# INSECURITY, VIOLENCE AND VOTER TURNOUT IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*Against the backdrop of growing concern and common desire for consolidation of the democratic system in Nigeria through credible, free and fair elections, this research paper interrogates the impact of electoral violence vis-à-vis voter turnout statistics as it relates to the electoral process. Informed by the nuanced view of the political behaviour and susceptibility of Nigerian electorates, the study is an enquiry into how supportive or otherwise the identified variables and drivers impacts on the credibility of the electoral process. This study was conducted between January, 2012 and July, 2013. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select seven thousand, two hundred (7,200) respondents across the six geopolitical zones of the country. The data were analyzed with the aid of simple percentage, the Chi-Square and Yule's Q to test and determine the degree of association intrinsic in the stated hypotheses. The study revealed that voter participation in the electoral process is inhibited by violence and widespread insecurity and hence, increased tendency towards political apathy by the citizenry. Accordingly, some recommendations and policy implications becomes imperative. For instance, there is need for the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct transparent, free and fair elections, improve voters' registration process and adequately educate voters'; the government should be genuinely supportive of the electoral body, while the political parties should ensure internal party democracy. Ultimately, the actualization of credibility, fairness, effective voters' participation in the electoral process and the quest for democratic consolidation would require the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders in the Nigerian polity*

**Keywords:** Elections; Democracy, Voter participation; insecurity, violence.

## Introduction

In liberal democratic theory, an election is a viable mechanism for perfecting representative government and voting is the main form of political participation in democratic societies. Globally, credible elections constitute a major factor in democracy and good governance. Elections in democracies help to promote representation of popular will and to secure legitimacy of the political system. However, there is an indicative evidence of the decline in voter electoral participation worldwide (IDEA, 1999). It has been observed that voters are displaying emotional aloofness from civic obligations, and to a certain extent, reserved attitude towards political activity. It is imperative therefore, to understand the sources and character of political abstention. Voter participatory behaviour (VPB), a subset of political behaviour, has therefore appeared as a major problem in developed and emergent democracies. There has been much concern over the years that the citizens are disengaging from the political process, as shown by the continuing decline in voter turnout at all levels of elections (IDEA, 1999, 2004). This leads to serious questions of legitimacy. For example, are non-voters completely disengaged from the political process or simply engaged in other kinds of political activities that they find more satisfying and more likely to affect their lives positively?

Even in advanced democracies, the level of citizen participation in the electoral process is dwindling, largely because real choice is limited and the people feel a sense of powerlessness rather than satisfaction (LeDuc, Niemi and Norris, 1996; International IDEA. (1997). In developing countries, especially in Africa, elections are riddled with tension, conflicts, crises and fraud such that it is difficult to use them as a barometer of the peoples' choice. Hence, the euphoria of the second wave of democratization in Africa is fast receding. Yesterday's icons who led civil society in the struggles for democratic renewal have been transformed into the images of those against whom they fought. They have assumed dictatorial postures, manipulated elections and tend towards sit-tight regimes (Adejumobi 2000; Ibrahim, 2006; Nolte, 2004). A study initiated in Nigeria by The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (a German non-governmental organization) identified INEC, the media and politicians as being principally responsible for the decline of voter participation (Alechenu, 2012).

Nigeria is in the league of less successful countries in the area of election management and outcomes. The electoral rules are unclear, ever

changing and easily subverted. The electoral body is structurally weak and perennially ineffective; the political actors and agencies are like gladiators in their conduct; while the people are often powerless in an environment of political and electoral misdemeanor (Dunleavy, & Margetts, 1995; Calingaert, 2006). Voting does not amount to choosing in the Nigerian environment, as electoral choices are made by political barons outside the environment of electoral norms, rules and procedure. In such circumstances, winners and losers have more often than not been determined before the contest, and voters merely go through the farce of confirming choices already made (Fawole, 2005; Glasgow & Alvarez 2005).

