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INEQUALITY, PATRONAGE, ETHNIC POLITICS AND DECENTRALIZATION IN KENYA AND BOTSWANA:
AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT INCREASE THE LIKLIHOOD OF ETHNIC CONFLICT
IN DIVERSE SOCIETIES

by

Rei Gordon

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Political Science
Western Michigan University
August 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the three members of my committee for their dedication to teaching and to their students. The topic of this thesis is greatly influenced by the courses they have taught and the example they have set as scholars of political science. The subjects of their research and the manner in which they interact with students demonstrates the power of our field to positively impact those around us.

I would like to especially thank the committee chair, Dr. Butterfield, for the countless hours spent pouring over this project. His rigorous expectations were only matched by his willingness to read, edit and discuss at all hours of the day and across several time zones.

I am grateful for the patience of my family, who not only offered helpful comments, but also suffered my puppy while I wrote.

Finally, I am eternally grateful for my dad. While his edits were invaluable, his continual support of my every endeavor is the reason I have come this far in my education.

Rei Gordon

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Rei Gordon, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 2019

Scholars have recommended numerous institutional arrangements for mitigating ethnic conflict in divided societies. Electoral systems are often considered to have an impact on ethnic conflict, and scholars have recommended both proportional representation systems and majoritarian systems for their respective effects on mitigating ethnic tensions. However, in a cross-national analysis of 18 sub-Saharan democracies, I find no impact of electoral systems on ethnic conflict. Countries employing proportional representation systems and majoritarian systems are compared according to three measures of ethnic conflict, yet neither electoral system correlates with higher or lower levels of conflict. In the interest of identifying factors that *do* impact ethnic conflict, I compare Kenya and Botswana, two sub-Saharan democracies with similar levels of ethnic diversity and vastly differing levels of ethnic conflict. I limit this analysis to factors that are subject to intervention, as these prove most promising in the search for methods by which to mitigate ethnic conflict. I examine inequality, ethnic patronage networks, ethnic politics and decentralization in Kenya and Botswana. My analysis reveals that inequality, ethnic patronage networks, and ethnic politics increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict, while the effects of decentralization on ethnic conflict are inconclusive.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS ON ETHNIC CONFLICT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Scholars have devoted volumes of work to the study of institutions that mitigate ethnic conflict. Electoral institutions have long been considered important in shaping ethnic identities, determining minority access to political power, and leading to ethnic conflict. The dominant position in the literature is that proportional representation electoral systems mitigate ethnic conflict, while majoritarian electoral institutions sharpen ethnic tensions. This view is articulated by Arend Lijphart, Cohen and others.

Scholars of sub-Saharan Africa have similarly cautioned against majoritarian electoral systems. According to Lindberg, majoritarian systems in sub-Saharan Africa are less inclusive and often produce elections that are less fair than those in PR systems, which lead to ethnic conflict. Fjelde finds that electoral violence is more common in majoritarian African systems because the stakes of winning are all or nothing. This makes the likelihood that ethnic groups will resort to violence more likely. Electoral violence, conversely, is supposedly less common in PR systems.

Contrary to this literature, there is a lack of evidence that these findings are applicable to sub-Saharan Africa. In a preliminary cross-country analysis of 18 sub-Saharan democracies, I find that there is no pattern linking ethnic conflict to either type of electoral system. It appears that electoral systems do not have the impact on ethnic tensions that scholarship predicts in sub-Saharan Africa. As the preliminary data suggests, electoral institutions have zero correlation with a country's level of ethnic conflict. If electoral institutions do not matter, students of ethnic conflict are left to question what factors *do* matter.

Answering this question is the focus of this research.

The substance of this project is a comparative case study of Botswana and Kenya, two sub-Saharan democracies employing majoritarian electoral systems. Botswana is a stable democracy, largely devoid of ethnic conflict. Kenya, in contrast, has experienced numerous episodes of ethnic violence. As my preliminary research indicates that electoral institutions do not contribute to this puzzle, this analysis focuses on the following variables: (1) inequality and ethnic patronage networks, (2) ethnic politics, and (3) decentralization. While ethnic composition, colonial legacy, geography, and other such variables certainly effect the likelihood of ethnic conflict, my research focuses on the factors which are subject to intervention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The possibility that institutions can mitigate ethnic conflict is an enticing proposition. As interstate wars decrease and ethnic conflicts increase, scholarship on mitigating ethnic conflicts has rapidly expanded. Of the plethora of institutional arrangements scholars promote, many consider electoral system design one of the most promising for ethnic conflict mitigation.

There are two general perspectives on electoral institutions: consociationalism and majoritarianism. The term *consociationalism* was coined by comparative scholar Arend Lijphart; essentially, consociational institutions provide minority groups access to government decision-making procedures. Examples of consociational institutions include federalism, parliamentarianism and proportional representation (PR) electoral systems. These institutions are recommended in divided societies because of their ability to accommodate minority groups. In the case of PR electoral systems, minority groups that are too small to achieve a majority of votes can potentially win representation if legislative seats are awarded proportionally. For example, in a PR system, a minority of 20% of the population may win 20 seats in a 100-seat legislature, whereas a majoritarian system may bar them entirely from representation. By allowing ethnic minorities access to government decision-making, proponents of PR systems suggest that conflict can be avoided, or at least mitigated. Exclusion from decision-making frustrates ethnic minorities, who perceive themselves to be at the mercy of the majority. Lacking channels through which to elect their own representatives and gain a voice in government, ethnic minorities resort to extra-institutional means of pursuing their interests, sometimes involving violence.¹ In a 100-country comparative analysis, Cohen compared majoritarian and PR electoral systems around the globe. As Lijphart predicts, Cohen found that majoritarian electoral institutions bar minority ethnic groups from political power, resulting in higher levels of ethnic conflict. PR systems conversely, reduce the stakes of political competition and experience less ethnic conflict.²

While there is greater support among scholars for proportional electoral systems, some scholars such as Horowitz advocate for centripetal electoral institutions.³ These institutions create incentives that encourage political moderation and discourage ethnic outbidding. Ethnic outbidding occurs when candidates campaign to their ethnic base only and utilize increasingly extreme ethnic appeals to “outbid” other candidates. According to centripetal logic, electoral systems that require a candidate to

¹ Lijphart, Arend. *Patterns of Democracy*. 2nd ed., Yale University Press, 1999.

² Cohen, Frank. "Proportional Versus Majoritarian Ethnic Conflict Management in Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 30, no. 5 (1997): 607-30.

³ Horowitz, Donald. "Ethnic Power Sharing: Three Big Problems." *Journal of Democracy* 25, no. 2 (2014): 5-20.

win by a majority to take office may incentivize candidates to appeal outside their own ethnic group in order to reach a majority. Instead of utilizing increasingly extreme ethnic appeals to outbid other candidates, politicians are incentivized to better appeal to the median voter to achieve the most support possible. In PR systems, conversely, politicians have no need to appeal beyond their own ethnic group, thus have little incentive to remain moderate. These ethnic outbidding campaign appeals can become ethnically charged, divisive, and can serve as catalysts for ethnic violence. To combat ethnic outbidding, Horowitz suggests that electoral institutions combine elements of both PR and centripetalism. Centripetal electoral institutions necessitate moderate appeals. Campaigns focused on extreme ethnic appeals lose potentially moderate voters, who will likely be picked up by candidates who focus on moderate appeals to achieve a majority of votes.⁴

My preliminary research continued the search for the most effective electoral institution for ethnically divided societies in sub-Saharan Africa. To assess the impact of electoral systems on ethnic conflict, I compared 18 sub-Saharan democracies on the following three measures: first, I compared each country's level of ethnic diversity with the number of ethnic groups engaged in ethnic politics. Second, I compared the number of minorities at risk in each country. Finally, I compare Afrobarometer survey responses to questions about ethnic marginalization. I limit my comparison to democracies because I expect the effects of electoral systems on elections to be meaningless in non-democracies. I used both Polity IV and Freedom House indices to select democracies. Of the two indices used to identify democracies in Africa, Polity IV is the more inclusive.⁵ According to this index, there are 18 democracies in sub-Saharan Africa: seven have PR electoral systems (Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde, Namibia, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, and South Africa), nine have majoritarian or plurality systems, (Botswana, Comoros, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Sierra Leone and Zambia), and both Lesotho and Senegal have mixed systems. Freedom House employs a stricter measure of democracy, counting only nine "free" democracies in sub-Saharan Africa. Of these, five countries have PR electoral systems (Benin, Cape Verde, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe and South Africa), three have majoritarian or plurality systems (Botswana, Ghana and Mauritius), and Senegal constitutes the only free mixed system. Freedom House defines democracy according to a more restrictive definition than Polity IV, including civil rights and liberties.⁶

⁴ Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.

⁵ Polity IV considers a country to be a democracy if a country's elections are free and competitive. The index also takes political participation and checks on executive authority into account.

⁶ The Freedom House definition of democratic regimes are those that afford individuals "...the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination— according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. Political rights enable people to participate freely in the

I compare both the more expansive list of Polity IV democracies and the more restrictive Freedom House list of democracies on all three measures of ethnic conflict.

Table 1: Polity IV Democracies (Island Countries and Burundi omitted)⁷

	Country	MAR	ELF	PREG
PR	Benin	0	0.62	0.30
	Namibia	4	0.68	0.55
	Niger	1	0.73	0.51
	South Africa	5	0.88	0.49
Majoritarian	Botswana	1	0.51	0.00
	Ghana	3	0.71	0.44
	Kenya	7	0.83	0.57
	Liberia	0	0.83	0.62
	Malawi	0	0.62	0.55
	Sierre Leone	4	0.77	0.56
	Zambia	2	0.82	0.71
Mixed	Lesotho	0	0.22	0.00
	Senegal	1	0.72	0.14

Posner, Daniel. "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (2004): 849-63.

Minorities at Risk. Last modified, 2019

political process, including the right to vote freely for distinct alternatives in legitimate elections, compete for public office, join political parties and organizations, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate. Civil liberties allow for the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state." --Freedom House methodology

⁷ As this project is focused on ethnicity, countries that are ethnically homogenous are not relevant to the study. Therefore, I exclude countries with low Ethno-Linguistic Fractionalization scores. Burundi is thus excluded (ELF 0.04). Small island countries are also excluded (Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Comoros, Mauritius). Due to these countries' small population, I do not expect results to be generalizable to a larger population.

Table 2: Freedom House Democracies

	Country	MAR	ELF	PREG
PR	Benin	0	0.62	0.30
	Namibia	4	0.68	0.55
	South Africa	5	0.88	0.49
Majoritarian	Botswana	1	0.51	0.00
	Ghana	3	0.71	0.44
Mixed	Senegal	1	0.72	0.14

I compare all three electoral systems on the following measures: the levels of ethnic diversity relative to the politicization of ethnicity, the number of ethnic minorities at risk, and Afrobarometer questions of ethnic marginalization and national identification.

The Ethno-Linguistic Fractionalization (ELF) score measures the likelihood that two randomly selected individuals in a country belong to different ethnic groups. For example, Botswana scores 0.51 on the ELF index, meaning that there is a 51% chance that two randomly selected Botswana⁸ will belong to different ethnic groups. This number is reported for every democracy in sub-Saharan Africa in Table 1. This measure alone is important as a predictor of ethnic conflict, as the literature suggests that conflict is more likely in ethnically heterogeneous countries. While this is the case, scholars such as Daniel Posner suggest that it is the *politicization* of ethnicity that corresponds more closely with ethnic conflict. Thus, I compare the ELF scores with the Politically Relevant Ethnic Group scores for each democracy (see Tables 1 and 2).

The Politically Relevant Ethnic Group (PREG) index predicts the likelihood that two randomly selected individuals will belong to different *politically relevant* ethnic groups. The PREG score explicitly measures which ethnic groups are engaged in political competition. Posner used books, academic articles, news sources, electoral campaigns and voting patterns to construct the index for 42 African countries. The PREG score differs from the ELF dramatically: whereas the ELF score measures the number of ethnic groups in a given country, the PREG score measures the number of ethnic groups

⁸ The people of Botswana

engaged in political competition along ethnic lines. Therefore, when a country's ELF score is higher than its PREG score, it indicates that while this country has a high number of ethnic groups, these groups are not engaged in explicitly *ethnic* political competition. Conversely, a country with a high PREG score relative to its ELF score indicates that existing ethnic groups are highly politicized.⁹ The literature suggests that electoral systems can influence ethnic group political behavior – thus, I hypothesized that the difference between these two scores may reveal the influence of the electoral system.

Minorities at Risk (MAR) data measures the number of culturally defined communal groups in a country at risk of human rights violations and/or protracted conflict behavior. According to the Freedom House measures of democracy, the only country with no minorities at risk is Benin. All other countries have at least 1, and at most 5, minorities at risk. When the Polity IV democracies are included, the highest number of minorities at risk for a single country is Kenya, with 7 minorities at risk. I included this data because while the PREG index captures ethnic politicization, it does not capture marginalized ethnic groups that have little access to political system or do not have the resources to organize. Furthermore, the MAR data captures current and past ethnic violence. I hypothesized that a high ELF score and a low MAR number indicates that a highly diverse country has avoided severe ethnic conflict (indicated by a low MAR score). I hypothesized that the successful mitigation of ethnic conflict may be partially due to the electoral system – if so, I expected PR and majoritarian electoral systems to correspond to MAR data differently.

Another data source I utilize is the Afrobarometer. I compared responses to the following questions in eight sub-Saharan democracies¹⁰ over a 12-year period:

"How often are members of your ethnic group treated unfairly by the government?"

Response options included: *"never," "sometimes," "often" and "always."*

"Let's suppose you had to choose between being a (national identity) or being a (member of your ethnic group). Which of the following best describes your feelings?"

Response options included: *"Only (national identity)," "more (national identity) than (ethnic group)," "equally both," "more (ethnic identity) than (national identity)," and "only (ethnic identity)."*

⁹ Posner, Daniel. "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (2004): 849-63.

¹⁰ Kenya, Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, Benin, Senegal, Zambia and Niger

I compiled responses and calculated trends for each response type. In every country included, the percentage of the population identifying with the national identity rose over time, while the percentage identifying with an ethnic identity fell. The rate at which these responses changed, however, did not correspond with electoral system type. Reports of unfair treatment by the government did not correspond to electoral system either.

Careful analysis reveals that neither the PREG scores, nor MAR data, nor Afrobarometer responses correlate with a type of electoral system. The dominant literature indicates that ethnic tensions should be lower in PR systems and higher in majoritarian systems, but this does not appear to be the case. According to proponents of PR systems, majoritarian electoral systems should be accompanied by higher numbers of minorities at risk, higher ethnic politicization, and a discernable difference in national identification relative to PR systems. Scholarship advocating the use of majoritarian principles would predict that PR systems correspond with higher levels of ethnic identification, possibly more minorities at risk, and a higher rate of ethnic identification. Rather than support or contradict either of these positions, my data indicates that electoral systems in sub-Saharan Africa do not have the impact on ethnic conflict that the literature suggests.

AFRICAN LITERATURE REVIEW

Africanist scholars have produced mixed analyses of electoral systems in sub-Saharan Africa. Some have suggested that electoral systems produce outcomes predicted by proponents of PR systems, while others contend that African democracies are not yet consolidated, and such a claim is premature. Most literature, however, does not point to the influence of electoral institutions to explain ethnic conflict. Rather, scholars posit that factors such as inequality, corruption, centralization, prior conflict and colonial influence are the main drivers of ethnic conflict.

In a comparative study of sub-Saharan African countries, Lindberg compares majoritarian and PR electoral systems. While he found that PR systems correlate with higher numbers of political parties, less fraud and higher voter turnout, he did not find that ethnic conflicts are more common in either system. He speculates that *violence* may be more common in majoritarian systems due to the high stakes of elections but does not find ethnic conflict to correlate with either PR or majoritarian electoral systems. At the conclusion of his study, Lindberg admits that his comparative analysis of electoral systems was preliminary at best; he does not control for economic development, regime type, corruption, freedom of media, or education levels. As a caveat, he admits that multiparty elections and democracies in general are new to sub-Saharan Africa, and electoral institutions may be far from

consolidated. Given the age of African democracies, an evaluation of electoral system effects may yet be premature.¹¹

Africanist scholars Fjelde and Hoglund confirm Lindberg's assumption that majoritarian systems are accompanied by higher rates of electoral violence; however, this is due to the presence of ethnic patronage networks. Ethnic patronage networks heighten the stakes of majoritarian elections, because elected officials distribute benefits such as jobs or development projects to members of their own ethnic communities. When ethnic minority groups are unable to achieve electoral victory, and thus access to state resources, they are excluded from patronage networks and the resources they provide. Because majoritarian electoral systems require candidates to receive a majority of the vote, election is often routinely impossible for small ethnic minorities. Furthermore, because there are no reserved seats for ethnic minorities, it is likely that small minorities will never gain access to state resources. This high-stakes nature of majoritarian elections makes conflict more likely.

While Fjelde and Hoglund do find that the chances of electoral violence are higher in majoritarian countries, they suggest that much of the potential for violence hinges on the presence of ethnic patronage networks which raise the stakes of electoral victories. Comparing electoral systems without taking patronage networks into account does not reveal a difference in levels of ethnic violence; rather, Fjelde and Hoglund find that consolidated electoral institutions, regardless of whether they are PR or majoritarian, result in lower levels of violence, while unconsolidated institutions of both types correspond with higher levels of violence.¹²

In 2010 comparative study, Basedau found that electoral systems do not correlate with levels of ethnic conflict. Rather, the size and cohesion of ethnic groups as well as historical animosity are better predictors of ethnic conflict.¹³

There is further evidence that electoral systems do not have the efficacy predicted by the literature. Scholarship suggests that PR systems will be accompanied by a greater number of parties than majoritarian systems. Lublin finds that among PR and majoritarian countries, there is *no difference* in the number of political parties; rather, the number of political parties corresponds with ethnic diversity in both systems.¹⁴

¹¹ Lindberg, Staffan I. "Consequences of Electoral Systems in Africa: A Preliminary Inquiry." *Electoral Studies* 24 (2005): 41-64.

¹² Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Hoglund. "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa." *British Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 2 (2016): 297-320.

¹³ Basedau, Matthias. "Ethnicity and Party Preference in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Democratization* 18, no. 2 (April 2011): 462-89.

¹⁴ Lublin, David. "Electoral Systems, Ethnic Heterogeneity and Party System Fragmentation." *British Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (2017): 373-89.

Despite assertions that electoral systems impact ethnic conflict, there is a lack of evidence that electoral institutions really matter for ethnic conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. In short, Africanist scholars have not found that electoral institutions produce the same results observed by Horowitz, Lijphart, and others. Some suggest that these effects have yet to be seen due to the relative youth of African democracies, while others suggest that ethnic conflict is not related to the electoral system, but rather to resource inequality, patronage networks, centralization, historic factors, education, economic prosperity or other factors.

Due to the evidence from Africanist literature, as well as my preliminary comparison, I conclude that electoral systems have little discernable impact on ethnic conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the remainder of this project is devoted to the identification of factors that do impact ethnic conflict. These factors will be identified through a detailed comparison of Kenya and Botswana, two sub-Saharan democracies with similar ethnic diversity, yet widely different levels of ethnic conflict.

CONSTRUCTED ETHNICITY

This project assumes a *constructivist* perspective of ethnicity. This view contends that ethnicity is an evolving, multi-faceted aspect of an individual's identity rather than a static identity fixed by birthplace, skin color, or parentage. This distinction is essential to this project. A constructivist perspective allows the possibility that institutions may incentivize individuals to strategically accentuate different parts of their identities; thus, identifications that may contribute to conflicts can be emphasized or deemphasized. For example, Daniel Posner studied two ethnic groups, the Chewas and Tumbukas. In Malawi, these groups are political adversaries. While a fixed view of ethnicity would contend that these ethnic groups are "naturally" adversarial or cultural incompatible, Posner finds that in neighboring Zambia, Chewas and Tumbukas are political allies. The reason for this difference is the political relevance of these groups in both countries; in Malawi, both ethnic groups are sizable portion of the electorate, thus their electoral support is courted by elites who often utilize divisive ethnic appeals to mobilize voters. In Zambia, however, both ethnic groups are too small to be electorally significant, thus they are never subject to divisive electoral campaigns.¹⁵

I do not wish to overstate the case; institutions and factors such as ethnic group sizes cannot *change* ethnicity. Nor am I suggesting that ethnic conflict is akin to an equation that can be solved by

¹⁵ Posner, Daniel. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (November 2004): 529-45.

finding the proper institutional “X”. I *am* suggesting, however, that individuals are strategic actors who engage in cost benefit analysis in relation to their institutional environments.¹⁶

This constructivist view of ethnicity contrasts with primordialism, the belief that ethnic identity is immutable. According to this view, ethnicity is inherited, much like genetics or kinship. According to scholar Kanchan Chandra, a primordial view of ethnic identities holds that these are biological, ancient, unchanging identities that have remained “fixed” from early history. Modern scholars generally do not adopt this view themselves, but rather suggest that it is a *belief* in the primordialism of a shared ethnic identity that defines an ethnic group.¹⁷ In other words, an ethnic group does not exist because of the traits members possess, but because members believe themselves to be part of an ancient, persistent, primordial group. If ethnic identities are truly ancient and immutable, institutional arrangements designed to incentivize ethnic groups to change aspects of their identity are useless for this purpose. If these identities are not static, institutions may hold the key to governing a divided society. This is the assertion of constructivist scholars.

As the name suggests, constructivist scholars consider ethnicity to be a constructed phenomenon, thus one that is not static. According to constructivist thought, ethnic identities are not natural or biological – instead, they are created by society. Ethnicity scholar Kanchan Chandra writes that a person may possess multiple identities that qualify her for entry into different categories; there are “nominal” and “activated” categories. “Nominal” categories are the set of identities an individual could possess that would qualify her for membership in an ethnic category. These multiple characteristics make up an individual’s repertoire of possible identities. These could be skin color, eye color, dialect, religion, birthplace, etc. Certain nominal characteristics may be required for membership in an ethnic group; for instance, white skin, Gaelic language, and birthplace in highland Scotland. Someone with these characteristics, however, may choose to “activate” only some of these nominal traits.¹⁸

“Activated” identities are the nominal identities a person chooses to claim. For example, an individual may have brown skin, practice Islam, and live in New York. These are all nominal identities that this individual possesses that qualify her for membership in categories such as “Muslim”, “New-Yorker” and possibly “black”. A nominal category becomes activated when an individual chooses to

¹⁶ Chandra, Kanchan, ed. *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

¹⁷ Gil-White, Francisco. "How Thick is Blood? The Plot Thickens...: If Ethnic Actors are Primordialists, what remains of the Circumstantialist/Primordialist Controversy?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 5 (1999): 789-820.

¹⁸ Chandra, Kanchan, ed. *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

emphasize this category. At work, this individual may choose to emphasize her skin color, while with her friends at the mosque, she may choose to activate the nominal category “Muslim.”¹⁹

The majority of political scientists adopt a constructivist rather than a primordial understanding of ethnicity. Evidence such as the varying relationship between the Chewas and Tumbukas demonstrates the fluidity of ethnic identities, and there is an abundance of similar research that supports a constructivist perspective of ethnicity. A well-known example is David Laitin’s study of ethnic groups in Nigeria, in which he chronicles the fluidity of ethnic identity in politics. Laitin found that while religion served as the political rallying point for the Ibo and Hausa-Fulani tribes, the Yoruba mobilized around ancestral homelands due to an institutional arrangement that made place of origin more politically salient than religion.²⁰

The socially constructed nature of ethnicity also makes elite manipulation an effective political tool. A plethora of scholarship documents the ability of elites to influence the way individuals identify. This can occur through political rhetoric, invented traditions, educational curriculums, and other mediums. In *The Invention of Traditions*, Hobsbawm describes the elite creation of political traditions such as holidays, statues and sports to build a national identity. These traditions often have little basis in historical fact, yet are useful tools for identity building.²¹ While these identity-building strategies may be innocuous, elite manipulation can contribute to ethnic conflict. Paul Brass records elite manipulation of ethnic identities in South Asia, where the peaceful coexistence of Hindus and Muslims was eventually destroyed by the instrumentalization of language and religious differences for political gain.²²

The construction of ethnicity is central to institutional arguments because if ethnicity is constructed and individuals can choose which nominal identities to activate, institutions can create incentives to motivate individuals to activate different aspects of their ethnicity. Thus, institutions may mitigate conflict by creating incentives structures that motivate ethnic groups to activate or deactivate a certain aspect of identity.

While ethnic identities may be fluid, this does not mean that they will change. Chandra writes that there are certain circumstances under which ethnic identities are more fluid and others under which they are not. Some circumstances motivate ethnic groups to change which nominal traits they activate, others change the entire “repertoire” of categories, while other circumstances do not promote

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Laitin, David. *Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Change among the Yoruba*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

²¹ Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger, eds. *Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914 Chapter 7 in The Invention of Tradition*. N.p.: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

²² Brass, Paul. *Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity Among the Muslims of South Asia*. Chapter 3 in *Ethnicity and Nationalism* Sage, 1991.

ethnic identity fluidity at all.²³ Just because there is the possibility of change does not mean that an institution can alter aspects of an individual's ethnic identity such that they become a member of an entirely different ethnic group. Just because an ethnic identity *can* be fluid does not mean that it will be.

