



GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

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Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to investigate how Violence against Women (VAW) contributes to women's marginalization and erasure in Nigerian politics. The relationship between violence against women and their involvement in Nigerian politics is examined. It addresses the idea of VAW and political leadership using a theoretical framework that integrates feminist and cultural theory perspectives on the understanding of violence. In the chosen geopolitical zones, the research identifies instances of VAW in Nigerian politics. It contends that because violence against women hinders women's political engagement, it effectively disenfranchises them from positions of leadership.

Keywords: *Political Violence; Violence Against Women; Marginalization; Political Participation; Political Leadership; Gender-Based Violence; Violence*

Introduction

According to an analysis of reports gathered from Africa, South-East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, political violence directed at women is on the rise. This includes everything from attacks on female civilians during times of war to suppression of female-led protests. According to the data, there were twice as many instances reported in the first quarters of 2022 and 2021. This type of abuse impacts women from all socioeconomic backgrounds, not just those involved in politics. It is hence obvious that the threat of political violence towards women is on the increase. On the 19th November 2019, in Nigeria, Kogi state to be specific, a PDP women leader was burnt to death during the post-election violence. All these give us an understanding of how violence against women is a form of political violence which inhibits women's political participation and women's civic engagement. This study focuses on political violence against women, which has become the most pervasive kind of abuse in the globe, affecting one-third of all women throughout their lifetimes. Women's human rights are violated by violence against them, which can take both formal and informal forms and be perpetrated by individuals, groups, and institutions. This violence also restricts women's freedom of choice and impairs their capacity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from development. VAW is therefore objectionable on all levels and in all social, political, economic, and cultural contexts. This is because it aids in the marginalization and erasure of women, which inevitably results in their significant absence from positions of political leadership.



Citation:



Violence against women's participation is a prevalent phenomenon in Africa and has been part of human history. Regardless of their age, class, religion, or social status, women in Africa experience numerous forms of violence, much like their counterparts in other parts of the world (Obagboye, 2021; Hamm, 2000). Biological, social, cultural, economic, and political elements interact to produce violence, which is a very complicated phenomenon, according to Bisika (2008). The primary cause of violence is an imbalance of power. Violence against women poses a serious obstacle to growth and development since it stops women from advancing in their development (Ouedraogo and Stenzel, 2021; Abama and Kwaja, 2009). The United Nations in New York similarly views violence against women as a roadblock to the pursuit of peace, equality, and development. According to them, it violates women's fundamental rights and freedoms and diminishes or eliminates their ability to exercise those rights.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) defines violence against women as any gender-based acts, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty - whether they occur in public or private life - that cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women. As a result, violence against women includes, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse that occurs in the home, in the greater community, or wherever else it occurs when it is committed by or supported by the state.

In addition to being a method of preserving gender inequality, violence against women is also a sign of unequal power dynamics between men and women (Bisika, 2008). Because it is backed by discriminatory cultural, social, and economic structures, this violence claims lives, tears communities apart, and halts progress (UN Women India, n.d.). Nigeria is frequently referred to as the "Giant of Africa" due to its enormous population and thriving economy. With a population of roughly 184 million, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the sixth most populous country overall. Nigeria's female population percentage was last estimated at 49.07 percent by the World Bank in 2015. The National Demographic and Health Survey of 2008 showed that 28 per cent of Nigerian women have suffered one form of violence or the other.

Family institutions, larger social and economic frameworks, as well as cultural and religious traditions, institutionalize violence against women. It is a widely used strategy for managing women. Furthermore, it is largely disregarded by law enforcement and people in positions of authority. Examining how VAW contribute to women's marginalization and erasure in Nigerian politics is the main goal of this study. The relationship between violence against women and their involvement in Nigerian politics is examined. In addition, the paper outlines several types of VAW in Nigerian politics throughout the chosen geopolitical zones. It contends that because violence against women hinders women's political engagement, it effectively disenfranchises them from positions of leadership. The research looks at the variations in VAW throughout Nigeria's geopolitical zones and looks at how it affects women's involvement and participation in politics.

