

Post-Electoral Violence and National Development in Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

Election is generally accepted in all climes of the world as the hallmark of democracy. Political scientists and development theorists link free, fair and credible elections to democratic governance, peace and development. In brief, they argue that free, fair and credible elections provide the basis for the emergence of democratic, accountable and legitimate governments with the capacity to initiate and implement clearly articulated development programmes. Again, they claim that free, fair and credible elections empower the electorate to hold the government accountable and to demand strong credentials and feasible development agenda from prospective government officials. In other words, free, fair and credible elections bestow on governments the legitimate authority to, on one hand, initiate and implement policies; while on the other hand, they empower the citizens to hold governments accountable for their actions and/or inactions. Credible elections are, therefore, *sine qua non* for democratic governance, political stability and national development (Nkwachukwu and Nkiru, 2012).

Nigeria's electoral politics from independence has been tumultuous. The politicians, in Nigeria, have over the years "*become more desperate and daring in taking and retaining power; more reckless and greedy in their use and abuse of power; and more intolerant of opposition, criticism and efforts at replacing them*" (Electoral Reform Committee Report, 2008, Vol. 1: 19). Violence has continued to mar the conduct of almost all general elections, making free and fair elections a necessity. Thus, electoral violence has proved to be Nigeria's harbinger of national instability as unabated festering (growing) irregularities that manifest at different stages of election, subject almost all Nigeria's election below the minimum democracy standard (Olayiwola, 2014).

However, since the advent of democratization in Africa in the 1990s, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on holding regular elections. As a result, since 1999, elections have become more regular in Nigeria. Between 1999 and 2011, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducted four consecutive general elections. This period has been marked by an extraordinary progress towards the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, considering that the country is able to conduct four consecutive general elections for the first time in its political history (Oyovbaire, 2008).

Although elections are now more regular in Nigeria, the quality of these elections is a matter of grave concern to both the actors and observers. The 2003 and 2007 elections were particularly marked by dissatisfaction by candidates, voters and observers (Ibrahim and Ibeanu 2009). Dissatisfaction with the 2007 general elections reflected in the barrage of litigations brought

before the election tribunals and courts as well as the number of election results that were nullified (INEC, 2007). Unlike the 2007 elections, the April 2011 general elections in Nigeria were adjudged by observers and analysts as the most credible election in the series of elections organized since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999. The success of the 2011 elections can be attributed to the remedial measures taken by both the government and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the aftermath of the 2007 general elections to restore the credibility of the electoral process (Nkwachukwu and Nkiru, 2012).

The widely acclaimed success of the 2011 elections was dented by post-election violence that broke out following the announcement of the results of the presidential elections. The 2011 post-election violence is seen by many as the bloodiest incident of electoral violence in Nigeria's history (Bekoe 2011, HRW 2011, ICG 2011). In fourteen Northern States, including Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, and Bauchi States, where the post-election violence was most prevalent, violent protesters killed several people, including an unspecified number of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members; torched, looted or destroyed businesses, churches and private houses (HRW, 2011). In the aftermath of the violence, thousands of people were displaced from their homes and places of business.

Post-election violence is not a new phenomenon in the country. However, most incidences often tend to be localised, short-lived and restricted to polling centres and communities. But the incidences of large-scale post-election violence of 1963-65; 1983 and 2011 in Western Region, Oyo and Ondo States and in several Northern States respectively recorded large scale loss of lives and destruction of property with serious implications for national development. In this paper, the focus is to highlight the emerging trend, examine the incidence and causes of post-election violence in the country, and the effects of post-electoral violence on national development by taking lessons from history and how to avert a re-occurrence of the phenomenon as 2015 general elections gets around the corner thereby suggesting best practices to engender effective national development through electoral politics.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Central to this discourse are the following clarified concepts

Electoral violence

This paper sees electoral violence as "any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced 'protection', blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination'. The target of electoral violence can be people, places, data, or things. In an attempt to influence the electoral process, perpetrators of electoral violence may attempt to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll and determine the winners of competitive races for political office (UNDP, 2009).

Three key elements in the above definition of electoral violence are worthy to note. The first is that like any other form of violence, electoral violence manifests in physical forms (kidnapping, killing, and destruction of property) and non-physical forms (threats, intimidation and blackmail) (Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance, 2011).

