POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated political violence and socio-economic development of Imo State. Specifically, it tried to ascertain if political violence discourages investments, impacts negatively on the economy of Imo State and leads to destruction of lives, social activities and property. Hafez Social Movement Theory was employed in this study as its theoretical framework of analysis. The theory (SMT) explains the conditions under which political violence occurs in societies; how group protects occurs in the society and what motivates their actions and inactions. It was deduced from the study that politics was the main cause of political violence in Imo State; that political violence discouraged investment flows into Imo State; that political violence impacted negatively on the economy Imo State. To curb political violence in Imo State, therefore, the researchers recommended that political leaders should always play a role in building effective government through their constitutional duties and mandates, there should be good governance practices to stem the tide of general insecurity of lives, property and investments in the country which scare away both local and foreign investors. Nigeria politicians should imbibe the value of good political culture and play violence free political system. Government of Imo State should initiate good pro-poor policies that would help reduce high level of poverty and unemployment among youths in the State and Nigeria at large.

Keywords: Violence, Political Behaviour, Socio-Economic, Development.

Introduction

In Nigeria, especially during the second Republic, political parties were formed along ethnic lines, rigging of election has become an unchanging strategy to use and win an election or to retain political power by the government in power. No doubt, politics is a super structure that determines the sub-structure which is the economy. Political behaviour has been thought by many to be only voting behaviour of the people over a period of time, but it comprises more than this. It can be seen in the light of choice, rationality, types of individual learning, the quality of

watchdogs and critic system (Ekpe, 2016). Citizens are uninformed about the social, political and economic implications of behaviour contrary to good policies and such ignorance of the economic implications of their political behaviour frequently resulted to the country's economic backwardness that the people have been experiencing in Nigeria, despite the numerous natural resources available. The unchanging nature of Nigerian political behaviour made the people's culture to remain uncertain, timidity, passivity, gullibility, blind and sometime unlearning, trial and error, etc. These shortcomings liberally, could be as a result of Nigerian people's constraints arising from their historical social organization, economic disparity and the traditional attitude to authority in general.

Economic growth and development in Nigeria from the point of view of the growth of political behaviour have shown that freedom and participation of citizens over the years have gained ground against arbitrary authority of institutional powers. In shaping the development of the post-colonial and other non-western world's, one can see that both political and economic growth and development had been shaped to the direction of the western world's and as such, most development theories had sought the validity of the western concepts grounded on the history and political traditions of the west. There is no doubt that the political behaviour of citizens had impact on the growth and development of the economy. Taking India, for example, the evolution of her political behaviour and capacity raised her level of economy upwards likewise in America. Britain's political behaviour goes a long way to shape their economic growth and development. Hence, the present study will be undertaken to explore impact of political violence of citizens on socio-economic and development of Nigeria with particular reference to Imo State as a case study.

The current electoral politics in Imo State right from 1998 till date have been characterized with violent conflict, political thuggery, assassinations, and arsons. Politicians in Imo State like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria so not accommodate dialogue, negotiation and consensus (Azeez, 2005; Adeggbami and Adeoye, 2021). Consequently, political contests in the state are characterized by desperation, and violent struggle for political power among politicians. Recurring political violence in Imo State could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation

of political gladiators to win or remain in office at all cost. These undemocratic activities and events, though they are orchestrated by political elites of the key political parties, are mainly carried out by vulnerable and able bodied youths who ought to have been constructively engaged and indoctrinated into fine democratic norms, values and attitudes.

Violence has become a problem of great national and global concern because of its economic and political consequences. It is observed that a considerable number of violent behaviour is inter-ethnic, intra-ethnic and inter-personal and it occurs within a society in the forms of riots, revolutions, protests, demonstrations, coups de tats and civil wars. This point is illustrative of the high level of political violence that frequently erupts in societies across the globe. The very fact that politics is a game that determines the acquisition of power and control of resources as well as it's allocation, the instinct and urge for political violence has become an inescapable reality in a social formation such as Nigeria (Adole, Mbaya and Aliyu, 2013).

These misadventures have often been catastrophic leading to decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and the destruction of properties among others. Political violence constitutes threat to live and properties, hinders economic activities, and discourages local and foreign investors. The long-term effects of political violence are immeasurable, this is because violence jeopardizes development, social integration and Rob's people of their psychological and emotional stability all of which stifles and retards socio-economic development (Eneji and Agri, 2020 and Ifeanyichukwu, 2017). Political violence has resulted in the damage, not only against private and public property, but also resulting in grievous bodily harm and in extreme cases, deaths (Adegbami and Adeoye, 2021). With the above record of political violence in Nigeria, hundreds of people mostly youths have been killed, many injured and property worth millions of Maria destroyed. These incidents have drained the state Treasury and slowed down socio-economic development. The orgy of political violence has sent waves of panic and fear through a shocked and outraged public in Imo State. Besides, the various violent crimes have destroyed social relationship among the people of some particular communities. Such violence had also provoked, entrenched and accelerated the cycle of violence in the state.

