

Does Electoral Competition Cause Post-Election Intimidation and Violence? Evidence from the March 29, 2008 Zimbabwean General Election *

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Introduction

Are post-election intimidation and violence attributable to intense electoral competition? This paper presents answers to that question based on empirical findings from an analysis of the events immediately following balloting in the 2008 general election in Zimbabwe, a time period marked by thousands of incidents involving threats and physical attacks. The scholarly warrant for this research is that post-election intimidation and violence merit research as political phenomena that are important for reasons that involve both normative and practical policy-making interests and that have not been much studied. Indeed, while the published research about intimidation and violence before and during balloting comprises a small literature, the published research about post-election intimidation and violence hardly comprises a literature at all.

The general normative interest in electoral intimidation and violence is that safeguarding the right to vote without fear is that people appear to value the right to participate beyond the specific outcomes of elections (Benz 2007: 210; Guth and Weck-Hannemann 1997). The procedural utility they derive from participation in elections is an enhanced sense of personal well being from the, “feeling of being involved and having

* I would like to express my appreciation to the staff of www.Sokwanele.com for sharing their data and for the diligent efforts of my research assistant, Adam Smith.

political influence” and “inclusion, identity, and self-determination” (Benz 2007: 212). These feelings fulfill innate needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Benz 2007: 203). That probably accounts for the determination of some voters to participate in elections despite the risk of threat or physical attack. Notwithstanding the courage of some voters, public opinion research suggests that the experience of intimidation deters some from voting both in the near term and over the long term (Bratton 2008: 626). The general normative interest in electoral intimidation and violence is independent of both the purposes sought by its perpetrators and its effectiveness. These behaviors are morally repugnant whether their purpose is simply retributive or instrumentally rational.

The general practical or policy-making interest in electoral intimidation and violence is that they constitute what liberal societies would otherwise deem to be criminal behavior (Bratton 2008: 623). Policy making about electoral intimidation and violence begins with moral outrage but then moves to consideration of the economics of crime: “the cost imposed on society by the criminal act; the benefit to the criminal of committing the act; the cost of resources used to maintain the expected punishment” (Winter 2008: 13). Where the authorities are not among the perpetrators or otherwise complicit, then a straightforward economic policy analysis may be warranted. How much effort should the state devote to preventing and punishing electoral violence and intimidation? Beyond the importance of deterring violent crime of any sort through prevention and punishment, the importance of specifically deterring electoral intimidation and violence lies in the value of deterring highly publicized violent crime that may have a demonstration effect by indicating the weakness of social restraint and in its instrumental effectiveness either by reducing voter turnout or by enhancing the chances of winning by

parties and candidates whose supporters are perpetrators. Therefore, if the authorities are not among the perpetrators or otherwise complicit, and if electoral intimidation and violence are neither highly publicized nor effective, then they may not merit policing and prosecution efforts different in intensity from ordinary violent crime. However, if the electoral intimidation and violence are highly publicized and effective, and if the authorities are among the perpetrators or otherwise complicit, then straightforward economic policy analysis of crime is insufficient. In such circumstances the equality of treatment expected under the rule of law is violated, and the practical or policy-making interest therefore becomes inseparable from the normative interest. So powerful are the normative interests implicated in widespread electoral intimidation and violence by the authorities that some citizens may ignore patriotic pride and willingly endorse international investigation to expose the pathology (Gettleman November 6 2009: A6). As such it may internationalize what would normally be a national political controversy. Independent news coverage indicates that the state was complicit in the highly publicized and widespread post-election violence in Zimbabwe in 2008 (Shaw June 22, 2008).

This research is justifiable because it attempts to answer, however preliminarily, an inquiry about a contradiction between moral goods: legitimacy and contestation. Beyond the toll of emotionally traumatized, wounded or dead, post-election intimidation and violence threaten the legitimacy of immediate election outcome, and more generally of elections as a method of selecting officials. If the intensity of electoral competition is associated with post election intimidation and violence (Manning 2005: 721), then that poses a fundamental conflict in moral goods because electoral contestation is crucial if elected officials are to be responsive and accountable to citizens.