Secondly, the main goal of electoral violence is to influence the electoral process, either by changing the outcome of elections or by disrupting the electoral process. Thirdly, electoral violence can occur at different periods in the election cycle; that is, before, during, or after election (Nkwachukwu and Nkiru, 2012).

Post-electoral Violence

Post-election violence is a specific form of electoral violence. The post-election phase usually starts from the collation and announcement of election results to litigation and settlement of election disputes. Violence at this phase is usually triggered by issues emanating from the pre-election and election phases. Post-election violence manifests in several ways including attacks on rival candidates, party officials and supporters; as well as violent street protests (UNDP, 2009). They could also include shooting, killings, arson, wanton destruction of property, usually perpetrated by officials and/or supporters of different political parties (Adoke, 2011). Therefore, what distinguishes post-election violence from other forms of electoral violence is the fact that it occurs just after polling, usually during or after collation and announcement of election results.

Development

Development has political, economy and social dimensions. Todaro (1977) for instance; view development as: "a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty". Hodder (2000) also sees development as an economic, social or political process which results in a cumulative rise in the perceived standard of living for an increasing proportion of a population". This definition suggests that an increased standard of living involves a social and political process as well as an economic one.

This improvement in the standard of living must be both cumulative and in the long duration rather than just temporary. Development which must be seen as an overall qualitative improvement in the lives of a people or a political community is expected to address the issues of social welfare, equity and justice. According to the UNDP, the central purpose of development should be the creation of an enabling and empowering environment in which all the individuals, including the poor and the vulnerable can enjoy healthy and creative lives (UNDP, 1997). However, in the absence of political stability the creativeness to lead a full life is not possible.

National Development

National development, on the other hand, is not confined to macroeconomic forces of growth, but also focuses on the:

improvement of the individual and collective human condition, increasing choices and participation, equality, standards of living and wellbeing, the environment and sustainability, and on another level, development as a human and ways of being (Edgar, 1972 in Dambazau, 2014).

Accordingly, development is not a stage to be attained or a goal to aim, rather it is a constant process of improvement in which education, research, service and political stability through free

and fair elections play prominent roles in creating positive changes in the self, the people, and the institutions and structures. Examining the concept from the perspective of human security, national development equals human development, the idea of expanding the choices of people and giving them a chance to lead full lives in an environment of peace, security and effective democratic governance.

UNABATED ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: THE PLACE OF THEORY

The importance of theories in political discourse cannot be overemphasized as it proffers empirically based general explanatory laws that are scientific in nature through the synthesizing and integrating of empirical data for maximum clarification and unification (Raphael, 1978). However, in literature there are a lot of theories that could be explored to explain unabated electoral violence in Nigeria. The pluralist theory could be applied in the Nigerian situation. The pluralist theory posits that conflict is inevitable in a plural society (Cohen, 1996). In fact, competition between plural groups takes place largely in political arena. However, the dimension of conflict generated by competition becomes more complex in democracies of the third world and particularly Nigeria, where ethnicity has permeated every facet of national life.

The ongoing insurgent activities perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect in North Eastern Nigeria varying from bombing, maiming, and killing of innocent citizens in the polity cannot be dissociated from the power tussle between the North and the South. It is believed in some quarters that it is the turn of a Northerner to preside over the affairs of Nigeria instead of the incumbent President of Nigeria from the South-South geo-political zone. Cultural pluralism therefore engenders minority/majority dichotomy, and perceived asymmetric access to power. Without any iota of doubt, ethnicity plays a major role in mobilizing electoral support for candidates in variegated societies like Nigeria. With such conditions, free and fair elections in the run-up during and after election becomes pretty difficult.

Furthermore, the culture of violence in relation to the electoral process could also be explained using the psychological theories, especially Ted Gurr's theory of relative deprivation (1980) coupled with James Davies (1971) J-curve hypothesis. The centrality of the theory rest on the fact that frustration-aggression mechanism is analogous to the law of gravity: men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustration, just as objects are attracted to one another in direct proportion to their relative masses (Dugan, 2004 in Olayiwola, 2014). In the view of the theorists, the primary source of human capacity for violence appears to be frustration-aggression mechanism. This then portends that unfulfilled expectations create relative deprivation gap between expectations and capabilities. In other word, when someone or group of people have the perception of their ability or right to get something (goal), if prevented from attaining such goals, the result is frustration which will in turn generate aggressive behaviours that will snowball into violence. This is always the case in Nigeria, when an individual or group of people are hindered from achieving their perceived goals in relation to getting to public office; frustration sets in, leading to aggressive behaviour that may sprout chaotic electoral process. In this lies the justification for 2011 post-election violence in Northern Nigeria, as classically, the case of protest against injustice and shortchanging of the will of the people to exercise their political and civil rights, to choose leaders of their choice.

