Breaking the Mold:
Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence

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December 2011

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

IFES

25 YEARS

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IFES White Paper

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Executive Summary

Women around the world are playing increasingly visible roles in the political processes of their countries as voters, candidates, representatives, protesters, journalists and as civic educators in the home, the community and beyond. However, as emerging democracies struggle to consolidate, overcome violent pasts and address crippling poverty, they often falter and breed disillusionment. Religious and ethnic divisions may appear or intensify. In these complex contexts, electoral violence threatens – or beckons – women in new ways.

In *Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence*, IFES introduces the concept of gendered electoral violence in transitional democracies and presents a new framework which accounts for all forms of public and private violence committed by and against women. Where current frameworks fail to fully take women into account by neglecting or stereotyping gender-specific forms of violence, IFES' new framework draws on research in domestic violence and feminist security studies to expand our understanding of types of violence and victim and perpetrator roles. This framework can help ensure that practitioners meet short and long-term needs, such as the protection and education of women candidates and voters in the short term, and better documentation and therefore responses to gendered electoral violence in the long-term.

IFES' framework was developed through experiences from women candidates, voters, party leaders and others on the ground and allows for inclusive programming in the field of electoral technical assistance. It is reinforced through empirical research from seven projects in six countries in which IFES' Electoral violence Education and Resolution (EVER) Program collected data between 2006 and 2010 (Bangladesh, Burundi, Guyana, Guinea, Nepal and Timor-Leste). These case studies provide regional diversity and include three post-conflict and three non-post-conflict states.

Women as Victims

According to the EVER data, which documents direct and verifiable incidents of violence, women are most frequently victims of intimidation (32 percent of all violence types against women), verbal harassment (11 percent) and physical harm and group clashes (both 10 percent). In terms of victim types, women were most often identified as victims when associated with a public role (political party leaders, candidates or supporters made up 48 percent of all women victim types). Voters were the second most commonly reported type of victim (22 percent).

What are the implications of these findings when combined with current understandings of gender and violence more broadly? First, the rapid changes in the roles of women in many countries mean that normal risks of political activity are augmented with the risk of rejecting traditional roles and values. Second, familial or social intimidation or pressures that play out in private spaces are not captured by quantitative studies, nor are they included in traditional responses to electoral violence. Third, current frameworks tend to exclude public sexist rhetoric and harassment designed to inhibit and intimidate female candidates, voters and activists. Fourth, such statistics are just beginning to document economic violence, such as pressure by an employer or targeting businesses of an owner's due to political beliefs or actions, and are far from addressing familial distribution of resources or control of childcare. Finally, these numbers and data collection methods do not capture direct, intimate violence; that is, physical or sexual violence in the home.

Women as Perpetrators

Theories abound as to why women engage in political violence, yet, electoral violence perpetrated by women is poorly understood and colored by pervasive gender stereotypes. Women's electoral violence can be better addressed by recognizing how women relate to democratic processes, how they make decisions to engage in violence in this context and how women may constitute specific security threats during an electoral process.

EVER data shows that women as exclusive perpetrators of electoral violence remain a small subset (4 percent of total incidents); however, women acting together with men compose a significantly larger proportion. Taken together, this means that women acted as perpetrators in almost one-quarter of violent incidents. Analysis of women perpetrators reveals that women are most commonly involved in group clashes, verbal harassment and intimidation/psychological abuse. Women's acts of violence employ significantly lower rates of weapon use: 70 percent of women-only acts employ no weapons, compared to 24 percent of male-only acts. And use of weapons by women is far lower than the rates within the full dataset.

Interestingly, the data reveals that electoral violence by women may be harder to categorize than that of men: an analysis of impacts, types and methods of violence found in incidents perpetrated only by women, proportions of data classified as "unable to determine" are significantly higher than in men-only incidents. Overall, female perpetrators are only marginally understood by current research and under-addressed in programming responses.

Recommendations

Practitioners can integrate activities throughout the electoral cycle to address gaps in the understanding of women and electoral violence, to take into account specific risks women face, and to create disincentives for women perpetrators of violence. Many of the recommendations in *Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence* improve upon existing, proven methods, while others push the envelope of traditional programming. In both cases, some steps can and should be taken quickly, while further research and long-term efforts proceed concurrently. Key action areas include:

1. Improved coordination and learning between development sectors can provide better training for civil society organizations, legal aid offices, security forces and election workers regarding protection and services for politically active women, candidates and voters

2. Improved pre-election technical assessments (PETAs) and other analytical tools can provide a roadmap to better violence prevention and victim assistance, as well as insight into motives for women perpetrators

3. Long-term projects in support of gender rights, conflict mitigation and civic education are essential to build trust and open up spaces for peaceful changes in social and cultural norms such as gender roles and the use of violence as a public or domestic strategy to pursue political aims

Introduction

Some have called the 21st century the "Century of the Woman" (Clinton 2000, 2011; Bachelet, 2011). Vast advances have been made in bringing gender to the forefront of human rights agendas on international, national and community levels around the world. Over the past decade, research has allowed us to better describe the distinct impacts of war and conflict on women and women's increasingly visible role as actors in political violence. Yet, gender implications of electoral violence remain on the margins of policy and research, largely because electoral violence sits in a disciplinary grey zone between conflict and democracy studies.

More women around the world are now key players in the political processes of their countries as voters, candidates, representatives, protesters, journalists and civic educators in the home, community and beyond. These enhanced roles enrich and inspire developing republics to extend the principles of equality, legitimacy and representativeness. However, as emerging democracies struggle to consolidate, overcome violent pasts and address crippling poverty, they often falter and breed disillusionment. Religious and ethnic divisions may appear or intensify. In these complex contexts, electoral violence threatens – or beckons – women in new ways.

This white paper explores both sides of this issue, women as victims and women as perpetrators of electoral violence. This paper also lays out programmatic responses for local, institutional and non-governmental actors and the international democracy promotion community. The first section of this paper explains the premise of electoral violence as a specific phenomenon for study and establishes gender as a specific subset in that field, with distinct forms, causes, impacts and solutions. The subsequent sections explore gendered roles and experiences related to electoral violence, among victims and perpetrators. The final section concludes with practical programming recommendations for assistance providers. While drawing on the growing literature from development and women's studies as context, this paper introduces a cross-country gender analysis of data from IFES' Electoral violence Education and Resolution (EVER) project. By introducing gender to the study of electoral violence for practitioners, donors and policymakers, we seek a better understanding of the challenges and potential entry points in this field.

Gender and Electoral Violence

Electoral Violence

While the past 20 years have seen an unprecedented growth in democratic governance, they have also witnessed the diversification of politically-motivated conflict and violence. Increased integration of the world economy through globalization has gone hand in hand with the fragmentation of societies along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines (Wilkinson, 2005). Likewise, the opening up of the non-governmental sphere in many developing countries has introduced sweeping opportunities for citizens to engage with transnational advocacy networks to pressure their leaders and protest absent, inadequate public services, corruption and other evidence of democratic deficit (Tarrow, 2005; Keck and Sikkink, 1998;

Chandler, 2004). Historically dominant trends of interstate warfare have given way to civil war, terrorism, revolutionary and guerrilla movements, failed-states and the complex humanitarian emergencies they engender (Wilkinson, 2005; Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992). Conflict often leaves in its path a reduced, but armed, male population and a large group of impoverished, female-headed households.

Today, politically salient identity lines are evolving under the forces of globalization. Opportunities for civic engagement and protest are growing, especially for women. Along with these changes, the dominant forms of internal conflict have changed – with profound effects on democratic development and fundamental electoral processes for democratic progress. Electoral processes are perhaps the most vulnerable moment in a country's domestic political life. Uncertainty, tension, righteousness and indignation often breed anger and violence during an electoral period. Electoral violence, defined as "any harm, or threat of harm, to any persons or property involved in the election process, or the election process itself, during the election period" (Kammerud, 2011), undermines the fundamental principle of elections as a peaceful mechanism for determining government and diminishes the legitimacy of any election where it takes place.

Given these changes and pressures, elections in fragile and transitional states stand on the frontline between an increasingly complex mix of conflict, identity politics, citizen action and ideals of a democratic peace. For the purposes of this paper, "elections in fragile and transitional states" refers to those which take place within a decade of one or more of the following:

1. Large-scale civil strife, military or paramilitary conflicts
2. Transition away from authoritarian or military rule to multi-party competition
3. Political crisis (constitutional crises, elections following widespread political boycotts, popular demonstrations, etc.)
4. Other beginnings or re-starts in competitive electoral processes, but before the consolidation of regular, democratic institutional patterns, like consecutive free and fair elections

During these highly charged electoral periods, complex domestic conflicts inherited from traditional tensions, civil war or insurgencies re-emerge. New identity lines become politicized and volatile expressions of dissatisfaction cross lines between peaceful advocacy and violent protest. The violence that takes place around elections in unconsolidated democracies can rock the foundation of a state and undo decades of democratic gains. Electoral violence poses a critical threat to peaceful development. While it is often related to ongoing conflict associated with civil war or with general, sustained low-level political violence present in many countries, it is a distinct phenomenon. In today's context, electoral violence in changing democratic contexts may feature:

1. Distinct victims who are targeted for their participation in a democratic process, who suffer the intentional consequences of acts against them or against the process, or who are so impoverished and focused on the struggle for survival that they become victims of de facto disenfranchisement

2. Distinct perpetrators with diverse motivations and strategies, both rational and irrational, who reject peaceful institutional channels of making their voice heard in favor of disruptive tactics and physical harm

3. Distinct forms, tactics and strategies to disrupt legitimate electoral processes, to disenfranchise, or to protest, pressure or punish perceived illegitimate electoral events

4. Distinct geography, including urban mobilizations, national and transnational crisis-communications, and the victimization of vulnerable rural and internally displaced population

5. Distinct time/space including all phases of the electoral cycle (pre-, during and post-elections)

The exceptionally high cost of setbacks and failure at this juncture make the study of electoral violence critical for citizens around the world. Yet, study of the topic has frequently excluded half of the population – women of developing states who become victims of this distinct form of violence and support or employ violent means to express and enforce their political aspirations.

The Gendered Nature of Electoral violence

General violence is often defined as an assault on a person's physical and mental integrity. While the most frequently used definition of electoral violence (cited above) is broadly encompassing, its application to specific types of violence is influenced by its origins in an earlier characterization:

> *Electoral conflict and violence can be defined as any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or to otherwise influence an electoral process.* (Fischer, 2001)

Common associations and stereotypes about the nature of political stakeholders and types of violence (i.e., as intimidation or physical harm) have generally led to a male-oriented or non-gendered interpretation and application of this definition. Yet, gender-specific electoral violence has many forms. Gender is defined as "a social construct that refers to social relations between and among the sexes based on their relative roles. It encompasses the economic, political and socio-cultural attributes, constraints and opportunities associated with being male or female. As a social construct, gender varies across cultures, and is dynamic and subject to change over time" (USAID, 2011). All of these dimensions must therefore be reflected in a gendered understanding of electoral violence.

Electoral violence falls into three broad categories that reflect this definition: direct physical violence, social-psychological violence and economic violence. While all of these categories have been recognized and recorded by traditional research approaches in the past, including IFES' EVER project, their gendered impacts have not been systematically recognized, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the nature of electoral violence and inadequate programming responses.

While not limited to women, several forms of electoral violence in each of the three categories take high tolls on women. These forms are summarized below. Note that, although the types are classified

according to their primary category in this table, individual types may overlap between physical, socio-psychological or economic violence. Each type and its forms will be explored in detail later in the paper.

