

THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL THREAT AND VOTING INSECURITY IN LAGOS; SUBMISSION OF IGBO TRADERS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

One of the greatest historical and constitutional rights of the state and its agents is to ensure security to lives and properties and equally maintain laws and orderliness. This remains one of the fundamental postulations of Western scholars on human rights which is anchored on freedom to vote and to be voted for during election. The 2023 Governorship election is subjectively interpreted by various ethnic groups and the place of BVAS electronic machine could be subjected to different scrutiny leading to ethnic war or rivalries, psychological trauma, burning of goods and building worth of millions, civil unrest, physical injury and sudden death, lack of trust in government, bad national and international images. The study adopted reviews of national and international journals to include articles, textbooks, and newspapers among others with the use of instinctual drives theory for the justification of the inquiry. The research adopted qualitative method of data collection with semi-structured questionnaire for the study. Purposive sampling technique (non-probability) and in-depth interviews were conducted among 50 Igbo traders in four market zones in Lagos namely Lagos Island market (Idumota) Ladipo International market (Mushin), Alaba International Market (Ojo) and Computer Village (Ikeja). The finding deciphers that Nigeria just operate at ethnic level but claiming for nationality is abstraction. Furthermore, the 2023 governorship election depicts absolute lack of voting rights compare to what is obtainable during Presidential election in 2023. Therefore, it is recommended for Nigerians to enjoy unity there must be change in the policy of state of origin to place of birth for social and universal acceptance,

Keywords- Political, Threat, Election, Voting, Insecurity, Development

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Globally, scholars submitted that election of candidates into political position remain one of the reality of democratization This is because every citizen who are 18 years and above are qualified to contest, to vote and be voted for credible candidates of their individual choice. Election is not complete without the voting rights of the citizens globally. Kelvin (2016) opines that elections are the hallmarks of democracy in any country Likewise, election serves the purpose of peaceful change in government thereby conferring legitimacy on the institutions that manage the electoral process in ways that respect the mandate and will of the people.

According to Ukwaje (2022) the core assumptions of credible election depends largely on the extent to which security to lives and properties of voters are guaranteed in any nations. Within the purview of ensuring safety for voters and the political elite, Haralambos and Holborn (2016) explains that security to lives and properties is both the primary and constitutional responsibility of the state political leaders and citizens in social contract. In the contract the citizens are expected to vote as part of fulfilling their historical responsibility while the political elites are expected to provide basic fundamental security towards the protection of the citizens. It is believed that the existence of positive relationship in the contract between the political elites and the citizens will foster semblance of orderliness while dysfunction in any of the contract will lead to eminent contradiction of underdevelopment.

Within the purview of African election, there are diverse orientations toward African politics, while some are of positive submission others sees African politics has been characterized by political threats. According to Bardal (2016) political threats is a subset of electoral violence. This is because political threats consist of element of oppression that negate individuals or group right to participate in electoral process through the use of emotional, social and economic force, coercion

or pressure as well as physical and social harms. Furthermore, Alston (2010) highlighted few reasons for the prevalence of political threats experienced by citizens before and after election in African continent which includes selfish or vested interest, greed and fear of unknown among others

Evidenced gathered from extant publications indicated that several reasons are held responsible for the remote and immediate consequences of political threats and irregularities in voting behaviours of citizens either before, during and after elections. According to Obakhedo (2011), Nigeria's political process has been characterized by irregularities, malpractices, riggings, loss of lives, and destruction of properties worth hundreds of millions. Likewise, Awofeso (2016) also validate the claims of the above scholar stating that the Nigerian electioneering since 1959 till date is characterized by consistence in the use of thuggery and series of other violent activities among the political elites. Awofeso further advanced the findings stating that the pre- and post-election in Nigeria is characterized by displacement and destruction.

In Nigeria, the ever increasing and uncontrollable occurrence of electoral violent activities as a subset of insecurity constantly faced by Nigerians before, during and after election in Nigeria. The nature of the persistence violent activities associated with electoral process in Nigeria till date posed as threats to human decisions in term of voting for credible candidates of their individual choice before, during and after election. The 2023 recently concluded election call for diverse orientations and subjective interpretations among people of different class, ethnic group, economic class, religious group among others. The outcome of the recently concluded election in Nigeria to some Nigerians is a sign of progressive development in democratic process of the country while others argued that the election is repetitions of eminent contradiction of underdevelopment in democratic practices. It on this ground the following research questions were established to guide the outcome of the qualitative analysis.

Within the purview of the inquiry, the following research questions were established as guides towards the understanding factors that lead to vote insecurity in the 2023 general election in Lagos. explore how political threat influence voting behaviour of the residents of Lagos in 2023 Governorship election, strategies put in place by the security officers to combat political hate speech during Governorship election in Lagos state and various submissions of the diverse ethnic groups concerning the use of BVAS machine in 2023 general election in Lagos.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical orientation adopted for this study is instinctual drive theory by Sigmund Freud. Thus, the major assumption of the theory, (instinctual drives) is that there are two different drives in every human being that determine and control human behaviour either toward positive or negative actions. According to Freud, the two identified instinctual drives are categorized into; (i) Eros Drive and (ii) Thanatos Drive. Freud postulation deciphers the correlation and differences between Eros and Thanatos and further explains how one of the two identified instinctual drives can influence individual or group behaviour toward positive or negative outcomes. For Marcuse (2018), Eros is the drive that increases individual level of thinking towards positive and progressive dimension. While Thanatos is the drive toward negative and retrogressive thinking. The Eros drive include thinking toward achieving quality education, developing positive relationship, and association quality healthy living standard, leaving in a comfortable home, and enjoyable marital life, having children and training them for future references, joining or belonging to a well-recognized professional groups or bodies, having good cars and lovely businesses, dreaming for periodic and regular vocation for relaxation among others. The Thanatos thinking included thinking to marginalization, subjugation, hatred, unwanted in the society, committing

suicide, killing to get to the position of authority, fear of unknown, feeling rejected, leaving a nonchalant attitudes lifestyle, killing for retaining wealth among others

