

SOCIOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF POLITICAL CRIMES among who (farmers, youth, women,?) IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

Comment [F11]: It is difficult to really understand and estimate the degree of heterogeneity among respondents for this study. A study must have clearly defined target population.

Abstract

Crimes perpetrated in search of power are common features of many practicing democracies such as Nigeria. Therefore, political crimes are quite disturbing phenomena in contemporary Nigerian society. This is confirmed by obvious cases of cancelation of results by the electoral body and nullification of elections by various election tribunals owing to evidence of rigging, ballot box snatching, intimidation, harassment, killings and assassinations among others. Considering the foregoing, this study gives a sociological appraisal of political crimes in Benue State. Conflict theory is utilized as the theoretical postulation in the study. The research utilized both primary and secondary sources of data while data were analyzed using simple percentage. Findings show the devastating effects of political crimes in the all spheres of Benue State of Nigeria and hence recommend stiffer penalties and religious enforcement by the law agents to any form of political offender, education and sensitizing as well as reconstruction of societal values from the family level to all agents of socialization, government commitment to addressing the perennial problem of unemployment as well as commitment in the side of the criminal justice system and other security agents among others through which political crimes can be solved.

Key words: politics, crimes, political crimes

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Politics is a common feature of every society that has been with us from time immemorial. The general conduct of the people in the society is regulated by the art of politics. [1] sees politics as the process of reconciling interest in an organised group. Central to politics is the idea of governance aimed at directing and reconciling human affairs in the society. Human needs are insatiable but it is believed that with governance as a core to politics, individuals would at best utilize the dividends. This is the reason why politics since its inception, many believed would serve as a reprieve to the pains and sufferings of the people in all societies of the world. Ironically, practitioners of politics in developing

societies like Nigeria have failed to embrace the genuine tenets of politics thereby turning it to a do or die affairs under which all kinds of criminality and manipulations are perpetrated.

The manner in which the 1999, 2003 and 2007 political campaigns and elections were conducted and as well as the aftermath of these elections clearly justified the above assertion, [2]. Hundred of precious lives and property worth millions of naira were lost in almost every state of the federation during each of these elections as political parties, individuals, group clashed with one another in what could be defined as ‘gun boat political campaigns’ or ‘cut-throat politics’, [2]. Criminological speaking, this is yet another dimension of criminality that search light need to be beamed on if we are to address holistically crime problem in Nigeria. Political crimes are quite disturbing phenomena in contemporary Nigerian society. It is a multifaceted area of criminality which factors responsible for it needs to be unearthed. Benue State has over the years witnessed various forms of crimes including those relating to politics such as rigging, political violence and assassination among others [3]. Crime statistic from Nigeria Police Command in Benue State from 2010-2015 indicated that only a total of 9 persons were arrested for kidnapping and 84 persons for breach of public peace. Inferring from the police statistic on crime in Benue state pointed a glaring picture that most of crimes relating to politics are not speedily given prompt attention. [4] while assessing Violence between and within Political Parties in Nigeria: Statistics, Structures and Patterns from 2006-2014 in Nigeria named Benue State as one of the states in Nigeria to have an average of 40 fatalities of electoral violence. Since electoral crimes with concomitant effect had been the bane of Nigeria’s democratic and socio-economic development, there has been the need to set in machinery to sociological investigate and curb this dimension of criminality which formed the problem of this study.

1.2 Conceptual Clarifications

63 Attempt to define political crimes is problematic and one is left by the mercy of
64 contextual restriction. As [5] argue that political crime has been more often of
65 partisan assertion than of independent research. In classifying criminals, [6]
66 identified eight (8) types of criminals including: legalistic, moralistic,
67 psychopathic, institutional, situational, habitual, professional and political
68 criminals. He defined political criminals as those who commit crimes in order to
69 gain political power or achieve other political motives [6]. Many sociologists
70 and classical criminologists especially those of the western societies most at
71 times tend to limit political crimes only to crimes committed against the state
72 like treason, sedition, sabotage, terrorism, espionage, subversion and conspiracy
73 [7]. But an in-depth and critical analysis in to the concept would make one agree
74 that there is more dimensions of political crimes if we are to broaden it to other
75 politically motivated crimes in search of power just like in the case of economic
76 crimes committed in search of wealth. Apart from economic crimes, political
77 crimes are spreading like wild fire especially in a struggling democracy like
78 Nigeria at it nascent stage. [8] affirmed that it appears crime of all types are on
79 the increase in Nigeria. To buttress this point, the spate of political crimes in
80 Nigeria like rigging, thuggery, assassination, violence, kidnapping, double
81 dealing, imposition of candidates against the public will amongst host of other
82 crimes show the increasing rate of political crimes in Nigeria. These are crimes
83 executed by the people to get political power or wax stronger in the corridors of
84 power which seems to be having deleterious effects on the larger society
85 whereas the perpetrators goes unpunished. In affirming this [8] posited that the
86 state, armed with its oppressive apparatus such as the army, secret service
87 agents, and the police are not always responsive to combating various crimes.