Gendered Types of Electoral violence

Figure 1: Physical Violence

Category of Violence	Form of Electoral violence	Examples and Gendered Impacts	Common Perpetrators
Physical	State and/or Militia-sponsored Violence	Informal repression (Government covertly employs surrogate agencies, such as ethnic or religious militias, to attack supporters of opposition political parties or government critics), or direct state violence (killings, beatings, arbitrary arrests, use of torture and mistreatment by police and intelligence officials, destruction or appropriation of property, violent dispersion of protests, political manipulation and direct incitement and organization of ethnic violence). While both genders are victims of this, it presents particular barriers to women's engagement and political participation.	Police, Military/Paramilitary, Covert Government Actors (ethnic, religious or militia), National Intelligence Agencies
	Sexual Violence	Includes politically motivated rape as a tool of terror and intimidation, marital rape as a tool of repression, sexual harassment, assault and abuse with the objective of controlling, intimidating, humiliating and disenfranchising.	Police, Military/Paramilitary, Family and Community Members, Political parties

Figure 2: Economic Violence

Category of Violence	Form of Electoral violence	Examples and Gendered Impacts	Common Perpetrators
Economic	Exploitation of Internally Displaced People (IDP) and Refugees	May include prolonging IDP status, artificially conferring status, forcing movement, preventing refugee return or forcing refugee return to influence voter geography and registration; misuse/misdirection of aid resources, extortion. 80 percent of refugees and IDPs worldwide are composed of women and children; hence abuse of this population takes a particular toll.	Political Parties, State actors, Military or Paramilitary, Local Strong-Men
	Criminality and Impunity	Increased social disorder resulting from electoral crises impacts women in particular by heightening levels of insecurity and increasing the risk/preventing women from partaking in regular activities that may make them vulnerable to criminal attacks such as working in isolated fields, protecting merchandise in market stalls, etc.	Criminal Elements
	Economic Coercion and Punishment	Economic harm, coercion or abuse comes in institutional as well as personal forms. It includes harm or threats to harm a business, termination or threat of termination of employment, or other threats or theft related to one's livelihood. In families or between spouses, it may include situations where one member or spouse partner intentionally denies access to financial resources to another to enforce dependency and coerce her or his electoral decisions and/or participation. May include theft, preventing a spouse from acquiring resources, forcibly limiting spouse's expenditure on essential goods, creating debts or spending a spouse's resources without her or his consent, preventing a spouse from seeking employment/education/assets, etc. Spousal economic harm disproportionately affects women.	Community, Family, State or Private Employers

Figure 3: Social- Psychological Violence

Category of Violence	Form of Electoral violence	Examples and Gendered Impacts	Common Perpetrators
Social-Psychological	Psychological Intimidation	A widespread tool of political manipulation, and often associated with situations of power imbalance and control in household settings. Psychological/emotional abuse includes rejecting, degrading, terrorizing, isolating, corrupting/exploiting and denying emotional responsiveness in a sustained or repetitive manner. Some forms are most prevalent in the domestic context and may be sub-sets of domestic violence while others (such as terrorizing or degrading) may take place publically by public political actors.	Family and Community Members, Religious Leaders, Political Parties, State-Sponsored, all levels
	Social Sanctions and Punishment	Can include informal means of control (systematic ridicule, ostracism, shame, sarcasm, criticism, disapproval, exclusion, discrimination) and formal means of control (laws, statutes, regulations against deviant behavior). This disproportionately affects women.	Community, Family, Religious Leaders
	Familial Pressure	A specific form of intimidation, control or forced disenfranchisement, this may include spousal or parental pressure on who to support, refusal of permission to leave house to vote, refusal of relatives to watch children for women to vote. This disproportionately affects women.	Family and Community Members
	Child Abuse	"Any act or series of acts of commission or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child" (CIDC) including neglect, physical abuse, psychological/emotion abuse and child sexual abuse; can occur in private or public. Considered electoral violence when they are employed to intimidate, politically control or disenfranchise a voting-age family member.	Family and Community Members
	Domestic Violence	Physical, emotional or sexual violence committed by an intimate partner in the home or in public; included as electoral violence when used for controlling electoral participation or disenfranchising. Forms include physical aggression (battering, hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering behavior; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse (e.g., neglect); and economic deprivation. Nearly all cases of domestic violence cases worldwide are against women.	Family Members

Some of these types of violence are well-documented. Others remain anecdotal and unexplored, such as economic coercion and sexual abuse for electoral ends. Electoral violence against women is perpetrated by actors ranging from state to community to family. It is perpetrated by men, women and, at times, both sexes acting in conjunction. Likewise, different forms of electoral violence vary in impact on different groups and classes of women. These brief descriptions will not exhaustively describe all forms of gender-specific electoral violence, but simply demonstrate that a gendered understanding of electoral violence expands the forms and areas of violence from those traditionally associated with this field. Through this exercise, the necessity of re-thinking the definitions used to address electoral violence becomes apparent.

Drawing on data from IFES' EVER project,[1] the following sections will explore these aspects of gendered electoral violence by examining women's roles as victims and as perpetrators, before concluding with policy recommendations.

Women as Victims of Electoral Violence

Gender mainstreaming policies and equity mandates have been built into international organizations since the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), including the United Nations and its Security Council, the European Union, the International Labor Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The Beijing Platform recognized that a "world-wide movement towards democratization has opened up the political process in many nations, but the popular participation of women in key decision-making as full and equal partners with men, particularly in politics, has not yet been achieved."

Despite international advances in this area, increased awareness of the gender dimensions of political violence is often limited to wartime rape and women remain second-class citizens even in countries supporting gender equity. Stereotypes of women as "maternal, emotional and peace-loving" (Sjoberg-Gentry, 2007; Kaufman-Osborn, 2005; Eisenstein, 2004; Ehrenreich, 2005) have led to generalizations about their role in political and electoral violence – namely that they are almost always victims, not perpetrators. The generalization of women as victims of violence persists because it remains largely true, especially for highly visible and vulnerable groups, including women in rural areas and refugees; of the latter, 80 percent are women and children (PEPFAR, 2006). However, the evolution of women's roles in democratic political processes has diversified the ways in which women become victims of electoral violence.

Specifically designed to capture verifiable data, the EVER project is uniquely helpful in identifying electoral violence of a more public nature. The data analyzed and presented here includes 2,005 cases

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[1] EVER was introduced by IFES in 2003 as a tool to support the capacity of CSOs to monitor, report and mitigate electoral violence, and to enhance cooperation and information sharing between electoral stakeholders. To date, fifteen monitoring projects have been conducted in thirteen countries subject to electoral violence, and several mitigation, advising or risk mapping programs have also been conducted. In EVER monitoring projects, IFES works with CSO partners to train community-based monitors to gather information on incidents and other conflict-related information, verify it, and report it. For more information on the project and methodology, please refer to the Annex 1.

of electoral violence recorded in six countries through the EVER project between 2006 and 2010. The country cases were selected from among those in which gender data was collected to ensure a representative geographic distribution of contentious elections in countries with recent history of violent conflict (Timor-Leste, Burundi, Nepal) and those in which elections did not follow a period of violence (Bangladesh, Guinea, Guyana). The dataset includes:

1. Timor-Leste, May – September 2007, parliamentary election
2. Nepal, November 2007 – April 2008, Constituent Assembly election (originally planned for November 2007 but held in April 2008)
3. Bangladesh, October 2006 – January 2007, and December 2008, general election (originally planned for January 2007, but was boycotted and cancelled; a second dataset for Bangladesh covers the 2008 elections, which ended the political crisis caused by the boycott)
4. Burundi, April – September 2010, covering a series of five elections: communal, presidential, legislative and local (a boycott took effect after the communal elections and resulted in uncontested elections for the executive seat and both legislative houses)
5. Guinea, May – November 2010, national elections which replaced 40+ years of dictatorship and the more recent military government
6. Guyana, April – August 2006, general and regional elections

Figure 4: Type of Violence Distributed by Victim Gender
(Number of incidents involving each violence type)
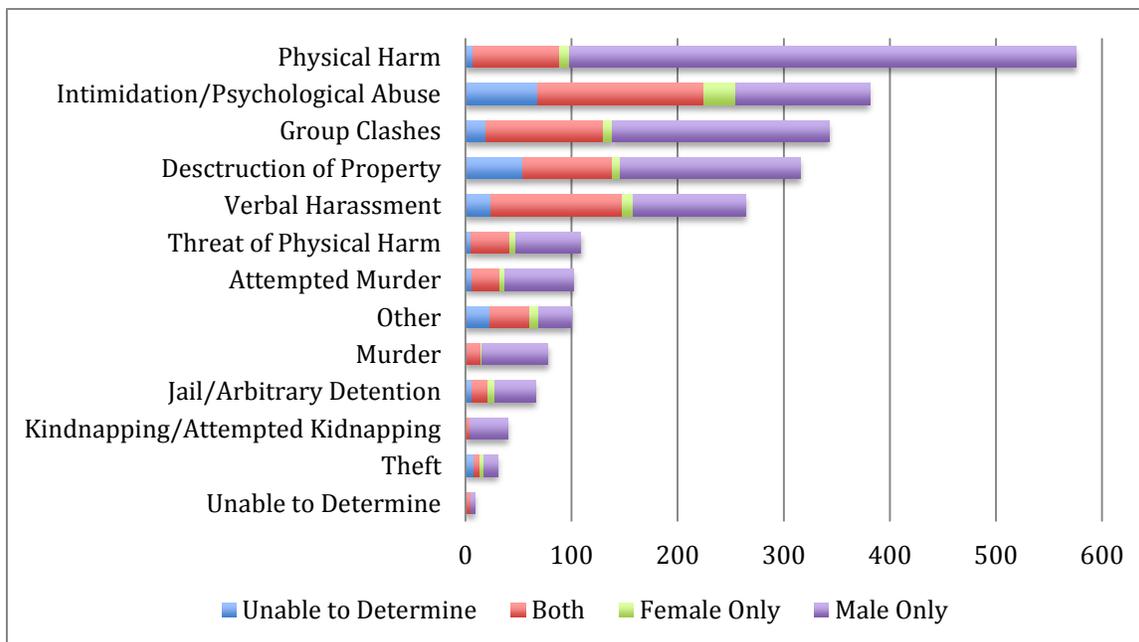
The EVER data illustrates that, while women were victims of all types of recorded electoral violence, in absolute terms they were most often victims of intimidation, verbal harassment and group clashes. The forms of violence most frequently perpetrated on women include politically-motivated theft,

jail/arbitrary arrest and intimidation/psychological abuse. Data measures being used may be limiting the gender-specific types of violence captured on the ground.

**Figure 5: Distribution of Female Victims of Electoral violence
(Percent of victim types)**
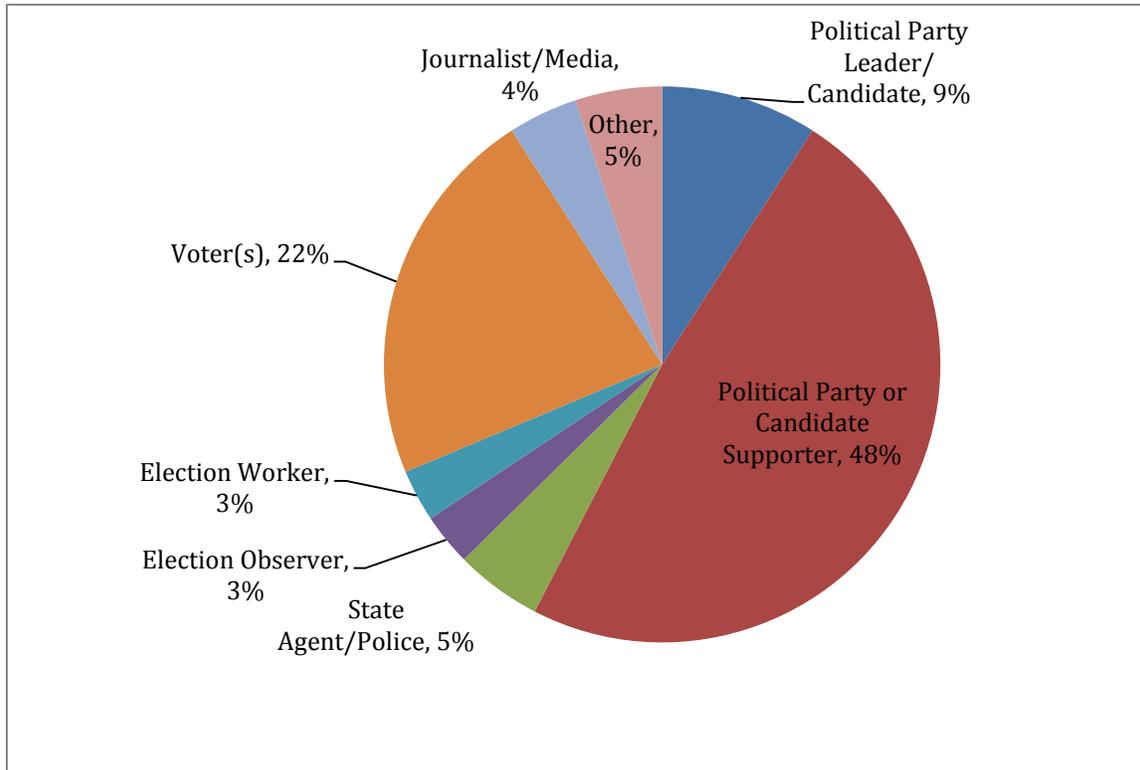
The role of female victims is also clearly demarcated. The data demonstrates that women in the case studies are most often victims in their roles as candidate/political party supporters and public citizens/voters. We now examine these two prevalent roles in which women become victims of electoral violence, as well as a third – women in their family/social relationships.

