

ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE: ROOT CAUSES AND PROSPECTS FOR  
SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY

by

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to the people of Zimbabwe who still suffer persecution in a post-independent state.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures.....	viii
Acronyms.....	ix
Abstract.....	x
<b>Chapter 1.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	1
1.2 Research Question.....	3
1.3 Explanation of Terms.....	3
1.4 Theoretical Framework.....	4
1.5 Justification.....	6
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.0 Introduction.....	8
2.1 Definition of Terms.....	8
2.2 Causes of Electoral Violence.....	11
2.3 Incidence of Electoral Violence.....	12
2.4 The Origins of Electoral Violence in Zimbabwe.....	13
2.5 Types of Violence and Its Targets in Zimbabwe.....	14
2.6 Conclusion.....	25
<b>Chapter 3: Methodology.....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	27

3.1 Research Design.....	27
3.1.1 Access to the Field.....	28
3.1.2 Thematic Analysis Approach.....	28
3.2 Sampling Techniques.....	30
3.3 Population.....	31
3.4 Ethics.....	31
3.5 Data Collection Methods.....	33
3.5.1 Participation Observation.....	33
3.5.2 Interviews.....	33
3.5.3 Observation .....	35
3.5.4 Questionnaire.....	35
3.5.5 Secondary Data.....	36
3.5.6 Analysis of Data, Interpretation, and Reporting.....	36
3.7 Limitations and Challenges.....	37
3.8 Conclusion.....	38
<b>Chapter 4: Analysis Evaluation and Conclusion.....</b>	<b>40</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	40
4.1 A brief Overview of Election Violence in Zimbabwe: 2000-2013.....	40
4.2 Theme Analysis.....	47
4.3 Application of the Frustration-Aggression and Other Related Theories.....	57
4.4 Evaluation.....	61
4.5 Conclusion.....	63
Appendices .....	64
Appendix I: Questionnaire .....	64
Appendix II: Interview Questions .....	66
Bibliography.....	67-74

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 1.....	15-16
Table 1.....	45
Table 2.....	46
Table 3.....	47

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1 .....	4
Figure 1: Zimbabwe Map 2008.....	45

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIO	Central Intelligence Officer
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
GPA	Global Political Agreement
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNFAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organizations
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
US	United States
OVT	Organized Violence and Torture
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe Africa National Union-Patriotic Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZWLA	Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association

## **ABSTRACT**

### **ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE: ROOT CAUSES AND PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY**

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This study explores the causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe between the years 2000 – 2013. It looked at factors that influenced the use of violence. The study employed the frustration-aggression theory together with other methods to understand the dynamics that suggest conditions for the use of violence. The study employed a questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis to assess the fundamental drive towards abuse. It establishes that electoral violence in Zimbabwe has roots in the country's colonial heritage. The ruling party's need for power and the party's failure to acknowledge its opponent, the MDC as legitimate opposition forced ZANU-PF to become intolerant. They intimidate, threaten, assault and kill members of the opposition to coerce them to vote in favor of the ruling party. The party deployed security forces to manipulate the election and to pursue parochial interests by taking advantage of electoral competition. The in-group out-group mentality exhibited in violence begets frustration which lead to abuse. Through the exploration of the frustration-aggression theory, married with the cognitive dissonance and use of hate speech, the research finds that no single theory can

adequately explain the existence of electoral strife in Zimbabwe. To achieve sustainable peace, the research suggests a continuous engagement of the international community as a means to uphold the rule of law for the conduct of undisputed elections.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This study is designed to examine the causes of electoral violence and the prospects for sustainable peace and security in post-independent Zimbabwe. The purpose of the study is to determine the causes and to seek relevant ways of addressing the violence to achieve lasting peace and security in the country. The study aims to explore some dynamics that can suggest possible ways to conceptualize electoral violence in Zimbabwe.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Electoral violence in Zimbabwe has disrupted the electoral process and created dissent among the participants. When properly managed, electoral violence does not affect the stability of a country. If not adequately handled, electoral violence, could, in combination with other prevailing factors, lead to disorder and eventually to political and economic instability as the financial community on edge, and many investors are scared away by the apparent lack of security for their investment.

Zimbabwe is a country experiencing a severe economic meltdown and political crisis which led to the significant suffering of many of its citizens. Since the late 1990s

and early 2000s, the financial collapse sustained. It led to a total collapse of the economy following the collapse of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in 2013. The case of Zimbabwe's disputed elections of 2008, for instance, led to many suffering including gross human rights violations in rural areas, people being murdered, assaulted, and maimed, and women getting raped and incapacitated.

One of the challenges in dealing with electoral violence in Zimbabwe is the politics of blame game. Whenever there is such a problem, the response of some members of the government of Zimbabwe is to blame the external forces, such as the West that seemingly want to cause a regime change in the country. The politics of the blame game without clear evidence is retrogressive. Blame game tends to distract attention from real issues to address. It makes politics irrelevant in solving the problem of electoral violence. This problem is deadly and is a cause of suffering, insecurity, and fear.

Many government official responses to electoral violence in Zimbabwe tend to emphasize short-term solutions just to stop the on-going conflict. They are not so much concerned with the causes of such conflict but with operational prevention strategies which are intended to prevent the immediate manifestations of conflict from degenerating into severe armed conflict. Prevention approach aims to try to remedy potentially violent situations from erupting as a matter of agency. It is not concerned with the causes of conflict but with activities such as private mediations, cross-party dialogues, and national healing and reconciliation workshops. The point is not only to focus on short-term approaches to conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding but to find long-term

mechanisms to stop conflict completely. Instead of putting more effort and resources into addressing results of pre-electoral, electoral, and post-electoral violence in Zimbabwe, more effort should be placed on finding long-term solutions to the problem. Therefore, conflict-prevention strategies in Zimbabwe should be concerned more with measures that seek to systematically deal with the causes of electoral violence to prevent future abuse from occurring or recurring.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This dissertation seeks to answer the following question:

- What are the factors that caused electoral violence in Zimbabwe in the period 2000-2013?

To answer this question, the researcher will examine the role played by stakeholders in Zimbabwe such as the media; Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), and political parties who have vital interests in the electoral process.

## **1.3 Explanation of Terms**

In this research, factors refer to any activity undertaken by any political party in an election which leads to violence. Examples are the mode of campaigning in an election, the use of state resources (abuse of incumbency) primarily by the party in power as against the electoral laws.

## 1.4 Theoretical Framework

While there are different viewpoints on the relationship between election and violence in Zimbabwe, it is true that violence has a close relationship with the frustration emanating from the country's colonial history. Using the frustration-aggression theory, together with other methods, can help us conceptualize a fundamental driver to violence. The frustration-aggression (FA) hypothesis, developed by five theorists (John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H Mowrer, and Robert Sears) in 1939, argues that aggression is merely a generic response to frustration (hence the theory's name). The theory's principle focuses on the cyclic nature of frustration and aggression (Berkowitz, 1989). In their book, "Frustration and Aggression," attempts were made to account for virtually all of human aggression with a few basic ideas. It advanced a few fundamental propositions to explain the origin and consequences of virtually all human aggression.

### Revised Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis (Berkowitz, 1989)

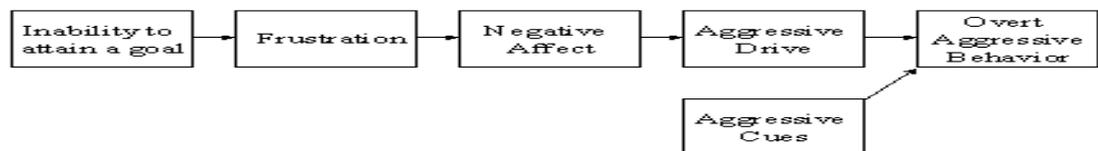


Fig.1 Revised Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

Thus, Dollard and his colleagues started their monograph with a sweeping generalization as their core assumption: "Aggression is always a consequence of frustration." A quick breakdown of this assumption would mean that: (a) the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration, and (b) that frustration always leads to aggression (Dennen, 2006).

On the one hand, frustration, in this context, was specified as the thwarting of a goal response. However, the term 'frustration' is used to refer not only to the process of blocking a person's attainment of a reinforcer but also to the reaction to such blocking. Consequently, being frustrated 'means both that one's access to reinforcers is being thwarted by another party (or possibly by particular circumstances) and that one's reaction to this thwarting is one of annoyance (Dennen, 2006). While on the other hand, Dollard and his colleagues regarded aggression 'as not merely the delivery of noxious stimuli but as an action having a reasonably definite objective: the infliction of injury' (Berkowitz, 1989).

However, the most relevant aspect of this theory is the clarification made by N.E Miller (1941) that Dollard and his colleagues believed not only that frustration always leads to aggression but frustrations do not cause hostile or aggressive outbursts by necessity. Potential outbreaks may be inhibited efficiently or may result in alternative actions, such as the pursuit of other, more readily available reinforcers. Miller, therefore,

rephrased the second part of the hypothesis to read: “Frustration produces instigations to some different types of response, one of which is an instigation to some form of aggression.”

Furthermore, many other scholars have extended this work in the search for the form or level of frustration that could likely lead to more aggression. Thus Pastore (1952) and Cohen (1955) were among the first to suggest that only illegitimate frustrations produce aggressive reactions. They argued that people prevented from reaching the desired goal become aggressively inclined only when the interference is thought to be illegitimate (i.e., a violation of socially accepted rules) or be viewed as a personal attack.