Literature Review

Post-election intimidation and violence have been given little attention in election studies. One exception is the cross-national study of the relationships between general elections and government respect for human rights by Richards and Gelleny, whose findings point to increased respect for physical integrity rights in the two years after conducting a national legislative election but decreased respect for them in the year after conducting a presidential election (2007: 515-519). Where national legislative elections and presidential elections are conducted simultaneously, “presidential elections reduce the odds of high respect for physical integrity rights in the year following the election, while legislative elections revealed no such association” (2007: 520). The authors reason that presidential elections may be viewed as a zero-sum game, one in which losing means being permanently excluded from power (2007: 510).

The bulk of the published scholarly literature on electoral intimidation and violence focuses on that occurring before and during balloting. The reason for this difference may lie in the unexamined assumption that the intimidation and violence occurring before and during balloting are instrumentally rational while that occurring afterward is simply irrational retribution. Thus, similar acts—threats, assaults and killings—are sometimes understood differently by observers because they occur at different moments in time (Throup and Hornsby 1998: 541-542). Dismay at the apparent disorder and/or hope that a particular election outcome will be accepted as legitimate may predispose observers to conclude that post-election intimidation and violence are the expression of dissatisfaction or rage on the part of the apparent losers and satisfaction and malice on the part of the

apparent winners rather than instrumentally rational. That seems the view implicit in one of the news stories about the 2008 post election violence in Zimbabwe by the Harare weekly *The Financial Gazette*: “The victims of the violence say they are being terrorized by state agents and militias who accuse them of having voted the wrong way” (n.a. April 23, 2008).¹ These same acts, however, might be motivated by instrumentally rational purposes comparable to those of election violence before and during balloting. Possible purposes include the following:

1. First, wholesale electoral intimidation and violence might be perpetrated by insurgents to prevent elections from being conducted or from being conducted across sufficient territory for the likely election winners to claim legitimacy (Yardley November 1, 2009: A16; Widyono 2008: 98).
2. Second, wholesale or targeted ‘retail’ electoral intimidation and violence might be perpetrated by agents of the state to transform the act of voting from one involving choice among parties and candidates to one involving expression of support for the regime.
3. Third, ‘wholesale’ electoral intimidation and violence across an entire country or entire regions might be perpetrated to deter voters from casting their votes for opposing parties (Argersinger 1985: 669-687; Chan 2003: 196-197; Chaturvedi 2005: 189-202; Gallup 2002: 176-178; Pugh and Cobble 2001: 30; Throup and Hornsby 1998: 372).
4. Fourth, targeted ‘retail’ electoral violence may be perpetrated to deter voters from casting their votes for competing parties or candidates in specific constituencies or elections wards (Hickman forthcoming; Patino and Velasco 2004).
5. Fifth, electoral intimidation and violence might reflect a principle-agent problem. The familiar principle-agent problem is that the private interests of the agent may diverge from those of the principle when the agent has knowledge unavailable to the principle, which is especially likely in endeavors where the principle must deny legal responsibility for the actions of agents. Given the backlash in public opinion, such denial is especially likely with the principle-agent relationship between parties or candidates and their campaign supporters, the likely perpetrators of electoral violence and intimidation (Mitchell 2004: 5-6).

¹ Moyses notes that the private owned *The Financial Gazette* “displays considerable editorial independence” despite being partially owned by a Mugabe subordinate (2009: 51).

6. Sixth, and finally, there is the possibility that electoral intimidation and violence may be the work of *agents-provocateur*. Because such acts are widely viewed as morally repugnant and the electorate may vote in a manner that punishes those that they deem responsible (Throup and Hornsby 1998: 347), perpetrators may attempt to commit such crimes in a manner that exposes the victim rather than the victimizer to public opprobrium. At the very least, perpetrators may attempt to deflect responsibility by blaming their opponents for the electoral intimidation and violence that they have committed. For example, the government of the ethnic Kalenjin President of Kenya Daniel arap Moi blamed the attacks carried out by ethnic Kalenjin on ethnic Kikuyu settlers in the Rift Valley following the 1992 general election on the ethnic Kikuyu (Throup and Hornsby 1998: 541-544; Wrong 2009: 140).

