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Coping Strategies of Victims of Political Violence: A Sociological study of Victims of the 1983 General elections in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigates the coping strategies employed by victims of the 1983 general elections in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, to deal with the impact of political violence. The study used a qualitative research design and an in-depth interview guide to elicit responses from thirty-three respondents. The theories of Frustration/Aggression, Anomie, and Social Capital served as the conceptual framework. The findings revealed that people turn to the web of social capital they have cultivated over time to cope with the effects of political violence. Moreover, respondents also used changing occupations, relocating from places of victimisation, and reducing spending as coping strategies. Further studies on the coping strategies of victims of political violence during the 1983 general elections and the effects of which are known to be profound, and the need for authorities to explore a genuine platform for reparation, discussion and compensation of victims to hasten the process of national healing were recommended.

Keywords: anomie, coping strategies, elections, frustration, political violence, reparation.

IJOGSE 2026

Introduction

Violent behaviour as a means of settling conflict and resolving disputes is as old as man. Violence can take different forms: religious, political, domestic, physical, or collective. It can manifest in the form of lynching, war, genocide, tyranny, colonialism, slavery, mobbing, terrorism, killing, raping, arson, etc. However, a common thread runs through them all: the political basis of violence. Put differently, all violence is inherently or manifestly political.

Political violence permeates all human societies and social formations. This is true at least of terrorism, which is considered the most publicised form of political violence and which could masquerade as religious or ideological. From the Baader-Meinhof in Germany, to the Irish Republic Army (IRA) in Ireland, The Red Army of the old Russia, the Bekaa valley union of Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organization of Palestine (Forsynth, 2002) on through to the Al-Qaeda, and coming home to the Boko Haram and other ethnic militias inclusive of

the Niger Delta militias, they all have one constant straddling through them which bothers on the political.

Nigeria has had its own share of political violence. From the various uprisings and riots of the colonial era, to the wild wild west of the First Republic, the civil war, the various coup-détats, "wet e" of the Second Republic, the June 12 rebellion of the Third Republic, to the "Sai-baba" of the present democratic experiment, it had been a tale of wanton destruction of property, loss of human lives, ethnic cleansing and profiling, war, famine, displacement of people and forced migration.

Political violence usually has untold effects on its victims, which include people, families, communities and other larger social formations. It is through an understanding of the effects of political violence on its victims that a penetrating insight into how victims can cope and the strategies they employ could be gained.

Coping with the effects of political violence by victims, as indicated earlier, is a relatively new field of endeavour. After the Second World War, which claimed millions of casualties and victimised so many people, the need for a systematic and scientific body of knowledge to understand the effects of political violence on victims and how they would be reintegrated back into normal social life became essential.

To cope with the effects of political violence, victims might adopt various strategies. Victim herein is conceived both at the physical level of the individual and the abstract level of the society. Silence, remembering and forgetting, memorialization, reparation (Ndlovu, 2010), imagining home, sanctuarilisation, social capital, social support (Cairns & Wilson, 1989), Habermasianism (truth commissions), political intervention (political bureau and state creation), informalisation, etc. are some of the strategies that have been adopted to deal with the effects of political violence.

The political history of Nigeria is fraught with crisis. This is consistent with Egwu (2001), who argues that the Nigerian state is inherently a violent institution and to that extent a crisis generating mechanism. The period of colonial domination in Nigeria by the British triggered violent protest from Nigeria nationalists who were seeking to change the old order. The Aba Women's Riot of 1929 and the 1946 general strike organised by the militant group, the Zikist Movement, were both manifestations of the presence of violence in the structural composition of Nigeria. The colonial government responded to these uprisings with state-sponsored

IJOGSE 2026

violence, since it controlled the apparatus of force. Even the political system's composition and character were essentially conflict laden. Ake (1995) captures this succinctly when he traced the problem of democracy and governance in Africa to the political legacy of colonialism. By the time independence was gained in 1960, nationalist politicians had sown enough distrust that their only objective was to grab political power. Politics was reduced to the crude mechanics of opposing forces driven by the calculus of power.

Post-independence politics in Nigeria mirrored the colonial system. The colonial system, in (Ake, 1995), views controls everything and interferes in all things. This craze for power later heightened competition among politicians to the point that politics assumes the character of warfare. For Olurode (1990), preparing for elections in Nigeria is akin to preparing for war.

