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Christian Thibon, Marie-Aude Fouéré, Lidred Ndeda and Susan Mwangi, eds. 2014. Kenya's Past as Prologue: Voters, Violence and the 2013 General Election. Nairobi: Twaweza Communications

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distinguish more clearly between contributing and/or destructive forms of resistance in order to avoid a non-realistic picture of overall glorifying armed resistance as a unique *raison d'être* of national liberation. The annotated book edited by Jeremy Silvester offers a responsible and professional collection of mature and promising contributions that demonstrate, at the same time, the high level of Namibian historiography.

Jan Klíma

Christian Thibon, Marie-Aude Fouéré, Lidred Ndeda and Susan Mwangi, eds. 2014. *Kenya's Past as Prologue: Voters, Violence and the 2013 General Election*. Nairobi: Twaweza Communications. 264 pages.

The East African state of Kenya has always attracted a great deal of attention from experts on Africa. One of the largest economies in the region as well as a popular tourist destination, Kenya has in recent years featured on the front pages of international news not only due to frequent, bloody attacks by Somali terrorist militias connected to Al-Qaeda, but also to ethnic violence, which has occurred regularly in Kenyan society since the implementation of the democratic process and the return to the multiparty system in 1991. Ever since colonial times Kenya has struggled with peacefully integrating more than 40 ethnic groups, with the largest of these groups, the Kikuyu, only comprising 22 % of the total population according to estimates.

In the period of British colonial rule, a one-party state led by president and KANU chairman Jomo Kenyatta managed to keep these conflicts more or less under control, however, after 1992 they flared up again in full force. Ethnic violence then regularly emerged during election periods, particularly during election campaigns of individual political parties and their candidates, at voting booths and most of all after the announcement of election results. Practically all elections have been affected, whether presidential, parliamentary, regional or local. Violent clashes even took place due to non-ethnic conflict between candidates from the same political party in primaries to determine the party's list of candidates.

As such, the most recent general elections in Kenya, held on 4 March, 2013, were awaited with concern by many, especially because these elections appeared to be a major test of the country's ability to move beyond election-related violence – particularly that of the 2007-2008 elections, which resulted in the death of 1,300 citizens and the displacement of more than 600,000. Would the 2013 elections confirm the success of political institutional reforms which had been put in place previously, or would the country explode into violent conflict between discontent ethnic groups again, as it had in recent years?

Ethnic and non-ethnic conflict had already surfaced in 2011-2012, long before the commencement of the 2013 election, primarily in connection with voter registration and political parties' primaries. Clashes between communities in several regions of the country resulted in more than 500 dead and nearly 120,000 displaced (International Crisis Group 2013). Similar events had taken place before practically every Kenyan election, and thus most observers feared that the March 2013 general elections and particularly the announcement of the election results would be accompanied by increased violence.

This underlying threat of escalating ethnic violence was something representatives of all Kenyan political parties and movements were aware of. The majority of presidential candidates, politicians, political activists and representatives of a diverse range of citizens' groups attempted to forestall electoral violence, appealing to their supporters for non-confrontational conduct, calm and tolerance during the election campaigns. The causes of ethnic violence, particularly those that have fueled its increase since 1992, became taboo topics in pre-election discussions and debates.

So the lack of the usual post-election crisis, particularly in light of the extremely narrow victory of presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta (50.07 % of the vote) in the first round and the subsequent vote recount in selected voter precincts, surprised all experts on Kenyan politics and the Kenyan electoral process. Research focused on the course of the March 2013 general election. The election campaign, its results, the activities of election institutes, and the causes of the previous conflicts were published in practically all well-known African magazines. It was only a matter of time until the first serious monograph on this unusual phenomenon for Kenya emerged.

One of the first such publications is the book under review here, with a relatively extensive collection of authors under the leadership of the French Institute for Research in Africa (Institut français de recherche en Afrique – IFRA), including political scientists, historians and anthropologists, who explored various aspects of the electoral process to contribute in-depth analyses of the last Kenyan elections.

This book is a collection of 17 studies by different authors who focus on various aspects of the Kenyan electoral process, such as structural factors underlying the election process and voting in Kenya, including the political system, culture and political transition. The authors have also provided specific case studies, analyzed contemporary and past situations and contexts in Kenya, as well as trends and issues that influenced the 2013 Kenyan elections.

The monograph commences with an introduction co-authored by the four editors, in which the authors present the main goal of the combined research and its methodology. According to this introduction, the monograph presents two different types of texts. The first could be described as “impressionist”, in that they take stock of general or topical issues and highlight the structural factors underlying elections and voting in Kenya, as well as Kenya’s political system, culture and political transition process. The second type of text could be, according to the authors, thought of as “pointillist”, and these essays offer detailed insights into specific case studies, situations and contexts, bringing these into focus against the background of more systemic analyses in the “impressionist” texts (p.9).

The individual studies present interesting perspectives on various aspects of Kenya’s politics, especially in relation to its election process. Christian Thibon, in the chapter “*Kenyan Elections: When Does History Repeat Itself and Does Not Repeat Itself?*”, introduces readers to a short history of the Kenyan election process; nevertheless the main focus is on an analysis of the last election, evaluating the new voting system and explaining its impact on the behavior of Kenyan political parties with ethnic roots. Authors George O. Okoth and Gordon O. Omenya concentrate on aspects of the new constitution and internal democracy in the Orange Democratic Movement in the chapter “*New Constitution, Odingaism and the State of Internal Democracy in ODM and its Effects on the 2013 Elections in Kenya*”.

