



The Fight for Political Dominance Through Local Government:

An Investigation of Electoral Violence in South Africa and the Impact of Political Assassinations on South African Municipal Elections from 2011 - 2016

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Abstract: Political violence has continued to rise in the past several years. Its implications are still largely unknown and its impact of elections currently has a restricted literature that focuses mainly on voters rather than politicians. The drastic rise of assassinations in South Africa beginning in 2016 shed light on the growing phenomenon, specifically due to its democratic standards at the national level. The stratification at the municipal level has created a political difference between political tactics at both levels. This paper will introduce a new dataset on political assassinations and couple this data with existing data on candidate numbers at the municipal level. This paper seeks to examine the effect on assassinations of candidate choice through multiple subsets of candidate groups including overall candidate count, the ANC and PR lists.

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1 Introduction

In 2018, The New York Times published an article highlighting the destructive nature of the political parties in small villages on the Eastern Coast of South Africa. The article gave a gruesome description of the final day of an ANC party member, Sindiso Magaqa, who had spoken out against political corruption within his own party.¹ A few months later, Magaqa and his family were met with a barrage of bullets, just minutes before reaching their home one evening. Magaqa had kept a gun under his seat knowing that this kind of assault was common for members who faulted against the ANC. In wards and municipalities in South Africa, this form of protection is now common practice but in the case of Magaqa and many others not always reliable.² Magaqa would not be the first or last member of the ANC to be killed in such a manner, and these types of killings would begin to grow as a concern within the Eastern provinces of South Africa beginning in 2016, where assassinations more than had doubled from the year prior.³

Political killings have been a longtime staple of social and political development and have existed since political institutions began to take root. Due to political killings and its return to relevancy, even in today's modern political climate, the case of South Africa and its increase in assassinations displays an alarming shift in political volatility at the ward and municipal level. Globally, assassinations have increased throughout the late 1970s, but

¹ Onishi, Norimitsu and Gebrekidan, "Hit Men and Power: South Africa's Leaders Are Killing One Another" (New York Times, September 30th, 2018). This article details multiple killings that are linked to the ANC. For the context of this paper, it is important to note that killings have occurred from multiple parties throughout South Africa, not exclusively just in the ANC.

² Ibid

³ The New York Times article suggests that there were 31 killings. The data presented later in this article documented 38 political killings in 2016.

would subside into the early 2000s. Again, assassinations have begun to increase slowly throughout the 2010s and the impact of these increases remains to be unclear. This global increase has been linked to increases in insurgent groups, shifting ideologies and violence from oppressive regimes (Perliger, 2015). Political violence has had extremely consequential results in the role of political and social progress. This form of violence has had the ability to shift platforms of political parties, stymie legislation, halt peace resolution and affect the electoral process of national and local elections (Perliger, 2015). To understand the importance and impact of political violence, it is necessary to briefly describe the nuances between general political violence and electoral violence.

1.1 Political and Electoral Violence

Democratic elections have the ability to stabilize states and hypothetically would reduce the use of violence toward politicians. Electoral violence toward citizens is a topic that has been discussed in numerous studies and its impact has been examined heavily. As Mariana Carvalho suggests, violence against politicians has been understudied and this phenomenon has only grown in prevalence within the past decade (Carvalho, 2021).⁴ Violence against local politicians receives minimal attention in academia and media alike, making its true impact difficult to explain. The media tends to focus on high-profile killings which make smaller killings challenging to document. This inherently causes constraints on academic research which makes the growing phenomenon of assassinations in a global context identifiable but the causation relatively underdeveloped.

⁴ I would like to thank Mariana Carvalho Barbosa for sharing a chapter of her unpublished dissertation, which has been critical to the development of my understanding of political violence.

In contrast, electoral violence has been explained to a greater degree. In Africa and worldwide, it has played a crucial part of the political process specifically as a strategic tool to move the tide of elections in a certain party's favor (Pierson, 2019). Largely in the context of threats, and at times the actual use of violence, has the ability to increase political competitiveness and change voter turnout. But the implementation of electoral violence is linked to the institutional and structural designs of each state, along with the kind of regime type and electoral makeup (Pierson, 2019). Although the effectiveness among voters is well studied, other new developments in nations such as South Africa challenge existing work on electoral violence.

1.2 Violence and Elections

Elections are held nearly everywhere globally in the modern political climate, even during times of conflict. Although the goal of peaceful transfers of power is intended, governments without a stabilized democracy constantly face influxes of violence. In theory, the use of elections is to select leaders who provide nonviolent alternatives and allow citizens a greater voice in politics (Birch et al., 2020). Yet often in unstable states, these expectations fail. Continued electoral even has greater ramifications that can become the threshold for civil war, undo peacebuilding and developmental work (Birch et al. 2020). This makes the anomaly of a stabilized state such as South Africa who experiences electoral violence as an interesting occurrence. Although the state has a history of violence, this form of violence is qualitatively different from former forms. As electoral violence has changed the development of once stabilized states, it begs the question if South Africa is on a similar path, specifically in the lawlessness at the municipal level. Other literature

analyzes the use of election violence through party leaders and elites who attempt to give themselves a greater advantage. Ellman and Wantchekon argue that the threats of violence influencing party choices and the outcome of policy practices after (Ellman and Wantchekon, 2000). Similarly to Birch, Chartruedi demonstrates how electoral violence affects the outcome of voters specifically on election day. Harish and Little provide a framework that suggests there is a “political violence cycle”, which in their argument reflects the nature of electoral violence (Chartruedi, 2005) . By examining daily levels of violence throughout multiple states and comparing the daily levels, to levels during election years. Although their model largely focuses on cases from Latin America and the Middle East and focuses on states with two or more party systems.

1.3 Overview

My research focuses specifically on the impact of political violence and its growth in the state in South Africa. As a subset of political violence, this paper will refer to political and electoral violence within the same vein, although reference the term “ electoral violence” more frequently since it is at the crux of this phenomena in the case of South Africa specifically. More on, this thesis will focus on the impact of political assassinations on local municipalities in terms of candidate numbers. In this paper, I propose that in municipalities where assassinations occur, that there will be a greater amount of fluctuation between candidates from the previous elections.