Several factors that affect voter electoral behaviour have been highlighted in relevant literature (Barnes & Kaase, 1979). Some of these include broad psychological factors and collective memory of historical and contemporary events. Others are patterns of trust, feelings of efficacy, political engagement and disengagement at individual, group and regional levels (Blaise 2000; Fawole, 2005). The electoral system of any country plays a fundamental role in sustaining and molding the political behavior of its citizens (Okolo, 2002). The way election is conducted in a country determines to a great extent the level of political culture, political participation and governance in the country. This obviously depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of a county's electoral system. Since democracy means rule by the people, people are supposedly able to choose politicians whom they want to represent their interest in government through elections even though it is usually difficult to hold elections that are completely free and fair. However, conducting elections have been the major bane confronting African democracies. Studies on elections show that transiting from one regime to another is often the problem in most African states (Ogundiya, I and Aba, T B. 2005; Glasgow and Alvarez, 2005; Falana, 2009).

The violence that occurs before, during and after elections often brings about instability in the political system of most African countries including Nigeria. Election violence has been one of the major banes of Nigeria's democratic sustainability since independence. The conduct of elections has always been characterized by pessimism or uncertainty and fears for the safety of lives and property. Conflict ridden situations have historically featured in all elections conducted in Nigeria since 1964; hence, issues surrounding the electoral process potentially relate to violence and violations of the rights of individuals. Rather than serve as a means and a process of exercising legitimate political rights, elections in Nigeria since

independence, have turned into a charade causing serious political turmoil and threatening the survival of not only democracy, but also Nigeria's corporate existence. Nigeria's democracy has witnessed unprecedented political woes and uncontrolled violence, evidenced in the wanton destruction of lives and property. Election period in Nigeria is best described as warfare (Ake, 2001, Adekanye, 1989). Incidences of intra-party and inter-party conflicts and violence have led to intimidation, abductions and assassinations of rivals and innocent victims, as well as flagrant rigging of election results. Breaking the circle of violence before, during or after elections has become elusive, imparting negatively on voter electoral participation in terms of turnout. Various reasons have been adduced as being responsible for the endemic nature of violence in the nation's political system. For instance, during the 2011 presidential elections alone, more than eight hundred people (800) lost their lives and more than sixty-five thousand (65,000) people internally displaced (HWR, 2011).

With these ugly scenarios, elections in Nigeria have not provided a window of politics of rationality and tolerance, which promotes maturity of public debate, productive dialogue, negotiations and compromise. Attempts designed to reconstruct the state have been unsuccessful because politics has been reduced to a violent game of fierce confrontation, bitter rivalry and repression. The objective of this study therefore, is to examine the role and position of the electorate in the electoral process; to examine the extent to which insecurity/violence causes low voter turnout during elections in Nigeria and to suggest appropriate policy recommendations to improve the Nigerian electoral process and ensure legitimacy of elections through popular participation. Three hypotheses were proposed and tested for this study. These were:

1.   There is no relationship between respondents' marital status and their opinion about electoral violence/insecurity.
2.   There is no relationship between perceived victims of electoral violence and their opinion about voter turnout statistics during elections.
3.   There is no relationship between voter turnout and adequate security provided by government security network.

### Theoretical/ conceptual discourse
Three theoretical perspectives are of relevance here: Structural-Functionalist, Conflict and the Frustration-Aggression. Structural functionalism as a framework for building theories views society as a complex system whose

parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism deals with society as a whole in terms of the functions of its constituent elements: namely, norms, customs, tradition and institutions. A common analogy presents these parts of society as "organs" that work towards the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole (Urry, 2000). To this end, societies are visualized as coherent, bounded and fundamentally relational constructs that function like organisms, with the various social institutions working together in an overall social equilibrium.

The institutional-functionalism explains fragility or instability by focusing on the interface between institutionalization and political participation. Institutionalism-functionalism draws a direct relationship between fragile or weak states and the phenomenon of violence. Violence is therefore likely to occur where the state fails to meet popular demands, leaving the mass of the people in grinding poverty (Biegon, 2009). The structural explanation of electoral violence suggests that the society and politics are organized in a manner that generates violence. In other words, the state is organized in such a way that significant elements of the population are excluded from meaningful participation in and benefiting from the state's economic and political life. Such segments are bound at some point to reverse the effects of the exclusion using violent means (Nathan, 2000).

