

EXAMINING THE POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF SOCIETAL VIOLENCE ON GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVENESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

This paper examines the possible influence of violent protests on the effectiveness of governance in South Africa. South Africa continues to experience huge number of labour as well as popular municipal service delivery protests. The popular social view with ensuing protests has often pointed at governance inefficiency as the cause of violent protests. This paper adopts a slightly different view in its analysis of violent protests and instead looks at possible influence of violence as possible instigator of ineffective governance. The paper is conceptually rooted in reviews – combined with simple regression test of possible relationship between violent protest and governance effectiveness. The authors also present an examination of probable relationship between violent protests and governance effectiveness using observation of macro-economic data trends from the World Bank. The findings reveal a probable weakening in governance effectiveness or its perception thereof as a result of violent protests. Amongst others, violent protests produces a psyche of perpetual victimhood that leads to further violence resulting in less value attached to lives, destruction of economic property, increases pollution, production stoppages for goods and services and in turn depletes government revenue generation and frustrates international investors. We postulate that under condition explained above, government effectiveness in managing public resources becomes weakened and may lead to wastage and inefficiency as the resources and revenues employed in controlling violent protests are unplanned and do not often lead to constructive and sustainable public policy. We suggest that this condition therefore may result in reduction in economic growth which in turn perpetuates the same weaknesses that led to society protests and violence.

Keywords: Governance; Governance Effectiveness; Governance Efficiency; Violent Protests; Peace; Economic Growth

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Introduction

Some form of political or social unrest exists in every society of the world, and this creates the potential for violence protests (Parvin, 1973). In the past, the economic implications of violent protests were somewhat neglected by researchers, but research in this area is currently emerging and has become more important for developing countries (Skaperdas, 2011). This research niche continuously become importantly in the third world because the greater majority of people live in poverty, thus highlighting aspects of impatience, anger and possible violent protest with implication for government stability and its efficiency. The performance of the economy has become pertinent to help shape social and economic policy decisions, and to assist in managing social behaviour.

Public sector researchers all over the world are more biased toward a critique of government failure as a provider of basic public services, and as an equal failure in stimulating the growth of the economy. But few researchers pay attention to the negative impact that society exerts on governments including violent protest on government effectiveness and economic growth. Similarly in South Africa, many research papers have been written on violent protests (Zuern, 2014; Mottiar & Bond, 2012; Mottiar & Bond, 2011; Llewellyn & Pelling, 2010), but little of these researches have considered the conditions under which government operates and the impact of societal-government relations on government's effectiveness and to economic growth. This paper thus deems it opportune to introduce this unpopular research debate in South Africa to sensitise the public, the academia and the government that a balanced analysis is necessary. We also envisage that

this paper may galvanise further broader set of researches on this important social and economic phenomenon.

If more energy were to be invested in these kinds of analysis then perhaps the monetary cost of social protests could be quantified and measured. At present, violent protest in South Africa is perceptually huge and is estimated to keep rising. In the Gauteng Province alone, estimated destruction of public property as at February 2014 is around R65 million (South African Government News Agency, 2014). Whilst physical damages can be estimated, the social, psychological costs and growth implications are fathomless. Most lamentable cost is that violent protests have often claimed lives of members of society and of the South African Police Force. An estimated 2027 service delivery protests alone, that is, excluding labour unrests, are recorded to have happened between 2004 and 2013, and from these protests a total of 42 members of public were killed by the police. Consequently this paper is anchored on the question: how may violent protest affect government effectiveness? And hence the objective of this paper is to demonstrate that though it is acceptable that government ineffectiveness causes societal unrests and protests, the reverse is equally the same, that is, violence may affect government effectiveness.

The paper is deemed important, not only for the South African environment, but also for the entire global environment where violent protests or organised violence of any kind take place. The paper should provoke ponderings for the publics and government, to pursue peaceful protests and to initiate solutions to curb violent protests. It is indeed timely as the global economy is still under the recovery trajectory from the recent global economic downturn, and no nation can grow on a trajectory of constant public disorder and perpetual property destruction.

The paper is organised as follows: the next section presents a review of related literature; this is followed by methodology and analysis section. The final section presents the conclusion.