Using a theoretical framework that combines feminist and cultural theory perspectives in the analysis of violence, it discusses the concept of Violence Against Women (VAW) and political leadership. The paper also identifies forms of VAW in Nigerian politics across the selected geopolitical zones. It argues that violence against women effectively disenfranchises women from leadership positions as their participation in politics is hampered. The paper examines the variation in the forms of VAW across Nigerian geopolitical zones; assesses the impacts of the



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socio-demographic characteristics on VAW across the zones and examines the impact of the VAW on women's involvement /participation in political activities.

The study used primary data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires in a few Nigerian States. For the quantitative survey, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed to choose the study sample. A questionnaire was given to 1439 female responders, but only 1206 received an appropriate response. To highlight the experience of VAW in the chosen geopolitical zones and how it is impacted by other sociodemographic factors, Chi-Square and binary logistics will be employed. The paper recommends the need to empower women and girls to be self-protective; change social norms via the socialization process; build political will and legal institutional capacity to prevent and respond to VAW and provide comprehensive services, especially to victims of VAW.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the research is to investigate how Violence Against Women (VAW) contributes to women's marginalization and erasure in Nigerian politics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research conducted by activists, as opposed to academics, who have examined the issue of domestic abuse in Africa, reflects a number of theories on domestic violence. According to Elizabeth Schneider, the theoretical underpinnings of the field of domestic violence research have a significant impact on the remedial measures used to address the issue, particularly if it is thought of as a component of a broader fight for gender equality (Elizabeth, 2000).

According to Cynthia G. Bowman, the literature on domestic violence in Africa falls into five broad kinds of thinking. Rights theories, feminist theories, cultural explanations, explanations for societies in transition, and so forth. For the purposes of this study, the phenomenon of DV will be explained using the feminist theory and the cultural explanation, and solutions will be arranged in accordance with the theoretical explanation.

Cynthia is adamant that domestic violence literature in Africa frequently uses feminist justifications. The reason is that it is challenging to look at domestic violence in Africa without considering how widespread gender inequality is there. A woman occupies a lower position in traditional African civilizations because of their patriarchal practices and traditions. African customary law has continued to institutionalize this inequity. For instance, women are not considered to share in marital property ownership and are also denied the right to inherit from their husbands in the majority of African customary legal systems. The fight for gender equality is therefore considered as a much larger struggle than the fight against domestic violence.

The second theory used for this study highlights the importance of tradition and norms within African culture in explaining the high prevalence of domestic violence. This theory can be found in the developing African literature. Morayo Atinmo provides evidence for this claim by describing social welfare office interviews in Nigeria's Ibadan region where police officers "remind wives that Yoruba culture allows men to beat women." Other cultural explanations for widespread wife abuse, according to Cynthia (2003), are less direct. They include the impact of polygamy, the impact on traditional African marriages, the acceptance of male promiscuity, the influence of the extended family over the married couple, and the nearly universal institution of bride price. Except for families who are ready to reimburse the bride price, it is difficult for women to escape an abusive husband.



Citation:



The cultural theory of domestic violence is not attributing violence as endemic in African societies, but it is pointing to the fact that there is a close link between violence and the enforcement of conformity to traditional roles for women and dominance for their husbands. According to Cynthia (2003), the theory holds that violence almost invariably results from a society that views women as property, socializes them to be submissive, and lessens their bargaining power through the practice of polygamy, and other practices similar to these. Therefore, the study combines the cultural argument with the ones that are grounded in gender equality.

The idea that violence against women is encouraged by culture is relevant because, according to Easteal (1994), there is a complex dynamic interaction between the many beliefs and institutions of culture. This is corroborated by Briere (2004), who lists socio-cultural elements like poverty, social inequality, and a lack of proper social assistance as some of the factors that combine to affect how seriously violence against women affects society. However, Armstrong (1998) contends that culture frequently serves as a defence against male aggression rather than a contributing factor.

NEXUS BETWEEN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

The advancement, development, and participation of women in politics are significantly hampered by violence. Development efforts are hampered in particular by violence against women (Abama and Kwaja, 2009). According to Akinboye and Agbalajobi (2013), it violates and restricts the fundamental freedoms and rights of women. One-third of all women will experience some sort of violence in their lifetime, making it the most pervasive form of abuse in the world (Mukasa, 2015; Mitchell, 2012). According to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA) report, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women, violence against women is defined as any acts of gender-based violence that cause "physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty" (Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punish This definition includes dowry-related fatalities, sexual abuse of female children, marital rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), and other harmful traditional practices for women, spousal violence, and violence resulting from exploitation, according to Krantz and Garcia-Moreno (2005) and Kamau and Nzomo (2012).