Conflict theorists conceive of society as stemming from the coercion of some members by those at the top (those in authorities) who employ the use of power in maintaining order in society (Ritzer, 2012). Authority is central to the conflict theory hypothesis. Society is composed of a number of units and association of people controlled by a hierarchy of authority positions. Each association is composed of two conflict groups- those in position of authority and those in subordination holding interest that are contradictory- leading to a clash or conflict of interest. Within every association, those in dominant positions seek to maintain the status quo while those in subordinate positions seek change (Ritzer, 2012).

Frustration-Aggression theory developed by Dollard et al (1939) is premised on the notion that aggression is always the result of frustration. The theory posits that frustration leads to aggression and that this is the result of inhibition or frustration of someone's effort, aim or ambition to attain a certain goal. When the source of the aggression cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced or directed onto an innocent target. A variant of

this theory is the notion of relative deprivation, in which a discrepancy exists between what is sought and what is actually achievable. The more the inconsistency, the more likely their anger and resort to violence. According to Sisk:

> *When parties are quite certain of loss or exclusion in an election context, especially when they expect to be permanent minorities (to lose not just once, but again and again), the certainty of outcomes is also a strong causal driver of violence. When a strongly insecure party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, they may well turn to violence to either prevent their exclusion or to prevent the election process* (Sisk, 2008: 10).

Violence in the electoral process may be ignited by a disputed election which however may have its roots from a remote historical marginalization and exclusion. In a situation where an election results to a contest between the 'included and the excluded', the stakes of coming out victorious in such an election becomes so high to the point that violence becomes the real outcome in the event of disappointment for either group (Sisk, 2008).

The theory of institutional functionalism seems a plausible explanation for electoral violence in Nigeria. In which case, societies like Nigeria with a low or weak process of political institutions and unpredictable level of political participation are more likely to experience or witness a high level of political disorders. Therefore, it can be contended that when the structures of political institutions are weak as in Nigeria, the political elites are bound to explore these weaknesses to pervert the electoral process, which ultimately could lead to conflict between rival groups or parties. The weaknesses inherent in these institutional structures would result to failure of the various conflicts prevention and resolution mechanism for settlement of grievances that arises from time to time in the Nigerian electoral system. The failure to resolve various contending electoral issues then results in frustration which could ultimately lead to outbreak of violence as a last resort by the aggrieved party or persons. The combination of the threesome theory paints a vivid picture of Nigeria's political landscape, and a lucid explanation for incidences of electoral violence.

**Electoral violence and democratic process**

Violence has been conceptualized as the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of others (Kolawole, 1988; Hoglund, 2006; Keane, 1996). Violence can be categorized into three-fold: physical, structural and psychological. Physical violence has to do with somatic injury inflicted on human beings such as the killing of an individual. Structural violence is connected to social injustice while psychological violence is concerned with injury or harm done to the human psyche which includes indoctrination of various kinds and threats (Galtung; 1985 & 1991; Schröder and Schmidt, 2001; Jinadu, 1980). Alanamu categorized violence into direct and indirect violence. Direct violence refers to acts of deliberate attack on a person's physical or psychological integrity. This includes all forms of homicide such as genocide, war crime, massacres, murders, terrorism as well as all forms of brutal actions including, kidnapping, torture, rape and cruel treatment. Indirect violence covers harmful and occasionally deadly situations or actions which, due to human intervention, do not necessarily involve a direct relationship between the victims and the institution (Alanamu, 2005).

Fischer, 2002; UNDP, 2009; Kolawole, 1988; Nwolise 2007) have explained electoral violence as all forms of systematized acts or threats-physical, psychological, and structural, directed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to deciding, delaying, or otherwise influencing an electoral process. Electoral violence can be viewed as the intended use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (WHO, 2002). These definitions capture all forms, dimensions and categories of violent acts, especially electoral violence. From the foregoing, electoral violence can therefore be seen as any act, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly directed at persons' connected with the electoral process, with the aim of undermining the process. The objective of the perpetrators of electoral violence is to unduly influence the electoral process and its outcome to gain advantage over other rivals or opponents.