TREND OF ELECTION VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Elections have been a source of violent political, ethnic, religious and communal conflicts in Nigeria since the late 1940s when limited elections were introduced. This problem deteriorated in the elections conducted immediately after independence in the 1960s (Alemika, 2011). All the eight general elections conducted in Nigeria since independence in 1960 (including 1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections) have been marred by various degrees of violence (Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, 2002). The announcement of the results of the Western Region elections in 1965 was followed by violence and breakdown of law and order in the region. It was the Western Region crisis that gave rise to the infamous '*Operation Wetie*' - an atrocious practice of dousing political opponents in petrol and setting them ablaze (Anifowose, 1982). In 1983, allegations of rigging by the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led to bloody post-election crisis in Ondo State.

In 1993, the results of the presidential elections won by Chief M.K.O. Abiola was annulled by then military ruler, Ibrahim Babangida, leading to the 'June 12' crisis that took the lives of many Nigerians. Nigeria's Fourth Republic has not been devoid of electoral violence. Between 1999 and 2011, thousands of people have died in election related violence (ICG, 2011).

There is substantial similarity between the post-election violence recorded in 1983 and the post-election violence recorded after the presidential election on April 16, 2011 in which hundreds of people were reported killed and properties worth billions of naira were destroyed or looted. The main difference between the 1983 and 2011 elections violence was the ethnic and religious dimensions that were introduced at the latter stages of the 2011 post-presidential election riots. Notwithstanding, this difference, they both reflected an anger primarily targeted at people considered as collaborators with the ruling national party to undermine local interests. Both cases also demonstrated the helplessness of the police in containing serious political violence due to lack and non-utilization of relevant intelligence and other forms of institutional weaknesses (Alemika, 2011).

The elections conducted in 1999, 2003 and especially 2007 were characterized by widespread malpractices such as violence, corruption and falsification of results. After the 2007 election, there was widespread disenchantment with the electoral process. The elections held in 2003 and 2007 were preceded by widespread intra-party and inter-party violence that continued on the polling days. The foregoing pattern and trend of violence in 2003 and 2007 partly explain the post-election violence in April 2011.

In particular, the absence of effective resolution of grievances in past presidential elections may be seen as a source of frustration-aggression exhibited during the post-presidential election in April 2011. Let us now examine some causes of election related violence in Nigeria.

CAUSES OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Orderly transfer of power from one government to another in accordance with democratic norms has been problematic in the Nigerian polity. Indeed electoral violence has become a clog in the wheel of democratic progress as violence always manifest at all the three stages of election process: pre-election, during the election and post-election period. However, myriads of factors are responsible for turbulent transfer of political power from one regime to another.

Electoral violence in the country is primarily due to the perception of politics and political office as investment and as an avenue for the acquisition of extraordinary wealth through corruption, which is otherwise not possible through any form of legitimate vocation and enterprise. As a result of this perception and reality, Nigerian politicians turn electioneering and elections into warfare in which violence and ethnic, religious and other forms of primordial sentiments and prejudices are employed. It is against this background that former President Olusegun Obasanjo counselled his party members to see the 2007 election as a do or die affair (Alemika, 2011).

Violence has been a feature of the country's electoral process since the colonial era. But during the colonial rule, they were easily curtailed due to the nature and scope of participation, characteristics of the politicians and electorates and the nature of colonial domination. However after independence, electoral violence became intense as struggle for power among politicians intensified.

The sources of violence in the Nigerian electoral process have been discussed by several jurists and scholars. Justice Sowemimo in his judgment in the treasonable felony against Obafemi Awolowo and his 'accomplices' observed that:

On the evidence before me, it would appear that politics generally in Nigeria has been conducted with a certain amount of bitterness. It appears that a person belonging to a party becomes an enemy of another who belongs to a rival political party. Political parties are equivalent ... to, warring camps- elections are conducted with party thugs protecting the campaigners and this state of affairs has been described to have assume a pitch that no method would be spared, however, vindictive or extreme by any rival political party as against another in order to score over one or another (cited in Anifowose, 1982).

