



Research Article

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Examining the Implications of Political Thuggery on Electoral Process in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper focuses on examining the implications of Political Thuggery on Electoral Process in Nigeria. Its general objective is to examine the effects of political thuggery or violence on electoral process with inferences from Nigeria; with specific objectives to i). Identify the implications of Political Thuggery to national security, and ii). proffer policy-based recommendations including implementation strategies to curbing the anomalies. The paper achieved its objectives by adopting qualitative descriptive method of analysis; its instruments of data collection included secondary sources --books, newspapers, journals, internet, and observations of the trend of political activities in Nigeria. For Indepth understanding of the discourse, the paper made extrapolations from three (3) relevant notions: the notions of Democratic Culture, Vested Interest, and Legitimation-crisis. In its investigation, relevant finding or outcome was made. The finding revealed that there is a positive correlation between Political Thuggery and Electoral Process --that is, the more political thuggery increases, the more electoral process anomalies increase too. The paper therefore concluded that, political thuggery has negative implications to national security. A few recommendations were proffered: 1. Salaries of political officers should be reduced to make political office less attractive, thus making politics no more a "do or die" affair; inter alia.

Keywords: Politics; Thuggery; Political Thuggery; Violence; Political Violence; Election; Electoral Process

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Certainly, the problematique of any society that has embraced democratic ethos, especially a society whose democratic permissiveness is still fledgling, is where a nation's political class that should

imbibe the principle of leadership by example; on the obverse, due to vested interests, embrace illegitimate means of ascending to power where politics is no longer treated with the sacred *raison d'être* to serve the people and ameliorate the human condition, but it is rather perceived by the "Class State" (the selfish political class occupying public offices) as an opportunity for personal aggrandizement, hence they handle a noble profession like politics with the glove of a "Do or Die Affair" turning themselves to desperados who are ready to embrace any unholy Machiavellian *modus operandi* of the "end justifies the means" in grabbing political power. One of such illegitimate and ignoble Machiavellian *modus operandi* is the use of 'Political Thuggery or violence' to subdue and intimidate one's political opponent to ascend to power.

Peradventure, for an articulate intellectual treatise on the discourse; for starters, it is very germane we define the twin thematic variables that are interlinked in the paper title: that is, 'Political Thuggery' versus 'Electoral Process'. So to say, Umar et al. (2016) in their persuasion viewed it as, a social violence in which thugs are used to victimize, terrorise, or intimidate others during political activities. Electoral process, on the other hand, connotes the whole gamut of the constitutional arrangements for voting systems or procedures geared towards selecting candidates that will emerge as winners to hold public offices.

The phenomena of political thuggery/violence and its implications on electoral process is a global issue. That is, it cuts across spatial dimensions where its effects can be felt at transnational, regional and national frontiers. For instance, Birch (2020) observed that, there had been recent electoral violence in countries like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and Kenya, etc which were accompanied with high levels of conflict. In the same vein, in a popular advanced nation like U.S.A, Rhodes (2016) affirmed that, violence has long been a feature of American elections. Rhodes (2016) further posited that, the 2016 American presidential campaign had renewed concerns about specter of violence in American electoral politics as the campaign was marked by tense and violent altercations between supporters and critics of Republican nominee (Donald Trump). According to Rhodes (2016), Trump encouraged his supporters to "knock the crap" out of protesters and agreed he would pay any legal fees of his followers who assaulted his critics. At the regional level, Africa is not a safe haven for Political thuggery/violence, either. In Africa, while the frequency of elections and advancement towards democracy across the continent has generated optimism for multiparty politics, it has also led to worrisome trend of election-related violence which poses threat to peace and security on the continent (The Nordic African Institute, 2012/3). The countries in Africa that have demonstrated such elements of violence in their electoral processes include, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea, Madagascar, Senegal, Kenya, including Nigeria, etc. (The Nordic African Institute, 2012/3). In Cote D'Ivoire, for instance, the post-election violence after their 2010 polls led to more than 1000 civilian deaths, one million internally displaced people, and 100,000 refugees in neighboring countries (Birch, 2020). In Kenya, the electoral violence played out in forms of attacks and massacres against minorities, including widespread rape (Birch, 2020).