This theory then becomes relevant when electoral violence has been analyzed from the viewpoint that another group illegitimately thwarts the wish or goal of some group and thus the former group violently reacts to this illegitimate thwarting or goal blockage.

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

The justification for this study is attributable to many factors. It is my contribution towards the establishment of peace and democracy in Zimbabwe. It serves as an essential document upon which future reference emerges. In this regard, stakeholders in good governance are in a position to develop a recommendation that could help in finding a solution to the violence associated with elections in Zimbabwe. It also contributes to the

legitimate choice made by the electorates without any influence, compulsion, or hindrance.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

There are several kinds of literature written on electoral violence and electoral conflict the world over. Recent studies reveal that more countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, are experiencing violent strife during election time stemming from the failure to tolerate opposition politics or, at least, adjust to democratic electoral processes which govern the conduct of an election. A lot has been published so far on Zimbabwe's electoral process which is often marked by violence (Masunungure, 2009). Confidence in the voting process and security institutions in Zimbabwe have waned since 2000-2008 violent elections. There are several ways of looking at the origins of violence in these elections. The literature below is a snapshot of some of the roots and causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe.

#### **2.1 Definition of Terms**

##### **Conflict**

There is a connection between violence and conflict. The term conflict conjures up associations of tension, disruption, and destruction with the expectation of anything from being uncomfortable to life-threatening situations (Fernandes, 1998). From such a

perspective, conflict is something to be avoided or even suppressed. However, there is another side of the conflict, that is, the bringing of an unjust situation to the surface or public arena, the stimulation to look for creative solutions and the challenging of outdated ideas and patterns of thinking. In this way, conflict can be spur creativity and development and can lead to a higher synthesis beyond contending views or positions. Conflict in itself is not to be eliminated, but ways need to be developed to handle conflict which liberates its creative potential and curtails its destructive manifestations (Schermerhor, 2002).

### **Election**

Elections are means of peaceful transition of leadership in society. An election is a "process of actualizing representative democracy, and it exposes people to the experiences of competition for power through balloting" (Balogun, 2003). In democratic societies, election empowers ordinary citizens to choose among contestants for political offices and promotes or encourages participation in governance. However, some polls have marred by violence. In this study elections mean: a combination of acts and procedures aiming at choosing or casting of a ballot for a candidate among various candidates as members of parliament and as the head of state (President) or any public and private institutions. This concept will be discussed further in this dissertation.

### **Election violence**

Election violence is a sub-category of political violence that is "distinguished by its timing, perpetrators and victims, objectives, and methods" (Bekoe 2012: 2). It has been defined as: "an activity motivated by an attempt to affect the results of the elections

– either by manipulating the electoral procedures and participation or by contesting the legitimacy of the results” (Laakso 2007: 227); “any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay, or to otherwise influence an electoral process” (Fischer 2002: 3); “acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arises in the context of electoral competition” (Sisk 2008: 5).

Electoral violence can occur before, during or after elections, often it involves the instrumental use of coercion; can be directed against people and property; and includes such acts as killing of candidates and their supporters, fights among rival groups, riots, threats, intimidation and coercion of opponents, voters and electoral officials, destruction of property, forceful displacement and unlawful detentions (Laakso 2007; Sisk 2008; UNDP 2009).

Faith Okpotor (2015; 5) holds that literature on electoral violence in Africa can be grouped as follows: single-case studies of various instances of electoral violence (Boone 2009; Boone 2011; Bratton 2008; Daddieh 2001; Dercon and Gutiérrez-Romero 2012; S. D. Mueller 2011; Straus 2011); analyses of electoral violence as a means of political parties and democratic deviants to perpetuate power, following the familiar narrative of the peculiar pathologies of the developing world (Basedau, Erdmann, and Mehler 2007; Collier 2009); strategies for preventing electoral violence (Collier and Vicente 2011; Frazer and Gyimah-Boadi 2011; Höglund and Jarstad 2011); and electoral violence in conflict-ridden or post-conflict societies (Brancati and Snyder 2011; Höglund 2009).

From these studies, it stands to reason that many factors cause electoral violence in Africa.

## **2.2 Causes of Electoral Violence**

The causes of electoral violence in Africa are as follows: inattention to land rights; violent instigation by political actors and perpetration by politically connected gangs; the use of violence by the state, institutional failures, and political allegiances that are based on ethnic divisions; the trajectory of democratic transition; the depth of social cleavages; and economic stress (Okpotor 2015; 5). These causes of electoral violence are multifaceted, and can further divide into two broad categories. First, structural factors related to the underlying power structures prevalent in new and emerging democracies, such as informal patronage systems, poor governance, exclusionary politics, and the socio-economic uncertainties of losing political power in states where almost all power is concentrated at the center. Second, factors related to the electoral process and the electoral contest itself, such as failed or flawed elections, election fraud and weak or manipulated institutions and institutional rules governing the electoral process (Adolfo et al, 2012). A typical example is Zimbabwe's 2008 - 2013 elections where electoral processes were manipulated to suit President Robert Mugabe's ruling party, (ZANU-PF), pitting against the main opposition political party, (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai. This assumption will be further assessed in the research discussion.

Many, but not all, African states implement some form of democratic election for filling positions in the government. Democratic institutions and procedures, including elections, have been introduced or reinforced while the underlying structures of power in society and the norms governing the political system have often not transformed. The continent has a long history of one-party and dominant political party states where politics and economics conflated (Adolfo et al., 2012). As a result, politics is often exclusive, intolerant of opposition, and sometimes militarized, not least in post-war states. Furthermore, many of the socio-economic and political benefits of democracy have yet to be fully realized among large parts of the population.

### **2.3 Incidence of Electoral Violence in Africa**

In the past few years, very violent elections have occurred in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. A more common scenario has been that of low-intensity violence, widespread coercive intimidation of both candidates and voters including harassment, imprisonment and assassinations; violent riots and clashes between supporters or security elements of the competing political parties; and attacks on local party headquarters and party symbols. Countries that have displayed such characteristics during elections include Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Uganda. The coup d'états staged during and before the elections in both Guinea-Bissau and Mali in April 2012 are other examples of election-related incidents (Adolfo et al., 2012).

However, there are significant differences across the 54 African countries. Some have seen little or no incidents of election-related violence, whereas others have a repeated history of violent electoral contests. There are also, significant variations between different elections within the same country, with some turning violent and some not.

#### **2.4 The Origins of Electoral Violence in Zimbabwe**

Electoral violence in Zimbabwe realized in various stages of the country's history: the war of liberation, the *Gukurahundi* atrocities in Matabeleland of the early 1980s, and a series of the pre- and post-election conflict that characterizes post-independent Zimbabwe. Some reconciliation was attempted after each of the above violent disputes. It includes the call to reconcile with the Rhodesian colonialists made by the new Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, on the eve of the Independence Day in April 1980. A General Amnesty Ordinance of 1980 was issued, and it pardoned both sides of the liberation war. In 1988, a Clemency Order pardoned all violations committed by both parties between 1982 and 1987. This period marked the period of the *Gukurahundi*. A presidential amnesty was given to the (ZANU-PF) perpetrators of politically-motivated violence during the 1995 elections. In October 2000, the President issued an amnesty to pardon politically-motivated crimes committed during the election campaign (NHR, 2012). However, in 2008, acts of politically motivated electoral violence were witnessed in Zimbabwe during the harmonized presidential election. It leaves us with one

conclusion that electoral violence in Zimbabwe originated during the birth of a new country, Zimbabwe, and a new system of government to an African people in 1980.

## **2.5 Types of Violence and Its Targets in Zimbabwe**

Paul Staniland (2013; 17) looked at cross-sectional occurrences of electoral violence and categorized them around actors and their interests. Table 1 outlines seven distinct types of electoral violence which Staniland (2013; 17) further classified as harboring intra-systemic goals and anti-systemic goals. The horizontal axis identifies four political categories of the actor: state security forces, non-state actors linked to the regime, non-state opposition groups, and politically unaligned local groups. The nature of the actor shapes the kinds of violence we are likely to see. States will use regular security forces, while state-backed non-state groups are likely to claim that they are autonomous from the state (creating “deniability” for the government) and may at times escape government control. The difference between the two can seriously complicate accountability and transparency, while potentially also leading to an unexpected escalation of the conflict. Local actors are likely to use reasonably limited violence, while opposition groups may be in a position to do everything from low-level intimidation to full-scale anti-regime insurgency.

The vertical axis of Table 1 asks whether an actor in question is seeking to win or hold power within the context of the democratic political system (intra-systemic) or whether instead, the actor aims to overthrow the status quo order (anti-systemic)

(Giovanni Capoccia, January 1, 2002: 9–35). Though there can be ambiguity in what goals an actor is pursuing – especially since goals are often not achieved – any analysis needs to begin with the simple question of who is acting and what broad purpose they have.

Most existing work devotes its attention to the intra-systemic category with violence being pursued within a polity’s “rules of the game”: this is where cunning politicians and roving bands of thugs operate to get an edge in weakly institutionalized environments. However, the electoral process can also be a target of actors who want to overthrow or radically reform a country’s political system. Violence may be aimed at destroying the rules of the game, not winning within them. This anti-systemic category ranges from the Pakistani Taliban’s onslaught against politicians to hardline South African security forces’ support for militias to try to unsettle the democratic transition. These are well-armed variants of a “disloyal opposition” (Juan Linz, 1978). The unaligned category refers to local actors opportunistically violently pursuing their parochial interests in the context of electoral politics, which does not necessarily involve clear intra- or anti-systemic goals, but which can contribute to persistent social militarization.

