Human Development as Correlates of Ethnic –Based Violence in Nigeria

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Abstract

The general objective of this study is to produce a causal analysis of ethnic based violence using available secondary data. This is necessary to guide national and state social engineering drives to stem the tide of growing ethnic based violence in Nigeria especially in the North. Number of ethnic groups per state, literacy level per state and poverty level per state were used as independent variables. Both correlation and regression statistics were employed to identify the pattern and significance of relationships among the variables. Two working hypotheses were set: That level of human development measured in terms of education and wealth have significant relationship with incidence of ethnic based violence across Nigeria. The second is, ethnic based violence is caused by intensity of ethnic combination per state. From the analysis, Number of ethnic groupings per state has highest correlation (0.53), followed by poverty level (0.31) while literacy level has negative correlation (-0.49). In summary, the more intense ethnic multiplicity, the more violent relationship becomes, the more the literacy

level, the less the violence and the more poverty is not alleviated across the states, the more the breeding points for ethnic based violence though the most significant factors are those of number of ethnic groups per state and literacy level. The most effective public intervention for peace building will be social and cultural re-orientation of Nigerians especially in more conflict prone states and encouraging local acculturation of other interacting ethnic groups through various communication channels. Equally implementation of the constitutional provision of free and qualitative education has impact of improving the socio-economic skills of the people and takes them out of the pressure on the limited land resources.

Key words: Ethnicity, Democracy, Poverty, Education, peace

Introduction

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multicultural nation-state, ever since the amalgamation of diverse political and ethnic entities in 1914, the reality of ethnicity has produced wide ranging efforts to manage the strains and stress of multi-ethnic coexistence. The basis of the untamed ethnic based violence in Nigeria is equally the poor understanding and conceptualization of what ethnic group really is and the number and boundary for each ethnic group. For instance the British colonial authority in a research conducted between 1914 and 1935 using language criterion and focusing on those with large population listed 200 groups. The typology of language criterion in listing number of ethnic groups in Nigeria gained most usage. Also Coleman (1958) listed 248 groups while the index of Nigerian languages identified 394 languages. But it seems that the public general statement of "250" ethnic groups in Nigeria is an approximation of Coleman's list (Blench and Dendo, 2003)

In a more in-depth analysis of exclusive language and cultural symbols across political states, Otite (1990) identified 374 groups. Also Onwuejeogwu (2007) used two variables of "cultural and territoriality", listed over 445 ethnic groups. Both Otite and Onwuejeogwu would have been more objective in mapping the ethnic configuration of Nigeria but using different criteria produced diversity of numbers. But it is generally acknowledged that Nigeria remain the most ethnically diverse nation either using the cultural, language or territory criteria. This diversity has not really been managed from the days of deliberate amalgamations of various entities as one Nigeria to the post-independent nationhood. In fact ethnicity has been conceived in the Nigerian context as conscious political relations among

various ethnic groups with a view to maximize gains and attract more benefit to one's group, thus denoting a competitive power relationship. The intensity of ethnicity, in terms of desperation for maximization of gains in the relationship seems to be increasing.

There is also the national observation that large scale violence is linked to certain ethnic areas than others. Nnoli (1978) having defined ethnicity as social phenomenon associated with communal competition among members of different ethnic groups, ethnic groups according to him are distinguished by the communal characters of their boundaries and membership especially language, culture or both with language constituting the most crucial variable in Africa (Azeez, 2009). Toyinbo (2003) likewise historically analyzed the various negative dimensions of ethnicity in Nigeria as including destruction of properties, millions of lives lost, grand insecurity of lives, negative international perception and image of the nation and loss of foreign investment. Further analysis of ethnic violence in Nigeria Okudiba Nnoli shows three phases which include:

1. The Tactic of Divide and Rule which was the hallmark of colonial governments. This produced the exclusive ethnic solidarity and consciousness either against other ethnic group or against colonial policy. For instance, 1922 Aba Riot; 1932-1945 Plateau violence between native miners and Hausa miners and Igbo traders; 1949 Enugu Coal Miners Riot, 1953-1956 political riot in Kano a result of acrimony between Yoruba AG party, NCNC Igbo party and NPC Hausa party (Nnoli, 1978).

2. Ethnic Conflict and the Struggles for Minorities by the onset of self rule period from 1950s. Emerging political elites and leaders inherited the tactic of divide and rule within their respective political regions and at national level. This generated tension between minority ethnic groups and the dominant ethnic group and their respective leaders. Also rival political party canvassed and supported political irredentism of other regions minority groups as a way of undermining dominant party of the region. All these accounted for the political and political violence in places like Lagos, South west Nigeria, Middle belt, Mid-West, COR states isolated by ethnic symbols.