Nigeria is not excluded in this spate of electoral violence or thuggery. As Umar et al. (2016) noted, the menace of political thuggery has become detrimental to democratic sustainability in Nigerian politics in which thugs move mostly in groups terrorizing and injuring innocent citizens. This is anti-democracy. According to Omezue-Nnali (2020), every democratic government embraces the rule by the people for the good of all the people where citizens willfully choose their leaders to represent them in government without any use of force. On the contrary, a situation where power seekers apply the means of thuggery to intimidate people against their political will presupposes a resurgence of the Hobbesian *problematique* in which social order is elusive because man lived in the state of nature, very brutish, wicked and unreasonable. Unfortunately, the jobless youths are the vulnerable targets to be used by the perpetrators of political thuggery to unleash mayhem in society. Hence, study reveals that poverty, unemployment, financial attractiveness of electoral positions, the value system of wealth accumulation, and ineffective security agency, account for causes of the incidence of political thuggery in Nigeria (Aliyu, 2022). Historically, when General Abdulsalami

Abubakar took over the reins of power after the general election of 1999 that ushered in the fourth republic on May 29th 1999, there were high hopes that the burgeoning democracy that his administration ushered in would help flatten the curve of the menace of political violence in the country. Unfortunately, it is ironical that since the return to civilian rule, the nation has experienced incidences of political thuggery/violence at unprecedented levels. Perhaps, a few scenarios here would be very helpful: in Kwara state, as Osisioma (2007) revealed, supporters of the incumbent governor versus the leading gubernatorial candidate were involved in violent conflict which resulted in the killing of the state party chairman in August 2002. In another scenario, prominent politicians that lost their lives due to election related political violence include Chief Bola Ige of AD party while serving under PDP's government, Chief Harry Marshall (Vice Chairman of All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) South South), Asari Dikibo (Vice Chairman of PDP, South South), Luke Shigaba (Chairman of Bassa L.G.A, Kogi state) (Osisioma, 2007). Moreso, a former governor of Anambra state was kidnapped with the intention of forcing him out of power, the plot was executed by the late assistant inspector General of police, Mr. Raphael Ige, who claimed he acted on the basis of an "order from above" even as the principal perpetrators remain unknown (Adeleke, 2012). In 2007, political violence related to election was at epic proportions --Adeleke (2012:211) captured it with clear precision: "in Rivers state, a police station was attacked and burnt by unknown assailants a night before the election date in Anambra and Rivers state, voters were forced with intimidation and violence; in Ekiti state, there was confrontation between PDP and Action Congress supporters, and election results were blatantly falsified in the areas. Violence was equally reported in Northern state of Katsina where opposition supporters burnt down government buildings in protest at the announcement that PDP had swept the State's gubernatorial polls. Soldiers clashed with angry voters in Nasarawa state. In Oyo state, PDP thugs beat up opposition party officials and hijacked ballot paper boxes". Besides, the declaration of 2011 presidential election results in which former president Goodluck Jonathan emerged as the winner led to violence demonstrations in northern parts of the country where several people were attacked (Alfa & Otaida, 2012). Thus, the dynamics of the nature of the effects of political thuggery/violence in the electoral process of Nigeria with its concomitant implications to national security is quite cathedral, and cannot be exhausted here. We shall revisit it through the thematic outlines in the futherance of the discourse.

1.2 Objectives

The general objective of the paper is to examine the implications of political thuggery/violence on electoral process in Nigeria; however, its specific objectives include to, i). Identify the implications of political thuggery/violence to national security in Nigeria's geo-political space, ii). to proffer policy based recommendations and/or implementation strategies to mitigating its antinomies or consequences.

1.3 Scope

The study focuses on examining the implications of political thuggery on electoral process in Nigeria. It is limited to identifying the effects on electoral process, as well as its implications on national security with inferences from Nigeria; additionally, it includes identifying policy-based recommendations, including implementation strategies to mitigate the consequences.

1.4 Conceptual Clarifications

For an articulate and intellectual presentation of the discourse, there are a few terms or keywords that are frequently used. Some of them are semantic lingos or jargons in the epistemic space of politics. Ideal-typically, these terms ought to be demystified by way of operational explanations of the identified terms. These terms include, Politics, Thuggery, Political thuggery, Violence, Political Violence, Election, and Electoral process. We shall attend to them, in sequence.