Related Literature

In recent times, the clamour for improved government delivery of public goods has occupied the centre stage in the expectations by the electorate, and political opposition parties (Lee & Whitford, 2009). This expectation is understandable given the central role of the state in its provision of enabling environment for improved economic performance and state effectiveness is therefore important for the positive social and economic outlook of nations. Effectiveness is also a key demand in the private sector, and both the private and public sector share common characteristics regarding performance management; and more than ever, performance

management in the public administration space is assuming an increasing importance at a global setting (Boyne et al., 2006;). Given the importance of public sector performance, some literature have attempted to measure government effectiveness; these includes inter alia Brewer et al (2007) who considered the effects of variables such as accountability and voice, corruption and wealth on government effectiveness in Asia and found that several factors may affect government effectiveness. In another research, Heinrich (2002) explored the application of public sector outcome-based performance management in measuring public programs outcomes and the finding indicates that the use of public sector administrative data in measuring public performance weakly explains the tangible impact of public programmes. Newton (1986) takes a different look at government effectiveness by studying the role of the “size” of the local municipality and its effectiveness and found that large municipalities may function more effectively than small municipalities. In another study of government effectiveness, Jimenez (2014) considered whether poor and affluence citizens’ concentrations in some municipalities has implication for service delivery and the findings indicates that municipalities with affluence inhabitants receive a better service budgets than municipalities inhabited by poor citizens, reason being that the voice of the poor, compared to the affluence, does little to effects the government service delivery budgets. In his comparative analysis of local government service delivery between affluent and poor suburbs in the City of Johannesburg Netwera (2005) found that affluent suburban are afforded better service standards and turnaround time as opposed to poorer suburban. Protest studies (Alexandra, 2010, Pfaffe, 2011 and Netwera and Phago, 2009) have also confirmed that the majority of unrests and violent protests emanates from poorer suburban than affluent sectors of society.

Although government effectiveness might be affected by many factors, a close look at possible effect of violence and/or lack of political stability (World Bank, 2013) depicts the likelihood to reverse some government effectiveness in service delivery (South African Government News Agency, 2014). Given therefore the likelihood of violent protests on government effectiveness, other literatures have considered the cost of violent protests. Atkinson et al, (2005) attempted a valuation of intangible costs of violence and stressed that it is a difficult task; the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2002) echoes the same challenge indicating that the cost of violence is incalculable, and stresses further that:

Although precise estimates are difficult to obtain, the cost of violence translates into billions of US dollars in annual health care expenditures worldwide, and billions more for national economies in terms of days lost from work, law enforcement and lost investment (WHO, 2002.p3)

In another related research, Iqbal, (2006) also highlights the impact of violence on social health and found that violence has the propensity to reverse the progress achieved in a country's health service delivery, and this situation therefore impacts negatively on national human security. According to Skaperdas, (2011), public infrastructure such as hospitals, public buildings, roads, schools, libraries are often destroyed during violent protests, and this view echoes the observations of the outcomes of the civil protests in South Africa. Overall, Skaperdas, (2011) summarises the cost of violence to include: overt and covert psychological impacts, community population displacement, increased mortality and health, reduced economic growth, disruption on the attraction of local and foreign investors, capital flight out of a violent country and soaring of government budgetary costs to repair damaged public properties, and to fund the policing of violence. The argument further suggests that the costs of violent protests far outweigh the potential gains.

Despite the growing literature on violent protests, specific literature on the possible implication of violent protests on government effectiveness is not known to the authors.

Potential Implication for the Economy, Poverty and Inequality

Organised violent protest leaders apparently fail to consider the overall impact of violent protests on business and economic growth of the nation. The international credit ratings of countries take into consideration factors which includes amongst others the easiness of doing business, which is often conditioned on the social or political stability and non-violence. The international credit ratings of South Africa fell slightly lower than its former position within the periods of constant violent protest in the country 2012 - 2013. The year 2012 witnessed a credit rating downgrade by the American Financial services company – Standard and Poor's downgrade of South Africa's credit rating to BBB from its previous position of BBB+, and this came soon after another company - Moody's downgraded South Africa's credit rating to Baa1 (STANLIB, 2013). The months leading to these downgrades witnessed a sharp increase in social unrests and some economic sector witnessed tremors and violent labour protests. The mining sector in particular saw 44 miners killed by the South African Police Service in August 2012 as the miners' strike at Lonmin Mining Corporation in Marikana Rustenburg. The miners are alleged to have carried "weapons" and had killed fellow miners, union members and members of the police service a day before (Dlangamandla, Jika, Ledwaba, Mosamo, Saba and Sadiki, 2013 and Alexander, Lekgowa, Mmope, Sinwell, and Xezwi, 2012).