Professor Billy Dudley (1961), a Nigerian political scientist, observed that in Nigeria, "the shortest cut to affluence and influence is through politics. Politics means money and money means politics ... to be a member of the Government party means open avenue to Government patronage, contract deals and the like". The implications of this are as follows:

- a. prebendal politics, in which political office is sought primarily for the aggrandizement of self, family members, associates and cronies, tend to become a preoccupation of the vast majority of the politicians and electorates;
- b. patron-client relationship becomes entrenched in the polity and economy;
- c. the logic and desire to belong to government party undermine the sustainability of viable opposition in the political system;
- d. instrumental use of violence by both ruling and opposition parties as an instrument of retaining or capturing power at elections independently or in contempt of electoral choices of the citizens at the poll.

According to Billy Dudley (1965), once the politicians recognize or know "the profitability of having power, the party (and the individual members) naturally uses the same governmental

machinery to stay in power. The leadership becomes a self-recruiting oligarchy-and no self-recruiting oligarchy has been known to tolerate opposition to itself'. In the circumstance, violence becomes an instrument for seeking, gaining and retaining political power. Ojo (2009) documented this, to him, a former Senate President, Adolphus Wabara opined:

Membership of the National Assembly is an investment because most of us sold our house to get to the Senate, but the ability to recoup whatever you spent legitimately that is the problem.

From the foregoing, the attractiveness of public office engenders investment mentality. Political investors and other major financiers of the political process for individuals seeking political office expend huge sum of money on the electoral process with expected returns. Therefore, no amount is too much to use in instigating electoral violence, even expending the lives of opponents and valueless youths

The nature of the Nigerian state and regimes contribute to endemic violence in the electoral process. According to Claude Ake (1996: 73):

The state is in effect privatized. It remains an enormous force but no longer a public force, no longer a reassuring presence guaranteeing the rule of law but a formidable threat to all except the few who control it, actually encouraging lawlessness and with little capacity to mediate conflicts in society .In the circumstance where the state is privatized, those in power will use violence and state repressive apparatuses to retain power. The people excluded from governance (especially in a society where politics is a license to oppress other citizens and to rob the public treasury with impunity) will resort to violence in their quest for office.

Nigerian political parties and politicians employ fraudulent and violent means. The Political Bureau reported that Nigerian politicians and parties rigged elections "in most blatant fashion ... violence, corruption, arson, and brigandage were employed in the mad desire to win and retain power both in the regions and at the centre" (Report of the Political Bureau 1987: 25). The Constitution Drafting Committee (1976: v) observes the country's politics is primarily geared towards securing "opportunity to acquire wealth and prestige, to be able to distribute benefits in the form of jobs, contracts, scholarships, and gifts of money and so on to one's relatives and political allies".

Ineffective law enforcement is another core contributory factor that encourages turbulent elections. Non enforcement of laws and non-adherence to same in the electoral process promotes violence during elections; due to lack of political will by the political class (Aluigba, 2008). Political actors, players, party supporters and political thugs violate the law that governs the rule of politicking with impunity due to inability of the government and other law enforcement bodies to compel obedience. It worthy to note that when the administrators of the political process is unwilling to enforce the rules, a lot of opportunities are created for violence and if the law does not prevail, it is tantamount to the absence of rules governing the conduct of elections (Smah, 2008 in Olayiwola.

2014). Therefore, the weak legal framework in Nigeria forms the fulcrum upon which the culture of violence is built and sustained resulting in violence, arson and assassination. As Aiyede observed, when the rule of law is weak, the judicial system becomes ineffective and there are ineffective penalties that make the probability of punishment of offenders low, thus, creating a fragile and corrupt system (Aiyede, 2007).

