refused to meet its demands for electoral reforms, the opposition intensified its agitation and critical civil society engagement deepened.

The 2013 elections turned CORD, an alliance within which ODM was by far the largest party, into a numerically strong opposition with over 40 percent of the seats in both chambers of parliament, but also made it politically wounded by the Supreme Court ruling and passive during the first year after the elections. Critical CSOs, revolving around KPTJ and including AfriCOG, were targeted by the Jubilee government for having first supported the ICC trials of Kenyatta and Ruto and then filing a petition against the presidential election result. They were labelled ‘evil society’ by online activists affiliated to Jubilee (Hansen & Sriram, 2015, p. 422), and the government sought to introduce repressive NGO legislation, an attempt fended off by civil society campaigning and opposition resistance in parliament (Berger-Kern et al., 2021; Cheeseman & Dodsworth, 2023).⁴ Due to the opposition’s relative inaction and government intimidation of critical civil society, politicisation of electoral integrity and reform was limited during the Jubilee government’s first year.

Campaigning for electoral reforms

The following years, however, saw continuous strengthening of the opposition and heightened politicisation of electoral integrity. This mainly took place through extra-parliamentary mobilisation. In mid-2014, CORD held a series of mass rallies where it presented grievances and demands, including calls for electoral reforms and a national dialogue. The government tried, but failed, to stop the rallies, and it rejected the opposition’s demands (Daily Nation, 2014, June 22). CORD then intensified its politicisation of electoral reforms by launching the *Okoa Kenya* (Save Kenya) campaign with meetings across the country, aiming for a referendum on proposals for a restructured electoral management body and process (Daily Nation, 2015, January 31). In March 2016, however, the IEBC declared that the number of collected signatures backing the Okoa proposal fell short of the required one million, thus blocking the referendum.

Although opposition demands during this period did not lead to negotiations or concessions from the government and the referendum proposal was stopped in its tracks, the Okoa campaign produced a change by placing electoral integrity at the centre of contestation:

The struggle over the control over the electoral agency became a very real political contest [...] The failure [of the IEBC] to succeed at creating a referendum meant that you had one side that was for them and one side that was against them [...] the evolution of events had destroyed any semblance of pretence at neutrality that you would like to have in the electoral management body. (Interview NGO-leader, Nairobi March 1, 2019).

This also affected government-critical CSOs. Two experiences from the 2013 elections had forced these to reconsider their election-related work (interviews, NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019; NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 19, 2019). The problems with the elections underscored the limits to safeguarding democracy by institutional reforms, and the aftermath made it evident that the new government was intent on punishing them for petitioning the Supreme Court. Following the Supreme Court

ruling, groups around KPTJ worked on proposals for electoral reforms and began to argue for a more politically activist line of engagement with elections. At that time, the opposition was quiet, leaving dissenting civil society alone and weak (interviews, NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019; NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 22, 2019): 'They neither had the voice nor the muscle to push for reforms' (interview, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 22, 2019).

Opposition-led politicisation through the Okoa Kenya campaign changed the incentive structures and engagement of government-critical CSOs. 'It's [when the opposition] started pushing for reforms [...] that now civil society also joined in' (interview, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 22, 2019). The opposition's vocal demands for electoral reform converged with and gave resonance to the written proposals articulated by this segment (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2015) – 'the militant wing of civil society, the one that decided now to actually aggressively address the same issues that CORD was agitating' (interview, NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019). Forceful opposition politicisation created the opportunity for CSOs to link their demands to a like-minded political entity with mass mobilisation capacity, and 'a good number of civil society actors agreed [...] to begin to work with the opposition' (interview, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 22, 2019). Early 2016, CSO-leaders met the opposition leadership, who supported the civil society idea of structured dialogue to put pressure on the government but argued that this would need to be backed up by street action (interview, NGO leader, February 18, 2019). At this stage, however, the convergence of thoughts mainly took the shape of overlapping initiatives and recurring but informal meetings and sharing of ideas (interviews, academic, Nairobi, February 15, 2019; NGO leader, Nairobi, February 18, 2019). Tactical considerations were seen as necessary given the risks of openly embracing the opposition (interviews, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 22, 2019; opposition politician, Nairobi, February 28, 2019).