I thus contribute to the existing literature that has mainly viewed electoral violence in the context of voters (Romero and LeBas, 2020) (Birbir and Gohdes, 2018) and rarely its impact on politicians. The existing literature has also mainly evaluated states with

unstable democracies (Birch et al. 2020) , and, in the case of South Africa this is simply not the case. I will further develop the independent variable of assassinations (Pierson, 2019) but rather than simply examine the ANC party, I will examine the candidates, percentage of ANC members and PR lists at the municipal level as well and its change in numbers. This project will also reveal the stratified institutional makeup that makes these divisions between national and local government possible in a democratically stable country such as South Africa.

My overall analysis will implement a new data set demonstrating new information on assassinations in South Africa constructed by a research team that I worked with.⁵ It will be merged with existing data on municipalities and candidate numbers from 2011, and 2016 , which are both election years. ⁶ The analyses that follow will explore the potential determinants of changes in candidate counts. It will reveal that the change in candidate counts is magnified in municipalities that experience political assassinations throughout the interim period prior to the next election. This thesis will also suggest that common determinants such as ethnic diversity and poverty levels will have a lesser impact on this change. Analyses in this thesis do not address candidate choice as a whole, and additional research is necessary to remove any potential reverse causality or variable bias. Nevertheless, the results uncover unique insights that suggest developments for further study and shed light on crucial progress in this understudied topic.

⁵ I would like to give many thanks to Mariana Carvalho who allowed me to use this data in this project.

⁶ I would like to thank Dr. Daniel DeKadt who was gracious enough to donate this data and kind enough to simplify the data so that it was manageable.

2. Literature review

2.1 Violence and Its Impact on Elections

One of the core aspects of democracy is the foundation of free and fair elections to elect state leaders. It is a practice that the majority of countries partake in and is a mechanism for citizens to have their say in who they want to represent their country. Understanding electoral violence allows an understanding of destabilizing conflict and the backsliding of democratic institutions (Birch S, Daxecker U, Höglund K. 2020). The structural institution of elections is synonymous with the approach to a democratic oriented world. Citizens residing in more than the majority of states globally have the opportunity to elect their representatives at the national level. Leaders are selected with the goal of peace and stability in mind, yet this often fails in reality. Elections in fractured and unstable states tend to be riddle with significant levels of violence (Birch et al., 2020). In recent years, states such as Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Kenya and Pakistan have all experienced high levels on violence as a result of national elections.

Although the electoral process has been impacted through practices such as clientelism, and intimidation (Birch, 2007) it is crucial to understand the impact of outright violence. Electoral violence can largely be viewed as a political strategy outright and is selected to ensure political goals are met (Hafner- Burton, Hyde and Jablonski, 2014). As referenced by Birch et al., electoral violence's severely alters the elections process as violence can occur through campaign attacks, attacking media outlets, displacing voters through limiting polling stations, electoral protests and lastly, reducing

the amount of candidates through direct attacks (Birch et al. 2020). It can be inferred that violence at least impacts candidate choice in some way.

2.2 Violence and its Impact on Candidate Choice

Since candidate numbers are a subset of candidate choice overall, it is important to understand how violence impacts the nomination process. Seeberg, Wahman and Skaaning examine electoral violence in the candidate nomination process in regions in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya and Zambia. This study examines the nomination process within political parties and demonstrates the competitive and dominant nature (Seeberg, Wahman and Skaaning, 2020). The impact of violence on candidate choice decides who is able to run and campaign throughout an election and is implemented through threats and intimidation which drastically alters the electoral playing field (Seeberg, Wahman and Skaaning, 2020). Although not directly emphasizing the presence of political assassinations this study demonstrates the internal conflict that plagues dominant and opposition parties alike.

2.3 Assassinations and Political Change

To comprehend the influence of assassinations within certain municipalities, it is important to define what is entailed in the term “assassination”. As described by Khatchadourian 1974, “assassinations are defined as the killing of a public figure for political reasons”. Specifically, when a political leader is intentionally killed, “it is often met with unstable or drastic political change” (Khatchadourian, 1974). O’ Brien adds to this definition by stating that “ the selection and deliberate killing of an individual for political purposes within the confines of conflict or peace” (O’Brien, 2001). This definition adds an

additional layer to Khatchadourian's definition by adding the context of desired political change. Of course, at a reduced level, a drastic political change may only result in the desired party winning their election. Nevertheless, it serves as a negative influence on that state's political system rather than as a legitimate mechanism for causing political change (Iqbal and Zorn, 2008).

Further evidence of the influence of political assassinations can be found in cases like Mexico and Spain, where criminal networks have demonstrated their ability to alter the electorate through manipulative attacks on either the candidates specifically or the locations where they have garnered support (Ponce 2019; De la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013). Mariana Carvalho also elaborates on these former developments which largely focuses directly on prominent political leaders assassinations, her work notes that assassinations affect local politics as well. This is due to the fact that assassinations are more common at the local level yet not as covered by the media. She also disaggregates types of electoral violence by the kinds of actors and goals that can be used to describe assassinations (Carvalho, 2021). This development is critical to the dissociation of electoral violence being viewed in one facet, rather considering the politicians level in their respective government, as well as the violent actors goal.

2.4 Assassinations on Elections and Candidate Choice

In a continuation of the perceived goals of violent actors, assassinations play a larger role in affecting the amount of candidates in a mechanical sense. As documented by Huerta Hernandez in a controlled case study in Mexico, assassinations played a critical role in the 2018 local elections and altered candidates that ran during the election. The tactic of assassinations has grown significantly in Latin America, with a historic 48 political

assassinations in Mexico alone in the year 2018 (Hueta Hernandez, 2021). In the case of Mexico and the majority of Latin America, the aspect of criminal organizations and turf wars plays a pivotal role in which politicians are allowed to run for office (Hueta Hernandez, 2021). Although dealing with similar motives, in portions of Sub-Saharan Africa, dominant parties use assassinations as a way to keep party members in line (Pierson, 2019).

2.5 Candidate Numbers

Beyond the impact of electoral violence, It is crucial to analyze what other factors impact candidate numbers. As suggested by Cavalcanti et al. electoral accountability is crucial on the effect of voting behavior and has substantial effects on the amount of candidates running per party (Cavalcanti et al., 2018). The popularity of a party is also highly dependent on voter information, scandals and transparency that occur during the time a person or party is in office (Costas-Perez, Sole-Olle and Sorribas- Navarro, 2012). In the case of South Africa, its deep history of ethnic friction and heightened levels of inequality have made the dominant party, the ANC, to face backlash throughout their thirty year incumbency (Bruce, 2013). Since South Africa's case is unique and fails to fit the model of the aforementioned articles, it is important to develop the background of this once conflicted state.

