

Political Violence and National Economic Development in Nigeria

Dr (Mrs) Louisa Ngozi Amaechi^{1*}, Dr Njoku A.S²., Okonta Patrick O³

^{1,2}Directorate Of General Studies, Federal University Of Technology Owerri, Imo State-Nigeria

³Department Of Economics University Of Nigeria, Nsukka

***Corresponding Author:** Dr (Mrs) Louisa Ngozi Amaechi, Directorate Of General Studies, Federal University Of Technology Owerri, Imo State-Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Nigeria from the time of independence till date always experience one form of political violence or the other. The nation is made up of different geographical regions with cultural plurality, ethnic differences and religious affliction. These differences in the country's ideologies and principles make it difficult for the political atmosphere to have absolute peace in the country. From time to time, if it is not religious, crisis, it may be cultural or economic crisis or political violence. The paper discussed the concept of political violence, theoretical explanation of political violence and the economic/development challenges. The paper also discussed strategies to eradicate political violence in Nigeria. The paper recommends honest and new breed political office holders for effective and skillful management of the nation's resources.

Keywords: Political violence, theoretical explanation, strategies to eradicate political violence in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of man, conflict, clashes, bloodshed and war have been an enduring characteristics of an organized society, Diamond Cleavage,(1982),Ewa (2003).At various periods in the history of Nigeria, people have had to resort to the use of violence as a way of articulating their various interest in government. This could be done as a result of intra-class struggle in the country for the control of state power.

In Nigeria today, religious differences, tribalism, unemployment, social injustice, and economic acquisition or reasons are features of our present peripheral capitalist system hi which state power is seen as an avenue to wealth by the political dominant class.

Therefore, political violence may likely to occur in any society, where people begin to lose confidence in their leaders. When there is a serious problem with wide spread of dissatisfactions within an existing political system, people tend to react, sometimes over-react over the incidence of poverty and injustice, under cruel, corrupt and incapable ruler attract violence in a society. Political violence occurs in a governmental system when a group that likes political step oversteps its constitutional

bounds to the extent that, some other groups experience some degree of injustice and constraints. Such act sometimes, may be peacefully demonstrated or forcefully executed.

It is very clear that when the political office holders and other governmental' officials fail to be sensitive to the demand of the citizens, in respect to the provision of their basic needs and economic well-being as well as involving them in policy making and execution or distribution of their natural resources, they tend to disturb the government activities through violence which in most cases is politically motivated, Diamond (2005). Political violence in the real sense is a mark of primitive action, bad governance, an unorganized society, cruelty, uncivilization and underdevelopment that paves no way for development. The stricken questions in this paper are:

- Can those who cause political violence be instrumental to the improvement of National economic development of the nation?
- Does political violence occur when the nation's political, social, technological and economic condition is becoming unbearable for the masses?
- Is political violence the only powerful measure people can use in order to attract

the attention of the government to solve their societal problem?

To address the above questions, there is need for us to give vivid explanation of political violence. Political violence is an act of action that destroys life and property of people in any given society which may not give solution to the act that generates such condition. It is an act of lawlessness and inability of people to show maturity in problem solving. Political violence attracts foreign intervention and destroys a country's image in international arena. Political violence occurs because of the serious problems that have caused wide spread of dissatisfaction with an existing system.

Nigeria's electoral institutions have been problematic, accounting for her political troubles that undermine democratization. The attitude of the political office holders in Nigeria is full of negativity, in the area of distribution of the country's economic resources and fair treatment to their fellow citizens. The unfair attitude of corruption, social injustice, uneven distribution of the country's economy, bribery, election rigging, embezzlement of the economy has continued to be an everlasting problem in Nigeria's democracy. The internalization of such evil practices have become a political tradition in Nigeria's politics, thus giving rise to constant political violence and social unrest, Onyeshola, (2008).

Theoretical Framework

An unresolved issue in the study of political violence is an explanation of why individuals or groups resort to violence when they need something. The problem of establishing an explanatory theory that cuts across national boundaries has led Arnold Forster, representing the majority view among contemporary scholars to argue that "political violence by its very nature is beyond any simple causation." We can summarize in a critical form some of the recurring explanatory models of political violence: They are:

- Relative deprivation, rising expectation and frustration model
- Systematic structural model and
- Group conflict model.

