Appendix B: Electoral Violence in Côte d'Ivoire Dataset Code Book

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Contents

1 Introduction

This codebook describes the data and data collection procedure that underlies the *Electoral Violence in Côte d'Ivoire Dataset*. The data collection effort was undertaken within the scope of the projects *Political Legacies of Electoral Violence* (VR2016–201605833) and *Actor Constellations and Electoral Violence* (VR2020–00914), both funded by the Swedish Research Council. Although the project is independent from existing electoral violence dataset projects, the data collection effort builds on insights, procedures, and coding rules developed by the Electoral Contention and Violence Dataset (ECAV, Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019a) and Deadly Electoral Conflict Dataset (DECO, Fjelde and Höglund, 2022). This codebook describes the data collection process, inclusion criteria, and included variables; outlines the covered time-period; and discusses data validity, reliability, and limitations. Moreover, the codebook provides an extended descriptive analysis of types, actors, and patterns of electoral violence during the 2020–2021 election period in Côte d'Ivoire. The file `appendix_b.R` provides the replication code for producing the descriptive statistics and figures included in this code book. All data management, visualisation, and analysis was conducted in `R Studio 2022.07.2`.

2 Unit of Analysis

Similar to ECAV, the unit of analysis in the dataset is the *event-day-location*, that is, a violent "election-related event reported in a media source on a single day in a particular location" (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 5). Using this unit of analysis means that violent events that spanned over several days or across several localities are coded as separate observations in the dataset. Moreover, if a single report mentioned multiple events, all were coded as separate event-day-locations. The database is spatially disaggregated at the reported event location and includes geo-coordinates. Thus, a violent event was only included in the database when (1) the event fulfilled the inclusion criteria (Section 4), (2) it was possible to identify the location where the event took place, and (3) it was possible to identify the day on which the event took place. However, there are three pragmatic exceptions to these rules:

- Electoral violence events for which no precise location could be identified were included as long as the report identified the legislative voting district in which the event took place. Voting districts in legislative elections consist of one or several sub-prefectures. The reason underlying this decision was to maximise the number of included events in instances where inclusion would not influence the results of the empirical analysis,

which focuses on the voting district level. These events were geo-referenced as taking place in the voting district's largest city (usually the department capital), and can be excluded using the `LocationPrecision` variable. Only about 3% of the total events in the dataset could not be geo-referenced to a particular location, typically because they occurred along the road between two towns.

- Electoral violence events that took place in the city of Abidjan, which consists of multiple voting districts, were only included insofar as the specific municipality could be identified. The reason underlying this decision was that the municipalities in Abidjan, unlike elsewhere in the country, also serve as voting districts in presidential and legislative elections.

- Electoral violence events for which no precise day could be coded were still included when no other violent event took place in the same location and within the same time period, as long as the report suggested that the event took place within the studied time period. The reason underlying this decision was to maximise the number of included events in instances where there was no risk that a single event would be reported twice. These events were coded at the best estimated date that the event could have taken place (often on the date of publication), and can be excluded using the `DatePrecision` variable. Some 10% of the total events in the dataset lack a precise event date, mostly because they reportedly occurred sometime during the night between two days.

3 Time Period

The dataset covers the period 1 August 2020 to 6 March 2021. Existing subnational event datasets differ in regards to whether temporal proximity to an election constitutes a key operational indicator of electoral violence. The ECAV dataset considers only events that occur between six months before and three months after an election (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 4), whereas the DECO dataset includes all events that fulfil the inclusion criteria whenever they occur (Fjelde et al., 2021: 8). There are two inter-related challenges in regard to time and electoral violence. First, not all political violence that takes place in temporal proximity to elections is election-related. Second, some violence that is election-related takes place in time periods without elections, for instance, because it relates to the voter registration or candidate selection process. Thus, any time delimitation includes a degree of arbitrariness.

Nevertheless, the data collection effort was restricted to the above-mentioned time period. The main reason for this decision was that the purpose of the data collection was to provide the information on electoral violence needed to answer a particular research question,

rather than to provide an exhaustive dataset of all political violence in Côte d'Ivoire that can be considered electoral violence. The hypothesised negative effect of electoral violence on voter turnout in all likelihood decreases with time, which made it important to focus on violence that took place in conjunction with the presidential and legislative election campaigns. Moreover, the decision to focus on violence that occurred in conjunction with both elections (including during the period between the elections) was motivated by the fact that these elections were viewed by election observers and case experts as part of a longer electoral campaign for the presidency and the National Assembly.

The time period starts three months prior to the presidential election on 31 October 2020. While starting points are necessarily arbitrary, this starting date captures a key change in pre-electoral dynamics. The run-up to the 2020 presidential election saw steadily rising tensions across the country, but escalated considerably after 6 August 2020 when President Alassane Ouattara announced that he would run for a third-term in office (Banégas and Popineau, 2021: 463). Thus, it is safe to infer that electoral violence that occurred from 1 August 2020 and onwards was clearly related to the 2020 presidential or 2021 legislative elections, whereas this inference about electoral violence that occurred before 1 August 2020 is less certain. The time period ends on 6 March 2021, the day of the legislative election. Although violence occurring in the immediate aftermath of the legislative election can certainly constitute post-electoral violence, this end date was selected because violence after the legislative election cannot have influenced voter turnout in that election, and thus was not deemed relevant for the empirical analysis.

4 Inclusion Criteria

Electoral violence is operationalised as "public acts of [...] coercion by state or non-state actors used to affect the electoral process or arising in the context of electoral competition" (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019a: 716). This operational definition builds on the operationalisation used for constructing the ECAV dataset, but excludes what ECAV refers to as "public acts of mobilization [... and] contestation" – acts which do not involve physical violence and therefore are outside the scope of the dataset. The ECAV codebook further clarifies that violent events are considered electoral violence when they are election-related, meaning that "the election in question can be identified and articles explicitly mention the electoral process as an issue around which contestation occurs" (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 4). Thus, identified events were only included in the final dataset if they fulfilled all of the following criteria:

- The event took place during the stipulated time period (see Section 3).

- The event involved the use or threat of physical force against people or property.[1] Threats were considered only when they were accompanied with a public and physical display of force. Hence, events in which armed men publicly challenged voters not to vote were included in the dataset, while instances including verbal statements threatening violent action were not (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 5).

- The event was substantively election-related (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 4). Drawing on the ECAV and DECO codebooks, respectively, an event was coded as election-related if it fulfilled at least one of the following criteria:

  - The perpetrators identified in the report had explicit ties to a political party or candidate, or were identified by their party or candidate affiliation (cf. Fjelde et al., 2021: 7). Thus, violent protests conducted by "opposition youth" were considered election-related, while riots conducted by "youth" were not, all else equal.

  - The target of the violence identified in the report was related to the electoral process (e.g. polling stations, polling material, election observers, election workers) or had explicit ties to a political party or candidate (cf. Fjelde et al., 2021: 7). Hence, an attack conducted against a polling station was considered election-related, while an attack on a market was not, all else equal. Moreover, it should be noted that the target of violence did not need to be the same as the victim of violence. Thus, attacks on election observers that failed but resulted in injury to innocent bystanders were still considered election-related.

