

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract

This paper investigates political violence and its socio-economic consequences on the development of Bayelsa State particularly and Nigeria generally. To achieve this objective, the study uses both the primary and secondary sources of data collection. A sample of 294 respondents was selected and administered with questionnaire in each of the three Local Government Area selected in the three senatorial districts of Bayelsa State through the simple random sampling techniques. The data obtained from the respondents were manually analysed through Chi-square. The Frustration-aggression theory was used as the main theoretical framework for the study. The results of the study revealed that political violence discourages both local and foreign investment in Bayelsa State. Thus, political violence has serious implications on the socio-economic development of Bayelsa State. Therefore, the study recommends among others that political leaders should play a role in building effective government through their constitutional duties and mandates.

Keywords: Violence, Political violence, Socio-economic development, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

The electoral politics in Bayelsa state right from 1998 till date have been characterized with violent conflicts, political thuggery, assassinations, and arson. Politicians in Bayelsa state like their counterparts in other parts of Nigeria do not accommodate dialogue, negotiation and consensus (Azeez, 2005). Consequently, political contests in the

state are characterized by desperation, and violent struggle for political power among politicians. Recurring political violence in Bayelsa state could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation of political gladiators to win elections or remain in office at all cost.

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 lives 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 robs people of their psychological and emotional stability all of which stifles and retards socio-economic development.

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. 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.

Bayelsa State is centrally located in the heart of the turbulent Niger Delta region characterized by perennial crisis of youth restiveness, militancy and insurgency. The crisis of insecurity is a product of several years of monumental neglect and deprivation suffered by the people of the region. And this has resulted in wide spread poverty, excruciating hardship, complete lack of basic socio-economic infrastructure, dislocated societal values and cohesion,

plundered environment and high rate of unemployment especially among the youths. This environment of anger, frustration and abject want has also precipitated terrible cases of electoral violence and warfare in Bayelsa State (Major, 2017; Karimo, Krokeyi and Ekainsai, 2017).

These undemocratic activities and events, though they are orchestrated by political elites of the key political parties, are mainly carried by vulnerable and able bodied youths who ought to have been constructively engaged and indoctrinated into fine democratic norms, values and attitudes. And we all know that the country's democratic structures and processes cannot be sustained by an unwholesome practice of electoral misdemeanour and violence.

The consequences of political violence can be devastating, especially on human development. 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. With the above record of political violence in Nigeria, hundreds of people mostly youths have been killed, many injured and property worth millions of Naira destroyed. These incidents have drained the state treasury and slow down development. The orgy of political violence has sent waves of panic and fear through a shocked and outraged public in the city. 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 country.

The abysmal of the violent incidents is a categorical inference of

the saying that something was wrong within the system and that it would equally be adduced that the politicians enjoyed electoral violence more than peaceful resolute of a particular crisis. Apart from the astounding increase in both number and magnitude of loss, destruction and wanton human carnage, it is also a truism that the country has been stereotyped by this virulent 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 in Bayelsa state. Having synthesized some of the consequences of political violence in this paper, it is important to suggest the way out of the problems as concluding part of this paper.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In fact since the country returned to democratic rule on 29th May 1999 the phenomenon of 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. The scenario encapsulated above is not different from that of Bayelsa 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, 2009 and 2011 political crises in the State. A close examination of the level of political violence in Bayelsa 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 the State has continued to

remain an issue of grave concerns to the State and Nigeria generally. Obviously, the spate of bomb blasts, kidnappings, vandalism and series of killings from 2009-2013 especially in Brass, Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Nembe, Ogbia, Southern Ijaw, Sagbama and Yenagoa local government areas of the State is quiet worrisome. Despite the assurance and measures taken for the protection of lives and property by the State Government, the security situation in the State has continue to deteriorate with huge impact on the socio-economic and political development of the State.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher is embarking on this study aimed at examining the consequences of the situation for the socio- economic development of Bayelsa State in particular and Nigeria in general.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study was to investigate the implications of political violence on the socio-economic development of Bayelsa state. The subsidiary objectives include:

- 1 To examine the extent to which political violence discourages local and foreign investors in Bayelsa State.
- 2 To find out the extent to which vulnerable youths have been recruited and trained in the art of thuggery for political violence in Bayelsa State.
- 3 To assess the extent to which political violence has led to the destruction of social services and amenities in Bayelsa state.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

This study will be guided by the following hypotheses stated in the null form:

- H₁ There is no significant relationship between political violence and the discouragement of local and foreign investors in Bayelsa state.
- H₂ There is no significant relationship between political violence and the recruitment and training of vulnerable youths in the art of thuggery in Bayelsa state.
- H₃ There is no significant relationship between political violence and the destruction of social services and amenities in Bayelsa state.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The research design used in this study was the survey design. It is preferred because it concerns itself with ascertaining and establishing the status quo, facts or pieces of information at the time of the research, presenting such pieces of information as they are and going further to analyze the data and draw inferences.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consisted of 670,120 for the three local government areas selected for the study in the three senatorial districts based on 2006 census figures for Bayelsa State. (Nembe 130,966; Sagbama 186,869 and Yenagoa 352,285) totalling 670,120 (NPC,2006).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique:

The researcher adopted simple random sampling method (balloting) to select one local government each from the 3 senatorial districts, and then choose a sample size of 384 respondents from the three selected Local Government Areas of the State, according to Guide to Survey Sample Size (Sample Size table 2015). The Local Government Areas include: Yenagoa, Nembe and Sagbama. Out of the 384 respondents that were selected, 294 respondents correctly filled and returned the questionnaires administered. The simple random sampling techniques were employed when picking the respondents in the three (3) Local Government Areas. The researcher sought the help of Research Assistants that helped in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires.

Instrumentation: The research instrument used in this study was titled, "Political violence and Socio-economic Development". The questionnaire was constructed by the researchers. The instrument had two sections made up of 15 items spanning through sections A, and B. Section A of the instrument sought information on subjects' demographic data. Section B was designed to obtain data on the implication of Political violence on Socio-economic Development in Bayelsa state.

Method of Data Analysis: The data derived from the field were subjected to numerical strength and analysed by using inferential statistical tool of chi-square.

$$(i) \quad X^2 = \frac{\sum(o-e)^2}{E}$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Sex: The study reveals that the overwhelming majority of the

respondents are female (62%) while the rest are male (38%) however, this does not have any significant effect on the outcome of the information gathered for the study.

Table 1: Table showing respondents Socio-Demographic Variables of Respondents

Variable	Operationalization	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	112	38
	Female	182	62
	Total	294	100
Age: (Years)	Less than 20	25	9
	20-29	16	5
	30-39	115	39
	40-49	100	34
	50 and above	38	13
	Total	294	100
Marital Status	Single	112	38
	Married	167	57
	Divorced	15	5
	Total	294	100
Educational Qualification	FLSC	20	7
	WASSC/SSCE	45	15
	NCE/OND	136	46
	HND/B.Sc/B.A	90	31
	M.Sc/M.A	3	1
Total		294	100

Source: Field Survey 2015

Age: It indicates that the majority (39%) of the respondents are between the ages of 30-39 years, while 34% were between 40-49 years, 13% were between 50 years and above, 9% between 20 years and below, 5% falls between 20-29 years of age.

Marital Status: The marital status of the respondents as revealed by the study shows that % are single, 38% are married while 57% are 5% divorced.

Educational Qualification: The study revealed that about 46% of the respondents holds NCE/OND, 31% have HND, BA and B.Sc. degrees, and

1% has M.Sc and M.A. degrees, while 15% and 7% have SCCE and First School Leaving Certificates respectively.

Test of Hypothesis One:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between political violence and the discouragement of local and foreign investors in Bayelsa state.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between political violence and the discouragement of local and foreign investors in Bayelsa state.