The central thesis of Relative deprivation, rising expectation and frustration model is that aggression is always a consequence of discontent of a kind, while systematic structural models central thesis is that political violence flows directly from the political system and is

most likely to occur. Group conflict model identifies political violence as a product of struggle for power among groups within a society.

For this, social contract theory has been taken to explain why political violence occur, the causes and consequences in any given society. Ake (1979) said that social contract theory was propounded by Thomas. Hobbes and Rousseau, the 17th century writers. Hobbes, was so impressed by this aspect of politics that he made it, the centre of his argument. The life of a man outside society, he said, is poor, solitary, nasty, brutish and short. So man should always obey the government, since any government however harsh is better than none. The need to check disorder in any given society like Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Hence, the 18th century writer Rousseau speaks of a "social contract"- an agreement not formerly made, but understood, between rulers and the ruled, the later to obey the former to do justice.

This theoretical approach of the social contract offered explanation to political violence, because a good government rarely gives room for social unrest and political violence. Hence, Okaji (1999) noted that when government is sensitive to the need and yield of the people, there will be no need of violence to attract government's attention, rather, people will bring out their best to obey the government in authority without breaking the law of the land. People will also do their best to support the growth of the economy of the land while government will enjoy enabling environment in order to discharge its duties effectively without exploitation.

Nwosu and Ofoegbu (1986) saw social contract theory as an agreement entered into voluntarily by the individuals for their mutual protection; a theory of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and other philosophers that organized society and government evolve from such loose agreements among early associations of individual. In contrast to the above, another political scientist said "that social contract theory is the term applied by a long standing consensus among students of politics, to the political theories of the most famous and influential thinkers of the period reaching from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century. Thomas Hobbes 1588- 1679, Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778.

Scholarly, tradition has associated the three because of their alleged insistence that society

originated in a contract, compact or agreement, explicit or tacit, to which each individual concerned consented and so, removed himself from the "state of nature" and helped set in motion a regime of government under laws, of impartiality and civic morality. The influence of Machiavelli, all above, if not avowed pupils of Niccolo Machiavelli; (who was in disrepute during most of the period in question) at least wrote as if they had been profoundly influenced by Machiavelli. Each was less committed to the contract as explaining the origin or even the nature of the society than to certain other ideas which Machiavelli first enunciated:

- Man and society are not coeval (as earlier thinkers had asserted; rather society like government, law, justice and morality is a human artifact, which man is free to alter or dispose of as he sees fit.
- There exists no natural or divine law that imposes on man anywhere and everywhere "perfect" duties towards one another and toward the society itself of which "right" are derivative. Aice (1999).

Here, indeed, the contractarians went further than Machiavelli, who had not concerned himself with rights at all, and held that the one firm statement we can make about "right" is that each man is born with "right" to preserve himself and to choose freely the means to himself — preservation which is the type of government he needs that which will satisfy his human needs in the society. All the ideas above geared toward political violence for human preservation and improvement of standard of living and nation's economy. Some Political Violence and Clashes which took place from 1999 are discussed in this paper. From 1999 to the first quarter of 2007 marked the democratic dispensation of President Olusegun Obasanjo Amaechi (2016).

It is very clear that social and political violence are natural phenomenon. The pre-military rule conflicts employed the weapons of harsh violent words, clubs and knives.

During the military regime, the social conflicts increased in scope, intensity, and was carried into the democratic regime. What is worrisome about the political violence is not simply that they occur, but, that they are wide spread, internecine and protracted, fought with machine guns and other sophisticated weapons whose sources are always queried as illegal. More worrisome is the colossal loss of human lives and billions of naira worth of property. Also,

these violent activities involve human rights abuse and violation.

Some of these political violence acts include:

a) The Mayhem in Kano - On July 25, 1999, when the corpses of the Hausas killed in the bloody Hausa - Yoruba clash at Shagamu on July 15, 1999 were displayed at a public place at Kauri Kwari in Kano. It aroused unprecedented dead, emotional feeling which moved the youth popularly known as Yandabas that were infuriated by the killings of their people. The Yandabas mobilized the youths and unleashed a very destructive revenge on the Yorubas. The violence resulted in grave arson, destruction of millions of property and loss of hundreds of lives, while many southerners, deserted Kano and returned to their various homes, later it was found out that it was politically motivated.