The stalled referendum made the opposition change tack and set off a phase of even more intensified politicisation. In April 2016, CORD initiated street protests to remove the IECB. These spread across the country and were met by repressive policing, which in turn created bad publicity that put the government on the defensive. The escalated conflict saw business, religious leaders, and diplomats trying to convince the government to concede to demands for a new commission (The Standard, 2016, May 28), which it did in July. New electoral laws were negotiated, but the government's backtracking on some of these in late 2016 made the period up the August 2017 elections tense; throughout, the opposition continued to contest different parts of the electoral framework (Pommerolle, 2020).

The opposition was thus strong enough to make the government negotiate and concede, but it could not prevent the ruling party from renegeing on some of the agreements. Overall, however, in the process of contesting the rules the opposition managed to profoundly politicise electoral integrity. The street protests shifted the parameters of contestation and transformed conditions for civil society engagement: 'the demonstrations changed the dynamics' (interview, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 19, 2019). In line with the theoretical argument, when the opposition confronted the IECB and the government on the streets, activist CSOs 'became much more militant in their demands' (interview, NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019), also calling for the resignation of the IECB commissioners. 'It was when ODM came up and started calling for street protests [...] that the

agenda of reforms started gathering momentum' (interview, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 22, 2019).

The demonstrations also pushed other sections of civil society, such as business associations and FBOs who had until then been government-friendly or cautiously neutral, to relate to opposition demands and persuade the government to do the same (interviews FBO leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019; FBO leader, Nairobi February 18, 2019; FBO leader, Nairobi, February 20, 2019; FBO leader, Nairobi, February 21, 2019; opposition politician, Nairobi, February 28, 2019; *The Standard*, 2016, 28 May). When the opposition launched the Okoa campaign, 'religious leaders were not sold on the idea of electoral reforms' (interview, FBO leader, February 18, 2019). But as agitation grew, 'the church became concerned' (interview, FBO leader, February 12, 2019), appealed to the government, and took upon itself the role of mediator. 'In 2016, we had no choice but to focus on electoral issues.' (Interview, FBO leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019). Likewise, business association members suffered economic losses from recurring demonstrations, and 'when they feel the pinch, we are sure that they talk to their friends [in the government] and say, "let's talk to these people"' (interview, ODM politician, February 28, 2019). As a result of the demonstrations, by mid-2016 the opposition and both activist and more cautious sections of civil society were in full unity about the need to replace the IEBC commissioners.

The calls within civil society to pursue a more forceful activist line on elections had resulted in the coming together of KPTJ and like-minded groups as the coalition *Kura Yangu Sauti Yangu* (KYSY); Kiswahili for 'my vote my voice'. As elections approached and lines were drawn, remaining concerns over election management led to close convergence between an increasingly vocal KYSY and the opposition (in January 2017 renamed NASA), and a deepening divide put NASA and KYSY against the government and the IEBC (interviews, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019; NGO leader, Nairobi, February 25, 2019; NGO leader, Nairobi, March 1, 2019). During 2017, both the opposition and KYSY repeatedly raised concerns about electoral manipulation and engaged in legal struggles to clarify and challenge most aspects of the electoral process to enforce electoral integrity (Kanyinga & Odote, 2019; Pommerolle, 2020). The two sides met and shared ideas, with KYSY's main contribution that of providing intellectual and legal clarity to issues (interviews NGO leader, Nairobi, February 14, 2019; NGO leader, Nairobi, February 19, 2019; opposition politician, Nairobi, February 28, 2019). This cooperation did not, however, extend into an open coalition; the problems of partisan endorsement outweighed the potential advantages (interview, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 22, 2019).