Whilst some literature have, over the years, made attempts to find potential effect of inequality on

violent protests (Statistics SA, 2013; Brockett, 1992; Muller and Seligson, 1987); on the contrary, Wang et al (1993) find no statistical causality evidence that inequality may cause mass violence, rather they find that semi-repressive regime and deep separatism may be the major contributor to mass violence. Other strands of literature reason positively that violent protests may increase inequality (e.g. Sogge, 2013), because the destructions inherent in violent protests aggravate negative and steep redistribution of basic social services as irate mob embark on self-dispossession and destruction of their own productive social infrastructure already installed by the state. The process of rebuilding these infrastructures unfortunately may take years; again such violence deteriorates the fragility of the state, and weakens efforts in stimulating peace and act as set-back to the achieved government service delivery track record and zeal. But no known research has closely looked at the possibility that violence protests may weaken government effectiveness and thus widen inequality and thus exacerbating the insufficient government capacity to provide the same services that protesters clamour for. For instance, as communities embark on violent protest for lack of certain amenities, they indignantly destroy other public facilities that are already built, thus depleting the same public infrastructures that are apparently inadequate and setting back the pace of government services and efforts towards equality in provision of basic amenities. Where communities go on rampage against erratic water supply or electricity, and vex their anger on and burn down schools, libraries and health centres; such aggression may appear somewhat tantamount to self-infliction of injury.

Method & Analysis

Data on governance effectiveness and violence in South Africa are collected from the World Bank Governance Indicators website from 2002 to 2012. In order to search for possible relationship between violence protests and governance effectiveness, a simple regression test is applied to test for probable relationship. In addition, graphs are used to present the trend of some phenomena in this article, such as a line graph depicting the trend of governance effectiveness and violence in South Africa. A probability plot of possible relationship between violence and governance effectiveness and a line graph depicting the trend of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Balance of Payment (BoP) in South Africa.

Variable Description

The variables used in this analysis are drawn from the World Bank Governance Indicators (World Bank, 2013). The two variables are:

Y = government effectiveness

X = political stability/absence of violence
 Hence the simple regression equation: $Y = a + bx$ (a: is the constant and b: is the intercept).
 From the World Bank governance indicators data collected, a simple regression test of relation is

presented, this is followed by graphs of violence and government effectiveness. Table 1 presents the Level of stability/no violence and Government Effectiveness in South Africa 2002 - 2012.

Table 1. Level of stability/no violence and Government Effectiveness in South Africa 2002 -2012

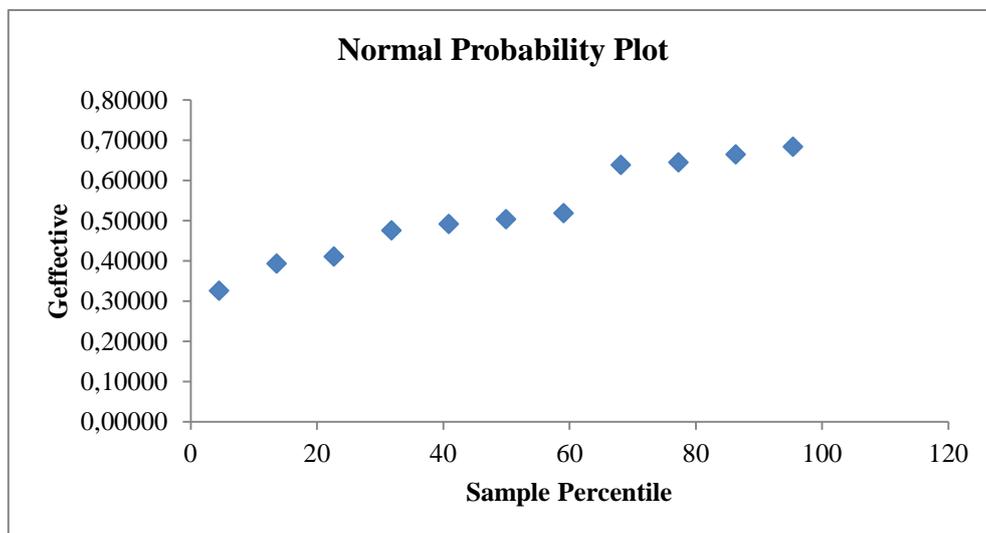
Year	Stability/NV	Gov effectiveness
2002	-0.32	0.64
2003	-0.33	0.68
2004	-0.12	0.66
2005	-0.15	0.64
2006	0.05	0.50
2007	0.20	0.49
2008	0.04	0.52
2009	-0.11	0.48
2010	-0.02	0.39
2011	0.03	0.41
2012	0.00	0.33