The Mayhem in Kaduna - was another political crisis which the religious people saw as an excuse to kill at random. This rocked the Nigeria polity which had to do with the introduction of the Sharia legal system. The crisis started when the Christians embarked on anti-sharia march on Monday, February, 20, 2000 to demonstrate their displeasure over the planned introduction of the Sharia legal system in the state. During the protest march by the Christians, they clashed violently with Moslems. An estimated 1,000 people were killed while property worth millions of naira were destroyed Tunde Asuju (2000). and Ewah (2003).

On Friday February 28, 2000, there were reappraisal attacks and kills at Aba in retaliation of their relations killed by the Muslim Hausas at Kaduna. The reappraisal violent later spread to other Eastern States including Imo, Rivers, Anambra and Akwa Ibom. It was alleged that about 29 persons were killed in Aba and Umuahia while 2 killed in Owerri. The Kaduna riot continued to Monday 24, 2000. It was alleged that re-enacted riot and violent was caused by a discovery of a corpse believed to be that of a Kaje indigene in the area which was suspected to be killed by the fundamentalists. The youth were woken up with this sad news who allegedly took arms. It was reported that more than 2,000 houses were pulled down in the area while 150 lives were lost. Tunde (2000).

Jos Political Violence

On September 7, 2001, Jos the Capital City of Plateau State, received its own share of violent clashes. It was alleged that a week before the crisis, leaflets were circulated among the

Muslims calling on them to stand firm on their religion.

This call may be prepared grounds for the riot. This was followed by the disagreement between the Jos Development Association (formed by the Hausa/Fulani) and the Plateau Youth Council which belong to mainly (native Christians) over the appointment of the head of the local government unit of the National Poverty Eradication Programme. The State Governor (a Christian) appointed the man a (Muslim) the Chairman of the programme in Jos North Local Government Area which angered the indigenes who argued that the man was a non-indigene from Bauchi State and should not represent them. But the Hausa/Fulani were alleged to insist that no other person would represent them except the man.

The conflict finally exploded when a lady who was going to the market through her normal route could not pass because the route was blocked by the Muslims. When the lady was coming back from the market because she removed the blockade she was mercilessly beaten up by the Muslims. The action angered her siblings who immediately retaliated. The news of the incident went to town and spread like wild fire and gave effect to violent and blood share. Within a short time, churches were burnt and lives destroyed.

Various weapons of warfare were used. It was politically motivated violence, a war of destruction, houses were razed down, marked places, churches and mosque burnt, cars were burnt and lives lost. On the Sunday night, the President ordered the deployment of troops of military personnel to the city. It did not improve the situation as the commander of the troop was shot dead which made the army to be shooting indiscriminately, Amaechi (2016).

It was reported that the men of the International Red Cross Society recorded about 165 persons died, 658 were injured while many were in critical conditions in Jos hospitals.

Jukun/Tiv Political Crisis

Tiv/Jukun political crisis which also claimed many lives started when 19 soldiers sent on a peace-keeping mission along Benue/Taraba boarder were killed on October 11, 2001 by Tiv ethnic military men from Benue State as part of the on-going conflict between the Tiv and Jukun. It was alleged by the Tivs that the military stationed in Takun, Taraba State "participated in the Tiv/Jukun crisis in the past"

(Philips, 2001). Consequently upon the brutal killing of the 19th soldiers troops from an Armoured Brigade in Yola moved into Waase in eight armoured vehicle. It was alleged that as soon as they arrived Waase, in Tiv settlement, they summoned the meeting of the villagers, separated men from women, and opened fire on the men. More than 200 civilians were killed.