Elections and after

The presidential election was bitterly contested. The opposition refused to accept the IEBC's declaration of Kenyatta as winner and filed a petition with the Supreme Court, which surprisingly declared the election null and void due to irregularities and illegalities. Following the ruling, a fierce contest erupted over key public institutions. NASA advanced what it termed irreducible minimum demands for reforms to be enacted before new elections could be held, among them a complete overhaul of the IEBC. The government attacked the Supreme Court, accusing it of conspiring with the opposition and dissenting CSOs. When the fresh presidential election was held in October it was boycotted by the opposition, who stepped up a resistance campaign based on civil disobedience, culminating in a mock swearing-in of Odinga as 'the people's president' in front of a massive crowd

in Uhuru Park, Nairobi, in January 2018 (Pommerolle, 2020). Defeated in the electoral arena, NASA demonstrated strength by other means; the government could rule the opposition-favouring parts of Kenya, but it could not govern them. Pressure from the opposition and external actors eventually resulted in ‘the handshake’ between Odinga and Kenyatta in March 2018 and a political pact between them.

Throughout 2017, electoral regulation was intensely politicised. Both the opposition and the government developed narratives and mobilised support around electoral justice and fraud, and the high stakes and polarised positions generated deep and wide partisan cleavages. Dissenting civil society had echoed the political opposition’s demands, and the elections and post-election period were tumultuous for the KYSY. The day after the election, the alliance held a press conference to call attention to serious problems with the reported results. Later, it contributed substantially to the opposition petition through the sharing of evidence collected by its own election observers (interviews, NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 20, 2019; NGO-leader, Nairobi, February 25, 2019). Furthermore, the Supreme Court’s nullification rested significantly on a prior high-profile court case filed by KYSY-affiliated individuals with the aim to prevent previously common manipulation during tallying and transmission from reoccurring; the ruling in that case confirmed that declared electoral results at the constituency level are final (Kanyinga & Odote, 2019; Pommerolle, 2020).

Following the nullification, KYSY retained a high profile. It took to the streets to argue for prosecution of IEBC commissioners (The Star, 2017, September 13) and filed an unsuccessful petition with the Supreme Court to postpone the new elections. Meanwhile the opposition boycotted the October election, and KYSY monitored it and filed a petition to the Supreme Court, which was dismissed (interview, NGO leader, Nairobi, February 25, 2019). Such activist dissent came at a cost. Just after the August election, the government sought to close down AfriCOG and the Kenya Human Rights Commission, two organisations affiliated with the KYSY, and after the October election it tried to do the same to KYSY and its extended variant set up in October 2017, We the People, which also included trade unions. However, both attempts were fended off in following legal petitions. The agreement between Kenyatta and Odinga provided relief to activist civil society under pressure.

Uganda: a weak opposition and constrained civil society engagement

Ever since Kizza Besigye’s presidential candidacy in 2001 posed the first serious challenge to president Museveni, presidential election cycles have followed a recurring pattern of flawed management, condemnation, and denied demands for reforms. Firm executive partisan control of the electoral process, of the instruments of coercive and administrative state power, and indirectly of parliament and the judiciary, have created a structurally cemented uneven playing field. The no-party 2001 elections and the multi-party 2006 and 2011 elections were all characterised by state-sanctioned violence, irregular use of public resources, and administrative malpractice deployed to ensure victory for Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, and all were disputed by the opposition (Khisra, 2019; Sjögren, 2018). In 2001 and 2006, Besigye filed petitions to the Supreme Court, which on both occasions confirmed violations of the constitution and electoral laws, but nevertheless ruled against the petitioners (Murison, 2013).