Women Victims: Candidates and Activists

Those who incite electoral violence against candidates and political activists of both genders have the same objective: to delay, impede, intimidate, prevent or eliminate political opponents and/or electoral processes. Yet, in the case of female candidates and activists, these destructive objectives extend deeper into the social fabric, shaping women's relations to the power structures that govern them and undermining the human rights framework in their countries.

According to Helen O'Connell, violence against women is "used to keep women in their place, to limit opportunities to live, learn, work and care as full human beings, to hamper their capabilities to organize and claim their rights. It is a major obstacle to women's empowerment, and their full participation in shaping the economic, social and political life of their countries" (O'Connell, 1993).

"One of the gravest challenges that women are now facing as a result of their increased participation is political gender based violence against candidates and elected women politicians," wrote Carolina Gottardo and Maria Eugenia Rojas in their study of violence and democracy in Bolivia. "Women are often subjected to threats, attacks, intimidation, physical and psychological violence and harassment by men just because they dare to speak up publicly in a patriarchal society. In Bolivia now, harassment and violence against women involved in politics is the main barrier against women's political participation" (Open Democracy, 2010).

Historically, politically prominent women have become victims of electoral violence through their associations, not their actions. In post-conflict and non-conflict countries, women often rose to political visibility as partners, wives, mothers and daughters of political personalities. In these roles they became targets for political opponents seeking to intimidate and disrupt electoral proceedings.

Electoral violence has evolved from these patterns in tandem with the growing participation of women in politics. In the case study countries, almost half (48 percent) of all identified types of female victims of electoral violence are supporters of political parties. Many writers have noted that women's opportunities for empowerment and their political involvement tend to increase during conflict periods when men are absent and women assume full responsibility of households and increased responsibility within communities from which they would normally be excluded in peacetime (O'Connell, 1993). When democratic transitions follow such conflicts, this empowerment frequently translates into increased roles for women as candidates and party supporters. In countries that were not in the midst of conflict but begin to experience transitions from authoritarianism, as in the Arab Spring events, women may use transitional moments to take more prominent roles in civic life and may expect to translate this into political empowerment as well.

**Figure 6: Types of Violence: Relative Male-Female Victim Frequencies
(Percent of violence types)**
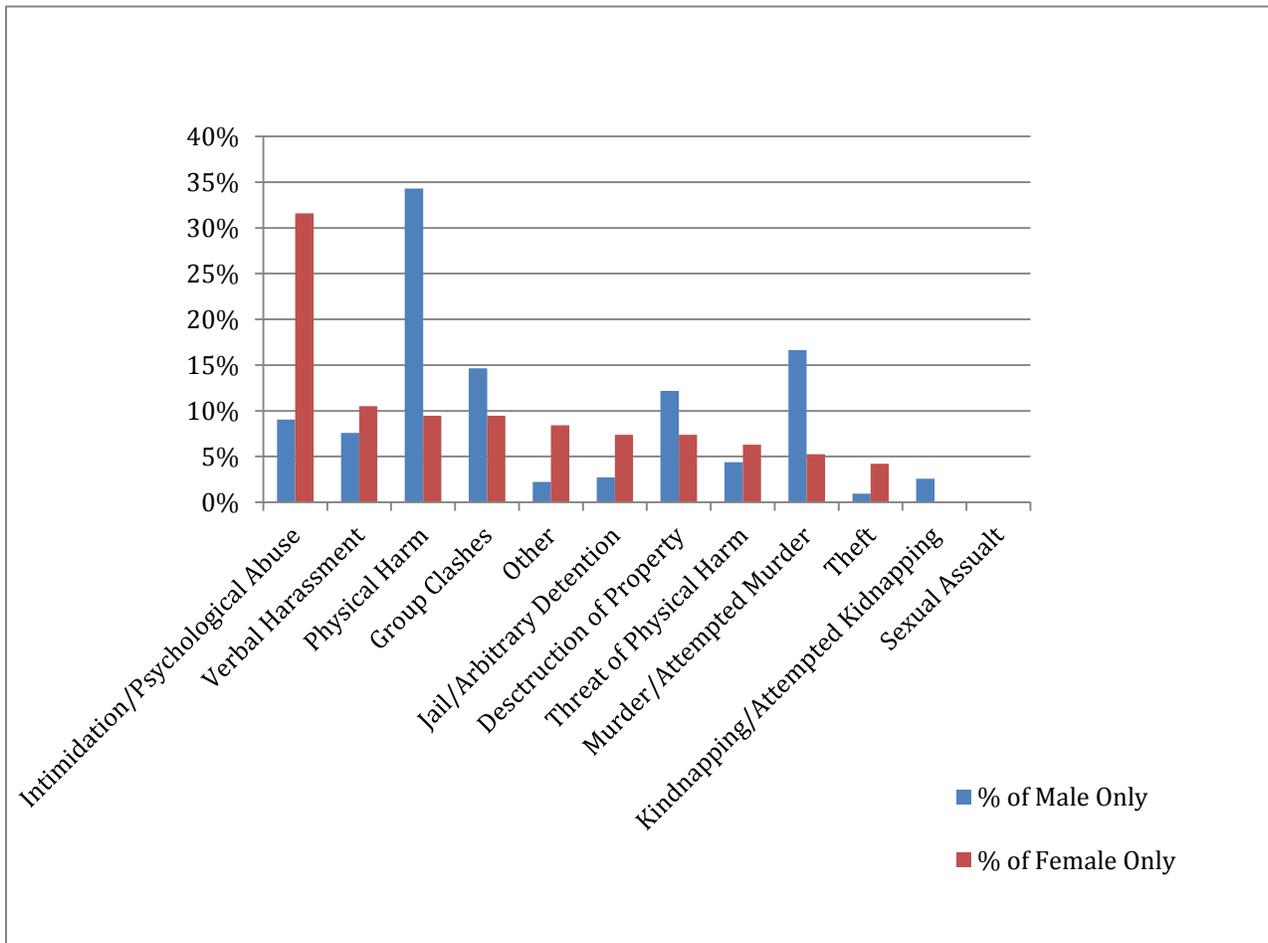
As women's political visibility rises, so does their vulnerability to electoral violence targeted at political leaders and candidates. This risk is frequently amplified by anger against women's rejection of traditional roles and values. For example, in Afghanistan, the Free and Fair Election Foundation for Afghanistan (FEFA) reported that nine out of 10 threats against candidates in the 2010 election campaign were against women (FEFA, 2010). In one noteworthy case, 10 campaign volunteers working for female candidate Fauzia Gilani were kidnapped while working on her campaign; five of them were killed when she refused to quit the campaign. Gilani told the Guardian newspaper that, "Society is run by men, they are in charge and they don't want a woman to be over them" (Boone, 2011).

Analysis of the EVER data shows both the relative significance of threats to women in politics and the ongoing disparity in gender roles in this area (Figure 7). On one hand, the proportion of incidents in which women political actors are targeted by violence is similar to the proportion involving male political actors as victims. Of incidents where only women are victims, 8 percent of all victim types are leaders/candidates, compared to 10 percent of those with male victims; 48 percent of victim types in

incidents against women involve party/candidate supporters compared to 59 percent of incidents of violence against men.

However, when looking at only those incidents involving candidates or political party leaders, the vast majority of victims are only men (69 percent) while women-only victims were 3 percent of such incidents. Similarly, for victim types involving party or candidate supporters, 62 percent involved only men while 3 percent involved only women. This broad discrepancy indicates that women in politics are indeed subject to threats that are similar to those directed at their male counterparts, but that women's presence in these political realms remains behind that of men's.

**Figure 7: Distribution of Victims of Violence
(Percent of all types)**
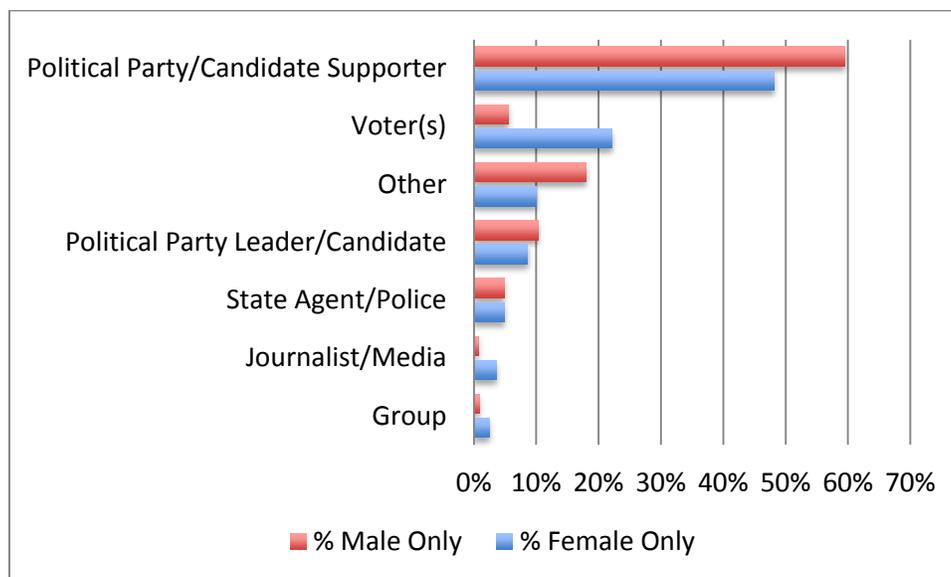
Women are, however, more often targeted as voters than men are. The most frequently reported threat to women is intimidation, which accounts for nearly one-third of all cases of violence against women, and nearly 90 percent of cases against female party leaders, party/ candidate supporters, or candidates. International Alert reports a striking example of the challenges of intimidation faced by women candidates, in this case from Sierra Leone:

> *In December 2009, Elizabeth Torto stood as a candidate in the Paramount Chieftaincy election in Kono District. Directly descended from a former chief, she had received the full support of traditional leaders in her community and was confident of victory. However, the all-male "poro" society viewed her candidacy as a contradiction of traditional practices and vowed to block her from standing. When she appeared in public she was confronted by extreme intimidation from men in her community. "They accused me of starting a revolution," she recalls. She received death threats warning her never to*

return to the area and her supporters were attacked and beaten. Under a hail of stones she was eventually flown to safety in Freetown in a UN helicopter.

In her absence, a loophole in a recently passed law was used to bar her from the resultant election, which was won by a man. The 2009 Chieftaincy Act stipulates that women have equal rights to contest chieftaincy elections, but only "where tradition so specifies." (Kellow, 2010)

This type of explicit intimidation of candidates or political activists is ubiquitous and unambiguous in many contexts. The limitations of the definition of electoral violence and cultural norms do not capture the full picture of intimidation. These definitions and norms ignore familial or social intimidation and pressures that play out in private spaces. They frequently exclude public sexist rhetoric and harassment designed to inhibit and intimidate female candidates and activists. Verbal attacks on female candidates and activists are designed to diminish their credibility and question their competency on the basis of their gender and the enforcement of exclusive masculine stereotypes of political roles, just as other forms of xenophobic hate-speech undermine candidates on the basis of race and enforce racist stereotypes. This was illustrated in the American general election of 2008 when Hillary Clinton "endured a wide range of sexism based on her looks, her family, her perceived manners and how she spoke, and even her own voting base, white women and feminists" (Suissa, 2010) while "[Sarah] Palin was held to lower standards by method of objectification of her looks and sexuality and questioning her level of overall competence" (Suissa, 2010).

All citizens have a right to express their opinions and run for office "without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the constitutions of democracies around the world. Gender equality is a matter of human rights (Bejing Platform) and, when violated through rhetoric and violent acts during electoral campaigns, it becomes an essential act of gender-based electoral violence in the form of harassment and intimidation. While EVER and other media monitoring programs have collected data on hate-speech, data on gender-based intimidation and harassment is lacking.