**Table 1. Types of Electoral Violence**

		<b>Actor</b>		
	<b>State</b>	<b>Non-State Ally Opposition</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Unaligned</b>
<b>Intra-Systemic Goals</b>	Security forces deployed to manipulate the election to maintain power	Non-state ally used to help ruling party win elections	Intimidation and protection against regime supporters	Local actors pursue parochial interests by taking advantage of electoral competition
<b>Anti-Systemic Goals</b>	Parts of state seek to prevent or overturn electoral system using violence	Non-state groups try to prevent or overturn electoral system to preserve the power of their state allies	Insurgents target electoral process to undermine the democratic system and to destroy the regime	

Intra-systemic violence involves Security forces deployed to manipulate the election to maintain power; Non-state ally used to help ruling party win an election; Intimidation, and protection against regime supporters; and Local actors pursue parochial interests by taking advantage of electoral competition.

Anti-systemic violence involves Parts of state seeking to prevent or overturn electoral system using violence; Non-state groups try to avoid or reverse electoral order to preserve the power of their state allies; and Insurgents target electoral process to

undermine the democratic system and to destroy the regime. These seven types of violence are not mutually exclusive. We can see a state directly engaged in violence and sponsoring non-state allies while an insurgent group targets the electoral process itself and the armed wing of intra-system opposition party clashes with ruling party supporters in contested constituencies. An election may involve a number of these different types, or only one, or none at all. Acts of violence (as well as broader campaigns of violence) can be measured and compared according to who engages in the violence and with what goal. The typology can incorporate everything from anti-democratic coups to local thuggery to insurgent offensives.

In Zimbabwe, for instance, rape, torture, targeting of members of opposition parties and rural school teachers; wanton destruction of property; assault; and hate speech are common forms of violence experienced before an election and after election time. Hate speech has become a poisonous epidemic that has fractured and polarized society by promoting extreme levels of political and social intolerance and hostility towards any group (Amini Trust; 2002) With little regard of what the law says, politicians in Zimbabwe continue to make careless statements that have over the years cost many people their lives. Statements such as:

“People who promoted sanctions and opposed the land reform were enemies.”

“Minister urged chiefs to banish ‘people who support homosexuality’ from their communities and take away their land.”

“Zimbabwe will not be ruled by homosexuals or people who support it.”

“You can vote for him (Tsvangirai) but if he brings back the whites, *toenda kuhondo*” (we will go to war).

“Elections are coming, and the army will not support or salute sell-outs and agents of the West before, during, and after the presidential elections. We will not support anyone other than President Mugabe who has sacrificed a lot for the country.”

Hate speech can result in heinous crimes against a group that viewed as the enemy. In 2003, the High Court of Zimbabwe decided on a case of three men charged with killing MDC activists. They stated they believed government media reports that they were indeed fighting a legitimate Chimurenga war against the MDC. As a result, the three responsible for killing the MDC activists were found guilty of culpable homicide and not murder (Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe, 2003).

The effects of hate speech can be seen from the violence unleashed on the people in 2008 during the election period. People were attacked because they: ‘supported’ the wrong party and others raped, severely beaten, and tortured for reasons that seem directly related to the encouragement given by vicious hate speech.

During the same elections of 2008, President Robert Mugabe is on record saying:

“We will never allow an event like an election to reverse our independence, our sovereignty, our sweat and all that we fought for ..... all that our comrades died fighting for.”

Violence against the principal opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), has been well documented both locally and internationally. In the pre-election period of 9-11 March 2001, there was widespread intimidation, assault, and politically motivated killings carried out mainly by “war veteran” militia, youth militia, and supporters of the ruling party, ZANU-PF (Amini Trust; 2002). While some of the “war veterans” were indeed genuine members of the liberation struggle of the 1970’s in Zimbabwe, there are also a larger group of unemployed youths who have become involved in the organized violence and torture (OVT). Although much of the OVT has centered on issues related to elections held over the past years, there have been equally as much OVT during the land disturbances. A large number of allegations have been made about OVT targeted at both the farm owners and the farm workers (Human Rights NGO, 2001).

The months following the Presidential Elections of 9 – 11 March 2001 marked public recriminations against the opposition party members, and intensified action against the farm owners and farm workers. The continuing violence has meant that farm workers and MDC supporters have been forced to flee their homes to escape harassment, assault, and, in the worst cases, death (Human Rights NGO, 2001).

On the farms listed for acquisition and settled by the “war veterans,” the farm workers were subjected to continual intimidation, theft of personal belongings, vandalism, and destruction of their homes. Before the elections, they were forced to

attend all night rallies for 'voter education' by ZANU-PF supporters, and after the elections, punished with violence for continuing to live and work on the farms, which was seen as supporting the MDC and the white farmers. The farmworkers rather than leave, live side by side with their new neighbors or are forced to leave by violence, in some instances with only the clothes on their backs. The police and the army, far from trying to protect the rights of the farm workers, were often part of the problem, standing to the side when violence erupted on the farm and continuing to harass the displaced farm workers once they left for the urban centers and refuge (Human Rights NGO, 2001). There were even instances of senior police officers and army generals acquiring farms themselves and depriving the farm workers of their homes and employment.

In January 2002, Amani Trust had reported a new pattern of sexual violence after interviewing victims who were forced to rape other victims at the instigation of the militia in Mashonaland Central Province (Amnesty International, 2002). By the end of March 2002, the Amani Trust documented further sexual assaults by the militia, including incidents in which men were forced by the militia to commit sexual assault on one another (Amnesty International, 2002). In the town of Gokwe in Midlands province, the Amani Trust reported that militia members and army soldiers continued to rape women and teenage girls or forced them to perform humiliating sexual acts in public, in revenge for the "crime" of living in a community perceived to support the opposition (Amini Trust, 2002).

Another human rights organization, the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers' Association, estimates that some 1,000 women were held in militia camps. In Masvingo, newspaper accounts describe farm workers being beaten and forced to watch their wives raped by militia because they may have voted for the opposition.

Amnesty International estimates that dozens perhaps scores of people were held in illegal detention in some 50 militia camps around the country. While many were detained for "re-education," some were beaten and reportedly tortured (Amnesty International, 2002). In the case of Ephraim and Faith Tapa, a High Court Judge successfully forced the police to rescue the couple who had been abducted in Marondera and held at a militia camp for some 22 days. The High Court Judge issued the court order on 8 March 2002, forcing Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri to intervene, but deliberately struck out of the draft order submitted by Tapa's lawyers the directive to police to rescue others who were held in illegal detention by the militia (Amnesty International, 2002).

The Zimbabwe authorities' political retribution carried out by the militia became even more widely felt while the risk of famine in Zimbabwe deepened. The UN FAO, Global and Early Warning System, predicted at the end of 2001 that more than 700,000 people were at risk of food shortages, with another 250,000 urban dwellers already experiencing food difficulties.

Amnesty International received evidence that ZANU-PF officials in charge of distributing food supplies in many rural areas were discriminating against those believed to be supporters of the MDC. ZANU - PF affiliated youth militia stationed outside long queues to buy grain targeted MDC supporters for assaults and intimidation to prevent them from getting food. In the rural town of Mvurwi, for example, a man standing in line to buy maize meal was beaten after being recognized as an opposition activist by militia members who hit him (Amnesty International 2002).

Human rights lawyers confirmed that war veteran-led militia controls the Grain Marketing Board food distribution facilities in the Matabeleland North Province. They demand a ZANU-PF party card before allowing people to buy maize meal. Similar acts of discrimination witnessed in the towns of Masvingo and Gutu. Amnesty International also received individual reports confirming militia control of food distribution from Kwekwe, Norton, Plumtree, Beitbridge, Victoria Falls, Chipinge, Kariba, and Tsholotsho, north of Bulawayo (Amnesty International, 2002).

The intimidation and assaults go viral to rural teachers. A young trainee teacher, Felicia Matamure, described how she was captured by government youth militia in north-eastern Zimbabwe and dragged to their camp near Mt Darwin. There she was gagged and gang-raped by a gang of 10 young men high on drugs in a horrifying night of sexual abuse and beatings. "They tied my legs and arms to poles...The men took turns to rape me while the others watched and sang liberation songs."

Felicia was untied at dawn but threatened with death if she fled the camp. Undaunted, she escaped the next night and tried to report the case to the police. "They were not interested," she said. "The war vets and the militia are above the law." She said there were dozens of other abducted women at the former school that turned into a militia camp. Some were made to wash and cook; others were forced to sleep with the gang-leaders. Most were too scared to flee because of the retribution that their family or village would face.

Lilian Nzirawa's ordeal was just as appalling: the militia forced her into their camp, ripped off her dress and slashed her underwear with knives. "I was tied, gagged and blindfolded while they raped me," she recalled. After about an hour, her abductors removed the blindfold but took turns to rape her again as their comrades cheered and sang revolutionary songs. With tears rolling down her face, Lilian, in her early twenties, said she recognized some of her assailants as local men from her home area near Bindura, 60 miles north of Harare. "All I want is justice, and all I can do is cry," she said softly.