3. Background of South Africa

3.1 South Africa and Democratization

South Africa appeared to make a substantial shift toward democracy with the first free and fair elections beginning in 1994. The period from 1990 – 1994, on the other hand, signaled a transitional period in South Africa and proved to be incredibly violent, with an uptick of politically motivated deaths. During this period, nearly 15,000 deaths were linked to the growing tensions between political parties and the transition of power. Specifically, in the province of Kwazulu-Natal, political violence emerged out of conflicting relationships within political systems that took advantage of growing opposition (Schuld, 2013). Although violence subsided throughout the early 2000's, other factors within the democratization of South Africa became problematic. The model of national liberation unified people against old apartheid tactics but suppressed differences among the population and was intolerant of pluralism (Suttner, 2004). This sense of unification made it nearly impossible to supplant the current dominant party, the ANC, regardless of it lacking ruling organization and political factions in later years.

Post-Apartheid South Africa's relatively new democracy has experienced pitfalls including the severe dominance of the African National Congress over other parties. As previously mentioned, at the federal level, the electoral process is more reminiscent of a majoritarian government, although rooted in proportionality. The ANC has retained power for over 25 years and this has created increasing friction from opposing parties (Khambule et al. (2019). Kramer suggests that the issue in KwaZulu Natal is related to the historical trajectory of the provinces, and identifies these political deaths as mere

outcomes of political and ethnic friction rather than consequential outcomes on the electoral system as a whole (Kramer, 2020)

3.2 The Institutional Structure of South Africa

Since its transition to democracy in the mid-1990s, South Africa at the national level has operated in a proportional electoral system. Initially beginning with parliamentary rules, current national level politics now follow a mainly majoritarian makeup (Ferree, 2018). The electoral institutions that fostered the favorability toward the ANC emerged out of the goals of inclusion and representation. The ANC has dominated federal elections for the past six elections and has demonstrated highly majoritarian outcomes despite the state's Proportional Representation (PR) electoral rules (Ferree, 2018).

3.3 The Electoral System at a National and Provincial Level

Despite the defined proportional system, South Africa at large has experienced majoritarian outcomes with the ANC winning all national elections since the year 1994. In addition to this, the ANC remains largely dominated at the provincial level as well winning all but a few (Ferree, 2018). The remaining votes at this level are distributed throughout minor opposition parties. The largest opposition parties include the Democratic Alliance (DA), formerly known as the Democratic Party which is dominant in the Western Cape Province. As well as the Inthaka Freedom Party (IFP) which is another well known but small opposition party.

3.4 The Electoral System at a Municipal Level

Politics at the municipal level operate under a vastly different political arrangement than at the national level that employs a mixed member electoral system. Municipalities are broken into smaller “wards”, which each have representatives elected “to plurality in single seat districts and municipality- wide multiseat districts elected through a closed list proportional representation (PR)” (Ferree, 2018). The structure of municipal elections in South Africa is dependent on the makeup of district municipalities and their smaller metropolitan and local municipalities (Obikili, 2018) leading to greater variance in electoral outcomes. Variations in election outcomes are more apparent at the municipal level than at the federal level, and this can be linked to the amount of political competition throughout the regions themselves.

Another crucial yet small aspect of ward elections is the role of chiefs who play a pivotal role in local government and have the ability to sway voters toward certain parties. As stated by De Kadt and Larreguy, the relationship between incumbent parties and traditional authorities is strategic and local traditional leaders will align themselves with political parties that serve their own interests (De Kadt and Larreguy, 2018). These unique aspects of municipal governance makeup a drastically different result compared to national election results.

3.3 South Africa’s History of Violence and Assassinations

In the years after 1994 and the official end of Apartheid, violence continued. The number of murders in South Africa topped 13,000 during the years 2012 and 2013

(Bruce, 2014). As described by Bruce, this increasing rate of violence has not only left individuals to experience these atrocities but has left a mark of national trauma.

Much of this violence has been linked to growing frustrations stemming from increases in poverty and inequality that have been addressed superficially by the ruling political party, the African National Congress (ANC). (Bruce, 2014). The ANC's implementation of neoliberal policies and uneven economic development has resulted in a continuous cycle of racial division and ethnic tension (Schnieder, 2018). This friction has evolved into the breaking down of democratic institutions including the use of violence in the municipal electoral process between party members and outside actors alike. One of the most egregious forms of politics during the post- 1994 period has been the outright assassinations of political leaders and party members.

The ANC has carried a substantial advantage at the federal, provincial and municipal level when it comes to incumbency. The same can be said throughout sub-Saharan Africa, as incumbent parties and presidents are typically highly favored in general elections and rarely lose (Warren, 2019). Similarly to the region, South Africa suffers from conflicts that occur at the intra-party level, specifically within the ANC. Dominant parties in Sub-Saharan have an extreme amount of turnover at the individual member level which limit the amount of in-office effectiveness (Warren, 2019). Although Warren focuses on candidate selection , the implications of her study on Sub Saharan African legislative bodies simply state that parties bar candidates from running. At the local level, there is a greater opportunity for party elites to involve themselves in candidate selection as well. Although these are factors to be considered in the South African municipal elections, it fails to introduce the violent background of the ANC.

The increase of targeted killings at the municipal level in South Africa has created an interesting juxtaposition between the established core democratic practices at the federal and provincial levels interparty violence and intimidation. Beyond that, municipal election outcomes are highly swayed by authority figures.

Democratic practices are still present at the municipal level, but they have been influenced by the prevalence of political violence. Although current literature that examines South Africa at the municipal level is limited, there have been various cases of politically targeted killings which will allow me to create a framework that is necessary to describe the severity of these assassinations toward the electoral process and candidate selection.

3.4 Controlled Case Study : South African Local Municipalities

There has been literature on the effects of violence on ethnic identity and interpersonal trust in the South African state (Bruce, 2013), this literature fails to tie in the importance of the outcome of municipal elections in South Africa and rather examines violence at a provincial level. Bruce's article focuses specifically on the provinces of Kwazulu and Mpumalanga, which were violent even during periods of stability in the early 2000's. At the national level has experience dramatically different At the municipal level, there have been notable issues involving the use of political violence to dictate the outcome of elections. Although it should be noted that the electoral system itself is universal throughout the entire state, thus removing any indicators that this is the reason for possible corruption and variance in electoral outcomes.