1.4.1 Politics

Etimologically, the term "politics" sprang from Aristotle's classic work, "Politika", in which the Greek word, "Polis" refers to the "affairs of the city". To that, Politics could mean, the art of managing the affairs of the city or society. Harold Lasswell popular definition presents it as, "Who gets what, when, and how?" (Remi and Francis, 1999). To Leftwich (2015), Politics comprises all the activities of co-operation, negotiation and conflict within and between societies. Teleologically, Leftwich (2015) definition is more apt to capture the subject matter of politics. This is because it encapsulates both manifest and latent functions of politics which embraces "Political thuggery or violence" as part of the 'activities' of politics, speaking from Leftwichian (2015) frame of reference.

1.4.2 Thuggery

It connotes brutal or violent act of thugs. Thugs, on the other hand, refer to violent, lawless or vicious persons who commit crimes, who are hired by others (especially, power seekers) to carry out their "dirty jobs" (assassination, assaults, riots, or any form of violent act, etc) with the intent to protect their vested interests. Thuggery can also be defined as a violent behavior that is criminal or antisocial (behavior that is inimical to society). Originally, the word thuggery was pronounced as "Thuggee", which means actions and crimes carried out by thugs -- which, historically, refers to gangs of professional robbers and murderers in India (Los Angeles Times, 3 August 2003).

1.4.3 Political Thuggery

It connotes an organized act of violence, intimidation and blackmail directed against a political opponent to achieve a selfish political aim. Besides, it is a social violence in which thugs are used to victimize, terrorize, intimidate others during political activities. The phenomenon of political thuggery makes individuals to pose deadly threats by deterring other individuals to be active in political process and routine socio-economic activities at their homes, shops, and on the streets (Umar et al. 2016).

1.4.4 Violence

Simply defined, it is an application of force with the intention to inflict harm or injury in other people; an act of intended destruction towards others. According to World Health Organization (WHO), violence is a deliberate use of physical force or power, either by way of threatening or acted, directed against oneself, or another individual or against a group or community which either ends up into injury or any appearance of it, or into death, emotional harm or any form of deprivation or mal-development (WHO, 2014).

1.4.5 Political Violence

From the backdrop of the conceptualization of 'Politics' and 'Violence', Political Violence therefore connotes the use of force intended to harm, damage or injure others as a means of achieving political aim or power. According to WHO (2002), it is the deliberate use of power and force to achieve political goals. Political violence has the attributes of both physical and psychological acts aimed at injuring or intimidating others.

1.4.6 Election

To 'elect' means to select or make a decision. Simply defined, election is the process by which the electorates (qualified voters) select or elect candidates to represent them or their constituencies in

government. In a truly democratic society, elections are the popular means of attaining political power rather than use of force as seen in military in politics. According to Nachana et al. (2014), elections are only acceptable institutionalized process which enables members of the society to choose office holders, and its electoral process is what provides the electorates with the institutionalized framework for choosing their representatives.

1.4.7 Electoral Process

It connotes the whole gamut of the constitutional arrangements for the voting systems geared towards selecting candidates that will emerge as winners to hold public offices. Besides, it is a set of rules or procedures that determine how the results are determined. It usually has a body or institution whose function is to coordinate the electoral process to ensure a free and fair election -- that is the electoral commission. Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2006) highlighted the different phases of the electoral process to include: 1. Delimitation of electoral boundaries. 2. Registration of voters. 3. Notice of Elections. 4. Nomination of Candidates. 5. Election Campaigns. 6. Elections, Announcement of results and completion of tribunal sittings. 7. Participation of other organizations. 8. Resolution of electoral conflicts resulting from the participation of other organizations, peoples or groups, etc.

1.5 Methodology

The procedural plan and/or design for the paper entails the use of qualitative method of analyses in presenting the narrative. It also included the use of secondary sources of information: books, internet, newspapers, Journals, etc. Besides, observatory analyses of national events with regards to political issues of thuggery and electoral process were also employed. The outcome of the study, through its findings revealed a positive correlation between the two variables: that is, the more political thuggery/violence increases, the more its consequences on electoral process increase too; its findings or outcome as well revealed the implications Political thuggery portend to national security, and possible policy-based recommendations and/or implementation strategies to tackling the identified consequences.