After resorting to rampant electoral fraud in this month's election, President Mugabe was desperate to ensure that the MDC can never again mount such a stiff political challenge to his regime. Across the country, opposition activists were attacked,

forced to pay hefty "fines," hounded from their homes, and in at least six cases since the election killed by ZANU-PF mobs.

White farmers targeted: in ZANU-PF's Mashonaland strongholds, dozens forced from their homes in revenge for backing the MDC, while Terry Ford was shot dead on his farm at Norton. It is local black MDC activists who are bearing the brunt of the anti-opposition crackdown, however. Laina Marowa, Tsanangurai Marowa, and Dorcas Maneni fled into the bush in the eastern Manicaland province after serving as MDC polling agents. Mobs had turned up outside their houses, and local ZANU-PF leaders had ordered them to pay "fines" of almost £50, a small fortune in rural areas.

Across the country, the MDC estimated that 1,200 of its election agents were on the run and there were countless reports of abuse at militia torture camps. Photographs obtained by The Telegraph reveal that recruits trained in the Bindura area, 100 miles north of Harare. Sexual assault was part of the new strategy of terror: one 15-year-old girl was repeatedly raped by youth militia shortly after the election because they could not find her parents, both MDC activists (Brian Latham and Philip Sherwell, 2002).

According to Dewa Mavhinga, a research officer with the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers' Association (ZWLA), more than 1,000 female sex slaves were being held in 56 militia camps. "These militias are now in celebration mode," he said. "They act like they are unafraid of anything." The victims fall into three categories. "Some are promised money," he said. "Others go in because they are ordered to, and they are too frightened to

disobey. The last groups are taken into the camps as punishment for supporting the opposition MDC." The fear that they will be discovered and killed by their former tormentors is common among escaped sex slaves, according to Mavhinga. "They have been told that they will be hunted down and killed by the militia and the war veterans," he said.

Even once they have escaped, the stigma attached to rape in rural areas means that women's suffering continues. "They cannot just admit they have been raped because they fear their husbands will not have anything more to do with them," Felicia confirmed the problem as she broke down in tears and explained that she was married with a small child. "My husband works in South Africa. When I escaped, I wanted to phone and tell him, but I just couldn't do it. By the time I spoke to him, he had heard. When he answered the phone, he just said: 'I know.' That was it." Asked if she will ever see her husband again, Felicia smiled sadly and shook her head. "I do not think so," she said (Brian Latham and Philip Sherwell, 2002).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

There are many views and experiences that Zimbabwean people had regarding electoral violence. The literature review shows a snapshot of multifaceted challenges on this subject. Zimbabwe, in general, needs genuine reforms in her electoral process and electoral institutions to do away with structural violence, electoral violence, and

systematic intimidation of voters during election time. The next chapter looks at the research methods used in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

When researching conflict analysis, we should start the research process with a defined question and then adopt methods that will produce the data to answer them. Data collection procedures are often complex and unpredictable. However, it would be insincere to present this research with its theoretical focus, methods, and research design as an accurate and adequate study of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. The methods used emerged out of a creative blend of document analysis, questionnaire, and interviews.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

To address the research question, a qualitative research method of data gathering, in particular questionnaire, in-depth interview, and document analysis was used. Purposive sampling method emphasizes the selection of participants who possess experiential knowledge of the phenomena in question - the causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. Research designed in this format has critical advantages. First, it allows the subjects to provide their understanding of the topic and views from an interpretative perspective. In this inquiry, the participants demonstrated detailed knowledge of politics in Zimbabwe and the conditions leading to violence. Second, it avails the researcher the

opportunity to gain a holistic grasp of the concepts. The inquiry gathered evidence on the causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. These led to an understanding of ways to conceptualize violence. It combined data from a questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis to obtain first-hand information.

### **3.1.1. Access to the Field**

The researcher is a Zimbabwean with a good knowledge of the country's politics and cultural setup. Although I could not travel to Zimbabwe for reasons related to the country's political situation, I was able to collect data with a bit of a challenge. It has reflected reservations expressed by most participants who feared to contribute to the topic through Skype or telephone interviews. Zimbabwe politics, particularly electoral violence topics are sensitive and emotional to discuss.

### **3.1.2. Qualitative Design: A Thematic Analysis Approach**

In the social science tradition, there are three approaches to research, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. These approaches are neither discrete nor are qualitative and quantitative methods dichotomous or polar oppositions. Instead, they are different ends of a continuum, while the mixed method is the middle ground (Creswell, 2014). While the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research concerns the use of words rather than numbers, or open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions) instead of close-ended questions (quantitative hypothesis), the most apparent

distinction between them is in; the underlying philosophical assumptions researchers bring to the study, the type of research strategies used in the research (e.g., quantitative experiments or qualitative case studies), and the specific methods employed in conducting these strategies (e.g., collecting data quantitatively on instruments versus collecting qualitative data through observing a setting) (John Creswell 2014:4).

Simply put, qualitative approach seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning persons or group ascribe to social problems and to interpret them, while the quantitative method examines a relationship between variables, often statistically (John Creswell 2014). In this study, the qualitative approach is utilized. Here, the researcher relied on document sources such as academic literature, electronic and print media reports, audio and videotapes, government reports; and primary research which involved a questionnaire and interviews.

Every study begins with an idea. Scholars then relate concepts to theories in one of the two ways. The deductive approach sometimes referred to as the research-before-theory model. In this method, the theory provides the orienting lens for the researcher to shape the type of questions she/he asks and informs the strategy for data collection and analysis. The second is the inductive model also known as the research-after-theory approach. In this approach, the researcher builds his inquiry from the data and develops it into full teams or generalized theory (see John Creswell 2014; and Ingrid Skogseth and Karianne Kasi 2014). The grounded approach developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1960s

is often inductive. Here the researcher begins with the idea, and then goes to gather data from participants, and then progresses to sort the information collected into categories or themes. He then develops these themes into theories, general patterns, and generalizations; these compared with the researcher's (field) experience or existing approach the researcher may have started with (John Creswell 2014).

This study began with an idea, the research objective(s) turned out differently, however. The eventual outcome of this inquiry is in part because as the survey deepened, new knowledge gained, the researcher realized that the initial idea was too broad and over-ambitious. Finally, the qualitative approach controls this study.

### **3.2 Sampling Techniques**

I employed the purposive sampling technique, which targets a particular group of people who possess features that a researcher is interested in (Silverman, 2000). Purposive sampling primarily used in qualitative studies “may be defined as selecting units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's question” (Teddlie and Yu, 2007:77). The groups used in this study selected from a cluster of educated members from ZANU-PF, MDC, the media, and the ZEC. To produce a well-rounded and well-informed knowledge base on electoral violence in Zimbabwe, I took the liberty of using only those people who possessed at least a degree. This bias necessitated by the fact that collecting data directly from ordinary people in Zimbabwe was almost impossible. As an exiled

researcher who has worked as a lecturer in Zimbabwe and a visiting professor in the USA, it was, however, good to be creative and more comfortable to identify ordinary graduate participants in Zimbabwe and outside the country. Conversely, time constraints, fear, and suspicion demonstrated by my selected participants was another challenge for conducting sizeable formal interviews. However, I decided to use interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis exclusively.

### **3.3 Population**

The sample used in this study consists of 40 (enlightened) individuals. Enlightened as used in this research depicts person(s) whose cognitive capacity allows for an understanding of basic concepts underpinning this study. It was essential to reach out to those that are best situated to provide insights into the process leading to electoral violence in Zimbabwe. The study examines how political players perceived and experienced electoral violence. Particular members of ZANU-PF and MDC who are the primary contesting political parties participated. These were the people with intimate knowledge and experience of the effects of electoral violence. The study also incorporates views of political analysts, opinions of selected Zimbabweans from the media, NGOs, and civil society.

### **3.4 Ethics**

Ethical issues are always at the center of every research. The Human Subject Review Board of the United States of America mandated researchers to ensure that the

rights and privileges of participants in their study, as well as their communities, are protected to make sure that their inquiry will not pose threats of any form to the subjects and their communities.

An “informed consent” which demands that the researcher inform the subjects of their rights as interviewees, in addition to the purpose and details of the research, is one form of this obligation. During the interview processes, the researcher explained the usage of the data, its storage, and the confidentiality of his response plus their anonymity to the subjects. He also stressed the fact that the respondent has the right to quit at any stage of the process should s/he deem it necessary.

Although the researcher prepared an informed consent form for participants to sign, people are often reluctant to sign documents. They often view it as entrapment. The majority of the subjects declined to sign the consent forms, though they read and understood it. They gave their consent verbally.

However, it is essential to state that throughout the exercise, the researcher explained his role as purely academic, motivated by the desire to understand the causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe and the possible prospects for sustainable peace and security in the country.

## **3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

### **3.5.1 Participant Observation**

To gain access to more intimate detail on electoral violence in Zimbabwe, I visited areas where the opposition political party members in the diaspora held public demonstrations against the government of Zimbabwe. I joined the events in New York and Washington, DC. Participation observation requires the researcher to collect data in natural settings and situations as and when they occur (Creswell, 1998). Participant observation not only allowed the researcher to be grounded in the case study but it enabled the researcher to socialize with groups under the investigation. Through participant observations, I followed news and developments in Zimbabwe and actively participated in events focusing on Zimbabwe. Using participant observation technique, I kept abreast with developments that were related to my study, and this enabled me to identify potential interview respondents, thereby providing the opportunity for productive interaction. In these demonstrations, I managed to do some informal interviews with members of the opposition MDC and one member from Studio 7, Voice of America, a news agency which focuses more on Zimbabwe. Although not much came through this exercise, I, however, managed to distribute my questionnaires.