Before the 2006 elections, a temporarily united political opposition, drawing on the experiences of the 2001 elections, demanded electoral reforms focused on an independent electoral management body and the transformation of military and security institutions (Daily Monitor, 2005, September 9). This demand was dismissed by the government. Demands were extended and reiterated by the opposition and backed by several CSOs before the 2011 elections, but apart from minor administrative amendments they were not considered (Makara, 2014). Supreme Court rulings and election observation reports had spelled out the shortcomings of Uganda's electoral management system along with recommendations on how to address them. While this provided the opposition with arguments, fragmentation and weakness prevented it from forcefully pushing for the implementation of the demands. Between 2006 and 2011, the five opposition parties controlled only 56 of 319 seats in parliament; of these, the major opposition party FDC had 37 seats. Attempts to create electoral coalitions collapsed ahead of both the 2006 and the 2011 elections, and most of the opposition parties suffered from internal factionalism (Beardsworth, 2018; Bertrand, 2020). Furthermore, all opposition parties had limited financial and organisational resources (Tangri & Mwenda, 2010).

Opposition mobilisation and civil society engagement around electoral integrity, 2011–2016

How did the strength of the opposition influence the incentive structure for critical civil society engagement with elections? During the 2011–2016 election cycle, this influence shifted over phases. For as long as a united opposition and large sections of civil society joined forces in a campaign for free and fair elections, Uganda witnessed unprecedented mobilisation around electoral integrity. However, the issue was politicised only in the sense of being brought onto the agenda; the opposition was too weak to make the government negotiate, let alone concede. When the government ignored demands for reforms, the opposition was unable to insist, and critical civil society engagement faded.

Opposition weakness in parliament was reinforced by the 2011 elections, leaving the combined opposition parties with a mere 58 seats in the extended parliament of 375 members, with FDC still the largest with 34 seats. Unlike after past elections, the opposition did not file a petition, but electoral grievances would still find an outlet. The most significant was *Walk to Work*, a protest march initiated by Besigye to target the rising cost of living. While it did not explicitly address the elections, Besigye's defiant mode of engagement expressed electoral and other forms of political discontent to the effect that in a broad sense, the 'election [was] not contested in court. It [was] contested on the streets of Kampala' (interview, journalist, Kampala, September 25, 2018). The marches mobilised huge crowds and brought together the opposition and activist sections of civil society, but they were brutally repressed by security agencies and subsequently subsided (Golooba-Mutebi & Sjögren, 2017; Makara, 2014).

While *Walk to Work* suggested new modes of political activism and pointed to potential mobilisation around electoral reforms ahead of 2016 (Helle & Rakner, 2014; Nassali, 2017), the opposition's underlying weaknesses remained: parties were hampered by limited financial resources, weak organisational capacity, uneven geographical outreach, and internal divisions. Moreover, state intervention in response to protests and unrest further undercut the scope for oppositional extra-parliamentary mobilisation. In 2013,

parliament passed a government proposal to restrict public gatherings, signed into law as the Public Order Management Act (Kagoro, 2016).⁵ The new law contributed significantly to reactivating organisation for electoral reforms (Nassali, 2017, p. 287). The restrictions it imposed on campaigning, together with the realisation that the government would not voluntarily embark upon electoral reforms, set off parallel and eventually converging initiatives among opposition parties and CSOs (interviews NGO leader, Kampala, September 17, 2018; NGO leader, Kampala, September 18, 2018; journalist, Kampala, September 25, 2018).

Campaigning for electoral reforms

The campaign for Free and Fair Elections (FFE) was launched in the beginning of 2014, spearheaded by the Uganda National NGO Forum and involving both CSOs and political parties, including the NRM along with the opposition. Over eight months the FFE campaign built on a participatory approach and collected citizen opinions on elections from across the country. The campaign concluded with a national delegates' conference in Kampala – notable for the absence of the NRM – during which the document *Citizens' Compact for Free and Fair Elections* was finalised and presented.