Women Victims: Public Citizens

Most women, and men, in any given country will never run for office or become prominent leaders in political movements. However, women represent a powerful political force as citizens, voters, journalists, caregivers and educators, amongst a myriad of other roles. It is in these political roles that women also become distinct targets of gender-specific electoral violence. Violent acts that target voters, or the general population, are designed to dissuade voters from casting their ballots, registering to vote or participating in rallies and other political events. In some cases, attacks like this are overtly gender-targeted, as demonstrated by the brutal army crackdown on a pro-election rally in Conakry, Guinea in 2008, when scores of women were raped, or in Zimbabwe where the "government is systematically deploying the most brutal forms of sexual violence to deter women… from participating in opposition

activities" (Democracy Digest, 2011). More often, however, the gendered nature of this type of violence is overlaid with other concerns of class and ethnic differences.

According to EVER data, women voters are the second-most frequent type of female victims of electoral violence (22 percent of all female victim types). These women were attacked either at polling places, during voter registration or during other civic activities. Female voters are victims at roughly four times the rate of male voters (6 percent of total male victims). Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of these women voters were victims of violence in rural settings, which was where the majority of all incidents occurred. Given these trends, women may be discouraged from heading to the polls. This was documented in Pakistan's 2008 elections where, following the assassination of leading candidate Benazir Bhutto, several segregated women's voting locations were completely empty on Election Day, by order of the village elders. Human rights journalists reported that women were discouraged from voting by their husbands throughout the country (Gannon, 2008).

As Figure 8 illustrates, apart from the top two identified categories of women victims (voters and political supporters), women who have official roles as government employees or police officers, election observers, journalists and poll workers/EMB employees are also victims of electoral violence.

**Figure 8: Geographic Distribution of Female Victims
(Number of incidents involving each type)**
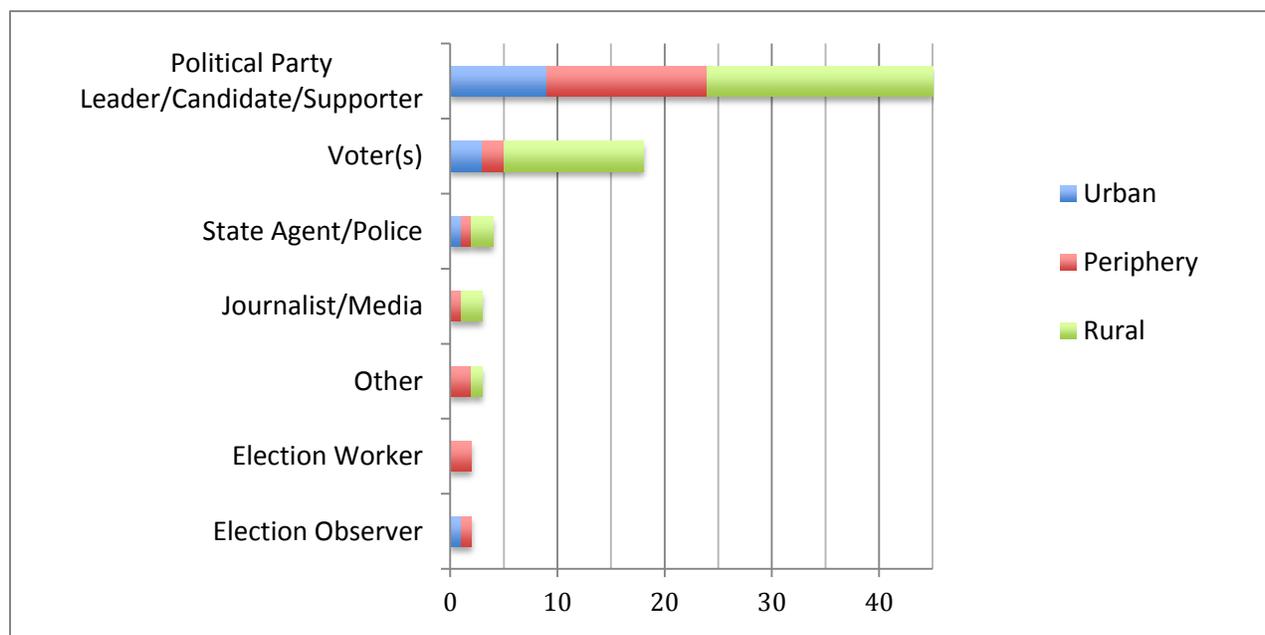
Women also become victims of electoral violence in various forms as public citizens. Documented cases of wartime rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Burma and Bosnia, have demonstrated that rape can be a tool of political violence that not only represses political action, but also represses, dishonors and humiliates the political actor. Rape as an agent of electoral violence in non-conflict states,

like in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire in 2010 (Human Rights Watch, 2011), has the same effect. Rape as political intimidation and dissuasion has amplified effects during an electoral process, making gender-specific violence a high impact tool of political coercion.

Electoral violence against female citizens is often mixed with non-gender related concerns for political affiliation, ethnicity and race. The gender effects of targeting voters or political party supporters for electoral violence at the grassroots level are exacerbated for several reasons. First, working-class women are often one of the most vulnerable segments of any population and generally constitute the largest female electoral constituency. The increased economic responsibilities and power they assume in unstable or transitioning states makes women higher value targets for perpetrators of violence, especially when this violence seeks to disrupt economic and social life. Likewise, women who have experienced civil war or other forms of extreme violence are highly vulnerable to relapses of psychological trauma linked to wartime experiences, intensifying the violence of election period actions and increasing the effectiveness of intimidation tactics.

Second, recent studies have shown that a side effect of globalization is the fragmentation of national identities in weak states (Wilkinson, 2005). As disillusionment and discontent with state corruption, inefficiency and electoral authoritarian regimes grow, loyalties shift (Schedler, 2006; Levitsky and Way, 2010). Young political party systems fall victim to resurgences of ethnic, linguistic, religious and other identities, and insurgent warlord, guerrilla and radical religious leaders seek to control parts of the political sphere, bypassing electoral processes. As these forces attempt to gain loyalty through coercion or persuasion, women become both important pieces in the power struggle and easy targets. Their importance as bearers of culture and tradition make them valuable targets for those wishing to impose radical cultural agendas, especially because attacks on women are often viewed as a strategy to weaken men of the opposition. Women's vital role in local economics means that winning them over or, falling short of that, preventing them from participating can bear significant results. Electoral processes pose a direct threat to these anti-democratic movements as they consolidate power. They often seek to prevent vulnerable populations, notably women, from participating through intimidation and blackmail.

Finally, women are increasingly becoming victims of electoral violence as they join social movements and non-governmental advocacy networks to voice their political concerns, including defense of human rights. Participation in local civil society groups has skyrocketed in the past two decades, particularly in transitional and post-conflict states. Inevitably, as these groups clash with police, governments, rival parties or other opposing groups in both public and private protest, the number of violent incidents and the number of female victims of violence increase.

Beyond these types of direct physical harm, violence against women in their daily, public roles is often expressed in social and psychological ways. Elections in transitional countries often open up virulent, unhealed political disputes, social divisions and, in post-conflict cases, rivalries of previously warring factions remain heavily armed. States already suffering from the social disorganization and eroded authority of conflict or authoritarian rule may find increased impunity and weakened social control during electoral periods. For many citizens and potential political actors, this volatility translates into a

fear of return to or introduction of wartime conditions that have severe impacts on women. Political candidates may explicitly evoke the terror of wartime relations in their speeches and rhetoric. Whether explicitly evoked or implicitly understood, this environment of instability and the fear it inspires are assaults on the mental integrity of its victims, and thus, are forms of electoral violence. Given the profound impacts of war on women (physical attacks, loss of loved ones, displacement, breakdown of support mechanisms, reduced access to food and shelter, etc.), the intimidation and psychological violence perpetrated through invocations of return of wartime or levels of disorder are intense discouragement from becoming politically involved and/or triggers for post-traumatic stress.

Quantitative data from EVER only captures publically-evoked intimidation rhetoric or other verifiable acts of smaller-scale intimidation. Even with this limited scope, intimidation and psychological abuse constitute the most common type of electoral violence perpetrated on women (32 percent of all incidents). However, the primary impact of violence committed against women was "Other Impact" – that is, it was not listed in the categories given. Other common impacts were disenfranchisement, campaign disruption and intimidation. Only two countries (Burundi and Guyana) recorded public or political intimidation as specific impacts; it was very commonly reported in Burundi (37 percent of all impact types) and much more commonly reported in incidents against women (47 percent of all impacts) than men (29 percent). About 21 percent of all impacts reported were disruption of women's voting at a polling station or participation in a political campaign. An additional 22 percent of impacts in electoral violence against women failed to fall into a category available on the EVER reporting forms, as compared to 15 percent for men-only, possibly indicating the need to adapt programmatic tools to gendered concepts of electoral violence.

In addition to these psychological assaults, electoral violence in traditional societies often takes the form of social censure. That is, a community may turn against publically, politically active women who are perceived to break from traditional roles. This is seen through limits on movement and speech imposed by husbands, religious leaders or the greater male community, and/or marginalization, isolation and rejection imposed by older female relatives and other community leaders.

Women Victims: in the Family

Physical and sexual violence against women occurs across all social groups, races, ages, religious and political persuasions. Roughly 80 percent of all violence against women worldwide is estimated to take place in the home and 95 percent of all domestic violence is against women (Advocates for Human Rights, 2006). Women face different familial and social pressures in different regions of the world, such as in Yemen, where half of Yemeni women surveyed by the Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa (SWMENA) Project "report being completely restricted from leaving their house without permission (47 percent) and another 15 percent say they are somewhat restricted." The situation in Indonesia reflects many others countries around the world wherein "women with families often experience certain obstacles, particularly opposition from their spouses. Many husbands tend to resist their views and extra activities outside the household" (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2002). Although it is virtually unseen and rarely acknowledged, politically-motivated physical and sexual

violence against women also takes place within the home and the immediate family, as well as psychological and economic violence, as discussed above.

Although the EVER data was not designed to specifically collect information on violence of this sort, it is notable that almost double the percentage of incidents with women-only victims took place in private homes compared to incidents with men-only victims (22 vs. 13 percent). Likewise, nearly twice the percentage of incidents where women were the only victims (15 percent) did not have an identified physical location (that is, the category "Other" was used) compared to that of men-victim-only incidents (8 percent). This could indicate an inadequacy in capturing the intimate spaces in which violence against women often occurs, again showing the gap between traditional approaches and the realities of the gendered nature of electoral violence.

Another indicator of the intimate nature of gender-based electoral violence is the way in which it is verified. The EVER data on sources of information (always captured, but not included in data entry in Timor-Leste and Nepal) shows surprising differences in how incidents of electoral violence are reported and verified depending on the gender of the victim. Incidents involving only male victims are more likely to be verified through official records including police reports, hospital records and the media. Meanwhile, incidents involving only female victims are most often traced through information from election observers, electoral agents and community sources. Approximately 28 percent of sources for incidents of violence against women are community sources, compared to 12 percent of sources in incidents with male-only victims. While this is likely linked to the types of violence to which each gender is more likely to fall victim (i.e., males are more frequently victims of the bloodier events which gain more public notice), it provides insight into both the intimate nature of gendered electoral violence and direction for practitioners to adapt intervention tools appropriately.