### **3.5.2 Interviews**

The researcher used an unstructured interview. This method gave the researcher room to be flexible and the interviewee the liberty to express him/herself freely. A

significant advantage is that the process leads to natural conversation. Each interview began with a presentation of a one-page summary of the research objectives and assumptions to the respondent; followed by an elaborate explanation by the researcher, as most of the respondents asked for it. Satisfied that the intended subject understands the purpose of the research, the researcher administers the consent form to the person.

The interview consisted of seven (7) open-ended questions, oriented towards getting detailed knowledge about the issues and problems central to this research. Discussions were central to this study. Clifford Geertz (1973) posits that conversation provides insights into meaning. Reviews were not merely a delivery of events that occurred during the electoral period, but they are critical appraisals and reflexive analysis by individuals who have the first-hand experience of circumstances surrounding elections. Interviews allow the researcher to understand events from the perspective of respondents (Geertz, 2000). The first of these sets of questions seeks to evaluate the respondent's understanding of the concept of violence in general and in the context of Zimbabwe's elections.

Most of the interviews (8) I conducted on Skype and telephone. Two meetings were face-to-face. Each session was audio recorded with a tape recorder. At the end of each course, I store data in a particular file in the researcher's laptop. The exercise I repeat at the next meeting.

During the interview process, the researcher applied the “uncomfortable silences” technique, a method which emphasizes a little break between questions to give the respondent time to evaluate or elaborate his/her response before moving to the next question. In some cases, this silence does urge the respondent to elaborate (Ingrid Kvinge Skogseth and Karianne Kåsin 2014). The researcher employed this technique frequently throughout the interview process.

Initially, the procedure of this inquiry was for ten (10) participants. The researcher reached theoretical saturation and ended the interview process. Theoretical saturation is a criterion for determining the number of informants interviewed to answer the research questions fully. When no new information formed, data saturation occurred (Ahmad Mohammadpur et al., 2012:5).

### **3.5.3 Observation**

A significant advantage of the interview process is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to observe the expression of the respondent. All through the interview process, the researcher observed in detail body movements and eye expressions of the respondents. It helps determine the reliability of verbal response from the interviewee. He also writes notes and remarks in some unique instances. The records were used to compare and contrast the respondent’s position during analysis.

### **3.5.4 Questionnaires**

I distributed questionnaires to members of ZANU-PF, MDC, nonpolitically affiliated Zimbabweans and the Media. The questionnaire return response was 100%. I used email and hand distribution. Although some key figure of ZANU-PF had initially agreed to participate in Skype interviews, they, however, changed their minds preferring to use a questionnaire which they regarded as more private and anonymous.

### **3.5.5 Secondary Data**

Data from the interviews and questionnaire triangulated with analytical information from secondary documents. Secondary data analysis is a common strategy in the social science field (Creswell, 1998). The use of secondary data enabled me to cross-check primary data, thereby enhancing the content validity of data. I analyzed reports from the print media, audiovisual reports from YouTube, and other media sources.

### **3.5.6 Analysis of Data, Interpretation, and Reporting**

Throughout the study, data analysis was a continuous, simultaneous, and iterative process whereby the processes of data collection, transcription, and analysis weave into each other. Iterative data analysis strategies allow for the identification of patterns, recurring themes, and data similarities and contradictions. I analyzed data from the research questions and theoretical frameworks of this study.

In my analysis, I not only looked at electoral violence in the narratives and accounts of respondents, but I also analyzed the progressions of events in Zimbabwe,

paying particular attention to critical moments where frustration emerges. My data analysis processes supported the review of literature that focused on the history and politics of Zimbabwe's electoral violence. The literature review process helped me to identify the theories that I could use to make sense of the reasons for electoral violence.

### **3.7. Limitations and Challenges**

Electoral violence remains a sensitive issue for Zimbabweans. I was initially skeptical of the willingness of some political stakeholders to outspokenly reflect on the conditions leading to electoral strife in Zimbabwe. Despite such fears, access to these stakeholders was reasonably comfortable, although they chose to remain anonymous. I was able to conduct interviews from both sides of the political divide with minimum complications.

As a reflective study where research participants are expected to look back and reflect on the events leading to violence in 2000-2013, this study had to contend with a historical-reflective approach which implied a significant reliance on the memory of the participant or victims. Literature in the conflict resolution field acknowledges that remembering is as much a political process as it is a mental and social process (Volkan, 2006). As such, it is possible that the participants' reflections on electoral violence will inform their political perspective, party affiliations, and ideologies. Therefore, this study had to utilize the information and tools. No matter how biased or subjective they could be, the views of the participants are still outstanding. They had first-hand experience as targets or perpetrators.

During fieldwork, although respondents were accessible, timing proved to be a critical consideration when trying to schedule interviews with stakeholders. Much of the data collection for this study occurred between March 2017- October 2017 and many events were taking place in Zimbabwe and the US related to Zimbabwe's political landscape. The MDC branch in the USA held demonstrations against the Mugabe regime in Washington, DC, and New York on September 22, 2017, during the UNGA. The ongoing events meant that political leaders were busy with meetings and other engaging state matters. Despite careful planning, I had to capitalize on impromptu opportunities for meetings and interviews. Ultimately, the fieldwork that I conducted spanned over a period of more than six months.

During the study, I was also aware of factors that influenced my biases. Admittedly, my interpretation of data influences my background as a Zimbabwean living outside the country, an academic, and eyewitness to victims of electoral violence. However, my continued engagement with Zimbabwe politics has enabled me to remain grounded in local reality. Ultimately, awareness of self and acknowledgment of my subjectivity has been helpful in controlling my bias.

As the Zimbabwean struggle is in a continuous state of flux, the dynamics between MDC and ZANU-PF keep shifting, making it hard to keep up with ongoing developments. The write-up of this dissertation took place when many demonstrations regarding economic hardship, the rule of law, and electoral reform in Zimbabwe were occurring.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter looks at the research methods. It describes the procedures I have undertaken and the challenges faced in coming up with a comprehensive report writing. Research methodologies often complicated by the fact that what one plans as a framework may be altered by specific realities and events on the ground. The next chapter presents the research findings and analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter is in two sections. The first presents a brief overview of the existence of violence in Zimbabwe from 2000 - 2013; the development of a political and social transformation which has created an endless hunger for outright power. Section two will present a critical analysis of the dynamics that suggest conditions for the causes of electoral violence in the country. Here, the focus is to identify patterns and themes that emerge from the data collected and recorded through a questionnaire and interviews; The data is in agreement with evidence from earlier studies.

#### **4.1 A Brief Overview of Election Violence in Zimbabwe: 2000-2013**

In 2000, Zimbabwe was beset by political violence perpetrated mainly by state agents and their allies, the ruling party. It has resulted in a rapid decline of the human rights situation in the country. Violence stepped up following ZANU-PF's first significant defeat in a referendum that was meant to change the nation's constitution. The government used its support and state agents to pursue parochial interests to eliminate opposition and silence dissent. The state-sponsored violence that comprised murder,

torture intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and attacks on supporters of the political opposition, human rights defenders and the independent media increased.

Towards the 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections, members of the opposition party MDC were labeled enemies of the state by the ruling party supporters. They were viewed as traitors because of the support they established through white commercial farmers. The opposition party also won the popular vote during a referendum. The party impressed a liberal position by embracing the rule of law. It promised the respect of human rights, and to help reform the fast-tracked land-reform program that was pushed by ZANU-PF. These promises angered ZANU-PF, forcing the party to persecute the opposition by labeling the latter traitors, imperialists, and neo-colonialists promoting Western interests. The ruling party pushed the agenda mainly to disempower the white commercial farmer and to stay in power. They systemically target the MDC with violence. By mid-year 2000, over 200,000 incidents of electoral were violence recorded (Network of Independent Monitors, 2000). The majority of the victims were MDC supporters.

Towards the 2002 presidential election, 1,096 incidents of violence, including 35 deaths were recorded. Moreover, in over 90 percent of the events, pro-government elements, war veterans, youth militia, ZANU-PF activists, and state security agents were identified as perpetrators. Similarly, in the 2005 elections, Zimbabwe's human rights watchdogs recorded about 1,221 incidents of violence and rights abuses and one killing

(Masunungure, EV 2009). Again most of the cases are attributed to ZANU-PF supporters and state security agents. The bulk of the victims were identified as MDC supporters.

Violence became a ZANU-PF's strategy to end the growing popularity of the MDC, and the political humiliation the ruling party suffered since independence (Makumbe J, 2003: 13). Although the government denied the existence of violence during this period, they only acknowledged the blame when the opposition was implicated. Violence traumatized Zimbabwe to the extent that government used the tool to maintain order in the country. Under this notion, abuse is illegal and dangerous when the victim evokes it to challenge the perpetrators.

On March 29, 2008, and June 27, 2008, election violence marked the center between supporting the ballot and favoring the bullet. Ray Kaukonde, the former resident Minister, and ZANU-PF provincial chairperson for Mashonaland East province, said, "Zimbabweans have no choice but to vote for ZANU-PF if they wanted to avoid violence and death." Regions such as Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West that never witnessed *Gukurahundi* in the 1980s had a share of the violence in 2008. People were intimidated; beaten up; displaced; tortured; raped; and murdered by ZANU-PF militias who worked in cahoots with state security agents. In most cases, the state authorities instigated and directed the attacks. The war veterans pledged unwitting support for President Mugabe to win the presidential run-off election. Reports obtained from victims acknowledged that war veterans worked closely with soldiers in the rural areas to

mobilize barbaric support for President Mugabe (Gatsheni, SN, 2010: 1).