One of the most pervasive and universal human rights violations is violence against women. (Mukasa, McCleary-Sills, Heilman, and Namy, 2014; South African Medical Research Council, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and World Health Organization (WHO), 2013; Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2002) They are not limited by geographic boundaries, age restrictions, class distinctions, or cultural differences. Women's engagement in governance, social inclusion, and gender equality are all strongly impacted by violence against women (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2015). The health, dignity, security, and autonomy of the victims are threatened by gender-based violence (GBV), which reflects and promotes inequalities between men and women (Vernellia, 2003; Izumi, 2007; Akinboye and Agbalajobi, 2013).

Violence against women manifests at every level of society, from interpersonal and familial relationships to communities and rights throughout society, including via the state (Mitchell,



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2012). According to the WHO, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council (2013), women are at risk of violence from both intimate partners and complete strangers.; Ellsberg and Heise, 2005; Heise and Garcia-Moreno, 2002). It is difficult to access reliable data for gender-based violence because this crime often goes unreported by both victims and police (Heise, Ellsberg, and Gottemoeller, 2002; Watts and Zimmerman 2002). However, recent data show that in sub-Saharan Africa, about 13 per cent and 45 per cent proportion of women at some point in their lives are being assaulted by their intimate partners (Mukasa, McCleary-Sills, Heilman and Namy, 2014).

Numerous sorts of violence can be used against women and girls. abuse against women takes many different forms, including human trafficking, female genital mutilation/cutting, and abuse against children, notably sexual violence against girls. The majority of known victims of human trafficking are women and girls, according to data, and the estimated proportion of girls among all trafficking victims has increased from 10% in 2004 to 21% in 2011 (UN Office of Drug and Crime, 2014). The prevalence of violence against minors is similarly high, with 9 to 21% of boys and 26 to 38% of girls reporting having been sexually assaulted before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2014).

The substantial health and financial costs of violence against women have a detrimental effect on women's capacity to engage fully in politics. There are also significant unintended consequences of violence against women. Although difficult to quantify, these expenses invariably have a significant impact on the political economy of any community because they reduce women's capacity and quality of life. According to Buvinic, Morrison, and Shifter as cited in Morrison and Biehl (1999), women who experience abuse of any kind are frequently socially isolated, which prevents them from taking part in community and even income-generating activities. Perhaps most importantly, this deprives the women of the social interaction that might enable them to stop the abuse.

In Nigeria, there have been many instances of violence that occurred while people took part in politics in one way or another. Election violence is one type of such violence. Whether sponsored or unsponsored, election-related violence is associated with social and economic problems such political unrest, resource competition, racial and religious intolerance, and political instability that generates anger and undermines or undermines the rule of law. Election violence is also a result of winner-loser power dynamics, inadequate security or law enforcement, racial tensions, and the presence of willing protesters. According to Aniekwe and Kushie (2011), politicians, state officials, party officials, and their representatives openly recruit, finance, and occasionally equip gangs that carry out electoral violence in Nigeria, which is primarily committed by illiterate, jobless, and poor young men (p. 20). There have been numerous instances of pre- or post-election violence in Nigeria since the 1965 elections, particularly with the resurgence of democracy in 1999 (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart, 2010).

The country's pre-election and post-election violence is exacerbated by the association of political campaigns with thuggery, false promises, lying, insults, altercations, and intimidation (Ehinmore & Ehiabhi, 2013, p. 50). As was the case with the 2011 elections in Nigeria, the spread of rumours and provocative messages about an election or its outcome could immediately set off political violence (Harwood and Campbell 2010; Ofili 2011, p. 3). According to Ehinmore and Ehiabhi (2011), the political climate in the nation is renowned for its boldness,



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which allows individuals to freely engage in active party politics. All of these harm women psychologically since they are perceived as having 'feminine' features like being maternal, delicate, and soft-spoken.

