

**Cost of Introducing Multi-Party Elections:
Impact of the 1992 Ethnic Violence on Child Health in Kenya**

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ABSTRACT

By exploiting ethnic violence resulting from the introduction of Kenya's first multi-party electoral system in 1992, we examine the impact of exposure to prenatal maternal stress on child health. The results suggest that prenatal exposure to the violence increased the probabilities of low birth weight and premature birth by 18.9% and 5.1%, respectively. In addition, an extra month of in utero exposure to the violence reduced birth weight by 94 grams. The results of our findings reaffirm the significance of the nine months in utero as one of the most critical periods in life shaping future health, economic and education trajectories.

JEL Classification: I15, J13, J24, O15

Keywords: Kenya, election, ethnic violence, child health, *in utero*, maternal stress, birth weight

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