Political violence during elections has been a phenomenon occurrence in Nigeria's democratic environment. Electoral violence of the forties and

Violence associated with elections has continued to rise dangerously with new dimensions introduced and old ones modified (Usman, 2000). Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria's electoral process has been encumbered with fraudulent and violent practices. According to Human Rights Watch:

> *Political violence has become a central part of political competition across much of Nigeria and it takes many forms— from assassinations to armed clashes between gangs employed by rival politicians. This violence is most often carried out by gangs whose members are openly recruited and paid by politicians and party leaders to attack their sponsors' rivals, intimidate members of the public, rig elections, and protect their patrons from similar attacks (HRW, 2007: 17).*

## Causes of electoral violence

Electoral violence might occur at different stages of the electoral process. It may adopt the form of thuggery, forceful disruption of political assemblies or voting at polling booths, or the employment of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters, electoral officials and security agents, or to inflict injury on anyone connected with the electoral process. During registration, both the ruling and opposition party may attempt to hijack the voter registration exercise to enable falsification or double registration as pre-rigging mechanism. During party primaries, violence might erupt either as a result of imposition of candidate or manipulation of election primaries to subvert the choices of party members by party leaders or 'Godfathers'. During campaigns, a rival party may attempt to disrupt the opponent's campaigns by using violent means. On Election Day, threats and violence are usually employed at the polling stations either as tactics to influence participation in the voting or to steal ballot boxes. After completion of the voting process, election outcome might trigger violence in protest of the authenticity of declared results (Omobowale & Olutayo, 2007; Aniekwe & Kushie, 2011).

Electoral violence can also be categorized into remote and immediate causes. The remote causes may include low level of internal party democracy, culture of impunity, economic vulnerabilities, primordial loyalties, weak state capacity to provide security and law enforcement, erosion of trust in the electoral justice system as well as low level of political education. The immediate causes has to do with the

authority, neutrality or partisanship of election management authority, lack of confidence in the Electoral Commission, lack of independence of the Electoral Commission, and the perception that an election was rigged may play a major role in instigating electoral violence. Doubts over the authenticity of declared results can lead to frustration among politicians and party stalwarts', which can metamorphose into violence. (Human Rights Watch: 2003, 2005, 2007; Adewale, 2005).

The non-adherence to the rule of the game for competitive democratic elections has been the major factor for electoral violence, through inflammatory remarks, actions and other unorthodox democratic practices (Harwood and Campbell 2010; Ofili 2011; William, 2011). Instead of electioneering campaigns and election results to solve political and democratic problems, they have exacerbated the existing problems without solving old ones. Jega captured this scenario during the 2003 elections in Nigeria thus:

> *Elections in Nigeria have historically been conflict ridden. The campaigns preceding elections are invariably marked by pettiness, intolerance, and violence. There are several reported incidences of intra-party, as well as, inter-party, violence, conflicts, including abductions and assassinations. Elections and their outcome have often been neither free nor fair, characterized by violations of the process (both inadvertent and willful), corrupt conduct by officials, rigging of results and so on (Jega 2007: 249).*

## Impact of electoral violence on voters

A study on African's perception of democracy conducted by Afrobarometer reveals that poorly managed elections are responsible for peoples' dissatisfaction with the election process as means to attain political representation. Out of the eighteen countries surveyed by Afrobarometer, three countries—Ghana, Botswana, and Namibia—which have recorded relatively violent free elections are those who acknowledge elections as a tool for engaging the government; while Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Zambia, which have successively recorded controversial and violent elections, are the least satisfied (Afrobarometer, 2006). The prevalence or threat of violence before, during or after elections can also undermine the entire election process having a negative impact on the voting age population turnout.

Consequently, voters may choose not to register or to turn out to vote (Hoglund, 2009; Fafowora, 2007).