Table 2: Table showing the Summary of Data Analysis on political violence and the discouragement of local and foreign investors in Bayelsa state.

Items	SA			A			D			SD			Cal Value
	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	
Q1	760	769.74	(1.12)	267	273.80	(0.17)	30	12.27	(25.62)	0	1.19	(1.19)	
Q2	804	771.92	(1.33)	275	274.58	(8.95)	26	12.3	(15.22)	5	1.19	(12.20)	
Q3	852	796.68	(0.07)	240	283.39	(6.64)	2	12.70	(9.01)	0	1.23	(1.23)	
Q4	820	791.58	(1.02)	267	281.57	(0.75)	0	12.62	(12.62)	0	1.22	(1.22)	
Q5	652	760.27	(15.42)	384	270.43	(0.68)	4	12.12	(5.44)	1	1.17	(0.02)	
Total			16.94			17.19			67.91			15.86	117.9

Calculated Value $X^2 = 117.9$

Table Value X^2 distribution at $V = 12 = 21.036$

$df = (R-1) (C-1) = (5-1) (4-1) = 4 \times 3 = 12$ at 0.05 levels of significance

Decision Rule: The calculated value of 117.9 is greater than our table value of 21.036. H_0 is therefore rejected at 0.05 and H_1 , is accepted, indicating that political violence do discourage both local and foreign investors to invest in Bayelsa state. Showing that there is a significant relationship between political violence

and the discouragement of local and foreign investors in Bayelsa state.

Test of Hypothesis Two:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between political violence and the recruitment and training of vulnerable youths in the art of thuggery in Bayelsa state.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between political violence and the recruitment and training of vulnerable youths in the art of thuggery in Bayelsa state.

Table 3: Summary of Data Analysis on political violence and the recruitment and training of vulnerable youths in the art of thuggery in Bayelsa state.

Items	SA			A			D			SD			Cal Value
	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	
Q6	760	759.64	(0.51)	300	261.28	(5.74)	16	33.47	(9.12)	1	2.62	(1.00)	
Q7	960	798.45	(32.69)	135	274.62	(70.98)	14	35.18	(11.58)	2	2.75	(0.20)	
Q8	816	769.70	(2.79)	225	264.74	(5.97)	30	33.91	(0.45)	0	2.66	(2.66)	
Q9	596	715.08	(19.83)	351	245.95	(44.87)	40	31.50	(2.29)	8	2.47	(12.38)	
Q10	656	725.14	(6.59)	285	249.41	(5.08)	66	31.95	(36.29)	2	2.50	(0.10)	

Total	62.41			132.64			59.73			16.34	271.12
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Calculated Value $X^2 = 271.12$

Table Value X^2 distribution at $V = 12 = 21.036$

$df = (R-1) (C-1) = (5-1) (4-1) = 4 \times 3 = 12$ at 0.05 levels of significance.

Decision: The calculated value of 271.12 is greater than our table value of 21.036. H_0 is therefore rejected at 0.05 and H_1 , is accepted, indicating that the respondents showed that there are significant effects political

violence on the recruitment and training of vulnerable youths in the art of thuggery in Bayelsa state.

Test of Hypothesis Three:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between political violence and the destruction of social services and amenities in Bayelsa state.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between political violence and the destruction of social services and amenities in Bayelsa state.

Table 4: Summary of Data Analysis on political violence and the destruction of social services and amenities in Bayelsa state.