88 **1.3 Electoral Offences and Punishments stipulated by Independent** 89 **National Electoral Commission**

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as established by section 153 of the constitution is constitutionally empowered to conduct democratic election processes, set up guidelines for that as well as prosecute political offenders among other functions. Section 150(1) and (2) of the Electoral Act, 2010 as amended gives the Independent National Electoral Commission the responsibility for the prosecution of electoral offenders while such offenders can be charged to the High Court or the Magistrate Court. Part seven of the constitutional and legal framework for the Nigeria General elections of INEC 2011 spate out some of the electoral offences or crimes to include offence in relation to registration, nomination, disorderly behaviour at political meetings, improper use of voters cards, improper use of vehicles, impersonation and voting when not qualified, bribery and conspiracy, threatening among others. For example the section 131 under the electoral offence which deals with matters relating to violence and snatching of votes states that:

- a) a person who directly or indirectly, by himself or by another person on his behalf, makes use of threat to make use of force, violence or restrain;
- b) inflicts or threatens to inflict by himself or any other person, any minor or serious injury, damage, harm or loss on or against person in order to induce or compel that person to vote or refrain from voting, or on account of such person having voted or refrained from voting; or
- c) by abduction, duress, or a fraudulent device or contrivance, impedes or prevents the free use of the vote by a voter thereby compels, induces , or prevails on voter to give or refrain from giving his vote,
- d) by preventing any political aspirant from free use of the media, designated vehicles, mobilization of political support and campaign at an election commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N1,000,000 or imprisonment for 3 years.

118 However, good as such punishments are it seems the Independent National
119 Electoral Commission is overburdened with the responsibility of conducting
120 elections, monitoring the activities of political parties and defending issues
121 before Election Petitions and this has prevented the Commission from paying
122 close attention to the issue of electoral offences and offenders.

123 The nullification of various elections in some states in Nigeria since the return
124 of democracy in 1999 to date like Benue, Adamawa, Anambra, Cross Rivers,
125 Edo, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Sokoto, among others by the various Election Tribunals
126 proved that the electoral conduct in the country is not free from criminality [10].
127 The 2007 election in Nigeria for instance was adjudged by both international
128 and national election observers as the worst election in human political history
129 because it was flawed [10]. According to [11], election violence in Nigeria has
130 acquired more dangerous dimension wherein other traditional fault-lines like
131 ethnic animosity, religious dichotomy and social discontent find convenient
132 violent expression during election that are characterized by the desperation of
133 politicians to win at all cost. The summary of the NERV report indicated that
134 beginning February 14 and as at June 30, 2011, a total of 424 incidents were
135 reported with 655 persons killed and 211 persons wounded. The puzzling
136 question one often asks is what are the factors responsible for these crimes?
137 Who are the perpetrators and what is role of law enforcement agencies and
138 government's political will to tackle the crime.

139 One may be right to say that political crimes in form of electoral malpractices
140 like most other crimes keep recurring in Nigeria because people are never
141 arrested, not to talk of being tried for these breaches of law or act of criminality,
142 [12]. Political crimes in form of electoral crimes or malpractice like rigging,
143 snatching of ballot boxes sponsored by men and women in control of power
144 which sometimes armed the youths with dangerous weapons in fulfillment of

these criminal ambition remains slowly unchecked and unpunished which forms the problem of this study.