2. Literature Review

Under this rubric, in line with the general and specific objectives of this paper, the key variables for discourse (Political thuggery and Electoral process) and their dynamics are addressed. To that, for a proper epistemic appreciation of the subject matter, the following thematic outlines or sub-themes are considered:

1. Electoral Process - An Overview
2. Politics and Political Thuggery --An Overview
3. The Role of the Political Class in abating Political thuggery/violence in Nigeria's Electoral process.
4. Effects of Political thuggery/violence on Electoral process in Nigeria.
5. Implications of Political thuggery/violence on National Security.

In what follows, the above adumbrated outlines are addressed, in sequence.

2.1 Electoral Process: An Overview

By way of conceptualization, the concept of electoral process connotes a method or procedure through which the people of a given country elect their representatives into various political offices or public offices. According to Alan (2015), it is a set of rules governing an election. Alan (2015) further posited that many scholars distinguish between three main elements of an electoral process

or systems --that is, the ballot structure (i.e, is it secret or open ballot); Constituency structure (i.e, how are the electorates grouped or divided into territorial or electoral districts); and the electoral formula (i.e, what type of electoral system will be employed --is it single member constituency and simple majority system; or Single member with preferential vote; or Proportional representative electoral system).

Typically, in Nigeria, part of the process is to appoint an electoral body to be in charge of the electoral procedure or process. This body is known as the 'Electoral Commission'. In Nigeria's chequered political history, the electoral commission has undergone through different designations under different regimes . For instance, it was known as 'Federal Electoral Commission' (FEDECO) during the Second Republic administration of late Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1979/83); known as 'National Electoral Commission' (NEC) during the aborted third republican election of 1993 of General Babangida (IBB) administration; and later became 'Independent National Electoral Commission' (INEC) during the fourth republican election under the administration of General Abdulsalami Abubakar. As Dibia (2018) posited, a typical electoral process, especially in Nigeria, embraces, but not limited to the following: establishment of an independent and impartial electoral body to oversee the electoral procedures; regular periodic elections; delimitation of the country into constituencies or electoral districts; registration of political parties; registration of qualified voters; stipulation of a particular voting system (secret or open ballot); provision of electoral materials; counting of votes and declaration of the winners, inter alia. Ademowu (2016) adroitly grouped these delineated electoral processes into phases as follows:

- The Pre-election Phase ---This entails delimitations, voters registration, registration of political parties, voter education, and campaign processes.
- Election Phase -- This includes the activities that take place on the election day, casting votes, counting of votes, and movement of election materials.
- Post Election Phase -- This starts from the close of polls on the election day, and then other activities after the election day. Also included here are, announcement of results and in some places post electoral disputes.

Although, the intention of any democratic country is to conduct a free and fair election whose electoral processes toe the ethos of democracy; as a matter of praxis, such expectations has rather been utopian, especially in Nigeria's chequered political history. This is because, to a large extent, there has always been manifestations of political thuggery or violence in the nation's electoral processes. So far in Nigeria, concern has been expressed by many about the increasing political violence or thuggery characterized by cases of assassinations and fighting between thugs hired by various political factions to intimidate their opponents. These have been major concerns of both international and local monitors of electoral processes in Nigeria. For instance, during the 2003 election in Nigeria, monitors from two USA institutions --the National Democratic Institute, and the Carter Centre -- in their pre-election assessment report, drew attention to the issues of political violence which they perceived might undermine the credibility of the elections. Particular concern expressed in the report, was the apparent absence of a 'well publicised national security plan' to tackle with the increasing wave of political violence (The New Humanitarian, 8 April 2003). Equally disturbing according to the report, was the outright rigging of votes by the powerful or the use of financial inducements to sway voters which has characterized Nigeria's electoral process (The New Humanitarian, 8 April 2003).