  - The reported purpose of the violence was to influence the electoral process or outcome (cf. Fjelde et al., 2021: 7). The purpose of violence was inferred from statements by the perpetrators (when available) or from the event context. Thus, violent protests were considered election-related when the protesters made explicit demands related to one of the elections, but not election-related when the protesters made no explicit demands related to the elections, all else equal.

To further ensure transparency regarding the inclusion criteria, the dataset follows the DECO procedure and includes the variable `Clarity` that denotes the level of certainty for the coding of the event as election-related (see Section 7). Thus, it is possible to use the `Clarity` variable to exclude events for which a clear electoral link could not be ascertained.

[1] This inclusion criteria is different from ECAV, which does not explicitly consider violence against property. Nevertheless, many events in the ECAV dataset constitute acts of violence against property.

5 Data Collection Procedure

The dataset builds on public reports in English and French. To create a comprehensive and representative dataset of electoral violence, I identified these reports through three different procedures. The first procedure builds on the sampling procedure used by the ECAV dataset (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b), whereas the other two procedures were added to broaden the coverage. While the addition of these steps are specific to the Ivorian case and thus would constitute a source of selection bias in a cross-national dataset, this concern is not relevant given that the aim here was to construct a single-country subnational dataset.

First, I conducted a systematic search for news media reports using Factiva, a multisource inventory that contains reports from a wide range of news sources. Factiva includes both major news outlets such as the BBC, Reuters, and AFP, and news articles from Ivorian newspapers republished through AllAfrica. The search string mirrored the ECAV search string, but included common synonyms in French. The date range was set to 2020-07-31–2021-03-06, and the region to "Côte d'Ivoire." The search for keywords focused on the full article and included no further restrictions. The search yielded 1,525 hits. The full search string was as follows:

> elections AND (protest OR strike OR riot OR violence OR attack OR killing OR intimidation OR harassment OR unrest OR injured OR manifestation OR greve OR émeute OR violence OR attaque OR meurtre OR tue OR intimidation OR harceler OR troubles OR affrontement* OR blessés)

Second, to ensure that I did not miss any relevant events, I manually reviewed and added all violent events listed in the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project (Raleigh et al., 2010). Third, I complemented the Factiva and ACLED searches with a review of international and domestic election monitoring reports. These reports included:

- EISA and The Carter Center (2020). *International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) Côte d'Ivoire 2020*. Preliminary Statement. Abidjan: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and The Carter Center
- EISA and The Carter Center (2021). *International Election Observation Mission Côte d'Ivoire 2021 – Legislative Elections*. Preliminary Statement. Abidjan: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and The Carter Center
- CNDH (2020). *Rapport Monitoring des Violences Commises du 16 Septembre au 10 Novembre 2020*. Report. Abidjan: Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme
- PSCPD (2020). *Rapport d'Observation Électorale en Côte d'Ivoire*. Report. Bouaké: Plate-forme de la Société Civile pour la Paix et la Démocratie (PSCPD)

- HRW (2020). Côte d'Ivoire: Post-Election Violence, Repression. URL: https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/02/cote-divoire-post-election-violence-repression
- Amnesty (2020b). Côte d'Ivoire: The Use of Machetes and Guns Reveals Horrors of Post-Election Violence. URL: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/11/cote-divoire-use-of-machetes-and-guns-reveals-horrors/
- Amnesty (Aug. 2020a). Côte d'Ivoire: Police Allow Machete-wielding Men to Attack Protesters. URL: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2020/08/cote-d-ivoire-police-allow-machete-wielding-men-to-attack-protesters/
- Amnesty (2021). Côte d'Ivoire: Hundreds Arrested Languishing in Detention Following Presidential Election Unrest. URL: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/03/cote-divoire-hundreds-arrested-still-languishing-in-detention/

6 Data Limitations

The dataset provides event data on electoral violence around Côte d'Ivoire's 2020 presidential and 2021 legislative election. While the data structure enables temporally and spatially disaggregated analysis of the causes and consequences of the electoral violence, event data on political violence always comes with a specific set of important limitations (see e.g. Dawkins, 2021; Demarest and Langer, 2022; Weidmann, 2015). In particular, event datasets on political violence can suffer from selection and description bias, meaning that some events may be systematically under-reported and under-described. Given these biases, I outline and probe three different limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the dataset.

A first concern is that small-scale and non-lethal events are systematically under-reported in the dataset. International media reports often prioritise reporting the most sensational news stories, thus making it more difficult to capture less sensational electoral violence events (cf. Dawkins, 2021: 1100). Under-reporting of less sensational events is problematic when studying electoral violence, a form of political violence that can have a considerable impact on elections even when it does not cause direct casualties (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019a; Wahman and Goldring, 2020). I sought to mitigate this challenge in the data collection process, both by extending the sampling to domestic media stories, and by also including events listed in ACLED, election observation reports, and human rights reports (cf. Öberg and Sollenberg, 2011: 52–53). While this strategy certainly did not fully alleviate under-reporting of less sensational events, closer inspection of the dataset suggests that it captures a large number of small-scale and non-lethal events – a full 75% of all events in the dataset did not result in death or injury. In addition, cross-tabulation shows that the decision to sample

reports by the Ivorian Human Rights Commission (CNDH) helps capture less sensational events: a full 61% of all acts of looting and 47% of all clashes would not have been captured without these reports. Moreover, a closer look at the share of events that were reported by multiple sources helps provide a picture of the event types that are most likely to be associated with under-reporting. More sensational events were indeed more often captured by multiple sources. For example, while some 39% of clashes, 29% of attacks, and 24% of violent protests with intervention were captured by multiple sources, only 2% of all acts of looting, and 7% of all roadblock riots were captured by multiple sources. Likewise, whereas 37% of all events resulting in bodily injury were reported by multiple sources, only 8% of events that did not cause bodily injury were reported by multiple sources. Thus, although the data collection effort seems to have mitigated under-reporting of less sensational events to some extent, I caveat that some reporting biases likely remain.

A second concern is that both journalists and election observers are more likely to observe and report on electoral violence in localities with a history of violence than in localities with a more peaceful past experience with elections (Fjelde and Höglund, 2022: 172). Such reporting biases could in turn constitute a challenge when using the data to explore the causes and consequences of the electoral violence. Indeed, maps provided by the international election observation mission suggest that more observers were deployed to areas that constituted hotspots during the 2010–2011 electoral violence, such as western Côte d'Ivoire (EISA and The Carter Center, 2020: 14). Moreover, cross-tabulation shows that about one-third of all reported electoral violence events in 2020–2021 occurred in localities with a history of past electoral violence. While this observation may be a function of time-consistent risk factors that produce path-dependent patterns of electoral violence, it may also be produced by reporting biases. Thus, readers should keep in mind that the data may suffer from over-reporting in localities with a history of violence.