Political killings have been a regularity in political life within district and local municipalities throughout South Africa's history. Political violence during Apartheid took various forms including conflict between protestors and armed militias, as well as massacres, killings during protests, and kidnappings. At the turn of the century, these forms of violence have become less popular and have been exchanged for targeted killings (Bruce, 2014).

One caveat of this study is that it can be difficult to know the motive of a killing without a full examination of each victim's case, which makes all documented cases difficult to truly link to political motives. For the past three decades there has been no established system for documenting political killings, and information depends on various sources presenting potential inaccuracies, making it challenging to evaluate the causes and consequences of this relative uptick in multiple municipalities within the state. A major contribution of this thesis is a collection on assassinations. David Bruce references in one of his most recent studies that there is no current comprehensive list on South African political assassinations (Bruce, 2018), which this study presents. This enables a close consideration of the causes of assassinations in South Africa but more importantly to this study, the consequences.

At the local level assassinations began to slowly increase throughout the 2010's with a large amount occurring in the year 2016. The 2016 election year demonstrated an unusual increase in assassinations which largely targeted members of the ANC. Our data shows that ANC members have been the most targeted political party, but their numbers have remained high in elections even as they continue to win the most votes in elections. It has been suggested that ANC rivalries and whistleblowing with the party has led to

increases in violence within the party itself (Onishi and Gebrekidan 2018). As the ANC has retained dominance at the national level for the past 25 years, levels of party corruption and inequality have expanded. Members of the ANC have taken on a zero-sum game against their own party members over power and jurisdiction and it has been magnified at the local municipality level. Although the ANC has experienced the highest levels of death due to inter party conflict, the issue of assassinations is not unique to the dominant party alone.

The issue of political assassinations extends beyond party lines and has largely to do with which largely reflects the geographic nature of political positions. At the provincial level, political offices carry a high value, especially in lower income municipalities leading to greater amounts of contention (Bruce 2016), which helps explain the stark difference between assassinations at the federal level that seldom occur, and assassinations at the municipal level which are much more frequent. In addition, the accessibility to individuals in lower income municipalities who are willing to carry out killings enables assassinations to perpetuate. The limited criminal justice response has also impacted the severity of punishment at the provincial level specifically in KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga, where convictions for political killings have been limited. Many political assassinations go without penalty due to the lack of interest from the criminal justice system toward lower rank politicians. Few killings result in actual trials and many of these cases resulted in limited punitive action due to the lack of evidence (Bruce, 2013). The increase of targeted killings at the municipal level in South Africa has created an interesting juxtaposition between the established core democratic practices at the federal and provincial levels interparty

violence and intimidation. Beyond that, municipal election outcomes are highly swayed by authority figures.

Democratic practices are still present at the municipal level, but they have been influenced by the prevalence of political violence. Although literature that examines South Africa at the municipal level is limited, there have been various cases of politically targeted killings which will allow me to create a framework that is necessary to describe the severity of these assassinations toward the electoral process and candidate selection. This presents municipalities in South Africa as an optimal case study for this paper. The link between assassinations and the reduction in candidate choice within these municipalities. Due to the increase of assassinations in the past decade the effects of candidate choice have not only been limited mechanically but have also provided an avenue for the ANC to retain dominance due to their larger pool of candidates overall through intimidation tactics.

4. Data

During the election of 2016, assassinations reached a peak point according to our compiled data. The latter half of the decade demonstrates an anomaly where assassinations of political leaders and representatives have increased without an outright explanation.

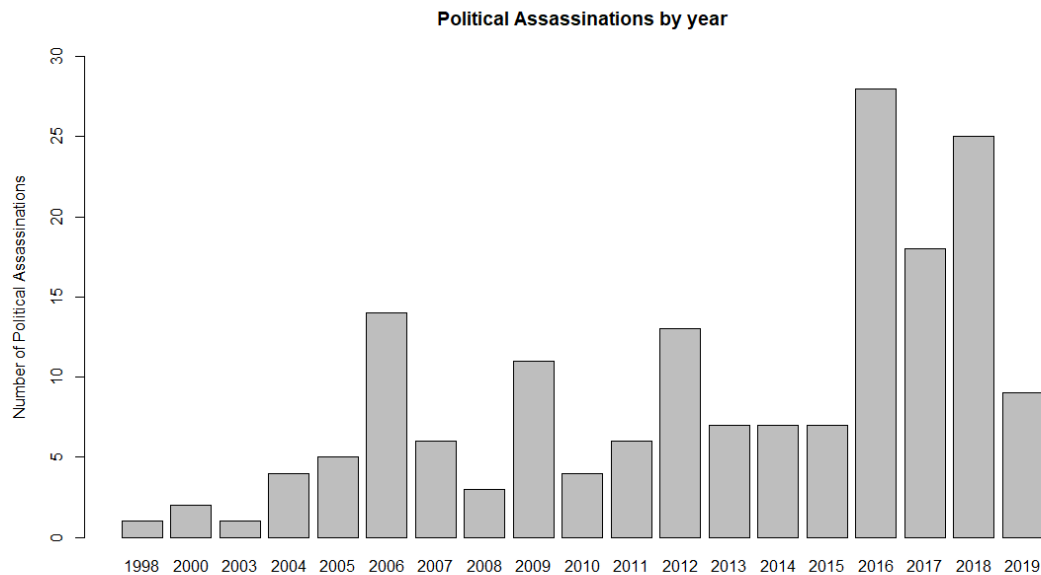


Figure 1: Political assassinations 1998-2019 (documented through media news articles).

4.1 Data on Assassinations

While working with other researchers ⁷, I have constructed a dataset evaluating political killings throughout the past decade at the South African provincial and municipal levels. This dataset was compiled through primarily documenting news and human rights publications that have reported on crime locally. In this dataset, the victim's gender,

⁷ This data was collected under the instruction of Mariana Carvalho Barbosa, a current PhD Candidate at UC San Diego. Our research team included Mariana Carvalho, Anika Dedanker, Madison Mainwaring and myself.

political party, political position, and location of killing, are accounted to determine if there are additional motives for the individual's death. This dataset reveals that some areas are extremely violent, while others have remained relatively peaceful. This data also matches other reports, specifically the reports from Pierson and the New York Times, which both noted that assassinations had significantly risen in the year 2016. From both reports, our data reports more killings per year. This may be due to limitations in access to when the other articles were published.