Political violence is a common means used by people and governments around the world to achieve political goals. Many groups and individuals believe that their political systems will never respond to their political demands (Ifeanyichukwu, 2017). As a result, they believe that violence is not only justified but also necessary in order to achieve their political objectives. By the same token, many governments around the world believe they need to use violence in order to intimidate their populace into acquiescence. Political violence can take a number of forms including but not limited to those listed below. Non-action on the part of the government can also be characterized as a form of political violence.

Imo State is centrally located in the heart of the South East region characterized by political violence, youth festiveness, kidnapping and insurgency. The crisis of insecurity is a product of several years of monumental neglect and deprivation suffered by the people of the area. And this has resulted in wide spread poverty, excruciating hardship, complete lack of basic socio-economic infrastructures, dislocated societal values and cohesion, plundered environment due to gully erosion and high rate of unemployment especially among the youths. This environment of anger, frustration and abject poverty has also precipitated terrible cases of electoral violence and warfare in Imo State.

Apart from the astounding increase in both number and magnitude of loss, destruction and wanton human carnage, it is also true that the country has been stereotyped by this violence. There is no disputing the fact that the phenomenon of political violence scares away investors and retards, in all ramifications, the socio-economic development of Imo State.

Nigeria, like any other plural states has been characterized by incessant contestations among individuals, groups and the different ethnic groups that make up the federal Union. Since the return to democratic rule on 29th May, 1999, these contestations have increased in alarming and violent proportions across the country. According to Mohammed (2012) "some ethnic groups in Nigeria feel that the return to civilian rule has offered them the opportunity to agitate for what they belief is their right to possess, partake in or achieve their development". Thus, these competing groups achieve their political, economic and social objectives with dire consequences on the Nigerian polity. This is why various forms of aggressions are displayed on a daily basis in

different parts of the country. In fact, since the country returned to democratic rule on 29[th]May 1999, the phenomenon of political violence has assumed a serious dimension: Bombings, militancy, religious riots, vandalism, arsons, political assassinations and the like have become the main features of Nigeria's nascent democracy (Adole, Mbaya and Aliyu, 2013).

The scenario encapsulated above is not different from that of Imo State. The state also stands out as a distinct point of intersection of individuals, groups and tribes competing for economic and political space. As a result of this, the state is now confronted with conflicts that have led to the destruction of lives and property as seen in the 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 political crisis in the State. Even, politics for the tussle in 2023 has started heating up violence in 2021. Added to this, is the heightened insecurity problems in Imo State due to agitation by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and their outlawed Eastern Security Network (ESN) operations. A close examination of the level of political violence in Imo State has clearly shown that the State has virtually a tripled level of violence in the country.

This glaring and alarming circle of violence in Imo State has continued to remain an issue of grave concerns to the State and Nigeria generally thereby generating interest among researchers too. For instance, Adegbami and Adeoye (2012), stated that undesirable effect of political crisis on national development in Nigeria was due to high rate of poverty as people provoke violence, in order to have food on their tables and keep their bodies and souls together. Igwe and Amado (2021) and Denen (2013), suggested that the prevalence of political violence and low socio-economic development was fundamentally an attribute of vested interests of the political elites. Eneji and Agri (2020), opined that insecurity and conflict have had serious socio-economic consequences for Nigeria. Ikyase and Egberi (2015), found that political violence has been a major road-block to democratic stability in Nigeria. Odozi and Oyelere (2019), found that recent and long-term exposure to conflict increased the incidence, intensity and severity of poverty in Nigeria. Ibok and Ogar (2018), revealed that political violence dissuades domestic and foreign investments in Nigeria. Ifeanyichukwu (2017), also revealed that political violence discouraged both local and foreign in Bayelsa State. Finally, Adole, Mbaya and Aliyu (2013) showed that

poverty and unemployment were not the causes and motivations of political violence in Your State but rather systemic leadership failure.

From these past studies highlighted above, it can be seen that no study has covered the incidence of political crisis and socio-economic development in Imo State, which is a gap the current study intends to fill. It is against this background that the researcher is embarking on the present study aimed at interrogating violent political behaviour in Imo State and its implications on socio-economic development of Imo State in particular and Nigeria, in general.

Delineation of Concepts

Violence

The word violence has no commonly accepted definition. The concept often serves as a catch for every variety of protect, military intervention, coercion, destruction or condemnation of people and property.