Freud, posits all human beings operates on these two instinctual drives for decision making and he stressed further that the relativity of theses drives has a negative and positive outcome. He explains that when the positive relationship occurs such as Eros outweigh the Thanatos, individual tends to act in a positive and progressive manner leading to positive thinking and behaviour/ But when the Thanatos outweigh the Eros, individuals may likely engage and acts in a negative or retrogressive manners which may wrongly influence their personal behaviour. He submitted the function of progressive behaviour is depend and determine by the effective advantage or domination of Eros over Thanatos drives for decision making while once the Thanatos outweigh the Eros the individual person will react and indulged in negative actions (Kli, 2018; Marcuse, 2018)

In the research inquiry, Sigmund Freud instinctual drives theory was adopted to explain the reason for persistence political threats in Nigerian election and the constantly experienced voting insecurity among the Igbos traders in Lagos state 2023 general election. It was deduced that the Thanatos drive of the Nigerian political leaders from 1959 elections proves to have outweigh their individuals Eros (positive) thinking Thus, the negative thinking is one of the reasons for the use of political threat such as snatching of ballot boxes, destruction of voter cards, sporadic shootings, fighting, harassment, assault, killing or political murder experienced before, during and after electoral process Moreover, the use of political thugs as means of sustaining and retaining power proves to be rampant among political leaders in Nigeria. More so, on the part of the citizens (Igbo Traders), the idea of voting during political process is the constitutional right of the citizens (Igbos) to vote and to be voted for during election in Nigeria.

The implication of the 2023 governorship election shows that the Eros thinking of the Igbos was eroded and replaced with thanatos. This can be seen from the Igbo traders turn out during the governorship election in Lagos state, the positive thinking of the Igbo traders towards exercising their fundamental right to vote during election was eroded and replace with Thanatos thinking which include fear, marginalization, subjugation, hatred unwanted in Lagos state because they want to vote for individual candidates of their choice as leaders. The outcome of the research was not far away from Obakhedo (2011), submission that deciphers that the Nigeria's political process was characterized by irregularities, malpractices, riggings, loss of lives, and destruction of properties worth hundreds of millions Likewise, Awofeso (2016) submits that the historical development of elections in Nigeria since 1959 till date is characterized by thuggery and violence among the political elites. He further advanced the findings stating that the pre- and post-election in Nigeria is characterized by displacement and destruction. The irregularities and consistence voting insecurity experienced by the Igbo traders in Lagos during presidential election paved wave to their withdrawal or reduction in participation in Lagos governorship election in Lagos state which pave wave for adequate research into the inquiry.

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research inquiry adopted for the study is anchored on the use of qualitative method with the aid of semi-structured questionnaire as guides toward the collection of primary data from the Igbos traders in the four market zones selected in Lagos State. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the inquiry. Thus, the secondary data collected rely on the review of past and present publications on political process and voting insecurity in Lagos state from journal, articles, textbooks, newspapers, and other related documents to support the outcomes of the inquiry while the primary data (Verbal data) adopted was conducted through the use of purposive and snowballing sampling techniques (non-probability). The snowballing sampling techniques is

adopted for the identification of the study locations, the market associations and business men and women that are interviewed for the research work while qualitative data or verbal information was collected purposively from 50 Igbo traders in four market zones in Lagos State which include Idumota market in Lagos Island, Ladipo International market at Mushin, Alaba International market at Ojo and Computer Village at Ikeja zones where Igbo's men and women carried out their business activities. Ethical approval was sought from Igbo Market Associations for informed consent and approval before the research was conducted among Igbos traders. In each of the selected market zones in Lagos selected for the study such as Alaba, international market, Ladipo International market, Idumota Market and Computer Village market, ten (10) participants in each of the market zones were interviewed using In-depth interview method while two (2) focus group discussions was conducted in two of the market zones (Ladipo and Alaba International respectively) among the Igbo Market Association so as to capture the group perception and knowledge concerning the Lagos 2023 Governorship election in Nigeria. The semi-structured questionnaire was designed based on the research questions so as to deeply probe the Market Association Committees and individual business men and women about their perception and knowledge concerning the last general election in Lagos State. The primary data collected from the participants were analysed and interpreted using descriptive and content systematic methods of the analysis and interpretation of the verbal data collected from the participants in the four selected market zones where large numbers of Igbo ethnic group settled and carry out their business activities in Lagos

4.0 RESULTS

The research work was analysed and interpreted using descriptive and content systematic methods based on the set research questions for the study. The analysis was divided along two sections which are the socio-demographic characteristics of the Igbo men and women that participated in the research inquiry and the interpretation of the verbal information collected from the Igbo traders.

The first stage was centered on the descriptive analysis and interpretation of the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants on the field which was stated and explained below;

S/N	Socio-demographic Characteristics	Options	Codes	Frequency = n	Percentages = %
1	Age of participants	Less than 18yrs	1	-	-
		19yrs to 23yrs	2	3	6.3
		24yrs to 28yrs	3	2	4.2
		29yrs to 33yrs	4	15	31.3
		34yrs to 38yrs	5	10	20.8
		39yrs to 43yrs	6	13	27.1
		44yrs to 48yrs	7	4	8.2
		49yrs to 53yrs	8	1	2.1
		54yrs and above	9	-	-
		Total		48	100.00
2	Gender	Male	1	43	89.6
		Female	2	5	10.4
		Total		48	100.00
3	Religion Affiliation	Christianity	1	31	64.6
		Islam	2	4	8.3
		Traditional Worshipper	3	12	25.0
		Others Specify	4	1	2.1
		Total		48	100.00
4	Nature of Business	Motor spare parts	1	12	25.0