Electoral violence has negatively impacted the lives of people in the Nigerian political landscape Thousands of eligible voters have been deprived of their rights and have been subjected to violent physical assaults. Human Rights Watch estimates that a minimum of 300 people were killed in incidence of violence during the April, 2007 elections. The run-up to the elections saw political assassinations, bombings, and deadly clashes between rival gangs—organized by politicians and parties—that claimed at least one hundred lives. Voter turnout during the 2007 elections was very low across the country as fear of violence discouraged many electorates from coming out to vote. Human Rights Watch interviewed quite a number of eligible voters who indicated their intention not to vote. Several potential voters explained this by stating simply, "I don't want to die." One retiree in the town of Oye Ekiti told Human Rights Watch that "the elderly people are scared and so are the women (HRW, 2007; Asemota 2011; Binniyat 2011).

Since the return of Nigeria to civil rule in 1999, there have been politically motivated assassinations and other election related killings (Ladan and Kiru 2005). All these have jeopardized the Nigerian democratic project. A large number of Nigerians have lost their lives, many others displaced with property worth billions of naira destroyed. The impact of these has turned the political climate into hostility, instability and uncertainty. Intra and inter party conflicts directly and indirectly related to power struggles have generated into party indiscipline, lawlessness with patron-client relationships dictating who stands or wins any given elective position (Ezendu and Akparandu, 2010). The consequence has produced fierce struggle and violence which have continued to pose serious challenges to the survival of democracy in the country. Thus, "the use of physical violence, intimidation and coercion to influence the outcome of elections is perhaps the most blatant perversion of the electoral process" (Debrah, 2005, 136; Ploch 2012), which has remained the feature of all campaign elections in Nigeria with some pervasive state violence.

Violence unleashed by politicians and their sponsors during elections and other periods of political contestation does not simply fade away once the political battles have been decided. In many cases violence fomented for the purpose of winning elections has taken on a life and logic of its own and continued to generate widespread human rights abuses over the long term. Several Nigerian states have been plagued by enduring violence after

politicians either abandon or lose control over the gangs they initially employed. They are prepared to bite their owner and their owners cannot be confident or sure of keeping them on a leash (HRW, 2007).

## Government action in incidence of electoral violence

Occurrence of violence has persisted in electoral competition despite the danger it portends for Nigeria's democratic development. HRW (2007) revealed that more than 11,000 Nigerians were killed in hundreds of separate outbreaks of inter-communal and political violence during the Obasanjo administration and nobody has been held accountable for organizing or inciting the massacres. Furthermore, the capacity of the Nigerian police to carry out criminal investigations is extremely lacking, considering the fact that corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of the agency. The politicization of incidence and acts of electoral violence makes this societal malady more difficult to handle, especially as both members of the ruling parties and oppositions are involved.

The enduring nature of electoral violence could be attributed to the lenient penalty for electoral offences and the non-enforcement of the provisions of the Electoral Act on prohibition of the use of violence. Section 98(2) of the 2006 Electoral Act stipulates a maximum penalty fee of N50, 000.00 or imprisonment for a term of six months for an individual convicted for political violence. In the case of a political party, such party is liable, on conviction, to a fine of N250, 000.00 for the first offence and N500, 000.00 for any subsequent violation. Considering the enormity of the damage that violence can inflict on the electoral process, this penalty is too placid to serve as a serious deterrent to anybody (Iriekpen, 2009). Therefore, the need to prescribe more stringent sanctions for electoral violence becomes imperative to sanitize the polity and ensure political development of Nigeria.

**Voter data participation statistics for Nigeria elections from 1959-2011**
**Table 1: Parliamentary - 1959 to 2011**

| Year | Voter Turnout | Total Vote | Registration | VAP Turnout | Voting age Population | Total Population |
|------|---------------|------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 2011 | 28,66% | 21,074,621 | 73,528,040 | 25.80% | 81,691,751 | 155,215,573 |
| 2007 | No data | No data | 61,567,036 | | 71,004,507 | 131,859,731 |
| 2003 | 49.32% | 29,995,171 | 60,823,022 | 46.63% | 64,319,246 | 129,934,911 |
| 1999 | 84.81% | 49,136,212 | 57,938,945 | 93.07% | 52,792,781 | 108,258,359 |
| 1983 | 38.90% | 25,400,000 | 65,300,000 | 58,23% | 43,620,780 | 89,022,000 |

| 1979 | 32.34% | 15,686,514 | 48,499,091 | 41.13% | 38,142,090 | 77,841,000 |
| 1959 | 79.52% | 7,185,555 | 9,036,083 | 43.46% | 16,532,640 | 34,443,000 |

Source: International IDEA (1999).