Wolf (1969), made a distinction between violence and force. According to him, violence is the capacity to impose or act of imposing one's will upon another. This imposition could be held to be illegitimate. Force on the other hand, is the capacity to impose or act of imposing one's will upon other, where the imposition is held to be legitimate.

Collaborating this position, Nieburg (1969) also stated that violence can be unambiguously defined as the most direct and severe form of physical power. It is force in action its use is a continuation of bargaining began by other means, whether it is used by the state, by private groups or by a person. He also tried to distinguish force from violence.

According to Hafez (2000), situation like riots, coups, massacre, wars, pogrom, genocide, revolutions, clashes, conflicts, jihad and crusades all fall within the ambit of violence.

In line with the above argument, Apam (2006) said that violent conflicts generally, arise from the pursuit of divergent goals and aspirations by individuals and or groups in defined social and physical environments. They are regarded as struggles over values and claims to scare status,

power and resources in which the aim of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals.

Violenceranges from demonstrations to rebellion against a political system or its leaders, in certain circumstances; it is directed especially against some aspects or symbols of political system. For instance, some sort of violence may involve the loss of many lives and a damage of property. Apam (2006), opined that in extreme cases, it is aimed to overthrown the political authorities and destroying the established political order rather than winning of concession from people in authority. In some cases, acts of violence are open to criticisms on moral grounds, but there is no complete agreement about the morality or immorality of specific political violence. It is worthy of mention here that individuals and groups with violent disposition often justify their action by their conviction of the absolute rightness of their demands while authorities also justify their use of violence as absolute necessity to maintain peace and orderliness as well as the protection of ordinary citizens from intimidations.

Political Violence

Political violence is the use of destructive means or methods in an unlawful manner against persons, property, institutions, in order to publicize grievances, coerce or intimidate a government, opponent, the civilian population, in furtherance of political, socio-economic, and religious objectives. It is terror and destruction that is systematically planned and executed, to achieve political goals. The targets often include government functionaries and institutions, identified individuals or groups, innocent public bystanders, traders and so on (Denen, 2013).

Howell (2004), saw political violence as synonymous with thuggery activities and means "brutal" acts or behaviour by ruffians. To him, politics is the tireless repetition of misleading facts designed to depict an opponent as personally despicable, and in regard to governance, as dangerous to physical and spiritual life of a person or nation. Violence involves acts characterised by rudeness, hooliganism, touting, intimidation and harassment. It involves behaviour that contradicts peace, harmony, interdependence among groups of people.

Nieburg (1969), advance that political violence is a product of factors and people's reactions that combine to produce violence in a society. He went further to add that political violence can also be seen as process that takes place between various groups and categories of actors within a political system.

Gurr (1970), refers to political violence as "collective attacks within a political community against a political regime, its actors including competing political groups as well as incumbent or its policies". Arendt (1996), viewed political violence as an extreme behaviour that is very dramatic, strongly emotive and highly visible that intends to distort general perceptions by flooding the sense and sensibilities of observers. The decision to use violence directly involves only a subset of the mobilized population; even in the most extreme situation, only a majority of any population is actively engaged in violence action.

Moser and Clark (2001), saw political violence as a collective sphere manifested in guerrilla conflict, paramilitary conflict, political assassinations, and armed conflict between political parties, while Mifflin (2004) on his part, stated that political violence is the calculated use of unlawful violence to intimidate governments and societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological. Dzurgba (2010) also advance that political violence arises from party formation, party membership, campaign hosting, voting behaviour, pressure groups, use of thugs and assassins, recruitment and training of militias, control and use of economic resources such as petroleum, oil and solid minerals, share of revenue, leadership, control and distribution of power, unjust electoral process, perverted judicial institution and police, indiscipline political behaviour, corruption and foreign influence. Civil war and International war are the greatest aspects of political violence.

Finally, political violence is an illegitimate and destructive means of seeking political power with a view to subverting popular opinion for parochial ends through self imposition. Therefore, political violence is simply the criminalization of political, to scare off the "good" people, leaving politics in the hands of ruffians, thugs, hooligans, touts, etc. Violence in politics is the entrenchment of the hijack syndrome, of the right of the people to participate in the decision making process of matters that concern their welfare and development. Karl Schmitt (In

Schaefer, 2011) is of the view that, political violence and violence generally, is a disturbance to political equilibrium.

Political violence is a perennial feature of plural societies; in fact, it has become a problem of great national and international concern because of its socio-economic and political implications. It is therefore any form of disaffection with or opposition to the procedural consensus established by a society which is calling for the total destruction of its political system. It is a purposive form of behaviour intended to disorient the behaviour of others thereby bringing about the demise of a hated social system.