If the post-election intimidation and violence in Zimbabwe are instrumentally rational responses rather than retributive in nature, then they probably reflect one or more of these six purposes. Given the suspicious delays by the Zimbabwe Election Commission in the release of information that no candidate had received an absolute majority of the vote in the first round presidential election and thus second round or runoff election was likely, the third and fourth purposes mentioned above are plausible. As one reporter noted, “[M]any opposition officials and leaders of civic groups have come to believe the delays were meant to buy time for ZANU-PF, the governing party, to carry out a campaign to intimidate the opposition ahead of a runoff” (Dugger April 28, 2008).

Background

The electoral history of Zimbabwe presents frequent deviations from the ideal of the free and fair election. The first general election in Zimbabwe in 1980 was marred by an attempted assassination of ZANU-PF leader Robert Mugabe, violence between the supporters of ZANU-PF and those of Joshua Nkomo’s PF-ZAPU, and the attempted suppression of campaigning by the ZANU-PF by the Rhodesian security forces (Reynolds 1999: 165). The ZANU-PF triumphed at the polls in 1980, winning 57 of 100

seats in parliament, despite the arrest of as many as 20,000 of its party militants.

Although those same pathologies were not in evidence during the subsequent 1985 general election, it took place during the brutal 1982-1987 conflict in Matabeleland, the electoral base of Nkomo's PF-ZAPU. Adoption of the First-Past-the-Post or single member constituency/plurality election system in place of proportional representation for the 1985 and later elections probably helped to set the stage for future tragedies.²

The ZANU-PF's emergence as the hegemonic party in elections in the 1980s and 1990s reflected the successful mobilization of voters in provinces where the ethnic Shona provinces were dominant and isolation of the PF-ZAPU in the two provinces where the Matabele were dominant (Reynolds 1999 168-172). Thus in the 1980s and 1990s Zimbabwe presented the problem evident in other states that adopted a single member constituency/plurality electoral system: ethnic voter mobilization and insulation of the party representing the ethnic majority from electoral challenge (Reynolds 1998: 75-77). Ethnic voter mobilization is effective because ethnicity offers voters a useful cue about how candidates might distribute patronage if they win office (Posner 2005: 104-105). Winning ethnic groups or coalitions of ethnic groups may be rewarded with preferential allocation of government spending for the regions and constituencies where they are dominant and ethnic favoritism in hiring and promotion in the civil service while turning a blind eye as their leaders succumb to the temptations of official corruption (Wrong 2009: 50-51). Politics then threatens to devolve into a zero-sum scramble for economic rents rather than an exercise in policy-making intended to enhance the quality of public

² Rule suggests that mal-apportionment in the drawing of the single member constituency boundaries may have favored Mugabe's ZANU-PF at the expense of PF-ZAPU (2000:123). However that is not clear from the analysis of the election by Lemon (1988: 6-7).

service and opportunities for wealth creation. In the parliamentary elections of 1990 and 1995, Mugabe's ZANU-PF trounced the opposition, claiming many seats unopposed.

That the ZANU-PF had not completely consolidated its hold on the electorate was revealed when on February 12-13, 2000 it lost a referendum amending the constitution and strong electoral competition reemerged in the June 24, 2000 parliamentary election, with candidates of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) winning 58 of the 120 seats filled by election. (Another 30 parliamentary seats were filled by appointment.) From that election until the present, the MDC, which one author described as a "loose coalition of the disaffected and the idealistic" (2003: 164), benefited from the erosion of support for the ZANU-PF caused by deteriorating economic conditions (Tarisayi 2009) and perceptions of official corruption and lawlessness. Comparison of the survey results from Zimbabwe with those of the other 17 states in the 2005-2006 Afrobarometer indicate a large discrepancy between perceptions of the quality of national elections and expectations about political rights (Logan et al, 2006). Fifty-eight percent of the respondents in Zimbabwe rated elections in the country as either 'not free and fair' or 'fair but with major problems.' The mean score on this item for all 18 states was 25% and the only state receiving a poorer score than Zimbabwe was Nigeria, at 61%. At the same time, respondents in Zimbabwe rated the importance of unrestricted freedoms of political speech, press freedom and freedom to organize higher than respondents in any of the other 17 states surveyed. They also scored the highest in agreeing with the following statement: "The president must always obey the laws and the courts, even if he thinks they are wrong." This reflects an acute contradiction between the popular assessment of the illiberal nature of the political regime and the value placed on basic political liberties.