Poverty pervasiveness is another factor that hastens the occurrence of electoral violence in Nigeria (Usman, 2009). To Abiola and Olaopa (2008) the scourge of poverty in Nigeria is an incontrovertible fact which results in hunger, ignorance, malnutrition, diseases, unemployment as well as general level of human hopelessness. The massive poverty that engulfs the body polity is a great asset to the politicians. The alarming rate of unemployment gives youth away as willing tools for the perpetration of violence with little financial inducement. In the words of Danjibo and Oladeji (2007), the high spate of deprivation and human hopelessness of the Nigerian youths force them to take the readily available "job opportunity" –implementers of electoral violence. The endemic poverty easily plays the gullible youths into the hands of unscrupulous politicians, who manipulate them by dangling irresistible baits for the youths to undertake electoral violence (Usman, 2009). More often than not, political violence is paid for, used as a tool by prominent Nigerians to bolster their political and financial positions.

Rigging is also a predisposing factor that easily makes the entire process violent (Balogun, 2003). Experiences of the past conduct of elections reveal that subverting the electoral process through massive organized fraud do engender violent upheaval, before, during and after elections. The use of political thugs by politician to manoeuvre electoral process in perceived unfavoured areas does cause violence if resisted by the opposition or the citizenry. Also, when an unpopular candidate is declared the winner of an election, violence always greet such announcement. The Western Regional election of 1965-1966 that was characterized by wanton destruction of lives and properties is a reference. Also, violence greeted the announcement of 2007 gubernatorial elections in some states of the federation as a result of perceived rigging resulting into arson and loss of lives and properties. Curfew was imposed in part of Edo, Osun, Ondo, Kogi and Kano states to calm the violence (The Punch, 17 April 2007:8). Elections were later overturned in Edo, Ondo, Ekiti and Osun states.

The media indulgence in campaign of calumny, mudslinging and defamation or slanderous attack on other political actors cannot but be mentioned as a causative instrument for electoral violence. The media spread of sensational political and motivated opinions engender violence by succumbing to the influence of selfish politicians to use their outfit as propaganda launch pad (IRI, 2007). All the factors discussed above, though not exhaustive, are causal factors triggering election related violence in Nigeria. I will now turn to their implications for national development in Nigeria.

POST-ELECTORAL VIOLENCE AND IMPACT ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

In a democratic system where elections are devoid of crisis, long term disputes or political violence are amicably resolved. Such system enhances the prospect for political stability, peace, development and continuity in governance. But where elections are characterized by violence,

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thuggery, intimidation, rigging, ballot box snatching and stuffing and other forms of electoral malpractices, they bring to question the very essence of democracy and compromise the prospects for national development (Ighodalo, 2012).

One of the principal functions of the modern state is that of protecting the territorial integrity of the state, lives and property of its citizenry and upliftment of the human condition. In fact, the promotion of human security has become the central focus of the new development paradigm because building of arms and ammunitions do not bring peace, security and political stability. Eradicating poverty, hunger, diseases and maintenance of peace through sustainable development programmes, hold the key to an enduring national security. Thus, a country that invests heavily on human security, which is integral to national development, may not have to spend much money and efforts in fighting crimes like: kidnapping, human trafficking, bombing, student unrest, political assassination, etc (Ighodalo, 2012).

The Nigerian experience with general elections has shown that the political elite have not fully come to terms with the significance of elections for democratic sustenance and national development. More often than not, the elite have failed to play by the rules of competitive electoral politics which prioritizes politics of tolerance, conflict and consensus, bargaining and compromise. They see elections as warfare, characterized by gangsterism and political disorder. Political parties which organize for elections are also, like an armed band of men and women going to war, where there must be victors and the vanquished.

Elections have therefore become warfare, where it is a sin to lose. This dominant pattern of elections and electioneering threatens to tear the nation apart and put its tenuous peace at great risks. And these have been our experience with post-electoral violence in Nigeria. Taking cognizance of the foregoing, the implications of post-electoral violence on national development are examined as follows:

In the first instance, electoral violence breeds insecurity as it is often characterized by loss of lives and properties as was the case during the November 2008 political violence in Jos, Nigeria. Over 500 people were killed, thousands displaced and properties worth billions of naira were burnt, looted or destroyed. This same instance applies to post-electoral violence. There is equally the recent harvest of deaths, due to post-presidential election violence leading to many victims from the three days rioting in twelve Northern States. The election-related violence in the northern part of the country "following the April 16 presidential election left more than 800 people dead, Human Rights Watch said" (Awofadeji, 2011).