2.2 *Politics and political thuggery/violence: An overview*

The term "Politics" is a derivative of the Greek word, "Polis"; which means a 'city state'. A 'City-State', teleologically, suggests a politically organized society --that is, a body politic. The essence of such politically organized society is that a body of people called the 'government' are saddled with the authority to represent the people, make laws, and enforce them in a given state. Politics, therefore, deals with the state or political society and how the people are organized for law within a definite

territory. Hence, Appadorai (2003:4) defined Politics as, "the science concerned with the state, and the conditions essential to its existence and development". Harold Lasswell, in his own persuasion sees Politics as, 'Who gets What?, When?, and How?' (Farr et al. 2006). If one should provide heuristic answers to Harold's posers, it pre-supposes that politics concerns itself with, "Who (i.e, the elected representatives), What?(i.e, political power), When? (i.e, during periodic elections), and How?" (i.e, through constitutionally laid down electoral process). Typically, then, politics concerns itself with power acquisition through periodic elections by elected representatives who have undergone through the electoral process to emerge as winners to manage the affairs of the state.

In concrete historical terms, politics in Nigeria since the 1st Republic (1963 - present) has been characterized by violence. Perhaps, a few scenarios will at this point be very constructive: At the heels of Nigeria's attainment of Republican status in 1963, the federal election crisis of 1964 was on top gear. It was replete with all kinds of electoral inconsistencies -- there were reports of absence of electoral officers at the stations which prevented parties like United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) from filing their nomination papers (Dibie, 2018). UPGA protested to boycott the election; the crisis led to the incidence of 1964 election not taking place in some parts of the country; amidst the crisis, Nigeria National Alliance (NNA) of Ahmadu Bello was declared the winner who many parties disapproved. A faction of the crisis manifested itself at the Western Region election of 1965 -- with widespread malpractices and violence, burning of ballot boxes, arson, killing -- at the declaration of Chief Akintola (of AG and UPGA alliance) as the winner and premier of Western Region, while Adegbenro (his opponent representative of NNDP and NNA alliance) was arrested. That arrest sparked off violent demonstrations, rioting, chaos, and anarchy in the Western Region (Dibie, 2018). Thousands of lives were lost, many houses were burnt down. The violence was so severe and lasted long that it culminated into military take-over in 1966. On 15th January, 1966 an already crisis-bound Nigerian government was overthrown by a swift military coup d'etat (Sklar, 2014) led by Major Chukwuemeka Nzeogwu that later brought Aguiyi Ironsi to power. It was a bloody military putsch in Nigerian political history that some key political leaders in the likes of Alhaji Tafawa Balewa (the prime minister), Sir Ahmadu Bello (Premier of the Northern Region), Chief S. L Akintola (Premier of the Western Region), the minister of finance (Chief Okotie Eboh) and other top ranking army officers lost their lives. There were other subsequent coups that featured violence in Nigeria's chequered politics.

Political thuggery/violence is endemic in Nigerian politics. Political thuggery is a violent behavior usually used by politicians as a means to an end. It is defined as an organized act of violence, intimidation, and blackmail directed against a political opponent to achieve a selfish political ambition. Immediately after independence, the politicians in the bid to retain their political seats at the regions adopted undemocratic and barbaric style where they recruited and empowered thugs to harass, intimidate and victimize their opponents. A case in point is the 1962 Western Region crisis where factional parties were using thugs to harass one another that led to the deaths of many people in pogrom which necessitated federal government declaration of a state of emergency in the region (Dibie, 2018). Pathetically, most of these recruited thugs are unemployed youths who are used by the politicians to harass, intimidate, and victimize their opponents including disruption of the electoral process. As an ancillary to that, a snapshot of a blow by blow account of a few political thuggery/violence intended to disrupt the electoral process in various parts of the country during 2003 election as captured by the Human Rights Watch (2003) can at this point be very helpful, in what follows:

Circa, March 2, 2003 Enugu: ANPP gubernatorial candidate petitions the Nigerian Police regarding telephone calls threatening assassination if he does not give up.

Circa, March 3, 2003 Ebonyi: state chairman for the ANPP reports shooting attack on him while in vehicle.

Circa, March 4, 2003 Edo state: at least one person killed in PDP/ANPP clash after PDP state Governor's campaign convoy was attacked; buses and several houses burnt.

Circa, March 4, 2003 Ekiti: state ANPP leaders sustain injuries of from acid attack.

Circa, March 5, 2003 Abuja: Marshall Harry, ANPP vice Chairman for the South South shot dead in his Abuja residence.

Circa, March 6, 2003 Cross River: several supporters injured and four cars vandalized in an attack on ANPP Senatorial candidate's convoy.

Circa, March 7, 2003 Abuja: protests against Plateau state Governor comes under attack by State government thugs, leading to several injuries and destruction of vehicles.