4.2 Data on Municipalities

I have been able to merge my current data on assassinations with ward and municipal data from the 2011 and 2016 election years which provides the number of candidates per local municipality.⁸ This information also provides the municipal PR lists which allow me to examine active parties in each municipality, as well as the list of candidates that the ANC had for each respective election. Election information will help determine any potential fluctuations in the number of candidates who ran for particular parties, but more importantly allows us to examine changes in the amount of candidates as a whole. Between the two merged datasets, I have excluded some municipalities based on the changing of jurisdictions between the 2011 and 2016 elections. Some municipalities that were observed in 2011 subsequently merged with other municipalities, creating new local municipalities. As a result, I have omitted 25 municipalities that were active in 2016 entirely. These municipalities were from the Eastern Cape province, the KwaZulu Natal Province, the Mpumalanga Province and

⁸ This data set was provided by Dr. Daniel De Kadt from UC Merced. This data set was crucial to the entirety of this project and I am grateful that Dr. De Kadt was able to share this information with me.

Gauteng Province. This study will now observe 201 municipalities, representing all provinces in South Africa.

This paper will be paying particular attention to the total number of candidates, as well as the number of political parties due to the dominance of the ANC in all levels of government. Although they are less dominant at the municipal level, the ANC still provides on average more candidates per election than any other party in the electoral system. The focus on both the number of candidates and number of parties per cycle will give a greater perspective on the composition of the candidate choice.

One of the contributing factors to my overall analysis will be to examine under what conditions targeted killings become effective tools in the electoral process for certain municipalities. I expect overall candidate numbers to decrease in areas that have greater levels of inequality, and areas that have greater ethnic diversity. I will set two primary controls, poverty percentage levels in 2016⁹ and ethnic diversity in 2011¹⁰. This data is derived from Statistics South Africa, which is South Africa's national statistical organization who performs surveys and censuses.

I expect candidate numbers to remain similar through election years in less diverse municipalities as well as ones maintain relatively higher standards of living. I will focus on the number of candidates after each election cycle and determine if this is reflective in the next cycle, or if the number of candidates at the beginning of an election candidate pool remains the same as the election prior.

⁹ Poverty percentage levels were featured in Statistics South Africa's Community Survey 2016. It is the second largest community survey and one of the few that provides detailed municipal data.

¹⁰ South Africa had initially attempted to perform a census every five years, due to limited resources by S.S.A., this was extended to every ten years. The 2011 Census is the most current census information. South Africa is preparing to conduct its 2021 census in the coming months.

Hypothesis

The following theoretical discussion utilizes the existing literature on political violence and its effects on electoral competition. Specifically examining Lessing's model on crimes impact on Mexican elections which implements a quasi experimental method, and Pierson's method which focuses on an interrupted time series model, I propose that regions where violence, specifically assassinations, are higher will result in greater fluctuation in candidate numbers. Electoral violence directly impacts every component of the voting process, from initial candidate selection to voter outcome. The assassinations of party officials or candidates are traumatic events within small townships globally, and as a result change the perception of citizens living in these areas (Lessing, 2018). Increases in assassinations challenge the formation of government and its purpose which is to provide security. Lessing's model takes into account the voting model proposed by Downs (1957), coupled with Pierson's ITS model, I have arrived at a hypothesis and form of analysis that will be able to properly identify the causal results of candidate change.

I will explore the effect of political assassinations on candidate numbers and number of PR lists within the elections in 2011 and 2016. I will also explore the effect of political assassinations on the dominant party in South Africa, the ANC, and examine if the number of candidates increases in the 2016 election. I propose and will test four hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Municipalities that experience violence during the interim period will have a greater reduction in ward candidates from the 2011 election to the 2016 election than municipalities that did not experience violence.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Municipalities that experience violence during the interim period will have a greater reduction in PR lists running for office in 2016 than municipalities that did not experience violence.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3) Municipalities that experience violence will have a greater increase in dominant party (The ANC) candidates in 2016 than municipalities that did not experience violence.
- Hypothesis 4 (H4) Municipalities that experience violence will have an increase in the percentage of all candidates that are from the dominant party (The ANC) in 2016 than municipalities that did not experience violence.

6.1 Research Design

My proposed research design is an observational study using a difference in difference method, which will allow me to evaluate the election years of 2011 and 2016 in each South African municipality. I have chosen these years due to the relatively lower levels of assassinations before the 2011 municipal elections and the increase in assassinations from 2012 - 2016.

6.2 Difference in Difference

This model is an observational quasi-experiment with multiple outcome variables such as *Overall Candidate Count*, *Total Ward Candidate Count*, *ANC Candidate Count*, and *Total PR List Count* observed in both 2011 and 2016 to be beneficial to integrate a standard Difference in Difference analysis. This model will allow us to examine the impact of the treatment of the potential explanatory variable titled *Assassinations between June 2011 and August 2016*. This model will create a mock setting comparing the changes in the outcomes of municipalities who were exposed and not exposed to the examined change. In this case, the change which will now be referred to as “treatment” is *Assassinations between June 2011 and August 2016*.

For this paper, I have grouped the levels of assassinations into different categories as some municipalities are consequently more violent. For this experiment, assassinations per local municipality will be rated on the number of assassinations per the four-year interim period. I have chosen to categorize the number of killings per municipality in this manner due to assassinations being limited to particular municipalities while largely being undocumented throughout the rest of the state. This ranking system will allow for a better analysis rather than marking the actual number of each killing per municipality. Drawing

from the data available, the majority of municipalities have experienced no more than five assassinations during this interim period, but some regions, particularly KwaZulu Natal, were observed as being particularly violent. Overall this method requires us to initially observe a Pre and Post for each variable in question, requiring each municipality that had assassination during the interim period to be differentiated between those that did not. As mentioned, this data is panel data and included each variable twice, with the only difference being the observed year. A Binary Variable, also known as the “treatment” was created to indicate whether a municipality received the treatment.

The binary treatment variable is currently as follows:

0 = No Assassinations were reported from June 2011 - August 2016

1 = 1 or more Assassinations were reported from June 2011 - August 2016

6.3 Non -Statistical Measurement

Our standard base equation will begin as follows. This will allow the treated and untreated variables to be isolated. I will begin by calculating the overall mean between all variables in question. Note that this model is a pure Difference in Difference model and has yet to take into account the individual-level data set:

$$DD = (\bar{y}_{Tr, Post} - \bar{y}_{Tr, Pre}) - (\bar{y}_{CPost} - \bar{y}_{CPre})$$

Some notations to point out in this equation. The Control Variable did not receive the treatment. The Treatment Variable received the treatment or experienced the observable change. Pre references the measurement before the treatment, in this case,

this is the election year of 2011. Post references the measurement after the treatment; for this study, this will be the election year of 2016.