		Furniture and wood finish	2	7	14.6
		Computer equipment	3	11	22.9
		Clothing Materials	4	10	20.8
		Transporter	5	7	14.6
		Others specify	6	1	2.1
		Total		48	100.00
5	Occupation Position	Business Owners	1	23	47.9
		Sales Representatives	2	10	20.8
		Market Associations	3	12	25.0
		Others Specify	4	3	6.3
		Total		48	100.00
6	Place of residence	Lagos	1	41	85.4
		Outside Lagos	2	5	10.4
		Others Specify	3	2	4.2
		Total		48	100.00
7	Market zones	Idumota	1	10	20.8
		Ojo/Alaba	2	14	29.2
		Ikeja	3	10	20.8
		Mushin	4	14	29.2
		Total		48	100.00
8	Years of Business Transaction in Lagos	1yr to 5yrs	1	6	12.5
		6yrs to 10yrs	2	10	20.8
		11yrs to 15yrs	3	9	18.8
		16yrs to 20yrs	4	12	25.0
		21yrs to 25yrs	5	5	10.4
		26yrs and above	6	6	12.5
		Total		48	100.00
9	Description of 2023 Presidential election in Lagos	Good	1	32	66.7
		Fair	2	8	16.7
		Indifferent	3	5	10.4
		Worst	4	2	4.2
		Others Specify	5	-	-
		Total		48	100.00
10	Description of 2023 Governorship election in Lagos	Good	1	-	-
		Fair	2	7	14.6
		Indifferent	3	-	-
		Worst	4	41	85.4
		Others Specify	5	-	-
		Total		48	100.00
11	Description of attitude of Electoral Officers during the election in Lagos	Good	1	8	16.7
		Fair	2	11	22.9
		Indifferent	3	7	14.6
		Worst	4	22	45.8
		Others Specify	5	-	-
		Total		48	100.00
12	Description of the formal security agents (Nigeria Police) before, during and after Lagos state election	Good	1	7	14.6
		Fair	2	10	20.8
		Indifferent	3	8	16.7
		Worst	4	23	47.9
		Others Specify	5	-	-
		Total		48	100.00
13	Do you experience any forms of disruption before, during and after governorship election in Lagos	Yes	1	38	79.2
		No	2	10	20.8
		Total		48	100.00
14	Types of disruption experienced before,	Verbal Harassment	1	13	27.1
		Physical assault	2	7	14.6

	during and after election	Box Snatching Destruction of voting cards Sporadic shooting Others Specify Total	3 4 5 6 48	10 4 9 5 48	20.8 8.3 18.8 10.4 100.00
15	What is your submission of BVAS machine adopted for count of electoral results in the Nigeria 2023 general election	Good Fair Indifferent Worst Others Specify Others	1 2 3 4 5 48	5 8 9 24 2 48	10.4 16.6 18.8 50.0 4.2 100.00
16	Turn out of the disruption of Governorship election on voting rights of Igbos on their business activities in Lagos	Burning of markets Arrest/detention Violation of human right Public assault Ethnic Oppression Others Specify Total	1 2 3 4 5 6 48	11 1 7 9 20 - 48	22.9 2.1 14.6 18.7 41.7 - 100.00

Source- Fieldwork Survey, 2023

The table above is centered on the analysis and interpretations of socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in their various fields selected for the study. The age distribution analysis shows that 89.7 percent of the participants were between the age bracket of 19 to 43years while 10.3 percent of them were between 44 to 54yrs and above in the research inquiry. The result on gender shows that 89.6 percent of the participants were mal while the female counterpart that participated in the research inquiry was estimated to 10.4 percent. It shows that most of the market zones selected for the business was dominated by male counterpart. The outcome of the result on religion affiliation of the participants deciphers that 64.6 percent of the participants were Christians, 25.0 percent were traditional worshippers, 8.3 percent of them were Muslim while 2.1 percent claimed to by Buddhism. Also, the result on the nature of employment of the participants shows that 25.0 percent of the interviewed participants were motor spare parts dealers, 22.9 percent of them were into sales of computer gadgets, 20.8 percent were into sales of clothing materials while 14.6 of the participants were equally recorded under furniture/wood finish and transportation system business.

The result of the question which intend to research into the business positions of the participants found out the 47.9 percent of the participants were the owner of their various businesses, 25.0 percent of them are members of the market associations in two out of the selected four market zones in Lagos, 20.8 percent of who responded to the question were sales representative while 6.3 percent were retailers in the market areas. The place of residence of the participants shows that 85.4 percent of the participants reside in Lagos State while 4.2 percent submitted that they are from neighbor state like Ogun state but carry out business transaction in Lagos state. Question was drawn from the market zones adopted for the study in Lagos state, the finding shows that 29.2 percent of the participants were interviewed at both Ojo/Alaba and Mushin market zones respectively while Idumota and Ikeja market zones were recorded to be 20.8 percent. The result on the years of business transaction in Lagos shows that 25.0 percent of the participants have spent 16 to 20 years in business, 20.8 percent have spent between 6 to 10yrs, 18.8 percent have spent between 11 to 15yrs, 12.5 of the participants have both spent between 1 to 5yrs and 22yrs and above while 10.4 percent of the participants have spent between 21 to 25yrs in business transaction in Lagos before the election.

The result of participant's description of 2023 presidential election in Lagos shows that 66.7 percent said the presidential election is good, 16.7 percent claim its fair, 10.4 percent said its indifferent 4.2 percent said its worst while no record was attributed to others specify category. In the participants description of governorship election submitted that 85.4 percent of them submitted the election is worst, 14.6 percent submit that the election is fair while no response were both observed at the category of good and indifferent as at the time the result was interpreted. The researcher intends to find out the result of the submission on the description of the participants on attitudes of the electoral officers before, during and after the election in Lagos which shows that 45.8 percent of them said the attitudes of the electoral officers is worst, 22.9 percent claim their attitudes is fair, while 14.6 percent of them were indifferent in the question. The outcome on the description of formal security agents (Nigeria Police and other agents) before, during and after election shows that 47.9 percent said the attitudes is worst, 20.8 percent said the attitudes is fair, 16.7 percent were indifferent to the statement while 14.6 percent said the attitudes of the electoral officers are very good towards election

The result on various forms of disruptions experienced by participants before, during and after election shows that 79.2 percent agreed that they experienced disruption before, during and after the presidential election in Lagos state while 20.8 percent of them said they did not experience any forms of disruption in their various polling boots. The outcome of the submission on types of disruption experienced shows that 27.1 percent faces verbal harassment, 20.8 experienced ballot boxes snatching, 18.8 percent experienced sporadic shooting in their various polling booths, 14.6 percent submits they experienced physical assault, 10.4 percent were recorded under others specify category while 8.3 percent claimed they experienced destruction of voting cards in their polling booths. The turnout of the disruption of governorship election on the voting rights of the Igbos on their business activities shows that 41.7 percent said the situation led to ethnic oppression against Igbo ethnic group, 22.9 percent faced burning of markets to includes their goods and properties, 18.7 percent said public assault, 14.6 percent said their human rights were violated, 2.1 percent said they are arrested /detained before, during and after the presidential election while nothing was recorded under others specify category

The second phase of the research was centered on the interpretations and analysis of verbal data collected from the participants based on the set research question developed to guides the outcome of the research work. Thus, this research was carried out in Lagos state precisely in four major markets zones dominated by the Igbo ethnic groups in Nigeria for their various business transactions. It is on this ground; the following primary verbal data collected was analyzed and interpreted using content systematic method.