Circa, March 10, 2003 Kebbi: PDP/ANPP clash in which two reported seriously injured, eleven homes burnt, fifty-three people arrested. Etc.

2.3 *The Role of the Political Class in Abating Political Thuggery or Violence in Nigeria's Electoral Process*

*"Political problems come from the fact that we are all subjects and yet we look upon other people and treat them as objects".
Marleau-Ponty (In, Ninalowo, 2004: 126).*

Paradoxically, Politics portrayed as a "dirty game" even by the politicians themselves speaks volume. That is to say, there is more to it than meets the eyes. To a large extent, it has a profound undertone that the litany of manifestoes by the political class at beginning of any electioneering campaigns do not spring from genuineness to serve the interest of the people but hinged on a vested interest of a particular class -- the political class. Buttressing this, Ninalowo (2004) in somewhat a comparative analysis between the game of politics in the advanced nations and the game of politics in peripheral social formations (nations of the Global South/Third World economies) like Nigeria, critically observed that, whereas in the advanced capitalist nations, economic power tends to precede political power (that is, those who seek for power in advanced nations are already wealthy trying to use their political positions to serve the interest of the people); but the equation seems to be reversed in the peripheral nations where people with comparatively humble economic means seek political office with the covert motive of enriching themselves or gain economic power once they assume office. The "lootomania" syndrome and money laundering that characterize the political mien of Nigerian political class, where several billions of dollars have been siphoned by them witnesses this. Thus, from an instrumentalistic point of view, assuming political office in the peripheral nations becomes a means to an end --to amass wealth and wield economic power. And in order to attain this economic power, the Nigerian political class is desperate to do anything to attain it including thuggery or any violent means. Especially, where historically, there has existed intra-elite rivalry; hence, a particular political rival can employ any violent means including thuggery to sideline his political opponent to achieve his vested interest. Thus, with the role of the political class in abating political thuggery as a means to ascend to power, circumstances of legitimation-crisis cannot but be heightened, particularly, since the moral justification of the claim to authority for rulership by those at the political commanding heights of the state is seriously questioned by the generality of the society (Ninalowo, 2004); more so, as popular vested interest (ie, interest of the masses) are hampered while parochial interest of a particular class (the political class) are superimposed on the people via intimidation or thuggery. It is useful to note that, such elements like use of thuggery or violence in electoral processes which manifest in terms of intimidation, force, threat, or killings etc. negate actual expressions of leadership and/or attainment of political power via legitimate means, as praxis. Typically, during campaigns for 2019 election, the allegation of gun-running and breeding of thugs leveled against a serving Senator is a pointer that a lot of the current crop of politicians in the country would stop at nothing to ensure that they emerge victorious at the polls (The Sun 25th March, 2018).

For a helpful epistemic articulation of the current sub-theme, the role of the political class in abating political thuggery/violence in Nigeria's electoral process can further be distilled and demonstrated with the notions of democratic culture, vested interest, and legitimation-crisis. We shall see this in a moment:

2.3.1 Democratic Culture

The notion of democratic culture suggests an ambience of democratic permissiveness, where the popular will of the people is held sacrosanct, having evidence of strict adherence to the rule of law, and the sanctity of fundamental human rights hold sway. Antithetically, this ethos only hold in principle; in praxis, a situation where those vying for power, instead of seeking the popular will of the people, are rather employing barbaric means of use of political thuggery or violence where the inalienable rights of the citizenry are at risks, to win an election, is no longer a credible electoral process conducted in an atmosphere of democratic culture.

2.3.2 Vested Interest

According to David Hume, it is a condition of "selfishness and limited generosity" (Ninalowo, 2004:10) as opposed to others' interests. Thus, the litany of manifestoes usually recited by the politicians during campaigns are mere facade that hides their vested interests. Since the vested interests of the political class is to use the means of political office to acquire economic power by looting and converting the public treasury into private hands; therefore, they use thuggery or violence to intimidate or sideline any potential obstacle or opponent that stands in their way to power, thereby increasing the rate of violence and insecurities in the state during elections. Supporting this, Punch (4th September, 2018) stated that politicians are largely responsible for the political causes of violence by breeding thugs and arming them.