Figure 9: Verification Sources by Gender of Victim
(Percent of all sources)
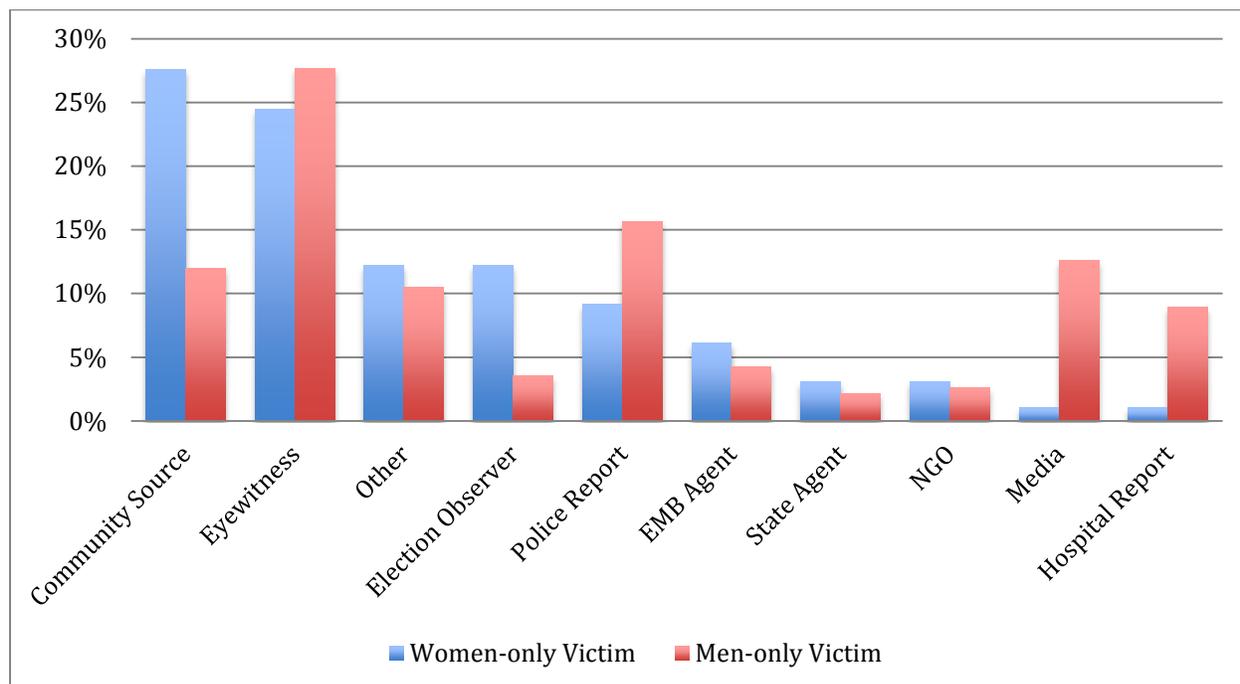
Beyond these numbers, however, gender-specific electoral violence can take on other forms not yet captured by quantitative studies like EVER, but which are related through stories from field offices and comparative research initiatives (United States Agency for International Development, 2011). These include sexual violence by both public and private actors, physical violence at the community or family level and intimate partner abuse. Sexual abuse for electoral motives includes politically-motivated rape as a tool of terror and intimidation, marital rape as a tool of repression, sexual harassment, assault and abuse with the objective of controlling, intimidating, humiliating and disenfranchising the victim. Sexual abuse by public actors is estimated to be grossly under-reported, while private abuse for political purposes still remains almost entirely outside of formal research approaches. Physical violence for purposes of social control at the community and family levels and politically-motivated domestic violence are both powerful tools to control and influence women's political behavior which also remain largely undocumented.

Anecdotal evidence from different countries suggests that women can become victims of violence and receive threats of violence from kin when they attempt to pursue political office, publically voice their political opinions, disagree with, or fail to vote in line with their husband, parents or clan. In India, human rights activist Savitri Goonsekre explains that "character assassination, kidnapping of their children, rape and even murder of winner women politicians by opposition party members after losing elections, social boycott for being involved in politics, breakage of relationships, ill treatment by husbands... there are a whole lot of reasons which discourage women from entering the field" (Indo-Asian News Service, 2009). In other countries, the legal framework does not protect women from domestic pressure and violence. Some legal codes stipulate that men have control over or rights to

women's bodies, choices, property, children, etc.; some simply encourage male dominance. Such clauses may be invoked to impede women's political participation as voters, activists or candidates. For example, in Algeria, Article 39 of the family code stipulates that "the duty of the wife is to obey her husband." Although the constitution allows freedom of movement to all citizens, "policemen and court officials in Algeria, and in many other countries in the region, consider it an acceptable practice for a husband to forbid his wife to travel without his permission" (Freedom House, 2006).

Power imbalances within and between households that developed during conflict periods or under authoritarian regimes (O'Connell, 1993) can also lead to abuse and violence during heightened tensions of an electoral period. Revival of ethnic/nationalist sentiment may reinforce traditional cultural roles, increasing the pressure on women seeking to exercise previously accepted civic freedoms. For example, assertive behavior by women seeking political expression may be punished through violence sanctioned by prevailing codes of conduct construed during wartime or through highly traditional societies. These may include rape, wife-beating, intergenerational conflict, attacks on divorced women, child abuse and economic punishments described earlier (O'Connell, 1993). Additionally, the status of women after conflict may decline despite increases in women's militancy, as in Cambodia where bride prices dropped during the conflict, causing tension, abuse and violence (Kumar, 2001).

Similarly, in non-post-conflict countries, tolerance of domestic violence means that it can be used to correct abhorrent behavior of any type, and electoral disagreements often fall under undesirable behavior. Attempting to vote for another party than the family's choice, or in some cases the desire to vote at all, might be met with such a response. Families of mixed-ethnicity may face heightened pressure within the community or the home, as has been noted in Bosnia and Rwanda.

Evidence suggests that domestic violence increases in post-conflict situations, especially where reintegration of predominantly male ex-combatants results in loss of self-esteem and sense of responsibility for men, who may take out their problems on the women in their lives, as in Uganda and Namibia (Kumar, 2001). Readjustment of gender roles in contexts where women have made rapid gains in self-reliance, independence and family and community responsibility have also been blamed for generalized increases in domestic violence, assault and battery. To date, no targeted research that we are aware of has been conducted to determine if these factors extend through transitional electoral periods. Due to the related pressures faced by actors in the immediate post-conflict period and transitional elections, it is likely that a similar dynamic exists. Again, further study and better documentation are required to assess this link.

Domestic violence is not only underestimated for its political dimensions, but is also compounded by their treatment in justice systems. In many countries, forms of domestic violence are culturally sanctioned (O'Connell, 1993). Social attitudes ascribe blame to women for failure to conform to traditional gender roles and tolerate violence as means of correcting behavior. These norms may be reflected in formal justice procedures that condemn perpetrators of gender-violence to relatively lenient sentences or refuse to try domestic violence cases.

Another form of under-recognized electoral violence against women is economic. Economic harm, coercion or abuse can be classified as electoral violence when it is used to influence electoral behavior or choices. This can happen in employer/employee relationships, in instances where a business is threatened (customer/supplier/provider relationships) or in instances in which livelihood and resources are under threat. Spousal and family economic relationships and power structures are not as publicly evident, but are often a source of coercion and pressure.

In Afghanistan, for example, human rights activists have "noted that domestic violence against women is increasing, that the Taliban has attacked and shut down hundreds of girls' schools and that most women remain economically in thrall to their fathers and husbands, even when they are abused" (Constable, 2009).

Examples of this also include situations in which one partner intentionally denies access to financial resources to another partner to enforce dependency and coerce electoral decisions and/or participation. This may include theft, preventing a spouse from acquiring resources, forcibly limiting their expenditure on essential goods, spending a spouse's resources without their consent/creating debt, preventing a spouse from seeking employment/education/assets, etc. In traditional, patriarchal households, women's political participation, or even the expression of divergent political views, may be punished by increasing labor burdens, withholding financial allowances, diminished bride-dowries or even reduction of food rations within a household (Adams et al, 2008; Saunders, 2006).

These acts, when done to influence voting or political behavior, are just as intimidating and coercive as those done in the more public spheres of commerce and employer/employee relationships. These acts happen in the home and they disproportionately affect women, not only in traditional or explicitly patriarchal societies, but in all societies where men control household financial resources. In such societies, women may also participate in this form of violence against other women through encouragement and/or support of male actions, or by direct actions against younger women in their households.

While economic abuse has been traditionally classified as a subset of intimidation or as an impact of another type of violence, it should be considered violent behavior in and of itself. Overlooking economic harm is inconsistent with both established norms of electoral violence and with a gendered understanding of electoral violence. Within the EVER framework, a gender-neutral notion of economic harm was added as a type of violence in 2011 and in some countries after 2008 the list of impacts was broadened to include economic harm, disruption of business or financial loss. Collected evidence supports these changes, but also indicates that more should be done to include the gendered forms of violence described here.

Economic harm or financial losses were included as impacts of electoral violence in three of the seven projects examined in this paper (Burundi, Guinea and the 2008 Bangladesh project). In 45 percent of the incidents in which financial loss was the impact of violence, men were the only victims, and about 40 percent included both men and women as victims. Of the incidents which recorded disruption of

economic life (businesses/roads closed) as an impact, 61 percent included both genders as victims and 30 percent included men-only victims. In this dataset, incidents with women-only victims were less likely to involve verifiable financial loss or economic disruption. Financial loss and disruption of economic life constitute 22 percent of all impacts in recorded cases, but the reality is likely higher. According to project teams, these newer categories might have been subject to significant under-reporting due to inconsistency in use and interpretation. The widespread nature of the issue coupled with what we know both of tactics of political disruption and gender-based violence on the whole confirm that conscious acts of economic abuse intended to disrupt, delay or suspend an electoral process constitute distinct forms of violence in their own right and not merely impacts of violence.

While in need of further documentation, there are many indications that deliberately coercive and explicitly political acts of theft, economic damages and other forms of financial coercion may exist equally in the private sphere as in the public sphere. Economic harm and coercion are regularly recognized forms of domestic violence (Mouradian, 2004; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2011; Futures Without Violence, 2010; Wettersen et al., 2004; De Benedictus, 2004) and must be recognized equally as political violence when its intent is to interfere with the choices and participation of legal voters. For example, EVER data shows that women-only victims constitute 13 percent of targets of election-related thefts and an additional 19 percent are directed at both genders. If theft is considered a form of electoral violence in the public sphere, it must also have the same status when it takes place in the home with similar intent.

Additionally, a focused data-gathering initiative like EVER cannot grasp the subtle electoral violence of poverty. In many developing states, especially post-conflict societies where disproportionately high numbers of households may be primarily or exclusively dependent on women's labor to survive, election-period violence and intimidation takes its toll on civic participation at the grassroots level and in cost-benefit considerations of women to present themselves as candidates. To women in profound poverty, politics often appear distant, conflicting and irrelevant to their daily lives. Low levels of literacy, family obligations and the basic struggle for survival are fundamental barriers to participation and enforce de facto disenfranchisement in poor states.

Women as Perpetrators of Electoral Violence

Women Perpetrators: Patterns and Trends

Just as women's roles in peaceful social movements and civics evolved during post-colonial, post-authoritarian and post-conflict periods, so has their involvement in violent political movements (Tétreault, 1994). While women remain predominantly victims of electoral violence, limiting our perspectives to this stereotype ignores the less visible but significant reality of women's engagement in electoral violence. The EVER data shows that women as exclusive perpetrators of electoral violence remain a small subset of the EVER data used, with 4 percent of the total incidents recorded, or 76 incidents of 2,005, involving women-only perpetrators.

However, women acting with men compose a significantly larger proportion (406 incidents of both genders as perpetrators, or 20 percent). Taken together, this means that women acted as perpetrators in almost 25 percent of incidents.

Women have appeared as perpetrators of political violence throughout history. In many of the countries currently transitioning to democracy, there is precedent for this. In the 20th century alone, women's involvement in political violence has been prominent, from participation in the anti-colonial struggle in Mozambique (1964-75) to guerilla movements in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas and Cuba. During the Angolan Liberation War, women rose to power largely through their connections to powerful men. Some, like Deolinda Rodriguez de Almeida became heroines of the revolution after assassination. At the grassroots level, logistic and information networks created by rural Zimbabwean women in support of the Zimbabwean African National Liberation Army (1964-79) led to the success of Mugabe's army, while up to one third of Mugabe's guerillas were women. In Vietnam, revolutionary intellectuals used gender as a model for analyzing oppressive colonial conditions and offered a strong gender platform as an appeal for Vietnamese women to join the struggle. Educated, middle- and upper-class Indonesian women formed influential civil society organizations during the Independence Movement (1908-45), actively contributing to the War of Independence against the Dutch in 1945-49. Yugoslav women responded to the Fascist invasion of 1941 by taking up arms in the Liberation Army (25,000 killed, 40,000 seriously wounded or 60 percent of total female military enrolled) and in the Anti-Fascist Council for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (2 million female members).

Women helped shaped revolutionary ideology during the Mexican Revolution, challenging *Marianismo* mentality and supporting the advancement of a women's platform through violent and consolidationist phases of the revolutionary process, such as through the formation of the *Brigadas Femininas* during the Cristero Revolution in the 1920s. Women also played prominent roles in the anti-Allende movement in Chile through mass demonstrations and a sophisticated protest movement, proclaiming after his defeat that "… we organized for the express purpose of helping to overthrow Allende…. If it hadn't been for… [us], the *Unidad Popular* would probably still be in power today pushing Chile towards Marxism" (Joan Supplee in Tétreault, 1994).