The wave of violence that ensued did not spare civic organizations and the NGOs. These organizations were accused of spreading Western propaganda to influence the outcome of the election. As a result, the government decided to ban and stop their operation. Aid distribution was restricted. It was distributed only through the Ministry of Public Labor and Social Welfare under the directive of the Minister. The Minister would scrutinize and approve the organizations' activities. It affected many lives in the rural areas that relied on food aid. The majority of supporters of the opposition suffered most.

Hundreds of families were forced to leave their homes and property throughout the campaigns. Families were separated and displaced. Those who fell victim to the violence received treatment at various hospitals across the country. Human Rights groups reported some victims barred from seeking help, especially MDC supporters. The United Nations Children's Fund states that at least 10,000 children were displaced by the violence. The organization gave emergency support to more than 25,000 individuals affected by the violence.

The attacks were meant to intimidate and impede the MDC supporters from voting during a run-off election, scheduled for 27 June 2008. Victims became desperate, and many were scattered without shelter, food, and in need of urgent medical attention. Human rights groups documented a total of 8,558 incidents of human rights violations

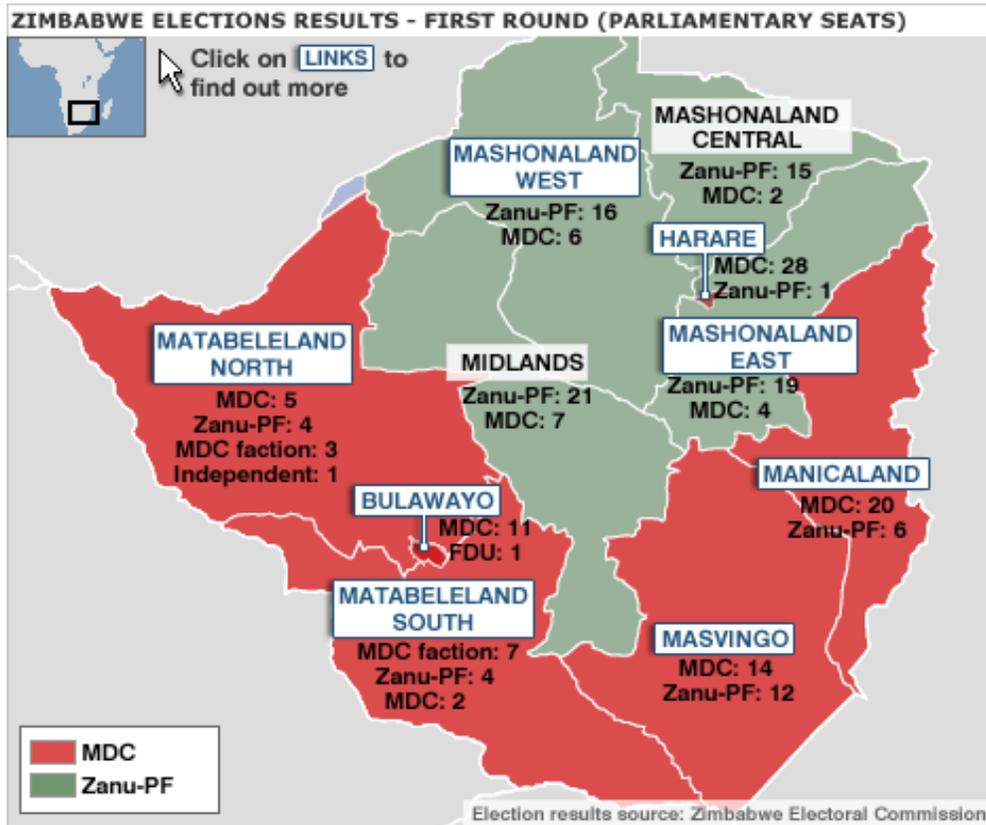
throughout the campaign. These comprised scores of killings, unlawful arrests, harassment, assault, torture, destruction and theft of property.

Human Rights NGO Forum, found high levels of violence in the rural areas where the activities of the youth militia and war veterans targeted specific individuals and families. Most women fell victim to rape and torture. Plan International reports that a seven months pregnant woman in Marondera rural was stoned by a youth militia after they failed to locate her husband who was an MDC supporter.

By 2008, election violence was a perennial reality with a considerable record of human rights abuses throughout the campaigns. The first round of the elections favored the opposition with a huge victory, frustrating the ruling party (see Fig.1 below). It forced ZANU-PF to disregard democracy and the rule of law. They chose to use violence to vent anger against the electorate. By 2013, violence officially rooted in Zimbabwe. It was not surprising that when the 2013 election campaign started, the environment polarized. No one bothered to challenge the status quo.

It, however, brings us to an analysis of the narratives behind the dynamics of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. What are the root causes, and how do Zimbabweans respond to the challenges? The section below gives data response from the research participants' views and possible interpretation of the dynamics.

### **ZIMBABWE MAP 2008**



**Fig.1**

The table below shows the distribution of research questionnaire participant by gender

**Table: 1 Research Participants by Gender (N= 30)**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	20	66.7
Female	10	33.3
Total	30	100

Table 1 shows research participants by gender. Sixty-six percent of the research participants were males, while 33.3 percent were females. These results indicate an uneven gender composition of the research participants which might give a masculine flavor regarding the research participants' views on the causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. This assumption will be elaborated further in the analysis below.

**Table: 2 Distribution of Research Participants by Age (N=30)**

<b>Age in years</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
20-29	10	33.3
30-39	12	40
40-49	6	20
50 +	2	6.7
Total	30	100

Results in Table: 2 depict that 33.3 percent of the research participants aged between 20 and 29; 40 percent of the research participants aged between 30 and 39; followed by 20 percent aged between 40 and 49; and 6.7 percent who are at least 50 years. From these age groups, the researchers assume that the research participants under study are mature eligible voters old enough to express possible causes of electoral

violence adequately. It is also the researchers' assumption that their experiences will be reflective of all Zimbabwe's experiences.

The table below shows the distribution of research interview participant by gender

**Table: 3 Research Participants by Gender (N= 10)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	5	50
Female	5	50
Total	10	100

Table: 3 shows interview participants by gender. Fifty percent of the research participants were males, and the other fifty percent were females. These results indicate an even gender composition of the research participants which might give a balanced reportage regarding the research participants' views on the causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. This assumption will reflect in the analysis below.

## **4.2 Theme Analysis**

The discussion of the actual data derives from interviews and the questionnaire. The research will focus more on emerging themes in its analysis. It will excuse itself from

exclusive gender perspectives on violence and age discrepancies reflected in participants' response. The research will, however, highlight particular views on these dynamics. At least seven core themes emerged. These are: witnesses to electoral violence; the meaning of electoral violence; the years in which violence is witnessed; causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe during the period 2000 - 2013; victims/perpetrators of violence; the extent to which electoral violence is perpetrated in Zimbabwe; and how the media promote electoral violence in Zimbabwe.

#### *Theme 1: Witnesses of Electoral Violence*

When asked if they have ever witnessed intimidation, rape, torture, and arson during 2000 - 2013 elections in Zimbabwe, all respondents acknowledged being witnesses to some form of violence. They explained that violence against women was more pronounced. One of the five women interviewees witnessed a couple in Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe district of Mashonaland East Province tortured and humiliated by a ZANU-PF youth militia. "A teacher and his wife were forced to engage in sex naked in full view of the crowd. Assaulted for indulging in the act despite being forced and denied any choice. It was scary and humiliating." The intimidation was done to teach fear by forcing the people to support ZANU-PF. Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe district is a ZANU-PF stronghold where the party garnered more votes than in other regions (see fig.1 Mash East Province). In all incidents, the youth were instrumental in violent campaigns as reported by both questionnaire and interview witnesses.

#### *Theme 2: Meaning/ Definition of Electoral Violence*

The respondents were asked to define electoral violence to which they demonstrated a better understanding of what constitutes electoral violence. Some of the most elaborate definitions given were as follows:

- ❖ Electoral violence refers to the political unrest that engulfs a nation before, during and, in the case of Zimbabwe, even after elections. It involves all the atrocities mentioned above: arson, rape, torture, intimidation, and murder all done in a bid to garner more votes. It is a powerful psychological tool used to force people to vote for a particular party.
- ❖ It is an activity intentionally done to another person which may result in physical or emotional or spiritual harm to that person, all this being done to deprive one's freedom of choice to voice an opinion or elect an official.
- ❖ It occurs when people are intimidated, harassed, tortured, raped, injured for life, beaten up, murdered and have their property burnt and destroyed just before and during election campaign period, and during election time itself.
- ❖ Subject someone to violence because of their different political views or to coerce them to vote for particular political persuasion.
- ❖ The contesting parties or one dominant party wields the muscle to intimidate and harass voters to a point where they are not free to elect their leaders independently. A party in power can monopolize its control over state apparatus such as the police and the army which a dictatorial ruling party can unconstitutionally deploy to crush opposition groups. Electoral

violence also entails the kidnapping and brutal attacks on members suspected of belonging to an opposition political party.