Socio-economic Development

Socio-economic development is any activity, or programme that creates sustainable access to the economy for its beneficiaries. This means that, contribution from stakeholders should provide sustainable benefits, to use the old saying; socio-economic development projects should teach (equip)people to fish, rather than giving them fish (politicizing and impoverishing) them (NEPAD, 2003). Socio-economic development is the relationship between economic activity and social life. The NEPAD declaration implies that socio-economic development is the continuous improvement in the well-being and in the standard of living of the people. It connotes meeting the basic needs that are essential to live a life of dignity by the people (Denen, 2013). This includes access to qualify education, better healthcare, decent housing, safe drinking water, and good sanitation of the nation's wealth.

Socio-economic development is measured with such indicators as life expectancy, literacy, functional education, employment and GDP. The impacts of socio-economic development are seen in positive changes in law (rule of law) and the supremacy of the justice system, changes in physical environment-curtailing the forces of denudation that often render environment inhabitable, and changes in ecology. Socio-economic development also requires action that will strengthen policies, delivery mechanism of output in the key social development areas – food, education, health care, child welfare, gender equity (fair treatment) and the protection of the vulnerable groups – women, youths, children, the aged and the disable. There is the need to address poverty, by reducing the suffering of the less privileged and increase their access to

social services/amenities, and the increases to poor people's ability to generate an income of their own, in order to liberate them from vicious circle of squalor, diseases and excruciating poverty (Denen, 2003).

Therefore, the key objectives of socio-economic development are:

1. Promote self reliance in development, and build capacity (skill acquisition, training, loans), for self-sustaining development.
2. Strengthen policies delivery mechanisms.
3. Ensuring affordable access to water, food, sanitation, finance, markets, ICT, shelter and land, especially for the rural poor.
4. Progress towards gender equity (fair treatment and access by all gender to opportunity) in all areas of concern including education, employment, elective positions, appointments, etc.

Causes of Political Violence

Denen G.M (citing Kayode, 2012), attributed political violence in Nigeria to failure of government at all levels in applying states' revenues on improving the welfare of citizens. Instead, the federal allocation funds, and the IGR combined are spent on running their governments. The federal, states and local, government are not ploughing resources into investments that will enhance their productive capacities. Nor are they allocating funds to the development of both social and economic infrastructures.

Corrupt politicians work with government in power be it military dictatorship or democracy. They will do anything by any possible means to oppress and marginalize the civil society with a view to preventing them access to power, and economic resources. This way they nurture corruption as a way of retaining continuous control; corruption has enjoyed great legitimacy and completely undermined government/public socio-economic development structure and international image, entrenchment of massive poverty and reckless extortion, which has become a feature of Nigerian Federation today in hospitals, schools and high-ways. These kinds of

practices create resentment and cynicism, which burst into violence at the slightest provocation (Denen, 2013).

Roger (2009), identified social problems as one of the causes of political violence. The dominant discourse in the conflicts refers to political exclusion on the basis of ethnicity and religion. A key element of dispute is over which groups are represented in government, and have access to state, with much controversy over how state and local governments exercise power. For this reason, the conflicts need to be placed in the context of the local political economy (Denen, 2013).

Denen (2013, in Raul, 2004), identified poor economic condition and lack of economic opportunities, to favour political violence. Poverty and income inequality would feed frustration; hatred and grievance make political violence more likely to erupt. Gurr (survive, in Denen, 2013) seems to be in agreement with Raul, when he explained political violence with his "economic discontent", also known as relative deprivation theory. According to him, the backbone of the theory is the "perceived discrepancy between expected 'pay off' and actual 'pay offs' of individuals. When these discrepancies become collective, they feed anger and frustration, which translate easily into violent.

Denen (2013), summarized the causes of political violence to include; domination and marginalization of sections, groups, and persons in the acquisition and sharing of political position, rigging of election, manipulation of political process in favour of certain groups, sections, persons and falling apart of sponsors and sponsored over contracts, appointments or methods of management of states.

Theoretical Framework

This study used the Social Movement Theory as the main theoretical Framework of analysis. Hafez (2005), advances that the study of political violence by applying the Social Movement Theory (SMT) as a means of explaining the conditions under which political violence occurs in societies. The Social Movement Theory is an interdisciplinary approach to the study and contention that focuses on the underlying mechanism of collective violence. It helps to explain

how group protects in a society and what motivates their actions and inactions. The theory's strength comes from its three variables

- Resources mobilization
- Political opportunity; and
- Ideological framing.