Nigeria's political landscape in the 60s was likened to the Hobbesian pre-political state, where all claims are arbitrary, and all rights are only powers (Ake, 1995). Even the military incursions and forays into politics had been explained from the perspective of violence as against the often-bandied reason of cleaning the mess of politicians.

The build-up to the 1983 general elections among the gladiators of the time was highly problematic and promised to ignite another round of violence and rekindle old rivalries. First Republic politicians like Awolowo and Azikiwe et al. were still around, with their different ideologies and worldviews, and were hell bent on ruling the country. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), the election management body charged with conducting the election, was not truly independent and lacked control over critical aspects of the political process. Political parties hotly disputed the number of prospective voters it claimed to register. Visible anger among the citizenry was fueled by widespread unemployment and biting austerity measures, as well as internal wrangling within some parties. This was higher in the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), which controlled the South West, leading dissenting members to cross the carpet to other parties.

The build-up to the election was violence-laden. Houses of opposition party members were burnt; their means of livelihood destroyed, lives lost, raping and arson became the order of the day, therefore setting the stage for a violent- prone election. By the time the election was held, the result was hotly contested, triggering another round of rioting at the state level. At the national level, the notion of two-thirds ($^2/_3$) became the bone of contention between Shagari of

IJOGSE 2026

the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and Awolowo of UPN. President Shehu Shagari later won the legal battle.

The political economy approach to understanding politics can also explain violence in Nigeria. That is how violence set in and remained a recurrent feature in our national life. When the Nigerian economy was based on cash crops, many producers (farmers) existed. Then, peasants were more powerful than the political class because they controlled the income. But with petroleum rent, wealth became centralised, and politicians no longer needed the peasants. They had no weapons of retaliation against politicians if they rigged elections, except to resort to violence. (Olurode, 1990). Needless to say, it was under this appalling and terrible situation that the election was conducted in 1983.

The above is not to insinuate that violence became moribund in Nigeria with the demise of the Second Republic. That is, after the 1983 general election, far from it. The Buhari Putsch that overthrew the Shagari regime was short-lived. It would later be sacked by the Babangida administration that bequeathed a long-lasting legacy of state-sponsored violence, policy somersaults, and the unleashing of a terror machine on the citizenry, especially the vociferous and the critical. He would crown his misrule with the annulment of a free and fair election. The uprising and rebellion that attended the cancellation of the June 12 Presidential election claimed many lives and created many victims. Then came the ultimate dictator, General Sanni Abacha, who sought to transition to a civilian Presidency. Abacha bested many of his contemporaries in terms of perpetration of violence and state-sponsored terrorism. The killings of Kudirat Abiola (wife of presumed winner of the 1993 election) and Pa Alfred Rewane, the attempt on the lives of Abraham Adesanya, Alex Ibru etc., the bombing of Lagos, State murder of Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (M.O.S.O.P), imprisonment of notable members of the civil societies, jailing of senior military officers under trump up charges of coup attempt (Obasanjo, Diya, Gwadabe, Fadile and Shehu Yaradua-who later lost his life), hounding members of opposition out of the country and thinning the political space and playing politics of exclusion by having the five political parties he registered to adopt him as their sole and consensus presidential candidate all point to his totalitarian and machiavellian orientation.

When he died, General Abubakar Abdulsalam took over and held an election in 1999 that brought Olusegun Obasanjo back to power as a civilian President. Between 1999 and 2007,

IJOGSE 2026

political violence did not abate. Several political assassinations, like that of Bola Ige, the then Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation, Harry Marshal, Dokunbo, Funsho Williams, the Igwes and many others, took place. There was the rise of ethnic militias like OPC, Bakassi boys, MEND, Egbesu boys, NDVF and others that terrorized the people and government of Nigeria and also became a law unto themselves. Bombing, kidnapping, organised robberies and other violent crimes became rampant and rife. Irregularities and massive rigging characterised the elections of 2003 and 2007, thus denying the government legitimacy, hence making the proclivity of violence perpetually lurking on the horizon.

It is against this background of Nigeria as a violent institution that this study is predicated to extend the frontier of investigation to identify the effects of political violence on its victims and examine the mechanisms victims adopt to cope with these effects.