The first question intends to know various factors that led to vote insecurity in the 2023 general election in Lagos. The following submission was collected from Igbo traders in four market zones in Lagos state precisely from Lagos Island (Idumota), Mushin (Ladipo International), Ikeja (Computer Village) and Ojo/Alaba (Alaba International) markets respectively

The first participants opine that;

The behaviour of the Yoruba people and their understanding of party political are ethnic biased. We are all facing the same problems and we are all in the same problem and I felt it is time for us to both fight against corrupt leaders. I believed we are all in it and we need to fight it hard but am surprise that some your people are not straight forwards and transparent in their dealings. If you remember this is how late Chief Obafemi Awolowo deceived the Igbos during

Biafra war. I don't believe in one Nigeria. The Hausa and Yoruba are just transferring power to one another and never think of giving the Igbo's chance to even try and ruled this country
IDI/Igbo trader/man//37yrs/Ojo/Alaba market/2023

The same question was directed to another participant and she submitted the follow;

The Yoruba are not straight forwards in their dealings. We are Igbo people and we are business minded people. We leave our place and come to their land to do business and even encourage some of their people to venture into business. We are leaving in Lagos and our businesses are situated in Lagos. It means we have the right to vote and to be voted for. Some of us are born in Lagos, our children were born in Lagos, they school in Lagos and some even married Yoruba girls. Some why did they say we should not vote for candidates of our choice. Why are they making it compulsory or mandatory for us to vote for Alliance Progressive congress if we feel they are not our choice. Why Lagos King told us to leave Lagos once we did not vote for their candidates in Lagos? Are we not all Nigerian? The level of harassment is very high in Lagos and nowhere or everywhere we Igbo moves to vote our choice they say is better for you not to vote if you are not voting for APC to stay at home. Then when will my vote count
IDI/Igbo trader/Woman/36yrs/ Idumota Market/2023

Within Mushin local government area of Lagos state, the Ladipo international market was adopted as one of the study areas where interviews are carried out between the Igbo traders and the man said that;

The political thugs are too many among the Yoruba ethnic groups. They practice political thuggery as part of election. They never had time to think that how many of the children of the political elites in Nigeria struggling for political position asked their children to join political thugs for engaging sporadic shootings, snatching of electoral ballot boxes, harassing voters among others. Yoruba boy's needs to think very well because these political leaders are just using them and after everything, they will be the one to kill them back after they have been used to achieve their political aims. I think the level of increase in thugs' involvement in political process and affairs in Nigeria gives room for to misused of illegal firearms in the hands of many thugs that might later degenerated to other social vices in the states such as insecurity, corruption, bad governance among others

IDI/Igbo trader/man/41yrs/Ladipo/2023

The same question was directed to a participant at Ikeja in computer village and the following submission was analyzed

Ikeja is a peaceful environ, open for different ethnic group to carry out their various market or business activities. We are one Nigerian in the zone but the just concluded presidential and governorship election nearly led to crisis among various people because of difference in the choice of voting for individual choice of electing the presidential and governorship candidates of their mind. The Yoruba are so tensed and wanted power shift to their region by people and I equally asked some of them who are my friends that are we going back to regional government or what is going on. How will you say someone that is born, brought out, school and married your Yoruba people as Igbo person does not have the right to vote and be voted for in Lagos state. Lack of understanding of political game affected many Yoruba in choice making when it comes to politicking in their regions. We have Igbos that did not vote for Peter Obi and they are not forced to leave the area because of politics. It just once in four years, then why killing ourselves? The Igbos are attacked, injured and arrest because they decided to exercise their constitutional rights

to vote and be voted for in Nigeria. But all proved aborted because of thuggery, bad governance, domination, harassment, and intimidations,

IDI/Igbo trader/man/38yrs/Computer Village/2023

On this question two focus group discussions were carried out at Alaba International market and Ladipo International markets respectively and the following submission were recorded in the field-note and interpreted to give meaning to the research inquiry. In each of the market the focus group discussions were carried out among eights (8) markets Association committees of the study locations. The following submission was derived from their group discussion

At Alaba International market, the association posits that

The problem of voting insecurity is rooted back to infringement on human rights to vote and be voted for in the country which is documented in the Nigerian 199 constitutions. The last election did not respect human rights because the utterances of the traditional leaders among the Yoruba are not encouraging and it is more of sentiment and fight leading statement. It is the historical responsibility of the monarch to protect the right of citizens but this election failed to acknowledge that. They also state that the level of educated illiterates is gaining moment among the Yoruba. Are we to vote for ethnic sentiment or because we belong to the same ethnic group or vote for transparency, accountability and future growth and development of our lives and properties. Another person argued that the presidential election is a true picture of what election should look like in Nigeria but once the APC leader won the federal seat veto power was enacted and thugs and monarch in Yoruba land organized up thugs to attack our properties. Please I think you are Yoruba what can you say about that. On that ground we decided to sit at home so that we will not be constantly experienced loss of lives and properties worth billions of naira

FGD/Alaba Market Association/Ojo-Alaba zone/2023

The other focus group discussion was carried out at Ladipo international market among the Igbo market association. They asserted that;

The problem is not the political vote or to be voted for because it is spell out in the Nigerian constitution then why are the police and other security agents not following it up or arrest those that violate the law of the land. Please are they saying they are not aware of those abusing the Igbo people in Lagos what have or can they do to them because they are in power. Can you imagine how someone who may not be up to my age or fall into my age category tell me openly that if I don't vote for their party then am not expected to come out and vote where we have governmental agents established to maintain laws and orderliness and equally protect lives and properties of its citizens. We know we are Igbo people but not seen as Nigerian due to election that we decided to pick our political leaders of our choice. The Yoruba are not doing the needful in term of what they said they are clamouring for during End Sars Campaigns in Lagos, Nigeria