The post election deaths followed the widespread protest by the supporters of the main opposition candidate, Muhammed Buhari of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) over the re-election of President Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The political protest which started peacefully, soon degenerated into what has being variously described as sectarian killings, violent riots as well as political terrorism. This incidence of post-presidential election violence was witnessed in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara States. "Relief officials estimate that more than 65,000 people have been displaced. 'The April elections were heralded as among the fairest in Nigerian

history, but they also were among the bloodiest', said Corinne Dufka, Senior West African Researcher at Human Rights Watch" (Awofadeji, 2011). Ani (2012) noted that:

About 50 Corps Members were locked inside the Nigerian Christian Corps Fellowship (NCCF) Secretariat in the heart of Minna, the Niger State capital, by some youths protesting the results of the presidential election, and the building set on fire. But for the courage of one of the Corps Members, who forced the door open, all the 50 would have died. A female corps member who said she escaped miraculously told tales of how she and other corps members on electoral duty were forced to thumbprint for a particular party in Giade Local Government Area of Bauchi State, tortured and even fondled by the irate protesters, and how 11 of them were butchered like animals (The Nation 19 in Ani, 2012).

President Goodluck Jonathan stated that the post-presidential election violence reminds him of the "events which plunged our country into thirty months of an unfortunate civil war...

Indeed, the nation still bears some of the scars of other similar events like the aftermath of the June 12th 1993 elections that brought our polity to the brink of disintegration. Two decades after this incidence, centrifugal forces are still well entrenched in the Nigerian system. It is inconceivable therefore that there are some in our midst who seek to re-enact a stalemate in the political process" (Ani, 2012). The post-presidential election violence was unfortunate and condemnable.

In the face of post-election violence, both the police and the military showed lack of capacity to effectively control it, showing that despite earlier experiences of electoral violence they were not prepared. In some places they were implicated in the excessive use of force and other serious abuses while responding to the rioting and sectarian violence. Human Rights Watch documented eight cases of alleged unlawful killing of unarmed residents by the police and soldiers in the cities of Zaria and Kaduna, and received credible reports of more than a dozen other incidents (Human Rights Watch, 2011). These are critical signs of national failure that hampers people's peaceful existence in the state.

It was a sad signal that rather than improve on their attitude over elections, politicians are still desperate, their supporters even more so. While reacting on the case of the killings of youth corps, Wole Soyinka condemned it as a pre-meditated act. He stated that:

I was really shocked by the note of satisfaction, almost sadistic reaction at the killings... There was always a kind of glory in what was always going on, which made me wonder why we all call ourselves Nigerians. It makes me wonder whether we all have the same project in mind when we go to polls, or whether we all have the same destination in mind, when we embark on events" (Ani, 2012). The able-bodies wasted in senseless post-electoral violence and other types of crises in the country can no longer contribute to the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria.

In addition to the insecurity, there are attendant costs like increased security votes and the resources spent on repairs of damaged infrastructure. These resources could have been better spent on human and social development and such trends adversely affect the social and economic wellbeing of the country. It is axiomatic that development cannot occur in the absence of peace and security. The economy suffers in an atmosphere of insecurity and political instability. Added to the above is the fact that continued insecurity in the country has not only discouraged transnational corporations to invest, but has equally caused the established ones to divest by way of folding up their businesses (Afegbua, 2010 in Joshua, 2013). This is because investors are scared due to lack of security for their investment. Direct foreign investment (FDI) is thus often lost in such circumstances which have contributed to the state of underdevelopment in Nigeria. According to Clare Short, "Businesses have a strong interest in peace and security in the countries in which they are operating or might wish to operate". Without mincing words, all these situations described above negate peaceful coexistence, law and order. In addition to security concerns, they militate against the consolidation of democracy. This in turn impact on the social and economic well being of the nation and creates imbalances or instances of *structural violence* as propounded by Galtung in 1969 that could lead to escalated conflict as was the case with the Biafran War and consequently undermine effective national development as they hinder people's chances of leading full life in the polity.

In another dimension, political instability often arises due to inability of opposition and relevant actors in governance to resolve perceived or real grievances. Election related violence is both causative and symptomatic of political instability in Nigeria. It is symptomatic as it reflects an absolutely weak political system. It is also causative because it feeds the political crises that manifest regularly. Post-electoral violence therefore, if not properly addressed, could ultimately lead to *escalated violence*. Generally, political violence is incapable of building a strong, efficient and virile democratic nation (social development). It is anti-people because issues of human rights, gender equality, cultural rights and identities are often ignored or trampled upon. These adversely affect the human security and social development which are vital to national development (Ugiagbe, 2010).