A third concern is that the dataset suffers from urban bias that leads to under-reporting of events in rural and sparsely populated areas (see e.g. Kalyvas, 2004; Weidmann, 2015). International newswires are, for instance, more likely to miss events in hard-to-access rural areas than in urban centres of strategic importance (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019a: 718). Since I do not have access to the universe of true electoral violence events, it is impossible to assess whether there is urban bias in the dataset. However, I made an intentional effort to mitigate urban bias by sampling not only international newswires, but also Ivorian newspapers with better spatial coverage, and election monitoring reports that build on observations by election observers deployed across the country. The international election monitoring mission, for instance, deployed election observers across large parts of the country, including in hard-to-monitor rural areas in western Côte d'Ivoire (EISA and The

Carter Center, 2020: 14). Moreover, descriptive statistics suggest that less populous rural voting districts are well-represented in the dataset. Some 51% of all events recorded in the dataset took place in a voting districts with less inhabitants than the median voting district, that is, less than 63,430 inhabitants. Thus, while I cannot exclude the possibility that the dataset suffers from rural under-reporting, the dataset includes a large number of electoral violence events in both more rural and more urban areas.

7 Variables

7.1 *Event.ID*

A unique event identifier.

7.2 *Date*

Lists the year, month, and date in YYYY-MM-DD format for when the event took place. Multiple-day day events are coded as separate event-day-locations. If the exact day could not be identified, this date is the best approximation of the event date (see Section 2).

7.3 *DatePrecision*

Denotes the precision of the date coding.

1 = Exact date reported in at least one source.
2 = Exact date not reported, but date range falls within the examined time period.

7.4 *AggStartdate*

Indicates the start date of events that lasted more than one day.

7.5 *AggEnddate*

Indicates the end date of events that lasted more than one day.

7.6 *Location*

A character variable that records the location of the event. Events were not coded if an approximate location could not be identified (see Section 2).

7.7 *LocationPrecision*

Denotes the precision of the location coding. Events that could not be attributed to a voting district were not included in the dataset. Events occurring in Abidjan were only included if they could be attributed to a municipality (the administrative subdivision used as voting districts in Abidjan).

1 = Location identified at the sub-prefecture level or lower.
2 = Location identified at the voting district level.

7.8 *Longitude and Latitude*

Records the longitude and latitude of the location. Coordinates for locations coded as `LocationPrecision = 2` are given for the largest city in the voting district, usually a department capital.

7.9 *Actor1Type, Actor2Type*

Indicates the type of actor involved in the event according to the following coding scheme. For specific coding rules, see the notes in the ECAV codebook (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 10–11).

1 = State actor
2 = Nonstate actor, citizens
3 = Nonstate actor, party
4 = Nonstate actor, armed group
5 = Other
6 = Unidentified individuals[2]
-99 = Unknown

7.10 *Actor1Side, Actor2Side*

Indicates whether the actor was acting in support of or against the national government during the event.

[2]This specific actor type refers to individuals that were identified as "unidentified" because they took active measures to hide their identity, such as operating at night or covering their faces. It differs from the "unknown" code, which was used for events where no information about the actor was provided at all.

0 = Progovernment
1 = Antigovernment
-99 = Unknown

7.11 *Actor1Name, Actor2Name*

Records the name of the actor in the event.

7.12 *Target1Type, Target2Type*

Records the target of the event. Only coded for asymmetrical events that involved no second actor.

1 = State actor
2 = Nonstate actor, citizens
3 = Nonstate actor, party
4 = Nonstate actor, armed group
5 = Other
7 = Electoral institution (e.g. polling station, election office)
-99 = Unknown

7.13 *Target1Side, Target2Side*

Records whether the target was acting in support of or against the national government during the event.

0 = Progovernment
1 = Antigovernment
2 = Electoral institution
-99 = Unknown

7.14 *Target1Name, Target2Name*

Records the name of the target in the event.

7.15 *ParticipantNumber*

Records the total number of participants in the event.

1 = Less than 10
2 = 10–99
3 = 100–999

4 = 1,000–9,999
5 = More than 9,999
-99 = Unknown

7.16 *EventName*

Records the name of the event (e.g. attacks, killing, riot, violent protest, ...) according to the below coding scheme. The coding scheme was adopted from the ECAV codebook (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 14). If the event involved escalation, up to two event names were recorded, separated by a semicolon, with the initial event listed first (e.g. violent protest; clash).

- Arrest
- Arson
- Attack
- Clash
- Intimidation
- Kidnapping
- Killing
- Looting
- Protest with intervention: Peaceful demonstration, vigil, march, picket, sit-in, rally etc. that was dispersed by security forces (army, police, gendarmerie) using lethal or non-lethal physical violence against the protesters.
- Protest
- Riot
- Roadblocks: A specific form of riot that involved the erection of barricades on public roads.
- Shooting
- Unrest: Events referred to as unrest (*troubles*) were included even when there was no explicit mention of violence. The logic was that events characterised as unrest often involve some lower-intensity violence, coercion, or coercive intimidation.

- Violent protest: Demonstration, vigil, march, picket, sit-in, rally etc. in which the participants engaged in lethal or non-lethal physical violence against people or property. Instances of violence include low-intensity forms of violence such as rock-throwing, the burning of tires and vehicles, and erection of barricades. Peaceful protests that included no violence were not included in the dataset unless they saw security force intervention or escalated to violence (e.g. peaceful protests that escalated to clashes).
- Violent protest with intervention

7.17 *EventDirection*

Records whether the reports allow for establishing whether an event was directed or undirected. Directed events here refer to events where the reports suggested that one actor initiated violence against a particular target. Examples of such events include attacks on polling stations or candidates, violent protests targeting the security forces, and looting of electoral institutions. Events were coded as directed even when the identity of the initiating actor was unknown as long as the reports clearly suggested that the unknown actor initiated the violence. Undirected events refer to events where the reports either did not establish which actor initiated the violence, or where the violence had no specific target. Examples of such events included clashes for which the initiating actor could not be identified, many roadblock riots that did not target a particular actor or institution, and events described in vague terms as unrest or troubles (cf. Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019b: 14).

0 = Undirected
1 = Directed

7.18 *ViolenceInitiator*

Records the reported initiator of the violence at the event.

0.1 = The initiator was the actor in Actor1
0.2 = The initiator was the actor in Actor2
1.1 = The initiator was the actor in Target1
1.2 = The initiator was the actor in Target2
-99 = The initiator could not be determined

7.19 *ParticipantDeaths*

Records the total number of estimated deaths in the event. Non-numerical estimates (such as "several," "many," and "tens") were converted into numerical estimates using the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) vague number translator.[3]

7.20 *ParticipantDeathsLow*

Records the lowest total number of estimated deaths in the event. When multiple figures are available for a single event, this is the lowest reported number.

7.21 *ParticipantDeathsHigh*

Records the highest total number of estimated deaths in the event. When multiple figures are available for a single event, this is the highest reported number.

7.22 *ParticipantInjuries*

Records the total number of estimated injured people in the event. Non-numerical estimates (such as "several," "many," and "tens") were converted into numerical estimates using the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) vague number translator.

7.23 *ParticipantInjuriesLow*

Records the lowest total number of estimated injured people in the event. When multiple figures are available for a single event, this is the lowest reported number.

7.24 *ParticipantInjuriesHigh*

Records the highest total number of estimated injured people in the event. When multiple figures are available for a single event, this is the highest reported number.

7.25 *OtherIssue*

Records what other issues constituted a source of disagreement using the following coding scheme:

[3] Available from the author upon request.

1 = economy, jobs
2 = territory
3 = ethnicity
4 = religion
5 = foreign affairs
6 = environment
7 = national security
8 = other

7.26 *EventDescription*

Provides a general author-written description of the event.