In another development, Fawehinmi (2002) recorded the ODI riot in Bayelsa State as a politically motivated riot. According to Fawehinmi, the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, contrary to Section 215 (2)(c) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria Ordered troops of armed soldiers to quit Odi riot in Bayelsa State in 1999/2000. The action violated the above section of the constitution, as the president did not obtain the consent of the National Assembly. As a consequence of the military operation against Odi, over 600 lives were lost and over 3,000 houses burnt. Indeed, the Odi community was plundered and destroyed by the military operation which was invited. Gani Fawehinmi observed that Odi became sign post of civilian dictatorship. Bola (2002) also reported a serious political violence at Paga Egbeda Road, Lagos State where some angry mob burnt a police station, killed some police men as a result of the incident of a police man at a police checking point who killed a bus driver who refused to give them N20 bribe at the checking point. There was more serious dimension in the rampant destruction of human rights and lives during Obasanjo's democratic regime. The political killings to attain political power, for example, a political war in a state of the Federation resulted in the emergence of two strong camps of PDF State Governor led home based group" and "Senator - led Abuja group". In an attempt to gain political superiority over the other group, it was alleged that policemen were utilized by one of the groups in which four men were killed from the home-based group. Nwabueze, (2001), Some ministers and commissioners have been either kidnapped or assassinated. Example, Bola Ige, the former minister of Power and Steel.

Ijaw Vs Itsekiri in Delta State

One of the greatest socio-political violence in the year 2000 was the Ijaw and Itsekiri political and ethnic crisis led to loss of people's lives including fifty (50) European and American Oil and Gas workers in Delta State. It also led to vandalization of oil pipeline and abandonment of work by the oil workers who ran away for

their lives. This led to the sharp drop in the country's export on oil. Ogunna stated that in 1999, the Odua People Congress (OPC) versus other group had several conflicts with the Hausa/Fulani and others in Lagos since the return of democracy.

These conflicts resulted to the death of many people. In September 1999, the O.P.C. members clashed with workers of Apapa Warf and Tin Can ports in Lagos to show their solidarity support for some Yoruba speaking members of the dock workers union who were defeated in an election, some people lost their lives, also in November 1999, the members of OPC clashed with Hausa traders at Mile 2 and Keru area of Lagos where many people also lost their lives. Furthermore., on July 10, 2000, the OPC clashed with the police in Lagos where scores of people lost their lives. Also, on Sunday, February 2, 2002, the areas of Lagos State as a result of the alleged refusal by an Hausa man to pay a certain amount of money imposed on him for allegedly easing himself in a nearby bush. In the violent clash, some lives and property were lost.

Nwabueze (2001) noted that on Sunday, September 1, 2002 Chief Igwe and his wife were brutally assassinated. Chief Igwe was the Chairman, Nigeria Bar Association, Onitsha branch. A matter of great controversy as to whether its activities is amour to human rights violation in democratic dispensation for Bakassi SECURITY Organization which existed in Anambra and Abia should exist at all.

During the democratic dispensation of Obasanjo's leadership Anambra State and Abia became a home for armed robbers. Armed robbers took possession of Eastern States, braking homes, both day and night, killing innocent citizens and carting away their property. So it was bitter, anguish, nasty and sleepless nights for everyone.

The security vigilante Bakassi organization was first at Aba, later at Umuahia. At the heat of greatest armed robbery menace in Anambra State, then, the State government through the initiation of Nnewi - North Local Government established the security outfit in the state. The Bakassi uses force to match force of the armed robbers, arrest suspected armed robbers, and killed them instantly through burning them. It is believed that the members possess the mystical power picking armed robbers which is violence. Through this process, they violently killed thousands of armed robbers without the due

process of law and trial by ordinary court of the land as provided by the constitution. Although, some people argue that the operations of the "Bakassi" are unconstitutional, and violate human rights, yet many people argue to the contrary as the essence of law and constitution is to cater for the interest of the majority of the people. "Bakassi" in view of the magnitude of the task given to it protected live and property of the citizen in violent way. It is not an easy task to discuss all social and political conflicts and violence in Nigeria from 1999. Political implication overrides them all.

Apart from the ones discussed above, there were other social and political violence and conflicts such as Ife-Modakeke in Osun State, Aguleri versus Umuleri crisis, Kuteb-Jukun/Chamba crisis in Taraba State; Benue/Nasarawa crisis etc Awa (2003).