Source: World Bank (2013) governance indicators – stability/no violence and government effectiveness

Table 2. Regression output of relationship between stability/no violence and Government Effectiveness 2002 - 2012

ANOVA									
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F				
Regression	1	0.063569331	0.063569	6.938352	0.027176473				
Residual	9	0.082458197	0.009162						
Total	10	0.146027529							
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%	
Intercept	0.48975274	0.031427687	15.58348	8.1E-08	0.418658372	0.560847	0.418658372	0.56084711	
Stability/NV	-0.494058739	0.187564406	-2.63408	0.027176	-0.918358904	-0.06976	-0.9183589	-0.06975857	

Figure 1. Line plot of relationship between violence and government effectiveness

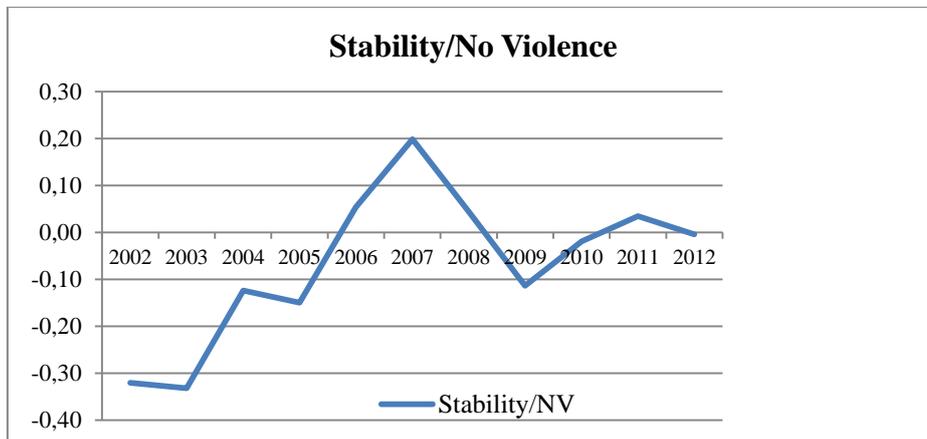


Source: Authors' Graph, generated from the regression output

Tested at 5% significance level or 95% confidence interval level, the regression output with probability of 2% indicate a significant relationship between violence and government effectiveness, which indicates that violence is detrimental to government effectiveness and that violent social protests weakens and frustrates government ability to deliver services that the society clamours for. This is understandable as destruction of public property that is often accompanied with violent protests reverses already achieved services. The destroyed public infrastructure such as schools, libraries, hospitals, roads, government offices, etcetera, are rebuilt with unbudgeted revenues from other budget codes that could be used for the provision of other services, thus setting back the time and resources earmarked for the provision of other essential services, and hence mountain heavy pressure and burden on limited government revenue.

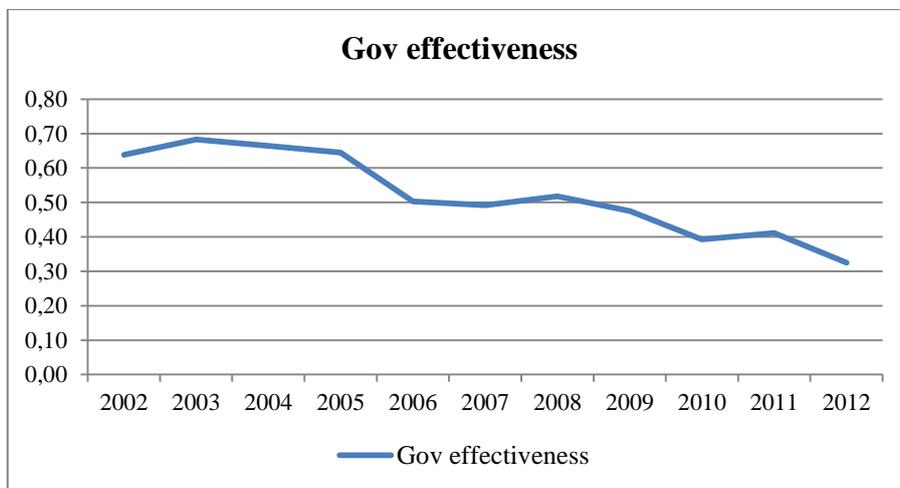
The following graphs show a pictorial illustration of how violent protests reduce government effectiveness; affects the GDP and current account balance. Apart from the regression relationship test above, it can be visualised pictorially that the increase in violent protests relates with the downward trend in government effectiveness. Furthermore the violent protests must have contributed to the negative fluctuations in the GDP and current account balances. The year 2012 saw the most bloody violent protests in the country climaxing with the Marikana saga that brought a halt to productions, and galvanised other protests around the country which reduced the normal flow of economic activities in South Africa. This led to a step downward slope in the GDP and balance of payment between 2012 and 2013 – attesting further, the negative impacts of violent societal protests.