ETHNIC CONFLICT

A concrete definition of ethnic conflict is difficult, as the line between competition and conflict can be blurry. Sometimes it is not readily obvious when two ethnic parties are engaged in political competition, and when they have crossed into conflict. Horowitz clarifies the difference well. He writes that conflict "...is a struggle in which the aim is to gain objectives and simultaneously to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals."²⁴ These goals clearly differentiate conflict from competition, in which ethnic groups may engage in political competition without attempting to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rival parties.

Therefore, the definition of ethnic conflict utilized in this project is:

A struggle in which the aim is to advance the interest of a specific ethnic group and simultaneously to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rival groups.

Note that this definition includes, but is not limited to, violent conflict. While the phrase "ethnic conflict" may evoke images of electoral violence or genocide, ethnic conflict also describes political and economic repression, ethnic favoritism in educational curriculum, and other such cases where the goal is neutralization, injury or elimination of rival ethnic groups.

CASE SELECTION

For this project, I adopt a most similar systems design. Thus, I narrow my selection criteria to majoritarian democracies in sub-Saharan Africa with diverse populations and the highest difference in levels of ethnic conflict. The following section details the logic of my case selection.

I limit my analysis to majoritarian democracies even though I find that electoral systems have no effect on ethnic conflict. This is because while electoral systems may not directly affect ethnic conflict, they do affect *other* aspects of a country's political system, such as the number of political parties or the accountability of office-holders to constituents. Thus, the comparison is strengthened by limiting the analysis to a single type of electoral system.

As mentioned prior, Polity IV counts 18 democracies in sub-Saharan Africa, 9 of which are majoritarian systems (Botswana, Comoros, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Sierra Leone and Zambia). I disregard the island countries and Burundi, as their populations are near-homogenous.

²³ Chandra, Kanchan, ed. *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

²⁴ Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985. Pp 95

Homogenous populations are more or less exempt from ethnic conflict, thus not useful for this comparison.

Table 3: Polity IV Majoritarian Democracies

Majoritarian	Country	MAR	ELF	PREG	Difference
	Botswana	1	0.51	0.00	51
	Ghana	3	0.71	0.44	27
	Kenya	7	0.83	0.57	26
	Liberia	0	0.83	0.62	21
	Malawi	0	0.62	0.55	7
	Sierre Leone	4	0.77	0.56	21
	Zambia	2	0.82	0.71	11

Freedom House lists 9 democracies in sub-Saharan Africa, 3 of which are majoritarian (Botswana, Ghana and Mauritius). Mauritius is excluded due to the homogeneity of its ethnic population.

Table 4: Freedom House Majoritarian Democracies

Majoritarian	Country	MAR	ELF	PREG	Difference
	Botswana	1	0.51	0.00	51
	Ghana	3	0.71	0.44	27

Of these nine democracies, I selected the democracy with the highest levels of ethnic conflict, and the country with the lowest levels of ethnic conflict. To measure ethnic conflict, I utilized two measures: the difference between a country's PREG and ELF scores, and the country's Minorities at Risk score. The smaller the numerical distance between the ELF and PREG score, the more ethnicity is politicized. A country with near-matching ELF and PREG scores would experience highly politicized ethnicity, as nearly every ethnic group is engaged in ethnic politics. A country with a large numerical distance between the ELF and PREG scores experiences less politicized ethnicity. As politicized ethnicity

alone does not fully capture ethnic conflict, I also take a country's Minorities at Risk score into account. I consider a country's Minorities at Risk score to be a better measure of ethnic conflict, because the dataset specifically measures marginalized ethnic communities.

I compared each of the seven democracies according to these measures and determined that the democracy with the highest level of ethnic conflict is Kenya. Kenya is considered democratic by Polity IV but is classified as "partly free" according to Freedom House – hence its absence from the chart above. This is because Freedom House utilizes a mid-range definition of democracy, while the definition used by Polity IV is procedural. Freedom House primarily measures political rights and civil liberties, which includes sub-categories such as equal access to economic opportunities, rights to private property ownership, and freedom of expression. Polity IV, by contrast, focuses on regime type and authority.²⁵ For the purposes of this analysis, I choose to adopt the Polity IV list of democracies, as the mid-range definition used by Freedom House is restrictive. Ethnic conflict often centers around unequal political rights and civil liberties for some segment of the society, thus countries with ethnic conflict cannot be considered free democracies by Freedom House. Ultimately, the presence of the very subject I analyze – ethnic conflict – excludes Kenya from the Freedom House list of democracies. Thus, I use the Polity IV list of democracies to allow for a more powerful comparison.

Kenya has an ELF score of 0.83, and a PREG score of 0.57. This is a difference of 26 percentage points. Kenya does not have the smallest numerical distance between the scores, however. Both Malawi and Zambia have significantly smaller differences between their ELF and PREG scores, 7 and 11 respectively. However, neither have more than 2 minorities at risk. Because I consider Minorities at Risk data to be a better predictor of ethnic conflict, I chose Kenya as the first country of comparison. The country with the lowest levels of ethnic conflict is Botswana. Botswana has an ELF score of 0.51, and a PREG score of 0.00, signifying that ethnicity is not politicized. Botswana has one minority at risk. It is worth noting that Kenya has a higher level of ethnic diversity than Botswana; I do not believe that this weakens the comparison, because countries with less diversity than Botswana have erupted in ethnic violence.

There are several additional factors that informed the choice of Kenya and Botswana. Both countries gained independence in the 1960s: Botswana in 1966, and Kenya in 1964. Many scholars of democratization contend that time is a significant factor of consolidated institutions: for instance, an electoral system that has withstood several elections is stronger than one that has not. By sharing a

²⁵ "About the Polity Project." Center for Systemic Peace. Last modified, 2018.

similar independence date, Kenya and Botswana have had nearly the same timeframe in which to consolidate institutions, create civic culture, and survive turnovers of political power. Furthermore, the passage of time also allows the independence political party to be evaluated more objectively by voters. In some cases, the independence party will ride a wave of high approval ratings for several years before challenging parties have gained any serious support.

Both countries share prior colonization by the British. This is significant because colonial powers had different strategies of rule over their colonies. In the case of the British, this was an ethnic divide-and-conquer strategy, the effects of which are felt today.

The project proceeds thus: the next chapter introduces Kenya and Botswana, and discusses history, ethnic composition, and ethnic conflicts in each country. Chapter three details inequality and ethnic patronage networks. Chapter four discusses ethnic politics. Chapter five covers decentralization and the project concludes with an analysis and summary in chapter six.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY OF ETHNIC CONFLICT IN KENYA AND BOTSWANA

No single variable *causes* ethnic conflict. The number of factors that contribute to conflict can range from geographic to social, political to economic, and may include phenomenon as diverse as climate change, immigration, industrialization and urbanization. Given the limits of time and space, this analysis limits itself to the investigation of variables that are *subject to intervention*; for instance, institutions and government policies.

I choose to limit the analysis in this way because these factors are the most meaningful to the search for methods by which to mitigate ethnic conflict. While I acknowledge that an ethnic group's size, location, and history holds significant explanatory power in an analysis of ethnic conflict, these factors are not subject to intervention. My purpose in this analysis is to identify causal mechanisms that *are* subject to intervention in the hope that they can be influenced to reduce the risk of ethnic conflict. Factors that are not subject to intervention do still matter; any analysis would be incomplete without some discussion of their impact on ethnic relations. Thus, this chapter is devoted to those factors which cannot be changed yet have powerful influence over ethnic conflict today. This chapter focuses on the impact of colonial powers on ethnic relations, and past ethnic conflict. Scholars have suggested that both have great influence on current ethnic conflict.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a brief introduction to Kenya and Botswana and details the ethnic composition of each. The second section discusses the history and colonial legacies of both countries, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of current ethnic conflicts in Kenya and Botswana.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION

Kenya

The Republic of Kenya is a sub-Saharan democracy on the eastern coast of the continent of Africa. Although Kenya holds multiparty elections, the limited nature of political rights and pervasive government corruption earn the country a 47/100 freedom house score. As discussed in the first chapter, Kenya is considered "partly free."²⁶

Kenya was a protectorate of the British Empire from 1859 to 1963, when the country gained independence. While the country adopted a democratic system of government, the first administration

26 "Kenya Profile." Freedom House. Last modified, 2018.

under President Jomo Kenyatta engaged in preferential ethnic politics, disadvantaging several ethnic groups to the benefit of Kenyatta's Kikuyu ethnic group. This trend of ethnic favoritism extending from the executive branch has continued throughout the country's history. Kenya's second president, Daniel arap Moi, reversed many of Kenyatta's policies and favored his own ethnic group, the Kalenjin over the Kikuyu. During Moi's presidency, the state became increasingly authoritarian and all opposition political parties were legally banned. In 1991, international pressure forced Moi to reintroduce multiparty elections.²⁷ Despite the introduction of opposition parties, Moi won the election of 1991. The election results were accompanied by nationwide ethnic violence that claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people and displaced 250,000.²⁸ Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, succeeded Moi in 2002. His reelection in 2007 was followed by another wave of ethnic violence. Over 1,500 people were killed, and 700,000 displaced.²⁹ The causes of these instances of violence will be discussed in more detail in chapters three and four. As a result of the violence, a referendum was held and a new constitution was drawn in 2010. A major component of this constitution was decentralization, which returned some political power to regional and local levels. Kibaki was succeeded by Uhuru Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, in 2013. Kenyatta's reelection in 2017 was highly contested and considered by many to be fraudulent. Kenyatta is the current president of Kenya.³⁰

Presidents are elected by majority vote for 5-year terms with two-term limits. The president is both the head of the government and the chief of state. The legislative branch is comprised of a senate and national assembly. There are 67 seats in the senate. The National Assembly consists of 349 members which are elected by simple majority vote. Currently, there are two major parties in Kenya: the Jubilee Party and the National Super Alliance (NSA). The Jubilee party holds 24 senate seats, and 165 seats in the National Assembly. The NSA holds 28 and 119, respectively. The Kenyan Supreme Court is comprised of 5 judges, as well as a chief and deputy justice.³¹

There are five major ethnic groups in Kenya, and numerous smaller ethnicities. These groups and their population percentages are: The Kikuyu (17%), Luhya (14%), Kalenjin, (13%), Luo (11%), Kamba (10%), Somali (6%), Kisii (6%), Mijikenda (5%), Meru (4%), Turkana (3%), Masai (2%). The remaining 9% of

27 Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahi. "Ethnicity and Politicization in Kenya." Kenya Human Rights Commission. Last modified May, 2018.

28 Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. "Land Grievances and the Mobilization of Electoral Violence: Evidence from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 5 (2015): 622-35.

29 Ibid

30 Cheeseman, Nic, Gabrielle Lynch, and John Willis. "Democracy and It's Discontents: Understanding Kenya's 2013 Elections." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014): 2-24.

31 "Africa: Kenya." CIA World Factbook. Last modified, 2019.

the population is comprised of smaller ethnic groups.³² Seven of these ethnic groups have been identified as “at risk” by Minorities at Risk (MAR) reports. These include the Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, Luo, Maasai and Somalis.³³

Minorities are considered at risk if they “collectively suffer, or benefit from, systematic discriminatory treatment vis-a-vis other groups in a society, and if the group is the basis for political mobilization and collective action in defense or promotion of its self-defined interests.”³⁴ Essentially, minorities are considered in danger from other groups when they collectively suffer or benefit more than other groups in society. Their risk is heightened when minorities pursue their goals through collective action.

This definition is particularly important to the understanding of ethnic conflict in Kenya; while the phrase “at risk” may prompt an image of a marginalized ethnic group, the MAR definition also captures ethnic groups with disproportionate access to resources and influence in government. These two extremes have been at play in Kenya since the colonial era, as members of several ethnic groups have alternatively gained political power through the executive office, gaining them disproportionate access to government resources. The resulting inequality has served as the catalyst for violence against the newly dominant group. Thus, both marginalization *and* relative prosperity can characterize minority groups at risk.

Botswana

The Republic of Botswana has been referred to as the Switzerland of Africa, and is one of the most peaceful, stable countries on the continent. Botswana is known for its social harmony, progressive policies, and uninterrupted civilian rule. Botswana scores a 72/100 according to Freedom House, making Botswana a “free” democracy.³⁵

Like Kenya, Botswana was once a protectorate of the British empire. The country was ruled by the British from 1885 to 1966, when Botswana gained independence. The first president, Seretse Khama, ran on a platform of *Kagisano*, a Tswana word meaning unity, peace, harmony and community. Khama and the independence party, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) won the country’s first election with 90% of the vote.³⁶ At the time of independence, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. This changed once diamonds were discovered in the early 1970’s. The

32 The CIA World Factbook. "Africa: Kenya."

33 Ibid

34 "About MAR." Minorities at Risk. Last modified, 2016.

35 "Kenya Profile." Freedom House. Last modified, 2018.

36 Charlton, Roger. "The Politics of Elections in Botswana." International African Institute 63, no. 3 (1993): 330-70.

discovery of diamonds allowed the government to create a nation-wide primary education program and increase infrastructure projects.³⁷

Khama was succeeded by Ketumile Masire after his death in 1980. Masire stepped down in 1998 and was succeeded by Festus Mogae. In 2008, Ian Khama, son of Seretse Khama, took office. He was succeeded by Mokgweetsi Masisi, who is the current president of Botswana. Masisi, like every prior president, is a member of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). The president is the head of government and the head of state, and is indirectly elected by the National Assembly, Botswana's single legislative body.

The National Assembly is accompanied by an advisory body, the Ntlo ya Dikgosi (the House of Chiefs). The Ntlo ya Dikgosi consists of eight hereditary chiefs from the eight largest ethnic groups. While the Ntlo ya Dikgosi does not have formal law-making power, any legislation concerning property, tribal law, or tribal organization pass through this advisory body.³⁸ The High Court and the Court of Appeals are the highest judiciary bodies in the country. There are 16 judges in the entire country and 59 magistrates – all are appointed by the president. Cases of customary law are heard at *Kgotla* meetings, traditional village assemblies, with local chiefs presiding.³⁹

Botswana has had a multiparty system since independence, but the BDP has held a majority in the legislature since independence in 1966. Currently, the BDP holds 37 seats in the 63-seat National Assembly; however, the percentage of seats held by the BDP has steadily decreased as opposition parties have grown. The second largest political party in Botswana is the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC). The UDC occupies 17 seats in the National Assembly. The Botswana Congress Party (BCP) holds 3 seats.⁴⁰

There are fifteen major ethnic groups in Botswana. Of these, eight are often considered part of a larger *Tswana* identity based on a shared language, Tswana.⁴¹ These ethnic groups include: the Bangwato, Bangwaketse, Balete, Bakgalta, Batlokwa, Batawana, Barolong and the Bakwena. The government of Botswana does not publish ethnic population percentages for fear of highlighting ethnic divisions, but scholars estimate that these groups make up between 60%-80% of the population and reside mostly in the south and east of the country.⁴²

³⁷ Charlton, Roger. "The Politics of Elections in Botswana."

³⁸ The CIA World Factbook. "Africa: Botswana."

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ The language Tswana is also referred to as Setswana

⁴² Selolwane, Onalenna D. "Elite Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Botswana." United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (March 2004).

Some scholars consider Tswana-speakers as a single Tswana ethnic group that comprises a majority of the population of Botswana. Botswana's lack of ethnic conflict, thus, is due to the homogeneity of the population. This is a mischaracterization. While eight ethnic groups share a common language, these groups are often multilingual and culturally distinct. According to Selolwane, Batswana often have multiple ethnic identities. For example, many Batswana have adopted different languages and ethnic identities than their parents. Some Batswana have adopted their father's ethnic identification yet spoken their mother's native language. Given the frequency of inter-ethnic marriage, this often leads to a divergence between social ethnic identity and the language spoken. Thus, Batswana often speak multiple languages, and may adopt several ethnic identifications. While 80% of the population may share a language, this does not make Tswana-speakers a single ethnic group.⁴³

Furthermore, prior to independence, the Tswana-speaking groups organized in regionally-concentrated polities and spoke varying dialects of Tswana. These groups did not have extensive contact with one another and were highly segmented. Speaking of the colonial era, Selolwane writes:

The apparently dominant Tswana ethnic group was in fact segmented into five major and three minor groups that saw themselves as separate and autonomous. None of them was large enough on its own to have any significant domination over the rest. Rather each existed as an autonomous tribal state that was largely multi-ethnic and co-existed with several, fairly autonomous groups under the overarching authority of an external colonial administration. Some of the small, segmented groups had jurisdiction not extending beyond a single village or settlement.⁴⁴

Other ethnic groups include the Bakgalagadi, Wayeyi, Ovaherero, Basubiya, Ovambukushu, the Kalanga, and the San Bushmen. Most of these groups live in the northern and western regions of the country. None of these groups share languages with each other or the Tswana-speaking ethnic groups. There is one minority group at risk in Botswana; these are the San Bushmen, an indigenous group of hunter-gatherers living in the Kalahari Desert.⁴⁵

SECTION 2: HISTORY AND COLONIAL LEGACY

According to many scholars of ethnicity, past conflicts and rivalries between ethnic groups impact the current relations between ethnic groups. A history of past conflicts can provide political elites with fodder for political campaigns, and aid in political mobilization. The presence of past conflict,

43 Selolwane, Onalenna D. 2004

44 Ibid

45 Minorities At Risk. "Assessment for San Bushmen in Botswana."

however, does not *determine* current ethnic relations.⁴⁶ Nor are current conflicts explained by prior hostilities. For instance, Hindus and Muslims lived together in peace before the British occupation incentivized elites to instrumentalize religious and linguistic differences for political gain.⁴⁷ Thus, a constructivist reading of ethnic relations takes historical conflict into account, but with the understanding that past conflicts are influential, rather than determinant of current relations.

For countries with a history of colonial rule, the methods of control utilized by the colonial power have often shaped part of the ethnic landscape. Africanist scholars such as Basedau consider the colonial history of sub-Saharan countries to be influential in post-independence ethnic divisions.⁴⁸ A common strategy of colonial powers was to exploit (or manufacture) ethnic rivalries by pitting ethnic groups against each other to avoid their potential unification against the colonizers. This colonial “divide and conquer” strategy often ordered ethnic groups within a social hierarchy, conferring benefits to some relative to others. In many countries, these divisions were deeply reinforced and institutionalized, lasting long after independence. Colonial rule also introduced the bifurcated state, dividing “whites” and “natives” through institutional designs. Settlers further divided “natives” into neat ethnic categories that were reinforced by institutions. Mambani writes that “everywhere the local apparatus of the colonial state was organized either ethnically or on a religious basis.”⁴⁹ Thus, the very concept of ethnicity was largely constructed by colonial powers and can be considered a relatively recent phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa.⁵⁰

History of Ethnic Relations and Colonial Legacy in Kenya

The area of modern-day Kenya has been inhabited since the Paleolithic era, but the first records of the ethnic groups currently occupying the country are from around 1000 BCE; these early groups migrated from the Nile river region and were known as Nilotes. They are the ancestors of the modern-day Kalenjin, Luo and Maasai ethnic groups. During this period, Bantu-speaking groups also began to move into the region, settling along the coast and in the fertile Rift Valley region. Those that settled in the Rift Valley were the ancestors of the modern-day Kikuyu and Luhya.⁵¹

46 Consider the past violent religious conflicts in Switzerland. The country is now considered one of the most peaceful in the world.

47 Brass, Paul. *Elite Groups, Symbol Manipulation and Ethnic Identity Among the Muslims of South Asia*. Chapter 3 in *Ethnicity and Nationalism* Sage, 1991.

48 Basedau, Matthias. "Ethnicity and Party Preference in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Democratization* 18, no. 2 (April 2011): 462-89.

49 Mamdani, Mahmood. "Indirect Rule, Civil Society and Ethnicity: The African Dilemma." *Social Justice* 23, no. 1/2 (1996): pp.

50 Mamdani, Mahmood. "Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4 (2001): 651-64.

51 Ehret, Christopher. *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in World History 1000 BC to AD 400*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1998.

By CE 100, coastal communities had evolved into autonomous city-states engaged in complex trading relationships with Indian and Arab traders. It was through trade that the language of Swahili developed as a *lingua franca* between trading groups. In the 1400's, the Portuguese began to dominate trade routes on the coast of Kenya, constructing a fort in 1593. Portuguese presence waned once the eastern spice trade lost its profitability, allowing Arab sultan Seyyid Said to consolidate his power on the coast in 1824. By the late 1800's, European mapping expeditions, a growing demand for ivory, and the desire to abolish the slave trade increased British interest in Kenya. In 1859, the British proclaimed Kenya "the East Africa Protectorate" and took over most of the territory of modern-day Kenya.⁵² The British forced pastoral Kenyans from the fertile highlands located in the African Rift Valley⁵³ and restricted the area to white settlers. This forced ethnic groups such as the Kikuyu and Maasai onto land of poor quality. The British also brought groups of Kisii, Luhya and Luo into the Rift Valley to serve as cheap labor. The few Kikuyu and Maasai who stayed worked as agricultural laborers on coffee plantations and had no recognized rights to the land. The British made Kenya into a Crown Colony in 1920, giving white settlers political powers through a legislative council. Africans were excluded from this council until 1944. To protect their agricultural monopolies, white farmers banned the growing of coffee by black Africans and began paying African workers lower wages, forcing many to relocate to the cities.⁵⁴

According to Oogo, ethnic identities in Kenya were constructed and codified by the British.⁵⁵ While there were distinct cultural groups with sophisticated political organization prior to the arrival of the British, the colonial practice of organizing people groups into neat administrative categories politicized ethnic divisions that were previously foreign to Kenya. The British used ethnic lines to "organize and order reality by use of coercion, an authoritarian policy of forced settlement by controlling migration movements, and by more or less artificially fixing ethnic details through birth certificates and identity cards."⁵⁶ The British also drew administrative lines along ethnic lines. Furthermore, the organization of the colonial Kenyan state introduced an ethnic hierarchy defined along racial lines: whites occupied the top administrative positions in the state, while black Africans were barred from these positions. Essentially, the colonial administration restructured Kenyan society. The colonial government also prohibited political organizations that crossed ethnic lines, limiting pre-

⁵² Ehret, Christopher. *An African Classical Age*

⁵³ At the time, the Rift Valley was referred to as "the white highlands"

⁵⁴ Oogo, Lilian A. "State Building, Democratization and the Role of Ethnic Political Identity: A Case Study of Kenya." University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. 2014.

⁵⁵ Oogo, Lilian A. 2014

⁵⁶ Ibed

independence organizations to tribal basis. By encouraging local political competition, the colonial government avoided cross-ethnic coalitions aimed at national unity.⁵⁷

The Kikuyu formed the Young Kikuyu Association in response to their exclusion from political process. It was Kenya's first protest movement. The movement was promptly banned. Momentum toward political inclusion, however, continued. Harry Thuku, the founder of the Young Kikuyu Association movement, founded the Kenya African Union, which demanded a political voice for black Africans and the return of the Rift Valley to African ownership. While the British provided for increased African representation in the Legislative Council, the concession was too little too late. While the movement had been moderate, some factions became more radical, morphing into the Kenyan African National Union led by Jomo Kenyatta.

The 1950s saw the rise of the Mau Mau rebellion, a nationalist movement led almost exclusively by Kikuyu. The rebellion was violently suppressed by the British: 13,000 Kikuyu were killed, and another 100,000 were relocated.⁵⁸ Although Kenyatta denied involvement in the Mau Mau rebellion, he was imprisoned from 1953 to 1961. In 1957, the British began granting concessions, the first of which was the creation of a legislative council with limited voting rights for black Africans. Land restrictions in the White Highlands were lifted in 1960, and Africans were allowed to grow coffee. The push for universal suffrage continued, and in 1960, independence talks between Africans and the British government began. Due to economic pressures as well as international anti-colonialism pressure, the British granted Kenyan independence in 1963.⁵⁹

Two major political organizations dominated Kenyan politics at independence: Kenyan African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). KANU served as a coalition between the two largest ethnic groups, Kikuyu and Luo, while KADU emerged as an amalgamation of smaller ethnic parties that feared domination by KANU. KADU promoted regional federalism, known as *majimbo*, to protect ethnic groups from centralized government control. As regional lines were drawn along ethnic lines, regionalism was seen as a means to protect regional and ethnic interests. KANU leadership called for national unity, labeling KADU majimbolists as "tribalists who oppose the broader goals of nationalism."⁶⁰

KANU won control of the government under the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta, who was elected the first president of Kenya in 1963. KADU leaders were systematically coopted and integrated into the

⁵⁷ Oogo, Lilian A. 2014

⁵⁸ Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Kikuyu in Kenya." 2006.