These definitions indicated that participants witnessed acts of violence and intimidation and that they are in agreement with (Laakso 2007; Sisk 2008; UNDP 2009) definition.

*Theme 3: Which year did you witness this?*

One participant summarized what most of the participants witnessed. He states that, “Giving a single year will be doing injustice to many years of intimidation. Electoral violence has been a continuous cycle in Zimbabwe. I witnessed a continuous span of violence from 2000 to 2008.” Two of the participants stated that they have not directly witnessed violence but read about it in the media of 2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, and 2013 presidential elections. Interviews with a member of the media, ZANU-PF and MDC also revealed that they were witnesses to some form of violence during the period 2000 - 2008. “I remembered visiting my rural home in Mutoko, seeing my uncle brutalized, and his home vandalized and burnt to ashes. He was a headmaster of a school in the district. It was a horrible experience. As a media person who is related to the assaulted, I felt unsafe in my home village at that time. I quickly cut short my visit to avoid unknown consequences.” The media personnel also revealed that his uncle is an MDC supporter who was hoping to see a democratic leadership take over. Despite living in a ZANU-PF dominated area, he did not fear anyone and firmly believed in democracy.

Further support to these attestations depicts in the electronic and print media. A Headmaster at Katsukunya School, Shephard Cheu, was abducted and was found dead three days later. His body dumped at Rukanda shops near Mutoko. In a related account in 2001, the researcher recalls an incident of abduction at Pachanza Primary School in Mount Darwin. A fellow teacher killed for supporting the MDC. His body was found dumped at the school gate. All these experiences help the belief that violence is a tool for cohesion and manipulation of the opposition supporters.

*Theme 4: Who were the victims?*

Participants identified members of the opposition, mainly MDC, as victims. Victims also included anyone vocally opposing the status quo; rural dwellers and farm workers believed to be supporters of the MDC and a few urban dwellers. In other instances, family members who lived in rural areas such as Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe, Chiota, Dande, Muzarabani, Gutu, Chivi, Buhera, and Chipinge lost their lives and properties as a result of the violence orchestrated by state agents and ZANU-PF youth. Media, pictures, and videos of police officers beating up peaceful demonstrators were shown across the globe. Five participants also stated that they were victims together with their close relatives. One interviewee from Chivi district in Masvingo province argued,

“The presidential election results of 2008 were in favor of the MDC candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, in an area that was traditionally dominated by ZANU-PF. It angered ZANU-PF supporters who began to unleash violence under the operation code-named

*Mavhotera papi?*” (Meaning, where did you put your vote?) He further explained that “Chivi district was one of the most targeted areas in 2008 harmonized elections. A lot of MDC supporters killed, assaulted, tortured and some abducted. The violence unleashed was nondiscriminatory. All age groups were affected - women and children, men, the elderly, and disabled.

Some conflicting views emerged from three interviews with ZANU-PF supporters who believed that they were the victims. “In some cases, MDC supporters fall victim to ZANU-PF “patriots” who fought to defend themselves against Western imperialism in the country.” When asked to explain what they meant by “patriots,” interviewees reiterated that “patriots” are “sons and daughters of the soil who liberated the country from white domination, and in this case, it refers to ZANU-PF supporters who are fighting against Western-imposed MDC.”

A closer look at the evidence presented by the Human Rights Forum shows that victims were indeed MDC supporters targeted for being affiliated to the opposition. According to the 2008 report, there are certain trends and characteristics which have been attendant on the incidents reported to Human Rights Forum which rebuts the denial of ZANU-PF that in most instances the violence was said was between overzealous youths and villagers. To the contrary, the information and evidence that is in the possession of the Human Rights Forum points to a situation of an organized and well-orchestrated plan of action and collusion between private individuals and the state security institutions to

annihilate the MDC structures countrywide so as to instill fear in the electorate during the two elections and to consolidate lost legitimacy and retain political incumbency (Human Rights Forum 2008; 2). This evidence cautions us against taking respondents' accounts at face value. Some compromise their witness to suit political narratives of their choice.

*Theme 5: Who were the perpetrators?*

As stated above, perpetrators were mainly members of the ruling party ZANU-PF known as 'Green Bomber' or Border Gezi youth. They incorporated state apparatus such as the police, soldiers, and Central Intelligence Officers (CIOs). Some rogue elements disguising themselves as the ruling party and a few opposition supporters were also part of the machinery. In most cases, ZANU-PF youth militias and the army deployed throughout the country to areas designated as "base stations" where they orchestrate violence on innocent people. These "base stations" were strategically placed near villages and farms to intimidate members perceived to be of the opposition. This depiction of perpetrators concurs with what the researcher witnessed in Marondera in 2008; one of my neighbors was bitten and ridiculed merely for not possessing a ZANU-PF flier which depicted Robert Mugabe as "the sole leader for Zimbabwe." This incident occurred during the runoff Presidential election of 27 June 2008. In this incident, frustration and aggression directed against members perceived to be of the opposition. The dynamic part ZANU-PF, regarded March 29 election a betrayal, hence, the decision to inflict injury (Berkowitz, 1989). The researcher also witnessed the first-hand assault in Harare when a

woman was severely beaten at a bank queue waiting to withdraw cash. The incident reported in the Daily News, 2002.

*Theme 6: What do you think contributed to electoral violence in Zimbabwe during the period 2000-2013?*

Participants listed several factors as contributing to electoral violence. Participants pointed to corruption, theft, and mismanagement of the economy by the government as most significant contributing factors. ZANU-PF feared repression and imprisonment in the event of a new government taking over. The regime used dictatorship to manipulate the electorate. Participants also noted that voting regulations were in shambles. It is easier for ZANU-PF to rig elections. There is no transparency, no freedom of speech, and no rule of law. Political polarization and the fear of losing an election influenced the status quo. The right to vote for the diaspora community revoked. There was uncertainty among the ruling party which led to a violation of the constitution. ZANU-PF is intolerant. The liberation movement failed to transform itself into a fully-fledged political party since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. Participants also cited poverty and unemployment, frustration and disillusionment among other contributing factors to electoral violence.

Although Mugabe defeated during the first round of March 2008 presidential elections, he still needed political power. To achieve this goal, Mugabe resorted to the use of violence to win 27 June 2008 run-off elections. Most ZANU-PF officials and top

security officers feared losing the election would result in them losing their jobs and their ill-gotten wealth.

The fear of the opposition and failure by the government to meet the demands of the people created a conducive environment for the use of violence by the regime. On the one hand, state media employed propaganda to silence the people and to lie about what was happening. Lack of unity among the people also contributed to suspicion, repression, and oppression. This culture of greed and power struggles by the ruling party had the net effect of producing violence.

On the other hand, interviews with some ZANU-PF members presented a slightly different view from those given by the private media and the MDC supporters. ZANU-PF differed on the major contributing factors of violence. One interviewee cited, “the West’s interference in our internal affairs promoted violence and intolerance to such an extent that supporters felt intimidated and undermined by foreigners. We do not interfere with the British or Americans, neither have we invited to observe their elections, but when it is an African election, they want to tell us how to run our elections, it is mischievous.” From this statement, one cannot help but notice the frustration and hatred of a perceived opponent by members of the ruling party. A sense of entitlement and propaganda impressed ZANU-PF followers.

*Theme 7: To what extent do media promote violence? Explain.*

Most participants believed that the media played a crucial role in the developing of positive and negative forces. I define real violence in this context to refer to the encouragement and continuation of force through glorifying and sensationalizing violence in favor of the orchestrator, and hostile violence refers to the act of denouncing the orchestration of force in favor of a peaceful electoral process. Participants reported that media propaganda potentially promote what people perceive to be true. For example, the media may portray a war scenario as an intimidation tactic to influence the electorate to support one particular party at the expense of the other. Galtung, (1969: 168) defines violence as “present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realization.”

All participants agreed that the media is sponsored and owned by both the state and private organizations. Usually, privately-owned media is an anti-government and anti-ruling party, while publicly-owned press supports the government and the ruling party. One participant stated that private media reports expose and tarnish the ruling party and the government, while state-owned press assassinates opposition parties. It usually creates tension and violence between the two opposing parties. Participants also agreed that the media promotes electoral violence. It is a tool for both propaganda and peace. People are often hoodwinked and indoctrinated through falsehoods peddled by the media in Zimbabwe. For example, the state media quoted President Robert Mugabe, and ZANU-PF ministers as describing Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition party MDC, as a war deserter, stooge, unpatriotic, and a puppet of the British and the United

States. This type of hate speech has contributed significantly to the violence and frustration during the election and after the election. President Mugabe is even quoted in the British media saying he does not respect any electoral vote for ‘the gun is mightier than a pen. Zimbabwe came through the barrel of a gun...’

### **4.3 Application of the Frustration-Aggression and Other Related Theories**

The above discussion reveals the level of intensity and confusion regarding elections in Zimbabwe. One can argue that no single theory can adequately illustrate the reasons for violence in Zimbabwe’s election. However, it is possible to apply Dollard et al.’s “frustration-aggression theory” together with other explanatory theories to Zimbabwe. The frustration-aggression theory holds that frustration comes as a result of failure to or barred from achieving the desired goal. While other methods like the identity, cognitive dissonance, and related analysis incorporated in this application; I realize that the frustration-aggression theory presents many complexities in this regard leaving more room for further investigation.