Figure 2. Line graph of violence in SA 2002-2012



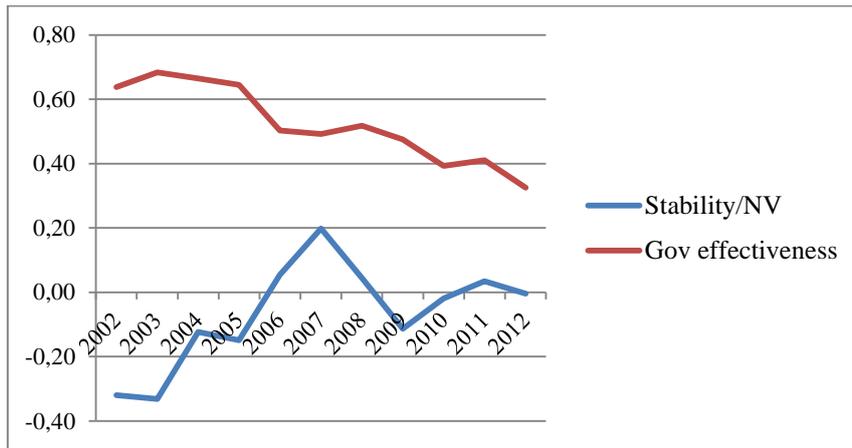
Source: authors' graph from Table 1; data from World Bank (2013) governance indicators – stability/no violence, government effectiveness

Figure 3. Line graph of government effectiveness in SA 2002-2012



Source: authors graph from Table 1; data from World Bank (2013) governance indicators – stability/no violence, government effectiveness

Figure 4. Combined line graph of violence and government effectiveness in SA 2002-2012



Source: authors graph from Table 1; data from World Bank (2013) governance indicators – stability/no violence, government effectiveness

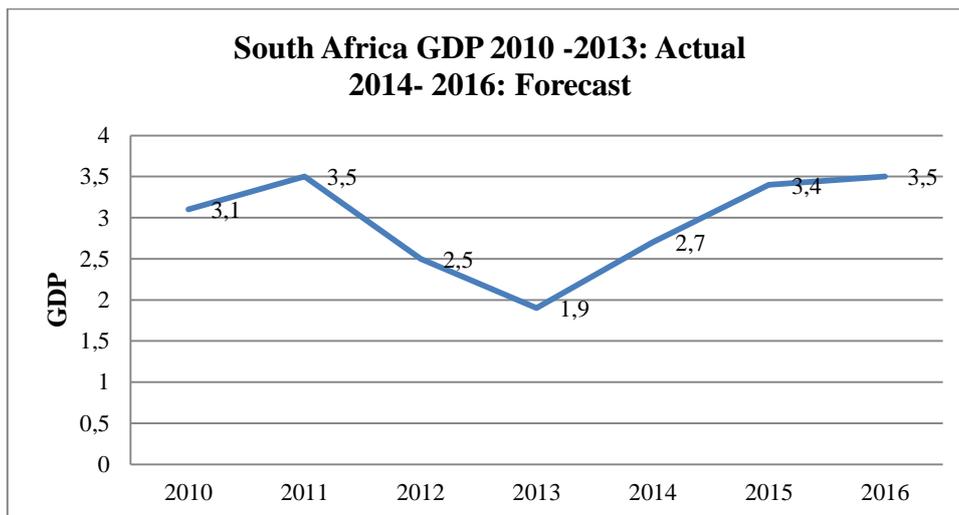
Effect of Violence on South African GDP

Table 3. SA GDP 2010-2016

Year	GDP growth
2010	3.1
2011	3.5
2012	2.5
2013	1.9
2014	2.7
2015	3.4
2016	3.5

Source: Table compiled from the World Bank (2014) Global Economic Prospects, Sub-Saharan Africa GDP at Market Prices

Figure 5. South Africa GDP 2010 – 2016



Source: Authors' graph from Table 3, data from the World Bank (2014) Global Economic Prospects, Sub-Saharan Africa GDP at Market Prices