FGD/Ladipo Market Association/Mushin zone/2023

The research which tends to examine factors that leads to increase in voting insecurity in the 2023 general elections shows that there are several factors that led to increase in voting insecurity which include high level of educated illiteracy among the Yoruba's, high level of political thugs' involvement in political party process and electioneering in Lagos. Moreover, some attributed voting insecurity to fear of unknown and vested interest placed over the general interest by the political elites over the citizens in Lagos, Nigeria. Out of 48 participants interviewed at various markets in Lagos state, 60 percent of them claimed that ignorance and illiteracy are the major factors that influence the level of voting insecurity in Lagos, 22 percent of them submitted that ethnic sentiment is the major factor that contribute to high level of voting insecurity experienced in Lagos, 10 percent of them claimed that the influence of bad political elites gives birth to political

thugs in political process while 8 percent said that the Yoruba's are lazy in doing business which Igbo's are doing well instead of them to get serious with whatever they are doing they decided to loot or steal and destroy our businesses in Lagos

The second question is designed to shed comprehensive understanding to how political threat influence voting behaviour of the residents of Lagos in 2023 Governorship election. The submissions of the Igbo traders are stated as follows;

The first participants opine that;

The Presidential election is a typical example of how politics or election should be run in Nigeria. People came out in mass to vote for their choice of leaders in the state. We are all Nigerians and share the same rights to vote and be voted for. The 2023 general election in Lagos is not transparent and lack accountability. The political thugs were encouraged to issues hate political speech and threatening languages such as if Igbo or any other tribes are not voting for APC then they should not come out to vote or better sit at home and not come out to vote. First thing that came to my mind is where are the state security personnel in Lagos? The commissioner of Police and the Inspector General of Police in Nigeria should be question on the state of insecurity among the voters in Lagos state so as for us to be able to ensure that the police are not really part of the political actors operating on do or die affairs to retain power for their selfish interest at the detriment of the general interest of the masses

IDI/Igbo trader/man//37yrs/Ojo/Alaba market/2023

The same question was directed to female participant and she submitted the follow;

The Igbos are not expected and respected in Lagos despite the fact that we are the tribe that nearly contribute 60 percent of the taxes paid into Lagos account. The presidential election turnout did not encourage Igbo people to come out for the governorship election because our vote is not counted and what we expected was not we see. In Lagos state, you can imagine the king of Lagos clearly stated that any Igbo tribe that failed to vote for APC should be ready to leave Lagos or jump inside Lagos lagoon. This statement is derogatory and not encouraging at all because freedom and fundamental rights that stated freedom of association was infringed and the one that say rights to vote and be voted for was also faulted and nothing was done by the Lagos state and federal security concerning the ill decision or utterances of the political thug and some political leader's decision to infringed on voter rights. This affected our right to vote for our choice because we might be injured and our businesses are also threatened because of burning of shops that belong to Igbos and even their houses and personality were attacked and assassinated

IDI/Igbo trader/Woman/36yrs/ Idumota Market/2023

At Mushin, the Ladipo international market was adopted and interviews were conducted. The interviewee submitted that

The Igbos spirit to vote for the candidate of their choice was very high coupled with the believed that the Yoruba are also ready to set themselves out of tyranny ruling or corrupt leaders. But to my greatest surprise some Yoruba men and women who claimed they are tired are still the set of people fighting for people they called tyrant leaders. Well to me the last presidential election seems to be the true results of Lagos state but the outcome of the election send signal to those eating out of Lagos pocket and they quickly formed a rebel group to attack Igbos and disrupts their plans to vote for candidates of their choice. The harassment and intimidation were so open and glaring to the extent that we are expecting the Lagos Police command to do something about

it and nothing was done. So are you expecting me to come out and vote when political thugs has threatened to kill or attacks those that are coming to vote other candidates different from APC candidates. Please Igbos are from Southeastern part of Nigeria we are here to transact business and if anything happens, we need to protect ourselves by not getting involved in political issues in Lagos state since politics of Lagos is just for the Yoruba's not for the Nigerians

IDI/Igbo trader/man/41yrs/Ladipo/2023

The same question was directed to a participant at Ikeja in computer village and the following submission was analyzed

We are Igbos and good traders that immensely contribute to the growth and development of any nations we found ourselves. The Yoruba are just too aggressive in terms of politics and they practice do or die affairs politics. Most of them are hiding and never lived outside their state or travelled far. I think travelling is an exposure in life because through that we learn how to live with ourselves. The Igbos are not interested in your election anymore and if anyone or any government advise us to vote for any candidates or asked any Igbo men to come out for election in Lagos, we will not allow them too decisive us again like before. You can imagine when a whole Lagos King openly utter an open statement even in the media and a political thug in Oshodi said if any Igbo men or women have it in mind to vote for another presidential or governorship candidates without voting APC, then they should not come out to vote at all or else they will be attacked, harassed, humiliated, intimidated and disgraced. So is this not good enough to reduce our zeal toward voting for our political leaders. Please am sure that the Igbos are not interested in governorship election in Lagos in 2023 election

IDI/Igbo trader/man/38yrs/Computer Village/2023

On this question two focus group discussions were carried out at Alaba International market and Ladipo International markets respectively and the following submission were recorded in the field-note and interpreted to give meaning to the research inquiry. In each of the market the focus group discussions were carried out among eights (8) markets Association committees. The following submission was derived from their group discussion

At Alaba International market, the association posits that

We all know we are not Yoruba's but we are Nigeria. The constitution of Nigeria is not a Yoruba constitution and is not Igbo constitution neither is it Hausa/Fulani constitution. The Yoruba are very brutal with the Igbo despite our contribution towards the growth and development of Lagos state. It will get to a time that the Biafra nation needs to stand on our own. The Igbos are not lazy people and we are never lazy wherever we found ourselves. Although after the presidential election, Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwoolu invited us for discussion and pleads that we should vote him and which everybody or Igbo men and women cannot go against anymore due to ill utterances from the Kings and the political thugs. You can imagine how they snatched ballot boxes, engaged in sporadic shootings and verbal harassment in the polling booths We Igbos have decided not to come out to vote because of the high level of insecurity that occurs in Lagos state since our voice and rights cannot be guaranteed by the State security agents and even federal security apparatus