2.1 Theoretical view: Social Conflict Theory

Although, several structural theories may be relevant to the discussion of political crimes, many scholars as [7] regards conflict theory as the most valuable or useful to its explanation.

The conflict theory was initially attributed to Karl Marx. Today many criminologists view the criminal law as a device made by the ruling class to preserve the existing order [6]. The conflict theory is also supported by Quinney (1974) who opined that although law is supposed to protect all citizens, it starts as a tools of the ruling class and ends by maintaining the dominance of that class [6]. Marxist criminology in a nutshell claim that what is responsible for crime is the power resulting from the exercise of capitalism due to the polarization of the 'haves' and the 'haves not' [18]. Radical conflict theory, some theorists suggest explain the roots of much political crimes that are situated in and emanate from social, political and economic process Roebuck and Weeber (1978) in [7].

The social conflict theory therefore, can be applicable in explaining the causes and consequences of political crimes in Benue state in particular and Nigeria in general because the vast majority of political crimes are traced to historical, material and dialectical nature of the political economy [8]. Political crimes like all other disturbing social phenomenon in a class society like Nigeria in general and Benue to be specific is seen as the by-product of a conflict of interest between the classes within the society, and that the class that is superior in economic and political power tends to define what is politically accepted which is the characteristics of its class, and to stigmatize the behaviour of the lower class as irresponsible, delinquent and criminal [14], [6], [7]. Furthermore,

majority of the political crimes in a society like Benue and Nigeria at large are rooted to the materialistic nature and structural imbalance owing to the disconnection between the rich and the poor characterized by factors such as poverty, hunger, unemployment, illiteracy and greed among others. As such, people see politics as the only lucrative avenue to “get-rich-quick” thereby indulging in all kinds of political manipulations and criminality which the conflict theory explained.

The conflict theorists advanced for a radical transformation of the existing structures of capitalism which breeds crimes of all kinds as the only possible way of solving the problem of crimes [15]. Considering the influx of political crimes in the present day Benue in particular and Nigeria at large with the explanation given so far, the conflict theory served as a good theoretical postulation in sociologically understanding and appraising the effects of political crimes in Benue State.

2.2 Factors Responsible for Political Crimes in Nigeria

From time immemorial human beings have tried to find out what is responsible for crime in society. At one time some believed that it was the devil that moved a man to commit crime, and also that those who were insane were possessed by the devil (Moran, 1978 in [6], [16], [17]). But scientists as [17] observed rejected the theory of demonology, claiming that the existence of the devil has not been scientifically demonstrated. Social scientists further rejected two other schools of thought that were propounded by some Italians during the nineteenth century [17]. For instance, Beccaria (1804) argued that criminals commit crime using their free-will believing that crime would bring them more pleasure and less pain [17], [16], [18], [19], [6]. This was the argument been put forward by the classical criminology. The second school of thought was the positivist initiated by another Italian scholar Lombroso (1876) who based his idea on the theory of biological evolution. He stated that criminals were those who had not

fully completed their biological evolution regarding criminals as a throwback to a more primitive form of human being [6], [17]. Lombroso believed that criminals are born and he compiled a list of criminal characteristics such as individuals with large ears, extra chromosome, extra toes and so on [17],[20]. The contemporary sociologists believe that social factors greatly contribute to crime in society. However, they accepted that in some cases, crime could be caused by biological, psychological and psychiatric factors [6],[17],[16]. Similarly, in dealing with the causal explanation of crime in social sciences, [13] in a lecture on August 23rd, 2009 to Post Graduates Students (PGS) of University of Abuja, Criminology class entitled “*the causes of crime in Nigeria*” explained that in giving explanations to the causes “we should be wary of multi-factor approach”. The general theorists he said explained the causative factor of crime which includes the orthodox functionalist and Marxist while the multiple factor deals with the correlation of so many factors focusing not only on poverty but other factors like unemployment, biological, group influence amongst others.