⁵⁹ Ibed

⁶⁰ Oogo, Lilian A. 2014

KANU patronage system. Rather than pursue policies of national unity, president Kenyatta utilized the ethnic divisions structured in the colonial era to keep political competition concentrated at the local level. This discouraged cross-ethnic coalitions that could threaten KANU political dominance. Thus, the “divide and conquer” strategies of the colonial government carried into the state formation of independent Kenya.

The election of Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, secured political power for members of his Kikuyu ethnic group. As the African Rift valley was reallocated, Kikuyu were awarded a disproportionate amount of valuable land relative to other groups. The Kikuyu also benefited from disproportionate access to resources, jobs, and government positions under Kenyatta’s presidency, which lasted until his death in 1978.⁶¹

President Daniel arap Moi, a Kalenjin, succeeded Kenyatta.⁶² Under Moi, the state became highly centralized and authoritarian. Opposition parties were banned under the justification that they would lead to ethnic violence. Under Moi, the Kikuyu were violently persecuted by the Kalenjin and Maasai. Furthermore, many of the advantages the Kikuyu had enjoyed under Kenyatta were removed and reallocated to the Kalenjin.

Due to international pressure, Kenya returned to a multiparty state in 1991. The elections of 1991, however, were accompanied by a wave of ethnic violence following extremely divisive campaign rhetoric. Moi’s reelection campaign labeled Rift Valley Kikuyu as “invaders” and promoted the return of the Rift Valley to the “rightful” Kalenjin inhabitants. Before and after the election, thousands of Kikuyu were violently forced from their homes in the Rift Valley. By the time the violence had stopped in 1993, over 1,000 people had been killed.⁶³

Ethnic conflict again broke out in 2007 after the election of Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu. Fearing the redistribution of their land in the Rift Valley, many Kalenjin began preemptively driving Kikuyu from the Valley. The expulsion of the Kikuyu was extremely violent, involving the destruction of homes, looting and rape. In 2008, many Kikuyu retaliated in a second wave of violence. Overall, there were 1,500 people killed and 700,000 displaced.⁶⁴

Recent presidential elections have not been accompanied by a similar scale of violence. President Uhuru Kenyatta was elected in 2013 on a platform of national unity. While the 2013 elections

⁶¹ Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Kikuyu in Kenya." 2006.

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Oyugi, Walter. "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya." *Addis Ababa* (2000).

⁶⁴ Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. "Land Grievances and the Mobilization of Electoral Violence: Evidence from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 5 (2015): 622-35.

were largely devoid of ethnic conflict, Kenyatta's reelection in 2017 was accompanied by protests, some of which became violent. In these, 16 people were killed.⁶⁵

The Minorities at Risk project identifies seven ethnic groups as at risk in Kenya. The account above adequately describes why the Kikuyu and Kalenjin are featured in this list. The five remaining groups are the Kisii, Luhya, Luo, Maasai and Somalis.

The Luhya are the second largest ethnic group in Kenya, comprising 14% of the country's population. The term Luhya is a linguistic category imposed on 15 distinct cultural groups by the British during the colonial period; the Luhya are in fact comprised of the Bukusu, Dakho, Kabras, Khayo, Kisa, Marachi, Maragoli, Marama, Nyala, Nyole, Samia, Tachoni, Tiriki, Tsoto and Wanga. Luhya live in Western Province and adjacent areas of the Rift Valley. The Luhya were brought to the Rift Valley by the British as a cheap labor force. The Luhya were also driven from the valley by the Kalenjin during Moi's presidency. In 2002, the ruling KANU party was defeated by the National Rainbow Coalition, of which the Luhya were a part. Since the government turnover, the Luhya have benefited from the overturn of many of Moi's discriminatory policies. Tensions still arise between the Luhya and the Kalenjin, with land rights at the center of the conflict.⁶⁶

The Luo are the third largest ethnic group in Kenya, comprising 13% of the population. Most Luo live in Nyanza province in the southwest of the country. During Moi's presidency, the Luo, along with the Kisii and Kikuyu and Luhya were violently driven from the Rift Valley, where they had been resettled by the British decades prior. Most Luo who were displaced have still been unable to return to the Rift Valley. Luo chief Raila Odinga led the main opposition to Moi's government, and the Luo were forefront supporters of the NARC, backing Mwai Kibaki as the successor to Moi. Chief Odinga was appointed a cabinet position under Kibaki. When Kibaki won the presidency, however, the Luo remained similarly marginalized as they had been under Moi. When a reform of the constitution to strengthen the power of the presidency was rejected by a popular vote, Kibaki dissolved his cabinet, reforming a new cabinet without Odinga. This increased resentment within the Luo community, and when Odinga ran for president in 2007, the campaign was bitter. While the campaign itself was nonviolent, a controversy over vote-counting procedures spawned widespread violence between the Luo and Kikuyu once Kibaki was declared winner. Tensions between the Luo and other ethnic groups are now generally nonviolent, however, there have been occasional protests and clashes with ethnic overtones.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Protest Death Toll Rises to 7." The Pulse: Nigeria. Last modified August 13, 2017.

⁶⁶ Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Luhya in Kenya." 2006.

⁶⁷ Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Luo in Kenya." 2006.

The Kisii make up only 6% of Kenya's population, and have a history of social and political marginalization. During the colonial era, the Kisii were relocated to the Rift Valley by the British where they were exploited for cheap labor. While some Kisii retained claim to the land during the Africanization of the rift valley during independence, the Kisii were driven from the fertile Rift Valley in the 1990's during Moi's presidency. Since 2000, the Kisii have been involved in numerous ethnic land disputes with the Maasai, Kalenjin and the Luo.⁶⁸

The Maasai comprise 2% of the population of Kenya. They are semi-nomadic pastoralists who live in the southern regions of the Rift Valley. During the colonial era, the Maasai were forced from the Rift Valley by the British. Those that remained lost their land under Kenyatta's presidency, as he reallocated land to the Kikuyu. The Maasai fared slightly better under Moi, but have continued to lose land as other groups have forced them from fertile grazing lands. There have been several instances of violence over land access, and numerous clashes between the Maasai and the Kisii over access to cattle grazing lands. The Maasai have organized politically to advocate for the legal rights to pasturage.⁶⁹

The Somalis comprise a mere 1% of the population of Kenya. There are two groups of Somalis – some are indigenous to Kenya, while others are refugees who fled Somalia in the 1990's. Somalis occupy lands subject to harsh droughts, and they receive sub-par health care and drought aid. Most Somalis are pastoralists, thus severe droughts have caused hundreds of deaths in recent years. There have been violent clashes between Somalis and other smaller ethnic groups – most center around land access. In 1999 and 2000, there were violent clashes between Somalis and some members of the Boran ethnic group due to land rights. More than 100 people were killed. Another clash in 2005 resulted in the deaths of 70 people.⁷⁰

History of Ethnic Relations and Colonial Legacy in Botswana

The earliest inhabitants of Botswana were the San Bushmen;⁷¹ they inhabited much of southern Africa at least 73,000 years ago. In 1,300 BCE, the first Tswana-speaking group, the Bakgalagadi, moved into the Kalahari Desert region. The Bakgalagadi were soon followed by another Tswana-speaking group, the Bakwena, who drove them further into the desert. These groups fractured, creating the Bangwaketse in the west and the Bangwato who moved into Kalanga regions. Around 600 BCE, Bantu-speaking Kalanga tribes moved into the northeast where they raised cattle.⁷²

⁶⁸ Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Kisii in Kenya." 2006.

⁶⁹ Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Maasai in Kenya." 2006.

⁷⁰ Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Somalis in Kenya." 2006.

⁷¹ Also known as the Basarwa

⁷² Selolwane, Onalenna D. "Elite Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Botswana."

By 1824, the Bangwaketse had developed as a military power, and frequently raided neighboring tribes. This ended with the invasion of the Bakololo and Amandebele from modern-day South Africa. The Bakololo and Amandebele were eventually defeated by the Bangwaketse, but not until after the tribes were severely impoverished by the invasions. The ivory trade with British Cape Colony during the 1840s and 1850s gave many of the Tswana-speaking tribes access to guns and horses. This allowed the Tswana-speaking tribes to gain dominance over the San Bushmen, Kalanga, and Bakgalagadi. Invasions by Afrikaners in the latter half of the 1860's forced the Tswana-speaking tribes to form a military coalition.⁷³

The British annexed Botswana in 1885 and sent a military expedition to force the chiefs to assent to British rule. Unlike Kenya, where there were abundant natural resources, Botswana was not of notable economic interest to the British. Thus, there was never a heavy British presence in Botswana, nor did the British have interest in employing an ethnic divide-and-conquer strategy. In 1920, the British created two advisory councils: one British and one African. Like the Ntlo ya Dikgosi, the African advisory council consisted of the chiefs of the eight Tswana-speaking tribes. A joint European and African advisory council was created in 1951, which proposed independence in 1964. The Botswana Democratic People's party, led by Seretse Khama, led the independence movement. Botswana gained independence without bloodshed in 1966.⁷⁴

The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) won the country's first elections in 1966, and Seretse Khama became Botswana's first president. The party ran on a platform of *Kagisano*, a Setswana term meaning unity, peace, harmony, and community. While at independence Botswana was a largely undeveloped country with a high poverty and low education rate, the BDP platform promised economic growth and a better Botswana for all, regardless of ethnicity.⁷⁵

Despite high levels of ethnic diversity, Botswana has been largely devoid of violent ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, non-Tswana-speaking ethnic groups have suffered discrimination and exclusion from the political arena, occasionally leading to non-violent forms of conflict, such as protest. These minority groups have experienced historical marginalization predating the colonial era and occupied a position of serfdom relative to the eight Tswana tribes. Non-Tswana-speaking groups include the

⁷³ Morton, Barry. "The Hunting Trade and the Reconstruction of Northern Tswana Societies after the Difaqane, 1838-1880." *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2014, pp. 220-39.

⁷⁴ Charlton, Roger. "The Politics of Elections in Botswana." *International African Institute* 63, no. 3 (1993): 330-70.

⁷⁵ Ibid

Basarwa, Bakgalagadi, Wayeyi, Ovaherero, Basubiya and Ovambukushu, the Kalanga, and the San Bushmen.⁷⁶

There are two primary sources of ethnic conflict in Botswana; both center around identity inequality. Many non-Tswana speakers consider the government to be biased against minority cultures in favor of a homogenous, Tswana culture. This perception fuels both sources of conflict. The constitution of Botswana has sparked some conflict in the form of protests, as it only legally recognizes the eight major Tswana-speaking tribes. This effectively bars non-Tswana speaking tribes from representation in the Ntlo Ya Dikgosi, which has reserved seats for tribes recognized by the constitution. The second source of conflict is the education system. Beginning in the early days of independence, the state utilized the education system as a method by which to create national unity. While it advanced access to education across the country, it simultaneously failed to teach students about minority languages and cultures. Furthermore, schools do not provide instruction in minority languages, which disadvantages non-Tswana speaking students. These two sources of conflict have sparked protests and have featured prominently in opposition party platforms; yet, there has been no violence.⁷⁷

Botswana contains only one minority considered at Risk by Minorities at Risk data; these are the San Bushmen. The San are an indigenous ethnic group of hunter-gatherers in the Kalahari Desert. The San have been gradually forced from the desert by the government, and now live in resettlement camps. The government justifies the move as an effort to modernize the community, however there are allegations that the discovery of diamond deposits in the Kalahari Desert have informed this policy. There is also evidence that the government is forcing the San from their traditional hunting grounds to accommodate tourism.⁷⁸

Despite these grievances, there has been no violent ethnic conflict in Botswana. Most Batswana⁷⁹ report fair treatment by the government and display high levels of national identification. Afrobarometer survey data reveals that when asked how often members of their ethnic group are treated unfairly by the government, 70% of Batswana report “never”, 11% reported “sometimes”, 3% reported “often”, while only 3% reported “always”. Furthermore, most Batswana identify as Batswana

⁷⁶ Selolwane, Onalenna D. "Elite Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Botswana."

⁷⁷ Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, and Bethany Mulimbi. "Pathways toward Peace: Negotiating National Unity and Ethnic Diversity through Education in Botswana." *Comparative and International Education Society* 61, no. 1 (2016): 58-79.

⁷⁸ Poteete, Amy, and Jesse Ribot. "Repertoires of Domination: Decentralization as Process in Botswana and Senegal." *World Development* 39, no. 3 (2011): 439-49.

⁷⁹ The people of Botswana.

primarily, citing their ethnic identity as secondary or non-important. This trend has increased over the years since independence.⁸⁰

Not only is ethnic conflict rare, but ethnicity is rarely a feature of political dialogue. Ethnicity is not a point of conflict outside or inside the political arena; in fact, ethnicity rarely features in electoral campaigns, or policy discussions in Botswana. The Politically Relevant Ethnic Group (PREG) index captures the relative unimportance of ethnicity in politics in its dataset: the PREG index measures an ethnic group's engagement in ethnic politics, and reports that Botswana scores near zero. This does not mean that ethnic groups do not engage in politics in Botswana, but rather than they engage in politics on issues other than ethnicity.

CONCLUSION

Although historic ethnic conflicts and colonial legacy are not subject to intervention, they are essential to understanding current conflicts today. While past conflicts do not determine present conflicts, they can serve as causes around which to mobilize voters and as tools for elite manipulation. Historic ethnic conflicts can be used to justify ethnically-based patronage networks, producing severe inequality between ethnic groups. These historical grievances have also been used to fuel divisive ethnic politics, which has led to violence. Unlike historic conflict or colonial legacy, patronage networks, inequality, and ethnic politics may be subject to intervention through government policies, international aid, and other actors. Thus, the following chapters examine the influence of these factors on ethnic conflict.

⁸⁰ "Kenya Round 7 Summary of Results." Afrobarometer. Last modified, 2016.

CHAPTER THREE

INEQUALITY AND ETHNIC PATRONAGE NETWORKS

There is a powerful link between inequality and ethnic conflict.⁸¹ Inequality can inspire divisive ethnic politics and sometimes initiate widespread violence. When coupled with ethnic patronage networks, inequality can be particularly dangerous.

In Kenya, every presidential turnover is accompanied by the establishment of a new patronage network that benefits one ethnic group over others. In Botswana, the government intentionally pursues policies of equitable resource distribution among ethnic groups. These countries experience vastly different levels of ethnic conflict. The focus of this chapter, therefore, is twofold, as a discussion of equitable resource distribution requires a complementary discussion of patronage networks.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section one reviews the literature on inequality and ethnic patronage networks. Section two details inequality and ethnic patronage networks in Kenya, while section three discusses inequality and ethnic patronage networks in Botswana. The chapter concludes with an analysis and summary in section four.

SECTION 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Stewart, inequality itself does not produce ethnic conflict. All countries suffer from inequality: only some experience ethnic conflict as a result. She contends that the *type* of inequality affects the likelihood of conflict and suggests two types of inequality: vertical and horizontal. Vertical inequality measures the scale of inequality between individuals, while horizontal inequality measures inequality between groups of people. Stewart writes that it is the relative deprivation of one group in comparison to others that can lead to ethnic conflict. The likelihood of conflict is heightened when there is a large gap between what resources an ethnic group expects, and what the group can procure. This situation is exacerbated when the political system is not considered legitimate, or violence is seen as a viable option by which to remedy the situation.⁸² Gadrun Ostby found that while *vertical* inequality does

⁸¹ Gurr, Tedd. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton: Princeton University, 1970.

⁸²

not correlate with conflict, when entire groups are unequal relative to each other, the likelihood of conflict rises significantly.⁸³ This position is reinforced by the works of Esteban and Ray, and numerous other scholars of ethnicity and conflict.⁸⁴

What accounts for inequality between ethnic groups? Environmental factors, such as access to water, proximity to urban centers, or historic marginalization certainly have initial explanatory power; scholars of sub-Saharan Africa, however, have found the presence of patronage networks to be instrumental in the perpetuation of horizontal inequality between ethnic groups. While patronage systems are not unique to Africa, these relationships characterize most regimes on the continent. Most sub-Saharan African regimes are best described as *neopatrimonial* regimes, defined as "...a personal rulership operating on the basis of loyalties that do not require belief in the ruler's unique personal qualifications but are inextricably linked to material incentives and rewards."⁸⁵ Most literature considers a neopatrimonial state to include elements of nepotism, corruption, tribalism and clientelism. Bratton and Van de Walle use the term to denote a hybrid regime type, citing neopatrimonialism as "the rule of an individual through personal prestige and power."⁸⁶ According to Van de Walle, neopatrimonialism has three main components: A "big man" president above the law, systematic clientelism to maintain the president's status quo, and provision of fiscal resources by the state for clientelism. Unsurprisingly, Van de Walle considers neopatrimonialism incompatible with democracy.⁸⁷

Erdmann and Engel delineate the difference between patrimonialism and *neopatrimonialism*, suggesting that patrimonial rule is highly personal. In patrimonial rule, "all power relations between ruler and ruled, political and administrative, are personal relations."⁸⁸ Patrimonial rule is an informal institution. *Neopatrimonial* rule, however, intertwines informal and formal rules: the patrimonial, personal relations still exist, but they interact with recognized and accepted formal rules of law. This

Chicago Bibliographical Entry:

Stewart, Frances. "Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development." *Wider Perspectives on Global Development* (2002): 101-35.

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⁸³ Ostby, Gadrun. "Polarization, Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Civil Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 45, no. 2 (2008): 143-62.

⁸⁴ Esteban, Joan, and Debraj Ray. "On the Saliency of Ethnic Conflict." *American Economic Review* 98, no. 5 (December 2008): 2185-202.

⁸⁵ Erdmann, Gero, and Ulf Engel. "Neopatrimonialism: Beyond a Catch-All Concept." *German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Working Paper 16* (2006). Pp. 9

⁸⁶ Bratton, Michael, and Nicolas Van de Walle. *Democratic Experiments in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

⁸⁷ Van de Walle, Nicolas. "The Path from Neopatrimonialism: Democracy and Clientelism in Africa Today." *Center for International Studies Working Paper 3* (2007).

⁸⁸ Erdmann, Gero, and Ulf Engel. 2006

combination of formal and informal institutions changes the outcome and function of the formal institutions.⁸⁹

While scholarship often utilizes clientelism as a synonym for neopatrimonialism, clientelism is a *feature of* neopatrimonialism. Erdmann and Engle describe clientelism as the exchange of material goods for votes. In a patrimonial system, benefits are conferred upon clients directly by the patron, while in a *neopatrimonial* system, middlemen distribute benefits through a more complex system. Clientelism is a personal, one-way, dyadic relationship between patron and client.⁹⁰

Van de Walle considers political clientelism as “an exchange relationship between unequals, which provides a political advantage to the more powerful agent and a material advantage to the less powerful agent.”⁹¹ According to Van de Walle, there are three kinds of clientelism: tribute, elite clientelism, and mass clientelism. Elite and mass clientelism are most common in Africa. According to Van de Walle, elite clientelism provides strategic offices to key elites, giving them access to state resources and the opportunity to extract resources for their personal use. Mass clientelism involves the use of state resources to provide jobs and services for the public, generally through party organizations and electoral politics.⁹²

Erdmann and Engle consider *patronage* the politically motivated distribution of favors to groups rather than to individuals. Groups are generally ethnic, and the benefits are more broadly redistributive in effect. Benefits include roads, schools, and other shared resources. Of clientelism and patronage, patronage is the most important and common in Africa. Ethnic groups are motivated to put a member of the group into office to procure patronage benefits, or at least keep another candidate out of office who will ignore their needs.⁹³

When patronage networks take on an ethnic dimension, the possibility of ethnic conflict is heightened. In regions with historical ethnic tensions, ethnicity serves as a political rallying point for campaigns, and historic ethnic conflicts are often politicized to bring voters to the polls. When patronage networks are based on ethnicity, membership in an elected official’s ethnic group is often a sufficient qualification to procure resources in exchange for votes. As suggested by Lindberg, this increases the stakes of elections because the loss of an office also leads to the loss of jobs, development project resources, educational spending, access to government services, and a host of other benefits.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Erdmann, Gero, and Ulf Engel. 2006

⁹¹ Van de Walle, Nicolas. 2007

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Erdmann, Gero, and Ulf Engel. 2006

The threat of losing access to resources if the opposition wins serves as a powerful motivator for political action. Unfortunately, it can motivate violent action as well.⁹⁴ Cote and Mitchell find that the breakdown of patronage networks fuels ethnic conflict as groups lose access to resources. The reelection campaigns of incumbents are also accompanied by higher levels of ethnic violence as the established patronage networks are threatened by challengers. Thus, the instrumentalization of past conflicts for political mobilization and the threat of losing access to important resources can serve as a flashpoint for ethnic conflict.⁹⁵

When government policies facilitate equitable access to resources regardless of ethnic identity, ethnic tensions can be reduced. In a massive cross-country analysis, Easterly compares countries with high levels of ethnic diversity and finds that the presence of good institutions mitigates ethnic conflict.⁹⁶ Without equitable, accepted and respected institutions, it becomes easier for particularistic interests to abuse the power of government. In neopatrimonial regimes, the lack of consolidated institutions allows ethnic patronage networks to contribute to gross horizontal inequality among ethnic groups. In his study, Easterly finds that good institutions protect ethnic minorities from oppression by majority groups and prevent exclusive patronage networks.⁹⁷

Some scholars have found that replacing some neocustomary laws with statist law structures can reduce ethnic conflict. Neocustomary laws are rooted in traditional justice systems, yet still exist within the modern system. Examples of these laws might be hereditary land ownership or chieftainship. When these laws are replaced by statist systems, individuals interact with the state instead of with the intermediary, customary authorities. This can eliminate patronage networks and reduce ethnic tensions. In a study of land policy in Tanzania, Boone and Nyeme found that ethnic conflict was reduced when neocustomary land laws were *de-ethnicized*. Originally, these laws were based on ethnicity; certain portions of land required the approval of a chief and were reserved for particular ethnic groups based on historical ownership. This situation allowed for ethnic land patronage and was accompanied by the sharp politicization of ethnic divisions. When the state began to regulate the land market, ethnic requirements were removed from purchase requirements. Furthermore, the chiefs were removed as an

⁹⁴ Lindberg, Staffan I. "Consequences of Electoral Systems in Africa: A Preliminary Inquiry." *Electoral Studies* 24 (2005): 41-64.

⁹⁵ Cote, Isabelle, and Matthew Mitchell. "Elections and "Sons of the Soil" Conflict Dynamics in Africa and Asia." *Democratization* (2015).

⁹⁶ Easterly defines these as "...Institutions that give legal protection to minorities, guarantee freedom from expropriation, grant freedom from repudiation of contracts, and facilitate cooperation for public services (690)." To control for democracy and wealth, he runs regression models and finds institutions mitigate adverse effects of ethnic diversity.

⁹⁷ Easterly, William. "Can Institutions Resolve Ethnic Conflict?" *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49, no. 4 (2001): 687-706.

intermediary between buyers, sellers, and the state. This statist shift de-ethnicized land policy, and shifted the political discourse away from ethnic divisions. Class became a political rallying point rather than ethnicity.⁹⁸

SECTION 2: INEQUALITY AND ETHNIC PATRONAGE NETWORKS IN KENYA

Kenya suffers from high levels of inequality. According to the GINI index, the lowest 50% of the population receive less than 20% of income, while the top 20% hold almost half of the country's wealth.⁹⁹ While these levels of inequality are significant, they alone do not predict ethnic conflict. Advanced democracies such as the United States suffer gross inequality yet are largely devoid of violent conflict. It is rather the presence of horizontal inequality in Kenya that predicts ethnic conflict. Recall that horizontal inequality occurs when one or more groups in a society experience deprivation in relation to other groups. This situation is different than vertical inequality because in a society with *horizontal* inequality, entire groups are collectively better or worse off than others. In Kenya, horizontal inequality occurs between ethnic groups, and it is glaringly obvious because regional lines were drawn along ethnic lines.

In Kenya's Central Province, 12% of the population have running water. In Nairobi, this number jumps to 33%. In the Coast Province, only 8% have running water, while in the Rift Valley only 5% have running water. This number drops to 4% in the Eastern Province and a mere 1% in Nyanza, North Eastern and Western Provinces. In Nairobi, 71% of the population has access to electricity, compared with 19% in the Coast and Central Provinces, 11% in the Rift Valley, 7% in the Eastern Province, 5% in Nyanza, 3% in the North Eastern Province, and 2% in the Western Provinces. The life expectancy of a Kenyan in Nyanza is 19 years shorter than someone born in the Central Province. In Nyanza, 15% of the population has HIV/Aids. In the North Eastern Province, this number is less than 1%. In the Central Province, there is one doctor for every 20,000 people, while in the North Eastern Province this number falls to one doctor per 120,000 people.¹⁰⁰

This horizontal inequality extends throughout the education system as well. While data is scarce, Alwy and Scheche write that during the term of Kikuyu President Kenyatta (1964-1978), formally trained teachers were concentrated in the Nairobi and Central areas, regions dominated by Kikuyu. Furthermore, quality educational facilities and opportunities were also more common in these

⁹⁸ Boone, Catherine, and Lydia Nyeme. "Land Institutions and Political Ethnicity in Africa: Evidence from Tanzania." *Journal of Comparative Politics* (2014).