### Table 2:  Presidential -1999 to 2011

| Year | Voter Turnout | Total Vote | Registration | VAP Turnout | Voting age Population | Total Population |
|------|---------------|------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 2011 | 53.68% | 39,469,484 | 73,528,040 | 48,32% | 81,691,751 | 155,215,573 |
| 2007 | 57.49% | 35,397,517 | 61,567,036 | 49.85% | 71,004,507 | 131,859,731 |
| 2003 | 69.08% | 42,018,735 | 60,823,033 | 65.33% | 64,319,246 | 129,934,911 |
| 1999 | 52.26% | 30,280,052 | 57,938,945 | 57,36% | 52,792,781 | 108,258,359 |

Source: International IDEA (1999)

Tables 1 and 2 reveal voter turnout data for both the Parliamentary and Presidential Elections. The tables clearly show a declining electoral participation in a descending order. It became imperative therefore, to investigate and find out to what extent electoral violence is responsible for this decline in voter turnout for elections.

### Methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Nigerians of voting age were randomly selected on a nationally representative sample of 7,200 respondents across the six geopolitical zones to provide empirical information on the impact of electoral violence on voter turnout statistics in Nigeria. The principal sampling unit was the electoral ward. The sample size of 7,200 respondents was drawn from the population for administration of questionnaire through the use of multi-stage sampling design which consists of twelve states (12); two (2) each from the six geopolitical zones; 48 local government areas and 96 wards; out of which 6,721 questionnaires were completed and returned (overall response rate of 93%). This study was conducted between January, 2012 and July, 2013. Primary and secondary data formed the nuclei of data collection for analysis. The primary source of data was based on the administration of questionnaire, while the secondary source included perusal of textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, internet amongst others. The data collected were analyzed using standardized methods. To this end, the Chi-Square $(x^2)$ and simple percentage were used to analyze the questionnaire.

**Background characteristics of the respondents**

Out of the 6,721 respondents, majority of them were males numbering up to 4342 which represented 64.6% while 2,379 of them were females representing 35.4%. This implies that men are more likely to participate in electoral activities than women. Also, the age category of 40 years and above constituted the highest frequency of 3,925 representing 58.4% of the respondents while those below the 40 years category make up the frequency of 2,796 representing 41.6%. This indicates that majority of the respondents with sufficient experience are within the age bracket which enhanced their capacity to give informed opinion. Furthermore, the study revealed that 2,519 of the 6,721 respondents representing 37.5% were single while 4,202 representing 62.5% were married. This shows that majority of the respondents are people considered to be responsible and experienced, who can therefore give reliable responses useful to this study. Finally, the study reveals that 2,968 respondents representing 44.2% had secondary education/less while 3,753 of the respondents representing 55.8.% had tertiary education. This distribution implies that majority of the respondents are enlightened and therefore in a position to make informed decisions.

**Table 3:      Response rate for the 12 selected states**

| Region | States | Response Rate | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| North Central | Benue | 610 | 9.1 |
| | Niger | 493 | 7.3 |
| North East | Adamawa, | 462 | 6.9 |
| | Borno | 575 | 8.5 |
| North West | Kaduna, | 672 | 10.0 |
| | Sokoto | 484 | 7.2 |
| South East | Anambra | 596 | 8.9 |
| | Imo | 497 | 7.4 |
| South South | Rivers | 662 | 9.9 |
| | Edo | 507 | 7.5 |
| South West | Oyo | 668 | 9.9 |
| | Ondo | 495 | 7.4 |

**Source:** Field Work (2012/2013)

## Statistical analysis and findings

### Table 4: Many Nigerians do not vote for fear of violence

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Positive | 4,551 | 67.7 |
| Negative | 2,170 | 32.3 |
| Total | 6,721 | 100.0 |

Table 4 reveals that 4,551 of the respondents representing 67.7% are of the view that many Nigerians of voting age do not vote on Election Day because of fear of violence, while 2,170 representing 32.3% do not share that view. This implies that majority of the respondents' share the view that fear of violence scares many Nigerians from voting in elections.