Another effect of post-electoral violence is that it has helped propagate the ongoing cycle of violence in the country. Acts of violence impact negatively on the children living in such societies. In line with the social learning theory, such children would likely end up being violent (Bandura and Walters 1963 in Ugiagbe, 2010). The ongoing violence by youths in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria (which has witnessed considerable political violence) supports this. Moreover, acts of electoral violence are likely to result in hostile goals like "*the desire for revenge*" in political opponents which could lead to conflict escalation (Pruitt and Kim, 2004:109 in Ugiagbe, 2010). This perhaps explains why almost all political parties in Nigeria are involved in electoral violence.

The political unrest and spate of insecurity which have invaded parts of the Northern geo-political zone have their links to the disputed presidential elections in 2011. For the umpteenth time, it has shown that politics of tolerance and accommodation, bargaining and compromise are yet to be enthroned in the Fourth Republic politics. The aftermath of the general elections of 2011 continue to pose major threat to the socio-economic and political development of the country (Ighodalo, 2012). Meanwhile, politics of tolerance and accommodation, bargaining and compromise

remains pre-requisite for creating positive change in the self, the people, and the institutions and structures for national development. The absence of political efficacy and stability, economic efficiency and pervasive social development owing to the disruptions caused by post-electoral violence since independence till present, lays the continued elusive search for genuine national development in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is evident from this article that orgies of post -electoral violence have been a recurring decimal in Nigeria's election history. Thus, post- electoral violence poses a great threat to Nigeria's nascent democracy and consequently, her national development. To purge the body polity of the infestation of incessant post- electoral violence, it is important to recommend the following policy options as remedy to the menace of post-electoral violence. There is need for the political class in Nigeria to adhere to the provisions of the law through enforcement of the electoral law as stipulated in the Electoral Act to serve as deterrent to others as experiences have shown that politicians and security operatives shield perpetrators of violence over the years.

Politicians, godfathers and political thugs who err from the rule of politicking by heating up the polity with violence during electioneering period should be subjected to face the wrath of the law as no one ought to be above the law.

In the time past, political offices did not attract money as it is today. The government has made politics more financially attractive that nobody wants to engage in any other profession than politics. Thus, as it is now, the 109 senators receive ₦4,066,212,458.00. The 350 members of House of Representatives receive ₦11,496,523,333.00. The 36 State House of Assembly receive ₦17,129,465,597.00 while about 600 Councillors receive ₦74,766,456,000.00 per annum (Audu, 2010 in Bamgbose, 2012). Seeing these gargantuan benefits, Nigerians determine to enter into politics and win at all cost. To combat this ugly phenomenon of electoral violence, government should reduce the salaries and allowances of these political office holders. Nigerians are now aware of these robust pay packets and this is why there is a clamour for a reduction in their salaries and allowances in the recent times. However, there must be sincerity on the part of government with the demonstration of political will to implement this in the interest of Nigeria.

Moreover, the judiciary and the Independent National Electoral Commission should be truly independent of the influence of the political executive in order to operate efficiently without bias or prejudice. The mass media need to adhere to international standard of journalistic integrity by not been bias and avoiding partisan reporting during electioneering period. Improving on the economy is also essential; a country where poverty is pervasive and unemployment rate is high, poor and idle hands can easily be hired by politicians as political thugs to achieve their end. The paradigm for democratic peace is one that focuses attention on economic productivity (Smah, 2008 in Olayiwola, 2014). Strengthening and training of security agencies is also imperative.

Finally, the National Orientation Agency, the mass media, stakeholders and other relevant agencies should embark on massive and sustained civic education of the citizenry on the negative consequences of election related violence and the need to imbibe democratic ethos and principles. People should be educated to seek redress in the court rather than take laws into their hands. What exist in the nation today is that people cannot accept defeat without exhibiting the act of

violence. This is not good for democracy. The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon realised this recently when he pointed out that 'Democracy is premised on the ballot box and not on violence' (Ban Ki -moon, 2011). If these recommendations are taken with all seriousness, Nigeria is not far from been launched on the great pedestals of genuine national development.

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