⁹⁹ "GINI Index (World Bank Estimate)." The World Bank. Last modified, 2019.

¹⁰⁰ Githongo, John. *Inequality, Ethnicity and the Fight against Corruption in Africa: A Kenyan Perspective*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

regions.¹⁰¹ While the Kenyan government has increased educational spending in recent times, large regional disparities remain. Somali schools in particular have not improved relative to other ethnic groups in 40 years.¹⁰²

This pattern of inequality follows ethnic divisions. As described in chapter two, regions in Kenya follow ethnic lines, thus, regional inequality translates directly into horizontal inequality among ethnic groups. As mentioned in the section above, this type of inequality between ethnic groups is a strong predictor of ethnic conflict. One of the primary ways that horizontal inequality leads to conflict is by creating an “in-group” and “out-group” in regard to state resources or political power. Oyugi explains the process by which conflict results in the following passage:

The out-group tries to break the structure of inequality as the in-group responds by building barriers to access that ensure the continuation of its privileged position. At the center of this scenario are the elites, who, feeling excluded or threatened with exclusion, begin to invoke ethnic ideology in the hope of establishing a reliable base of support to fight what is purely personal or elite interests.¹⁰³

This chain of events has led to divisive ethnic politics and numerous violent ethnic clashes. Inequality also provides political entrepreneurs with a powerful mobilization tool by way of politicizing grievances.

The group-specific inequality in Kenya does not occur naturally. While some of these regional inequalities are due to factors such as distance to a major city-center or access to natural resources, it is the presence of patronage systems that best explain this gross inequality among ethnic groups; specifically, networks extending from the executive branch. Since Kenya’s independence in 1964, there have been four presidents: Jomo Kenyatta (Kikuyu)(1964-78), Daniel arap Moi (Kalenjin) (1978-2002), Mwai Kibaki (Kikuyu) (2002-2013), and Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu) (2013-present).¹⁰⁴ The relative advantages of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin have shifted predictably with the election of members of their own ethnic groups to the executive office.

Patronage networks are not new to Kenya. One of the origins of the ethnic patronage systems of today harkens back to pre-colonial days. A method of governance employed by the British was to utilize pre-existing power structures to control the population of colonial territories; in the case of

¹⁰¹ Alwy, Alwiya, and Susanne Schech. "Ethnic Inequalities in Education in Kenya." *International Education Journal* 5, no. 2 (2004): 266-74.

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Oyugi, Walter. "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya." *Addis Ababa* (2000). Pp 6

¹⁰⁴ The CIA World Factbook. "Africa: Kenya."

Kenya, the British established relationships with tribal leaders, providing resources in exchange for loyalty. Over time, these leaders accumulated extensive wealth, becoming some of the wealthiest members of society. This exchange promoted the idea that the state was the principal distributor of the benefits of modernization and development. Of more importance, it established patronage as the primary means by which to access state benefits and resources.¹⁰⁵

Because ethnic groups are regionally concentrated, patronage networks took an ethnic character as benefits were transferred from the British to tribal leaders, then to tribal members. Ethnic conflict, however, did not occur on account of these networks until the post-independence period. This was due in large part to the Africanization of the Rift Valley and other valued resources previously held by white settlers. As whites left Kenya, many of their high-value assets were left behind. It was around access to economic opportunities, jobs, and land redistribution that ethnic tensions began to form; the issue of most contention, however, was access to the fertile Rift Valley.¹⁰⁶

Numerous ethnic groups have made claims to the valley; historical evidence suggests that the Kalenjin and Maasai were original inhabitants of the region, yet many were forced from the land by white farmers decades before independence.¹⁰⁷ The British then resettled Kisii, Luhya and Luo ethnic groups in the Rift Valley to serve as cheap labor. Prior to independence during the Mau Mau rebellion, the British initiated forced land consolidation that benefited government loyalists at the expense of mainly Kikuyu rebels. At the end of the revolt, many Kikuyu detainees found that their homes in the Central region had been appropriated to government loyalists. Some of the displaced Kikuyu moved to urban centers to seek work, but many moved into the Rift Valley in anticipation of the redistribution of white land following independence. These migrants often squatted illegally on land owned by white farmers, thus, when Kenya gained independence and the British left, they were the first to benefit from land reallocation by simple proximity.¹⁰⁸ Thus, at the time of independence, several ethnic groups had substantial claims to the Rift Valley.

The character and extent of ethnic patronage became clear immediately after independence. The government was largely comprised of Kikuyu, as they had been the most active group pursuing independence and were thus positioned to assume political power as the British left. Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta, was also a Kikuyu. While his rhetoric was that of national unity, one of

¹⁰⁵ Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahiu. "Ethnicity and Politicization in Kenya." Kenya Human Rights Commission. Last modified May, 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Oyugi, Walter. "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya." *Addis Ababa* (2000).

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

Kenyatta's first policies disproportionately benefited fellow Kikuyu. This was a land transfer program that allowed the Kikuyu to create land-buying companies and resell land to fellow Kikuyu. This program allowed hundreds of thousands of Kikuyu to resettle in the fertile Rift Valley, where lands had traditionally belonged to the Kalenjin and Maasai. Some land was also purchased by the Kisii, Luo and Luhya.¹⁰⁹ During Kenyatta's presidency, Kikuyu were disproportionately appointed to government positions, given loans, and benefited from good roads, schools, hospitals, running water and electricity in far higher numbers than other ethnic groups. This clear government favoritism encouraged a pattern of patronage politics that would characterize Kenya up to the present.¹¹⁰

The extent of ethnic patronage that extended from the executive branch was made evident once Kenyatta's vice president, Daniel arap Moi, became president in 1978. Moi, a Kalenjin, had functioned as an ally of the Kikuyu for years, but upon achieving executive power began to shift the power of the state in favor of the Kalenjin. This was made easier once Moi transformed the country into a single-party state by amending the constitution and concentrating personal power. He began to remove Kikuyu from the civil service, government positions, and state-owned enterprises and replace them with Kalenjin. Infrastructure development in Kikuyu-dominated regions was abandoned and redirected to Kalenjin areas. Politicians who complained of ethnic favoritism were labeled "tribalists" and often lost their positions.¹¹¹ During this era, detentions, political trials, torture, arbitrary arrests and police brutality became normalized and took on ethnic dimensions. As Moi's regime became more and more authoritarian, domestic and international pressure for a return to a multiparty state increased.

Moi gave in to the pressure in 1991, warning that a return to a multiparty state would result in chaos. The ban of multiple parties was repealed in December. The return of multiple parties opened the political system to a vicious struggle for political power, as marginalized ethnic groups jockeyed for control of the nation's resources. Moi was reelected by a small majority in 1991, the first elections after the one-party era. The election was riddled with accounts of fraud, and a wave of violence swept the country for several days after the election. Even with the return of multiple parties, ethnic patronage was still rampant.¹¹²

Patronage was also at the heart of the electoral violence of 2007. The reelection of Kibaki, a Kikuyu, prompted Luo and Kalenjin leaders to mobilize mass violence in the Rift Valley. The messages

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Gachanga, Timothy. "Kenya: Ethnic Agendas and Patronage Impede the Formation of a Coherent Kenyan Identity." Genocide Watch. Last modified, 2012.

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. 2015

were hinged on patronage: if a Kikuyu occupied the executive office, patronage would continue to only benefit Kikuyu at the expense of the Kalenjin and Luo. In this instance, Kalenjin and Luo feared that Kibaki would redistribute the fertile Rift Valley land to the Kikuyu. The violence was extensive: 1,500 people were killed and 700,000 were displaced.¹¹³

Ethnic Patronage in Kenya Today

Ethnic patronage is still rampant in Kenya today. In her 2018 book, *What Politics?* Ranta describes the way ethnic patronage occurs in Kenya at the local level. According to Ranta, patronage networks are inextricably tied to ethnicity and wealth. At the local level, the wealthiest members of society are most likely to win political office, as voters perceive them to be most able to provide for the community after taking office. She writes that “this implies that instead of the state or municipality functioning as a redistributive agent, the distribution – or non-distribution – of resources is seen by community members to be strongly dependent on individual political leaders and their networks.”¹¹⁴ This perception has meant that elites have used their power to seize resources to distribute to supporters, rather than using institutions to protect citizens. Ranta suggests that political parties in Kenya have rarely started as social movements, but rather as vehicles for the advancement of personal power.¹¹⁵

Ethnic patronage is easily seen in the distribution patterns of Kenya’s Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The CDF provides a pool of resources for all 290 National Assembly constituencies. Each member of the National Assembly is responsible for the distribution of these funds at the local level. Most of these funds are designated for education, infrastructure, agriculture, security and roads. MP’s have significant control over the way these resources are allocated. In constituencies where ethnic divisions are highly politicized, the MP’s co-ethnics receive greater benefits from the CDF funds than do non-ethnic constituents.¹¹⁶

Ethnic patronage extends even into the slums. A 2017 study of a slum in Nairobi found that ethnic affiliation determines the rates that slum residents pay. Rental rates are far higher, and slum quality is negligible when the landlord and locality chief share ethnic identity. When the slum residents share the ethnicity of the chief, rental rates are lower and quality is far better.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. 2015

¹¹⁴ Ranta, Eija. *Patronage and Ethnicity amongst Politically Active Young Kenyans Chapter in What Politics?* N.p.: Brill, 2018. Pp 234

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Harris, Kirk. "Kenya's Constituency Development Fund and the Politics of Resource Allocation." *Working Paper - Indiana University* (2016).

¹¹⁷ Marx, Benjamin, Thomas Stoker, and Tavneet Suri. "There is No Free House: Ethnic Patronage in a Kenyan Slum." *American Economic Association Working Paper* (2017).

According to the transparency international corruption index, Kenya scores 27/100, ranking as the 36th most corrupt country on the planet.¹¹⁸ This is due in large part to patronage politics. Ethnic patronage networks have hampered the institutionalization of democratic procedures as the formal rules of elections, political appointments, and the management and distribution of resources are overridden by ethnic patronage systems. Violence has accompanied nearly every election in Kenya, largely due to the high stakes that patronage politics places on elections.¹¹⁹

SECTION 3: INEQUALITY AND ETHNIC PATRONAGE IN BOTSWANA

Botswana has one of the world's fastest growing economies, averaging 5% growth per year. This is due in large part to the discovery of diamond deposits shortly after independence.¹²⁰ Botswana allocates a significant amount of the budget to social services and welfare policies and spends nine percent of the annual budget on universal primary education. This is one of the highest rates of education spending in the world.¹²¹

Despite economic success, Botswana suffers one of the highest levels of inequality in Africa. Close to 30% of the population live barely above the poverty line, and unemployment levels hover around 18%.¹²² Despite this, ethnic conflict has been almost entirely absent from Botswana. As detailed in the literature review, ethnic conflict is explained by the *type*, not mere presence, of inequality. According to Frances Stewart, it is the presence of horizontal inequality among ethnic groups that leads to ethnic conflict.¹²³ This presents one of the starkest differences between Kenya and Botswana: the latter does not experience significant horizontal ethnic inequality, even though the country is ethnically diverse and highly unequal.

This lack of ethnic conflict is particularly surprising in Botswana because of the discovery of diamond deposits and the possibility of developing the "resource curse." On one hand, the discovery of diamond, copper, and nickel deposits shortly after independence provided the country with the unique chance to translate natural resources into rapid economic growth. The discovery also made Botswana susceptible to the resource curse. The resource curse describes a situation in which the economy of a natural-resource-rich country grows far slower than that of a natural-resource poor country because of

¹¹⁸ Transparency International. Last modified, 2019.

¹¹⁹ Wanyama, Fredrick, and Jorgen Elklit. "Electoral Violence During Party Primaries in Kenya." *Democratization* (January 2017). Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Hoglund. 2016

¹²⁰ "Botswana Overview." The World Bank. Last modified, 2019.

¹²¹ Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, and Bethany Mulimbi. 2016

"The World Bank in Botswana." The World Bank. Last modified, 2019.

¹²³ Stewart, Frances. "Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development." *Wider Perspectives on Global Development* (2002): 101-35.

mismanagement of the resource. Wealth from natural resources can spark conflict between politicians, local tribes, developers, and citizens, and often leads to ethnic conflict. Whomever gains control over the resource is likely to seek unfair rents; thus, the resource will be depleted quickly without contributing to national economic growth. This has been the unfortunate story of many sub-Saharan African countries.¹²⁴

Natural resource-rich countries are also less likely to develop accountability between citizens and the government, as the wealth provided by natural resources eliminates the need to tax the electorate, which removes accountability between citizens and the state. Furthermore, the elimination of the need to tax citizens fails to incentivize the state to build the professional, administrative infrastructure needed to effectively do so. Essentially, effective state growth is stunted without the need to tax.¹²⁵

Another common consequence of the resource curse is ethnic violence. According to a UN report 40% of civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa are over natural resources and many of them divide along ethnic fissures.¹²⁶ One reason for this is the unequal distribution of the resource wealth among ethnic groups. Scholars of ethnic conflict find that resource inequality between ethnic groups is a significant predictor of conflict. In a weak state, resource wealth is less likely to be distributed equitably among ethnic groups, creating a situation of inequality between ethnic groups that can lead to conflict.¹²⁷

This has not been the case in Botswana. The country has neither suffered the ill-effects of the resource curse, nor experienced horizontal inequality among ethnic groups. This is largely due to *Kagisano* policies.¹²⁸ Part of the appeal of the 1966 BDP *Kagisano* message was economic. At the time of independence, many BDP leaders saw national unity as inextricably connected to economic development. BDP leadership believed that national, rather than private or tribal, management of natural resources would avoid divisive, regional disparities that plagued neighboring countries. The BDP quickly moved to vest control over natural resources in the hands of the central government, aware that the delivery of a “unified” Botswana relied on the central government’s ability to equitably redistribute resources among the country’s diverse regions.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Iimi, Atsushi. "Did Botswana Escape the Resource Curse? IMF Working Paper." IMF.org. Last modified , 2006.

¹²⁵ Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital and European States*. N.p.: Blackwell Publishing, 1992.

¹²⁶ Iimi, Atsushi. 2006.

¹²⁷ Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.

¹²⁸ The first party platform of the BDP: *Kagisano* is a Tswana word for unity, peace, harmony and community. See chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion.

¹²⁹ Charlton, Roger. "The Politics of Elections in Botswana." *International African Institute* 63, no. 3 (1993): 330-70.

In 1966, before the discovery of diamonds, Botswana had very few economic resources and those that existed were largely undeveloped. At independence, the BDP leadership was acutely aware of the challenges of delivering on many of their promises, particularly those of national development and economic growth. To meet this challenge, the BDP had developed a sophisticated “legitimation strategy” which involved heavy government investment in rural areas, and complimentary spending on urban, government-employed sectors. Rather than focus spending on the urban majority to retain power, the BDP intentionally invested heavily in rural areas and sought to incorporate the non-Tswana speaking Kalanga into the party’s voting coalition.¹³⁰

The discovery of large diamond deposits in the early 1970s enabled the BDP to make good their promise of economic growth. Because of the prior decision to vest natural resource management in the central government, the equitable distribution of revenue was managed by the central government bureaucracy, rather than by the party apparatus. This allowed for fairly even-handed investment in all regions, regardless of the ethnic composition of the citizenry.¹³¹

In her research, Selolwane explains the effect of government evenhandedness on the electorate:

Over time, this concrete transfer of public resources earned government the confidence of its citizens. That confidence has been demonstrated by the voters returning the same political party to power in eight successive general elections. This did not mean that the development programmes were adequate or that everyone in fact had access to them. Rather they were more often than not grossly inadequate in relation to the number of beneficiaries within the targeted populations. But they won over voters’ confidence because they were fairly evenly spread across the regions where they were highly visible and therefore could be appreciated as being available to all within the practical limits of implementation. This point is worth emphasizing in light of the fact that critics of the African state normally perceive the distribution of state benefits only in terms of tribal biases that enhance deep divisions and undermine the authority and legitimacy of the state.¹³²

Patronage Networks

While ethnic conflict is largely absent in Botswana, there is a robust patronage network. The primary difference between patronage in Kenya and patronage in Botswana is the lack of ethnic

¹³⁰ Charlton, Roger. "The Politics of Elections in Botswana." *International African Institute* 63, no. 3 (1993): 330-70.

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² Selolwane, Onalenna D. "Elite Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Botswana." *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development* (March 2004).

exclusivity in the latter. Patronage networks are not defined by ethnicity and are not comprised of a single ethnic group in Botswana.

Patronage has existed in Botswana since before independence. Precolonial Botswana depended almost entirely on cattle and agriculture. While land is abundant in Botswana, access to water is not. Thus, early patronage networks were built around access to water and the lending of cattle. Cattle were owned by the wealthiest members of society, generally the chief and his family, and were loaned out through a patronage system known as *mafisa*, a long-term lending system. According to Hillbom and Bolt, “the recipient gained access to milk as well as ownership of potential future offspring, while the lender could claim both labor and political loyalty in return.”¹³³ These early patronage networks were ethnic in the sense that they were generally confined to a small village, in which most members considered themselves part of the same ethnic group.

With the colonization of the British, the cattle trade expanded into an export market in 1930. Inequality began to increase as the British sought to increase the profitability of the market by drilling water boreholes. Control of these boreholes was given to local leaders, who became exponentially wealthier due to the expanding market and the efficacy of patronage networks. While inequality increased between rich and poor, it did not result in horizontal inequality among ethnic groups. No single ethnic group had a monopoly on cattle ownership or water access.¹³⁴

By the 1960's, Botswana society experienced high inequality. The British administrators made up 0.5% of the population yet earned between 13 and 54 times more than African officials. Even given this disparity, native Africans employed by the government were far wealthier than those employed in the private sector. Thus, at the time of independence, employment by the government and ownership of cattle stratified Botswana's society.¹³⁵

Patronage systems evolved dramatically during the first years of independence. First, as described above, the BDP took great pains to provide aid equitably across ethnic groups, thus avoiding an ethnic patronage network extending from the executive as is the case in Kenya. Secondly, the power of cattle patronage networks fell once diamonds were discovered in 1967.¹³⁶ This led to the evolution of a government-managed patronage network that is entirely non-ethnic.

¹³³ Hillbom, Ellen, and Jutta Bolt. "Changing Income Inequality and Structural Transformation: The Case of Botswana 1921-2010." *WIDER Working Paper* 28 (2015).

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Ibid

As described above, the decision to vest natural resource rights in the federal government avoided the privatization of diamond exports, which could have led to ethnic patronage networks extending from an individual. Instead, the federal government utilized the mineral wealth to invest in heavy urban and rural spending programs to legitimate BDP rule. However, rather than allow the BDP party apparatus access to the wealth generated by the diamonds, the central government keeps tight control over the distribution of government resources. Furthermore, the government allocates resources evenly throughout regions, regardless of whether the region supported the BDP in prior elections. The government regulates the distribution of these resources down to the local level, requiring federal employees, rather than elected local officials, to distribute resources.¹³⁷ This situation can be considered somewhat of a government-managed patronage network, as citizens are increasingly dependent on the government for drought relief, access to education, and employment. Continuation of these services, then, is dependent on the BDP's return to power, not on which ethnic group gains exclusive access to the executive branch.

Thus, by maintaining government control over patronage resources, the state has avoided the damaging, personalized patronage networks common to other African countries. Opposition parties cannot leverage economic discrimination based on ethnicity as a mobilization tool, thus ethnic tensions around economic disparity are low. Rather, inequality between classes is a much more salient political issue.

SECTION FIVE: CONCLUSION

As detailed above, inequality is pervasive in both Kenya and Botswana. Only in Kenya does this lead to ethnic conflict. This brief comparison identifies several reasons this may be the case:

1.) Horizontal inequality among ethnic groups increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict

As stated by Stewart, and exemplified by this analysis, inequality alone does not predict ethnic conflict. Rather, horizontal inequality among ethnic groups increases the likelihood of ethnic tensions. In Kenya, the extreme inequality among ethnic groups provides political entrepreneurs with a highly salient issue around which to mobilize potential voters. This leads to divisive ethnic politics, which is the subject of chapter five. Furthermore, because ethnic groups perceive their livelihoods to be tied to the ethnicity of the president, the stakes of presidential elections are incredibly high. As described above, this has resulted in extensive ethnic violence.

While the country as a whole suffers extreme inequality, Botswana does not experience horizontal inequality among ethnic groups. Thus, while politicians may utilize class appeals to mobilize

¹³⁷ Charlton, Roger. 1993

voters, it is not politically expedient to mobilize voters around ethnicity. This is because the BDP has intentionally distributed resources equitably among ethnic groups. Ethnic conflict is thus doubly unlikely: ethnic divisions are not politically salient, and ethnic groups do not suffer targeted deprivation relative to each other.

2.) Ethnic patronage exacerbates ethnic conflict by increasing the stakes of elections

As suggested by the research of Cote and Mitchell, the breakdown of patronage networks in Kenya increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Because patronage extending from the executive branch in Kenya benefits one ethnic group at the expense of others, the cost of electoral loss is high. As demonstrated by the electoral violence of 1991 and 2007, Kenyans perceive the election of a member of a rival ethnic group to be detrimental to their wellbeing, and many have engaged in violence to preemptively protect their land and other assets they fear will be redistributed.

In Botswana, there is no ethnic patronage structure. Thus, the election of the BDP over opposition parties does not result in an ethnic group losing resources. The opposite is in fact true. The reelection of the BDP results in the continuation of government programs such as drought relief and universal primary education – all benefits that do not hinge on ethnic identification.

3.) Prior ethnic tensions increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict

Kenya has obviously experienced far more ethnic turmoil than Botswana since independence. Beyond the widespread electoral violence of 1991 and 2007, there have been numerous smaller ethnic clashes throughout the country's history. Botswana, however, has entirely avoided violent ethnic conflict. Past ethnic violence has provided political opportunists in Kenya with salient rhetorical ammunition to mobilize voters. Because members of the Kalenjin, Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups have been violently removed from their lands in the past, politicians can more easily mobilize ethnic votes, citing the need for protection against rival ethnic groups. In Botswana, there is no comparable history.

It is also important to note that these ethnic divisions in Kenya began with the British. Because of the divide and conquer strategy employed by the colonial government, there was a divisive ethnic hierarchy in place before Kenyan independence. Ethnic groups in Kenya were already economically unequal. This made the activation of relative inequality among ethnic groups a useful political tool in a way it was not in Botswana. In Botswana, colonization by the British served to create class rather than ethnic inequality, as the cattle industry benefited local leaders of all ethnic groups. Thus, the continual activation of ethnic identity in Kenya, coupled with the pervasive horizontal inequality and history of violence has made appeals to ethnicity a useful and reliable political tool. In Botswana, class inequality serves as a more salient political mobilization tool.

4.) *Corrupt government institutions may increase the perception of ethnic patronage networks as a reliable alternative. This may increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict.*

The Kenyan state has failed to redistribute resources equitably among ethnic groups, prevent large-scale electoral violence, establish a trustworthy electoral system, and create institutions that are free from personal manipulation by the executive. Given these failures, it is possible that for many Kenyans, ethnic patronage networks are more trustworthy than the state. Eija suggests as much in her analysis of Kenya:

Ethnicity is not the cause, but a symptom of a weak sense of nationhood and a non-distributive state that does not even out the colossal gaps between narrow elites and the poor masses. In contexts where state formation processes have been constructed through colonial conquest and violence as well as various forms of neocolonial dependency relations, people tend to identify with other kinds of collectivities rather than with the state. What ethnicity brings to the people is what the state does not: trust.¹³⁸

In Botswana, state institutions have performed far better than those in Kenya. While the state has failed to equitably redistribute wealth among classes, it has been evenhanded in redistribution among ethnic groups. Furthermore, as described in chapter two, elections are free of fraud and violence and ethnic patronage does not override the government's provision of education, roads, healthcare, jobs and political appointments.

Just as ethnic patronage networks increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict, corrupt government institutions are associated with ethnic conflict. The lack of equitable, popularly accepted and respected institutions makes it easier for particularistic interests like ethnic patronage networks to abuse the power of government. Easterly's study demonstrated that sound institutions protect ethnic minorities from oppression by majority groups and prevents exclusive patronage networks.¹³⁹ I suggest that popular distrust of Kenyan government institutions may contribute to ethnic conflict as these institutions have rarely proven to be more reliable than ethnic patronage networks. Thus, Kenyans seeking any provision that may be pursued through state channels are more likely to achieve success if they utilize ethnic patronage networks. This contributes to the proclivity of ethnic patronage networks in Kenya.

¹³⁸ Ranta, Eija. *Patronage and Ethnicity amongst Politically Active Young Kenyans Chapter in What Politics?* N.p.: Brill, 2018. Pp 240

Paragraphs preceding this quote in Ranta's writing make it clear that she is referring to ethnic *politics*, not merely ethnic identification as this quote might seem to imply. See page 240 in the above reference.

¹³⁹ Easterly, William. "Can Institutions Resolve Ethnic Conflict?" *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49, no. 4 (2001): 687-706.