7.27 *Clarity*

Reports the certainty with which the event was coded as election-related using the following coding scheme:

1 = Clear references to electoral dynamics
2 = Vague references to electoral dynamics
3 = No references to electoral dynamics, but contextual relation to electoral dynamics

7.28 *Source*

Lists the sources used to code the event.

8 Types, Actors, and Patterns of Electoral Violence

The 2020–2021 electoral violence in Côte d'Ivoire has received limited scholarly attention. While there are a few academic and popular analyses of the dynamics of violence around the 2020 presidential election (see e.g. Bakare, 2021; Banégas and Popineau, 2021; Bjarnesen & Van Baalen, 2021), no systematic efforts have been made to analyse temporal, spatial, and other patterns of the 2020–2021 electoral violence. Several factors may account for the lack of more systematic analysis: the 2020–2021 election crisis is quite recent, was far less severe than the devastating 2010–2011 election crisis, and took place in the shadow of the US presidential election. Another reason for the lack of systematic analysis is the dearth of data on the electoral violence: existing electoral violence event datasets like ECAV (Daxecker, Amicarelli, and Jung, 2019a) and DECO (Fjelde and Höglund, 2022) have not yet been updated to include the latest Ivorian election crisis, while more general political violence

datasets like the UCDP (Pettersson et al., 2021) and ACLED (Raleigh et al., 2010) either capture too many or too few events to enable careful analysis of electoral violence. My dataset alleviates this limitation and provides information about 320 unique electoral violence events (event-day-locations) for the period 1 August 2020 to 6 March 2021. Drawing on the dataset, this section provides a first descriptive analysis of the types, actors, and patterns of violence during the 2020–2021 electoral period in Côte d'Ivoire. The analysis serves two purposes: first, it sheds new light on Côte d'Ivoire's latest electoral violence spell, and two, it introduces the dataset and its utility.

8.1 *Types of Electoral Violence*

Electoral violence can take many forms, and the lastest violence in Côte d'Ivoire was no exception. Figure 1 shows the number of electoral violence events by type of violence, while Figure 2 plots the number of casualties by type of violence. Note that since some events involved escalation, the dataset records up to two types of violence for each event, with the first string indicating the type of action through which the event started. As can be gleaned from Figure 1, a large share of the electoral violence took the shape of attacks on candidates and clashes between rival sides. These types of electoral violence also constituted the most severe events in terms of the number of recorded deaths and injured people (Figure 2). Attacks and clashes accounted for 83 out of the 91 deaths and 617 out of the 682 injuries recorded in the dataset. For example, on 12 August 2020, clashes between opposition and government supporters in Daoukro resulted in the death of 2 people, and some 30 people were injured. The clashes also led to attacks on the local headquarters of the PDCI and RHDP, and several shops and houses were burnt (EventID CI-010). Likewise, on 1 November 2020, clashes between neighbouring ethnic communities backing rival political factions left 4 people dead and about a dozen injured in Toumodi (EventID CI-254). Events such as those in Daoukro and Toumodi bore much resemblance with prior electoral violence episodes in Côte d'Ivoire, notably the 2010–2011 post-election crisis (Banégas and Popineau, 2021: 462), in that they pitted citizens of different ethnopolitical affiliations against one another.

Figure 1 also shows that other types of electoral violence were common during the studied time period. Protests[4] and violent protests that resulted in violent security force intervention, as well as riots, account for a large share of the total events. These types of events took place in the context of an opposition-initiated civil disobedience campaign and election boycott to protest what the opposition perceived as an unconstitutional attempt by President Alassane

[4]Peaceful protests were only included in the dataset if they involved violent security force intervention (see Section 7).

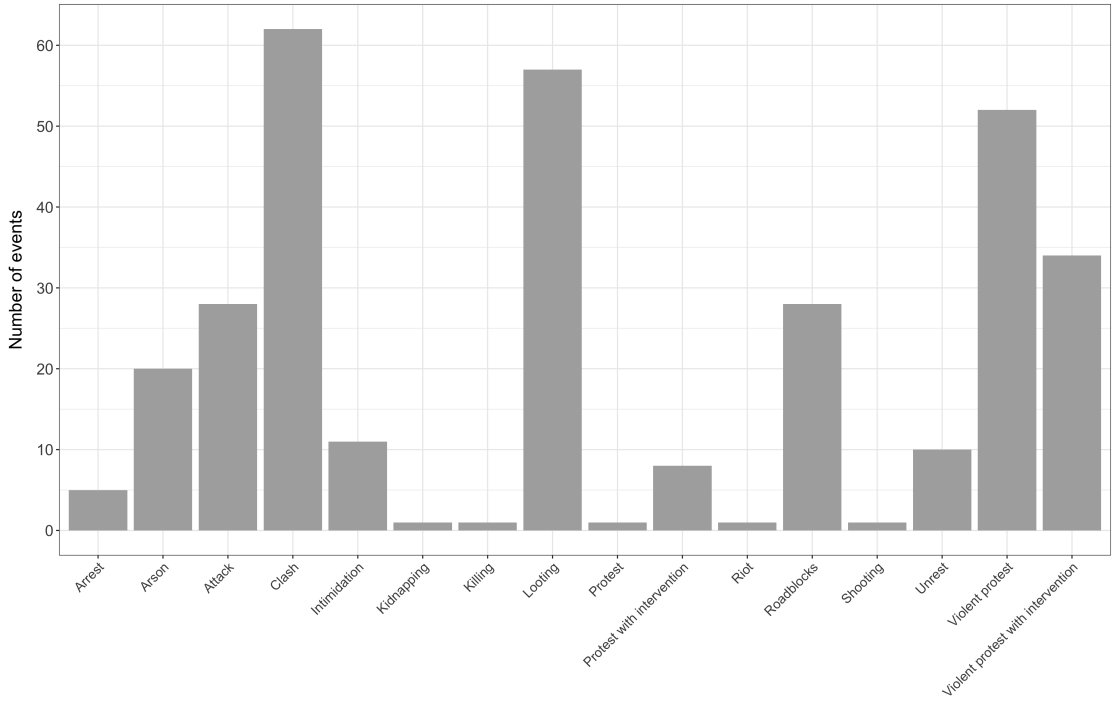

Figure 1: Number of electoral violence events by type of violence

Ouattara to win a third term in office (Banégas and Popineau, 2021: 463–464). As protests were illegal under the government's Covid-19 motivated ban on public assembly (Banégas and Popineau, 2021: 463–464) and many protests involved violent displays in the form of rock-throwing and the burning of tires, street action often triggered a violent response by the security forces. For example, on 19 September 2020, opposition supporters demonstrated against President Ouattara's third term bid in Yopougon in Abidjan. In conjunction with the protest, a group of unidentified individuals attacked and burnt a transport truck belonging to the gendarmerie, which triggered the security forces to intervene to disperse the demonstrators (EventID CI-068). Likewise, on 19 October 2020, opposition supporters protesting against President Ouattara's candidacy in Bonoua erected barricades on the roads and clashed with gendarmes, who subsequently fired live ammunition against the protests, killing one person and injuring about ten (EventID CI-115). Nevertheless, protest events were typically more expressive in nature and rarely bore evidence of intentional action to cause death or injury. Indeed, protest events resulted in far fewer casualties than attacks or clashes (Figure 2).