Statement of the Problem

Marks (1993)'s seminal work on John Dulles, a former U.S. Secretary of State, opined that of all tasks of government, the most basic is to protect its citizens from violence. This succinctly captures the thrust of this study's problem. The operative words derivable from the quotation above are emphasised. Government, which may symbolise the super-organic à la (Spencer, 1969), can be a perpetrator of violence or a victim. The citizens may also be a recipient of violence or a giver. Hence, this study examines how both the individual and society, as victims of violence, respond to attain positive closure. Therefore, the problematique of this research work is centered on coping strategies of victims of political violence: A sociological study of victims of the 1983 General elections in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this research study is to investigate the effects of political violence on victims and, by extension, to identify the mechanisms they employed to attain closure and reintegrate into normal social life.

Apart from the major research objective, there are also some specific objectives, which include:

(i) Provide understanding of the concept of political violence within the context of the Nigerian state.

(ii) Provide theoretical perspectives on how victims of political violence could be adaptive.

IJOGSE 2026

(iii) Identify other mechanisms and strategies by which victims of political violence might cope with their affliction or attain social integration

(iv) Contribute to the growing literature in the emerging field of study called Victimology.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study defines its bounds. This research focused on analysing victims of political violence during the 1983 general election in Ibadan, Oyo State. Those studied are residents of Ibadan who were politically victimised during the 1983 general elections or those who, though, did not experience victimisation directly but were themselves second-generation victims. Hence, we are talking about a sample size of thirty-three drawn from the eleven local government areas that make up Ibadan.

Literature Review

Political Violence: Conceptual Exploration

Conflict can exist when interests clash between one person and another, or between one group and another. To resolve conflict, people may resort to several mechanisms, including dialogue, litigation, inaction, and violence. In this view, violence becomes a means of resolving conflict. (Dahrendorf, 1958), following in the tradition of (Coser, 1968) had argued that violent conflict is a particular kind of interaction marked by efforts at hindering rivals, hence violence is a means of identifying the imperfections of a plural society and of suggesting remedies to remove or solve the problems of inequality, marginalization, exploitation, internal colonialism and the misuse of majoritarian democracy and national government in a prejudicial manner (cited in Osaghae, 2001; 30 and Azeez, 2005; 20). However, this classical conception of violence from the standpoint of functionalism cannot suffice in developing nations like Nigeria, where political violence tends to deepen social cleavages.

Anifowoshe (1982) in striving to define political violence, recognised the futility of a consensual conceptualisation. Danzinger (1998) viewed political violence as the use of violence by the state as an order maintenance activity. Honderish (1989) defined it as considerable use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law, directed to a change in the politics, personnel or system of government and hence also directed in the existence of individuals in the society and perhaps other societies. As broad as this definition of political violence is, it places too much emphasis on the use of force, which presupposes

IJOGSE 2026

that acts that are not overtly physical or forceful but are deadly in their effect are excluded under this conception. For example, chemical and biological weapons used as an instrument of war could be more deadly than a bomb, whereas the latter is more physical and overt. Honderish failed to consider the victims in his conception. Charles Tilly would, however, blur the lines between violence and political violence in his own definition when he opined that collective violence flows regularly from the political process. However, he failed to define violence itself. Along this line, some other scholars also followed Tilly, though in a more daring manner. Smith, in Anifowoshe (1982) is of the view that violence and the threat of violence has a dimension of both national and international politics. Adedimeji (2005) captures this dilemma effectively when he professed that virtually all violence is political.

It is against this premise that an effective definition of violence, viewed as political violence or vice versa, can be harnessed. (Anifowoshe, 1982) Anifowoshe attempted an overarching conception of political violence that many writers have adopted as a classic rallying point for understanding the concept. He defines political violence as the use or threat of physical act carried out by an individual or individuals within a political system against another individual or individuals, and/or property, with the intent to cause injury or death to persons and/or damage or destruction to property and whose objectives, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation, and effects have political significance that is, tend to modify the behaviour of others in the existing arrangement of power structure that has some consequences for the political system.

Aetiology of Violence

Having settled the conceptual issues involved in political violence, it is pertinent to turn to its causation, which will be undertaken from a purely theoretical perspective.

The killer-ape thesis, otherwise called the biological thesis, posits that the cause of violence in human behaviour is rooted in their biological composition. That is, there is something like man that predisposes him to violent behaviour. For Sedelberg (1994), human beings are naturally programmed towards violence, and because we are programmed this way, this is a valid explanation for the causes of violence. Another theorist who aligned with this proposition is the Italian Cesare Lombroso, in his theoretical variant labelled born criminals. This hypothesis holds that discontent has no meaning because it is the starting point. However, this hypothesis has been criticised on the basis that it assumes human beings have

IJOGSE 2026

no choice in matters of political violence. That is, it fails to explain why some people tend to violence, and others do not.