FGD/Alaba Market Association/Ojo-Alaba zone/2023

At Ladipo international market among the Igbo market association, the following group discussion was recorded and interpreted;

The Igbos are the major targets of the Yoruba in term of occurrence of any disaster in the country. Why and when are we going to survive? I think it is right time we need to start thinking of

reducing our business concentration in Lagos because if not properly managed the Yoruba's thugs are trying to attack us and its always against our wishes. Why should someone or few groups of people compel us to vote for their candidates against our own choice? Is it not funny? Imagine someone that is not up to my age or not within our age bracket telling us or forcing us to follow whatever he says. In Igbo land that is abomination of the highest order. The State security officers in Lagos did not say, do or act on such statement. That can bring about divisions or crises in the state. The question here is that is the Lagos state police officer in support of this hate speech and threat to lives and properties issued by this political thug and how they started burning markets where Igbos transacts their daily businesses because of exercising fundamental rights as a citizen of Nigeria. We have decided not to come out while few of us were out to vote against their preferred candidates into power.

FGD/Ladipo Market Association/Mushin zone/2023

The research which tends to examine how political threats can influence voting behaviour of the Igbo's before, during and after the 2023 general election both at presidential and governorship stages. The submissions of the Igbo men and women indicated that the utterances of the king in Lagos and political thugs deduced the rate of Igbo involvement in governorship election in 2023. This is because 69 percent of the Igbo's submitted that the major reason for their withdrawal from voting was because the political thugs warned that the Igbo's should not come out to votes for another candidates of their choice apart from voting for APC candidates in Lagos, Moreover, 21 percent of them claimed that poor performance of the Nigeria Police send signal to them that their lives and properties are not secured so therefore, we needs to withdraw from the Lagos state politics while 10 percent said the utterance of the Lagos King shows that we do not have choice because the king order that and make it compulsory that we must votes the APC leaders and once we failed to do that we should leave Lagos and park our properties and return back to Southeastern parts of Nigeria.

In another research question for the study, it was stated that the researcher intends to know strategies put in place by the security officers to combat political hate speech before, during and after Governorship election in Lagos state?

The first participants opine that;

Well, the question is not for me to answer because am not a police man or security agents even at the market am not part of the market security. Am just a business man from the Eastern part of Nigeria doing business in Lagos. But it is glaring in Lagos that the Police did not address the situation before they arrived at most polling booths where political thugs invades or attacks, the evil work such as snatching boxes, destruction of voter's cards and sporadic shootings to scare voters will have been carried out before they arrive to the polling booths. So, what will I say concerning their efficiency and effectiveness for addressing the situations? For some the police are doing well but to me they are not at all.

IDI/Igbo trader/man//37yrs/Ojo/Alaba market/2023

The same question was directed to another participant and she submitted the follow;

The Nigeria police cannot address the situation at all. If you see the modern weapons carried by this people even those that arrested in Lagos for attempting to snatch ballot boxes what did the state security do to them to make them face the judgment of their misbehavior. The Police are equally part of them. In the television we are told by the IGP in Nigeria that everything security is under control for effective electioneering process in Nigeria

IDI/Igbo trader/Woman/36yrs/ Idumota Market/2023

At Ladipo international market, interview was carried out with Igbo traders and the man said that;
The efforts of the Nigeria Police cannot be felt because it is a federal problem. How do you expect them to work perfectly in the country when sometimes their salaries are delay in payment, they are not constantly trained, promoted and carried modern weapons for security purposes in the state. So, a police man that faces home front problem that was offered 200 thousand to engaged in crime or delinquent act will do it because he will need to innovate to get something addition to his or her family back home. The problem is not coming from the police but from the Nigerian government who subject police officers to rigorous and abject poverty in the state

IDI/Igbo trader/man/41yrs/Ladipo/2023

The same question was directed to a participant at Ikeja in computer village and the following submission was analyzed

We are corrupt minded and I cannot blame anybody for the situation we found ourselves in term of political process in the country. We are there all the times when the thugs are always doing what the elites are meant to be doing today in Nigeria but they run away from it. Who says transportation business is for thugs and why did thugs dominate the transportation system in Lagos especially Nigeria at large. The police have tried and you can imagine how do we expect them to be everywhere in Nigeria when we know there is a need to employ more police in Nigeria to effectively control in occurrence of insecurity in the country and arrest the prevalence of political thugs in the country.

IDI/Igbo trader/man/38yrs/Computer Village/2023

On this question two focus group discussions were carried out at Alaba International market and Ladipo International markets respectively and the following submission were recorded in the field-note and interpreted to give meaning to the research inquiry. In each of the market the focus group discussions were carried out among eights (8) markets Association committees. The following submission was derived from their group discussion

At Alaba International market, the association posits that;

The Nigeria Police cannot do more than what they are instructed to do. Who are those that control the police and call for their recommendations to be promoted to the next level? The police can only try but the work is not perfectly carried out in Lagos state during, before and after election. There are some Igbo leaders that are arrested for support Igbo presidential candidate but those threatening Igbo men and women in Lagos are working free not even disturbed for their ill utterances before, during and after election. In Lagos, some political thugs are above the law and they misbehave without looking at the state of law. They have political godfather who will intervene to their matters once they are arrested and detained for illegal actions. This people are also ignorance of the state of law and ignoramus is not an excuse before law then where is the law and its punishment attached to violation of law in Lagos state. I think it is time other state in Nigeria discover that Lagos state make uses of their personal state laws to protect the political thugs when they work for their government

FGD/Alaba Market Association/Ojo-Alaba zone/2023

The other focus group discussion was carried out at Ladipo international market among the Igbo's market association. They asserted that;

What do they put in place to control political violence or protect citizens before, during and after election and what is their plans for preventing political thugs' involvement in snatching ballot boxes, void sporadic shootings, and protecting lives and properties of the Lagosian or other tribes that reside in Lagos state. I don't think the security agent has done anything to protect the voters and the entire Lagosian before, during and after election. You can see how some even Yoruba are insulted and disgraced because they belong to another party different from APC which they proposed as Yoruba political party. Well, the portion of the blame should not be attributed to the police what about the lawyers that are meant to fast the prosecution process in Lagos state since the case have been reported immediately after the pronouncement of the next presidential election in Nigeria

FGD/Ladipo Market Association/Mushin zone/2023

The research which tends to unravel strategies put in place by the security officers to combat political hate speech during Governorship election in Lagos state shows that the police have tried but the menace associated with hate speech continues to gather its momentum in the state. This is because the police and other security agents failed to address the issues as signed in the constitution. Out of the 48 participants interviewed 92 percent agreed that the police and other security agents cannot address the issues of hate speech that arise in Lagos state before, during and after 2023 general election in Nigeria. 5 percent argued that even the political leaders are more interested in hate speech for demoralization of their various opponents while 3 percent submitted that the police have done what they can do because they are normal human being like any other person in the society that have family and life to maintain. They can only do what they can do and leave the rest for the government to give order.