Finally, Figure 1 demonstrates that a significant number of electoral violence events either did not target people, such as the nighttime looting and arson of polling stations and electoral material, or constituted more undirected events, like the erection of roadblocks on public roads, and acts of intimidation and general unrest. Although these events did not

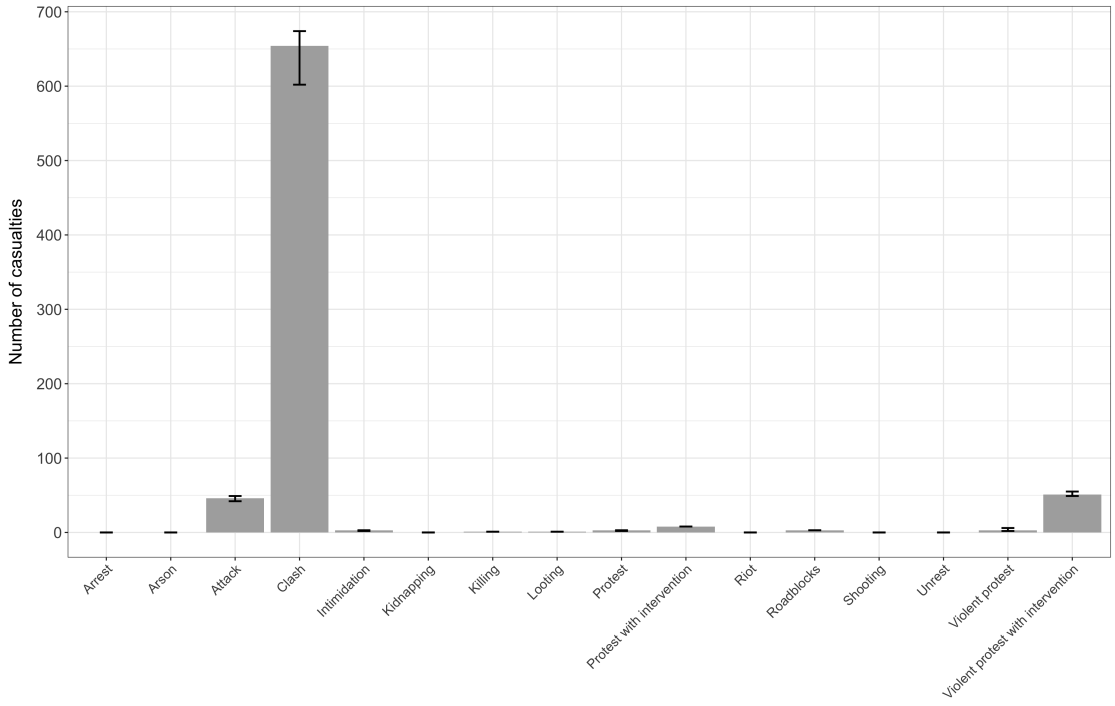

Figure 2: Number of casualties (deaths and injuries) by type of violence. The error bars indicate the highest and lowest casualty estimates included in the dataset.

typically result in any deaths or injuries, such acts still contributed to the general sense of fear that characterised the period before and after the 2020 presidential election. In fact, low-intensity events that resulted in no casualties still contributed to fear and displacement because many citizens remembered the devastating 2010–2011 election crisis. As noted by a UNHCR spokesperson commenting on the thousands of Ivorians that fled the country during the 2020 presidential election, "we know that people are looking back to 2010–11, that period when there was violence which at that time led to 3,000 dead, more than 300,000 refugees fleeing in the region and around 1,000,000 displaced" (UNHCR, 2020).

8.2 *Actors Involved in the Electoral Violence*

A broad range of actors were reportedly involved in the electoral violence, including both opposition-affiliated and government-affiliated actors. Figure 3 shows the share of electoral violence events that involved opposition- and government-affiliated actors. Note that involvement here only refers to whether an actor acting in support of the opposition or government was *involved* in the event, and not whether the actor was solely or partly responsible for *perpetrating* the violence. The data indicate that opposition-affiliated actors were involved

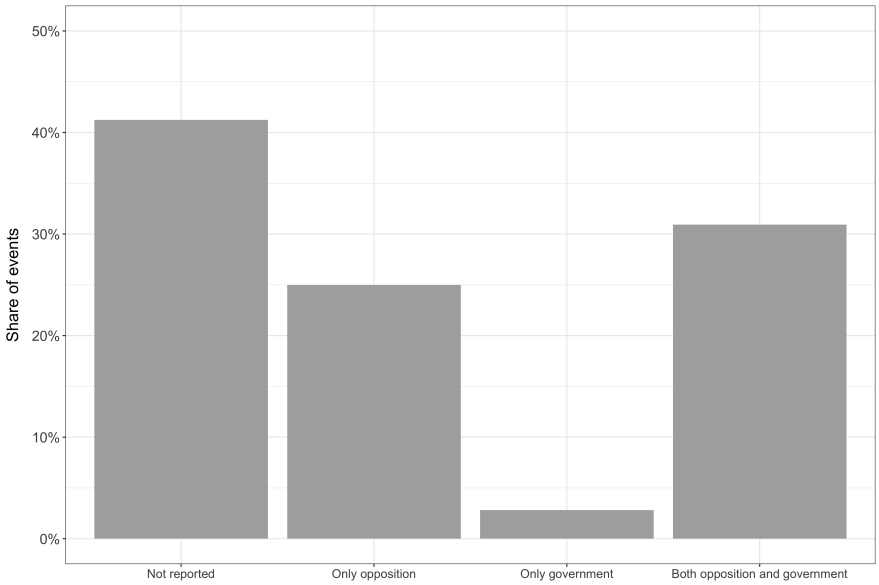

Figure 3: Share of electoral violence events by sides involved

in about twice as many events as government-affiliated actors (56% compared to 34% of the events). This pattern is unsurprising given that much of the political contention during the studied time period was driven by opposition leaders contesting President Ouattara's third term bid (Banégas and Popineau, 2021; Bjarnesen & Van Baalen, 2020). A key reason for more frequent involvement of opposition-affiliated actors was that most violent protests involved only opposition-affiliated actors but no other actor. Nevertheless, it should be noted that government-affiliated actors were still involved in about one-third of the electoral violence events, primarily represented by government supporters and the security forces. Thus, in contrast to the narrative promoted by President Ouattara's investigative unit (The Africa Report, 2021), the 2020–2021 violence should not be seen as exclusively involving opposition-affiliated actors.