The need to cover up the inadequacies of the killer-ape thesis led to the emergence of the cherry-pie thesis. This work is sociological. That is, it traces the cause of violent behaviours to the environment and rejects the view that biology plays a crucial role in causing violent acts. (Sedelberg, 1998: pg 102) opines that we are violent because of our culture. He averred that we exhibit violent behaviour because of our socio-economic status, where we live or the era we live in.

Coping strategies of victims of political violence

Coping is defined as a process through which people try to understand, make sense of, and deal with personal or circumstantial critical situations (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984 cited in Thabet et-al, 2011). However, to understand the coping strategies employed by victims to deal with the effects of political violence, it is pertinent to understand the concept of victim. Only after properly conceptualising the victim can one appreciate the effects it has on them.

The concept of victim gained prominence during the Second World War, when many people were traumatised. It was, however, not until the 1973 symposium on victimology that deliberate effort was made to understand the sociology of the victims of crime and human rights abuse (Kirchhoff, 2007). Violence usually brings traumatic consequences to its victims. Also, the traumatic effects on victims can be passed on from one generation to another in a process which Weingarten (2001) referred to as inter-generational transmission or vertical transmission of intergenerational trauma, in the words of Daniel (1998). With this line of reasoning, the second-generation victims might take up the role of seeking justice, compensation or correcting the wrong for what had happened to their parents (Volken, 2001). There is some agreement among scholars on the mechanisms through which children may be exposed to the trauma of their parents, and they are (i) biological (ii) Familial (iii) societal and (iv) Psychological.

When one generation fails to repair the damage caused by trauma, the next generation may feel entitled to do so (Volken, 2001).

Silence: Silence is an important strategy of coping with political violence and a crucial mechanism for passing trauma from one generation to the next. There are various ways to theorise silence. It can be considered as an absence of communication; on the other hand,

IJOGSE 2026

silence can be a communicative act in itself (Sheriff, 2000; Weingarten, 2004). If we view social memory as a politically motivated representation of the past that requires collective forgetting, silence may not always signify a lack of knowledge about an issue; it may, instead, be an adaptation to power by less powerful groups whose ideology is not accepted. Brockmeier, (2002); Olick, (1998) believe that those with power can silence any views different from their own. In this sense, silence may be relative: a louder dominant ideology can silence other ideologies, and power shapes what is remembered collectively and what counts as silence (Brockmeier, 2002; Olick, 1998). Sheriff (2000) theorises silence as cultural censorship. Silence as cultural censorship, he argues, is not a signifier of a lack of knowledge about an issue but rather a choice. By highlighting the agency of communities that choose not to speak about issues they know about, Sheriff (2000) argues that choosing silence does not mean the issue is insignificant or that they accept dominant ideology; it is a form of forgetting. People may therefore choose to forget within the struggle of what is considered politically and socially memorable. When we consider silence as cultural censorship, it is not so much political power that determines what is said and what is not, but rather collaboration within a community that is aware of issues yet chooses silence as an adaptation or a form of resistance to power. For example, silence enforced by cultural censorship may represent a defence mechanism; people may choose to be silent about their trauma as a way of containing the effects that such narration may bring (Sheriff, 2000).

Remembering and Forgetting: The events we remember from history are not a representation of what occurred but an interpretation of those events. Memory, therefore, from this point of view is not merely a recounting of history but an interpretive act of making sense out of history (Brockmeier, 2002; Freeman, 1993; Olick, 1998; Posel and Simpson, 2002; Ricouer, 1984). Memory as an interpretive act means that people incorporate events they consider significant and meaningful into memory, while leaving others out. Freeman (1993) says historical knowledge should never be judged according to its correspondence to events of the past but as an interpretation of what those events mean, as memories of the past are not memories of facts but of imaginings of the facts. Meaningful past events are pieced together into a trajectory that justifies the present and enables projection into the future. In this sense, memory provides meaning through which people can make sense of their present and anticipate or project what the future could or should be. When considering remembering and

IJOGSE 2026

forgetting, it is crucial to examine those facts. People will contest what counts as valuable memory and what does not. People also struggle over what is considered socially memorable and what is not. (Sheriff, 2000). Brockmeier (2002) says it is not just an issue of what is remembered but the kind of knowledge and its effects on behaviour and character that is of greater significance. Memory thus drives struggles over what to remember and what to forget, and what those choices are perceived to mean. In contestations over what is forgotten and what is remembered, some versions of the past may therefore not be admitted as truth. Varying interests in the present lead to these contestations of what is remembered.