The last verbal data collected concentrate on various submissions of Igbo ethnic groups concerning the use of BVAS machine in 2023 general election in Lagos. The following were recorded and interpreted for the study;

The first participants opine that;

I don't know the first reason for importing the machine for election and even the money spent on purchasing the machine is another thing I considered. The country is wasteful. So even if some people want or threatening to hack the machine, they chairman did not consider that before purchasing the machine for the election. This is act of waste of resources that can be disbursed to another developmental activities or project. I don't think they go deep think about the measure or process to adopt for conducting the election and for collation of the result after casting of the vote

IDI/Igbo trader/man//37yrs/Ojo/Alaba market/2023

The same question was directed to another participant and she submitted the follow;

The process of collating the result during presidential election in 2023 in Lagos state shows act of maturity, wastage and corruption of the highest order. The BVAS machine is not planned for well before usages, this shows clearly in the presidential election. But my greatest surprise is that the BVAS machine that did not work during presidential election was later used for the governorship election. Can we now say its technological problem or human errors? We need to shed meaning to the outcome of the differences between technological and human errors in terms of the usage of the BVAS machine in Lagos state

IDI/Igbo trader/Woman/36yrs/ Idumota Market/2023

At Ladipo international market the outcome of the interview indicated that;

The use of BVAS machine for 2023 general election is planned for the governorship election but not for presidential election because of their act of maladjusted behaviour planned initially for winning the election. Let be scientific about the mode of election conducted and their preparedness towards providing the next types of political leaders in Nigeria. The BVAS machine work during governorship election but did not work during the presidential election. We are not fools in Nigeria but we are all thinking about the unity of the country. The situation is like waste of time, money, and resources, why is the chairman of INEC wasting our time because of the game they have masterminded already and just waiting for the result

IDI/Igbo trader/man/41yrs/Ladipo/2023

The same question was directed to a participant at Ikeja in computer village and the following submission was analyzed;

The adoption and introduction of BVAS machine is just to make Nigerians believed the electoral process in the 2023 general election will be transparent and accountable. But at the end of the election especially the presidential election proved abortive. This is because the same BVAS machine that did not work during presidential election finally work at the governorship election when millions of Nigerians are no more interested in voting because of voting insecurity and increased in hate political speeches all over the country

IDI/Igbo trader/man/38yrs/Computer Village/2023

At Alaba International market and Ladipo International markets respectively, focus group discussion was carried out among Market Associations and the following are submitted by each of the Associations in the selected markets in Lagos state At Alaba International market, the association posits that

The machine I mean BVAS is not planned before purchasing it for the election. We know that millions of dollars were spent on buying and importing the machines into Nigeria and the process of training staff for the electoral work is also calculated. Then why failure displayed national and internationally must we copy what others are doing when Nigerians will want to depend on our local and indigenous means or process of doing things in Nigeria. Another person opines that the adoption of BVAS is primarily for cheating in Nigeria because the process of buying involves money, training staff involves money, transporting the materials involves money, payment of workers and security personal involves money among others. The third respondent explains and opines that the adoption of the BVAS machine is not bad but the aims and purpose behind the usage and what the leaders intended to use it for warrant probing in the country. On can imagine that the INEC Chairman opine his mouth and explain that the machine was hacked that is the reason for not using what worth of million dollars

FGD/Alaba Market Association/Ojo-Alaba zone/2023

The other focus group discussion was carried out at Ladipo international market among the Igbo market association. They asserted that;

The BVAS machine imported is for selfish interest and to protect the long-term plans of some political leaders who are master game changers of politics at any time. We know that these machines were imported to show that Nigerian government want to fight against corrupt political leaders which they did not achieved. For example, millions of Nigerians were left suffering because they need to change money and fuel scarcity so that people will stay at home of forced to go out to vote. The situation was said to fight against political leaders who uses money to buy votes from the citizens. They failed because the plans did not work with the politicians because

money was spent while Nigerians who worked for their money were deprived of having access to their money due to election

FGD/Ladipo Market Association/Mushin zone/2023

The research intends to research on Igbo ethnic group submissions concerning the use of BVAS machine in 2023 general election in Lagos. The findings shows that large numbers of the Igbo's indigenes feels that the purchasing of the BVAS machines is to deceive large number of Nigeria because the game has already been planned and they know who they wanted as president of Nigeria. The statistics shows that 56 percent of the participants feels that the political authority know what they want to achieve during presidential election which they have already achieved, 23 percent submitted that human errors was responsible for the problem of BVAS machine for achieving its purpose while 21 percent said that the security personal and the INEC trained workers worked line with the order of the politicians to rub Nigerians the expected leaders in the country.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first conclusion was drawn from the research question that intends to examine factors that leads to increase in voting insecurity in the 2023 general elections. The research was concluded that there are several factors that led to increase in voting insecurity which include high level of educated illiteracy among the Yoruba's, high level of political thugs' involvement in political party process and electioneering in Lagos. Moreover, some attributed voting insecurity to fear of unknown and vested interest placed over the general interest by the political elites over the citizens in Lagos, Nigeria. Out of 48 participants interviewed at various markets in Lagos state, 60 percent of them claimed that ignorance and illiteracy are the major factors that influence the level of voting insecurity in Lagos, 22 percent of them submitted that ethnic sentiment is the major factor that contribute to high level of voting insecurity experienced in Lagos, 10 percent of them claimed that the influence of bad political elites gives birth to political thugs in political process while 8 percent said that the Yoruba's are lazy in doing business which Igbo's are doing well instead of them to get serious with whatever they are doing they decided to lot or steal and destroy our businesses in Lagos. The findings was correlated Ogunmefun (2020), which was also supported by Ajaegbu (2012). These issues were made worse by the high rate of unemployment and other economic hardships that drive young people to engage in antisocial behavior. Due to the high percentage of unemployment in Nigeria, for instance, a significant portion of those who engage in illegal or violent behavior are graduates from a variety of disciplines. As opposed to this, Soh (2012) argues that all types of people engage in illegal behavior, including those who bask in luxury and do so in order to further their own interests.