A number of studies are devoted to the roles of selected institutions and their influence on the election process. The first essay of Hervé Maupeu, “*Kenyan Elections: The ICC, God and the 2013 Kenyan General Elections*”, examines the function of the International Criminal Court in regard to post-election violence in 2007-2008 and its influence on the rather violent character of the previous election. Marie Wolfrom focuses on the function of the Election Commission and the Supreme Court in the chapter “*The Election Commission and the Supreme Court: Two new institutions put to the test by Elections*”. To this category could be added the noteworthy if not extensive study by Thomas P. Wolf in the chapter “*Getting it ‘Wrong’, Again? Wajojiwa vs. Wapiga Kura in the 2013 Kenyan Election*”, which focuses on public opinion polls and how accurate they are in predicting election results.

Mathieu Mérino (in the chapter “*The 4 March 2013 General Elections in Kenya: From Latent Tension to Contained Violence*”) mostly concentrates on the causes of election violence after the 2007 elections and in the lead-up to the most recent election (2012-2013). His research is supported with clear maps showing election violence in individual Kenyan regions, including numbers of dead and displaced people.

The publication contains a number of studies on the election process, campaigns and results in selected voting precincts. Lisa Fuchs in the chapter “*Political Integration of Minority Communities: The Ogiek of Eastern Mau Forest in the 2013 Elections*” examines the voting behaviour of the Ogiek ethnic minority. A case study of Kisii County is the subject of Eric Rosana Masese’s contribution “*Negotiating History for Negotiated Democracy: The Case of Kisii County in 2013 Kenya Elections*”. Issues connected with the selection of a new political elite in the South Rift region are explored in Joseph Mistai Akuma’s paper “*The Quest for New Political Leadership in the South Rift, Kenya*”. The problematic voting behavior of Luo Women voters in the Siaya and Kisumu counties is dealt with by Mildred A. J. Ndeda. *Issues of grassroots movements, marginalization and the origins of the alternative Authority in the Kenyan Coast* are covered by Ngala Chome.

Issues connected to the function of local and international election observers are explored in Mwanela Kamencu’s “*Role of Election Observers: Diplomatic Bias and the Findings of the Kenyan 2013 Election*”. Separate sub-chapters focus on an analysis of the activities and

findings of the regional observation missions AU, EAC, IGAD and COMESA, the observation mission of the EU and The Carter Center International Observation Mission.

A very interesting contribution is the analysis of the voting behaviour of the middle class, which Patrick Mbataru undertook in the course of his research, in the chapter “*Twitting Votes: The Middle Class and the 2013 Elections in Kenya*”, along with another paper which centers on the election campaign of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, authored by Yonatan Gez and Tanya Alvis.

One of the biggest surprises in the lead-up to the elections was the creation of a coalition of political parties representing the political interests of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic groups, which Susan Mwangi thoroughly analyses in her study “*Kikuyu-Kalenjin Relations in IDP Camps and the 2013 Elections: An Invitation to ‘The’ Conversation*”. Political mobilization strategies in Kisii County are addressed by Wycliffe Nyachoti Otiso in his chapter “*An Evaluation of Political Mobilization Strategies Employed by Vigilante Groups in Kisii County during the 2013 Kenyan Elections*”.

One of the shortcomings of the editors is their failure to organize the studies into logical groupings. As is evident from the overview given above, the publication contains a number of different types of studies, the first type featuring an overview of the general character of Kenyan elections and a history of the Kenyan electoral process (Christian Thibon et al, Christian Thibon, Mathieu Mérino etc.), while we also find pieces analyzing elections and voting behavior in selected voting precincts (Tom Wolf, Lisa Fuchs, Eric Rosana Masese, etc.). Furthermore, there are analyses of the activities of various Kenyan institutions (e.g. Election Commission, Supreme Court) and their influence on the election process. Not even non-Kenyan institutions (e.g. International Criminal Court, the role of various election observers) are lacking from the pages, while studies focusing on the behavior of various social classes (e.g. Luo Women Voters, The Middle Class) also appear, and finally a number of papers dedicated to election strategy, not forgetting of course further studies on problems with election violence.

A glaring oversight is that the book lacks a formal conclusion, in which the authors summarize the results of the individual studies and attempt to formulate some general conclusions, an analysis and the general characteristics of the 2013 Kenyan general elections. The lack of a conclusion greatly detracts from an otherwise high quality collection of studies, which on the whole present thought-provoking new perspectives on modern Kenyan politics and the most recent elections.

In conclusion, the book contains a compelling analysis of the most varied facets of Kenyan modern political history, recent elections, the election process, the election campaigns, the causes of election violence, the election platforms of political parties and above all a detailed analysis of the results of the March 2013 Kenyan general election, not only at a national level but also in individual voting precincts. The book is recommended to all experts on Kenya and Africa, students of African studies and political science as an valuable source of information and thorough analysis, shedding light on the election process from various points of view in one of the most important East African nations.

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