The FFE contained new features, such as cooperation between CSOs and political parties, and it built on community mobilisation rather than Kampala-based lobbying and boardroom meetings (interviews journalist, Kampala, September 17, 2018; NGO leader, September 18, 2018; Law Society leader, Kampala, September 2018; Nassali, 2017). CSOs took the lead, but 'around 2014, we thought we needed to link this process with the political actors [...] we thought this is more of a political process than a civic organising process' (interview NGO leader, Kampala, 1 September, 2018); the guiding idea was that 'if you build this strong coalition, you can create the pressure that make reforms inevitable' (interview NGO leader, Kampala, 1 September, 2018).

The campaign was intended to combine the intellectual capacity of NGOs and the mobilisation capacity of political parties. However, while the campaign brought about rare, if temporary and fragile, unity among opposition parties and CSOs, and it politicised electoral reform by placing the issue high on the agenda, it also illustrates the limitations of a weak and divided opposition to address coordination and collective action problems. Mutual suspicion remained between and CSOs and politicians, with the latter competing for attention, reputation, and funding (interviews NGO leader, Kampala, September 21, 2018; academic, Kampala, October 1, 2018; NGO leader, Kampala, October 3, 2018). Opposition weakness also created limits to participation and politicisation. Large sections of the FBOs succumbed to pressure from the government and steered clear of the FFE campaign (The Observer, 2014, June 1; interview FBO leader, Kampala, September 24, 2018), and the government was never pushed to seriously consider or negotiate the demands, let alone make concessions.

The national convention turned out to be the climax of the FFE campaign. The *Citizens' Compact* was submitted to the speaker of parliament and was briefly referred to during debates, but all its suggestions, just like the ones tabled separately by the opposition, were ignored in April 2015 when the government presented its bill recommending constitutional change, which contained only one electoral reform: to rename the EC as the Independent Electoral Commission (Nassali, 2017). 'Parliament ignored all substantive issues (interview NGO leader, Kampala, October 4, 2018).

When it became evident that the government would ignore the FFE proposals, the campaign quickly subsided, demonstrating the limiting effects of oppositional weakness on politicisation and CSO activism. ‘There was that thinking [to organise street protests]. But part of the major weakness was that we have a pretty small, pretty weak opposition, which means that government can easily ignore it and easily shift attention to [target] civil society’ (interview journalist, Kampala, September 24, 2018). In addition, ‘[t]he structure of the civil society [working on electoral issues] was itself problematic’ (interview FBO leader, Kampala, September 26, 2018), was made up of NGOs who lacked mass mobilisation capacity (interview NGO leader, Kampala, September 21, 2018). ‘Yes, NGOs have been involved, but they don’t resonate’ (interview opposition politician, Kampala, October 2, 2018).

Elections and after

Opposition weaknesses continued to undercut efforts towards coordinated and sustained mobilisation. With less than a year to the 2016 elections, opposition parties set aside demands for reforms and turned their attention to forming a coalition, The Democratic Alliance (TDA). The coalition fell apart, however, after only a few months due to infighting over selecting a presidential candidate. Most of its constituent parties were also internally divided, and some defected to the government side (Beardsworth, 2018). Campaigns were characterised by extensive state-sanctioned violence and irregular executive use of state resources (Abrahamsen & Bareebe, 2016; Sjögren, 2018). Museveni won the presidential election with 60 per cent of the votes against Besigye’s 35, and the opposition captured just 57 parliamentary seats out of 426.

Without the continued presence of the opposition, the CSOs at the core of the FFE campaign diverged before the elections. Some individuals joined the TDA, while others planned to form a connected civil society counterpart to TDA, The Democratic Front, and to take the *Citizens’ Compact* back to the communities for renewed mobilisation. This did not happen. One reason was the disconnect between parties and CSO activists: ‘the relationship between civil society and politicians [in FFE] was not as rosy as it should have been’ (interview, NGO leader, Kampala, October 3, 2018). Another was lack of funding: ‘the donors either retreated or withdrew into their project mode’ (interview NGO leader, Kampala, September 21, 2018). A third reason was political pressure and self-censorship, making some organisations more careful and others to withdraw from election-related work altogether. ‘There was a bit of political tension and anxiety with some of our civil society leaders feeling that “Oh, this may bring us trouble”’ (interview NGO leader, Kampala, October 1, 2018). Restrictive NGO legislation, signed into law just before the elections (Cheeseman & Dodsworth, 2023, p. 629), added to this caution.