Memorialization: Memorialization refers to the construction of memorials such as plaques, museums and monuments. Other memorials include days of commemoration and the naming of streets, schools, towns, and cities, etc., to preserve the memory of the past (Sigsworth, 2008). As already discussed, memory is theorised as an active process of making meaning of past events. Memory is therefore not fixed and is sometimes contested.

Reparation: Reparations are measures aimed at recognising or publicly acknowledging the harm done to individuals and communities during periods of conflict or repression (Sigsworth, 2008). Hamber and Palmary (2009) say that reparations are the things done or given as an attempt to deal with the consequences of political violence or benefits that are given to people who have suffered atrocity. Reparations are said to play an important role in healing, bereavement and addressing trauma, as they can symbolically acknowledge and recognise a person's suffering (Hamber, 2000). Reparations can be compensatory, restitutionary, rehabilitative and /or symbolic in nature, and be individual or collective. While reparations may be given as a form of paying back for loss or damage done, they can never bring back the loved ones who have died or disappeared. Hamber (2000) calls this repairing the irreparable. Reparations, therefore, face the dilemma that victims may never accept them as enough. Symbolic reparations take different forms. Hamber and Palmary (2009) opine that an apology may constitute symbolic reparation. Other symbolic reparations include reburials, memorials such as museums, renaming streets, establishing remembrance days, and erecting statues and monuments. Reparations may symbolise the memory of a loved one as well as something about the one giving the reparation, such as an admission of guilt (Hamber and Palmary, 2009). In this regard, symbolic reparations should be given with awareness of the meanings attached to the violence, as they symbolise what was lost as well as the person

IJOGSE 2026

giving the reparation. For example, where violence is understood to have been intentionally targeted, an apology may be the required symbolic reparation. At the same time, if people lost their lives in a conflict considered legitimate, for example, fighting to defend the nation, a memorial may suffice. On a macro level, reparations can represent society's willingness to deal with and part from the past in that they represent an acknowledgement that the events occurred and there is a commitment to right the wrongs of the past (Hamber, 2000).

Theoretical Framework

- **The theory of Social Capital**

Social capital refers to the aggregate of connections and relationships linked together in a network of social relationships. The theory of social capital gained prominence through the work of Robert Putnam, a political scientist at Harvard University, in his book Bowling Alone. However, other variants of the concept exist, especially in the work of Pierre Bourdineau. John Dewey pioneered the term in 1899. Hanifan (1916) followed suit, using the term to describe the mechanics of mobilising local support for rural schools. By the 1960s, another scholar, Jane Jacobs, used the term in her work, though she did not give it an explicit definition. Despite this, her explanation of the concept did not lack the value of a network of relationships. In 1969, Robert Salisbury used the term extensively to explain his main theory, the exchange theory of interest groups. Bourdieu (1971) made his own debutant use of the concept and later clarified it in what could be regarded as a brilliant theorisation. This is underscored by the adoption of his theoretical viewpoints by other scholars such as James Coleman, Barry Wellman, and others. By the 1990s, the concept had assumed such a gargantuan dimension that the World Bank studied it. It culminated in Robert Putnam's work. Putnam's variant of social capital derives essentially from classical functionalism because his conception centres on the need for social solidarity, which is also the thrust of functionalism. Putnam himself acceded to his functional orientation in his book, Bowling Alone (2000; pp. 858- 859), where he refers to Émile Durkheim's classical studies on suicide, in which he concluded that a lack of social capital can have negative effects such as an increase in suicide rates (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008).

Central to social capital is the idea that people can treat their connection and relationship with others as an important resource. Those individuals tend to call on family, friends, and relatives

IJOGSE 2026

when they face problems, confront challenges, or make changes in their lives. That group of people band together to pursue common interests (Scott, 2006). Putnam himself asserts that the core idea of social capital theory is that social network has value. That social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and group (Putnam, 2000). Proponents of social capital hold that social relationships are assets that people must treasure and value. Apart from this, social capital also serves a wider public interest, and there will be societal decline when social capital itself declines. Hence, when we talk about social capital, we are essentially referring to the relationships that exist in social organisations and groups like clubs, political parties, team sports, community-based organisations (CBOs), descendants' unions, parent/ teacher associations, community development associations, etc.