ZANU-PF and MDC continued their struggle with the March 31, 2002 and November 26, 2005 parliamentary elections, with the former party winning but having to “deploy the full repertoire of oppression and persecution” for its victories (EISA Election Observer Mission Report 2008:7). In the run-up to the “harmonized” March 28, 2008 general election, which combined elections to local government councils, elections to both chambers of parliament, the Senate and House of Assembly, and the first round of the presidential election, the political regime in Zimbabwe would be fairly characterized as semi-authoritarian (Munck 2009: 44-47). As a hegemonic party, the ZANU-PF tolerated the existence of other parties that contested elections but deny them the possibility of ever winning elections.

As was true in the previous March 9, 2002 presidential election, incumbent president Mugabe’s primary opponent in the March 29, 2008 presidential election was Morgan Tsvangirai. The MDC leader developed a national following by serving first as leader of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) leader and later as president of the National Constitutional Assembly. Intimidation and violence were widespread in the 2002 contest, with 40 MDC candidates and supporters being killed (Chan 2003: 196-197; Meredith 2002: 194, 214-215). Electoral intimidation and violence were largely absent before and during the polling in the 2008 general election. Instead intimidation and violence by ZANU-PF supporters and security forces against MDC supporters erupted *after* polling. In the end, these succeeded in forcing MDC candidate Morgan Tsvangirai to withdraw from the June 2008 second round runoff election five days before it was conducted. However his name remained on the ballot and the election was held.

Incumbent President Robert Mugabe ‘won’ that contest, which featured an impressively, and perhaps improbably, high reported voter turnout.

Explaining Post-Election Violence

Masunungure outlines two plausible explanations for the post-election violence (2009: 90-95). The first explanation, focused on the national legislative elections, is that the violence was an expression of rage at the ‘betrayal’ of voters considered to be part of the ZANU-PF electoral base who had the temerity to vote for the opposition MDC. Losing parliamentary seats in the ruling party’s traditional strongholds both aroused intense partisan rage and violated the assumed historical imperative that the ZANU-PF would hold power indefinitely (2009: 90-93).

“This partly explains (if not largely) explains why the epicentre of the strategy of ‘electoral cleansing’ was in the Mashonaland provinces, and within them in those constituencies where it lost or won marginally. Even in constituencies where it won, the brutal campaign visited those areas whose polling stations had recorded a loss for the party or where a large opposition vote had been recorded” (Masunungure 2009: 91).

This was the prediction made by a reporter for *The Independent* (April 13, 2008), who also supplemented the explanation with a rational instrumental purpose:

“[T]he blows are expected to fall the hardest in constituencies where ZANU-PF won, or came close to winning, two weeks ago. The reason for this apparent paradox is that Mr. Mugabe has long ago dispensed with the support of the minority Ndebele group, whose political resistance was crushed in a military campaign in the 1980s...Ever since, the people of Matabeleland...have said Mr. Mugabe will not go until his own group, the majority Shona, overthrow him. Conscious of that, ZANU-PF has always reacted most viciously to any sign that the MDC is eroding the ruling party’s based of support in the provinces around Harare, the capital, and down the eastern half of the country” (n.a. April 13, 2008).

The second, instrumentally rational explanation offered by Masunungure, focused on the presidential election, is that the ZANU-PF waged a campaign of intimidation and violence to increase to win, and win strongly, the June 27, 2008 second round, run-off election by deterring voters from casting ballots for the MDC's candidate Tsvangirai and instead casting them for the ZANU-PF's candidate Mugabe (2009: 23-97).

The purposes described in the two explanations point to two hypotheses. The first is that if the post-election intimidation and violence was an expression of partisan rage, possibly supplemented by the determination of the ruling party's determination to hold its core electoral base, then it should be associated with smaller winning percentage margins by presidential and parliamentary candidates.

Hypothesis 1: electoral intimidation and violence are inversely related to the winning percentage margins in both the presidential and parliamentary contests.

However, if the post-election violence is an expression of the determination of the ruling party to deter voters from casting ballots for the opposition party's presidential candidate, then it should be associated with larger percentages of the vote for the opposition presidential candidate.