While Besigye’s confrontational approach captured the popular imagination during the campaigns, it was too risky for CSOs to be seen supporting him (interview NGO leader, Kampala, October 1, 2018). The ones who were still active with electoral work turned to civic education and election monitoring (Sjögren, 2022). And while Besigye proclaimed a defiance campaign after the election and circulated a video where he was sworn in as the people’s president, the combination of state repression (including keeping Besigye in house arrest for more than a month after the elections), and the weakness and reluctance of the rest of the opposition seriously limited the scope for critical civil society engagement.

Explaining divergent critical civil society engagement with elections

This article investigates how the strength of the political opposition affects critical civil society engagement with autocratic elections. The link is theorised in terms of specific mechanisms. A strong opposition can forcefully contest elections at two levels: direct electoral competition for power and the politicisation of electoral regulations. Forceful contestation through agenda-setting and demand-making extends the opportunities and raises the incentives for government-critical CSOs by making dissent more possible and meaningful. This in turn makes activist CSOs more prone to articulate problems with electoral regulation and demand changes to these problems through daring and government-challenging action. The within-case analyses explore whether and how these mechanisms worked in Kenya and Uganda. In both countries, activist CSOs were frustrated with mismanaged elections. They also increasingly became targets of autocratising governments. For those reasons, they decided to engage with elections in a more openly political way. However, the scope for doing so differed between the countries. This section considers the relevance of the theoretical argument by comparing the cases to bring out important differences related to opposition strength.

Starting with the *electoral reform campaign phase*, the united and strong Kenyan opposition began its agitation for electoral reforms by holding country-wide mass rallies and political meetings to mobilise support for a referendum. This campaign invigorated a section of civil society that had presented proposals for reforms along the same lines and facilitated a sharing of strategy and ideas. In Uganda, the FFE campaign was led by CSOs who, joined by weak political parties, mobilised around political issues in a way that was unprecedented for Uganda and illustrates that opposition strength is not a necessary requisite for civil society mobilisation. However, while there was a formal similarity between the two campaigns – and CSOs had a relatively more prominent role in the Ugandan campaign – they differed in substance. The Okoa campaign in Kenya, which directly challenged the government and demanded the immediate reconstitution of the electoral management body, was far more confrontational than the FFE campaign in Uganda, which was consultative and consensus-seeking in character and included the participation of the ruling party.

The effects of opposition strength on forceful politicisation and civil society engagement are evident in the events following the disruption of the two campaigns. In Kenya, the blocked referendum generated intensified politicisation of electoral regulation through opposition-led street protests, which, illustrating the argument, shifted the parameters of contestation and changed incentives and opportunities of engagement for civic actors. The opposition's demands received stronger backing from activist CSOs and pushed otherwise disengaged or government-leaning groups in civil society such as FBOs and business associations to mediate and plead with the government, which eventually negotiated with the opposition and conceded to some of its core demands. In Uganda, on the contrary, the opposition did not pursue further action after the parliament and the government ignored FFE demands; in line with the theoretical argument, civil society activism around electoral reforms quickly faded. FBOs and business associations in Uganda continued to disengage or to support the government.

As Kenya entered *the election phase*, the united opposition and activist civil society groups such as the KYSY pursued legal battles around many aspects of the electoral

process, one of which – the confirmation of declared electoral results at the constituency level as final – was instrumental in ensuring the subsequent nullification of the presidential election. In line with the theoretical expectation, the opposition's continuous politicisation of electoral regulation strengthened incentives and opportunities for critical CSO engagement. In Uganda, however, a weaker and more divided opposition was unable to create similar conditions for civil society engagement. While Besigye pursued a confrontational electoral campaign, the relative weakness and vulnerability of the FDC as a party placed limits on the scope for civic activism. Compared with KYSY's legal activism, the Ugandan CSOs conducted a less controversial civic education programme around elections.