All of these historic trends – women as fighters, support to violent groups, strategists, policy makers, activists against democratic regimes or falsely democratic regimes, heroines and icons, independent actors, organized groups or influential wives – are present today and describe women's participation in political and electoral violence. Just as in these revolutionary cases, women's support for violent movements rarely leads to an improvement in women's status in society (Tétreault, 1994).

Virtually all corners of the globe have witnessed women's active participation in unsanctioned political violence since the end of the Cold War, including female suicide bombers in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, India, Palestine, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and the Chechnya "Black Widow" attacks. Women also participated in genocide campaigns in Rwanda, guerilla warfare in the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflicts and have been accused of war crimes (female U.S. soldiers in the Abu Ghraib prison affair) (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007). While these vivid examples underscore women's role in conflict, women are also globally

present today as perpetrators of electoral violence. Just as their male counterparts, their actions are designed to influence or derail electoral processes in favor of their preferred political option. They employ tactics that encompass threats and acts of armed and unarmed physical violence, verbal abuse, theft, riots, destruction of property, persuasion of male counterparts to undertake violence, intimidation, murder and political assassination.

Figure 10: Women Perpetrators of Electoral Violence
(Number of incidents in which each type was involved)
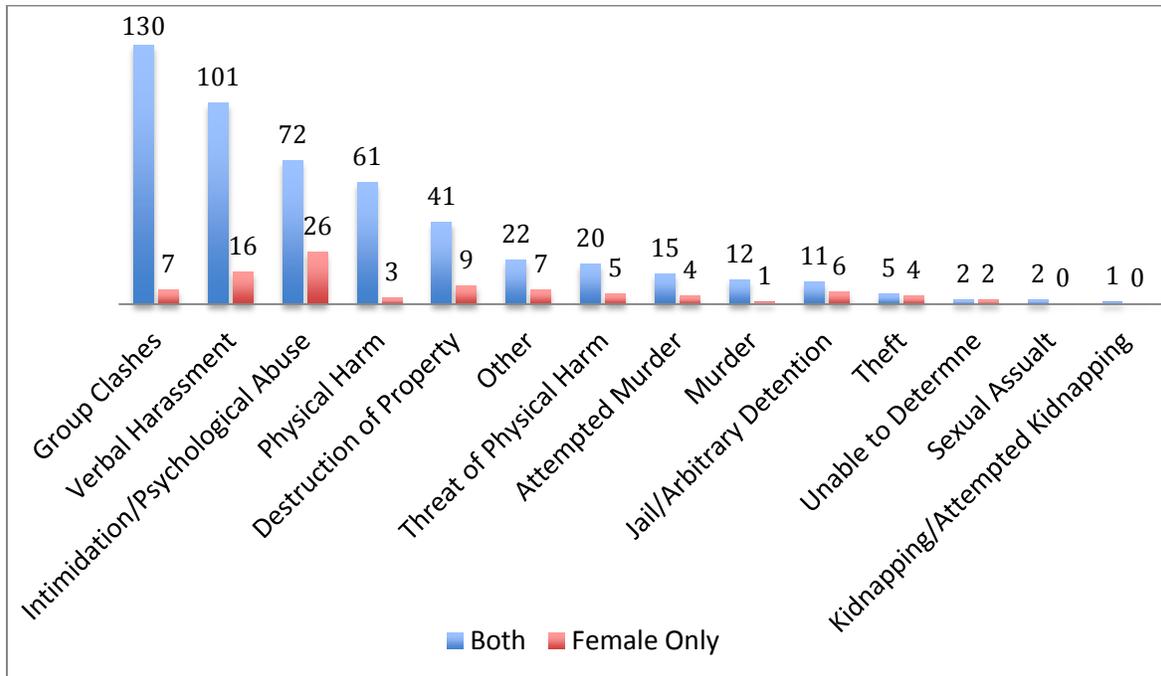
Acting alone, women most commonly engage in acts of intimidation/psychological abuse (29 percent of types of female-only incidents), verbal harassment (18 percent) and destruction of property (10 percent). However, when acting in groups of two or more with men, the incidence of physically harmful acts increases substantially. Of incident types in which both genders were identified as perpetrators, verbal harassment and intimidation remain significant at 15 percent and 21 percent, respectively, but the rates of group clashes jumps from 8 to 26 percent, acts resulting in physical harm jumps from 3 to 12 percent and murder from 1 to 3 percent. It should be noted that in these, as in all incidents, more than one type of violence may occur. When both genders are present, which gender committed which type of violence is undocumented. Given the types of violence they most often engage in, women's acts of violence employ significantly lower rates of weapon use: 70 percent of women-only acts employ no weapons, compared to 24 percent of male-only acts. Use of bombs/explosives, arson, guns/firearms and knives/stabbing by women-only is far lower than the full incident distribution.

Figure 11: Type of Violence Distributed by Gender of Perpetrator
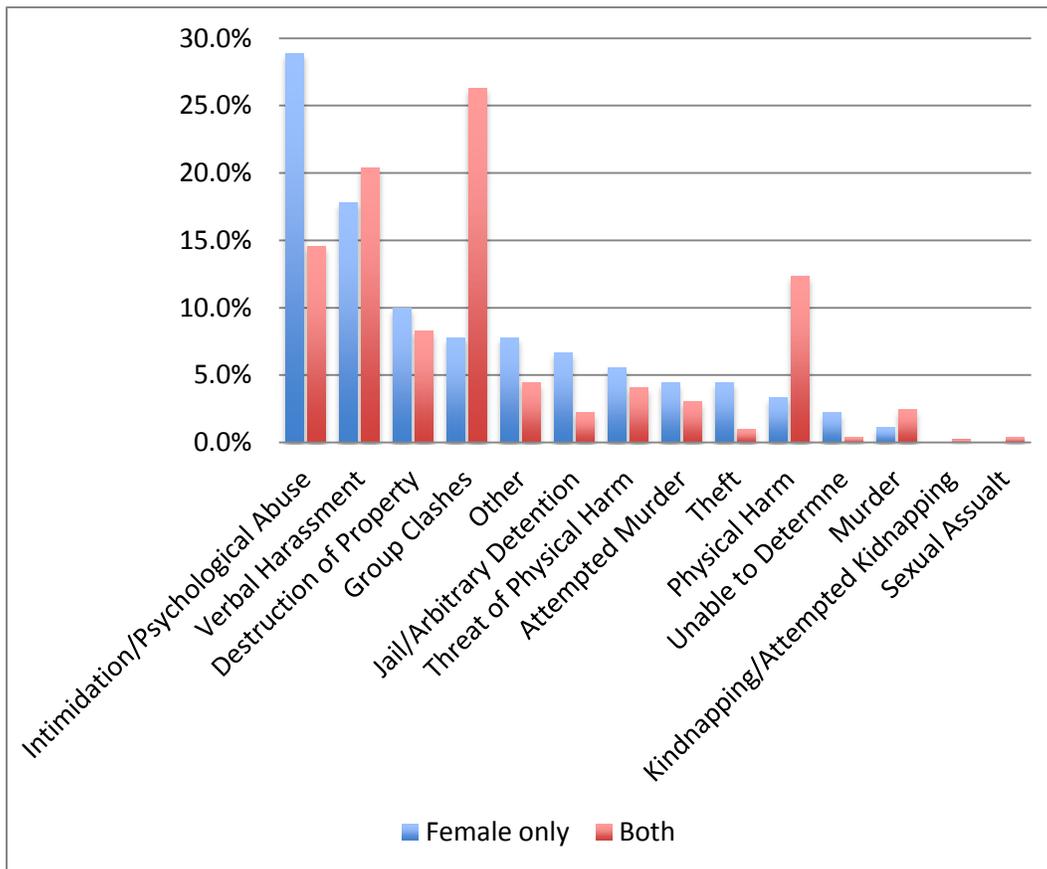
Female political party supporters who committed acts of violence were much more likely to be associated with incumbent parties than with opposition parties (90 percent of all types vs. 10 percent). Their acts are mostly committed during the pre-electoral phase (51 percent within five days of election) and in rural settings (57 percent). The social conditions within a country also appear to be related to women's engagement in acts of electoral violence, as all but four of the 76 incidents of women-perpetrated acts of violence were committed in countries with the lowest Human Development Ranks (Guinea ranks 156 and Burundi ranks 166, of 172 during years of interest) and 59 percent were committed in post-conflict states. The distribution evens out significantly when acts committed by both genders are considered.

**Figure 12: Methods Used: Women Victims and Women Perpetrators
(Percent of all methods, showing only those with weapons involved)**
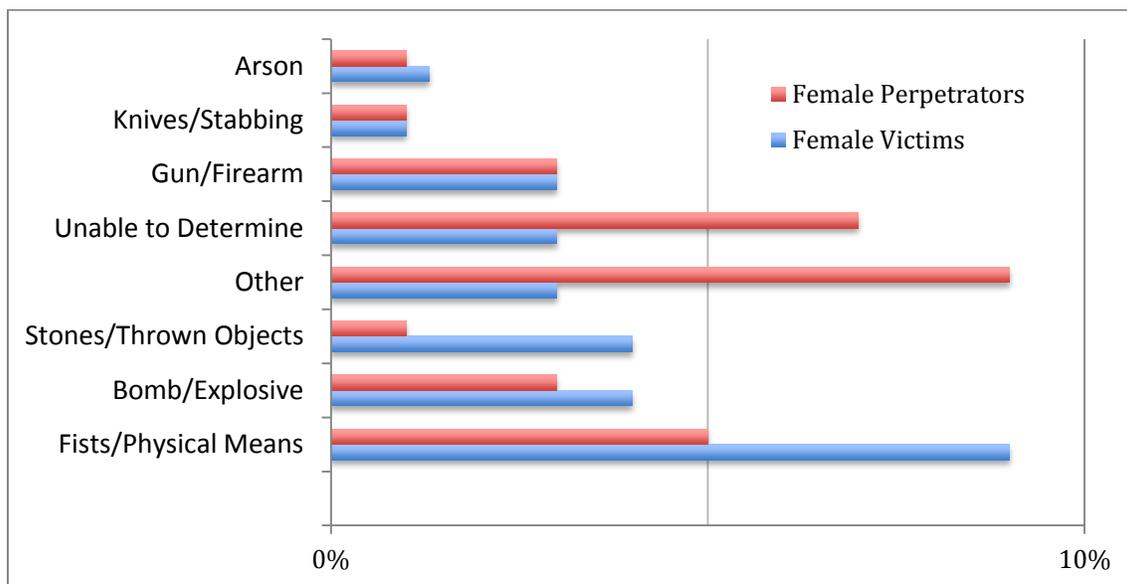
In terms of the methods used to commit violence, cases involving women both as perpetrators and victims overwhelmingly involved no physical weapons or means – 70 percent of incidents committed by female perpetrators and 76 percent of incidents against female victims.

In proportional terms, women used arson, stones or thrown objects and other or unidentified means more often than they were victims of the same methods. However, when comparing these findings against those methods women perpetrators used, we find that the rate of women as victims of heavier weapons such as bombs/explosives, fists/physical means, knives/stabbing and firearms is somewhat higher than the rate at which women perpetrators use these arms.

Women's roles as perpetrators of electoral violence include many other, traditionally male roles, including making bombs, general strategizing and leading riots, raids and assassination missions. Powerful women, including Khalida Zia, Sheikh Hasina, Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, Srimavo Bandaranaike and Chandrika Kumaratunge, have all sanctioned violence against opponent's parties. Wives of warlords and authoritarian leaders can play powerful roles in violently subduing electoral activities in their countries. In 2003, at the outset of the world's largest UN peacekeeping mission to date, Mrs. Ayesha Conneh revealed herself as mastermind of the rebel coup that had overthrown Charles Taylor the year before. While the UN had persuaded Mr. Conneh to help lead the powershare arrangement and bring peace, his wife, the "boss lady" was now threatening war. According to the *Economist* (2006), "…no one now doubts who is boss in Liberia…It had been Mrs. Conneh who had made LURD [Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy] so potent, by persuading the ruler of neighboring Guinea, Lansana Conté, to arm it; and it was through her that the guns had been channeled to the rebels, who were then, in 1999, unleashed on Mr. Taylor."

These high profile female roles remain an exception rather than the rule. Women generally provide crucial assistance rather than leading the charge in violent movements. According to Henderson and Jeydel, "women have assumed traditionally female, nurturing roles as helpers in revolutions by raising money, getting shelter, teaching and nursing" (Henderson and Jeydel, 2007). These secondary roles may include weapons transport, intelligence gathering, recruitment, alibis, cover-ups and other accessory roles. Henderson and Jeydel suggest that women strategically pursue these roles because of the gendered expectations of their opposition regarding appropriate female activity, which rarely includes political violence (Henderson and Jeydel, 2007).