Hafez used this hypothesis to study the causes and motivations of political violence in North Africa specifically in Algeria and Morocco. According to him, the real motivating grievance of groups in societies centres on their own town, state and their local economy. These groups are using their social interaction to provide for the population, recruit followers and propagate their ideology. The theory also explains how regimes method of repression and poor governance practices can fuel and smother political violence. According to their exponent, the relevant influences for the movement and the array of political opportunities it benefits and also the level of exclusion from the political system plays a powerful role in radicalizing in such societies.

Within the context of resources mobilization hypothesis, the theory starts from the very straight forward observation that all political action is socially structured and that the resources available to the activists are patterned accordingly. It makes the assumption that movement activists are at least as calculating rational as they are more conventional political actors that they will accordingly devise strategies of action which make the best use of the resources they have and which minimize the requirement for resources they do not have.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design. This is because of the contention among the Nigeria rapid population (Imo State inclusive) over the future growth and development of the economy. Imo State is a Rural State with a single cosmopolitan city, Owerri the State Capital with five medium sized towns (Okigwe, Mbaise, Oguta, Mgbidi and Orlu) with significant commercial activities located in the South Eastern part of Nigeria. It was created in February, 1976 out of Old East Central State by military regime of Major General Murtala Ramat Mohammed. The 2006 census put the total population of the state at 2,485,499.

The population from which sample was picked for this study were from these five major towns. The State is varied in ethnic, tribal and religious composition. It also has partisan loyalty and some degree of urbanization, so it can serve as a reasonably microcosm of the nation as a whole. In this study, the sample from which data was obtained included the following groups; the political class; civil servants; the religious leaders and members; traditional rulers; the academia and security agents.

The researcher chose a sample of 500 respondents from six selected Local Government Areas of the State. The Local Government Areas include; Orlu, Orsu, Owerri Municipal, Ikeduru, Okigwe and Isiala Mbano. Two Local Governments were each selected from the three senatorial zones (districts) of the State (ie. Zone A, B and C). Out of the 500 respondents that were selected 347 respondents correctly filled and returned the questionnaires administered to them. The simple random sampling techniques were employed when picking the respondents in the six Local Government Areas. The researcher sought the help of Research Assistants that helped in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires.

Apart from questionnaire administered to the respondents in the selected Local Government Areas of the State, data for this study were also collected from various secondary sources such as: textbooks, government publications, magazines, newspapers, journals and library/internet materials that have relevance to the study.

The data derived from the field were subjected to numerical strength and analyzed by using inferential statistical tool of simple percentages. In analyzing the data collected with the questionnaires, the questions or assertions that attracted more responses determined the decision taken. The data collected was finally classified in raw scores and later tabulated in simple percentages which were used to illustrate and classify the research questions earlier raised in the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table. 1: Respondent Demographic Data

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Male	220	63.5%
Female	127	36.5%
Total	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021)

From Table 1, above , a total of 347 questionnaires were obtained from the data collected and analysed for the study. The respondent population comprised 63.5% males 36.5% females, thus the gender distribution among the respondents could be considered balanced.

Table. 2. Age Distribution of Respondent

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 – 30 years	87	25.1%
31 – 40 years	139	40%
51 – above	121	34.9%
Total	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021)

Table 2 above revealed 87 (25.1%) of respondent were within the age bracket of 20-30 years, 139(40%) were within 31-40 years of age while 121 (34.9%) were in the range of 51 and above of age. This result showed that answers to questions in the questionnaires were extracted from the audience of matured adults with right sense of judgment.

Table 3. Demonstration of literacy status for both male and female respondents

Education	Illiteracy	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total	Percentage (%)
Male	20	60	102	40	220	63.5%
Female	40	20	54	13	127	36.5%
Percentage (%)	17.2%	23.5%	44.1%	15.2%	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021)

Table 3, above showed the literacy status of respondents in Imo State. Both male and female illiterate respondents constituted 17.2% of the population; 23.5% constituted the population with primary education. Respondents with secondary education had the highest percentage (44.1%) while respondents with tertiary education constituted 15.2% of the general population.

Question 1: What do you think is the cause of political violence in Imo State?

Table 4. Demonstrates the causes of Political violence in Imo State

Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Religion	38	11%
Ethnicity	30	8.6%
Politics	120	34.6%
Poverty	85	24.5%
Unemployment	74	21.3%
Total	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021)

The table 4 above showed that 38 respondents representing 11% of the entire Imo population were of the view that the cause of political violence in Imo State in Imo State is religion 30 (8.6%) respondents were of the view that the causes of political violence in the state as a result of ethnicity. 120 (34.6%) respondents were of the view that the cause of political violence was as a result of politics. 85 (24.5%) believed poverty motivated violence in the state while 74 (21.3%) though unemployment was the cause of political violence in Imo State.