Below I compare citizens' trust in government in Kenya and Botswana. These measures are taken from the Afrobarometer Round 7 database, administered between 2016 and 2017. I compare three questions from the survey, the first asks respondents to report their level of trust in the president, the second asks respondents to report their level of trust in parliament, and the third asks respondents to rate their level of trust in the electoral commission.

Table 5: Kenya and Botswana Afrobarometer Question #43A: *How much do you trust the president?*

	Kenya	Botswana
Not at all:	10%	14%
Just a little:	26%	19%
Somewhat:	26%	12%
A lot:	36%	48%
Don't know:	2%	7%

Table 6: Kenya and Botswana Afrobarometer Question #43B: *How much do you trust the parliament?*

	Kenya	Botswana
Not at all:	17%	17%
Just a little:	36%	26%
Somewhat:	27%	18%
A lot:	17%	33%
Don't know:	3%	5%

Table 7: Kenya and Botswana Afrobarometer Question #43C: *"How much trust do you have in the Independent Electoral Commission?"*

	Kenya	Botswana
Not at all:	34%	19%
Just a little:	25%	23%
Somewhat:	19%	15%
A lot:	15%	37%
Don't know:	7%	6%

"Kenya Round 7 Summary of Results." Afrobarometer. Last modified, 2016.

"Botswana Round 7 Summary of Results." Afrobarometer. Last modified, 2017.

The percentage of Batswana who trust the president "a lot" is much higher than the same category of Kenyans; these numbers are 48% and 36% respectively. However, when the responses "somewhat" and "a lot" are combined, 62% of Kenyans trust the president compared to only 60% of Batswana. This is surprising due to the lack of corruption in Botswana; thus, this data does not entirely support Easterly's hypothesis. It is possible, however, that this question does not distinguish between the office of the executive as an institution, and the person occupying the office. This may change the numbers reported here.

Kenyans trust parliament at a far lower rate than Batswana. Only 17% of Kenyans trust parliament "a lot," compared to 33% of Batswana. When these categories are increased to include "somewhat" as a response, the data reports that 44% of Kenyans trust parliament "a lot" or "somewhat," compared to 51% of Batswana.

Finally, Kenyan's trust in the electoral commission is lower than the trust Batswana afford their own electoral commission. The difference in these levels of trust in parliament and the electoral commission supports the argument made by Easterly: corrupt institutions correlate with high levels of ethnic conflict. Furthermore, I suggest that the perception of government institutions as untrustworthy in Kenya aids in strengthening patronage networks as viable alternatives. As institutions are considered legitimate in Botswana, ethnic patronage networks do not present a necessary alternative. As long as institutions remain less trustworthy than ethnic patronage networks in Kenya, I predict the latter will remain as robust as ever.

CHAPTER FOUR

ETHNIC POLITICS

Ethnic politics is a term that describes the character of political competition. Ethnic politics occur when ethnicity is used as a mobilization tool by elites to achieve electoral or policy goals. Ethnic politics are particular: politicians who utilize ethnic politics seek to achieve advancement for one group in society relative to others. At best, ethnic politics serve to accentuate differences among ethnic groups, promote regionalism and patronage, and encourage exclusionary campaign rhetoric. At worst, ethnic politics are a prelude to ethnic violence.

Ethnic politics are not absent from Kenya nor Botswana but exist at vastly different levels. Scholars have described Kenya's entire political system in terms of ethnic politics, while Botswana has had few, intermittent periods of ethnic politics. This chapter compares ethnic politics and their effects on ethnic conflict in both countries. The chapter is organized as follows: the first section summarizes literature on ethnic politics, the second section details how ethnicity is politicized in Kenya and Botswana, and the final section concludes with an analysis and summary.

SECTION ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Africanist scholar Shaheen Mozzafar, ethnic politics, or politicized ethnicity, is "a strategically rational behavior involving the contingent activation of objective ethnic markers by political elites to form groups, define group interests and organize collective action to advance political goals."¹⁴⁰ In order to achieve a political goal, elites use ethnicity as a tool by which to mobilize supporters. They do this by making appeals to ethnic identities.

Oolo defines the goals of ethnic politics thus: "ethnic politics seeks to advance the interests of a particular group in society, the members of which often share and unite around common experiences of actual or perceived social and economic injustice, relative to the wider society of which they form part of and exist."¹⁴¹ Oyugi suggests that ethnic politics take place in situations where there is inequitable access to resources. He writes that "these situations give rise to the emergence of the 'in' group and the 'out' group with the latter trying to break the structure of inequality as the former responds by building barriers to access that ensure the continuation of its privileged position. At the center of this scenario

¹⁴⁰ Mozzafar, Shaheen. "The Politicization of Ethnic Cleavages: Theoretical Lessons with Empirical Data from Africa." *Working Paper: 2007 ECPR Workshop on "Politicizing Socio-Cultural Structures: Elite and Mass Perspectives on Cleavages* (2007).

¹⁴¹ Oogo, Lilian A. "State Building, Democratization and the Role of Ethnic Political Identity: A Case Study of Kenya." University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. 2014.

are the elites who, feeling excluded or threatened with exclusion, begin to evoke ethnic ideology in the hope of establishing a reliable base of support to fight what is purely personal and/or elite interests.”¹⁴²

There are several common features of societies that are characterized by ethnic politics. First, political parties are dominated by one ethnic group. These parties pursue the interests of one ethnic group alone, and political platforms are about ‘who,’ not ‘what.’ This means that the identity of the candidates and members is more important than ideology or policies. Rather than political dialogue centered around ideologies, or differing policy visions for the country, politics in these societies center around which ethnic group will gain power – to the detriment of other groups. In these systems, people are often distrustful of government and government institutions, as the political victory of the opposition heralds the elevation of one ethnic group over the others. This heightens the stakes of political loss and victory, and makes extreme rhetoric, character assassination, and even violence plausible options.¹⁴³

Additionally, elections are decided almost entirely by ethnic voting patterns. Horowitz refers to this occurrence as an “ethnic census.” Essentially, electoral results can be accurately predicted with a glance at a country’s ethnic populations. Each ethnic group votes for a party, and that party’s membership is made entirely of one ethnic group. There are no swing voters, nor are there realistic attempts to campaign to voters from other ethnic groups. A common political tactic is to scare voters into voting along ethnic lines.¹⁴⁴

Finally, societies characterized by ethnic politics experience ethnic hegemony. Ethnic hegemony means that one’s ethnic group is either in or out of power – there is no real shared power at the national level. The group that is in power confers power and benefits to fellow ethnic group members, while ‘out-groups’ are excluded from these benefits. When this is a continual pattern, ‘out-groups’ are further incentivized to achieve political office, and in desperation, are more likely to use extra-legal means to do so.¹⁴⁵

Ethnic politics often result in ethnic conflict. Recall the definition of ethnic conflict from the first chapter: a struggle in which the aim is to advance the interests of a specific ethnic group and simultaneously to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rival groups. When political parties engage in ethnic

¹⁴² Oyugi, Walter. "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya." *Addis Ababa* (2000). (pp 6)

¹⁴³ Lublin, David. "Electoral Systems, Ethnic Heterogeneity and Party System Fragmentation." *British Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 2 (2017): 373-89.

¹⁴⁴ Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid

hegemony politics, entire groups are excluded from resources or political decision-making, which can neutralize, injure, or eliminate rival groups. These situations can quickly devolve into violence.¹⁴⁶

Violence is not always an outcome of ethnic politics; there are instances where political appeals designed to incite violence are ineffective. It is only under some circumstances that ethnic politics lead to violence. Klaus and Mitchell investigate the circumstances under which political elites mobilize supporters to fight. They suggest that in emerging democracies, ethnic groups often consider elections as a chance to alter the distribution of land rights or other resources. Thus, political elites utilize grievance appeals to mobilize collective action during elections, claiming that land rights or access to other resources hinges on the outcome of the election. This establishes a logic to violence. These appeals to violence are particularly effective when citizens believe that upcoming elections may jeopardize their access to vital resources. When citizens do not see elections as a credible threat to their resources, violence is unlikely regardless of the extremism of elite rhetoric.¹⁴⁷

The next section details the presence of ethnic politics in Kenya and Botswana. Particular detail is devoted to the presence of ethnic political parties, and violence as a result of ethnic politics.

SECTION TWO: ETHNIC POLITICS IN KENYA

Ethnicity is highly politicized in Kenya. This is particularly evident when the country's ELF and PREG scores are compared to those of Botswana. While both Kenya and Botswana are diverse, scoring ELF 0.83 and 0.51 respectively, Botswana scores a zero on the PREG index, and Kenya scores a 0.57. As detailed in chapter one, the ELF index measures the ethnic diversity of a country, while the PREG index measures ethnic groups that are engaged in ethnic politics.¹⁴⁸ These two measures demonstrate the relative political importance of ethnicity in both countries: in Botswana, ethnic issues are rarely politicized, while in Kenya, ethnicity is central to the political debate. According to a report by the Kenyan Human Rights Commission, ethnicity "is the primary means of political mobilization."¹⁴⁹

Ethnicity overpowers nearly all other means of political identification in Kenya. During the 2017 election cycle, ethnicity predicted voter turnout, mobilization and party affiliation; it predicted trust in electoral institutions, credibility of the election, and belief in the freedom and fairness of the electoral process. After the results were announced, ethnicity predicted rejection of the election results, patterns

¹⁴⁶ Oyugi, Walter. "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya." *Addis Ababa* (2000).

¹⁴⁷ Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. "Land Grievances and the Mobilization of Electoral Violence: Evidence from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 5 (2015): 622-35.

¹⁴⁸ See the first chapter for a more detailed explanation of these measures.

¹⁴⁹ Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahi. "Ethnicity and Politicization in Kenya." Kenya Human Rights Commission. Last modified May, 2018.

It is important to note that this opinion comes from the Kenyan Human Rights Commission. Due to the impartiality with which it is written, as well as the quality of the scholarship, I believe this report is unbiased.

of police brutality, destruction of property, and widespread violence.¹⁵⁰ The predominance of ethnicity in political identification is not new: ethnicity has served as a tool for political mobilization since Kenya's independence.¹⁵¹

Before colonization by the British, ethnic groups in Kenya were generally egalitarian, interacting through marriage, warfare, trade and migration. None of these interactions were accompanied by rhetoric about the ethnic "other." Such a concept was foreign to pre-colonial Kenya. The arrival of the British restructured Kenyan society and introduced the concept of ethnicity. The colonial state sought to structure and define society, categorizing and regulating everything from access to resources, land access, movement, and ethnic identity. Of more consequence, the British employed a divide and conquer strategy by accentuating differences among groups and allocating jobs and resources along ethnic lines. One of the more divisive policies employed was to quite literally divide ethnic groups into segregated administrative units. This policy lumped numerous communities together under new labels: thus, groups with a common Bantu language in the Northern Kavirondo region became the "Luhya", while groups speaking Nandi were amalgamated and renamed the Kalenjin. Beyond creating ethnic identities, the colonial government also propagated the idea that certain ethnic groups were the primordial, rightful owners of particular parts of the country. The British divided the country into eight administrative districts, each "home" to an ethnic group.¹⁵²

Because the British also restricted migration between the provinces, political associations during the colonial period were ethnically based. The beginnings of political organizations such as the Baluhya Political Union, Kalenjin Union and the Kikuyu Central Association all formed along ethnic lines. After the Mau Mau revolt, the colonial government banned nationwide political parties, restricting party formation to the district level. District-level parties formed along ethnic lines as well.¹⁵³

The ban on national political parties was lifted in 1960. By 1961, two major national political parties had formed: the Kenya National African Union (KANU) and the Kenya Africa Democratic Union (KADU). These parties were more similar to loose ethnic coalitions, however. KANU was a coalition of Kikuyu and Luo, while KADU was an opposing alliance of ethnic groups that felt threatened by the large numbers of KANU. Thus, by independence in 1963, the political arena was already characterized by ethnic politics. One year after independence, KADU dissolved, creating a one-party state. This was short-lived, as divisions between Jomo Kenyatta and vice president Oginga Odinga, resulted in the formation

¹⁵⁰ Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahiu. "Ethnicity and Politicization in Kenya."

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Ibid

of the Kenya's People's Union (KPU) upon Odinga's resignation from KANU. The KPU was banned in 1969, returning Kenya to a one-party state.¹⁵⁴

The country remained a one-party state by law until 1982; KANU, however, remained the only functioning political party until 1991 when a constitutional amendment allowed the formation of other parties. During the one-party era, opposition sentiments were harshly suppressed.

Ethnic politics permeated this period, continuing with Jomo Kenyatta. While Kenyatta's rhetoric was that of national unity, his politics were near-opposite. Ethnic politics strengthened his political position, as well as that of his successor, Daniel arap Moi. During the one-party era, political power and wealth concentrated in the ethnic groups of both presidents through patronage networks. Both Kenyatta and Moi were known to use political appointments as rewards for loyalty, and to pack their cabinets with members of their own ethnic groups. By the end of Kenyatta's tenure, he had created a Kikuyu hegemony. Moi, a Kalenjin, replicated this strategy and replaced the Kikuyu officials with Kalenjin appointments. This process stoked ethnic politics as the focus of political messaging became which ethnic group should not get political power or resources. Political action was framed as a battle about who should not have power, rather than who should.¹⁵⁵

While the Luo and Kikuyu had been allies during independence, they split in 1969. Instead of ideological critiques, political rhetoric assumed an ethnic tone. Kikuyu who supported Luo politicians were condemned as "traitors who engaged in activities aimed at jeopardizing the Kikuyu hold over the state and its resources."¹⁵⁶

Due to international pressure, the portion of the constitution that outlawed opposition parties was repealed and Kenya became a multiparty state in 1991. While there have been efforts to address ethnic politics, they are still the default of Kenyan politics. Political parties still fall along ethnic lines, vote trends are predicted by ethnicity, patronage systems are purely ethnic, and political violence falls along ethnic lines.¹⁵⁷

How Ethnic Politics have led to Violence in Kenya

Since colonial times, land access has been an issue of major importance in Kenya. The fertile Rift Valley has been central to the political debate, which has often been framed in ethnic terms. The evacuation of white settlers from the valley immediately created a dilemma for the independence

¹⁵⁴ Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahi. 2018

¹⁵⁵ Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Hoglund. *Ethnic Politics and Elite Competition: Chapter 2 in Violence in African Elections*. Uppsala Sweden: Zed Books, 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahi. 2018

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

government as numerous ethnic groups claimed rightful access to the prior-restricted “white highlands.” During the 1960’s under the Kenyatta regime, access to the Rift Valley was disproportionately given to the Kikuyu.¹⁵⁸ This land transfer was made possible with the formation of land-buying companies that would sell land that had historically belonged to the Kalenjin and Maasai ethnic groups before the British had settled there. During Moi’s presidency, however, the Kikuyu began to lose political power as Moi began favoring his own ethnic group, the Kalenjin, with government appointments and access to resources. Prior to the mid 1980 general election, the Kikuyu and Luo inhabiting the rift valley formed a political alliance to protect their land and dislodge the Moi regime from power. To counter the political threat created by these two groups, Moi’s KANU party invoked ethnic identity, labeling the opposition as “invaders” and began to campaign around the expulsion of the invaders and the return of land to the “traditional” inhabitants. The rhetoric became increasingly violent, escalating into physical clashes among groups. By 1991, ethnic violence was regularly directed toward Luo and Kikuyu inhabitants of the rift valley. Homes and property were destroyed, and entire communities were dislocated. The violence rid the Rift Valley of a significant number of anti-KANU voters as residents fled the region. It is estimated that the region lost 25% of its anti-KANU voters. The politically motivated nature of the violence was evident on a smaller scale as well: in Kericho, Luo were driven from an area they had settled over 60 years prior to reduce their voting percentage in local elections, and in several other counties, anti-KANU who had reached voting age were denied their voter registration cards. There were over 1,000 people killed and at least 250,000 displaced by 1993.¹⁵⁹

Another instance in which ethnic politics led to violence was the disputed elections of 2007. The aftermath left more than 1,500 dead and 700,000 displaced. Violence erupted on December 30th, 2007 when presidential incumbent Mwai Kibaki was declared winner. Kibaki, a Kikuyu, was a member of the Party of National Unity (PNU), while his rival, Raila Odinga, a Luo, was a member of the Orange Democratic Movement.¹⁶⁰ Within minutes of the announced results, violence swept the country as Kalenjin and Luo ODM voters began to drive “outsiders” and PNU supporters – mostly Kikuyu - from contested areas in the Rift Valley. The removals were extremely violent, involving destruction of

¹⁵⁸ Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Hoglund. *Ethnic Politics and Elite Competition: Chapter 2 in Violence in African Elections*. Uppsala Sweden: Zed Books, 2018.

¹⁵⁹ Oyugi, Walter. "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya." *Addis Ababa* (2000).

¹⁶⁰ The Kikuyu and Luo were part of a political coalition from 1991 to 2004. Luo overwhelmingly supported Kikuyu presidential candidate Mwai Kibaki in 2002, but when Kibaki failed to meet Luo expectations of economic advancement, the coalition fell apart. By 2007, the Luo were more closely aligned with the Kalenjin and were represented by the opposition ODM party. ODM supported Raila Odinga rather than Kibaki. -From Minorities at Risk. "Assessment for Luo in Kenya." 2006.

property, rape, lootings, and widespread killing. A second round of intense violence occurred in 2008 as many Kikuyu retaliated.¹⁶¹

Klaus and Mitchell write that the violence was largely due to the use of land grievance rhetoric on the part of political elites. Kalenjin and Luo ODM leaders were instrumental in the exploitation and mobilization of grievances, claiming that the election of a Kikuyu would lead to massive land appropriation from the Luo and Kalenjin to the Kikuyu. Elite rhetoric was harsh: Kalenjin politicians called for the “cleansing” and “liberation” of the Rift Valley from the Kikuyu “stains.” Thus, the initial wave of violence after the election was partially a preemptive strike to defend land the Luo and Kalenjin were certain would be lost if Kibaki was reelected. Coupled with a violent history and past instances of land seizure, the exclusionary ethnic rhetoric incited violence that resulted in the deaths of over 1,500 people.¹⁶²

Since 2007, there have been two more presidential elections in 2013 and 2017. The 2013 presidential elections were free from the scale of violence of prior elections. The two presidential candidates were Uhuru Kenyatta, a Kikuyu from the National Alliance Party and Railia Odinga, a Luo, running with ODM. Kibaki did not run, as he was constitutionally barred from seeking a third term. Kenyatta won the election with 50.5% of the vote. While Odinga contested the election, the Kenyan Supreme Court upheld the results.¹⁶³ The election was largely peaceful and lacked the widespread violence of the 2007 elections. Scholars Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis identified several reasons for the relative peace: first, several formerly rival ethnic parties formed coalitions, reducing ethnic tensions. Second, constitutional reforms in 2010 gave the electoral system a new sense of legitimacy. Furthermore, the 2010 reforms decentralized some national powers to the regional and local levels of government, thus allowing for opposition parties to win local seats although they had lost the presidency. Finally, both candidates campaigned on a peace narrative.¹⁶⁴

In 2017, Odinga again challenged incumbent President Kenyatta. Kenyatta was elected with 54% of the vote. The announcement of the results was met with protests, some of which became violent. There were 16 people killed in clashes with the police, most of which occurred in regions where Odinga’s support was highest.¹⁶⁵ Odinga again contested the election, this time with success as the

¹⁶¹ Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. "Land Grievances and the Mobilization of Electoral Violence: Evidence from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 5 (2015): 622-35.

¹⁶² Ibid

¹⁶³ Ferree, Karen, Clark Gibson, and James Long. "Voting Behavior and Electoral Irregularities in Kenya's 2013 Election." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 1 (2018): 153-72.

¹⁶⁴ Cheeseman, Nic, Gabrielle Lynch, and John Willis. "Democracy and It's Discontents: Understanding Kenya's 2013 Elections." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014): 2-24.

¹⁶⁵ "Protest Death Toll Rises to 7." *The Pulse: Nigeria*. Last modified August 13, 2017.

Supreme Court annulled the election results and called for a second election, citing numerous irregularities and possible election fraud. The Electoral Boundaries Commission refused to allow the court access to the election data, prompting justices to demand a second election. Judges faced numerous death-threats, and the opposition party refused to participate in further elections until the Electoral Boundaries Commission was significantly reformed.¹⁶⁶ Kenyatta accepted the court's ruling but criticized the justice system. Odinga refused to participate in the follow-up election, thus handing the election to Kenyatta.¹⁶⁷

While recent elections have not been accompanied by the levels of violence seen in 2007 and 1991, this should not be read as an indication that ethnic politics are in decline. As described in the introduction to this section, ethnicity still predicted the 2017 election turnout, mobilization patterns, party affiliations, trust in government, and the belief in the credibility and freedom of the elections.¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, while the major political parties have changed names, they have not changed membership. Uhuru Kenyatta's National Alliance party of 2013 was a coalition of multiple ethnic parties, as is its successor party, the Jubilee Party. Since the 2017 election, the party has begun to fracture along ethnic lines as more than 30 new parties have formed.¹⁶⁹ Politics in Kenya continue to be characterized by ethnic divisions.

It is worth noting that Kenyans do not mobilize around ethnicity exclusively. While ethnicity is certainly the most often politicized of identities, it is not the only one that inspires collective political action.¹⁷⁰ Increasingly, Kenyans are mobilizing around identities such as youth, gender, and religion.¹⁷¹

SECTION THREE: ETHNIC POLITICS IN BOTSWANA

As noted above, ethnicity is not a prominent feature of politics in Botswana. While the country is diverse, Botswana scores 0 on the PREG index. This indicates that despite Botswana's ethnic diversity, ethnicity is not an issue around which Botswana mobilize, vote, or campaign.

Since independence, political parties have not divided along ethnic lines. Seretse Khama, the country's first president, drew wide support from across the entire country. Khama was the chief of the

¹⁶⁶ Duggan, Briana, and Lauren Said-Moorhouse. "Kenya Supreme Court: 'No choice but to accept' Opposition Hacking Claims." CNN World. Last modified September 20, 2017.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahiu. "Ethnicity and Politicization in Kenya."

¹⁶⁹ Omulo, Collins, Ndungu Gachane, Samuel Baya, and Vitalis Kimutai. "Crisis in Jubilee as Factions Fight over Leadership 2022 Polls." Daily Nation. Last modified April, 2019

Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahiu. 2018

¹⁷⁰ Bratton, Michael. "Voting in Kenya: Putting Ethnicity in Perspective." *University of Connecticut: Economics Working Papers* (2008).

¹⁷¹ Biegon, Japhet, Joshua Kivuva, Patrick Asingo, and Winluck Wahiu. 2018

Bamangwato of Botswana's central district yet received significant support from other districts. He also drew significant support from rural areas across the country.¹⁷²

Like Kenya's first president, Kenyatta, Seretse Khama campaigned on a message of national unity. His personal vision was to make the BDP a universally elected party as a demonstration of national unity. As part of this vision, Khama and BDP leadership constructed a party manifesto that pledged to uphold democracy and permit opposition parties. Furthermore, the manifesto explicitly stated the BDP's commitment to create a national state that would supersede ethnic identities. As detailed in chapter three, Khama and the BDP leadership considered national unity to be inextricably tied to economic growth. To this end, mineral rights were vested in the central government rather than in tribal authorities or private companies. This was to avoid uneven growth across the country, which Khama worried could lead to divisive ethnic politics. Unlike Kenyatta, whose commitment to national unity was rhetorical only, Khama and early BDP leaders enacted policies that substantively aimed at avoiding division. The closing paragraphs of Khama's closing speech to the 1966 BDP conference articulates the party platform well:

I should like to close this address by reminding you that we are meeting here today essentially as a party conference, and by impressing upon you the importance of the fact that we had to become a party first and then we became a government, and that our continuance in office as a government depends entirely on the liveliness of the Bechuanaland¹⁷³ Democratic Party, on the growth of its membership, and the continued loyalty of its old members, on the strength of its appeal to the young, on the effectiveness of its machinery as an organization and on the high standards of morals and ethics of its leadership at both the national and local levels. But above all on the promise of a better Botswana Republic that the party holds out for even the lowliest citizen of this country.¹⁷⁴

From its inception, the BDP pursued a strategy of unification that legitimized governance. Elections were central in importance; never has the BDP settled for a mere majority of the electorate, rather, campaign efforts have been robust from the beginning. The BDP has greatly emphasized even-handed spending on rural and urban centers across the country, regardless of the party persuasion of the district. This evenhandedness has even been acknowledged by the opposition.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Charlton, Roger. "The Politics of Elections in Botswana." *International African Institute* 63, no. 3 (1993): 330-70.