Hypothesis 2: electoral intimidation and violence are positively related to the percentage of the vote for the opposition presidential candidate.

Methods and Data

This method employed in this analysis is cross-sectional comparison using comparison of summary statistics in tables and bivariate regression analysis. The level of analysis is the House of Assembly constituency.

Electoral intimidation and violence share with many other illicit behaviors of interest to social scientists the quality of being difficult to observe and measure. Both perpetrators and victims may seek to conceal the interaction, the former motivated by guilt, shame or fear of persecution and the latter motivated by fear of reprisal. Perpetrators may also prevent observation that must precede measurement through intimidation and violence directed at observers (Ndapwadza and Muchena 2009: 26). Yet another problem is that when observers collect data they typically do so not for the purpose of conducting social science but to document instances of wrongdoing for legal prosecution or moral denunciation. As a consequence, data collected about electoral intimidation and violence may be incomplete. The post-election intimidation and violence data for this study were drawn from data supplied by the civic NGO Sokwanele which identify both specific acts and their locations in House of Assembly constituencies. In an e-mail exchange, Sokwanele staff described their data as a 'sample' because they could not be certain of having recorded every act of intimidation or violence in the disordered and dangerous conditions obtaining between the March 29th first round and June 27th second round elections (October 29, 2009). However the degree of detail in the data suggest that they resemble population data and are treated as such for the purposes of this analysis.

Electoral intimidation and especially violence may take several forms. To reduce their variety to manageable dimensions, events in each House of Assembly constituency were counted and recoded in three categories: intimidation, assault and killing. Events originally categorized as intimidation, threatened, arrested, detained, and death threat were coded as 'intimidation.' Events originally categorized as assaulted, assaulted with weapon, *falanga* (beating of the feet), submerged, strangled, burnt, hung, tortured and abducted were coded as 'assaulted.' Events originally categorized as death were coded as 'killing.' Finally, a Electoral Violence index was created by adding the figure coded as 'assault' to the multiple of three of the figure coded as 'killing.'

Election returns for the March 29, 2008 presidential contest were drawn from the *The Sunday Mail* (May 4-10, 2008). Election returns for the House of Assembly were drawn from Sokwanele, which were in turn drawn from the announcements of the radio announcements of the Zimbabwe Election Commission.

Electoral competition among all candidates was measured as the effective number of candidates, which accounts for their relative strength of candidates rather than their mere status as candidates (Hickman 1992: 578-579). To calculate the effective number, the percentage share of the vote of each candidate is multiplied by itself, the results are summed, and then one is divided by this sum.

Electoral competition between the major presidential candidates, Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai, and between House of Assembly candidates of their ZANU-PF and MDC (MT) parties, was calculated as the percentage margin between the shares of the total constituency vote. In the few constituencies in which the MDC (MT) did not field a House of Assembly candidate, the case for that constituency was dropped from the

data set. In the few instances where the ZANU-PF fielded multiple House of Assembly candidates in the same constituency, the percentage margin was calculated between the shares of the vote of the MDC (MT) candidate and the ZANU-PF candidate with the most votes.

Analysis

Summary data on the intensity of electoral competition in the presidential and House of Assembly contests is presented in Table 1. Examination of the third column, which displays the percentages won by the presidential candidates, shows that neither leading candidate received an absolute majority of votes required to claim the presidency in the first round. Note that these figures were disputed by the Tsvangirai campaign, where it was suspected that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission delayed release of the election returns for an extraordinary 32 days (Masunungare 2009: 75), so that sufficient additional votes for the incumbent Mugabe could be located in the recount to deny Tsvangirai the required absolute majority of the vote and thus ensure a run-off election (Matyszak 2009: 145).

Table 1. Summary Data, March 29, 2008 General Election

Party	Presidential Candidate	Presidential % Vote	House of Assembly Constituencies Contested	House of Assembly % Vote	House of Assembly Seats Won
ZANU-PF	Robert Mugabe	43.25%	128	42.11%	97 (46.8%)
MDC (MT)	Morgan Tsvangirai	47.98%	207	45.71%	99 (47.8%)
MDC (AM)	Simba Makoni	08.28%	208	8.35%	10 (4.8%)
	Langton Towungna	00.05%	-	-	-
Independents		-	117	3.81%	1 (.0048%)
Two Party Competition		Tsvangirai/Mugabe 4.73%		MDC (MT)/ ZANU-PF 3%	
Overall Competition		Effective Number of Presidential Candidates: 2.36		Effective Number of Elective Parties: 2.53	Effective Number of Legislative Parties: 2.24

Comparison of the third and fifth columns, which display the percentages of the vote won, respectively, by the party presidential and parliamentary candidates, suggest a high degree of party voting. Those voting for a party's presidential candidate probably voted for the party's House of Assembly candidate.