3. Indigeniety, Exclusionism and Ethnic Conflict; This is the dimension of ethnic tension and resultant open confrontations and violence due to the

unresolved minority ethnic groups agitation for political relevance and the failure of 1967 and 1976 state creations to resolve it. 1979 constitution in a bid to address the question compounded it through the Federal Character Principle and the definition of Constitution of 1979. Article 210 of the Draft Constitution defines who is an indigene of a state: "belong to' when used with reference to a state refers to a person either of whose parents were a member of a community indigenous to that state" (Nigeria, 1976, Nnoli, 2003). There has been increasing violence over access and control of arable land, vegetations, political and social rights, economic opportunity and related resources across Nigeria. Examples include the 1992 Zango-Kataf and Hausa ethnic groups in Kaduna State, the carnage for four months claimed thousands of lives and communities of people were totally destroyed; 1990-1992 Jukun and Tiv ethnic groups violence also claimed thousands of lives and displaced communities; 1986-1997 Bassa communities and Igbira Communities in Nassarawa State constantly engaged themselves over claims to land, settlements were devastated and even the Bassa groups were completed driven out of the area; 2001in Nassarawa state, the TIV settlements were destroyed by the indigenous people while by 1980-1987, the Bachama native group of Adamawa state violently engaged the immigrant Hausa farmers with hundreds of lives lost. The cause is the pressure over claim over arable land (Toyinbo, 2003).

Another dimension to the ethnic based violence is explained by Nnoli (2003) as the impact of globalization and the multinational corporations on ethnicity. "This impact is tripartite: hostility of an ethnic group toward the government, hostility toward the multinational corporation, and hostility toward neighboring ethnic groups. Underpinning these conflicts is the requirement by globalization that governments in Nigeria and elsewhere facilitate the profit-making and transnational activities of the multinational corporations. In Nigeria this has meant providing abundant land, ignoring pollution requirements and in general permitting these companies to neglect their social responsibilities to the communities where they operate. This is exemplified with the mounting pressure by Nigerians on available land and resultant violent relations between indigenous Jos Plateau people and Hausa Fulani farmers after MNCs have acquired over 2000 acres of the land. From 1980s crisis has been the order of the day in the Plateau State. This is also the explanation for the insurgencies in the Niger Delta region between the youth

and the MNCs and the governmental machineries on one hand and among the indigenous sub-ethnic groups (Oluwadare, 2008)

A new dimension of violence in Nigeria is the emergence of pseudo militia groups who identify with their respective ethnic symbols, ideology and cultural values. This really started with the OPC who represented the militant agitation for the actualization of the June 12, 1993 election and the enthronement of democracy to favor the Yoruba. Also the MASSOP, the Niger Delta militants and the current insurrental group in northern Nigeria. The operations of these ethnic based groups though vary from zone to zone in terms of methodology, ideology, targets and extent of damages; they have really added a new dimension to ethnic based violence in Nigeria. Nonetheless there are other violent clashes that are not within the sphere of the organized militant groups.

The general objective of this study is to produce evidence based causal analysis of ethnic based violence using available secondary data. This is necessary to guide national and state political engineering drives to stem the tide of growing ethnic based violence across the Nation; North and South. The likely causal factors are ethnic configuration per state, poverty level and literacy level. As pointed out above, ethnicity in Nigeria is guided by subtle political economic relations and traditionally, land resource is central to traditional and less modern societies while human development conditions tends to neutralizes pressure of land, specifically the following research questions are set to guide the study:

1. What is the level of relationship between number of ethnic group per state and ethnic based violence experience?

2. What is the pattern of relationship between measures of human development and propensity to ethnic based violence?

3. What is the best social remedy to uproot the menace of ethnic violence in Nigeria?

Definition of Concepts

Human Development

Human development as used in this study agreed with the definition of UNDP;

a process of enlarging people's choices. Enlarging people's choice is achieved by expanding human capabilities and functioning. At all levels of development the three essential capabilities for human development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have a decent standard of living. If these basic capabilities are not achieved, many choices are simply not available and many opportunities remain inaccessible. But the realm of human development goes further: essential areas of choice, highly valued by people , range from political, economic, and social opportunities, for being creative and productive, to enjoying self-respect, empowerment and a sense of belonging to a community (UNDP. 2004: 3-5).

It further identified measures of human development as to include life expectancy at birth, literacy rate and per capital income. These three main indicators produced the human development index. Human development approach developed as a new strategy to put the people first in both national and international development programs rather than emphasis on economic development paradigm. It was also a response to the obvious weakness of various economic restructuring programs in most poor nations at the last decade of 20th century (UNDP. 2012). Annual Country specific reports, regional and global reports are published. For instance in 2011, Nigeria ranked 156 out of 187 nations making her one of the poorest and her people comparably challenged in human well being and survival. Nigeria equally has a score below the African score. This however has been the trend for the past 20 years.