The dataset also includes information on the reported initiator of violence in an event. Initiator here refers to the side that first used violence in an event according to the reports, and does not preclude the possibility that the other side responded with violence. Moreover, it should be noted that the initiator of violence is not the same as the initiator of the event. For example, on 10 August 2020, residents in Koun-Fao staged a peaceful demonstration against President Ouattara's candidacy and were met with violence by intervening security forces (EventID CI-007). In this event, Koun-Fao residents initiated the event, while the security forces initiated the violence. Figure 4 graphs the share of electoral violence events reportedly initiated by opposition-affiliated and government-affiliated actors. Again, the data

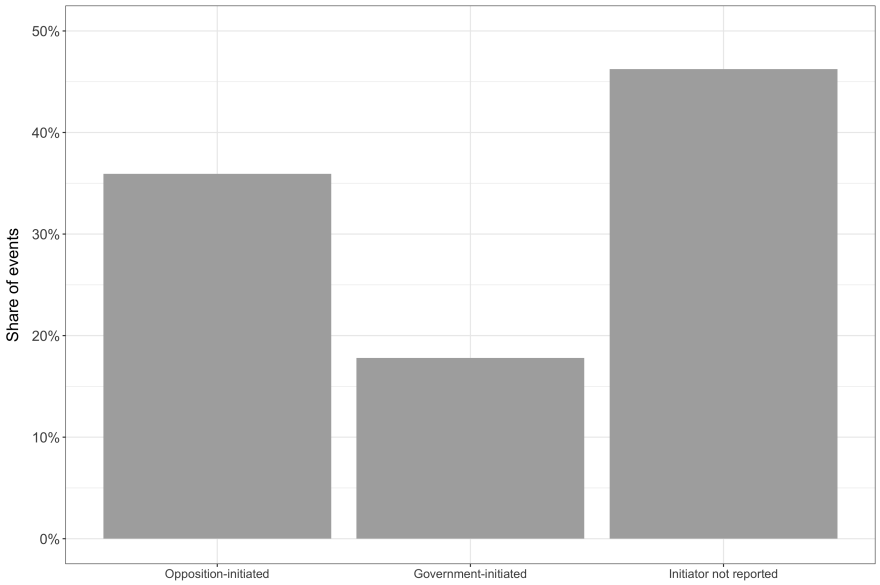

Figure 4: Share of electoral violence events by reported initiator

indicates that opposition-affiliated actors were the prime initiators of the electoral violence: the reports indicate that opposition-affiliated actors initiated the violence more than twice as often as they indicate that government-affiliated actors initiated the violence. Although this observation suggests that the 2020–2021 electoral violence was in larger part driven by opposition-affiliated actors, three caveats are in order. First, no initiator was reported or could be discerned for 46% of the events. Thus, given that government-affiliated actors may have been better at hiding their involvement in provoking violence, it possible that the true distribution was more even. Second, while opposition-affiliated actors initiated much of the violence through stone-throwing, violent displays, and rioting, security forces often responded with disproportionate force (see e.g. Amnesty, 2020a; HRW, 2020). Hence, the data should not be used to assign *responsibility* for the violence. Third, even though the dataset identifies opposition-affiliated actors as the most frequent initiators of violence, the data cannot provide evidence that such violence was part of a concerted opposition strategy directed by opposition leaders. The event reports provide little detail about the actors, and most actors coded as opposition-affiliated were described in rather vague terms as "ethnic communities supporting the opposition," "opposition supporters" or "presumed opposition supporters."[5]

[5]The latter label was often used for demonstrators that were presumed to be opposition supporters because they protested against President Ouattara's candidacy.

8.3 *Temporal Patterns of Electoral Violence*

The dataset also helps shed light on the temporal dynamics of the electoral violence. Figure 5 shows the number of electoral violence events per day during the studied time period, with key events superimposed. Violence took place both before and after the presidential election, as well as on the days of the presidential and legislative elections. The bulk of the events (155) took place before the presidential election, while 53 events occurred in the interim period between the two elections. Some 98 events took place on the day of the presidential election, while 14 events occurred on the day of the legislative polls. Moreover, as can be gleaned from the graph, there were several waves of violence. The first wave erupted in the days and weeks following President Ouattara's announcement on 6 August 2020 that he intended to run for a third term in office (Banégas and Popineau, 2021: 463). A second wave began after opposition leaders declared on 15 October 2020 that they intended to boycott the presidential election and called upon their supporters to "refrain from participating" and "to prevent any operation linked to the ballot from being held" (AFP, 2020). A third wave, which partly overlapped with the second, started in the week after the presidential election, while a smaller fourth wave occurred before the legislative election in early March. In addition, a noteworthy observation is that the opposition's call for nationwide civil disobedience did not trigger considerable violence in the immediate weeks after the announcement.

Pre- and post-electoral violence are often motivated by different strategic logics and can therefore follow different patterns (Straus and Taylor, 2012: 28–31). Varying patterns of pre- and post-electoral violence are also discernible in the Côte d'Ivoire data. Figure 6 shows the number of electoral violence events by type and timing. As demonstrated by the graphs, violent protests and the looting of electoral infrastructure were both far more common in the pre-election period and on election day than in the interim period between the presidential and legislative elections. In contrast, event types like clashes and attacks (the most violent types of electoral violence) remained common in the interim period and constituted a relatively larger share of the total events in the interim than pre-election period. One possible explanation of this is that violent protests and the pillaging of electoral infrastructure aimed to disrupt or prevent the presidential election, and hence served little purpose once the election was over. Indeed, international election observers reported that insecurity prevented 46% of the polling stations from opening on time, and that at least 1,052 polling stations were never able to open at all (EISA and The Carter Center, 2020: 2).

8.4 *Spatial Patterns of Electoral Violence*

The dataset is geo-referenced and includes coordinates referring to the nearest reported location of the violence (as long as the event could be assigned to a particular voting district,

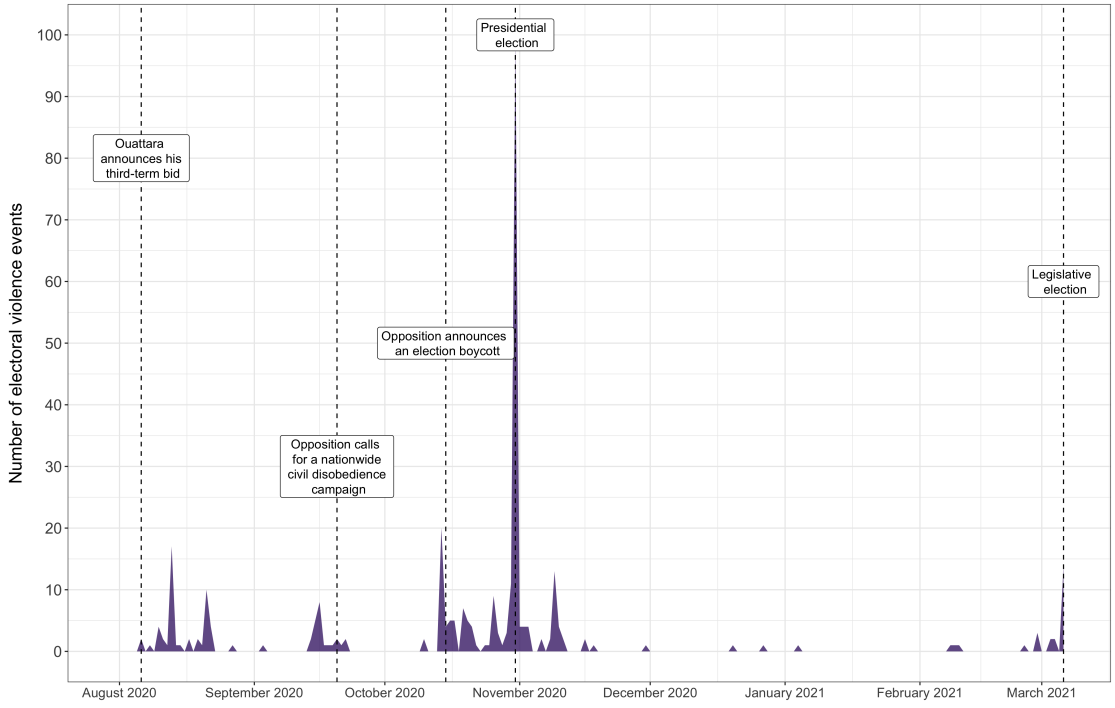

Figure 5: Number of electoral violence events by day (1 August 2020–6 March 2021)