The research which tends to examine how political threats can influence voting behaviour of the Igbo's before, during and after the 2023 general election both at presidential and governorship stages. The submissions of the Igbo men and women indicated that the utterances of the king in Lagos and political thugs deduced the rate of Igbo involvement in governorship election in 2023. This is because 69 percent of the Igbo's submitted that the major reason for their withdrawal from voting was because the political thugs warned that the Igbo's should not come out to votes for another candidates of their choice apart from voting for APC candidates in Lagos, Moreover, 21 percent of them claimed that poor performance of the Nigeria Police send signal to them that their lives and properties are not secured so therefore, we needs to withdraw from the Lagos state politics while 10 percent said the utterance of the Lagos King shows that we do not have choice because the king order that and make it compulsory that we must votes the APC leaders and once we failed to do that we should leave Lagos and park our properties and return back to

Southeastern parts of Nigeria. The submission of Ogunmefun & Oyeyemi (2021) opines that increase in political violent activities is rooted to vested interest of the political leaders on their illegal passion associated to political seat and retainment of power. In addition, the authors submitted that in African continent political class or elites takes advantages of the youths by using them to clandestine political process in the country. This is one of the major retrogressive indicators influencing the last conducted election in Lagos.

The research which tends to unravel strategies put in place by the security officers to combat political hate speech during Governorship election in Lagos state shows that the police have tried but the menace associated with hate speech continues to gather its momentum in the state. This is because the police and other security agents failed to address the issues as signed in the constitution. Out of the 48 participants interviewed 92 percent agreed that the police and other security agents cannot address the issues of hate speech that arise in Lagos state before, during and after 2023 general election in Nigeria. 5 percent argued that even the political leaders are more interested in hate speech for demoralization of their various opponents while 3 percent submitted that the police have done what they can do because they are normal human being like any other person in the society that have family and life to maintain. They can only do what they can do and leave the rest for the government to give order. Ogunmefun, Olawunmi, Aluko Aborisade, & Amosun (2022) lamented that the activities of the police have proved abortive because of the security lapses experienced in Lagos and how the Nigeria police are most used by the political leaders to achieve their interest. The Nigeria police are respected globally but despite all the efforts put in place to redeem their profession, the attitude of political leaders mostly infringed on the performance of the force.

The research intends to research on Igbo ethnic group submissions concerning the use of BVAS machine in 2023 general election in Lagos. The findings shows that large numbers of the Igbo's indigenes feels that the purchasing of the BVAS machines is to deceive large number of Nigeria because the game has already been planned and they know who they wanted as president of Nigeria. The statistics shows that 56 percent of the participants feels that the political authority know what they want to achieve during presidential election which they have already achieved, 23 percent submitted that human errors was responsible for the problem of BVAS machine for achieving its purpose while 21 percent said that the security personal and the INEC trained workers worked line with the order of the politicians to rub Nigerians the expected leaders in the country. For Ogunmefun & Oyeyemi (2021) political threats is a subset of electoral violence because political threats consist of element of oppression that negate individuals or group right to participate in electoral process through the use of emotional, social and economic force, coercion or pressure as well as physical and social harms. Furthermore, Ogunmefun, Aborisade & Aluko (2022) highlighted few reasons for the prevalence of political threats experienced by citizens before and after election in African continent which includes selfish or vested interest, greed and fear of unknown among others

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study was drawn from the set research questions as guides to the study. Thus, the conclusion drawn from the first research question shows that there are several factors that lead to vote insecurity in the 2023 general election in Lagos. The factors vary in terms of purposes ranging from vested interest depict by the political actors, wickedness, love for money, fear of unknown in term of losing their political position to other political parties.

Within the purview of the second inquiry which intends to know how political threat influence voting behaviour of the residents of Lagos in 2023 Governorship election. The study concluded that the

recently concluded election in Lagos state shows high level of insecurity among voters especially other ethnic groups in Lagos state. There are different techniques adopted by political leaders or party representative to frustrate voters before, during and after election which in turn result to poor participation of the Nigerians in electioneering process in Nigeria

Based on the research which intends to inquire into various strategies put in place by the security officers to combat political hate speech during governorship election in Lagos state. The conclusion derived from the study indicated that there are several strategies put in place by various security officers in Lagos state to curb electoral violence or threat but most proved abortive because several malpractices, violent activities, civil unrest, psychological trauma and vandalization were experienced in Lagos state during the last concluded election

The conclusion drawn from the inquiry which intends to know the conclusion of diverse ethnic groups in Lagos state concerning the use of BVAS machine in 2023 general election in Lagos. The study concluded that Nigeria political process and electioneering still needs transparency, accountability and technological advancement in dealing and approaching election. This is because most electoral policy adopted by Nigerian to ensure safety of the voting rights of Nigerians later proved to be retrogressive to what is expected in decision making concerning the political leadership position in Nigeria.

Recommendations

- 1) The political laws guiding political process should emphasized that political position acquired by any political leaders should be based on part time obligations
- 2) The formal and informal policing structure should be separated from party interest so that they could maintain and assure transparent and accountable political process
- 3) The introduction of hate speech should not be segregated or made optional because while some people used it against other people and they go free from be apprehended others should also be apprehended for any hate speech they asserted against any ethnic groups in Nigeria
- 4) For Nigerians to assure unity and harmony the registered state of birth in term of determining Nigerians personality should be replaced with place of both to ensure collective collectivity among diverse ethnic groups in Lagos state, Nigeria
- 5) The elected Political actors who are to determine political decision should be elected based on meritocracy and if any malpractice is found, such dignity should be compel to justice
- 6) The constitution rules concerning election and declaration of winners of election as stated in Nigerian constitution should reviewed and revisited for clarity in the mode of operandi

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