Question 2. Do you agree that political violence can affect the level of local and foreign investments in Imo State?

Table 5. Assessing the impact of political violence on the local and foreign investments in Imo State

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	100	28.8%
Disagreed	76	21.9%
Strongly Agreed	116	33.4%
Strongly Disagreed	55	15.9%
Total	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021)

Based on Table 5, above, total respondents who agreed were 100 (28.8 %) and strongly agreed 116 (33.4%), respectively were of the view that political violence can negatively affect level of local and foreign investments in Imo State and disagreed and strongly disagreed were 76 (21.9%) and 55 (15.9%), respectively. Therefore, judging from the above results, the strongly agreed had the highest number of respondents 116 (33.4%) believed that political violence had negative impact on the level of local and foreign investments in Imo State.

Question 3. Do you agree that unemployment, youth restiveness and political violence have negative impact on the economy of Imo State?

Table 6. Assessing Impacts of Political Violence on the economy of Imo State

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	150	43.2%
Disagreed	26	7.5%
Strongly Agreed	151	43.5%
Strongly Disagreed	20	5.8%
Total	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021)

Based on the above table, 150 (43.2%) of the respondents agreed that political violence has negative impacts on economy of Imo State while 151 (43.5%) strongly agreed. However, 26 (7.5%) of respondents disagreed and 20 (5.8%) strongly disagreed.

Hence, a total of 301 respondents representing 86.75 agreed or strongly agreed believed that high level of unemployment, youth restiveness and political violence had impacted negatively on the economy of Imo State.

Question 4. Do you believe that political violence has negative impact on social activities leading to loss of lives and property in Imo State?

Table 7. Assessing Impact of Political Violence on Social Activities in Imo State.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	101	29.1%
Disagreed	26	7.5%
Strongly Agreed	200	57.6%
Strongly Disagreed	20	5.8%
Total	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021).

From Table 7 above, 101 (29.1%) of the respondents agreed that political violence causes loss of lives and property in Imo State, 26 (7.5%) disagreed and 200 (57.6%) strongly agreed, while 20 (5.8%) strongly disagreed.

So based on the above result, it was believed by 57.6% and 29.1% of respondents, a total of 86.7% (301 people), that political violence caused loss of lives and property.

Question 5. Are you of the view that there is a negative relationship between bad governance (bribery, corruption and misappropriation of public funds) and economic growth and development of Imo State?

Table 8. Assessing effect of Bad Governance on Economic Growth and Development in Imo State.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agreed	100	28.8%
Disagreed	70	20.2%
Strongly Agreed	117	33.7%
Strongly Disagreed	60	17.3%
Total	347	100%

Source: Researcher's field survey (2021)

Based on Table 8 above, 100 (28.8%) of respondents agreed that there was a negative relationship between bad governance leading to political violence and economic growth and development in Imo State, while 70 disagreed, 117 strongly agreed and 60 strongly disagreed representing 20.2%, 33.7% and 17.3% respectively.

Hence, from the above results, it was agreed that there was a negative relationship between bad governance or rather political violence and economic growth and development of Imo State.

Impact of Political Violenceon Socio-economic Development

For the individuals or groups of individuals to access the economic and political resources of the country, since the country returned to democratic rule on 29th May, 1999. The phenomenon of violence has assumed a serious dimension, bombings, military, religious riots vandalism arsons, political assassinations and the like have become the main features of Nigeria nascent democracy (Ekpe, 2016).The scenario encapsulated above is not different from that of Yobe State, Borno State, Go be State, Zamfara State, I'm, Ebonyi, Bayelsa, Ogun, Osun, Edo, Rivers, etc, these states also stand out as a distinct point of intersection of individuals, groups and tribes competingfor economic and political space. As a result of these, the states are now confronted with conflicts that have led to destruction of lives and property as seen in the 2007, 2009, 2011 political crisis in the states in Nigeria (Ekpe, 2016).

This glaring and alarming circle of violence in the states has continued to remain an issue of grave concern to the states and Nigeria, in general. Obviously, the state of bomb blasts, kidnappings, vandalism and series of killing from 2009-2013 especially in Damaturu, Potiskumtka and Gaidam Local GovernmentArea of Yobe State, taken for the assurance and measures has continued to deteriorate with huge impact on the socio-economic and political development of the country Nigeria as a whole (Adole, Mbaya and Aliyu, 2013).