Post-election events further underline the differences in oppositional strength and its relevance to civil society engagement in the two countries. The weak Ugandan opposition could not sustain Besigye's protest campaign and Ugandan CSOs remained quiet about it. The radical and far-reaching defiance of the Kenyan opposition, however, enabled legal protest and public dissent by activist CSOs. To summarise, the ability of the opposition to forcefully politicise electoral reforms helps to explain the difference between the cases in modifying the effects of autocratic state control and reshaping the incentive structures for and expressions of critical civil society engagement. It should be noted, though, that while a strong opposition increased the scope of activist CSO engagement with politics, the Kenyan case also illustrates that such activism constitutes a high-risk activity that necessitates careful balancing between the rewards and risks of expressing dissent.

An alternative explanation of civil society engagement would be that both opposition strength and the scope for civil society activism follow from the level of state control. This is an important factor that cannot be fully disentangled from the mechanisms explored in this study. The argument advanced in this article is that oppositional strength counters state repression and co-optation and that neither oppositional strength nor civil society engagement can be reduced to effects of the workings of state power. While the Ugandan government's treatment of the opposition and civil society has been undeniably harsh, the Kenyan government did, during the period examined here, also move rapidly in an autocratic direction by introducing – and, when passed, enforcing – repressive media, security, and NGO legislation (Amnesty International, 2016, 2017; Cheeseman & Dodsworth, 2023; Gichohi & Arriola, 2023; Lind et al., 2017). Executive treatment of dissenting CSOs was similar in the two cases, indicating that this does not explain the difference in outcomes. Furthermore, the article empirically shows that opposition strength and critical CSO engagement vary over time within cases, especially in Kenya, in ways that do not follow from variations in state repression.

Conclusions

During the current wave of autocratisation, non-democratic leaders have become increasingly intent on and adept at using elections to extend their stay in power. However, evidence from several electoral autocracies has called attention to the variation in scope for party-based and civic resistance to such entrenchment. This article shows how the strength of political-party opposition affects the ability of government-critical CSOs to engage with elections, even in difficult contexts marked by emboldened autocratic governments and shrinking space for civic mobilisation. The empirical analysis demonstrates the relevance of the argument: the strong opposition in Kenya extended the

opportunities and incentives for critical parts of civil society to engage by forcefully politicising issues related to electoral regulation and requiring the government and other actors to engage with its demands. The weak Ugandan opposition, on the contrary, was vulnerable to manipulation, division, and repression, and it encountered overwhelming challenges when seeking to move beyond placing issues of electoral regulation on the agenda to press for broader negotiations and concessions, which resulted in limitations on critical civil society engagement.

This study contributes to research on the varying dynamics of dissent in electoral autocracies and goes beyond explanations that centre on either state regulation or civil society mobilisation. Rather, it highlights the significant role played by the political opposition in shaping civil society engagement, even in regions characterised by weak opposition parties, such as sub-Saharan Africa. The findings are especially relevant for contexts where the independent mass mobilisation capacity of government-critical CSOs is weak, as is the case in many electoral autocracies. This article demonstrates that under such circumstances, a strong opposition party or coalition can help to protect CSOs and promote their contributions to combined efforts.

Future research could extend the range of cases to systematically assess the applicability of this argument across electoral autocracies. One important focus of such studies would be on how opposition strength affects CSOs' navigation between their scope and incentives for action and the risks of intensified competition that may impede critical engagement. Another focus would examine whether stronger incentive structures through increased competitiveness and uncertainty with stronger opposition party strength not only extends the scope for government-critical CSOs, but also intensifies the mobilisation of government-friendly CSOs as contestation at that level becomes more important. Such endeavours would further and deepen the line of inquiry pursued in this article and shed light on the social basis of political rule and opposition under autocratic conditions.