Women are disproportionately the targets of gender-based election violence because of their desire to run for office, their involvement in politics, or even just their dedication to voting. 'Political rape' is how Okumu (2008) described political violence against women. According to him, political rape happens when males use violence to intimidate or dominate women when they attempt to gain access to historically or inherently male domains due to men's egos (2008). Some women may face threats and physical abuse as a result of being forced to withdraw in favour of a male candidate. Although violence is employed equally against male candidates by other males, it has a bigger impact on female aspirants.

In connection with the foregoing, women typically find it challenging to navigate the choppy political waters of Nigeria (Charles and Ikenna, 2009). Thus, one of the main reasons given by female political candidates as their main barrier to success in electoral politics is their fear of all sorts of gender-based violence. Another thing that deters many women from even trying to get involved in electoral politics is the perception of politics as a dirty game. For instance, in 2003 there were party disputes, political killings, and turmoil in the community, particularly in the Niger-delta region. Election violence in 2007 was more of a certainty, deterring people from voting, like in Rivers State, where violent threats led to poor election turnout and several political kidnappings concurrently (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart, 2010).

Unlike past elections, the 16 April 2011 presidential election in Nigeria was well-organized and credible, but post-election violence was still present, particularly in the Northern area. Attacks mostly targeted PDP officials and supporters, as well as governmental institutions and non-Muslim people. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) participants were specifically targeted for attack (Orji and Uzodi, 2012). Because they are non-natives, INEC recruited NYSC participants to work as ad hoc election staff in their deployed communities. However, this call to duty gave the Corps participants the unfortunate impression that they were election officials, and this unfortunate perception, combined with the fact that the majority of the NYSC participants deployed to Northern states were non-natives and non-Muslims, made them prime targets.

Two female Corps members were raped before being killed. Unknown numbers of additional female Corps Members were molested and assaulted by protesters in the village of Gadau. The situation of the female NYSC members is indicative of the abuses that several other women experienced during the protests (Tribune, 2011). In Maiduguri, party supporters allegedly came under fire from security personnel, according to Zana Shettima, the CPC's chairman in Borno State (Liman, 2011). According to accounts, troops topped and detained some 100 civilians who were attempting to leave protests in Kaduna and were kept at an army depot in Zaria. The majority of these detainees were women and children. Before being freed, they were held for days in a cramped space without appropriate ventilation and went without food and drink for an extended period of time (Liman, 2011).

Although it's possible that the severity of the sexual violence connected to the protests was underreported, the 2011 post-election unrest saw instances of sexual assault. When he reported that "an unspecified number of female Corps members were raped, molested and assaulted by irate youths in Gadau village," the Bauchi State Police Command corroborated this (Orude,



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2011, p. 5, Mohammed, 2011, p. 10). In a separate incident, demonstrators allegedly broke into a female hostel at the Federal College of Education in Kano, although no sexual assaults were reported (Mgboh and Ebije, 2011). Information is scarce due to the culture of silence surrounding sexual abuse, inadequate reporting mechanisms, security personnel's treatment of victims of sexual abuse, and the challenge of identifying sexual abusers in violent situations (Amnesty International, 2006).

A frequent and widely publicized feature of the post-election violence in 2011 was physical assault. The media was flooded with reports of people who had been beaten, maimed, or otherwise harmed by protesters. Many people were injured physically as a result of being struck by arrows, machetes, and other lethal weapons (Asemota, 2011). According to accounts from multiple hospitals, gunshot wounds were common (Binniyat 2011). Although there is no official count of those who were assaulted and hurt physically, statistics from a number of sources indicate that physical assault was the most frequent type of violence throughout the protests.

A local human rights defender told Amnesty International (2011) “The pattern of the killings now is extremely worrying, with attacks on women, children and the elderly” (2011:13). Gender-based electoral violence have in no small dimension determined women’s participation in politics. Therefore, violence against women is one issue that needs to be handled critically.

Methodology

The study used primary data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires in a few Nigerian States. For the quantitative survey, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed to choose the study sample. A questionnaire was given to 1439 female responders, but only 1206 received an appropriate response. To highlight the experience of VAW in the chosen geopolitical zones and how it is impacted by other sociodemographic factors, Chi-Square and binary logistics will be employed.