By the end of 2011 general election in Nigeria, the result was to mass recognition of a militant terror group popularly called Boko Haram. This sect of militants during the cause of prosecuting their objectives have destroyed property worth billions of naira, killed thousands of innocent people and added to religious misconceptions in Nigeria. It should be noted that the scope of this study did not stop on the activities of political violence, likewise Niger Delta Avengers held five foreigners for ransom after hijacking a chemical tanker off the coast of Nigeria destroying oil pipelines from time to time.Similarly, Fulani herdsmen which are politically motivated have been launching brutal attacks on rural farmers and dwellers in the North Central Nigeria; in an attack in Benue State in February, 2016, 40 people were killed, scores seriously injured, over 7000 persons displaced and property worth millions lost (Ekpe, 2016). Their terror activities have even expanded to include bandits and kidnappers. These herders, bandits and kidnappers have also extended their brutal attacks to the Southern States (South West, South East and Niger Delta States).

On 21[st]of April, the Nigeria Police and Department of State Security (DSS) have declared the "Shite Islamic Movement" as a threat to Nigeria's security; this is coming amidst ongoing trial of the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Nnamdi Kanu, whose movement is agitating for session from Nigeria. Similarly, Sunday Igboho, has led the South Western States' youths to also be demanding for a separate country for the Yorubas just as Nnamdi Kanu has been doing for the Igbos of South Eastern States. As a matter of fact, the brunt of IPOB/ESN violent attacks and operations in the South East State (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo) leaves much to be desired with Imo State where Senator Hope Uzodinma is the Governor, has been having the lion share of these violent attacks that often result into huge destruction of lives

(killing and beheading of people) and property (burning of houses and vehicles, etc) on daily basis since the beginning of 2021 and escalates by the moments.At the same time in the region of Nigeria, different forms of major violent threats are arising. Nigeria's economic growth and development plans have drawn seriously backward due to impended political activities of the country that are politically motivated. Causing the snail growth and development of the economic sector, loss of lives and property, social tension is not left out. The impacts of these violent political activities are summarized below.

1. **Loss of lives and property:** Political violence of various types has claimed the lives and property of many Nigerians and Imo people, in particular. The recent attack on Agatu people of Benue State by Fulani herdsmen left 40 people dead and over 7000 displaced. Over 2 million Nigerians in the North East have been displaced by Boko Haram attacks, including over 800,000 children while thousands of lives have been lost, government, corporate and private propertylost millions of naira. IPOB/ESN attacks and clashes with security personnel in the South East States and in Imo State in particular, have resulted in loss of many lives and property worth billions of naira.

2. **Social tension:** Political violence breeds tension in the society. For example, if an Igbo man is killed in Northern Nigeria by an Hausa man, it creates immediate tension not only for Igbos in the North, but it causes Hausas in the Eastern Nigeria to be afraid due to reprisal attacks that might occur. Recently, IPOB declared lockdown in every Monday of the month until their leader Mazi Nnamdi Kanu is released from detention and this singular act has virtually paralyzed economic and social activities in the South Eastern States, Imo State inclusive.

The challenge of controlling violent crimes and terrorism has really been very expensive. Since it began and escalated, the Federal Government has been spending huge sums of money on defense and security. A heavy sum compared to expenditures on other critical sectors of the society. Again, the cost of tackling terrorism in Nigeria plunges the economy deeper into the more of poverty, and political destabilization, cankerworms that are themselves already eating up the nation's vast capital and material resources.

Political violence deprives women of the opportunity to participate in a climate of thuggery, killing, maiming, because they carry an essence that is not violence compliance thereby robbing the society of the subtle tenacious managerial capacity that only women can give (Denen, 2013).

The syndrome of giving appointments to unskilled, unqualified thugs, leaving the skilled people branded "opposition" has caused unprecedented decay in governance, low productivity in the entire civil service and general apathy in the society (Alubo, 2008).Business people suffer serious losses as a result of political violence. Others move their businesses elsewhere, which are a serious blow on the economy of the affected state, city, community, causing congestion in places of destination.There is politicization of social services, amenities (electricity, transformers, roads, and farm inputs), other people belonging to 'opposition parties' are not to benefit from provision of such amenities (Denen, 2013).

There is massive destruction of live and property, throwing family members into grief and misery. There is erosion of confidence in the law enforcement agents, and general feeling of insecurity.In a bid to proffer a workable means by which they could be terminated, it is saddening to know that the prevailing state of insecurity in the country is happening at a time when most of the key industries in the country have become moribund. What is even more saddening is that struggle against terror is gradually affecting the transport and tourism industries which are key foreign exchange earners, tax revenue generations, business opportunities for growing entrepreneurs and sources of employment (Ekpe, 2016).