Analysis

In this analysis the incidence of electoral intimidation and violence is compared with the intensity of electoral competition in both House of Assembly and presidential contests at the House of Assembly constituency level. Table 2 displays figures categorized by the incidence of electoral intimidation for the numbers of House of Assembly constituencies in each category, the numbers of House of Assembly seats won by ZANU-PF candidates,

mean Electoral Violence index score, mean effective numbers of presidential and parliamentary candidates, and mean percentage margins between the ZANU-PF and MDC (MT) presidential and parliamentary candidates.

Table 2. Electoral Intimidation

Incidents	Constituencies with 0 incidents	Constituencies with 1-9 incidents	Constituencies with 10 or more incidents
# Constituencies*	93	78	33
# House of Assembly Seats Won By ZANU-PF (%)	39 (41.93%)	37 (47.43%)	19 (57.57%)
Mean Electoral Violence Index	2.14	6.75	57.15
Mean Effective Number of Presidential Candidates	2.14	2.12	1.93
Mean Margin Between Tsvangirai and Mugabe	0.10	0.06	-0.26
Mean Effective Number of House of Assembly Candidates	2.28	2.19	1.96
Mean Margin Between MDC (MT) and ZANU-PF House of Assembly Candidates	-0.01	-0.00	-0.12

* Missing constituencies = by-elections and uncontested constituencies.

The figures in Table 2 suggest linear relationships between the incidence of electoral intimidation and the percentage of ZANU-PF House of Assembly candidates elected to office, the incidence of electoral violence, and the mean effective numbers of presidential candidates and House of Assembly candidates. As the incidence of electoral

intimidation increases, the percentage of ZANU-PF House of Assembly candidates elected to office increases, the incidence of electoral violence increases, and the mean effective numbers of presidential candidates and House of Assembly candidates decrease. However the differences in the mean margins that indicate relative constituency level performances of Tsvangirai and Mugabe and the MDC (MT) and ZANU-PF House of Assembly candidates are less marked.

Table 3 displays figures categorized by the Electoral Violence index for the numbers of House of Assembly constituencies in each category, the numbers of House of Assembly seats won by ZANU-PF candidates, mean Electoral Violence index score, mean effective numbers of presidential and parliamentary candidates, and mean percentage margins between the ZANU-PF and MDC (MT) presidential and parliamentary candidates.

Table 3. Electoral Violence

Incidents	Constituencies with 0 incidents	Constituencies with 1-9 incidents	Constituencies with 10 or more incidents
# Constituencies*	70	79	58
# House of Assembly Seats Won By ZANU-PF (%)	26 (37.14%)	35 (44.3%)	33 (56.89%)
Mean Electoral Intimidation	0	4	17.43
Mean Effective Number of Presidential Candidates	2.10	2.09	1.96
Mean Vote Margin Between Tsvangirai and Mugabe	0.10	0.07	0.02
Mean Effective Number of House of Assembly Candidates	2.26	2.15	2.04
Mean Vote Margin Between MDC (MT) and ZANU-PF House of Assembly Candidates	0.03	-0.00	-0.04

* Missing constituencies = by-elections and uncontested constituencies.

The figures in Table 3 suggest linear relationships between the incidence of electoral violence and the percentage of ZANU-PF House of Assembly candidates elected to office, the incidence of electoral intimidation, and the mean effective numbers of presidential candidates and House of Assembly candidates. As the incidence of electoral violence increases, the percentage of ZANU-PF House of Assembly candidates elected to office increases, the incidence of electoral intimidation increases, and the mean effective numbers of presidential candidates and House of Assembly candidates decrease.