Analysis of Result

Experiences of Violence against Women across the Geopolitical Zones

Table 1 below shows the distribution of women’s experiences of violence across the geopolitical zones. Various forms of emotional violence were presented to the women and these are ‘Has anyone ever said or done something to humiliate you?’, has anyone ever threatened to hurt or harm you’ among others. The results revealed that 68.1% of the women in Anambra experience humiliation by others, and more than half experienced this in Kaduna and Ondo. Further, 68.1% of the women reported cases of threatened or harm by others in Anambra, 47.0% of them reported this in Kaduna and more than half of them in Ondo reported this. In addition, 59.2% of the women had experienced insult by others in Anambra, just 40.7% and 50.6% of the women in Ondo reported this case. As regards physical violence, the results further showed that more than 82% of the women reported cases of being threatened or attacked, choke or beaten by others and kicked or dragged by others in Anambra and Ondo. However, in Kaduna, more than half of the women reported this. Statements formulated on sexual violence involved force and threats. It was revealed that 75.2% reported cases of threats in Anambra and 74.2% of the women experienced forced sex. Also, 60.6% of the women in Kaduna reported cases of threats and 57% of them reported cases to force sex. Also, 85.2% of the women reported cases of forced sex and 82.1% of the women reported cases of threats.



Citation:



Table 1: Distribution of women's experiences across the geopolitical zones

Type of Violence	Experiences of Violence Against Women	Ever Experienced			Never Experienced		
		Anambra Freq. (%)	Kaduna Freq. (%)	Ondo Freq. (%)	Anambra Freq. (%)	Kaduna Freq. (%)	Ondo Freq. (%)
Emotional Violence	Has anyone ever said or done something to humiliate you	271 (68.6)	124 (31.4)	224 (56.3)	714 (43.7)	216 (52.3)	197 (47.7)
	Has anyone ever threatened to hurt or harm you	269 (68.1)	126 (31.9)	187 (47.0)	211 (53.0)	238 (57.6)	175 (42.4)
	Has anyone ever insulted you or made you feel bad about yourself	234 (59.2)	161 (40.8)	162 (40.7)	236 (59.3)	209 (50.6)	204 (49.4)
Physical Violence	Has anyone ever pushed you, shaken you or thrown something that could hurt you	283 (71.7)	112 (28.3)	172 (43.2)	226 (56.8)	273 (66.1)	140 (33.9)
	Has anyone ever slapped you	283 (71.7)	112 (28.3)	177 (44.5)	221 (55.5)	254 (61.5)	159 (38.5)
	Has anyone ever twisted your arm or pulled your hair	307 (77.7)	88 (22.3)	174 (43.7)	224 (56.3)	298 (72.2)	115 (27.8)
	Has anyone ever punched you with a first or with something that could hurt you	308 (78.0)	87 (22.0)	197 (49.5)	201 (50.5)	309 (74.8)	104 (25.2)
	Has anyone ever kicked you, dragged you, or beat you	317 (80.3)	78 (19.8)	208 (52.3)	190 (47.7)	329 (79.7)	84 (20.3)
	Has anyone ever tried to choke you or beat you	326 (82.5)	68 (17.2)	236 (59.3)	164 (41.2)	357 (86.4)	56 (13.6)
	Has anyone ever threatened or attacked you with a knife, gun or any other weapon	327 (82.8)	68 (17.2)	234 (58.8)	162 (40.7)	343 (83.0)	70 (17.0)
Sexual Violence	Has anyone ever physically forced you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to	293 (74.2)	102 (25.8)	227 (57.0)	171 (43.0)	352 (85.2)	61 (14.8)
	Has anyone ever physically forced you to perform any other sexual acts you did not want to	21 (5.3)	374 (94.7)	203 (51.0)	195 (49.0)	338 (81.8)	75 (18.2)
	Has anyone ever forced you with threats or in any other way	297 (75.2)	98 (24.8)	241 (60.6)	157 (39.5)	339 (82.1)	74 (17.9)