Notes

1. There are of course other factors influencing civil society engagement with elections; the focus of this article is restricted to the role of opposition party strength.
2. This does not mean that governments will not try to repress a strong opposition (the cost of toleration may also increase when competition is real), only that coercion becomes more difficult. For an extended discussion of the costs of repression and toleration in relation to autocratic elections see Lindberg (2009).
3. The argument applies to national CSOs in electoral autocracies and with reference to engagement with elections. It does not apply to other regime types, or to very local or international CSOs. Finally, it is restricted to democratically oriented opposition parties and CSOs.
4. Other pieces of repressive legislation introduced during 2013 and 2014 include the Security Laws (Amendment) Bill (2014) (Lind et al., 2017) and the Kenya Information and Communication Bill (2013) (Gichohi & Arriola, 2023).
5. In 20202, the Constitutional Court declared Section 8 of the act that gives sweeping powers to the Inspector General of the Police illegal and unconstitutional.

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Appendix

Appendix: list of interviews in Kenya

#	Gender	Interviewee	Location	Date
1	Male	FBO-leader*	Nairobi	12/2 2019
2	Male	Law Society leader	Nairobi	12/2 2019
3	Male	FBO-leader	Nairobi	12/2 2019
4	Male	FBO-leader	Nairobi	14/2 2019
5	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	14/2 2019
6	Male	Journalist	Nairobi	14/2 2019
7	Male	Academic, Nairobi University	Nairobi	15/2 2019
8	Male	FBO-leader	Nairobi	18/2 2019
9	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	18/2 2019
10	Female	NGO-leader	Nairobi	19/2 2019
11	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	20/2 2019

(Continued)

Continued.

#	Gender	Interviewee	Location	Date
12	Female	FBO-leader	Nairobi	20/2 2019
13	Male	FBO-leader	Nairobi	21/2 2019
14	Male	Lawyer	Nairobi	21/2 2019
15	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	22/2 2019
16	Male	Trade union leader	Nairobi	22/2 2019
17	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	25/2 2019
18	Female	NGO-leader	Nairobi	25/2 2019
19	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	25/2 2019
20	Male	Academic, Nairobi University	Nairobi	27/2 2019
21	Male	Academic, Nairobi University	Nairobi	27/2 2019
22	Male	Opposition politician	Nairobi	28/2 2019
23	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	1/3 2019
24	Male	NGO-leader	Nairobi	1/3 2019

* FBO = Faith-Based Organisation

List of interviews in Uganda

#	Gender	Interviewee	Location	Date
1	Male	Journalist	Kampala	17/9 2018
2	Male	NGO-leader	Kampala	18/9 2018
3	Male	Trade union leader	Kampala	19/9 2018
4	Male	NGO-leader	Kampala	20/9 2018
5	Female	Academic, Makerere University	Kampala	21/9 2018
6	Male	NGO-leader	Kampala	21/9 2018
7	Male	FBO-leader*	Kampala	24/9 2018
8	Male	Trade union leader	Kampala	25/9 2018
9	Male	Law society leader	Kampala	25/9 2018
10	Male	Journalist	Kampala	25/9 2018
11	Male	FBO-leader	Kampala	26/9 2018
12	Male	FBO-leader	Kampala	26/9 2018
13	Male	NGO-leader	Kampala	27/9 2018
14	Female	Academic, Makerere University	Kampala	1/10 2018
15	Male	NGO-leader	Kampala	1/10 2018
16	Male	Opposition politician	Kampala	2/10 2018
17	Female	NGO-leader	Kampala	3/10 2018
18	Male	NGO-leader	Kampala	3/10 2018
19	Male	Law society leader	Kampala	4/10 2018
20	Male	NGO-leader	Kampala	4/10 2018
21	Female	NGO-leader	Kampala	5/10 2018

* FBO = Faith-Based Organisation