A linear relationship is also suggested in the differences in the mean margins that indicate relative constituency level performances of Tsvangirai and Mugabe and the MDC (MT) and ZANU-PF House of Assembly candidates.

To investigate these relationships the five measures of electoral competition were regressed on the incidence of electoral intimidation. The bivariate regression coefficients are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Bivariate Regression Coefficients: Electoral Intimidation

Variable	t-stat	R square	N
Effective Number of Presidential Candidates	0.74	0.00	208
Margin Between Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai	-2.42*	0.02	208
Effective Number of House of Assembly Candidates	-1.75*	0.01	203
Margin Between ZANU-PF and MDC (MT)	-2.55*	0.03	203
Percent Vote for Morgan Tsvangirai	-1.69	0.01	208

* stat. sig. > 0.5

The t-stats reported in the second column indicate inverse relationships statistically significant at the .05 level between the dependent variable and the margins between the ZANU-PF and MDC (MT) presidential and parliamentary candidates. The t-stat reported in the fourth row indicates an inverse relationship statistically significant at the .05 level between the dependent variable and effective number of House of Assembly candidates. Note that the R-squares are small for each of these regressions and thus little of the variation in the dependent variable has been explained. The t-stats reported in the second

and fifth rows for the effective number of presidential candidates and the percentage of the vote for Morgan Tsvangirai are not statistically significant at the .05 level. As such, these findings support Hypothesis 1, that electoral intimidation and violence are inversely related to the winning percentage margins in both the presidential and parliamentary contests, and fail to support Hypothesis 2, that electoral intimidation and violence are positively related to the percentage of the vote for the opposition presidential candidate. Perpetrators of electoral intimidation appear to have focused on constituencies with closer contests between their ZANU-PF candidates and those of the MDC (MT).

Much of the pattern in Table 4 is repeated in the figures in Table 5, which reports the bivariate regression coefficients for the relationships between the five measures of electoral competition and the index of electoral violence.

Table 5. Bivariate Regression Coefficients: Electoral Violence Index

Variable	t-stat	R square	N
Effective Number of Presidential Candidates	-0.14	0.00	208
Margin Between Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai	-3.55*	0.05	208
Effective Number of House of Assembly Candidates	-2.18*	0.02	203
Margin Between ZANU-PF and MDC (MT)	-3.64*	0.06	203
Percent Vote for Morgan Tsvangirai	-2.61*	0.03	208

* stat. sig. > 0.5

Once again the t-stats reported in the second column indicate inverse relationships statistically significant at the .05 level between the dependent variable and the margins between the ZANU-PF and MDC (MT) presidential and parliamentary candidates.

Similarly, the t-stat reported in the fourth row indicates an inverse relationship statistically significant at the .05 level between the dependent variable and the effective number of House of Assembly candidates. Note that again the R-squares are small for each of these bivariate regressions, though larger than in Table 4, and indicate that only a small amount of variation in the dependent variable is explained. The t-stat reported in the second row for the effective number of presidential candidates is not statistically significant at the .05 level. The pattern in Table 5 is broken because the t-stat for the percentage of the vote for Morgan Tsvangirai is statistically significant at the .05 level. However the sign for this coefficient is negative, indicating that as the vote share for Tsvangirai declined, electoral violence increased intensity. These findings also support Hypothesis 1, that electoral intimidation and violence are inversely related to the winning percentage margins in both the presidential and parliamentary contests, and fail to support Hypothesis 2, that electoral intimidation and violence are positively related to the percentage of the vote for the opposition presidential candidate. Perpetrators of electoral violence appear to have focused on constituencies with closer contests between their ZANU-PF candidates and those of the MDC (MT).

Conclusion

The empirical findings reported in this paper appear to flag retribution rather than instrumental rationality as the better preliminary explanation for the intimidation and violence that followed the March 29, 2008 general election in Zimbabwe. Had the latter been the primary purpose for the post-election intimidations and violence it would have directed at suppressing voter turnout in the upcoming second round runoff election in

those constituencies where Morgan Tsvangirai won overwhelming shares of the vote in the March 29, 2009 first round election. So instead of specifying the empirical basis for a contradiction between the moral goods of legitimacy and contestation, these findings highlight the rage aroused when partisans of a hegemonic party fear that they may lose state power and seek victims within easy reach to punish.

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