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The results in Table 2 below revealed a rating of the class of gender-based violence experienced by women in their attempt to participate in politics across the geopolitical zones in Nigeria. About 21% of Anambra women reported high cases of emotional violence, close to one-third (32.7 %) reported physical violence and 35.2% of them reported sexual violence. It could be deduced from the distribution that women had experienced physical and sexual violence in Anambra. Though the classes of violence reported were low, however, there is a need to encourage women in politics by controlling violence in political activities. This is because if all these are left unchecked may likely deter women from political participation. Experience of gender-based seems to be high in Kaduna as half of the women reported one case of sexual violence or the other. For instance, close to half (48.7 %) of the women in Kaduna reported



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cases of emotional violence, about three-quarters (73.9 %) of them reported physical violence and more than half (52.5 %) reported sexual violence. Cases of gender-based violence in Ondo are averagely low as the results revealed that 36.7% of the women reported emotional violence, 36.1% claimed physical violence and 37.5% reported sexual violence. This indicated that one out of every three women in Ondo had experienced a form of gender-based violence or the other which could be emotional, physical or sexual violence.

Table 2: Ranking of the Experiences of Violence Against Women in Politics across the Zones

Forms of Violence	Party Politics	ANAMBRA	KADUNA	ONDO
		Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Emotional	Low	312 (79.0)	204 (51.3)	250 (63.3)
	High	83 (21.0)	194 (48.7)	145 (36.7)
Physical	Low	266 (67.3)	104 (26.1)	264 (63.9)
	High	129 (32.7)	294 (73.9)	149 (36.1)
Sexual	Low	256 (64.8)	189 (47.5)	258 (62.5)
	High	139 (35.2)	209 (52.5)	155 (37.5)

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Relationship between Gender-Based Violence and Women Political Participation across the Zones

Table 3 presents the relationship between VAW and political participation. The results established that those who experienced high emotional violence are 37% less likely to participate in politics in Anambra, they are 19% less likely to participate in politics in Kaduna and approximately 20% more likely to participate in politics in Ondo compared to those that experience a low level of emotional violence as the reference category (RC). As regards physical violence, those that have experienced high physical violence are 23% more likely to participate in politics compared to the RC (low physical violence) in Anambra. They are 26% less likely to participate in politics in Kaduna and 25% less likely to participate in politics in Ondo compared to the RC. Concerning sexual violence, those who have experienced a high level of sexual violence are 34% more likely to participate in politics in Anambra, they are 19% less likely to participate in politics in Kaduna and 62% less likely to participate in politics in Ondo compared to the RC.

Table 3: Binary Logistics Regression (BLR) on Violence against Women and Women Political Participation across Nigeria's Geopolitical Zones

Forms of Violence	Party politics	ANAMBRA		KADUNA		ONDO	
		Odds ratio	p-value	Odds ratio	p-value	Odds ratio	p-value
Emotional	Low	RC		RC	-	RC	-
	High	0.6289	0.113	0.8018	0.449	1.1966	0.443
Physical	Low	RC	-	RC	-	RC	-
	High	2.2387	0.003	0.7346	0.414	0.7438	0.233
Sexual	Low	RC	-	RC	-	RC	-
	High	1.3462	0.228	1.1918	0.543	2.6294	0.001

Source: Field Survey (2023)



Citation:



Table 4 below presents the association between gender-based violence and political participation level in the geopolitical zones. As regards emotional violence experienced by Anambra women, 39.7% of the have experienced low emotional violence and have low political participation, 37.8% participate moderately in politics and 22.4% participate highly in politics. Among those who have experienced high, 39.8% of them have low political participation, 33.7% participate moderately and 26.5% cent of them participate highly in politics. There is however no significant relationship between emotional violence and political participation ($= 0.7624$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$). This implied that emotional violence experienced in politics does not influence women's political participation level. In addition, 15.7% of those experienced low emotional violence, 15.7% of them have a low level of political participation, 34.8% of them participate moderately and 49.5% of them participate highly in politics.