*Historically Zimbabwean election has been marred by violence.* Since 1980, the ruling party ZANU-PF used violence and political hegemony to stay in power. Force as a tool for political dominance is applied to ensure compliance and that subjects do not harbor any ambition to challenge the status quo. Subjects are “inferior.” Mugabe and his party maintained power for the past 37 years using these tactics. Like Ian Smith who declared, “Not in a thousand years will Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) be ruled by an African.” Mugabe also declared, “We fought for this country, and many bloodsheds

occurred. We are not going to give up our country, because of a little X. How can a ballpoint fight the gun?” Both Smith and Mugabe expressed frustration to the idea of “inferior” harboring ambitions to overthrow the government. An individual experiences conflict-produced frustration when he is not on good terms with the people he has to deal with regularly. ZANU-PF supporters echoed these sentiments against the opposition parties as reflected by witnesses through interviews and questionnaire response. The Resident Minister and Governor of Masvingo Province, Willard Chiwewe, argued, “This is a choice with no choice. It is either vote for war or peace” (*Financial Gazette*, 19 June 2008).

Between April and June 2008, ZANU-PF demonstrated its strong colors by showing their preparedness to destroy the nation. The unleashing of militias, central intelligence officers, regular army officers, war veterans, and ZANU-PF youth on citizens under Operation *Makavhoterapapi*, pointed to what Bratton and Masunungure, (2009) described as the strategy of ‘election cleansing,’ liquidating all those suspected of having voted for the MDC. It also describes thwarting of one’s access to reinforcers by a particular circumstance as a result of annoyance (Dennen, 2006). Alternatively, instigations to some different types of response, one of which is an instigation to some form of aggression (Miller, 1941).

“*Hate speech*,” just like the frustration expressed above is a dangerous, aggressive tactic. The state media championed the campaign in favor of ZANU-PF. One interviewee reiterated that “ninety-five percent of the media in Zimbabwe is government controlled,” which implies that aggression toward the MDC party had double effects.

While some private media have tried to level the playing field by criticizing the ZANU-PF government, the government media intensified its campaign on “hate speech.” National elections in March and June 2008 witnessed resurgence in the use of “hate speech” aimed at publicly discrediting ZANU-PF’s legitimate political opposition in a concerted campaign to portray these groups as “traitors,” “sell-outs” and “puppets” intent on undermining the country’s sovereignty. In the weeks leading up to the presidential election run-off of June 27<sup>th</sup>, the hate messages in the government media focused exclusively on Tsvangirai and his party and reached such extreme levels of paranoid intolerance that they resorted to openly threatening the electorate with war if they voted for the political opposition. By so doing, ZANU-PF legitimizes an illegitimate situation by reinforcing the view that “only illegitimate frustration produces an aggressive reaction.” They perceived the MDC victory as an unlawful interference that has prevented them from reaching the desired goal. To compensate for this ZANU-PF employed myriads of hate speech towards the opposition.

Notable examples of these frustration speeches against Tsvangirai are as follows:

- ❖ Tsvangirai is a traitor. I came here to warn you about the machinations of Rhodesians and their imperialist's allies who dislodged through the protracted armed struggle, but now they intend to go back using one of our fellow Zimbabweans, Tsvangirai as their running dog- *chimbwasungata*. If you vote for Tsvangirai on June 27, you are voting for the former Rhodesians, and thus you are voting for war- Vice-President Joseph Musika, (*Manica Post June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008*)

- ❖ Soon after the March elections war veterans approached me and said they would take up arms if Tsvangirai won the elections to protect their farms and the nation's sovereignty. You saw what happened when the British thought their stooge had won the election. A ballpoint then cannot argue with a bazooka. They (war veterans) will not allow that. -President Mugabe, (*The Sunday Mail* 22 June 2008)

These speeches reinforced what Dollard et al. (1939) called “a group identity crisis,” or “in-group out-group mentality.” Discrimination between in-groups and out-groups is a matter of favoritism towards an in-group and the absence of equivalent bias towards an out-group (Brewer, Marilynn B, 1999). Out-group derogation is the phenomenon in which an out-group is perceived as being threatening to the members of an in-group. In this case, the MDC party and its leader Morgan Tsvangirai suffer discrimination when they are perceived as blocking or hindering the goals of an in-group (ZANU-PF).

*Cognitive Dissonance*, a theory developed by Leon Festinger (1957), is a counterintuitive initiative that fits into a category of counterintuitive psychology theories which referred to as action-opinion theories. The theory is concerned with the relationships among cognitions. According to cognitive dissonance theory, there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their cognitions (i.e., beliefs, opinions). When there is an inconsistency between attitudes or behaviors (dissonance), something must change to eliminate the dissonance. In the case of a discrepancy between

attitudes and behavior, it is most likely that the attitude will change to accommodate the behavior (Festinger, 1957).

Dissonance occurs most often in situations where an individual or a group chooses between two incompatible beliefs or actions. ZANU-PF suffered dissonance. Their perceived beliefs and interests contradicted the realities people experienced during the harmonized elections and after the presidential run-off elections. Despite massively intimidating the electorate using all forces at their disposal, the run-off election's victory failed to instill a positive attitude within ZANU-PF. Instead of adopting a conciliatory tone after a substantial election victory, the ruling party rationalized the behavior and interpreted it as usual.

#### **4.4 Evaluation**

The above discussion gives an exposition of causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe during the period 2000-2013. It establishes that political factors are the leading causes of electoral violence. The need to maintain power forced ZANU-PF to become intolerant of the opposition party. It portrays the ruling party's failure to acknowledge the MDC as a legitimate opposition political party. ZANU-PF labeled the MDC as "traitors," "stooges," "Western puppets," and, "sellouts," bent on undermining the sovereignty of the country. ZANU-PF instigates its supporters against the MDC supporters, or anyone perceived to be sympathetic to the opposition. They intimidate, threaten, assault and kill members of the opposition to coerce them to vote in favor of the

ruling party. ZANU-PF deployed security forces to manipulate the election. They pursue parochial interests by taking advantage of electoral competition.

Thuggery and the state media also helped in manipulating the electorate through the dissemination of hate speech. They undermined the principles of democracy and the running of a free and fair election. Although the independent media's attempts to balance the playing field suffered persecution, one would expect both the public media and the private media to work hand-in-glove as voices of reason. The ruling party's cognitive dissonance toward June 27, 2008, elections triggered the party to use violence.

It is prudent, therefore, to argue that respondents in this study strongly believe that electoral violence in Zimbabwe is perennial cancer. The interviews and questionnaire data shows a recurring theme of violence perpetrated mainly by the youth militia and state agents. There is compelling evidence of women rape and human rights degradation. The data also shows that the majority of the people aged 18-49 (youth) were the culprits responsible for practicing violence. Women suffered humiliating abuses whereas men constituted the majority of victims.

Because of the biological makeup and position in a patriarchal society, women carried the double blame. They suffer abuse for supporting the opposition and also raped for the crimes of their husband's political views.

When violence has room, it will thrive out of frustration. However, to understand and end electoral violence in Zimbabwe, it is essential for parties to continue to engage the international bodies such as the SADC, the AU, and the UN as the only credible tools

that can guarantee free and fair elections. These will help to encourage stakeholders in Zimbabwe to uphold the principles of electoral democracy. A compendium of approaches and theoretical principles can be used to comprehend the reasons for election violence in Zimbabwe fully. The frustration-aggression theory on its own is inadequate.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the causes of electoral violence in Zimbabwe. It provided an analysis of the reasons using data obtained from participant response. The section evaluates that electoral violence in Zimbabwe derives in energy from political factors such as greed, intolerance, and thuggery displayed by the ruling party ZANU-PF. The chapter concludes that stakeholders should engage with the international organizations. It will help the conduct of free and fair elections. However, the frustration-aggression as a theory on its own is an inadequate analytical tool to use to understand reasons for the occurrence of electoral violence in Zimbabwe.

**APPENDIX I**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**INTRODUCTION:** My name is Richard T. Nenge. I am a Masters student at George Mason University, School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) in the USA. I am researching the Causes of Election Violence. My Dissertation Topic is entitled: **ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE: ROOT CAUSES AND PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY.**

Please indicate if you wish to remain anonymous and to have your name and identification withheld in the research report:

Please indicate if you have read and signed the informed consent form:

**SECTION A**

Age:                      Gender:                      Level of Education:

**SECTION B**

**QUESTIONS**

1. Have you ever witnessed any of the following during 2000-20013 elections in Zimbabwe? a) Intimidation, (b) Rape, (c) Torture, (d) Arson?

2. How best do you define electoral violence?

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3. Which year did you witness this?

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4. Who were the victims?

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5. Who were the perpetrators?

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6. What do you think contributed to electoral violence in Zimbabwe during the period 2000-2013?

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7a. Do you think media influence electoral violence in Zimbabwe?

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b. To what extent do media influence violence? Explain

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**Thanks!**

## **APPENDIX II**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS: MEDIA, ZEC, ZANU-PF, MDC, AND OTHERS**

#### **TOPIC: ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN ZIMBABWE: ROOT CAUSES AND PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND SECURITY**

1. How best do you define electoral violence?
2. When have you witnessed electoral violence in Zimbabwe?
3. What are the factors that caused electoral violence in Zimbabwe during the period 2000-2013?
4. To what extent is electoral violence perpetrated in Zimbabwe?
5. Who were perpetrators?
6. Who were the victims?
7. To what extent do media/stakeholders influence electoral violence in Zimbabwe?

**Thanks!**

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