Items	SA			A			D			SD			Cal Value
	Fo	Fe	X^2	Fo	Fe	X^2	Fo	Fe	X^2	Fo	Fe	X^2	X^2
Q11	884	732.08	(31.53)	153	317.71	(85.39)	26	17.75	(3.83)	9	4.52	(4.44)	
Q12	936	748.47	(46.99)	135	324.83	(110.94)	20	18.08	(3.69)	5	4.63	(0.03)	
Q13	528	680.18	(34.05)	441	295.19	(72.02)	24	16.43	(3.49)	3	4.20	(0.34)	
Q14	620	702.03	(9.58)	396	304.67	(27.38)	10	16.96	(2.86)	2	4.34	(1.26)	
Q15	590	697.25	(16.50)	420	300.87	(47.17)	6	16.84	(6.98)	3	4.31	(0.40)	
Total			138.65			342.9			20.85			6.47	508.87

Calculated Value $X^2 = 508.87$

Table Value X^2 distribution at $V = 12 = 21.036$

$df = (R-1) (C-1) = (5-1) (4-1) = 4 \times 3 = 12$ at 0.05 levels of significance

Decision: The calculated value of 508.87 is greater than the table value of 21.036. Therefore, H_0 is rejected at 0.05 levels of significance, while H_1 , is

accepted indicating that the respondents agreed that there is a significant relationship between political violence and the destruction of social services and amenities in Bayelsa state.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS:

The findings from the study as indicated from the perceptions of the

respondents who are the target population of the study is quite clear on the implications of political violence on the socio-economic development of Bayelsa state. Majority of the respondents' perception on hypotheses I, II, and III shows that there is a strong significant relationship between political violence and socio-economic development in Bayelsa state. The variables in these hypotheses such as Political violence, acrimony, assault, assassination, intimidation, harassment, maiming, vandalization, kidnapping, killing, arson and looting of goods from business premises, etc, consequently affect the existing social, political and economic relationship in the society during electoral violence. This is an indication that the phenomenon remains a serious threat to acceptable democratic culture and norms, all these turn around to have implications on the general income, education, social services, the stability of human and economic activities in the state. The negative feelings from the majority of the respondents, that political violence causes serious disorder in the socio-economic development of Bayelsa state calls for the reappraisal electoral acts and security strategies in the state in particular and Nigeria in general.

Adetiba, (2012) advocate that political violence affects level of investments in a society. It can therefore be put forward that since 2009 the level of investments in Bayelsa State has dropped drastically as a result of political violence, thus affecting the socio-economic development of the State and the country generally.

Ogundiya (2003) asserted that the syndrome of political leaders providing appointment to unskilled,

unqualified youths as 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. Political violence also 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 (Adetiba, 2012).

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 (Ajayi, 2007). Political violence therefore, is a serious phenomenon that causes massive destruction of life and property, throwing family members into grief, and misery. There is erosion of confidence in the law enforcement agents, and general feeling of insecurity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Political violence in Bayelsa state could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation of political gladiators to win elections or remain in office at all cost. 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 lives 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 robs people of their psychological and emotional stability all of which stifles and retards socio-economic development.

The study reveals that the role most of the youths perform in the political and electoral processes are violent in nature, and in most instances these violent roles are assigned to them by political classes that have deliberately refused to imbibe and practice requisite democratic norms, values and tradition. Secondly, the study was also able to establish that youths are vulnerable instruments of electoral violence as a result of dislocated and poor parental background, poor education, unemployment and under employment, moral decadence and as well as political manipulations by an irresponsible political class.

Based on the foregoing findings the following suggestions are discernable:

1. Political leaders should play a role in building effective government through their constitutional duties and mandates. This is because the core of political violence in Bayelsa State is the inability of political leaders to adhere to good governance practices.
2. Political leaders should learn how to settle political differences in an amicable way that is devoid of violence
3. There is need for policies that would help in reducing the high level of poverty and unemployment in the State and Nigeria at large. This will assist in meaningfully engaging the youths, thereby distracting them

from engaging in violent activities during electoral process.

4. The Bayelsa State Government should endeavour to satisfy all interest groups and individuals, competing for the control of political and economic power by introducing measures or policies that would carry every one along in the state.
5. There is a need to make provision for laws that sanctions politicians who violates electoral laws by inciting violence in the state.

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