For the purpose of this study, literacy level per state and income level measured in terms of poverty index per state are used as proxy for human development across the states. The data for income level was derived from National Bureau of Statistics (2012) National Poverty Profile Report of 2010 while the data for literacy level was derived from Nigeria demographic and health survey 2008 (NPC. 2008).

Ethnic Based Violence

In this study, this is identified to be reported cases of violence that has a coloration and presentation of inter-ethnic conflict that led to destruction of property and loss of lives across the states of Nigeria in the past ten years.

Some of the incidences are already highlighted above. The data for this is derived from available newspaper reports and published materials. It is calculated as percentages. From 25 percent being the least score since realistically no state in Nigeria is spared of one form of violence or the other and the highest being 100 percent for states endemic and notorious with violence of ethnic coloration in the past ten years.

Number of Ethnic Groups per State

Calculating this relies on Onwuejeogwu (2007) data which listed 474 groups on the 37 political map of Nigeria. The number of ethnic group per state is used as percentage contribution of each state to the total of 474 ethnic groups. These four parameters are shown in Table 1.

Data Analysis

Number of ethnic groups per state, literacy level per state and poverty level per state were used as independent variables to explain and predict ethnic based violence across states. Both correlation statistics were employed to identify the pattern and significance of relationships among the variables.

Findings

From Table 1, most states in north central and north east account for over 40 percent of ethnic groupings in Nigeria especially Plateau, Taraba, Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Yobe, Niger and Kaduna. These states are equally the hotbeds of violence that most of the time targets other ethnic groups who are co-natives or immigrants from other states. From historical observations, Igbo settlers are victims of most violence from Northern Nigeria. Also most violence in northern Nigeria has anti-Christian manifestation but equally most southern settlers in the north are Christians. It will be emphasized also that like Nnoli (2003) observed, most violence that are between same state ethnic groups, tends to be over access and control of land resources. Also inter-ethnic carnages targeting other religious adherents historically have dimensions of external or international ideological influence like the Mataitsine crisis (1980-1985) and the current Boko Haram onslaught.

For literacy level which measures the level of ability to read and write and acquisition of minimum of first ten years of education, more than most states have more than 80 percent of their people being literate. But Ogun state in the south have the least of 76 percent while Yobe state that is the base of Boko Haram has the least literacy level of about 32 percent in Nigeria.

Zamfara state has 34 percent followed by Borno state 38 percent. These three states in the last ten years, have produced significant disruptions of the peace of Nigeria through violence that target non indigenes of their states.

Nigeria is a poor nation notwithstanding the huge wealth of oil and other natural resources. The fact is that the nation is rich but her people are poor. By NBS (2012) data Nigeria has 60.9 percent of her population as absolutely poor with northwest having the highest percentage of 70, followed by north east 69%, and southwest has the least percentage of about 49% percent followed by South-south 56%. At the state level, the poorest states (0ver 70% poverty level) are Adamawa, Bauchi, Ebonyi, Gombe, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Plateau, Yobe and Zamfara. UNDP (2008) equally linked poverty to high level of socio-economic inequality and most of these listed states are in that category.

From the explanation above and further statistical correlation of the variables, Number of ethnic groupings per state has highest correlation of 0.53 with ethnic based violence. This means that number of ethnic group per geographical sphere has a propensity factor for escalating violence. Poverty level has the second highest correlation of 0.31 that is the more the poverty of the people, the more the propensity for ethnic based violence. Thirdly literacy level has negative correlation of -0.49, that is the more the literacy of the people in the states, the less the propensity for violence.

Discussion

The fact from the above is ethnic multiplicity across in Nigeria and her states remain the most important factor predicting violence. But inter-ethnic relations will continue to be a matter of necessity and increasing complexity due to cultural and economic aspirations of the people. As a result of this, there will be pressure on the limited and non renewable natural resources of land and water for cropping and grazing between indigenous population and settlers. This pressure equally forces people to move in search of greener pasture. Usman (2006) explained that even in the pre-independence period, there used to be constant inter ethnic warfare and hostilities caused by various expeditions and expansionist tendencies to acquire more lands by virtually all kingdoms and serfdoms that were later annexed as Nigeria.

