

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A TALE OF ONE ELECTION, TWO COMMISSIONS AND PLENTY OF EXTERNAL AGENTS: THE KENYA 2007 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND ITS AFTERMATH**

**Anders Sjögren, PhD**

**Department of Political Science, Stockholm University, Sweden**

This paper analyses the role of external actors in the Kenya 2007 Presidential election and in addressing the violence and the political stand-off that followed. It further discusses possible long-term implications of external engagement. The Kenyan crisis was almost immediately internationalised. A great many actors sought to intervene, for various reasons. Different interests converged around a political compromise, and a settlement was brokered by the Kofi Annan-led team, mandated by the African Union. The agreement set off two main commissions that investigated the election and the post-election violence, respectively. The two commissions generated very different reactions among both external agents and Kenyan political forces; this paper analyses how and why.

“External agents” is a label that refers to very different forces, both facilitators and obstructionists of democracy. The ways in which such agents relate to specific contexts and various local political forces produce different outcomes. The Kenyan experience demonstrates the significant but contradictory roles of external agents, and offers an opportunity for theoretical reflection on internal-external divides and alliances and how internal-external constellations shape African states in the context of globalisation. I argue that whereas, in the Kenyan case, the convergence around a political settlement facilitated a ceasefire, external agents’ preoccupation with “stability” – and the ways in which their different interests shape their understanding of what such stability consists in – blocks the prospects for radical reforms, necessary for preventing another crisis of an even greater magnitude. The study draws on media and official documents and on interviews with Kenyan activists and politicians as well as with foreign diplomats in Nairobi.