2.3.3 Legitimation-crisis

To be legitimate presupposes what is popularly accepted or approved by all as right. Legitimation-crisis, on the other hand, suggests a rupture between "what is" (present hour reality) and "what ought to be" (the ideal). A situation where the political class or those vying for power makes the polity "ungovernable" (organized anarchy) with the use of political thuggery/violence, where the Electoral Commission charged with the sacred duties to independently conduct a free and fair electoral process is no longer truly independent as it succumbs to the whims and shenanigans of the politicians due to intimidation and risk of life, is tantamount to legitimation-crisis of the electoral process! --a rupture between what is, and what ought to be: unfortunately, that is the bane of the electoral process in Nigeria due to the vested interests of the political class.

2.4 Effects of Political Thuggery on Election Process in Nigeria

According to Agba et al. (2010), political thuggery increases crime rate and the emergence of lack of credible candidates in elections, and thus it is a threat to the achievement of democratic dividends and the individual rights in Nigeria. It has been the bane of public accountability and fuels the embers of despotism or authoritarian tendencies among the political class as they have become "untouchables" surrounding themselves with thugs. In view of the foregoing, the effects of political thuggery/violence on Nigeria's electoral process include as follows:

1. Encourages limitations to independence of INEC. With the menace of political thuggery, INEC succumbs to the pressures of the politicians and falsifies election results, hence not truly independent as praxis.
2. Encourages electoral passivism: as a result of fear and intimidation, individuals develop apathy to political activities, and hence shy away from electoral process.
3. No guarantee for fundamental human rights as people are intimidated from speaking their mind.
4. It encourages loss of lives and properties.
5. Encourages despotism and lack of public accountability.

3. Implications to National Security

Indeed, with the prevalence of lapses in the observance of the rule of law and democratic culture due to the spate of political thuggery or violence that tends to rupture the electoral process, what obtains in actual terms could perhaps, properly be characterized as "organized anarchy" (Ninalowo, 2004:28). That is, a situation of high levels of anomie characterized by disorderliness, high rates of normlessness and generalized moral decadence that reproduces itself into, killings, threats to lives and properties, etc. And sadly, there is neither a coordinated efforts of the state nor a discernible plan to address the root causes of the menace of thuggery/violence in the nation. Worse still, the passivity of government in bringing the offenders to book has led to the escalation of the menace (Punch 4 September, 2018). Its implications to national security are very broad. Typically, Ibok and Ogar (2018) affirmed that, it has retarded the performance of other sectors of the economy-- especially, the security, social and economic transformation of the nation. For instance, political thuggery/violence militates against foreign and domestic investments, hence preventing economic growth and development (Bassey et al. 2018). Besides, between 2003 and 2005 over 3000 people died in election related violence in Niger Delta (Segun, 2013). Thus, it is a serious threat to lives. In sum of the foregoing, its implications to national security are delineated as follows:

1. It breeds an atmosphere of insecurities, hence discourages foreign investors that would help the nation's economic growth.
2. A chain reaction effect on reproduction of more crimes: the arms given to the hired thugs are never taken from them; after election they use the arms to commit more crimes.
3. Encourages election of unqualified political class who may be passive to protection of lives and properties.
4. Encourages loss of lives of innocent citizens.

4. Conclusion, Recommendations/Implementation Strategies

Political thuggery has a global deleterious effects on the electoral processes, including in Nigeria. From the investigation of the paper, its findings reveal that there is a positive correlation between political thuggery and electoral process: the more political thuggery increases, the more its negative effects on the electoral process. The paper therefore concludes that, the phenomenon of political thuggery has a serious implications to national security if not curbed. And therefore, recommends as follows:

4.1 Recommendations

1. Salaries of political officers should be reduced to make the position less attractive.
Implementation strategy: the National Assembly should enact the above proposal into law to make it binding and practicable.
2. The security agents should embark on nationwide mop up of arms from unauthorized possessors of arms.
Implementation strategy: the Judiciary should issue a search warrant for unauthorized arms possessors and be ready to punish offenders.
3. Job creation for the jobless youths who are vulnerable targets of the politicians.
Implementation strategy: government should embark on industrialization drive and boost the private sector.
4. Government should be responsive and responsible to the people.
Implementation strategy: National Assembly should enact into law that any government that has lost people's approval should resign.

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