	PRE	POST
Control	$\bar{y}_{C, Pre}$	$\bar{y}_{C, Post}$
Treatment	$\bar{y}_{TR, Pre}$	$\bar{y}_{Tr, Post}$

Table 1. A Non-Statistical demonstration of the change in outcome between treated and non-treated municipalities specifically regarding the number of total PR Candidates

Total PR Candidate Count	Pre (2011)	Post (2016)	Difference in Difference
Control	79.73	94.96	+15.23
Treatment	191.11	178.65	-12.46

Table 2. A Non-Statistical demonstration of the change in outcome between treated and non-treatment municipalities regarding Total ANC PR Party members.

Total ANC PR Party Member Count	Pre (2011)	Post (2016)	Difference in Difference
Control	17.46	17.76	+ . 30
Treatment	35.58	30.11	-5.47

Table 3. A Non-Statistical demonstration of the change in outcome between treated and non-treatment municipalities regarding the Total Ward Candidate count.

Total Ward Candidate Count	Pre (2011)	Post (2016)	Difference in Difference
Control	80.04	107.85	+27.81
Treatment	214	213.69	-.31

Table 4. A Non-Statistical demonstration of the change in outcome between treated and non-treatment municipalities regarding the Total PR List Party count.

Total PR List Party Count	Pre (2011)	Post (2016)	Difference in Difference
Control	7.45	7.94	+0.49
Treatment	9.61	10.76	+1.15

Table 4. A Non-Statistical demonstration of the change in outcome between treated and non-treatment municipalities regarding Total ANC PR Candidate Count.

Total ANC PR Candidate Count	Pre (2011)	Post (2016)	Difference in Difference
Control	16.94	18.61	+1.67
Treatment	35.26	33.26	-2.00

6.4 Statistical Measurement and Difference in Difference Estimation

To estimate the Difference in Difference with attention to individual cases within our panel data, the following regression is estimated for all variables in question:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Treatment + \beta_2 Time + \beta_3 (Treatment \cdot Time) + \varepsilon$$

Y is our outcome of interest. The coefficient β_1 is the mean estimated difference in Y between the “treatment” and “control” variables before the interim assassination period. It represents the foundational differences that already existed prior to the interim period being applied to the control group.

The coefficient β_2 is the expected mean change from the outcome variable. This coefficient measures the before to the after concerning the intervention toward the control group. It reflects the baseline of time without the interjection of the treatment.

β_3 is the difference in difference estimation. It will tell if there is a change in the outcome variable by measuring the before and after of the treatment. It will be able to demonstrate whether the variable that experienced the treatment showed greater changes in candidate count than the control that did not.

Note that in order to confirm the accuracy of this statistical measurement, it is crucial to demonstrate the “parallel trends assumption” which shows that control and treatment groups would have similar changes in their outcome variable if both were not exposed to the treatment. This will be discussed later in my analysis.