see Section 7). This feature makes it possible to also analyse the spatial patterns of the electoral violence that accompanied the 2020–2021 electoral campaign. Figure 7 maps the number of electoral violence events by Côte d'Ivoire's 201 voting districts. Two conclusions emerge concerning spatial patterns of violence. First, while electoral violence affected large parts of southern Côte d'Ivoire, most northern voting districts saw no violence at all. One reason for this was in all likelihood that northern voting districts are traditional Ouattara strongholds were the opposition – who initiated most of the recent electoral violence – holds limited influence. In addition, northern voting districts are quite ethnically homogenous and sparsely populated, and therefore see less land conflicts that can serve as a cause for mobilisation during elections (see e.g. Klaus and Mitchell, 2015). Second, although electoral violence almost exclusively took place in southern Côte d'Ivoire, there was significant variation across voting districts. Electoral violence was most frequent in the south-east (around opposition strongholds such as Daoukro and Yamoussoukro), in the West (long a hotbed of ethnopolitical tension), and in and around Abidjan. In contrast, electoral violence was much less frequent in the south-west and in the central-south (see also Banégas and Popineau, 2021: 464). This local variation does not follow clear ethnopolitical divides, meaning that both some government and some opposition strongholds across southern Côte d'Ivoire saw frequent violence during the 2020–2021 crisis.

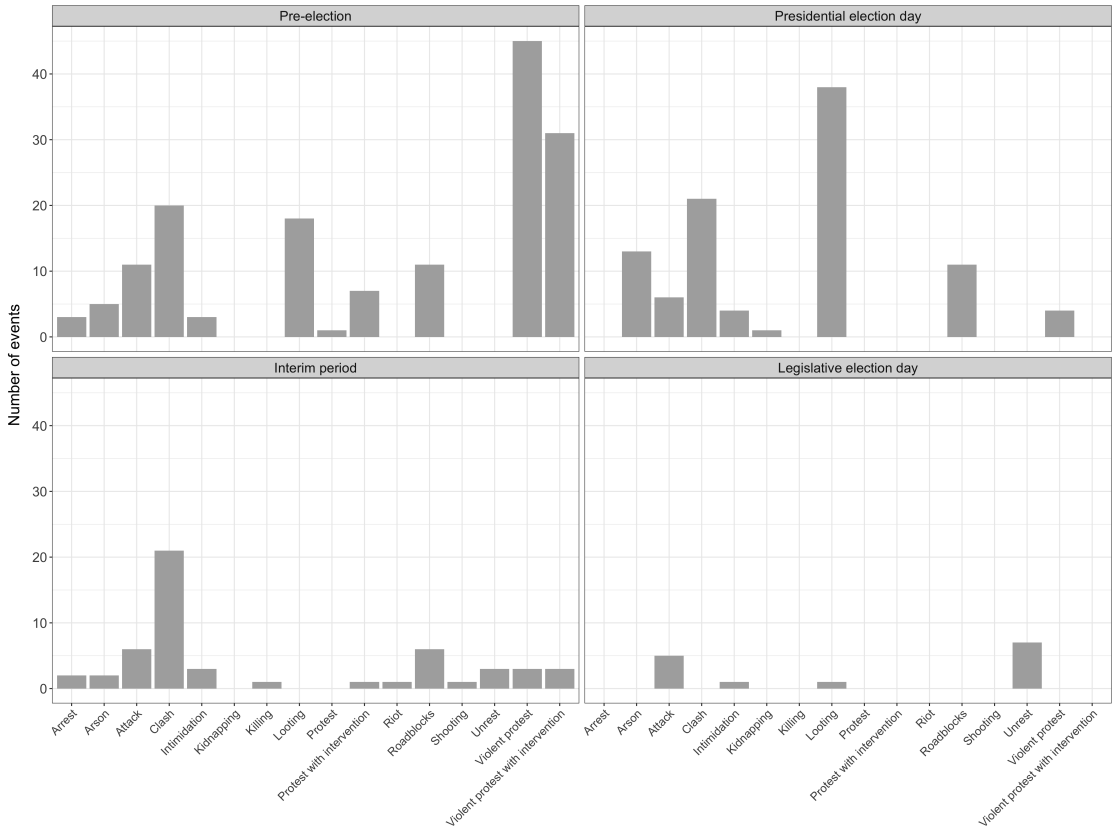

Figure 6: Number of electoral violence events by type of violence and timing

Similar spatial patterns also characterised the electoral violence in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire's de facto capital and largest metropolis. Figure 8 shows the number of electoral violence events by voting district across the thirteen voting districts in the Autonomous District of Abidjan. Electoral violence was most frequent in Yopougon, a well-known opposition stronghold, and in Cocody, an economic district in centre town that is often intensely contested. In contrast, no or little violence was reported in Ouattara strongholds like Abobo and Adjamé.

Existing analyses of the spatial patterns of violence during the 2020–2021 electoral period assert that violence was more frequent in opposition-controlled areas, especially in PDCI strongholds (Banégas and Popineau, 2021: 464). My analysis in part corroborates these claims, but cautions that such assertions must also be viewed in light of Côte d'Ivoire's complex and changing electoral landscape. Figure 9 shows the share of electoral violence events that occurred across voting districts won by different parties in the first round of the 2010 presidential election and the 2021 legislative election. These two elections serve as relevant baselines because they are the only elections in the last decade that were contested by all major political parties.