In addition to other things, these among others can lead to political violence, thuggery, assassination of innocent citizens, election malpractices, and falsification of election result, exploitation of natural resources without adequate compensation, bribery and corruption and looting of government treasury can make the political system unstable and living standard unbearable. Also tribalistic affiliations have made people of different tribes in Nigeria to have unity in diversity. There is lack of patriotism, social injustice, unemployment etc. Religious differences can be an instrument for political violence and a threat to unity and national economic development. The destruction of lives and properties has been a routing acts in Nigerian political scene.

The effects of political violence on the national economic development Onyesiola (2008) writing on economic development discovered that the terms economic development and economic growth are used interchangeably, but, there is a fundamental distinction between them. Economic growth refers to a rise in national or per-capital income and product. Economic development in addition to a rise in per-capital income implies fundamental changes in the structure of the economy, Mmaduabuchi (2016).

According to World Bank development report (1990) a key element in economic development is that the people of the country must be major participants in the process that will bring about these changes in structure. Foreigners can be and inevitably are involved as well. Participation in the process of development implies participation in the enjoyment of the

benefits of development as well as the production of those benefits. If growth only benefits a tiny wealthy minority, whether domestic or foreign, it is not development.

Furthermore, it should always be kept in mind that while economic development and modern economic growth involve much more than a rise in per-capita income or product, there can be no development without economic growth.

Charles (1965) said that economic development planning occurs separately from the comprehensive/master plan process. Many communities today have developed and adopted a strategic plan for economic development, this is the "process by which an organization envisions the future and develops the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future." Then strategic planning for economic development is the process by which an area's resources are allocated and used in accordance with an overall programme designed to maintain, diversify and or expand the economic base of the community.

Charles (1965) in his write up opined that the more population classification implicitly put all countries on a continuum based on the i i degree of development. The better thus, we speak of the distinctions between developed and underdeveloped countries, more or less developed nations. Also, to recognize continuing change in the society like developed and developing nations. The degree of optimism implicit in "developing countries" and the handy acronym L.D.C for "less developed countries" make these two most widely used terms developed countries are also called industrialized nations in recognition of the close association between development and industrialization. Ogunna (2003) pointed out that political violence has heavy economy loss. Losses in economic materials in each violence is always huge, houses are burnt, factories, markets, and places are razed: down, refineries and oil pipelines are damaged, business activities are often disrupted suspended or stopped. Domestic investments within the country are considered quite unsafe for non-indigene of that area.

Politically, as a result of political violence, people are afraid nt joining a political party of their choice which may not be a poplar political party that controls the forces like the police and army. Internationally, the country will not command international respect much for example, when the president of Niger Republic

died, Obasanjo flew to Niger to find out if the news was correct, but, he was not allowed to land or to stay. Internally, people have more confidence in their micro-communities and possess fear and suspicion on Macro-communities. Political parties are formed along ethnic group and regional lines. Political participation is weakened; political structures and institution are dominated by parochial orientation, norms and values. More importantly, the country finds it very difficult to produce a national and visionary leader who should transform the economy of the nation. What Nigeria possesses is tribal/ethnic leaders who are dominated by parochial orientations and values, and controlled by ethnic/religious loyalties, sympathies by settling those who helped either to sponsor them or who ragged them into power. As a result of this, the sharing of political power often results in crisis. It leads to low political development and political instability.

It should be observed that political violence, social conflicts and tensions create serious social problems. In the first place, Nigeria as a result of these internecine violent widespread socio-political violence is faced with very acute and pronounces, problems of national integration-National integration according to Weine (1965) refers specifically to the problems of creating a sense of territorial nationality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties" put in other words, it is the process of bringing together culturally and socially national identity. In this sense, national integration involves in the real practices, shifting or transferring the loyalties or expectations. Political activities of political actors, in these several distinct ethnic group, towards a new centre (nation).