7. Results

Figure 2. Exploratory Data Analysis on Total PR Candidates ran against

Treated municipalities

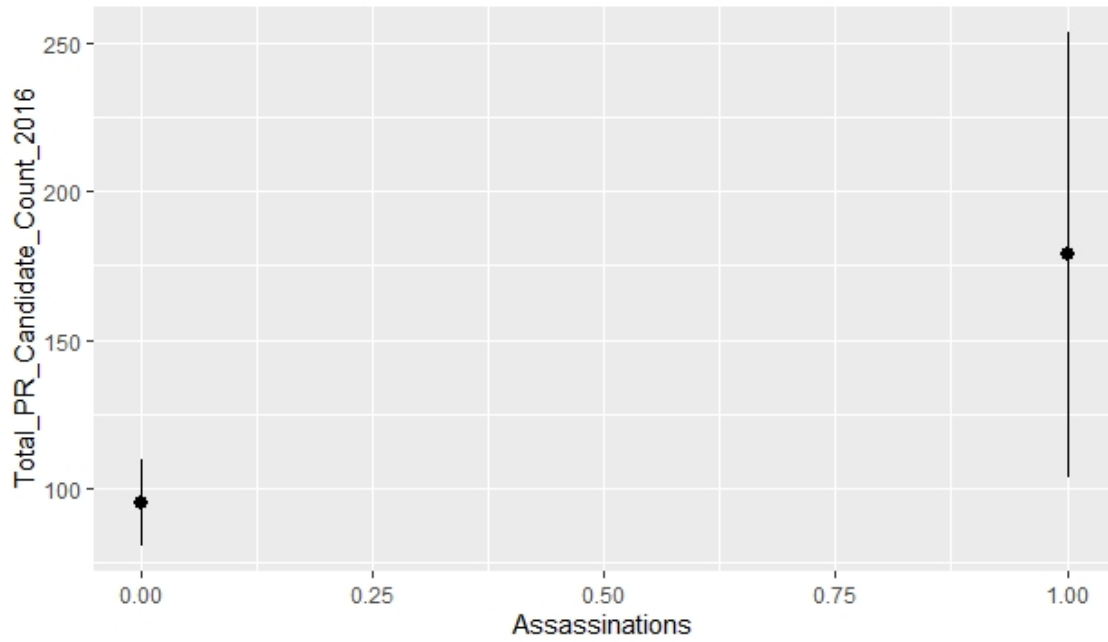


Figure 3. Exploratory Data Analysis for Overall PR Lists

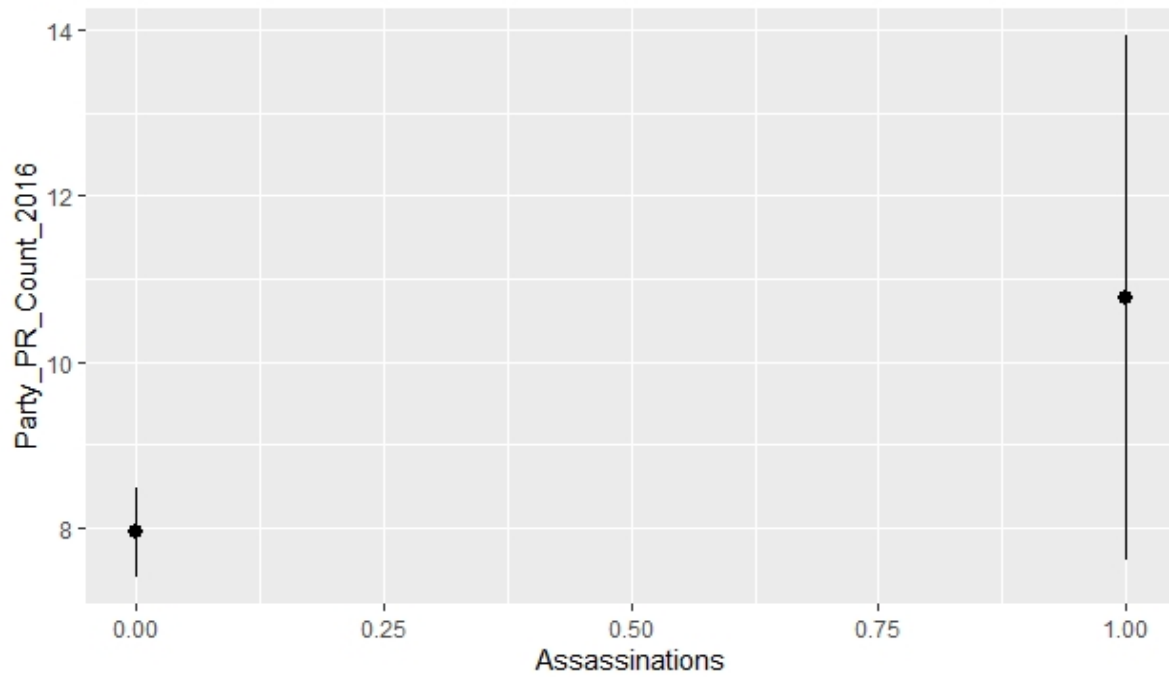


Figure 3. Exploratory Data Analysis for ANC Candidates in Municipalities

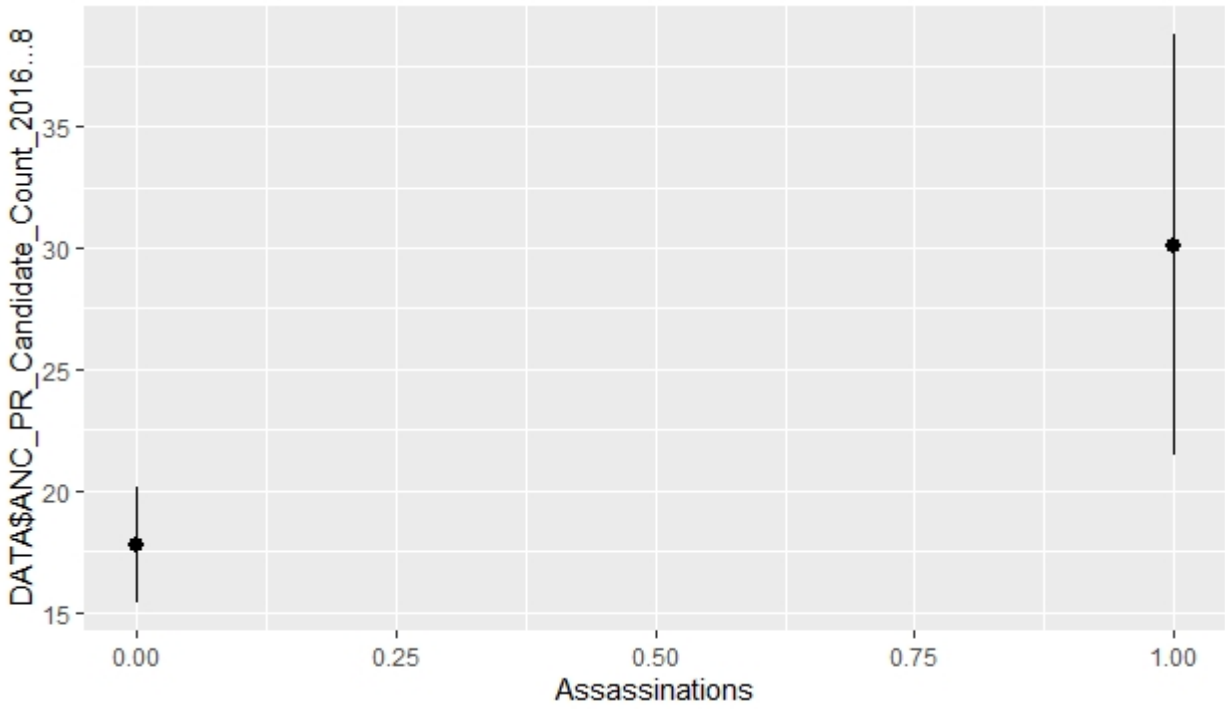
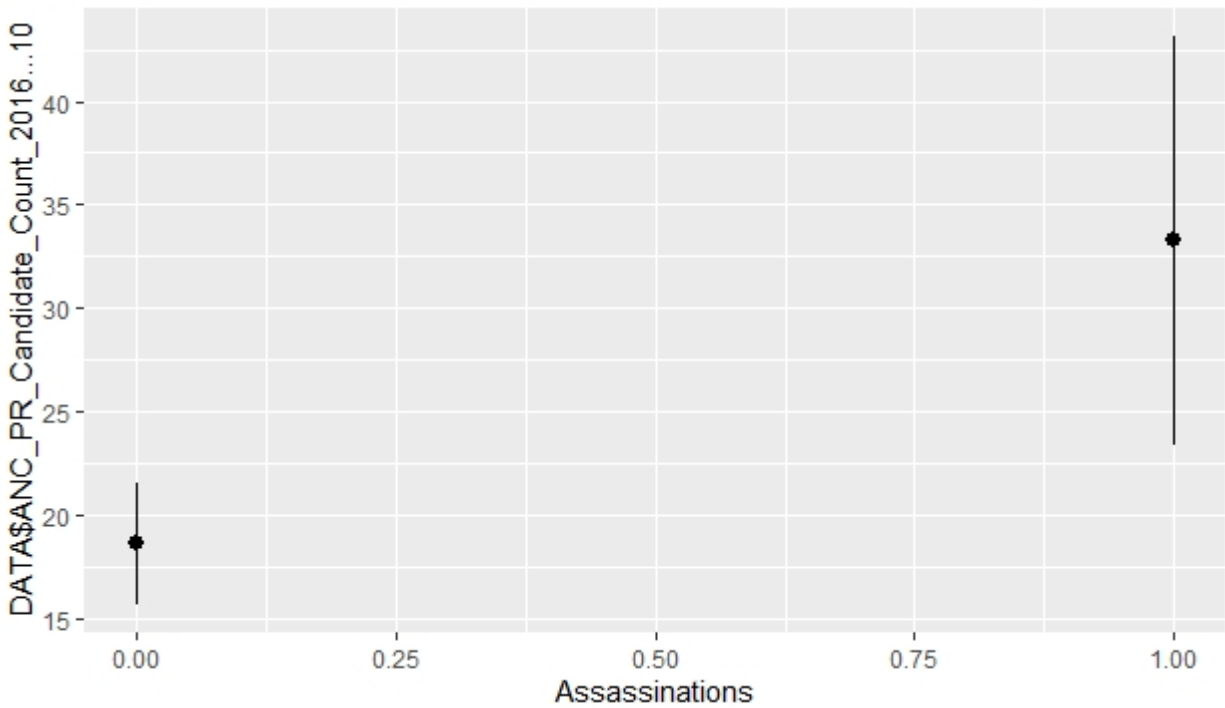