¹⁷³ Botswana

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

Like the BDP, most opposition parties are multi-ethnic in their composition and are ideological rather than ethnic in their policy platforms. For instance, the largest opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), has been ideologically defined since its inception in 1969. Originally, the BNF drew most of its support from intellectuals, trade unions, and chiefs, and drew support along class lines, rather than along ethnic ones.¹⁷⁶ An early example of this is the political career of Chief Bathoen Gaseitsiwe of the Bangwaketse. Bathoen left the BDP to become the leader of the BNF, bringing a decidedly left-leaning vision to the party. Initially, the BNF relied on the support of the Bangwaketse of Ngwaketse district, Bathoen's home district, but this support waned once Bathoen retired from politics and accepted a position as president of Botswana's Customary Court of Appeals. If this was an ethnic voting pattern at one time, this gradually decreased as Ngwaketse district failed to vote for Bathoen's successor at similar numbers in following elections. Eventually, the BNF failed to procure many votes from Ngwaketse district even with the campaigning support of Bathoen's wife. A clear ideological and class split became apparent after the BNF won the Gaborone constituencies in 1984. The BNF successfully appealed to the rapidly growing multi-ethnic working class in the capital city, over 70% of whom lived in over-crowded quarters without electricity or standard housing. The BNF appealed to voters based on class, rather than ethnicity, with great success.¹⁷⁷ By 1994 there was an obvious pattern in which the BDP appealed primarily to rural voters in addition to some urban centers, while the BNF targeted urban areas almost exclusively.¹⁷⁸ Today, BNF is a member-party of the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), a coalition of the BNF, the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) and the Botswana People's Party (BPP). Together, the UDC holds 13 seats in the 63-seat National Assembly. The UDC campaigns on progressive ideology.¹⁷⁹

Ethnic politics are not entirely absent from Botswana. Two opposition parties have organized along ethnic lines and many have claimed that the BDP is itself an ethnic party as it has favored Tswana-speaking ethnic groups. Charleton writes that "there is a strong correlation between opposition voting and the politicization of intra- and inter-tribal disputes, ethnic divisions or ethno-regional controversies."¹⁸⁰ This is certainly the case: Tswana-speakers predominantly vote for the BDP and ethnic minority groups are much more likely to vote for opposition parties. The Kalanga of Francistown and the

¹⁷⁶ Charlton, Roger. 1993

¹⁷⁷ Selolwane, Onalenna D. "Elite Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Botswana." *United Nations Research Institute for Social Development* (March 2004).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid

¹⁷⁹ Gasennelwe, Utlwanang. "Boko Unveils new UDC." Botswana Weekend Post. Last modified February 13, 2017.

¹⁸⁰ Charlton, Roger. 1993

North East districts vote en masse against the BDP, and the Okavango have voted for every party but the BDP for most of the country's history.¹⁸¹

Despite this, there have been only two ethnic political parties,¹⁸² and no opposition parties with explicit, exclusive ethnic policy agendas. The only ethnic parties that have existed are the Botswana's People's Party (BPP) and the Botswana Independence Party (BIP). Before independence, the BPP was originally defined ideologically but fractured in 1969 along ethnic lines. The party leader, Philip Matante, failed to cooperate with smaller opposition parties, and instead relied singularly on the support of the non-Tswana speaking Kalanga in Francistown and the Northeast districts. He eventually left the BPP to create the Botswana Independence Party (BIP), which continued to draw nearly all of its support from the Kalanga in the northern district.¹⁸³ The BIP gained national representation only twice and ceased to exist in 1995. These are the only two ethnic parties in Botswana's history. The BPP has since expanded its membership to include support from nearly all districts and can no longer be considered an ethnic party.¹⁸⁴

Opposition parties and some scholars have suggested that the ruling BDP is an ethnic party.¹⁸⁵ There are two primary reasons for this. First, for most of Botswana's history, the BDP has won a substantial majority of legislative seats. For many years, the exact percentage of seats corresponded with the estimated percentage of the electorate made up of the eight Tswana-speaking tribes.¹⁸⁶ For scholars that consider these eight tribes to share one common ethnic identity, this indicates that the BDP draws most of its support from one ethnic group and is thus an ethnic party. Secondly, the BDP has continually promoted the Tswana language and culture at the expense of minority groups and has yet to revise the constitution to officially recognize minority tribes.¹⁸⁷ Again, if the eight Tswana-speaking tribes are viewed as monoethnic, these policies certainly advance one ethnic identity to the detriment of others.

This view is too simplistic, however. As detailed in the second chapter, the eight Tswana tribes are far from homogenous. Furthermore, support for the BDP among Tswana-speaking and non-Tswana

¹⁸¹ Charlton, Roger. 1993

¹⁸² This number does not originate from a scholarly source. I suggest there are two ethnic parties according to my own research.

¹⁸³ Charlton, Roger. 1993

¹⁸⁴ Molomo, Mpho. "Understanding Government and Opposition Parties in Botswana." *Commonweath and Comparative Politics* 38, no. 1 (2008): 65-92.

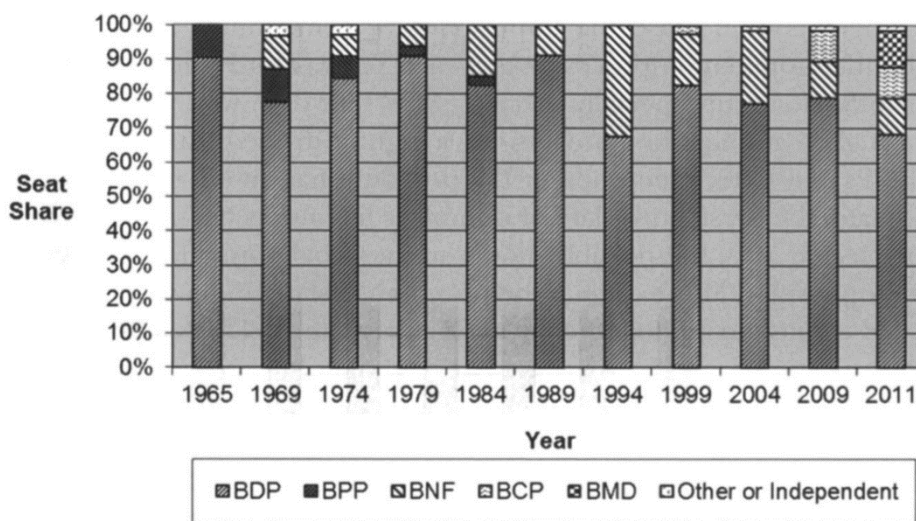
¹⁸⁵ Holm, John. *Elections in Botswana: Institutionalization of a New System of Legitimacy*. Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1987.

¹⁸⁶ Poteete, Amy. "Electoral Competition, Factionalism, and Persistent Party Dominance in Botswana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 75-102

¹⁸⁷ Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, and Bethany Mulimbi. "Pathways toward Peace: Negotiating National Unity and Ethnic Diversity through Education in Botswana." *Comparative and International Education Society* 61, no. 1 (2016): 58-79.

speaking ethnic groups has fluctuated significantly over time. According to Poteete, the competitiveness of elections in Botswana have increased as more Batswana cast votes for opposition parties. Figure 1 records the BDP's seat share in the National Assembly from 1965 to 2011 and demonstrates the BDP's fall from 90% of legislative representation, to below 70%. If the BDP were a truly ethnic party, vote share would not fluctuate at such variable rates. Rather, it would steadily reflect the percentage of the population comprised of Tswana-speakers. This is not the case. The BDP currently holds only 58% of the seats in the legislature, which is below the smallest estimated percentage of the population who speak Tswana.¹⁸⁸ Thus, Tswana-speakers cast their votes for parties other than the BDP.

Figure 1. BDP Share of seats in the National Assembly 1965-2011



Reproduced from: Poteete, Amy. "Electoral Competition, Factionalism, and Persistent Party Dominance in Botswana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 75-102

Furthermore, while the BDP has promoted Tswana language relative to minority languages, particularly in primary education, the party has made efforts to address minority concerns. For example, the government has commissioned several task groups to investigate inequality among ethnic groups in regard to education. The 1992 National Commission on Education recommended shifts away from a singular focus on Tswana language and cultures, and the Revised National Policy on Education shifted accordingly. Vision 2016, a series of national referendums that sought to conceptualize the direction Batswana wanted for the country, emphasized education as well as recognition of minority rights. The BDP government has also commissioned investigations into structural discrimination within government

¹⁸⁸ "Botswana Ruling Party Wins National Elections." Aljazeera. Last modified October, 2014.

institutions and the constitution, such as the Balopi commission.¹⁸⁹ To be clear, the government has not always instituted the reforms recommended by these projects; however, merely the initiation of these commissions demonstrates that the BDP is not singularly focused on the advancement of one ethnic group. Furthermore, as detailed in previous chapters, the BDP has put substantial effort into resource equality across ethnic groups and has not focused solely on Tswana-speakers.

Additionally, the BDP is programmatic rather than ethnic in its goals. The party has strict governing strategies and principles that are based on *Kagisano* rather than ethnicity. The BDP has continually pursued an electoral and governance strategy that is based on government performance. To this end, the BDP has engaged in substantial development projects in rural and urban regions of the country, regardless of the ethnicity or voting patterns of the inhabitants. The BDP has gone to great lengths to avoid the appearance and reality of ethnic favoritism. The party has largely avoided urban bias, focusing political campaigns and infrastructural investment in both urban and rural environments, regardless of the region's voting patterns. The impetus to avoid the appearance of ethnic favoritism was so great that after the 1983 drought and concurrent electoral cycle, the BDP actually failed to provide drought aid to the areas most effected, for fear that that the distributed aid may have appeared to have an ethnic bias.¹⁹⁰

While Tswana-speaking ethnic groups vote overwhelmingly for the BDP, the party is far from monoethnic. The BDP draws support from the non-Tswana-speaking Kalanga of the Central District, as well as the Bakgalagadi in western Botswana. Charleton writes that "BDP choices have been based on the clear appreciation that the party cannot afford to ignore ethnic divisions, and, indeed, must try to transcend them if it is to continue to retain its present levels of legitimacy and remain a truly national institution."¹⁹¹ This, the BDP has done with considerable success. Poteete writes that "the BDP has never been a party mainly for the Tswana-speaking ethnic groups. Instead it has historically won support across Botswana's ethnic mosaic, much like the opposition parties have been doing as their share of the votes have increased."¹⁹²

In conclusion, while ethnicity has played an important role in Botswana, the political system cannot be considered one of ethnic politics. National unity and government performance, rather than

¹⁸⁹ Dryden-Peterson, Sarah, and Bethany Mulimbi. "Pathways toward Peace: Negotiating National Unity and Ethnic Diversity through Education in Botswana." *Comparative and International Education Society* 61, no. 1 (2016): 58-79.

¹⁹⁰ Charlton, Roger. 1993

¹⁹¹ Charlton, Roger. 1993 pp. 348

¹⁹² Poteete, Amy. "Electoral Competition, Factionalism, and Persistent Party Dominance in Botswana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): pp 43

ethnicity, have dominated the policies of the ruling BDP; and ideology, rather than ethnicity, has characterized opposition parties. The two ethnic parties that have existed were unsuccessful, and quickly lost relevancy or broadened their support base. While debates around ethnic minority representation are important, they do not dominate politics in Botswana.

SECTION FOUR: CONCLUSION

The accounts above reveal that while ethnicity defines Kenyan politics, ethnicity is an important, yet peripheral, issue in Botswana. Divisive ethnic politics in Kenya have directly contributed to numerous instances of electoral violence and mass dislocations, while Botswana has entirely avoided these tragic scenarios. The comparison above indicates three primary reasons for this difference.

1.) Ethnic politics are most effective as a political tool when there are significant horizontal inequalities among ethnic groups, and inequalities are material rather than identity-based.

As described in chapter three, resources are distributed far more equitably among ethnic groups in Botswana than in Kenya. More importantly, these inequalities are vertical in Botswana, rather than horizontal. Recall from chapter three that horizontal inequality describes drastic inequality among ethnic groups, while vertical inequality describes inequality among members of the same ethnic group. It is the former that is associated with ethnic conflict. While vertical inequality certainly exists in Botswana, it is horizontal inequality that characterizes ethnic groups in Kenya. This vertical inequality among ethnic groups contributes to ethnic conflict by providing an incredibly salient grievance to utilize as a mobilization tool. While there is significant inequality among ethnic groups in Kenya, the BDP has distributed resources to all regions of the country equitably, regardless of the region's ethnic composition or voting history. Thus, opposition parties in Botswana have little incentive to attempt to use inequality among ethnic groups as a mobilization message.

Politicians in Kenya and Botswana both utilize messages of inequality to mobilize voters, however, there are two crucial differences between these messages. First, in Kenya, these messages are explicitly ethnic. Campaigns often center around the dangers of losing access to resource if a rival ethnic group gains political power. Thus, resource inequality and ethnic identity are inextricably tied in Kenya. In Botswana, however, political rhetoric more often centers around class, rather than ethnicity. The largest opposition party, the BNF, has focused campaign efforts on urban centers that lack adequate housing and roads. Inhabitants hail from various ethnic groups across the country, making appeals based on class more effective. Like Kenya, Botswana does suffer inequality, but because inequality exists within all ethnic groups rather than among them, inequality is not tied to ethnicity the way it is in Kenya.

Second, while inequality serves as a mobilization tool in both countries, it is more effective in Kenya because of the nature of inequality. As detailed in chapter three, Kenyans may suffer lack of health care, educational resources, infrastructure and jobs on account of which ethnic group they belong to relative to the current ruling party. In Botswana, some citizens certainly lack similar material resources, but lack of resources is not tied to ethnic identification. Inequality between ethnic groups in Botswana is identity-based, rather than resource based. For example, while access to clean water does not vary based on ethnicity in Botswana, the ability to learn one's native tongue in primary school does. Ethnic groups such as the Kalanga and San Bushmen suffer inequality on an identity-level rather than on a material level. From the comparison above, it seems that political appeals of this type are not particularly effective in Botswana. While identity inequality is important and has featured in many opposition party platforms, it is class that has been a more effective mobilization tool in Botswana. Thus, my research suggests that ethnic appeals based on material inequality are more effective than those based on identity inequality.

2.) Ethnic politics are more effective when elites utilize historic grievances as mobilization tools.

Clearly, Kenya has suffered a tumultuous period of ethnic relations since independence. There have been two major instances of nationwide ethnic violence, and an ongoing pattern of vicious patronage politics that systematically disadvantage some ethnic groups relative to others. Politicians seeking to utilize past grievances have abundant fodder with which to politicize history. Indeed, past grievances have often featured in campaign rhetoric, such as calls to “remove invaders” from the Rift Valley prior to 1991 and 2007. Assertions that the election of a Kikuyu or Kalenjin would result in a repeat of past marginalization were frequent prior to both periods of violence.

There are no historical grievances in Botswana that can compare to those in Kenya, and no grievances have been politicized in a similar manner. The country is not devoid of acts of injustice and violence, but they have never involved the targeting of a single ethnic group nor have they ever been as widespread or violent as those in Kenya. Thus, the use of historical grievances is not as poignant in Botswana as it is in Kenya. As mentioned previously, opposition politicians in Botswana do utilize historic grievances such as the exclusion of minority groups from constitutional recognition or language discrimination as issues of mobilization, but these identity-based grievances are not as powerful as those based on material resources or loss of life.

3.) Ethnic politics lead to violence when an ethnic group's access to resources is determined (or is perceived to be determined) by an electoral outcome.

Finally, it is worth noting that economic inequalities and historic grievances are constant in Kenya, yet ethnic violence is rare. There are defined moments in which ethnic politics erupt into violence. Klaus and Mitchell write that elite appeals to violence are most likely to inspire actual violence when the following three conditions are met: (1) when grievances are based on relative resource-insecurity, (2) when elites have the ability to redistribute resources to their supporters, and (3) when there are an equal or greater number of “outsiders” than insiders.¹⁹³ The mere presence of a grievance or inequality is not enough to predict violence; rather, these three conditions are necessary. In Kenya, it is apparent that these three conditions were met at times of violent ethnic conflict. In each case, ethnic groups were relatively land insecure. In 1991, land transfers under Kenyatta had benefitted the Kikuyu and Luo at the expense of the Maasai and Kalenjin, who were thus particularly susceptible to Moi’s calls to “cleanse” the Rift Valley of the Kikuyu and Luo invaders. Similarly, in 2007, land insecurity prompted many Kalenjin and Luo to preemptively drive Kikuyu from the Rift Valley before newly-elected Kikuyu president Kibaki could reappropriate land to his own ethnic group. The second condition was also met at each instance of violence. In both election years, voters believed that their access to resources hinged on the election of a member of their own ethnic group. Finally, the third condition was clearly met as the Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Luo make up comparable portions of the electorate, thus they present each other with a genuine electoral threat.

In Botswana, these three conditions are not met. First, as discussed above, resource insecurity does not fall along ethnic lines. Thus, ethnic violence is highly unlikely because members of the same ethnic group may be resource secure, making calls for violence on the basis of resource insecurity non-applicable to many members of the group. Secondly, only a select few elites have the power to redistribute resources. These are members of the BDP. Thus far, no opposition parties have gained a majority in the National Assembly, which could confer the power to redistribute resources. Thus, minority ethnic groups that are not represented by the BDP have never had the opportunity or ability to redistribute resources. Even if opposition parties did win a majority in the legislature, it is unlikely that ethnic violence would erupt given the ethnic diversity of all parties. Unlike in Kenya, rule by the BDP has not singularly advantaged Tswana-speaking ethnic groups. Finally, there is not an equal number of insiders and outsiders in Botswana, nor is this terminology applicable to Botswana in terms of ethnicity. There may be economic outsiders, but these are not defined by ethnicity, but rather by class. Thus, none of the three conditions for ethnic violence are present in Botswana. Therefore, I suggest that ethnic

¹⁹³ Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. "Land Grievances and the Mobilization of Electoral Violence: Evidence from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 5 (2015): 622-35.

politics are most likely when an ethnic group's access to resources is determined by an electoral outcome. This is clearly the case in Kenya, but not in Botswana due to the diverse nature of political party membership.

CHAPTER FIVE

DECENTRALIZATION AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

The ethnic violence of 2007-2008 in Kenya rekindled a decades-old policy debate about political decentralization – a term meaning a return of political power from the central government to regional and local levels. A myriad of scholars champion decentralization as a mechanism to mitigate ethnic conflict, as ethnic minority groups gain more power over their economic, political, and social interests. Conversely, a number of scholars ardently oppose decentralization, claiming that it contributes to ethnic conflict. There is inconclusive evidence as to the effects of decentralization on ethnic conflict.

In 2010, Kenya adopted a new constitution that initiated decentralization. The new constitution created elected county governments, executive powers for governors, and elected assemblies for each of the 47 districts.¹⁹⁴ Botswana, by contrast, has moved in the opposite direction. According to numerous scholars, as well as popular opinion, the central government in Botswana has become stronger over time while local and regional governments have become less powerful.¹⁹⁵

The focus of this chapter is decentralization and its potential for mitigating ethnic conflict. The first section reviews the literature on decentralization and ethnic conflict. The second section details the process and effects of decentralization in Kenya, while the third section describes the increasing centralization of Botswana. The chapter concludes with an analysis in section four.

SECTION 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Brancati, political decentralization “is a system of government in which there is a vertical division of power among multiple levels of government that each have independent decision-making power over at least one issue area.”¹⁹⁶ D’Arcy and Cornell describe decentralization as “the transfer of public authority, resources, and personnel from the national level to subnational jurisdictions.”¹⁹⁷ Generally, decentralized systems have three levels of government: national, regional, and local. Brancati explains that independent decision-making power describes the power each level of government has to legislate over certain matters. In both centralized and decentralized governments, the national government has legislative power over issues such as defense, foreign affairs, currency, and

¹⁹⁴ D’Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. “Devolution and Corruption in Kenya: Everyone’s Turn to Eat?” *African Affairs* 155, no. 459 (2016): 246-73.

¹⁹⁵ Dickovick, Tyler, and James Wunsch, eds. *Decentralization in Africa*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014.

¹⁹⁶ Brancati, Dawn. “Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Successionism.” *Internal Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006): pp 5

¹⁹⁷ D’Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. (2016): pp 250

other matters that affect the country as a whole. In countries with decentralized governments, however, the legislative powers and policy-areas of sub-national units of government vary greatly. For instance, sub-national governments may legislate issues such as marriage, roads, education, health, and other similar policy areas.¹⁹⁸

Some scholars consider decentralization as a method by which to reduce ethnic conflict.¹⁹⁹ Decentralization affords regionally-concentrated ethnic groups some influence over their own political and social affairs, thus protecting their unique interests at the regional level of government.²⁰⁰ Decentralization is also suggested to reduce corruption and thus conflict by creating more accountability mechanisms between citizens and all levels of government. These accountability mechanisms incentivize politicians to provide public goods more efficiently, and to be attentive to the wishes of voters. Decentralization also allows the public to monitor politicians to ensure they are not engaged in corrupt practices.²⁰¹

In a recommendation for decentralization in Kenya, Ghai writes that decentralized systems are accompanied by high levels of popular legitimacy. This is because decentralization provides more participation opportunities for citizens; additionally, decentralization incentivizes leaders at both local and national levels to engage in cooperation and compromise. This occurs because checks and balances are built into decentralized systems, requiring negotiation and cooperation among participants. These structures help to increase citizen trust in government institutions.

Decentralization is based on two primary ideas: first, citizens exercise self-government over local matters; secondly, communities share political power at the national level.²⁰² Ghai writes that it is important to provide roles for states or regions at the national level through some form of power-sharing. He recommends second chambers that represent regions and planning committees. This strengthens the administrative and political bonds throughout the country. These decentralization reforms are expected by many scholars to reduce ethnic conflict.

¹⁹⁸ Brancati, Dawn. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Sucessionism." *Internal Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006): 651-85.

¹⁹⁹ Horowitz, Donald. *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Gurr, Ted. *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington DC: Institute of Peace Press, 2000.

²⁰⁰ Lijphart, Arend. "The Wave of Power Sharing-Democracy" Chapter 2 in *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management and Democracy*. Edited by Andrew Reynolds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

²⁰¹ D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. "Devolution and Corruption in Kenya: Everyone's Turn to Eat?" *African Affairs* 155, no. 459 (2016): 246-73.

²⁰² Ghai, Yash. "Devolution: Restructuring the Kenyan State." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 211-26.

Not all scholars consider decentralization as a solution to ethnic conflict. Hardgrave and Kymlicka suggest that decentralization actually increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict because it makes ethnic and regional parties stronger, thus creating a situation in which parties seek to achieve political victories for their own region at the expense of others.²⁰³ Furthermore, ethnic parties are likely to discriminate against other ethnic or religious groups.²⁰⁴ Brancati suggests that while decentralization can decrease ethnic conflict directly by giving ethnic groups control over their own economic, political and social affairs, it indirectly increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict. She suggests that decentralization increases ethnic conflict by aiding in the creation of regional, ethnic parties. These parties reinforce ethnic and regional identities, pursue legislation that benefits certain groups over others and can incentivize voters to engage in ethnic violence.²⁰⁵

Another criticism of decentralization is that it may reproduce the corruption of the central government at the local government level, where it may become even more pervasive as media fails to highlight local politics.²⁰⁶ Another of the major criticisms of decentralization of power is that it will weaken the state to a point of disintegration. This may occur because regions with some degree of political autonomy could possess the resources and organization for secession. Evidence for the accuracy of this criticism is inconclusive. There are several instances in which the granting of regional authority has led to secession attempts, such as the cases of Yugoslavia, Pakistan, the Soviet Union. There are other examples, however, that seem to demonstrate the efficacy of granting minorities some control over regional affairs: India, Spain, South Africa, and Canada.

The debate over the efficacy of decentralization as a method to alleviate ethnic conflict is more nuanced than the above review would suggest. There are regions in which decentralization has decreased ethnic conflict. There are also countries in which decentralization has seemed to exacerbate conflict, such as in Nigeria, Indonesia and the former Yugoslavia.²⁰⁷ Thus, the puzzle is not whether decentralization can or cannot alleviate conflict, but rather under *which circumstances* does decentralization reduce ethnic conflict. The following comparison of Kenya and Botswana reveals several possible conditions.

²⁰³ Hardgrave, Robert. *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Democracy* Chapter: India: The Dilemmas of Diversity. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994.

²⁰⁴ Kymlicka, Will. *Theories of Secessionism: Chapter: Is Federalism a Viable Alternative to Secessionism*. New York: Routledge Press, 1998.

²⁰⁵ Brancati, Dawn. "Decentralization: Fueling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Sucessionism." *Internal Organization* 60, no. 3 (2006): 651-85.

²⁰⁶ Ghai

²⁰⁷ Brancati, Dawn. 2006

SECTION 2: DECENTRALIZATION IN KENYA

Decentralization has long been a theme in Kenyan politics. During the independence movement in 1963, there was a broad push for a concept called *majimbo*, essentially regional federalism. This idea was spearheaded by KADU, which was comprised of many of the minority ethnic groups that feared domination by larger groups under a strong central government. Ghai writes that “*Majimbo* was a kind of defensive measure, born out of fear, to secure for these, and other groups, powers of self-government at the local level and in respect to local matters.”²⁰⁸ The main goal of *majimbo* was thus to limit the powers of the central government. KADU did not succeed in achieving electoral victory in 1963, and shortly thereafter fell apart – the possibility of *majimbo* with it.