Social capital can benefit both the individual and society. Putnam believes that individuals with high social capital tend to be happier and healthier than those with low social capital. Also, a strong network or web of social capital will form mutual obligation between people; that is, people feel obliged to be helpful and to act morally towards others they have been involved in a social network.

Putnam also tries to categorise social capital into two types that parallel the typologies of social formation. The concern with types of societies has preoccupied sociologists from the classical period to the present day. Hence, exist organic and mechanical solidarity (Durkheim),, traditional and legal-rational (Weber), Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft (Tönnies), capitalist and communist societies (Marx), and the Folk and Mass society (Redfield), among others. One common element in all these societal variants is that one is simple, rustic, largely traditional, and rural, while the other is complex, modern, and largely industrial. Putnam contends that in simple societies, people behave well towards others in dense social networks in the expectation that others will behave well towards them.

Materials and Methods

The research design adopted for this study was qualitative. This design was adopted because the study relied exclusively on logic and qualitative data collection. A non-probability sampling method was employed. Specifically, snowball sampling was used because the target participants were already defined. That is, those who experienced political violence firsthand during the 1983 elections.

IJOGSE 2026

Although the adopted design strategy may have limited external validity, it yielded robust data and an in-depth understanding of the study's critical variables. In this study, the in-depth interview method was used to collect data from the respondents. The interview guide, which detailed the questions, was used to elicit responses from the respondents.

To ensure the data were reliable and valid, the instrument was unstructured so respondents could freely recall their experiences and have enough flexibility to marshal their responses effectively.

The sample size for the study are thirty-three (33) local government which comprises the total number of local government areas in Oyo State; of these, eleven fall within Ibadan. Of the eleven local government areas in Ibadan, six are in suburban or rural areas, while the remaining five are within the Ibadan metropolis. Three people were sampled in each of the eleven local governments in Ibadan. The local governments are Lagelu, Egbeda, Akinyele, Iddo, Oluyole, and Ona Ara (rural); Ibadan North, Ibadan North East, Ibadan North West, Ibadan South East, and Ibadan South West (urban).

This study used the snowball sampling technique, and content analysis was used to analyse the collected data.

Discussions of Findings

This study aims to describe the coping strategies of victims of political violence during the 1983 general elections in Ibadan. It is interesting to note that the strategies employed by respondents in this study differed significantly from the coping mechanisms adopted by respondents in some previously conducted studies discussed extensively in our literature review. This study's conjectures are premised on coping strategies such as memorialisation, remembering and forgetting, imagining home, reparation, silence, open apologies, and other forms of outward communicative action.

However, the reality on the ground produced entirely different coping mechanisms, such as financial adjustments, relocation, change of occupation, religiosity, and turning to family, relatives, and friends for assistance and bail-out. This shows that a society's forgiving spirit is rooted in its culture.

It is also obvious from the study that deliberate effort was never made by any level of government in Nigeria to address the incidence of political violence that occurred during the 1983 general elections. Thus, no official platform was created to initiate discussions, tender

IJOGSE 2026

apologies, apportion blame, or institute mechanisms for the payment of compensation and reparation to actual or second-generation victims.

The high points of this study are that strategies adopted by victims of political violence during the 1983 general elections in Ibadan, Oyo State, are significantly influenced by their peculiar experiences as victims and the effects such violent acts had on them. Experiences that are bitter and different. It should be noted that the specific coping strategies adopted by victims are not mutually exclusive. Summatively, the strategies adopted include spending reduction, relocation to escape stigmatisation and labelling, and turning to family and friends for assistance, which reinforces the basic proposition of social capital theory, occupational change, and religiousity.

However, the conceptual framework of this research is reinforced by findings from the field work. Corruption was conceived as a form of violent behaviour, and our respondents agreed with this, as shown in their call for strict de-monetisation of political processes and very stiff and capital penalties for those convicted of corruption.

Conclusively, the theoretical conception of this study was also supported by the results obtained from the fieldwork. The theory of Social Capital, which was used to describe how victims of political violence adjust to normal social life by drawing on their stock of social capital, was found to be valid, as some respondents did so.