Also, Nigeria is still dominated by peasant farming and related extractive occupations with rural life of more than 60 percent of the population. This proportion is more especially in the three zones of Northern Nigeria where

survival is conditioned by access to land for either farming or grasing. This makes the people to be more anxious to protect their respective territories and natural habitat (Ekong, 2003). It is equally compounded when most of the people are less engaged in non-land occupations like civil service, private modern jobs because they are less educated. In this study, it is shown that literacy level is inversely related to poverty level and generally peasant farming is co-condition with poverty in Nigeria. This explains why there is constant violence in North central Nigeria and in the Niger Delta region (Nnoli, 2003).

Other increasing concern is the use of religion as ideological basis for most of the ethnic based violence in the past twenty years. This trend was started by the uprooted Mataitsine insurrection of the 1980s, Jos Plateau violence since 2001 and the current Boko Haram is also an example of the use of religion as ideology to express the socio-economic deprivation of the people who lack access to quality education, skill for gainful employment and hope for better life due to irresponsive public policies. But religion itself is not enough to analyze this social malaise since Classical Marxism rightly affirm that religion is the opium or soothing weapon of the oppressed, here the poor and the unskilled mass of the people are alienated and deprived from social mobility opportunity due to poor economic infrastructure in the midst of entrenched feudal and parasitic elites.

When people are educated to the point of being socially and spatially mobile out of their geographical ecology, there will be less pressure and obsession over land. Their economic livelihood will improve and their self worth assessment will increase, tendencies to Durkheim's suicidal bids will also reduce. Improved education and income of the people will also increase social equity. According to UNDP (2008: 93), specific interventions are needed to accelerate growth to the agricultural sector and to increase sectoral growth and to increase sectoral labour mobility to allow the poor to share from the growth process through the creation of appropriate skills which serve as a critical barrier preventing the poor from connecting to the growth process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The most effective immediate public intervention for conflict and peace management strategy will be social and cultural re-orientation of Nigerians especially in states with multiplicity of ethnic or cultural groups. Positive information about other interacting ethnic groups through various

communication channels, like development of schools curricula, electronic media, cultural exchange and visits, social orientation of community leaders are to be disseminated. Without this, public investment and international fund directed at boosting public projects in the areas of poverty alleviation, building schools, hospitals and welfare services will not have immediate outcomes.

Along with the above is the need for both state and federal governments to implement to the latter the tenets of the constitutional provision of free and qualitative education to all children and the youth. But it must be strategically suited for individual cultures and legislated for sustainability sake. Nigeria with her huge resources can no longer pretend that it is expensive to educate her citizens. There is no cure for ignorance except education.

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Table 1: Showing Ethnic Configuration, Literacy Level, Poverty Index by States in Nigeria

S/N	States	% of ethnic groups (N=474)	Violence incidence (%)	Literacy Level (%)	Absolute poverty (%)
1	Abia	0.2	25	91.1	57.4
2	Imo	0.2	25	96.7	50.5
3	Anambra	0.2	50	99.2	56.8
4	Enugu	0.2	25	95.4	62.5
5	Ebonyi	0.2	25	77.4	73.6
6	Cross river	6.1	50	79.4	52.9
7	Akwa Ibom	1.7	50	85.2	53.7
8	Rivers	1.7	50	94.5	50.4
9	Bayelsa	0.6	50	95.7	47.0
10	Delta	1.5	50	88.8	63.3
11	Edo	1.1	50	87.8	65.6
12	Lagos	0.6	50	95.5	48.6
13	Ogun	0.2	25	76.2	62.3

14	Ondo	0.6	25	80.1	45.7
15	Ekiti	0.2	25	92.0	52.4
16	Osun	0.2	25	92.9	37.9
17	Oyo	0.2	50	85.4	51.8
18	Adamawa	9.03	75	69.3	74.2
19	Bauchi	13.7	75	51.5	73.0
20	Borno	6.1	100	38.2	55.1
21	Gombe	9.5	75	67.5	74.2
22	Taraba	9.5	50	69.1	68.9
23	Yobe	3.2	100	31.6	73.8
24	Benue	1.9	75	82.8	67.1
25	Kogi	3.4	75	89.7	67.1
26	Kwara	1.5	50	62.4	61.8
27	Nassarawa	2.1	50	76.4	60.4
28	Plateau	15.3	100	82.8	74.1
29	Niger	4.2	75	49.7	33.8
30	FCT	0.8	75	88.8	55.6
31	Jigawa	1.1	50	57.7	74.1
32	Kaduna	6.7	75	79.8	61.5
33	Kano	1.1	75	71.5	65.6
34	Katsina	0.4	50	39.3	74.5
35	Kebbi	1.3	50	62.4	72.0
36	Sokoto	0.8	50	45.3	81.2
37	Zamfara	0.8	50	33.8	70.8