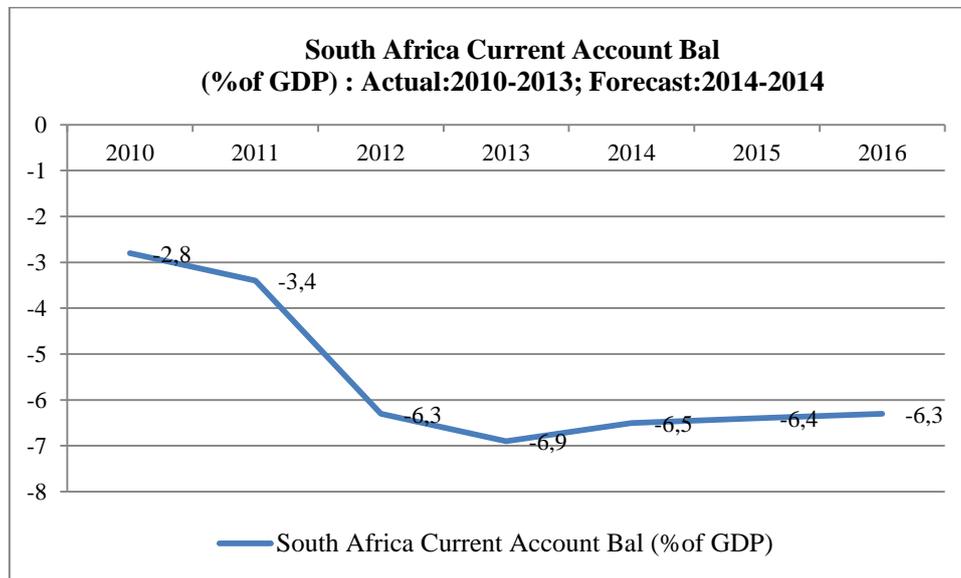
Effect of Violence on South African Current Account Balance

Table 4. SA Current Account Balance 2010-2016

Year	South Africa Current Account Bal (%of GDP)
2010	-2.8
2011	-3.4
2012	-6.3
2013	-6.9
2014	-6.5
2015	-6.4
2016	-6.3

Source: The World Bank (2014) Global Economic Prospects, Sub-Saharan Africa GDP at Market Prices

Figure 6. South Africa Current Account Balance 2010 – 2016



Source: Authors’ Graph from Table 4 with Data from The World Bank (2014) Global Economic Prospects, Sub-Saharan Africa GDP at Market Prices

Conclusion

We set out to demonstrate that societal violent protests may weaken government effectiveness. A simple regression test of relationship was employed to determine possible existence of relationship. The regression test of relationship resulted in a probability of 2%, less than the significant test of 5%, which thus suggests a relationship, and thus the possibility that violent protest may affect government effectiveness. Furthermore an observation of the seemingly corresponding movement of data in the pictorial graphs informs our conjecture toward concluding (subject to further robust analysis), that there is some degree of possibility that violent societal protests contributes to impede government effectiveness. Furthermore, there is an observable near corresponding trend movement between the plots of

societal violence and the plots of government effectiveness. There is also an apparent corresponding movement, observable between the trend in societal violence and the trend in GDP and current account balance of SA in the years 2010 – 2013. Our literature is also somewhat corroborative of our findings as it provides evidence that South African credit rating was downgraded in 2012 – the year of the unfortunate violent protest saga.

Public infrastructure destruction and associated rebuilding costs are not normally in the long and medium term expenditure frameworks of government, hence violent protests and the concomitant destructions may necessitate unproductive and ad hoc budget virement to manage and quell protests and to rebuild associated destructions. Such ad hoc budget virements reverses the achievements already gained in service delivery,

and delays other important projects and time and resources are deployed toward rebuilding violently damaged public infrastructure. We therefore recommend as follows: there is urgent need to expand collaborative governance – to broaden channels of grass root involvement with governance, draw union and community leaders closer to governance; and to educate the leaders on the processes and resources of public policy and governance. It is also important to improve proactive and timely response to signs of impending and/or imminent public protests, to quell it before it is ignited. On the other hand, there is an urgent necessity for the organised group leaders to understand the collective ownership of public infrastructure – that these belong to the people, and not to the government as often perceived; the government belongs to the people and public infrastructure belongs to the people and deserves protection. Peaceful protests are the most productive, and yields enduring satisfaction. We suggest the need for a further – more robust research on violent protests, government effectiveness and economic growth.

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