Conclusion

It was established that victims of political violence employ different strategies to cope. However, to reduce the incidence of victimisation, the monster of political violence itself is to be attacked. To attack it, the government should adopt and implement some of the solutions proffered by respondents who were direct victims or second-generation victims.

It is interesting to note that, of all the victims in this study, none sought compensation or received it from any individual, authority, or government. All suffered in silence. To that extent, reparation as a technique for achieving closure was alien to our social and political lexicon. The federal government's decision to honour the presumed winner of the 1993 election, Chief MKO Abiola, by renaming the University of Lagos Moshood Abiola University was meant to be symbolic, so his children could find closure. However, this generated intense and sustained criticism from the people that it is wrong to dishonour one legacy to honour another. The University of Lagos is a legacy in itself, and Abiola represents

IJOGSE2026

our collective reaction against the forces of oppression and tyranny. Hence, what the government did was rob Peter to pay Paul. This shows that reparation is a sensitive issue that must be handled properly to achieve its intended purpose.

The Nigerian government did not faithfully deem it fit to address the injustices suffered by the victims through national healing. The Oputa panel set up by Obasanjo's government became a charade and comic relief of a sort, as most of the injustices it concentrated on occurred during the military interregnum, thereby deliberately ignoring victimised people during the Second Republic. Even so, the panel's report was not made public, making it an exercise in futility.

That Nigeria is underdeveloped is no longer news. Several studies and research have attempted to explain the causes of stunted growth in Nigeria. Poor leadership, corruption, death of ideology, indifferent and uncommitted followership are some of the reasons often bandied about as contributing significantly to our pitiable situation. However, corruption should be singled out as a primary and critical element in our journey towards retardation. The sooner we see corruption as a violent act, the better for us as a people. What can be more violent than an individual, entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring a good road network throughout the country, who decides to appropriate the funds allocated for road construction for his private pocket? Any life lost on such a road because of bad roads is caused by the avarice of a corrupt official who puts greed and avarice ahead of national development. That is the tyranny of corruption. This scenario is also the case for other officials manning different aspects of our national life. All lives lost as a result of bad planning, lack of drugs in hospitals, collapsed buildings, and power supply hiccups are lives lost to corrupt practices. It is the tyranny of corruption. To this extent, corruption is a violent behaviour and should be treated as such.

The core issue of this topic is political violence; without it, there would be no victims, and without victims, there would be no need for this academic adventure. Therefore, suggestions were offered on how to reduce political violence. The consensus on a panacea for reducing political violence is to demonetise the political process and system by drastically reducing the salaries, allowances, and emoluments of political office holders. There is also a general consensus that good governance will reduce poverty. Creating a n0ational identity system that stores all citizens vital biometric data is also suggested and could go a long way toward reducing political violence. Other strategies to combat political violence include staggered

IJOGSE 2026

elections, political education and reorientation, improved power supply, proper prosecution of electoral offenders, and capital punishment for anyone accused of and convicted of corruption.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made;

a. The government of Nigeria needs to address the political violence of the Second Republic in the form of national healing so that the victims, both direct and second-generation victims, could attain closure.
b. Good governance should be entrenched so that people would be rescued from the abyss of poverty, which in turn will breed responsible citizenry
c. Staggered elections are also recommended to improve the political process. There is no point in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) bringing the country to a halt because of elections. Federal elections can be held on separate dates for different states or geopolitical zones.
d. There should be an effective system of identification of citizens where their essential biometric data would be stored. This will greatly reduce criminality and violent acts, as offenders would be easily identified.
e. Civic and political education should be introduced into primary and secondary educational curricula. The importance is that by the time students become adults, they will have had a basic understanding of the rudiments of democracy. Hence, the political landscape will not be peopled by opportunists and charlatans
f. The Nigerian government should have the political will to prosecute election offenders.
g. Our system of local government administration needs to be overhauled. As the closest to the people, it should be charged with more responsibilities.
h. There is a need for the creation of a bureaucracy to handle issues of victims. For example, a Bureau of Victims of Violence whose mandate is to initiate policies, sponsor research, maintain and update census data on victims of violence, and generally develop modalities for victim compensation, as well as other issues relating to victims and victimisation.

IJOGSE 2026

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IJOGSE 2026

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IJOGSE2026