Also, 20.1% of those that experience high emotional violence, have low participation in politics, 29.4% of them have a moderate level of political participation and 50.5% of them highly participate in politics. There is no significant relationship between emotional violence and political participation ($= 2.0166$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$). Furthermore, among those that experienced low emotional violence in Ondo, 58.0% of them have a low level of political participation, 30.7% participated moderately in politics and 11.4% of them highly participated in politics. Of those who experienced high emotional violence, 51.0% of them have a low level of political violence, 28.2% of them participated moderately in politics and 20.8% of them highly participated in politics. The chi-square test results revealed a significant relationship between emotional violence and political participation in Ondo ($= 6.7767$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

Considering physical violence among the Anambra women, 45.1% of them that experience low physical violence reported a low level of political participation, 38.0% of them reported a moderate level and 16.9% of them highly participate in politics. Among those that experienced high physical violence, 28.7% of them reported a low level of political participation, 34.9% of them participate moderately in politics and 36.4% of them highly participate in politics ($= 20.3312$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). In Kaduna, among those that reported low physical violence, 14.4% of them have a low level of political participation, 40.4% participate moderately in politics and 45.2% highly participate in politics. Of those that experienced high physical violence, 19.1% of them have a low level of political participation, 29.3% of them participate moderately in politics and 51.7% of them highly participate in politics.

There is no significant relationship between physical violence and political participation level ($= 4.5325$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$). In Ondo, 56.6% of those that experienced a low level of political violence have a low level of political violence, 28.7% of them participate moderately in politics and 14.7% of them highly participate in politics. Among those that have experienced high physical violence, 53.6% of them have a low level of political participation, 31.6% of them participate moderately in politics and 14.8% of them highly participate in politics. The test of the relationship revealed no significant association between physical violence and political participation level in Ondo ($= 0.4415$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$).

Concerning sexual violence, 43.8% of those that have experienced sexual violence in Anambra reported a low level of political participation, 32.8% of them participate moderately in politics and 23.4% of them highly participate in politics. Among those that have reported high levels of political violence, 32.4% of them have low levels of political participation, 44.6% of them,



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reported a moderate level of political participation and 23.0% of them highly participate in politics. There is however a significant relationship between sexual violence and political participation ($= 6.3287$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). In Kaduna, among those who reported low sexual violence, 18.0% of them claimed a low level of political participation, 34.4% of them moderately participate in politics and 47.6% participate highly in politics. Of those who reported a high level of sexual violence, 17.7% of them claimed a low level of political participation, 30.1% of them reported a moderate level of political participation and 52.2% of them reported a high level of political participation. There exists no significant relationship between sexual violence and political participation ($= 0.9695$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$).

In Ondo, among those that have experienced, 59.9% of them reported a low level of political participation, 26.6% of them reported a moderate level and 13.5 highly participate in politics. Among those that have experienced high sexual violence, 38.4% participate low in politics, 41.9% of them moderately participate and 19.8% highly participate in politics. There is a significant relationship between sexual violence and political participation in Ondo ($= 12.8691$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). In conclusion, sexual violence influences women's political participation level in Ondo geopolitical zone.

Table 4: Relationship between gender-based violence and Women's political participation level

Forms of Violence	Party politics	Political Participation Level											
		ANAMBRA				KADUNA				ONDO			
		Low	Mod.	High	Total	Low	Mod.	High	Total	Low	Mod.	High	Total
		Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Emotional violence	Low	124 (39.7)	118 (37.8)	70 (22.4)	312 (100)	32 (15.7)	71 (34.8)	101 (49.5)	204 (100)	153 (58.0)	81 (30.7)	30 (11.4)	264 (100)
	High	33 (39.8)	28 (33.7)	22 (26.5)	83 (100)	39 (20.1)	57 (29.4)	98 (50.5)	194 (100)	76 (51.0)	42 (28.2)	31 (20.8)	149 (100)
	Statistics	$\chi^2 = 0.7624$, $p\text{-value} = 0.683$				$\chi^2 = 2.0166$, $p\text{-value} = 0.365$				$\chi^2 = 6.7767$, $p\text{-value} = 0.034$			
Physical violence	Low	120 (45.1)	101 (38.0)	45 (16.9)	266 (100)	15 (14.4)	42 (40.4)	47 (45.2)	104 (100)	146 (56.6)	74 (28.7)	38 (14.7)	258 (100)
	High	37 (28.7)	45 (34.9)	47 (36.4)	129 (100)	56 (19.1)	86 (29.3)	152 (51.7)	294 (100)	83 (53.6)	49 (31.6)	23 (14.8)	155 (100)
	Statistics	$\chi^2 = 20.3312$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$				$\chi^2 = 4.5325$, $p\text{-value} = 0.104$				$\chi^2 = 0.4415$, $p\text{-value} = 0.802$			
Sexual violence	Low	112 (43.8)	84 (32.8)	60 (23.4)	256 (100)	34 (18.0)	65 (34.4)	90 (47.6)	189 (100)	196 (59.9)	87 (26.6)	44 (13.5)	327 (100)
	High	45 (32.4)	62 (44.6)	32 (23.0)	139 (100)	37 (17.7)	63 (30.1)	109 (100)	209 (100)	33 (38.4)	36 (41.9)	61 (19.8)	86 (100)
	Statistics	$\chi^2 = 6.3287$, $p\text{-value} = 0.042$				$\chi^2 = 0.9695$, $p\text{-value} = 0.616$				$\chi^2 = 12.8691$, $p\text{-value} = 0.002$			