The national government quickly amassed centralized power after independence. According to Ghai, the highly centralized nature of the Kenyan state has contributed to the perpetuation of ethnic politics. He describes the situation thus:

The combination of an executive president with enormous powers and a unitary system has led to the lack of accountability, patronage politics, arbitrariness and the ethnicization of the state. The powers of the president have been exercised ever since independence for the benefit of cronies of the president and for favors of certain members of his ethnic community.²⁰⁹

He writes that the failure of the state to redistribute resources over numerous regimes has made capturing the presidency the prime objective of politics. Lacking access to state resources at a local level, putting a member of one’s own ethnic group into the executive office has become the only reasonable option for small minority ethnic groups. Thus, the centralized presidential system aids in the ethnicization of politics, which in turn increases the chances of ethnic conflict as described in chapter three. Ghai, writing in 2008, proposed decentralization as a solution, which disperses state powers throughout the country. This decentralization of political power throughout multiple levels of government, theoretically removes the singular focus from the presidency as other local offices have control over state resources. This lessens the stakes of winning the presidency. Furthermore, local-level political offices may be more easily won by minority groups, giving them access to state power and to state resources.

He also suggested that decentralization could improve the state of democracy in Kenya. The highly centralized nature of the state resulted in few opportunities for Kenyans to participate in government, which increased the stakes of presidential elections and reduced accountability between

²⁰⁸ Ghai, Yash. "Devolution: Restructuring the Kenyan State." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): pp 214

²⁰⁹ Ibid

voters and elected officials. Thus, decentralization gives citizens closer access to government decision-making, and greater control over policies at the local level.

The centralization of government post-independence has led to a concentration of economic growth in Nairobi rather than across the country, resulting in uneven development across Kenya. Ghai suggested that decentralization would create more opportunities for economic growth in new regional and district governments across the country. He also wrote that decentralization can promote the equitable distribution of resources as well. Centralization has led to the concentration of capital in Nairobi, and there has been little redistribution to poorer regions.

He also suggested that decentralization could reduce the political salience of ethnic identity: In a curious way, the establishment of devolution²¹⁰ can reduce the political salience of ethnicity. So long as a community feels excluded from power at the center and there are no institutions at the local level where it can exercise power or influence, the community remains united by its opposition to the dominant community and most issues are analyzed in ethnic terms. Intra-community differences are put under the carpet or at least hidden from public view. Once a community finds it has outlets for its politics and policies at the local level, intra-community differences come to the surface and become points of contention in the political process at the local level, represented and fought through competing regional parties. Less attention needs to be given to what happens at the center. In this way, animosity toward the center or dominant community subsides, and partnerships and coalitions with other forces at the center bring in forms of political integration (which usually strengthen national unity).²¹¹

Decentralization came to the forefront of Kenyan politics in the aftermath of the violence of 2007-2008. As the violence was brought to an end by the negotiations of the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Team, it was clear that major institutional changes were needed to avoid similar violence in the future. The National Dialogue and Reconciliation team identified several causal factors for the violence; unequal distribution of resources, regional imbalances in development, and perceptions of historical injustices were the three major drivers of violence identified. The centralized state was also identified as a major contributor to the violence, as the power of the presidency increased the competition for control over the executive branch.²¹²

²¹⁰ Devolution is synonymous with decentralization. The term devolution was more commonly used in Kenya during the constitutional reforms of 2010.

²¹¹ Ghai, Yash. (2008): pp 220

²¹² Lind, Jeremy. "Devolution, Shifting Centre-Periphery Relationships and Conflict in Northern Kenya." *Political Geography* 63 (2018): 135-47.

While decentralization was proposed as a means by which to mitigate ethnic conflict, many Kenyans felt that decentralization was actually a way to increase patronage opportunities. According to an interviewed Kenyan politician:

I have always suspected that the real logic for devolution was to allow ethnic elites a second chance to eat. After losing the contest at the national level for presidency and the national government, which left a lot of elites very bitter and organizing their people to fight and resist the results of the elections, somebody must have said: 'You know what, this devolution can help us. For all these guys who don't make it at the top, let's give them a second layer of something that they can take home.' And I think to that extent it has worked.²¹³

There was high popular support for decentralization. The new constitution provided for equality among the counties in relation to the central government, allotting resources to each accordingly. For most Kenyans, decentralization brought state resources closer to them than ever before. A Kenyan Somali political analyst described the situation in Wajir County:

I come from a marginalized group...the Wajir County government just the other day read its budget, totaling a projected annual expenditure of 6.4 billion Kenyan Shilling. Wajir didn't get that in 50 years of government under the previous constitution. So devolution is the only thing that can change this country.²¹⁴

While support for decentralization was widespread among the populace, the position of the central leadership in regard to decentralization was less enthusiastic. 2010, the central government was sluggish in its implementation of decentralization, attempting to protect the status quo. Popular support, spearheaded by the Council of Governors, pressured the government to move toward decentralization ahead of schedule. Under this pressure, the Transition Authority transferred all decentralized powers to the counties and governors three years early. Decentralization was fully implemented in 2013.²¹⁵

President Kenyatta has supported the 2010 constitution and has verbally championed decentralization. This is unsurprising, however, given both the popularity of decentralization, and the significant incentive he and other Kikuyu leaders have to support decentralization, as they will likely lose

²¹³ D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. "Devolution and Corruption in Kenya: Everyone's Turn to Eat?" *African Affairs* 155, no. 459 (2016): pp 257

²¹⁴ Lind, Jeremy. (2018): pp 140

²¹⁵ D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. (2016): pp 262

control of the executive branch eventually. Deputy-President William Ruto, a Kalenjin, initially opposed decentralization, but has faced pressure from his Kalenjin community to support decentralization.²¹⁶

Unlike many decentralization reforms in other African countries, Kenya's constitution has been explicit about the roles and responsibilities of the decentralized governments. Other countries have often left the specifics of decentralization vague or have made specified roles of decentralized government easily-amended or repealed. Kenya's constitution specifically and extensively delimits the extent of decentralization. Reforms include:

The creation of elected county governments, with executive power exercised by governors, and legislative power exercised by assemblies in 47 sub-national units (counties); the reassignment of key service delivery tasks, including healthcare, to the county administration; the redistribution of fiscal resources to county governments, at a level not less than 15 percent of national revenue; and the introduction of a bicameral parliament, with an upper house, the senate, designed to protect the interests of county governments.²¹⁷

Given the relatively short time Kenya's system of decentralization has been in place, a full evaluation of its effects on ethnic conflict is premature. Nonetheless, scholars have noted important indications of the impacts of decentralization thus far. As detailed in the literature review, scholars suggest that decentralization will lead to greater trust in government as citizens are included in more government functions in a decentralized system. Additionally, the presence of more checks and balances may lead citizens to trust the integrity of government. I compared Afrobarometer data from 2005 to 2016 to assess whether this trend is reflected after the decentralization reforms.

Table 11: Afrobarometer Survey Data 2005-2016 Q42: *How much do you trust your elected Local Government Council?*

Not at all/Just a little	54%	57%	58%	45%	58%
Somewhat/A lot	41%	38%	37%	51%	38%
Year	2005	2008	2011	2014	2016

²¹⁶ D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. "Devolution and Corruption in Kenya: Everyone's Turn to Eat?" *African Affairs* 155, no. 459 (2016): pp 262

²¹⁷ D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. (2016): pp 256

Table 12: Afrobarometer Survey Data 2005-2016 Q43C: *How much do you trust the Independent Electoral Commission?*

Not at all/Just a little	35%	73%	30%	49%	59%
Somewhat/A lot	53%	25%	53%	46%	34%
Year	2005	2008	2011	2014	2016

Table 13: Afrobarometer Survey Data 2005-2016 Q43A: *How much do you trust the President?*

Not at all/Just a little	36%	42%	37%	25%	36%
Somewhat/A lot	60%	56%	60%	72%	62%
Year	2005	2008	2011	2014	2016

Source: "Kenya Round 1-7 Summary of Results." Afrobarometer. Last modified, 2016.

The results of this comparison are inconclusive. If decentralization does increase citizen trust in government, I would expect to see an increase of trust in the president, the independent electoral commission, and local governments after 2013.²¹⁸ As predicted by the literature, trust in local government rose in 2014, one year after decentralized governments were fully implemented. By 2016, however, trust in local government had fallen to the same levels as in 2008. Trust in the Independent Electoral Commission followed a different trend, rising from 25% in 2008 (in which elections were widely assumed to be rigged) to a high of 53% in 2011, one year after the adoption of the new constitution.²¹⁹ By 2016 however, they had fallen to 34%, but had not fallen to levels of distrust experienced in 2008. Trust in the president rose from 56% in 2008 to a high of 72% in 2014, one year after decentralization. Trust dropped to 62% by 2016.

As predicted by the literature, trust in the president, the electoral commission, and local governments all rose between 2011 and 2014. Interestingly, these levels of trust do not seem to have held. Trust in local governments decreased significantly by 2016, as did trust in the president and the electoral commission; in the case of trust in the electoral commission and in local governments, these levels of trust dropped to levels similar to those in 2008. While decentralization is still a fairly new

²¹⁸ I expect that the effects of devolution would not be apparent until after 2013. While the constitution was adopted in 2010, full power was not granted to the decentralized governments until 2013.

²¹⁹ Trust in the electoral commission may have risen in 2011 instead of 2014 because full devolution was initiated in 2013, but other reforms to the constitution took place immediately. This may have led citizens to believe the electoral commission to be more trustworthy immediately after the constitution was adopted.

arrangement in Kenya, I believe this preliminary analysis may indicate the failure of decentralization to meet the expectations of Kenyans. The survey of 2014 was administered one year after decentralization, far too soon to capture the effects of decentralization, but soon enough to capture the high expectations of Kenyans of the new system of governance. By 2016, it appears that the expectations were not met as the effects of decentralization had more time to set in. However, as previously stated, this is a preliminary analysis, and further research and the passage of time may reveal other findings.

In a 2016 study of the effects of decentralization, D'Arcy and Cornell found that most voters expected decentralization to result in greater access to government resources through local patronage. Campaigns for the newly decentralized governments revolved around ethnicity and the ability of candidates to provide jobs, development projects, and other resources to their ethnic bases. D'Arcy and Cornell write that "while candidates running primarily non-patronage campaigns got a substantial amount of votes, finishing second or third in all cases, the winning candidates were those who primarily ran patronage-based campaigns and came from the ethnic majority."²²⁰

D'Arcy and Cornell also found that in most counties, decentralization has resulted in fairly high levels of rent-seeking. Elites at the county level have utilized higher proportions of the budget for travel than national ministries and have exceeded the monthly maximum sitting allowance by between 26 and 83 percent.²²¹ The extent of ethnic patronage as a result of decentralization presents a mixed picture. D'Arcy and Cornell measure ethnic percentage of seats in local County Executive Committees (CEC), and find that while in some counties a disproportionate number of seats are held by the ethnic group that matches the ethnicity of the governor, many counties have much more proportional ethnic representation in their CEC's. Nevertheless, the majority of CEC's practice preferential ethnic patronage in the recruitment of CEC representatives. Overall, D'Arcy and Cornell suggest that decentralization has resulted in both local-level ethnic patronage and elite rent-seeking.

There are some ethnic groups that have fared poorly as a result of decentralization. These are very small minority ethnic groups whose relative marginalization is increased by decentralization, because not only do they lack access to the ethnic patronage network extending from the national level but are also excluded from the ethnic patronage network of their home district. Examples of these groups include the Kuria in Migori, Sabot in Bungoma, Teso in Busia, and Marakwet in Elgeyo-Marakwet. These groups lose doubly due to decentralization. There are also "trapped minorities" who suffer from

²²⁰ D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. "Devolution and Corruption in Kenya: Everyone's Turn to Eat?" *African Affairs* 155, no. 459 (2016): pp 262

²²¹ A sitting allowance is a sum paid to legislators to cover the time spent in legislative session. These funds are subject to a legal limit; however, some legislators have exceeded the sitting allowance set by law.

decentralization; these are members of larger ethnic groups such as the Kikuyu and Kalenjin who make up small minorities within counties. For example, there is a Kalenjin minority in Nakuru county where the majority of the population is Kikuyu. The Kalenjin feel trapped, expressing desires to change the county border to join other neighboring Kalenjin-majority counties. Given their precarious situation, many Kalenjin have expressed fears of violence. D'Arcy and Cornell write that while providing access to patronage networks for more ethnic groups through decentralization might reduce the competition between groups at the national level, it can also greatly disadvantage minority groups at the county level. When these minority groups are politically relevant groups "trapped" in a county where a majority of the population are from a group with whom there is historical animosity, the risk of conflict is increased.²²²

Since decentralization, there has been an increase of violence in many of Kenya's northern counties. The sudden influx of state resources coupled with the localization of ethnic patronage networks has in some cases emboldened political elites to seize newly available resources for their own ethnic communities. This has heightened tensions between minority and majority groups in northern counties as new patterns of exclusion and marginalization emerge.²²³

Conversely, it is important to note that there have been no outbreaks of widespread ethnic violence in the six years since decentralization. This may indicate that the decentralization reforms have had a positive effect on ethnic relations, or at least have not contributed to the escalation of violence. This evaluation is likely premature, however, given the short amount of time that has passed since the reforms were instituted. Furthermore, lengthy time periods devoid of widespread violence are not uncommon in Kenya; for instance, sixteen years passed between the electoral violence of 1991 and 2007.

While there is significant evidence that decentralization has not achieved everything hoped for in 2010, it is still early to evaluate its effects. Decentralization was fully instated in 2013, a short 6 years ago. It is imprudent to pass judgement on such a comprehensive reform after such a short period of time. Nonetheless, the evidence thus far suggests that decentralization has not resulted in a qualitative change in the nature of Kenyan politics. Rather, rent-seeking, patronage and ethnic politics now characterize county-level politics. According to D'Arcy and Cornell, "devolution has been implemented

²²² D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. "Devolution and Corruption in Kenya: Everyone's Turn to Eat?" *African Affairs* 155, no. 459 (2016): pp 262

²²³ Lind, Jeremy. "Devolution, Shifting Centre-Periphery Relationships and Conflict in Northern Kenya." *Political Geography* 63 (2018): 135-47.

not by removing rent-seeking, nor by overturning the 'our turn to eat' character of ethnic patronage politics. Instead, more groups are now given their turn."²²⁴

SECTION 3: CENTRALIZATION IN BOTSWANA

Like pre-2010 Kenya, Botswana is highly centralized. This was not always the case, however. Before independence, the British ruled Botswana through an indirect system of tribal reserves. Each reserve was based around a small polity led by hereditary leaders with whom the British interacted. At independence, many of these leaders advocated for a federal system; this, however, did not become a reality and Botswana became a unitary state with a parliamentary system. According to Poteete, the period since independence has seen a dramatic increase in the centralization of political power.²²⁵

The rapid centralization of power was partly aided by the large degree of legitimacy enjoyed by the BDP at independence. One reason for this legitimacy is the carryover of pre-colonial traditions into the post-colonial state. Michaloloulos and Papaioannou describe this continuation of traditions thus:

Tswana chiefs were accountable to the local community both via local and inter-klan assemblies (kgotlas). In Kgotlas, key issues were debated, and all adult males could participate and contribute to the arguments. Moreover, the Tswana king, while very powerful, was subject to checks and balances by senior chiefs, who in turn cooperated with local administrators and various advisory bodies. Perhaps not surprisingly, Botswana's relative post-independence success seems to be partly driven by the perceived legitimacy of the BDP government, which was seen as a continuation of the Tswana rule, based on pre-colonial chiefs, customs, and ethnic institutions.²²⁶

This legitimacy allowed the BDP to centralize power easily during the transition to independence. Power centralization was also aided by the BDP's push toward nation-building through *Kagisano*, as the state took control of natural resources, developed a national education plan, and implemented other unification policies.²²⁷ As described in chapter three, the discovery of diamond deposits has provided the government steady revenue for decades, allowing the state to become the single most important economic actor in the country.²²⁸ A 2003 comparative study stated that Botswana was one of the most highly centralized governments in sub-Saharan Africa.²²⁹ More recent scholarship

²²⁴ D'Arcy, Michelle, and Agnes Cornell. (2016): pp 271

²²⁵ Dickovick, Tyler, and James Wunsch, eds. *Decentralization in Africa*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014.

²²⁶ Michaloloulos, Stelios, and Elias Papaioannou. "On the Ethnic Origins of African Development: Chiefs and Pre-Colonial Political Centralization." *NBER Working Paper Series* (2014): 205-13.

²²⁷ Hope, Kempe. "Decentralization and Local Governance Theory and the Practice in Botswana." *Development in Southern Africa* 17, no. 4 (2010): 519-34.

²²⁸ Dickovick, Tyler, and James Wunsch, eds. *Decentralization in Africa*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014.

²²⁹ Schneider, Aaron. "Decentralization: Conceptualization and Measurement." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 38, no. 3 (2003): 32-56

suggests that Botswana's government remains highly centralized. While country does have two tiers of government, national and local, local governments have little formal authority.²³⁰

Decentralization in Botswana

The central government in Botswana has supported some degree of decentralization. Decentralization in Botswana involves the sharing of power between three kinds of local authorities: municipal councils, land boards and tribal administrations. These local authorities are not included in the Botswana constitution; rather, they were created by parliament and can be abolished by an act of parliament at any time. Thus, Botswana is essentially a unitary state as parliament has ultimate sovereign power in all jurisdictions.²³¹

District councils were established by Local Government Act of 1965. The councils legally have both legislative and executive authority, and are responsible for district development, infrastructure development and district development planning. Land boards were created by the Tribal Land Act of 1970. These boards are responsible for land grants, imposing restrictions on land use and settle land disputes. Tribal administrations are colonial institutions that were retained from the colonel era and now function as part of the state apparatus; these administrations are headed by a chief with power over customary courts, tribal police, and village development matters.²³² The tribal administrations hold the most popular support of all local government institutions, as these administrations regularly hold Kgotla meetings, general assemblies that serve as public forums. These forums serve as places to air grievances, suggest policy changes, and reach policy consensus.²³³

According to Hope, decentralization has largely been a success in Botswana. He writes that there is significant local accountability between citizens and local councils: this has led to greater citizen participation. Local authorities, in turn, are the most vocal members of political society in Botswana, and regularly advocate on behalf of citizens.²³⁴ In this manner, decentralization can be considered to have had a positive impact on ethnic relations, as ethnic groups have access to institutions in which they have real political power.²³⁵

²³⁰ Ibid

²³¹ Hope, Kempe. "Decentralization and Local Governance Theory and the Practice in Botswana." *Development in Southern Africa* 17, no. 4 (2010): 519-34.

²³² Jones, David. "Traditional Authority and State Administration in Botswana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, no. 1 (1983): 133-39.

²³³ Hope, Kempe. 2010

²³⁴ Ibid

²³⁵ Ibid

By other accounts, decentralization has been superficial, as the central government and private interests retain significant power over domains which legally belong to local governments. While Hope's assessment of *legal* decentralization in Botswana is accurate, other scholarship contends that the reality of decentralization is quite different. The management of Wildlife Parks is exemplary of this kind of cosmetic decentralization.

Tourism, particularly safaris and hunting, is Botswana's second largest economic sector. This sector is highly regulated: tour operators must have licenses, leases for campsites, and permits to hunt or enter protected areas. These requirements make entry into the tourism industry incredibly difficult and serve to give tour operators a near-monopoly on the industry. These regulations benefit the Land Boards, Wildlife Department, and high-end tour operations. Rural residents are significantly disadvantaged, as the creation of Wildlife Parks reduces the available farming lands. Not only are livestock prohibited from the protected lands themselves, but livestock are prohibited in areas outside the parks as well. In the case of the San Bushmen, an indigenous ethnic group whose main source of subsistence is hunting and gathering, the creation of Wildlife Parks has been detrimental. Regulations have become increasingly strict, and unlicensed hunters are classified as poachers and are subject to exorbitant fines. Many of the San have been forced from their ancestral lands to accommodate the tourism industry.

In 2007, the government decentralized control over wildlife areas to community-based organizations through the Community-Based Natural Resource Management program. While the program was intended to give local governments greater control over tourism and the use of local lands, it has been met with heated pushback from safari companies, some government agencies, and politicians. Efforts by community-based organizations to assert control over local lands have been thwarted by safari companies, many of whom lobby members of parliament to delay legal proceedings. Government agencies, such as the Wildlife Department, have essentially run a smear-campaign against community-based organizations. Officials offer exaggerated claims of corruption in efforts to justify returning jurisdiction over the Wildlife Parks to the central government. Even the Botswana Daily News, the government-run news outlet, has disproportionately featured community mismanagement of wildlife areas.²³⁶

²³⁶ Poteete, Amy, and Jesse Ribot. "Repertoires of Domination: Decentralization as Process in Botswana and Senegal." *World Development* 39, no. 3 (2011): 439-49.

According to Poteete, decentralization in Botswana has been lackluster and temporary as many decentralization reforms have been subjected to recentralization. For instance, the decentralization of power over health and water services to local councils has been recentralized to the Ministries of Health and Minerals, Energy and Water Affairs in 2009. Additionally, local councils have little discretionary authority as the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development issues narrow policy directives. Furthermore, central government approval is often required for council decisions. Local councils are also reliant on the central government for funding, further hampering their autonomy. Poteete writes that these councils are better understood as delegated, rather than decentralized, governing bodies. Because local-level governments were created by parliament, they can be legally absolved at any time. This is perhaps the most detrimental to the autonomy of local governments. Thus, while decentralization has occurred *de jure*, there are many cases in which local authorities do not exercise real power over domains that have been decentralized; rather, the national government in Botswana has become increasingly centralized.²³⁷

SECTION 4: CONCLUSION

While decentralization has been both recommended and opposed by scholars, the above comparison does not reveal conclusive evidence that decentralization reduces or increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict. This comparison does, however, indicate several *conditions* under which decentralization may increase or decrease the likelihood of conflict.

As decentralization is a fairly recent undertaking in Kenya, an evaluation of its effect on ethnic conflict may yet be premature. Similarly, as decentralization in Botswana is largely superficial, analysis is restricted to the impact that centralized or the recentralization of power has had on ethnic relations. Thus, the following propositions are made with less confidence than those in the prior two chapters.

1.) Decentralization increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict when it creates or recreates ethnic patronage networks and ethnic politics at the local level.

I suggest that the findings of chapter three and four apply to decentralized governments in the same manner they apply on the national level. Ethnic patronage networks increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict by heightening the stakes of local elections and contributing to ethnic politics just as they do at the national level. Ethnic patronage was certainly expected during the decentralization process in Kenya, as detailed by D'Arcy and Mitchell. Furthermore, successful local campaigns following decentralization were based on patronage and ethnicity, mirroring the very problem present at the national level. The ethnic composition of County Executive Committees also reveals a strong ethnic bias

²³⁷ Dickovick, Tyler, and James Wunsch, eds. *Decentralization in Africa*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014.

in which members match the ethnicity of the governor. Beyond a continuation of ethnic patronage and ethnic politics, decentralization has led to some violence, particularly in the northern regions of the country. This violence has occurred largely because of the sudden influx of resources and the presence of new ethnic patronage networks that are creating new patterns of exclusion and inclusion. It seems that the factors that have led to ethnic conflict at the national level have been decentralized along with government power; I suggest that rather than mitigating ethnic conflict, decentralization has simply shifted conflict to the local level.

Botswana has not experienced meaningful decentralization, thus it is impossible to know what effect decentralization would have on ethnic relations. Because Kenya's decentralization transferred national factors of conflict to the local level, I theorize that true decentralization in Botswana may follow a similar path in which local politics divide along class, rather than ethnicity. Because there are no ethnic patronage networks at the national level in Botswana, and few instances of ethnic politics, I suggest that decentralization in Botswana would not be accompanied by the sudden development of either.

However, this is mere speculation as decentralization in Botswana has been *dejure* rather than *defacto*.

2.) *Decentralization increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict when it creates "trapped" minorities within regions with historic politicized animosity between ethnic groups.*

Given the history of violence between the Kalenjin and Kikuyu, decentralization in regions such as Nakuru county has resulted in a precarious situation for the Kalenjin minority "trapped" within the majority Kikuyu population. Kalenjin in Nakuru are excluded from the Kalenjin ethnic patronage network, and fear future violence from the majority community. D'Arcy and Cornell suggest that this situation increases the likelihood of conflict significantly. Of note, the situation is uncomfortably similar to that of the Kalenjin in 2007, who acted preemptively to expel the Kikuyu from Rift Valley provinces when they anticipated the loss of access to the executive patronage network.

As with the prior proposition, Botswana does not contribute much to the discussion as decentralization has not occurred. I theorize that even if decentralization did occur meaningfully in Botswana, it would not result in ethnic conflict, as historic animosities between groups have not been politicized at the national or local level. Thus, minority groups "trapped" within a majority would not face the similar exclusion from ethnic patronage networks.