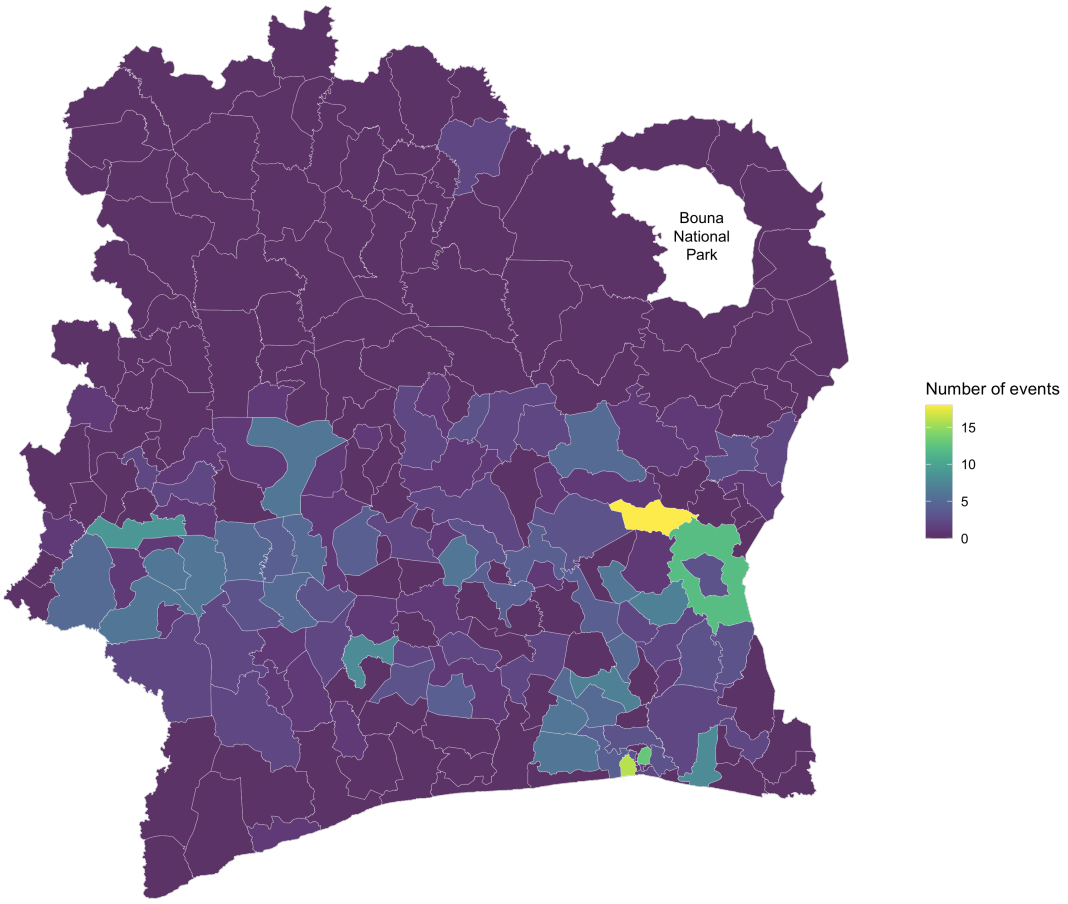

Figure 7: Number of electoral violence events by voting district

The left panel shows that electoral violence in 2020–2021 was indeed infrequent in incumbent strongholds if such strongholds are operationalised as voting districts won by the RDR in 2010 – only 4% of the events occurred in voting districts won by the RDR in 2010. However, this operationalisation does not take into account that the PDCI positioned itself in between the RDR and the FPI in 2010 and formed a coalition government with the RDR after the election. Taking into account that voting districts won by the PDCI in 2010 have a far stronger historical connection to the RDR than voting districts won by the FPI paints a less uneven picture and shows that almost a third of all electoral violence events took place in voting districts won by the RDR-PDCI coalition in 2010. Moreover, the graph demonstrates that the claim that most electoral violence events in 2020–2021 affected PDCI strongholds depends to a large extent on the FPI's boycott of most elections since 2010. When consider-

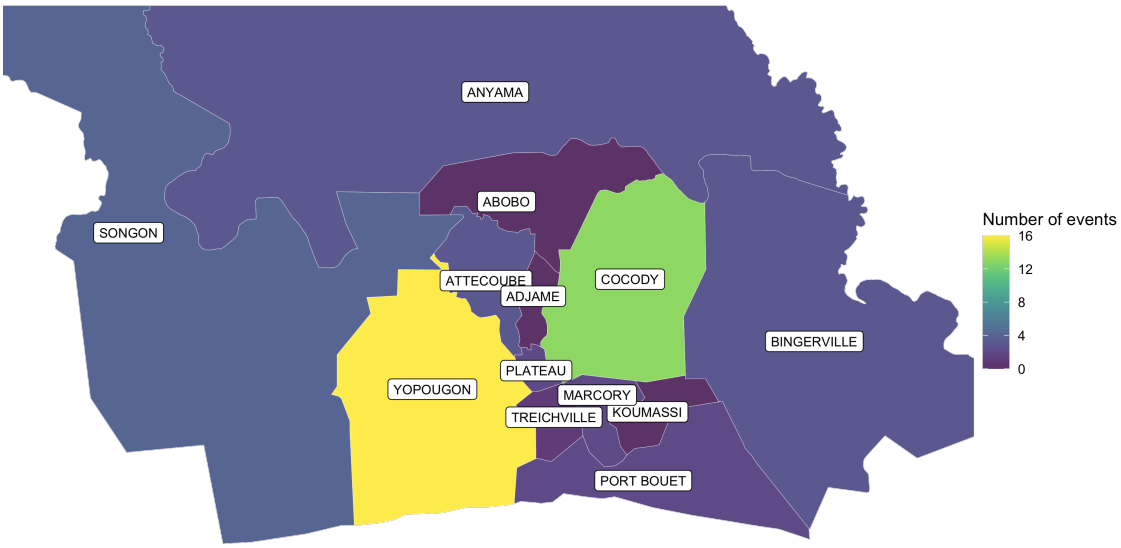

Figure 8: Number of electoral violence events by voting district in Abidjan

ing the 2010 electoral outcome – the last national election contested by the FPI before 2021 – some 74% of all electoral violence events occurred in voting districts won by the FPI.

The right panel adds additional nuance on the spatial patterns of violence and shows that electoral violence in 2020–2021 was quite evenly distributed across voting districts won by the RHDP (the RDR's successor) and the various opposition parties (primarily the PDCI and FPI) in the 2021 legislative election.[6] In fact, some 38% of all electoral violence events occurred in voting districts later won by the RHDP. This pattern reflects the changing geography of electoral support since 2010, a time period during which the RHDP has made important political inroads in southern Côte d'Ivoire. Thus, although the data support the conclusion that electoral violence in 2020–2021 was rare in long-term incumbent strongholds in northern Côte d'Ivoire, it also demonstrates that electoral violence did occur in more recent incumbent strongholds in the southern parts of the country (cf. Figure 7).

[6]While it is possible that the 2021 election result was influenced by the electoral violence that preceded it, the 2021 results also provide the most up-to-date figures of electoral support in Côte d'Ivoire.

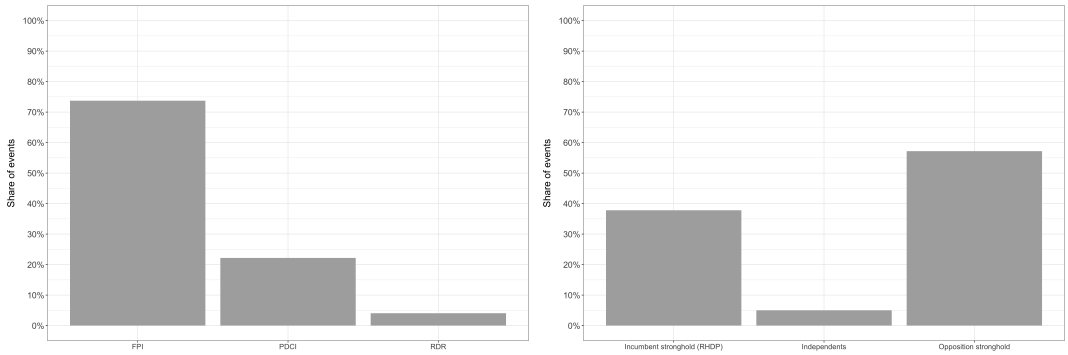

Figure 9: Share of electoral violence events by winner in the first round of the 2010 presidential election (left panel) and the 2021 legislative election (right panel).

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