Women's participation in electoral violence is uneven across social classes. In general, women in middle and upper classes encounter fewer barriers to participation than working class women who often bear full financial and material responsibility for their households. The greater economic independence, higher level of education and access to daycare are variables that favor wealthier women's participation in political movements that, in some cases, turn to violence (Henderson and Jeydel, 2007).

Women Perpetrators: Motivations and Impacts

Why do women join violent political movements or independently perpetrate acts of electoral violence? We contend that women generally do not have gender-specific agendas when they engage in violence, nor do their motives conform to stereotyped objectives like revenge, protection or perversion (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007). Instead, shedding stereotypes to accept that some women choose violence as the best means to a political end is the first step in developing appropriate programming responses.

History suggests that participation in violent movements rarely leads to improvement in the lives of women. Of the EVER-documented cases of intentional, rationalized electoral violence perpetrated by women or by groups of women and men, none were related to a movement that explicitly promoted the advancement of gender equality and women's rights. The impact of women's acts of violence in the data is indistinct: 35 percent of incidents perpetrated by women either could not identify an impact (14 percent) or described the impact of the incident as "Other" (21 percent), suggesting that the tools could not capture the effects of women's violence. Academic and practitioner case studies suggest similar findings: according to Henderson and Jeydel, women usually downplay their specific gender interests to the concerns of the larger struggle (Henderson and Jeydel, 2007). Research on women's participation in conflict suggests that, while women's participation in violent movements may sound liberating, modern conflicts have shown political violence is most often an escape from poverty. Women join conflict movements because of promises of cash, education or jobs, or coercion (Henderson and Jeydel, 2007). At this point, research is inadequate in determining the validity of theories extended from the field of conflict and electoral violence research, but what exists offers food for thought.

Previously, women kept out of violent, revolutionary political movements or played supporting roles, including managing family responsibilities to allow their spouses to participate fully. Women's access may have been limited because they received less education or less integration into the workforce, and thus less exposure to revolutionary ideas (O'Connell, 1993). Changes in education and women's entry

into the formal workforce in many countries could have altered this dynamic; however, this cannot fully explain all the important changes in recent decades.

It may seem paradoxical that women – whose motives are traditionally associated with pacifism, nurturing and protection – would engage in violent activities to disrupt an otherwise peaceful and democratic transfer of power. Even if we limit ourselves to this traditional framework, democracy movements rarely focus on women's rights, but instead argue for the value of the individual citizen and their equal rights as autonomous citizens. Yet, democracy discourse can be a double-edged sword for women in that "struggles for greater political inclusion tend to blur the distinction between genders in the search for a widened space for political participation for all citizens, thus obscuring the reasons why women may be unable to participate equally" (Henderson and Jeydel, 2007). This fundamental dissatisfaction with the broader process coupled with frustration, disillusionment and anger may provide insight into why women engage in violence against democratic elections.

Despite these statistics and theories, electoral violence perpetrated by women is not fully understood. Women's engagement in violent political movements dates back to ancient times. However, stereotyped and essentialist explanations for this involvement persistently color our understanding. Images of women as nurturers and protectors do not account for women who are *genocidaires*, who suicide bomb, take hostages, hijack planes or torture prisoners (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007). In their review of explanations for women's political violence, Laura Sjoberg and Caron Gentry (2007) assert that politically violent women are traditionally viewed as one of three archetypes: mothers whose primary motivation is to protect or avenge their family, monsters whose perverted femininity renders them virtually inhuman or whores whose violence is motivated by sexual dependence or deviance.

These stereotypes are a serious flaw for practitioners who respond to political or electoral violence. Each of these classifications removes women's agency and rational decisions from their actions by imposing their own logic and a formulaic identity – they are types that disregard women's intellectual capacity to make deliberate decisions to engage in violence. Without engaging directly with female perpetrators to better understand their motivations and objectives firsthand, targeted interventions to deter women's political and electoral violence will not succeed. Sjoberg and Gentry suggest these motivations may be simpler than we suspect:

> *As women's freedoms increase, so will their violence. Women, like men, commit violence for variety of reasons, some rational some irrational. Women, like men, sometimes see violence as the best means to their political ends. Women, like men, sometimes commit senseless and heinous acts out of depravation or some other socioeconomic motivation.*
> (Sjoberg and Gentry, 2007)

Rather than seeking responses outside the target group, women's electoral violence can be better addressed by recognizing how women relate to democratic processes, how they make decisions to engage in violence in this context and how women constitute security threats during an electoral process.

Programming Recommendations and Conclusion

As the international community promotes peaceful, inclusive elections, electoral violence must be taken into account through programmatic responses. What can the democracy promotion community do to reduce, prevent and mitigate electoral violence against women? What can be done to engage with women who perpetrate these acts?

There are multiple entry points for action. Vertical entry points start with bottom-level grassroots interventions, through activities with mid-level community organizers, civil society activists, political parties, media and religious groups, to top-level actions with female parliamentarians, legal framework and coordination through international actors. The issue may also be approached horizontally, including civil society outreach and networking, learning between organizations and state-to-state activities. In order to offer a systematic response, proposed programming recommendations are organized below according to an electoral cycle approach to elections assistance.[2] We begin with some general recommendations for programming.

General Recommendations

1. <u>A cyclical approach to elections</u>. Electoral violence is not limited to the immediate electoral period, but can take place at any of the junctures in a country's electoral process, from constitution and legal revisions through inauguration day. Different forms of violence tend to manifest themselves in different ways throughout the electoral cycle (Bardall, 2010). Therefore, responses to gender-specific electoral violence should take the cycle into account in developing solutions that span the full period of any given electoral cycle.

2. <u>Cultural sensitivity</u>. Gender-based violence responds to vastly different norms around the world. As experience from gender programs in other areas of development have shown, programs based primarily on Western-based notions of violence, justice and treatment may be inappropriate when they do not integrate the local cultural context. This is also an important aspect in constructing norms and standards for reporting cases of gendered electoral violence in a given society, to build in mechanisms that ensure women's safety in the process and that are culturally sensitive.

3. <u>Duration of interventions</u>. The very private and psychological nature of gender-specific violence requires trust, confidence and patience that cannot be established in short-term projects. The length of a project dealing with female victims and perpetrators of electoral violence is a long-term undertaking often best-suited for locally trained and culturally sensitive experts who are able to bridge promotion of women's political empowerment with psychological and legal support.

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[2] The author acknowledges Oxfam's publication *Women and Conflict* (ed Helen O'Connell, 1993) and Amnesty International's *Documenter les violations des droits humains par les agents de l'État – la violence sexuelle* (Agnes Callamard, 1999), as inspiration for several programming recommendations adapted for the electoral violence context in the following section.

4. <u>Flexible, diversified responses</u>. The private, often emotional aspects of the issue also signify that no single programming response will fully encompass all problems presented by gendered impacts of electoral violence. Programming to address these must employ hard approaches like quantitative data collection, formal technical assistance, advising and training, and soft approaches like interviews, qualitative approaches to data collection and networking with spiritual and/or psychological support groups.

    Hard approaches should adapt to the private or informal nature of the issue as best as possible (see recommendations below), while acknowledging that they will not fulfill a gender-violence objective single-handedly. Soft approaches should also recognize the problem and formalize their actions wherever appropriate to reduce marginalization of the issue. All programs should situate their objectives appropriately within the cultural context, identify realistic goals and coordinate with other agencies to fill in the gaps.

Figure 13: Responses to Gender-Specific Electoral Violence Throughout the Electoral Cycle

✓ Civic education
✓ Awareness and outreach
✓ Working with security forces
✓ Including male perpetrators
✓ Working with female perpetrators
✓ Coordination with aid community

✓ Broaden definitions
✓ Refine research tools
✓ Integrated assessments
✓ Networking and strategizing

Pre-Election Period

Election Period

✓ Cultural sensitivity
✓ Long-term programs
✓ Flexible, diversified responses

Post-Election Period

✓ Gender assessment and lessons learned
✓ Maintaining human resources
✓ Supporting advocacy networks

Pre-Election Phase Recommendations

A first group of recommendations for the pre-election phase focus on conceptual re-orientation and research on gendered electoral violence:

1. Broadening the definition of electoral violence. The working definition of electoral violence must be deepened and broadened to include dimensions of gender-specific electoral violence. In the case of women's electoral involvement, this paper has demonstrated that the involvement of "persons in the election process, during the election period" covers both the public and private domains. "Harm and threat of harm" extends beyond public interactions in the political sphere to indirect, private interactions in economic, social and psychological spheres. Integrating these concepts into the definition opens new entry points for intervention and more precise understanding of the challenges.

2. Refining data collection on electoral violence. While the most intimate forms of electoral violence are likely beyond the reach of systematic electoral violence data collection initiatives like EVER, awareness can be better integrated to adapt research programs to the reality of the problem. The quantitative approach should be refined to reflect the gendered nature of electoral violence including:

   a. Updating category types and other concerns raised, like a category for family members or asking "Is the victim related to the perpetrator?"

b. Revising training manuals and handbooks for monitors with examples of gendered types and impacts explored here, and guidelines on sensitive documentation

c. Creating a unit in the training module to ensure monitors are sensitive to gender in electoral violence and have a shared understanding of how it manifests itself in their culture

d. Investigate those areas of gender-specific electoral violence with high EVER reporting rates of "Other" and "Unable to Determine" to specify the nature of the violence

e. Draw inspiration from the data collection expertise of domestic violence specialists, including interview techniques and sensitivities adapted to research of gender specific and intimate violence (Callamard/Amnesty International)

As electoral violence moves into the personal sphere and manifests itself through economic, social and psychological means, it becomes imperative to integrate qualitative approaches in research design along with quantitative approaches like EVER.

Other applied actions can be taken during the pre-election phase to address this issue:

3. Adapted Pre-Election Technical Assessments (PETAs). Gender and electoral violence should be systematically included in PETAs and other strategic planning documents. Such analysis should include:

   a. Legal situation of women – What are the laws on rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, etc.? Do women come forward to accuse their aggressors under these laws? Are the aggressors held responsible? Do women have the right to drive or otherwise acquire transport; must they be accompanied?

   b. Political context – What is the punishment for gender specific crimes (rape, domestic abuse, etc.)? What international treaties has the state signed in this regard? Have women been involved in political violence in the past? In what capacity?

   c. Social and cultural norms – How is domestic violence viewed? Is it accepted for a man to beat is wife/daughter? Is polygamy allowed? Dowry payment required? Forced marriage permitted? What type of work do women usually do? How do norms around childcare/availability of alternative childcare affect women's political participation? What stereotypes are present in the media?

4. Networking and Strategizing. International assistance providers should work early to create ties with local, gender-sensitive organizations that can provide cultural insight and are open to integrating gender and electoral violence topics into their election period programming. Consistent strategies for networking and information exchange should be put in place at the time of program conception. Effort should be made to build the capacity of research and documentation centers that provide civic education materials and promote the circulation of information on gendered electoral violence. Ongoing research that employs local researchers to document the issue in their countries is crucial.

5. <u>Legal Framework</u>. International assistance providers working in justice reform should introduce gender and electoral concerns during legal formulation and revisions, drawing inspiration from international standards documents such as Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Training for legislators and state bodies on new laws or gendered electoral violence should be offered. Advocacy for legal recognition and protection of women during electoral processes can be supported through civil society supported declarations on women's rights and electoral violence, etc.

6. <u>Civic Education</u>. Incorporate gender issues into long-term, ongoing civic education programs beyond the immediate electoral cycle.

Election Phase Recommendations

1. <u>Civic/Electoral Education</u>. Integrate gender and electoral violence information as a cross-cutting issue in civic and electoral education material and provide targeted documentation and training. Seek opportunities to include local specialists and gender-focused civic groups in the design of civic and electoral education activities. Commit all partners in electoral/civic education programs to support gender rights and awareness, regardless of their orientation/area of specialization. Seek out individuals with moral and spiritual authority who are committed to inclusive, non-violent elections to support awareness of the gendered impacts of electoral violence and assume leadership positions.

2. <u>Awareness and Outreach</u>. Internationally designed aid programs to support victims of violence (including legal aid, temporary shelter, vocational training, counseling, etc.) may be undermined by inadequate outreach. As is the case for most marginalized victims, women are often unaware of aid offered to them and may be limited in taking advantage of this help. They may also fear the repercussions of taking action. Well-designed education and outreach to victims of violence is the first step in building awareness. Use pre-programming analysis as a basis for targeted civic education and direct assistance in this area.

