

Pre-Analysis Plan: The Political Economy of Elections in Lagos

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1. Research Question

Existing scholarship has yielded important insights on the structural conditions associated with the outbreak of electoral violence in developing countries, including winner-take-all electoral rules (Sisk 1998; Fjelde and Hoglund 2014), politicized social cleavages (Horowitz 1985; Guelke 2001), and weak democratic institutions (Bekoe 2012; Hafner-Burton et al. 2014). However, far less is understood about the micro-level factors affecting why some individuals become victims of such violence (Mares and Young 2016). In analyzing Nigerian elections, for example, Bratton (2008, 624) finds “few demographic correlates of exposure to electoral violence,” suggesting that its victims are largely determined by chance.

The current literature specifically overlooks the fact that individuals in many developing countries are embedded in clientelistic relationships that regulate their participation in politics as well as their access to resources (Scott 1969; Piattoni 2001). These clientelistic relationships — the personalized networks that facilitate the mutually beneficial exchange of material benefits for political support — are known to shape the behavior of both politicians and voters (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). But the role of clientelistic relationships in mediating individual experiences

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with electoral violence has been neither theoretically developed nor empirically tested. In this context, the proposed research contributes to our understanding of electoral violence in two ways. First, we examine whether individuals who belong to clientelistic-like associations are exposed to electoral violence at different rates or in different forms. Second, we examine how exposure to violence affects individual attitudes and behaviors toward politics.

To pursue such questions, we focus on the experiences of traders in Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria that is often affected by violence during local and national election campaigns. We study traders in particular because they are enmeshed in economic and political relationships that allow us to directly assess how clientelism affects their exposure to violence as well as how such exposure influences their subsequent behavior. Traders in Lagos often participate in market associations whose leaders provide clientelistic-like services with varying degrees of success in shielding them from official predation (Grossman 2016). In leveraging the variation in market associations, we seek to assess whether traders in associations with stronger leaders are less likely to be victimized by election violence.

This pre-analysis plan is written after the data were collected but before researchers accessed the data for analysis. We detail in the following sections how the data were collected and how we will proceed to analyze it.

2. Research Design

To create a sampling frame of traders (specifically, shop owners) for this study, we proceeded in two stages. The first stage entailed conducting a census of shops in four commercial areas of Lagos, Nigeria: Agege, Bariga, Mushin, and Oshodi.⁴ In each commercial area, the census

⁴ The Ebute-Ero commercial area was initially included in the sampling frame but was later removed due to tensions among market association leaders in the area.

counted shops, cataloged the type of product sold, and recorded their geographic location in plazas (small, multi-story buildings). In the second stage, we randomly sampled shops from the census records in proportion to the relative number of shops of each commercial area. If a respondent indicated that she shared her shop with other businesses, an owner from each of the shared businesses was added to the sample and approached for an interview.

For the survey, a team of locally recruited enumerators conducted face-to-face interviews of approximately 45 minutes with each selected respondent. Traders who refused to participate were replaced with newly sampled traders. Respondents received N500 in phone credit (~\$1.38) upon completing the survey. The sample included 1,122 shop owners, and the survey was completed by 1,025 respondents.

The survey instrument included questions on respondents' shops and their relationships to market associations. Respondents were asked questions about their experiences with different clientelist strategies employed during elections, including a list experiment on vote buying. An experimental module presented half of respondents with information about instances of election violence in Lagos during both local and federal elections. Post-treatment questions asked about respondents' perceptions of violence, their preferences over parties, and their trust in electoral institutions.

While our study is not strictly causally identified in that we cannot randomly assign market association memberships to respondents, Grossman (2016) has previously shown that membership in strong versus weak market associations is largely idiosyncratic. Traders typically 1) lack information about market associations prior to joining, and 2) cannot select themselves into one form or another. For the purposes of this study, we identify association strength through survey questions that ask respondents whether their association leaders hold regularly scheduled

meetings and whether association leaders have the power to lock a shop if a trader does not follow the rules. We separately code associations' political engagement through questions that ask respondents whether their leaders provide information about politicians prior to elections, give permission for campaigning in the market, ask traders to sleep in their shops before voting day, and ask traders to vote for a particular candidate.

3. Hypotheses

To examine if clientelistic relationships affect how traders experience electoral violence, we draw on Grossman's (2016) finding that traders' interactions with government officials are significantly mediated by their ties to market leaders. The influence of these market leaders extends to the political arena, allowing them to mobilize support among their members for politicians competing for local offices. We thus expect that the type of market association to which traders belong (strong vs. weak or engaged vs. disengaged) will significantly affect whether or how traders experience violence or other forms of electoral malfeasance during elections. We therefore examine the following hypotheses:

H1: Traders under a market association (compared to traders who are not under an association) are more likely to have interactions with vote brokers in their commercial area.

H2: Traders under strong associations (compared to traders under weak associations) are less likely to report experiencing or witnessing election violence or intimidation.

H3: Traders under politically engaged associations (compared to traders under politically dis-engaged associations) are more likely to have interactions with vote brokers in their commercial area.

Additionally, we examine respondents' political attitudes and behaviors after being presented with a prompt reminding them about the possibility of election violence in Lagos.

H4: Respondents who receive the violence prompt are more likely to fear becoming a victim of violence or political intimidation.

H5: Respondents who receive the violence prompt are more likely to agree that vote monitoring is likely.

H6: Respondents who receive the violence prompt are more likely to justify use of violence.

H7: Respondents who receive the violence prompt are less likely to plan to vote in upcoming elections.

H8: Respondents who receive the violence prompt are less likely to say they intend to vote for the local ruling party.

H9: Respondents who receive the violence prompt are less likely to trust electoral institutions.

For hypotheses H4-H9, we expect heterogeneous treatment effects based on market association membership as well as partisanship. The effect of the violence prompt should be weaker among members of strong or engaged market associations if they feel that their market leaders can insulate them from the violence in the first place. Similarly, members of the local ruling party should be less affected by the violence prompt if they expect to be shielded from violence otherwise directed at opposition supporters or swing voters.

4. Empirical Strategy

We will pursue two strategies for the empirical analyses. First, the analyses of H1-H3 will be conducted using linear regression. These analyses will use the self-reported measures of association strength and engagement. All regressions will be estimated without control variables as well as the following controls: income, party affiliation, ethnicity, and gender. We will employ commercial area fixed effects.

Second, the analyses of H4-H9 will compare average responses among respondents randomly assigned to treatment and control conditions using standard two-sided difference-in-means tests with an alpha of 0.05. We will also estimate treatment effects by regressing the outcomes on the treatment condition along with the measures for heterogeneous effects, namely, market association type and party affiliation. Other controls will include income, ethnicity, and gender. We will also employ commercial area fixed effects in these analyses.

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