**Hypothesis 1:**
**Null hypothesis:** There is no relationship between respondents' marital status and their opinion about electoral violence/insecurity.
**Alternative Hypothesis:** There is a relationship between respondents' marital status and their opinion about electoral violence/insecurity.

### Table 5: Many Nigerians of voting age do not vote because of fear of violence on Election Day

| Response | Marital Status | | Total |
|----------|---------|--------|-------|
| | Married | Single | |
| Positive | 3,032 | 1,519 | 4,551 |
| Negative | 1,170 | 1,000 | 2,170 |
| Total | 4,202 | 2,519 | 6,721 |

**Source:** Field Work

Cal. $X^2$ = 101.23
Crt. $X^2$ = 10.83
Df = 1
α = .001
Q = +0.26

### Research Results and Decisions (significance)

Using the degree of freedom 1 and the level of significance $\alpha = .001$.

The calculated $X^2$ (101.23) is greater than the critical $X^2$ (10.83). Data are statistically significant with a sample error of 1%. Therefore we reject $H_0$ and accept $H_R$.

### Statistical inference

With the probability of 1% sampling error and a 99.9% confidence level, there is a relationship between respondents' marital status and their opinion about electoral violence and insecurity.

The Yule's Q of +0.26 implies that there is a medium positive relationship between respondents' marital status and their opinion about electoral violence and insecurity in Nigeria

**Interpretation (Result Summary):** This means that the respondents who are married are more likely than their counterparts who are single to have the opinion that voter participation in the electoral process is inhibited by electoral violence and insecurity. Conversely, this means that the respondents who are single are less likely than their counterparts who are married to have the opinion that voter participation in the electoral process is inhibited by electoral violence and insecurity in Nigeria.

**Table 6: If you were a victim of electoral violence, would you be encouraged to vote in subsequent elections?**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Positive | 2,305 | 34.3 |
| Negative | 4,416 | 65.7 |
| Total | 6,721 | 100.0 |

Table 6 reveals that 4,416 of the respondents representing 65.7% are of the view that they would not participate in subsequent voting if they were victims of electoral violence, while 2,305 representing 34.3% do not share that view. This implies that majority of the respondents' share the view that victims of electoral violence would most probably not participate in future elections.

**Hypothesis 2:**
**Null hypothesis:** There is no relationship between perceived victims of electoral violence and their opinion about voter turnout statistics during elections.

**Alternative hypothesis:** There is a relationship between perceived victims of electoral violence and their opinion about voter turnout statistics during elections.

**Table 7: If you were a victim of electoral violence, would you be encouraged to vote in subsequent elections?**

| Response | Electoral Violence Victims by Sex | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Male** | **Female** | |
| Positive | 1,585 | 720 | **2,305** |
| Negative | 2,757 | 1,659 | **4,416** |
| Total | **4,342** | **2,379** | **6,721** |

Source:     Field Work

Cal. $X^2$ =     26.55
Crt. $X^2$     =     10.83
Df     =     1
$\alpha$     =     .001
Q     =     +0.14

**Research results and decisions (significance)**
Using the degree of freedom 1 and the level of significance $\alpha$ =.001, the calculated $X^2$ (26.55) is greater than the critical $X^2$ (10.83). Data are statistically significant with a sample error of 1%. Therefore we reject $H_0$ and accept $H_R$.

**Statistical inference**
With the probability of 1% sampling error and a 99.9% confidence level, there is a relationship between perceived victims of electoral violence and their opinion about voter turnout statistics during elections in Nigeria.
The Yule's Q of +0.14 indicates that there is a small positive relationship between perceived electoral violence victims and their opinion about voter turnout statistics during elections in Nigeria.

**Interpretation (result summary):** This means that the male respondents of perceived victims of electoral violence are more likely than their female counterparts to have the opinion that being a victim of electoral violence would not discourage them from participating in subsequent voting exercise. Conversely, the female respondents of perceived victims of electoral violence are less likely than their male counterparts to have the opinion that being a victim of electoral violence would not discourage them from participating in subsequent voting exercise.