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Conclusion

Violence may be claimed to be a primary reason for low political engagement among Nigerian women when considering the trend of violence and the experience of VAW throughout the three geographical zones that were chosen. This is due to the catastrophic outcomes that violence against politically active women has caused, which deters other women from participating in politics. It severely restricts women's ability to participate in politics, denying them their civil



Citation:



and political rights. Additionally, it prevents the participation of the other half of the world's population, eroding democracy and effective government and resulting in a democratic deficit. Sexual harassment, rape, and even the most heinous and savage form of murder have all been used as forms of violence against women in politics, in addition to verbal abuse and threats of retaliation. The fact that women are singled out for violence just because they are female makes it gendered in nature and, more crucially, discourages other women from using their agency and voice.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** To better protect women from political violence, the Nigerian government should examine and update current laws. This includes laws that expressly address violence against women in politics and harsh consequences for offenders. Additionally, the legal system needs to guarantee victims' access to justice and assistance programs.
2. **Promote Gender Equality:** The underlying socioeconomic issues that contribute to gender-based violence should be addressed. Through education, public awareness campaigns, and affirmative action policies, promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Encourage women to participate in decision-making, and provide them the tools and support they need to become more effective political leaders.
3. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Create a thorough and uniform method for gathering data that explicitly records instances of political violence against women. This information can be used to spot violent trends, patterns, and hotspots and enable targeted actions. To examine the data and produce evidence-based suggestions, work with academic institutions and civil society organizations.
4. **Strengthen Law Enforcement and Judicial System:** Increase the ability of law enforcement organizations to efficiently look into and bring cases of political violence against women to justice. Give judges, prosecutors, and police personnel specialized training so they can deal with these cases tactfully and effectively. Create specialized courts or fast-track procedures to speed up the legal system and guarantee victims receive justice on time.
5. **International Collaboration:** Participate in worldwide alliances and partnerships to exchange best practices and get insight from global experiences. To create and implement successful plans to counter political violence against women, look to international organizations like the United Nations for technical expertise and support.
6. **Public Awareness and Sensitization:** Launch focused public awareness initiatives to draw attention to the harm that political violence causes to women and society at large. To encourage polite and inclusive political discourse, conduct sensitization campaigns for political parties, candidates, and their followers. To promote attitudes that oppose violence against women in politics, interact with traditional and religious leaders.
7. **Support Mechanisms for Victims:** Create all-encompassing support systems for victims of political violence, including assistance with physical, mental, and legal needs. Make sure women have access to shelters, counselling, and safe areas as needed. Work together with civil society organizations to create networks of support and advocacy for victims.



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8. Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms: Create tools, such as helplines, hotlines, and internet platforms, to track and report instances of political violence against women. Assure women's safety and secrecy so they can report occurrences without worrying about retaliation. Evaluate these mechanisms' performance on a regular basis, and depending on user feedback, make any necessary modifications.
9. Strengthen Political Party Policies: Political parties should create and uphold internal policies that support diversity, gender equality, and a zero-tolerance policy for violence. Implement measures including party consequences for violence, candidate quotas, and open complaint processes. Encouraging political parties to put forth and support more female candidates.
10. Evaluation and Review: regularly assess the success of measures and techniques being used to stop political violence against women. To find gaps, difficulties, and improvement areas, conduct independent evaluations and assessments. Apply the information from these findings to new strategy development and policy revision as necessary.

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