I suggest that the mere presence of a "trapped" minority does not increase the risk of conflict; rather, it is the combination of a trapped minority in a region with *historic, politicized grievances* that leads to conflict. The presence of exclusive patronage networks only serves to increase the likelihood that real economic grievances continue and provide cause for political mobilization along ethnic lines.

3.) There is inconclusive evidence that decentralization increases trust in government and thus reduces the likelihood of ethnic conflict.

While trust in government institutions seemed to rise in the years immediately following decentralization in Kenya, these levels of trust did not remain steady; rather, they dipped to pre-decentralization levels. While another round of Afrobarometer surveys may reveal a change to this trend, it appears thus far that decentralization does not increase trust in government in the long term. It is likely that this finding interacts with the previous two propositions, however. Given that ethnic patronage networks have decentralized to the local level and have continued to promote inequality among ethnic groups, these factors likely contribute to the perceptions of government institutions as untrustworthy.

4.) Centralization increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict by reducing the accountability of the government to the electorate.

Prior to the constitutional reforms of 2010, the Kenyan government was massively powerful and highly centralized. As described by Ghai, this led to pervasive corruption and patronage politics as the executive was almost entirely devoid of accountability. Recall from chapters three and four that the executive was so devoid of accountability that president Moi outlawed opposition parties. Because of the extreme power of the executive and the centralization of the state, capturing the presidency has been the focus of Kenyan politics for most of the country's post-independence history. Centralization also reduced the opportunities for participation available to Kenyans, which further reduced accountability between citizens and elected officials. It was under this centralized regime that both the 1991 and 2007-2008 instances of nationwide ethnic violence occurred in Kenya.

While Botswana has not experienced any conflict rivaling that of Kenya, the highly centralized nature of the state has certainly contributed to a lack of accountability. As discussed above, the recentralization of land access rights in Botswana has resulted in one of the most blatant violations of human rights in the country's post-independence history. The central government has both sought to recentralize land access and has failed to protect the legal rights of local governments, to the detriment of local citizens. In the case of the San Bushmen, who rely entirely on hunting and gathering, this has resulted in the loss of hunting lands as the government has forced the San to relocate off their traditional hunting grounds. The San have been relocated in poorly constructed resettlement camps, denied access to their traditional lands, and have been severely punished as poachers if caught hunting. The San ultimately face the loss of their entire way of life. While it is impossible to know what the fate of the San might be under a truly decentralized system of governance, I theorize that their plight might not

be so desperate. It is the central government and private interests that benefit from recentralizing land access policies, not local citizens. As suggested by Lijphart, true decentralization gives local ethnic groups some manner of control over their unique social, political, and economic interests, and creates accountability between citizens and elected officials. I suggest that the case of the San Bushmen provides evidence that decentralization may reduce the likelihood of ethnic conflict by giving minority ethnic groups access to the political power to protect their own interests. Recall that the few instances of ethnic conflict that have occurred in Botswana have involved issues such as language and school curriculums – both issues that Lijphart suggests are best left to the discretion of local ethnic groups. Centralization of power at the national level in Botswana that has resulted in a lack of accountability which allows the national government to continue to make policies that disadvantage ethnic groups.

In conclusion, this chapter does not provide conclusive evidence as to the benefits or ills of decentralization. An evaluation of Kenya's recent decentralization is premature, and decentralization has not occurred meaningfully in Botswana. Thus, I tentatively suggest the following conditions under which ethnic conflict may be exacerbated or mitigated. I suggest that decentralization may decrease the likelihood of ethnic conflict when it is not accompanied by ethnic patronage systems and ethnic conflict. Thus, the findings of chapters three and four matter at both the national and local levels of government. Decentralization in Kenya has thus far been accompanied by the localization of ethnic patronage networks and ethnic conflict; thus I conclude that ethnic conflict will continue to occur at a local, rather than national level. Because Botswana's politics have not been characterized by ethnic patronage and ethnic politics, I theorize that decentralization would not produce these at the local level. Rather, decentralization may produce greater accountability and rights for minority groups.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this project has been to discover factors that make ethnic conflict more likely in diverse societies. An institutional arrangement that scholars have long considered instrumental to ethnic conflict mitigation is the electoral system. Many scholars suggest that proportional representation systems best mitigate ethnic conflict due to their inclusive structure. These systems allow minority groups access to government power by awarding them legislative seats that are proportional to their percentage of the population. Other scholars advocate the use of majoritarian electoral systems. These systems award legislative representation according to majority vote, and thus incentivize politicians to appeal to the median voter rather than their own ethnic group. There has been extensive debate among scholars as to which electoral system best mitigates ethnic conflict. Despite this, the preliminary research detailed in chapter one indicates that electoral systems have no impact on ethnic conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. I compared 18 sub-Saharan democracies on the following measures: (1) a country's ethnolinguistic fractionalization score compared with the number of ethnic groups engaged in ethnic politics, (2) the number of minorities at risk, and (3) Afrobarometer responses to questions of ethnicity over time.

A careful analysis revealed that none of these measures correlated with either type of electoral system. Neither electoral system corresponded with a higher level of ethnic politics, higher numbers of minorities at risk, or Afrobarometer responses. Thus, this project has focused on the identification of factors that *do* contribute to ethnic conflict. To this end, I have compared Kenya and Botswana, two sub-Saharan African democracies with diverse societies, yet varying levels of ethnic conflict.

This analysis identified several factors that increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict.

Chapter three explored the impact of inequality and ethnic patronage on ethnic conflict; consistent with the writings of Stewart, the chapter demonstrated that horizontal inequality among ethnic groups is associated with higher levels of conflict.²³⁸ Horizontal inequality describes a situation in which entire ethnic groups are economically advantaged or disadvantaged relative to other groups. In Kenya, horizontal inequality has provided political entrepreneurs with a salient issue around which to mobilize voters. This has led to divisive ethnic politics that have occasionally led to violence. Conversely, in Botswana, relative equality among ethnic groups has contributed to their peaceful coexistence. The

²³⁸ Stewart, Frances. "Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development." *Wider Perspectives on Global Development* (2002): 101-35.

Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has been evenhanded in the distribution of resources among ethnic groups, thus ethnicity is not a salient political issue.

Furthermore, the chapter demonstrated how ethnic patronage systems raise the stakes of elections, increasing the likelihood of ethnic conflict. In Kenya, the ethnic patronage system that extends from the executive branch has consistently benefited one ethnic group to the detriment of others. This has made the cost of electoral loss high, as Kenyans perceive that the election of a member of a rival ethnic group will result in unfair redistribution of resources. Thus, ethnic groups are incentivized to take extreme measures to win the presidency or take defensive measures to defend their assets in the event of a loss. While Botswana has something akin to a state-managed patronage network, it is not based on ethnic identity. Elections are not accompanied by the loss of resources; rather, the reelection of BDP members is associated with the continuation of government-sponsored programs that do not hinge on the beneficiary's ethnicity. Elections thus are not accompanied by ethnic conflict.

The chapter also described the effects of past conflict on current ethnic tensions. Kenya's history of violent ethnic conflict serves as the basis for divisive rhetoric and as a mobilization tool for political entrepreneurs. When this contentious past is politicized, it has served as a basis for acts of violence. While there has been tension between ethnic groups in Botswana - particularly before independence - this has never been politicized and used as a mobilization tool.

Chapter three concludes with a discussion of the way corrupt government institutions may increase the perception of ethnic patronage networks as viable alternatives. The Kenyan state has failed to redistribute resources equitably among ethnic groups, prevent ethnic violence and establish trustworthy institutions that are free from manipulation by the executive. Thus, I hypothesize that for many Kenyans, ethnic patronage networks have proved more reliable than state institutions. In Botswana, institutions have proven to be far more reliable, and largely free from corruption. This may eliminate the need for an ethnic network to perform the services the state fails to perform. Afrobarometer data may support this hypothesis, as Botswana trust government institutions at higher levels than Kenyans.

The focus of chapter four is ethnic politics. To a large degree, this chapter reinforces many of the propositions of chapter three. As suggested in chapter three, chapter four expounds upon the efficacy of political appeals based on horizontal inequality. The analysis suggests that divisive ethnic politics are most likely to lead to conflict when horizontal inequality exists among ethnic groups. This is because the actual existence of inequality serves as a potent mobilization tool. In Botswana, class inequality, rather than ethnicity, serves as a salient political appeal and is often employed by opposition parties.

Additionally, the comparison suggests that material inequality serves as a more effective mobilization tool than identity inequalities – the former exist among ethnic groups in Kenya, while the latter occurs among ethnic groups in Botswana.

Chapter four features an examination of the rhetoric employed by politicians prior to presidential elections. The analysis suggests that past ethnic violence serves as a powerful rhetorical tool and can lead to an escalation of ethnic tensions. In the case of Kenya, politicians frequently cited past grievances to mobilize voters to engage in violence after the 2007 presidential elections. Klaus and Mitchell suggest three conditions under which elite appeals to violence are most likely to result in actual violence. These are: (1) when grievances are based on relative resource-insecurity, (2) when elites have the ability to redistribute resources to their supporters, and (3) when there is an equal or greater number of outsiders than insiders.²³⁹ These three conditions are met in Kenya, but none are present in Botswana.

Chapter five examines the effects that centralization and decentralization of government power have on ethnic conflict. The analysis suggests that decentralization has failed to decrease the likelihood of ethnic conflict in Kenya for a number of reasons. First, decentralization in Kenya has recreated ethnic patronage systems at the local level. These produce the same outcomes as ethnic patronage systems at the national level: heightened electoral stakes, exclusionary redistribution policies, and divisive ethnic politics. Secondly, decentralization in Kenya has created "trapped" minorities in devolved districts. These minorities lack access to patronage networks and fear the loss of political power and resources at the hands of the new local majority, particularly when there has been historic animosity between them. Third, there is inconclusive evidence that decentralization has led to an increase of trust in government, which is predicted to reduce ethnic conflict.

This analysis provides inconclusive evidence as to the impact state centralization has on ethnic conflict. Prior to decentralization in Kenya, the highly centralized government lacked accountability to the electorate, which allowed the creation of ethnic patronage networks and the systematic marginalization of entire ethnic communities. It was under a highly centralized government that both the 1991 and 2007-2008 episodes of nationwide ethnic violence occurred. Botswana, however, remains highly centralized and has not experienced meaningful decentralization. While extensive ethnic violence has not occurred in Botswana, there is a significant lack of accountability between the state and the

²³⁹ Klaus, Kathleen, and Matthew Mitchell. "Land Grievances and the Mobilization of Electoral Violence: Evidence from Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 5 (2015): 622-35.

electorate that has allowed the government to significantly violate the rights of an ethnic minority group.

There are common threads that connect many of these findings. For instance, horizontal inequality and ethnic patronage systems feature prominently throughout the project as factors that increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Below, these findings are consolidated into seven propositions.

1.) Horizontal inequality among ethnic groups increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict. The existence of horizontal inequalities makes ethnic politics more effective when these inequalities are utilized as mobilization tools. These appeals are most effective when inequalities are material rather than identity based.

2.) Ethnic patronage exacerbates ethnic conflict by increasing the stakes of elections. The stakes of elections are increased when an ethnic group's access to resources is determined (or is perceived to be determined) by an electoral outcome. Corrupt government institutions may increase the perception that ethnic patronage networks are more reliable alternatives. This may increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict.

3.) Prior ethnic tensions increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Ethnic politics are most effective when elites utilize historic grievances as mobilization tools

4.) Decentralization increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict when it creates or recreates ethnic patronage networks and ethnic politics at the local level

5.) Decentralization increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict when it creates "trapped" minorities within regions with historic politicized animosity between ethnic groups

6.) There is inconclusive evidence that decentralization increases trust in government and thus reduces the likelihood of ethnic conflict.

7.) Centralization may increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict by reducing the accountability of the government to the electorate

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

This project has contributed to the scholarship of ethnic conflict in several ways. First, this research provides significant support for Stewart's theory of the impact of horizontal inequality on ethnic conflict. Of all the factors examined in this project, horizontal material inequality has the strongest causal relationship with ethnic conflict. I suggest this for the following reasons:

(1) It is the interaction of horizontal inequality and ethnic patronage networks that produces conflict in Kenya. While ethnic patronage systems heighten the stakes of elections in Kenya, increasing the likelihood of conflict, the underlying *reason* that this occurs is the horizontal nature of material

inequality. Electoral outcomes have high stakes in Kenya because the election of a member of a rival ethnic group has historically resulted in relative deprivation among ethnic groups. This has led to numerous instances of ethnic violence.

(2) Ethnic politics in Kenya are largely fueled by horizontal inequality. Divisive ethnic rhetoric commonly features material horizontal inequality as a mobilization tool, and these appeals are particularly potent because of the reality of horizontal inequality. Furthermore, conflict inspired by ethnic politics is more likely when ethnic groups perceive their wellbeing to be tied to an electoral outcome. Ethnic groups perceive this to be the case because the distribution of resources has been historically tied to the executive branch and has resulted in horizontal inequality for all of Kenya's post-independence history.

(3) Horizontal inequality is at the core of the findings of chapter five. I suggest that decentralization leads to the continuation of ethnic patronage networks and ethnic politics at the local level, both of which stem from horizontal inequality. As detailed in chapter five, violence has occurred in northern regions of Kenya because of the unequal distribution of resources as a result of decentralization. Furthermore, trapped minority groups have lost access to resources, resulting in horizontal inequality and a higher risk of ethnic conflict.

This work also indicates several factors that do not cause ethnic conflict.

First, ethnic diversity does not cause ethnic conflict. Both Kenya and Botswana are similarly diverse, scoring 0.83 and 0.51 on the ELF index. Despite this diversity, Botswana experiences very little ethnic conflict.

A country's GDP does not predict ethnic conflict. While Botswana's GDP is currently significantly higher than Kenya's, at independence, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa and had one of the lowest education rates on the continent. There was, however, no ethnic conflict. Furthermore, as detailed in chapter three, the discovery of diamonds could easily have led to the resource curse in Botswana, which correlates strongly with ethnic conflict. Thus, this research suggests that GDP has little impact on ethnic conflict in divided societies, as both resource-poor and resource-rich Botswana has experienced little ethnic conflict.

Inequality alone does not cause ethnic conflict. As explained in chapter three, Botswana has one of the highest levels of inequality in sub-Saharan Africa. This inequality, however, affects all ethnic groups more or less equally, resulting in vertical inequality. This inequality, while extreme, has not led to

ethnic conflict. Rather, it is horizontal inequality in both Kenya and Botswana that has led to ethnic conflict.²⁴⁰

This analysis also suggests that past ethnic conflicts do not necessarily cause future ethnic conflict. Rather, it is the *politicization* of past conflicts that has fueled divisive ethnic politics in Kenya. Ethnic groups in both Kenya and Botswana have histories of conflict – while Kenya's may have occurred more recently, many of Botswana's ethnic groups have contentious histories.²⁴¹ Past conflicts have only been politicized in Kenya. I make this claim tentatively, however, as further research may reveal additional factors that make some grievances more politically salient than others.

Finally, the cross-national analysis in chapter one does not provide evidence that electoral systems impact ethnic conflict. Levels of ethnic conflict did not vary between democracies employing majoritarian or proportional representation electoral systems. In accordance with the research of Fjelde and Hoglund, I suggest that electoral systems are not yet consolidated in sub-Saharan Africa, thus an evaluation is premature.²⁴²

OTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

There are numerous other factors that influence ethnic conflict beyond those examined here; this analysis largely focused on those factors that are subject to intervention – such as the distribution of resources or government decentralization. These factors, however, do not exist in isolation; thus a brief acknowledgement of other possible explanations is prudent. Furthermore, it is possible that other factors have greater explanatory power than this analysis affords them.

A factor that may influence ethnic conflict is an ethnic group's capacity for collective action. As described in the preceding chapters, the larger ethnic groups in Kenya have the organizational capacity to form political parties, and thus articulate demands and pursue goals framed in ethnic terms. Occasionally ethnic groups have engaged in violence in pursuit of objectives. While collective action on the part of ethnic groups in Kenya has had varying degrees of success, some ethnic groups have at least some material and organizational resources with which to pursue their demands – even if violently. It is possible that ethnic conflict would occur in Botswana if ethnic groups possessed similar capacities for collective action. For instance, the San Bushmen occupy such a marginalized position in society that they lack the resources to organize politically. Thus, the San's relationship with the central government is not

²⁴⁰ Recall that ethnic conflict in Botswana has centered around ethnic identity inequality – for instance, the government's promotion of Setswana over other languages. This type of inequality has been horizontal in nature, as language policy benefits entire ethnic groups over others.

²⁴¹ See chapter two for a detailed account.

²⁴² Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Hoglund. "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa." *British Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 2 (2016): 297-320.

one of conflict, but one of systematic deprivation. Ethnic conflict in Botswana may be absent purely because ethnic groups do not have the capacity for collective action – especially against a central government as powerful as Botswana's.

Poteete suggests that the lack of ethnic conflict in Botswana is partially due to the timing of economic success. At the time of independence, the country was one of the poorest in sub-Saharan Africa, thus, there were no resources for elites to compete over. Therefore, the government was initially structured to best promote economic growth in all sectors, rather than distribute patronage or extract rents from existing wealth as there was none. By the time diamonds were discovered, infrastructure for government control of natural resources – rather than private or ethnic control – was in place. This avoided an elite scramble over resources, ethnic group monopolies or conflict over control of the diamonds. Thus, the timing of economic success largely avoided ethnic conflict.²⁴³ This contrasts with Kenya, where the fertile Rift Valley was already of great economic value at the time of independence. This presented the new government with an immediate source of conflict.

Another explanation for the lack of ethnic conflict in Botswana is the absence of government turnover. No party but the BDP has ever won a majority in the national legislature and the BDP has never been threatened with potential losing control of government. Were turnover to occur, or the potential of turnover be great enough, it is possible that ethnic conflict might arise. Given the research done in this project, however, I maintain that conflict would not fall along ethnic lines. There is potential for conflict if the BDP were to lose a majority in the upcoming election this October, but due to the lack of salience ethnicity has in Botswana, I suggest that ethnic conflict is unlikely.

Some scholars have suggested that ethnic group sizes and intragroup divisions impact the likelihood of ethnic conflict. For instance, Fjelde and Hoglund suggest that ethnic conflict is most likely when large ethnic groups are excluded from political power. These groups are excluded because the size of their constituencies present a threat to the existing power structure. This situation is likely to result in conflict.²⁴⁴ This explanation clearly describes Kenyan politics, but it is possible that it applies to Botswana as well. While the research in this project has considered both Tswana-speaking and non-Tswana speaking tribes in Botswana as distinct ethnic groups, some scholars have suggested that the Tswana-speaking tribes are best understood as a single ethnic group. If this is the case, ethnic minority

²⁴³ Poteete, Amy. "Electoral Competition, Factionalism, and Persistent Party Dominance in Botswana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 75-102

²⁴⁴ Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Hoglund. "Electoral Institutions and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa." *British Journal of Political Science* 46, no. 2 (2016): 297-320.

tribes in Botswana may simply comprise too small a proportion of the electorate to result in ethnic conflict. Similarly, Baker suggests that when a majority of the population shares ethnic identity, yet the group is divided into subgroups, conflict is less likely. This is because the divisions within the majority group allow minorities to participate in the political process as there is room for negotiation among the majority factions. This situation may explain Botswana's relative lack of ethnic conflict.²⁴⁵

Botswana's potential monoethnicity is another possible explanation for its lack of ethnic conflict. If Tswana-speaking tribes are best understood as a single ethnic group, between 60% and 80% of the country shares ethnicity.²⁴⁶ Many scholars of ethnic conflict suggest that ethnic homogeneity reduces the risk of ethnic conflict.²⁴⁷ As explained in detail in chapter two, however, Tswana-speaking have diverse histories and cultures, and have operated as distinct polities for much of Botswana's history. While these tribes may share a language, this does not equal shared ethnicity.

These alternative explanations are not exhaustive as there are other factors that likely impact conflict. The discussion above only covers explanations offered by scholars whose research focuses on one or both cases discussed in this research.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This project identifies several promising directions for future research, particularly in regard to current political developments in Kenya and Botswana. As stated in chapter five, decentralization in Kenya is a recent undertaking, thus its effects are not yet fully apparent. Given the potential that scholars suggest decentralization has to mitigate ethnic conflict, I foresee decentralization as a particularly meaningful direction for future research.

In Botswana, current political developments present another direction for further research. As discussed briefly in chapter four, the BDP no longer enjoys the high levels of support it did in the years after independence. Furthermore, as of 2017, four of the major opposition parties have united to form a coalition against the BDP, and plan to run single candidate challengers against the BDP in October.²⁴⁸ Combined, these groups share 54% of the vote. Additionally, Ian Khama, former president of Botswana left the BDP on May 26 of this year to join the opposition coalition.²⁴⁹ This may be the first time the BDP

²⁴⁵ Baker, Andy, James Scarritt, and Shaheen Mozaffar. "Ethnopolitical Demography and Democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Democratization* 23, no. 5 (2016): 838-61.

²⁴⁶ Recall from chapter 2 that the government of Botswana does not publish data on the ethnic makeup of the country; estimates of the percentage of Tswana-speakers range tremendously.

²⁴⁷ Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985.

²⁴⁸ The Botswana National Front, The Botswana Movement for Democracy, the Botswana Congress Party, and the Botswana People's Party

Heavens, Andrew. "Botswana Opposition Groups Unite to Challenge BDP Rule." Reuters. Last modified February 3, 2017.

²⁴⁹ Motlhoka, Thobo. "Khama Officially Quits BDP as New Party is Confirmed." Sunday Standard. Last modified May 26, 2019.

has faced a genuine electoral threat. Thus, both scholars of democratization and ethnic conflict may be presented with an opportunity for analysis of Botswana's commitment to democracy and human rights this October.

Another fruitful direction for research is politics at the local level in both countries. This project has predominantly focused on national-level analysis, and research at the local level may reveal far more nuance to the findings I present here, as well as possible additional explanations for ethnic conflict.

Further study of the exclusive and inclusive nature of policymaking in both countries may provide another avenue for research. Such an analysis may prove useful in evaluations of consociationalism and centripetalism; for instance, further analysis may reveal that the principles of centripetalism best explain the inclusive nature of politics in Botswana, or conversely, that these increase the risk of conflict in Kenya. Such an analysis may prove useful in the evaluation of both theories.

CONCLUSION

This project presents a multicausal explanation for the presence of ethnic conflict in Kenya and the comparative lack thereof in Botswana. While the explanation offered here is well-informed and supported with substantial research, I acknowledge that there are multiple other factors that may impact ethnic conflict that have not been considered here.

This research indicates that the principle agent perpetuating ethnic conflict in Kenya is horizontal material inequality among ethnic groups. This inequality has been perpetuated by ethnic patronage networks extending from the executive branch. These ethnic patronage networks have exacerbated horizontal inequality by systematically distributing resources to one ethnic group at the expense of others. These patronage networks have made elections to the powerful executive branch the focus of politics, as access to resources is determined by the ethnicity of the president. This, in turn, heightens the stakes of elections, making extreme measures, such as violence, a logical course of action in pursuit of electoral victory or as a defensive maneuver in lieu of defeat. Due to the high stakes of elections, and the ethnic character of patronage networks, politicians are incentivized to campaign along ethnic lines and use divisive ethnic rhetoric to mobilize voters. This rhetoric further heightens ethnic tensions and can inspire violence. The centralized nature of the Kenyan government has contributed to ethnic conflict because there is little accountability between the government and the electorate, thus citizens are unable to pressure the government to redistribute wealth equally.

This research indicates that the primary reason Botswana is devoid of ethnic conflict is the relative equality among ethnic groups. To be clear, Botswana is vastly unequal: the wealth gap between rich and poor is immense. This inequality, however, exists across all regions and ethnic groups, and thus cannot serve as an *ethnic* grievance around which to mobilize voters. Ethnic politics do not occur in Botswana, simply because ethnicity is not a salient political issue that brings voters to the polls. Class, rather than ethnicity, is a salient political issue in Botswana.

While research for its own sake may be of value, true scholarship should seek to understand the complexities of our world to improve the existence of humankind. To this end, I have examined factors that increase the likelihood of ethnic conflict and are subject to intervention. These are the causal factors that offer the greatest promise of finding methods by which to mitigate ethnic conflict. I do not presume to offer policy recommendations in this analysis; however, this project does provide useful insights for policymakers, activists and donors that wish to find ways to decrease the likelihood of ethnic conflict. This research indicates that material horizontal inequality and ethnic patronage networks are some of the primary causal factors of ethnic conflict that are subject to intervention. Both of these factors may be addressed by government policies and international organizations aimed at redistribution and corruption reduction. I am not suggesting that there is an easy “solution” for ethnic conflict, or that economic equality would eliminate conflict. I *am* suggesting that ethnic conflict is not inevitable – it is an avoidable tragedy that occurs under certain circumstances, some of which are subject to intervention. Future scholarship is needed to further investigate the link between inequality, corruption and conflict, with the goal of aiding the creation of policies that reduce the likelihood of ethnic conflict.

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