**TABLE 8: Do you have trust in the government security network to provide adequate security during the electoral process especially on Election Day?**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Positive | 3,051 | 45.4 |
| Negative | 3,670 | 54.6 |
| Total | 6,721 | 100.0 |

Table 8 reveals that 3,051 of the respondents representing 45.4% are of the view that the government is providing adequate security during elections, while 3,670 representing 54.6% share a contrary opinion. This implies that majority of the respondents' share the view that the government does not providing adequate security during election.

**Hypothesis 3:**
**Null hypothesis:** There is no relationship between voter turnout and adequate security provided by government security network.

**Alternative hypothesis:** There is a relationship between voter turnout and adequate security provided by government security network.

**Table 9: Do you have trust in the government security network to provide adequate security during the electoral process especially on election day?**

| Response | Voter Turnout by Age Group | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Below 40 years | Above 40 years |  |
| Positive | 1,703 | 1,348 | 3,051 |
| Negative | 1,093 | 2,577 | 3,670 |
| Total | 2,796 | 3,925 | 6,721 |

*Source: Field Work*

Cal. $X^2$ = 464.84

Crt. $X^2$ = 10.83

Df = 1

α = .001

Q = -0.50

**Research results and decisions (significance)**
Using the degree of freedom 1 and the level of significance α =.001, the calculated $X^2$ (464.84) is greater than the critical $X^2$ (10.83). Data are statistically significant with a sample error of 1%. Therefore we reject $H_0$ and accept $H_R$..

**Statistical inference**
With the probability of 1% sampling error and a 99.9% confidence level, there is a relationship between respondent's age group and their opinion about provision of adequate security by the government.
The Yule's Q of -0.50 implies that there is a large negative relationship between respondents age group and their opinion about provision of adequate security by government.

**Interpretation (result summary):** This means that the respondents who are 40 years and above are less likely than their counterparts who are below that age bracket to have the opinion that the government is able to provide adequate security during elections. Conversely, the respondents who are below 40 years are more likely than their counterparts who are above that age bracket to have the opinion that the government is able to provide adequate security during elections.

**Policy recommendations**
Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations to improve the electoral process and encourage voters' participation are offered for consideration and possible action by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, and other relevant stakeholders. The government should provide adequate security for the electorates throughout the electoral process and set up machinery to forestall any outbreak of violence. This would encourage voters to fully participate in the electoral process. The government should also ensure the effective utilization of the various conflict resolution

mechanisms to effectively resolve conflicts arising from electoral issues. Furthermore, the government should provide support to INEC by adequately engaging in voter education, non interference with the electoral process, upward review of allocation of resources, and promptly prosecuting electoral offenders.

The INEC, among other things should focus on the conduct of transparent/credible elections, voter education, recruitment and training of proficient staff, provide adequate voting materials as well as improve voter registration process. Finally, the electorates should be encouraged to make the right choice and resist the temptation to sell votes, defend their votes and protest within the law when necessary. These policy prescriptions are necessary sacrifices for political development and nation building.

**Concluding comments**
The crisis of democracy, its dilemma and challenges in the Nigerian project have indicated very fundamental socio-economic policy implications as reflected in the electoral process. The persistent and endemic nature of electoral violence in Nigeria overtime has remained a clog in the wheels of democratic progress and invariably portends danger for democratic consolidation. Thus, electoral violence is without doubt a manifestation of the failure of democratic consolidation, and a threat to democracy in the country. Therefore, for the democratic politics to enjoy both domestic and international acceptability and legitimacy, the value orientations of the political elites must be transformed so that elections are not regarded as a game to be perverted at will to achieve an end. The implementation of the above recommendations would obviate or at least mitigate the occurrence of electoral violence. Finally, Nigeria's democracy must be mass oriented and founded on the configurations and circumstances of the masses. Elite based democracy as currently the case will continue to fail in all respects. This is because elites are extremely individualistic and this individualism is a primary driver for the type of democracy Nigeria practices. Mass based democracy is premised on the basis of access to basic resources needed to energize active participation with zero-level violence in the quest for political power.

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