3. <u>Working with Security Forces</u>. Reach out to local security forces (police, special election police, etc.) to increase their awareness of the issue. Train security providers, poll workers and other social service providers to understand and effectively respond to specific security challenges confronted by women on and around Election Day. Coordinate with local police to establish gender hubs in precincts where women may feel safe and comfortable enough to bring their complaints.

4. <u>Include Men</u>. Borrowing a lesson from domestic violence programs, election practitioners responding to political gender-based violence must not limit their intervention to women and children victims, but also the men who are perpetrating the violence. Often, as in Cambodia, Georgia and Guatemala, these men are victims of trauma and violence themselves. Likewise, social acceptance of violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned.

5. <u>Include Women</u>. Women who commit acts of electoral violence are the primary source for better understanding the behavior. As this paper shows, the motivations and forms of these acts

are broad and can only be understood by engaging directly with the perpetrators. Practitioners responding to female perpetrators of electoral violence should work to understand the problem at its source in order to determine whether their response should be restorative, educational, punitive or psychological in nature. Likewise, consulting directly with the victims of violence on project design will strengthen the cultural appropriateness of interventions.

6. Include the Broader Aid Community. While it is essential for election administration experts to understand the dynamics of this topic, their expertise may not extend to cover the necessary response areas. Democracy and governance practitioners and gender-violence development workers should try to learn from each other and develop coordinated responses.

Note that several of the election phase recommendations may apply to activities beyond the immediate electoral cycle, such as coordination with the broader aid community and engaging directly with male and female perpetrators and victims.

Post-Election Phase Recommendations

1. Post-Election Gender Assessment. Analyze gendered electoral violence following the election period and critically assess the gender impact of targeted programs, including the involvement of local women's groups in the design and implementation of program activities. Draw on models like the World Bank Country Gender Assessment (CGA) framework. Analysis may be stand-alone or integrated into other post-election lessons-learned activities.

2. Maintain Human Resources. Build and maintain a database of local women trainers, consultants and experts that have contributed to improving gender-sensitivity, mitigation of gendered-violence and engagement against perpetrators of electoral violence. Draw upon the database for planning activities in the next electoral cycle and employing regionally or internationally-based staff on similar projects.

3. Support Women's Advocacy Networks. Research shows that government responsiveness to violence against women is most strongly influenced by the social and institutional structures in a country, not just women as policy makers (Weldon, 2002). Democracy support organizations should support autonomous women's organizations that draw on and reinforce state institutions designed to promote the status of women in the inter-election period. This may include support for human, institutional and material resources and establishing a consultative status for specialized gender focused organizations.

4. Continue Civic Education, Awareness-raising and Working with Perpetrators. The need for these activities, as outlined above, does not disappear after the election. Only long-term programs can alter cultural and social norms like gender roles, women's legal rights, or the acceptance of violence as a public or domestic strategy to pursue political aims.

Annex 1: Methodology

This paper draws upon data from six countries in which IFES conducted the EVER project, and includes comparison of this data with other international datasets. The EVER methodology is explained here in some detail, as well as the methodology for use and compilation of the EVER country data included as case studies.

The core data used comes from six countries and seven EVER monitoring projects. EVER was introduced by IFES in 2003 as a tool to support the capacity of CSOs to monitor; report and mitigate electoral violence; and to enhance cooperation and information sharing between electoral stakeholders.

To date, 15 monitoring projects have been conducted in 13 countries subject to electoral violence. Several mitigation, advising or risk mapping programs have also been conducted. In EVER monitoring projects, IFES works with CSO partners to train community-based monitors to gather information on incidents and other conflict-related information, verify it and report it back to the team headquarters. The monitors gather information about incidents of electoral violence with the date and time (as available) and describe what happened, and then categorize (without naming individuals) the perpetrators, victims, place, type, method (weapons used) and impact of violence. They also document at least two sources of information used to verify the facts of the incident, again, through categories such as media, police report or community leader, not names. To be an incident, an act must meet the definition of electoral violence, must have a specific victim or victims, must be limited in time (i.e., not a series of events over days) and must happen in a specific place (while marches or kidnappings may involve movement, the starting point can be used).

Project coverage, information flows, forms and mechanisms for data entry and analysis vary by country, but the core information gathered remains standardized. Country-specific words or types of violence, such as barricading of streets, will be added or itemized in more detail in a country as needed. However, the system allows for all countries to capture standard categories such as physical harm, and establishes how any additional categories can be rolled up into the standard terms as needed. The categories were "Check all that apply," except for Place. A person (and therefor the category of person), such as a political party supporter or police, could be both victim and perpetrator in the same incident. A list of standard categories is included below.

The data analyzed and presented in this paper includes 2,005 cases of electoral violence recorded in six countries through the EVER project between 2006 and 2010. The country cases were selected from among those in which gender data was collected to ensure a representative geographic distribution of contentious elections in countries with recent history of violent conflict (Timor-Leste, Burundi, Nepal) and those whose elections did not follow a period of violence (Bangladesh, Guinea, Guyana):

1. Timor-Leste, May – September 2007, parliamentary election

2. Nepal, November 2007 – April 2008, Constituent Assembly election (originally planned for November 2007 but held in April 2008)

3. Bangladesh, (October 2006 – January 2007, December 2008), general election (originally planned for January 2007, but was ultimately boycotted and cancelled. A second dataset for Bangladesh covers the 2008 elections which ended the political crisis caused by the boycott)

4. Burundi, April – September 2010, covering a series of five elections: communal, presidential, legislative and local. A boycott took effect after the communal elections and resulted in uncontested elections for the executive seat and both legislative houses

5. Guinea, May – November 2010 national elections which replaced 40+ years of dictatorship and the more recent military government

6. Guyana, April – August 2006, general and regional elections

In these six countries, some variances exist in terms of coverage (i.e. Bangladesh included specifically targeted constituencies and districts) and data management. However, the analysis is not intended to be the final word on trends in electoral violence in a given country. The purpose of using the EVER data is to show what electoral violence has been documented thus far. Similar strengths and weaknesses are present in each monitoring project, though the degree to which each is present may vary. At present, the EVER project provides the most detailed and consistent incident data collected on a community level.

Annex 2: Categories

In **victim and perpetrator categories**, monitors were trained to identify the role of the person during the incident. For example, if a shopkeeper was targeted for supporting party A, the monitor should have identified the victim as "party supporter" and noted "party A." If a group of people were in the street apparently rallying for party A, or a cause of party A, they were likely labeled party supporters by monitors. The monitor was trained to identify people as "voters" if they were being targeted in a way that seemed to pressure their vote, or limit their freedom of choice, or, of course, when exercising their vote. In many countries, the category was listed as voters/members of the public, to show that people were being pressured regardless of political affiliation. These categories leave some room for judgment calls, and therefore there were undoubtedly some inconsistency in their application. However, the line between acting as a citizen (voter /member of the public) and acting as a party supporter is blurry for individuals at times in their daily lives. Based on field experiences and interaction with the partners, the IFES field team believes that these issues were similar across countries and across projects, and across genders of victim or perpetrator.

In **types of violence**, there were also challenges with a few categories. Drawing a line between verbal harassment and intimidation was stressed in training as the difference between an insult and an assertive act that had a goal of persuasion/coercion more than merely insulting or taunting. In later cases, other than those used in this study, verbal harassment was left out and all cases of non-physical harm were classified as intimidation. Threat of physical harm was coded separately from intimidation in order to capture that elevated level of intensity (although such threats, or even physical harm, could be intimidating). Monitors were encouraged to focus on the most intense acts against a particular victim so as not to be redundant. If physical harm occurred, it is not necessary to also include intimidation to express that the harm was intimidating.

Sources of information were always documented. However, in some countries they were not recorded in data entry since they had been checked in data quality controls and were not used in those projects' data analysis for public reports. Sources were not included in data entry in Nepal and Timor-Leste.

Standard EVER categories in case study countries[3]

Place
In/near polling station
EMB Office
Political Party Office/Facility
Non-Election Government Office/Facility
Media Office
Street/Public area
Private Home
Other

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[3] Some standard categories, such as in or near voter registration office, were not present in this dataset and so are not listed. For more information on EVER methodology, please contact the Applied Research Center at IFES.

Perpetrators
Political Party/Candidate Supporter (which party or parties)
Political Party Leader/Candidate (which party or parties)
Voter(s)
State Agent/Police – includes national military
Election Worker
Journalist/Media
Election Observer
Person Paid by Political Party (which party or parties)
Other
Unable to determine (this meant that the type of perpetrator was unverifiable, but that other aspects of the incident indicated that it was indeed election-related)

Victims (note that victims include types of property)
Political Party/Candidate Supporter (which party or parties)
Political Party Leader/Candidate (which party or parties)
Private Property
Voter(s)
State Agent/Police
Election Worker
Journalist/Media
Election Observer
Person Paid by Political Party
Election Material (ballots, etc.)
Political Party Office
Election Office/Facility
Non-election government property
Other

Types of violence
Murder
Attempted Murder
Kidnapping/Attempted Kidnapping
Jail/Arbitrary Detention
Intimidation/Psychological Abuse
Verbal Harassment
Physical Harm
Sexual Assault
Threat of Physical Harm
Group Clashes
Theft
Destruction of Property
Other
Unable to Determine (this was incorrectly used in only 11 incidents)

Methods of violence
Arson
Bomb/Explosive
Fists/Physical Means
Gun/Firearm
Knives/Stabbing
No Weapon
Stones/Thrown Objects
Other
Unable to Determine

Impact of violence
Person(s) Killed (count)

Person(s) Wounded (count)

Person(s) Kidnapped (count)

Disrupted Voting

Complaint Filed

Disrupted Vote Counting

Postpone Election - Locally

Unable to Determine

Disrupted Campaign

Financial Loss

Business/Transportation Disrupted

Public Intimidation (this was used only in Burundi and Guyana)

Political Party Intimidation (this was used only in Burundi)

Other

Unable to determine

Annex 3: Definitions

For this analysis, some re-coding and new variables were necessary:

Election time period: This was assigned based on a scale of four possible values. Incidents of electoral violence are recorded as taking place on Election Day itself, in the immediate preceding period, in the early stages of election organization or in the post-election period. The early electoral period includes the beginning of data collection (which generally starts with a mark in the electoral process such as opening of voter registration, candidate registration or campaigning) and ends six days preceding the organization of the election (or the first election in countries holding multiple elections in a row). The more immediate electoral period includes the five days before the election. In those countries where elections were delayed at the last moment, this period begins five days before the original date. In countries with multiple elections in rapid succession, this period covers five days before the first election through the holding of the final election. The post electoral period begins the day after the final election in any data set until the completion of the EVER project.

Geography comparison: Geographic location is recorded in multiple ways for each dataset, including up to four territorial sub-divisions. For purposes of comparison, the geographic locations are distinguished according to urban settings, rural locations and peripheral locations. Urban zones were established as the three largest cities in each country with substantial populations. Exceptions include Nepal and Bangladesh whose large, concentrated urban populations resulted in five urban zones, and Guyana whose small population qualified for one urban zone. Peripheral areas include semi-rural areas often surrounding major cities and/or minor cities. Each country has one to three peripheral identified. Of the sub-divisions used in the EVER data collection, the district level data was used to establish the zone coding.

Incumbent or Opposition: In those cases in which the victims or perpetrators were political actors (party leaders, candidates, party or candidate supporters, a code for Political Affiliation was assigned as either Opposition or Incumbent (whether either was unified or not). This binary coding was identified depending on who was in power at the time and related to parties or candidates in the executive or parliamentary offices.

About the Author

Gabrielle Bardall has worked on electoral support programs throughout sub-Saharan Africa and in Asia and the Middle East. Gabrielle has worked for IFES in different capacities since 2005, notably as lead technical advisor to IFES-Burundi's electoral violence monitoring program in 2010 and as Field Project Manager with IFES-Guinea in 2008. As an expert-level BRIDGE Facilitator, she leads trainings with election administrators and civic stakeholders. Before joining IFES, Ms. Bardall worked on grassroots women's community programs in West Africa and Central America. Ms. Bardall is currently a doctoral candidate at the Université de Montréal where she researches democratization and electoral violence. She holds a BA from McGill University in Montréal and an MA from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris.

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