Table 4. Exploratory Data For the Percentage of ANC Candidates



Regression table testing the treatment and time against ANC and Total Ward

Candidates

```
A tibble: 4 x 5
  term                estimate std.error statistic  p.value
<chr>                <dbl>    <dbl>    <dbl>    <dbl>
(Intercept)          95.0      8.62     11.0    2.33e-22
treated              83.7     24.0      3.49    5.88e- 4
```

8. Discussion

From the exploratory data and the Regression table it appears that there was a limitation in the variables that was frankly unexpected. My non statistical analysis proved promising but from the results in the regression analysis, it generally demonstrates values that are inconsistent with the original analysis. The exploratory data is also inconsistent with the non statistical analysis, as each table demonstrated an increase in treated variables and candidate count. For the opposite to occur in the explanatory variables is quite shocking and not what was initially expected. This form of analysis works off the mean of each of the groups, this means that potentially each treatment had a higher mean to begin with. Some of the most violent areas in South Africa are some of the most populated regions. This includes provinces such as KwaZulu Natal which have high

populations and high crime already. When analyzed through the non-statistical model, the use of mean is not implemented, thus removing these potential limitations in finding out true casualty. Drawing from the data analysis, Total PR Candidate Count demonstrated the largest shift in candidate count, as Total Ward Candidate Count demonstrated the shift. This is an interesting observation as Wards make up a subset of the municipal election pool, yet show the smallest amount of difference when it comes to the treatment variable. In addition, the number of ANC candidates only marginally shifted. This is an interesting revelation due to the dominance that the ANC has in these regions, yet also its known association with assassinations. This signals that voter transparency and opinion has only marginally changed throughout the interim period. It appears that the ANC will remain dominant despite its use of violence toward its own politicians.

8.1 Data Limitations

It should be noted that potential limitations on this data can be derived from potential media biases that may have occurred in the initial collection. Although my research team worked tirelessly to create the most accurate representation of assassinations in South Africa, it is possible that only some areas were reported on from South African media outlets. We have made an effort to cross reference this data with other publications and the data appears to be within the range of other reports. Articles such as the New York Times and Pierson both suggested that killings doubled in the year 2016 and this matched our dataset as well. Additionally, to get a wider scope of potential outcome, it may have been beneficial to analyze these outcomes at the ward level. Although this data was presented to me, it seemed best to begin with the municipal level

since this has resulted in the most frequency throughout elections. Another limitation is that controls within the dataset could have been fleshed out better to make for more substantial controls. In the data set, I listed poverty levels and ethnic diversity. Unfortunately the diversity label was set in a way made it difficult to identify the overall percentage of ethnic diversity. Rather the variables would only demonstrate the percentage of each demographic.

8.2 Alternative Explanations

Although I am confident in my explanation of changes in the number of candidates in a number of municipalities that have experienced political killings between interim periods between election years throughout the past decade, I will offer several other alternative hypotheses that may also explain the fluctuations in candidate numbers at the municipal level. For example, drawing from Chakravarty, et al., who suggests that in order to quantify degrees of electoral competitiveness throughout multi-party polities, it is important to consider scenarios where the number of candidates and parties has been historically lower or higher than in other districts. In the case of South Africa, candidate selection and party cohesion have been considered determining factors in its electoral makeup. The social cleavages of a party's effectiveness within a certain municipality may dictate whether candidates run in that area at all (Giollabhui , 2011). Alternatively, choices in candidate numbers and selection according to several authors is determined by the power that a party has in a certain region (Gallagher, 1988: 4–8; Hazan and Rahat, 2006). If the ANC has less dominance in particular municipalities then it is difficult to know if

assassinations does have a causal effect on candidate count. This may be the same among differing parties in each municipality as well. Referring back to one of the initial models presented by Mariana Carvalho, it is also important to understand the goal of violent actors and their cause for political change within the context of electoral violence.

Although the ANC has been a consistent actor within municipal assassinations, this notion does not account for all members of popular opposition parties such as the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The causes of these assassinations may be different from the causes of ANC assassinations. One of the best ways to cross reference this potential difference would be to add a detailed list of violent actors in documented cases and compare these results with changes in municipalities.

9. Conclusion

Ultimately, this paper sought to identify the impact of the increase in targeted killings in South Africa beginning in 2016 and that is still on the rise. The goal of my thesis was to identify municipalities that were affected by these killings and investigate if candidate numbers, ANC candidate numbers, and PR lists have changed since this increase. This paper suggests that there is a link between assassinations and the candidate numbers within municipal elections in South Africa. Unfortunately due to my growing understanding of the parallel line trend, it was difficult for me to implement this final test and determine validity of this analysis. In future analyses, it will be crucial to implement this trend report to be able to determine if the regressions presented are truly significant. It was also difficult to analyze the explanatory graphs due to the implementation of a mean which was possibly detrimental to the overall results.

I would like to close this thesis by commenting on the development of scholarship in electoral violence. The gap of research on political assassinations and its causes represents a critical oversight, considering the prevalence of this ongoing phenomenon and its implications. The implications of political assassinations is that they have the ability to initiate state-wide conflict, stymie peace accords and change the electoral and candidate nomination process.

This study highlights the theoretical and mechanical implications of assassinations within the context of municipal elections, which is a topic requiring more scholarship. Most academia features research on the impact of high-profile killings, but as this study shows, the democratic process can be affected even at its lowest levels. It also identifies other

promising options for continued research, with the expectation that this kind of violence and its impact will be understood further in the future.

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