Domestically, the fight against terrorism has caused a clamp down on the popular motor cycle riding business known as "Okada" in states like Borno and Yobe, leading to the ban of the business in some parts of these states. Secondly, interstate travel for business and other activities has been grossly affected.Indigenes of Southern States of the country are becoming more afraid to visit the North and vice versa. Internationally, Nigeria are now being treated with great suspicion.Foreigners are finding it hard to visit Nigeria. A country once regarded as the "Giant of Africa" and one of the most colourful countries in the world. The reason is not farfetched, no "Oyibo" wants to be kidnapped, neither do they want to be caught one day in the middle of a crossfire between terrorist gangs and security operatives in the hotels or while sightseeing. With

the state of the nation now, one may not be considered to be totally wrong to say that terrorism and violent crimes have given Nigeria and Nigerians bad years than, corruption had done in the almost 61 years of nationhood while the country may continue to count the implications of the terrorism and violent crimes on our society and economy, it is also necessary for us to begin to plan a new vista for our nation. The failure of the government to act in ways that boost public confidence on such issues have been demonstrating, coupled with the fact that our system seems to be providing these destroyers of Nigerian society with more reasons to perpetrate their dastardly acts, the high rate of corruption in high and low places, the increases in unemployment among a majority of the nation's youth, mass illiteracy coupled with ignorance and the hypocrisy of some traditional, political and religious leaders. However, it is time for something to be done, and the Nigerian people must believe that it will (Ekpe, 2016).

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to explore the impact of political violence on economic growth and development of Imo State in particular, and Nigeria in general. The research was necessitated due to the need to address the problems that attended the co-existence of Nigeria as a result of the prevalence of political violence at both states and national level.

What really bordered the mind of the researcher is whether violent political behaviour has any negative effect on economic growth and development in Nigeria, particularly in Imo State, whether political violence affect social, political and economic developments in Nigeria and in Imo State in particular.

However, in a bid to know the views of scholars about the issues of political violence, the researcher looked at the historical overview of political culture (violence) in Nigeria and reviewed available literatures on the topic. The researcher also looked at the factors influencing political violence in Nigeria and these include nationalism, social and economic conditions of the State, use of thuggery during elections, defect government, political culture, electoral malpractices, and issues of godfatherism in politics, among others.

As to political violence, the study shows that political violence has been part of the Nigerian political system even before her Independence in the 1960. Though, its level in the past was not very inimical to the growth and development of the economy, this was so because political violence then was influenced mainly by nationalism. But after Independence in 1960, religion, ethnicity and tribalism came into play in Nigeria political system and these factors made political violence to take an increasing trend in Nigeria today.

It is evident based on the findings of this research that the major causes of political violence were negative political culture and orientation that was given by Nigerians which brought about the desire and struggle among political parties to win the general election at all cost so as to acquire or retain political power, however, the issue of ethnicity problems and religious fundamentalism in Nigeria should not be overlooked. It is derivable from the analysis of this study that these acts lead to general insecurity of lives, property and investment in the country and as such scare away local and foreign investors.

Finally, there is destruction of educational system, youth decay and human rights violation, its implication being the breakdown of Nigerian economy as no economy can grow or develop in isolation, so to speak.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings of research it can be said that political violence has socio-economic consequences on the people of Imo State and Nigeria at large, such as high level insecurity of lives, property and investments, unemployment and destruction of educational system. Besides, hoodlums are sworn in as leaders of the nation at federal, state a d local government levels of the country, thereby threatening democratic foundations of Nigeria. As such the following recommendations would help in solving the question of political violence in Imo State and Nigeria generally.

1. Political leaders should play a role in building effective government through their constitutional duties and mandates. The core of the crisis in Imo State is instability of political leaders to adhere to good governance practices.

2. Study established that, political violence that often leads to general insecurity of lives, property and investments in the country scare away local and foreign investors. To attract both local and foreign investments at both states and national levels, there is need to inculcate in the mind of Nigerian politicians the value of positive political culture, citing for them the advance countries like USA, Britain, etc, that have developed due to violence free political system.

3. Political violence is carried out by mostly unemployed youths in the society, it is therefore recommended that these youths should be meaningful employed. Government of Imo State should initiate good policies that would help in reducing the high level of poverty and unemployment in the State and Nigeria at large.

4. There is the need for government to inject more funds into the economy to encourage economic activities, create employment and increase social actions and activities. This is necessary because in an environment of unemployment and lack of positive social action, political violence is sure to masquerade as a social activity. Study established that, political violence had negative impacts on social activities leading to loss of lives and property. But if there are employment opportunities and these youths are employed, they can reject offering their service to any politician as a thug.

5. Study also established that bad governance in form of bribery, corruption and misappropriation of public funds led to political violence, hence the need for political leaders to be honest and transparent when spending public funds.

6. The government of Imo State should endeavour to satisfy all competing interests, competing for the control of political and economic power by introducing measures that would carry every one along in the State.

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