The religious and ethnic violent, the communal civic communities which are widespread can sometimes be politically motivated in the Northern part of the country and Niger Delta Communities. Politically motivated kidnappings and assassinations constitute grave obstacles which impede the process of bringing together diverse ethnic groups of divergence patterns into one single political entity, and the establishment of a national identity and a deep sence of national devotion. In addition to the above consequences, Ogunna (2003) said that political violence may lead to collapse of economic system as it happened in oil and gas industries in Niger Delta region when constant violence and kidnapping of foreign natural oil explorers led to

fear of working in such environment. Insecurity made most of the foreigners to leave Nigeria, this led to a sharp drop on the exportation of oil which affected the economy. It can lead also reduce rate of investment which is to increase unemployment rate, it is because, foreign investors cannot invest in a chaotic environment. The unwanted destruction of lives is an irreparable lost of manpower needed for national economic development, the destruction of public and individual property are huge waste, which retard national economic development and hinders foreign investors from investing in Nigeria. A state of emergency always comes as a result of constant political violence in any given environment. Violence does not give opportunity for any meaningful economic development nor for good governance. It leads to destruction of life and property and unnecessary abuse of human rights. It destroys government business and does not promote democratic image. It leads to unnecessary breakdown of laws and orders in the state, infrastructural decay, enmity and lack of trust. It scares away foreign investors from such land.

Ogunna concluded that, there is a correlation between a healthy economic system and a harmonious stable political system. (Lushes and political violence brings permanent peace and motivates the activities of the leaders in searching serious means of bringing permanent peace, and, at the same time reduce the suffering of the masses through economic emancipation. Also citizens and political violence strengthens democratic government; it helps the government in power to tidy up every loop holes for economic development. Dacarth (1970) said that without adequate stimulus from different critics, government can be slacked, and complacent or even corrupt completely. Henry Mayor (1970) observes that "the existence of political oppositions by individuals and groups, by press and above all, by the organized parties is the litmus paper test for democracy.

Charles Kiudleberger (1965) also said if an old system is not destroyed a better system will not be built and that the only way to maintain permanent peace is by outbreak of war and violence. For people to enjoy economic growth and development, W.W. Rostow suggested that, there must be variation in the behaviour of people who will serve as watch dog to the activities of government for relevant economic growth. The propensities to develop science to apply science and to involve mainly people in

policy making and execution especially in a democratic system of government and to the world around them is through confrontation, violence and radicality.

Strategies for Eradication of Political Violence in Nigeria Polity

- The leader irrespective of his ethnic cultural, religious and political affiliation should rule without the sense of nepotism, corruption and marginalization of any group or set in his government.
- Sensitive issues or matters should be "treated without fear or favour.
- The rule of law must be carried out effectively irrespective of wealth, position or connection of anybody.
- There must be absolute separation of power in governance.
- The natural resources must be distributed evenly.
- There must be respect for human rights.
- The leaders must respect and recognize the needs, aspiration and the desires of the masses.
- There must be equal attention on the nation's development projects to all irrespective of the culture, religion and ethnic consciousness of the masses and the leaders.
- There must be free and fair election and equal justice.
- The government should strengthen the nation's security outfit and be prepared at any given point in time to tackle any matter that may result to violence and war most especially on religious and political matters.
- Corruption and abuse of power must be reduced or controlled by the leaders.
- Appointment by merit should be taken as a tradition and culture in governance
- Public opinion activists must be respected
- Equal attention must be given to all sectors of human life, need and aspiration irrespective of the ethnic or cultural affiliation. Every corrupt practices that may lead to violence and war must be controlled and properly managed or controlled by the government before it escalate to war.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A well informed and equipped security outfit or agents must be prepared always to tackle any emergency of riot or violence of any type at any given point in time.
- Leaders with integrity who will be sensitive to handle issues that may escalate to violence and wars should be elected into power.
- Nigerians should abolish ethnic and religious politics in governance.
- The issue of marginalization should be eradicated by Nigerian leaders.
- Neglect to development should be avoided by Nigerian leaders.
- Corruption should be controlled to the minimal level.
- Social injustice in Nigerian polity should be avoided totally,
- Electoral malpractice should be taken care of.
- Unevenly distribution of the country's natural resources should be reduced.

CONCLUSION

Political violence cannot erupt without any good reason, therefore, the leaders and politicians in Nigeria should handle sensitive matters carefully in order to manage violence and war in

Nigeria. Violence and war do not give room for any meaningful development therefore, the government should set up a powerful machinery equipped in the country to manage violence for peace and justice to reign.

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