3.1 METHODOLOGY OF DATA COLLECTION

This study was carried out in Benue state which was created on February 3rd, 1976 by the then military administrator General Murtala Mohammed is located at the middle belt zone of Nigeria and shares boundaries with five neighbouring¹ states namely: Nassarawa to the north, Taraba to the east, Cross River to the south, Enugu, Ebonyi to the south-east and Kogi to the south-west. The state also shares a common boundary with the Republic of Cameroon on the south-east. Benue state lies roughly between latitude 6⁰1/2 north and longitude 7 1/2⁰- 10⁰ east [21]. Presently, the state has 23 Local Government Areas. Benue state is one of the populous states in Nigeria with population over

¹Local Government Areas in Benue State Nigeria: Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer, Gwer-West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo and Vandeikya with Makurdi as the state capital (Lyam et al, 2003, p. 73).

226 four million. According to [22], the state has a total population of 4,219,244, a
227 break down shows that 2, 164,058 are males, and 2,055, 186 are female. [23]
228 put the state population in 2013 at 5,287,129. The state also occupies a land
229 mass of about 30, 955 square kilometers, [22]. In terms of ethnic composition,
230 the state constitute of several ethnic group namely Tiv, Idoma Igede, Etulo,
231 Abakpa (Abakwariga), Jukun, Hausa, Akweya and Nyifon. The Tiv are the
232 majority dominant group accounting for over half of the entire population, [21].
233 The state has over the years witnessed various forms of crimes including those
234 relating to politics such as rigging, political violence and assassination among
235 others [3]

236 In collecting data for this study, the researcher utilized primary and secondary
237 sources of data. ~~The primary source involved~~ Primary data was collected with
238 the use of structured questionnaires while qualitative data were obtained
239 through interview and focused group discussion. ~~A p~~ Purposive sampling
240 technique was used to ~~arrive at the select~~ nine Local Government Areas, (LGAs)
241 in all the three senatorial zones in ²Benue state which include the Benue North
242 east, Benue North west and Benue south zone ~~with each zone equally~~
243 ~~represented based on the sampling procedure~~. These LGAs were purposively
244 selected based on ~~their level of involvement in~~ high record of political crimes
245 relating to election matters. ~~Three LGAs from each of the zone were randomly~~
246 ~~selected to give a total of nine Local Government Areas used for the study. A~~
247 total number of 609 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the area of
248 study using a purposive sampling technique which was used to select 69
249 households in the three zones of Benue State, Nigeria. At the end of the
250 exercise, 300 questionnaires were returned by respondents while twenty persons
251 were interviewed bringing the population of study to 320. Data was
252 quantitatively analyzed using ~~simple~~ percentages and tables. The questions that

Comment [F12]: This paper did not utilize any secondary data. That you consulted secondary sources does not mean you used secondary data. What you have in Table 2 is never used or mentioned anywhere in the paper. Hence it is not a data since it was never analysed or processed in any way.

Comment [F13]: Contradiction.

Comment [F14]: The number of questionnaire distributed is very irrelevant. Don't tell us pls

Comment [F15]: Using purposive sampling technique to distribute questionnaire to respondent?

Comment [F16]: This is not accepted at all. It makes mockery of the sampling procedure. In a serious research, no one is interested in this

² Local Government Areas Visited by the researcher: Ukum, Katsina-Ala, Kwande (Benue North East), Gboko, Buruku, Makurdi (Benue North West), Oturkpo, Agatu and Ohimini (Benue South).

were asked both on the socio-demographic information of respondents and the issues relating to causes and consequences of political crimes in Benue while the secondary source comprised books, journals, newspapers, magazines and internet sources.

3.2 Sample Size

The study adopted the Yaro Yomene's formula to arrive at the sample size. Thus,

$$S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where, S = sample size (to be determined)

N = population of Benue State = 4,219,244 (2006 Census)

e = margin of tolerable error = 5% (0.005)

Therefore,

$$S = \frac{4,219,244}{1 + 4,219,244 (0.005)^2}$$

$$S = \frac{4,219,244}{1 + 4,219,244 \times 0.0025}$$

$$S = \frac{4,219,244}{1 + 10,548.11}$$

$$S = \frac{4,219,244}{10,549.11}$$

$$S = 399.9 \approx 400.$$

To arrive at the sample size using Yaro Yomene's formula is presented thus:

$$\frac{320 \times 100}{400 - 1} = 80.0\%$$

It is important to states that 320 respondents represented 80.0% of the sample size of the total population of Benue State.

3.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comment [F17]: ???

Comment [F18]: This cannot be correct.

3.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents on Sociological Appraisal of Political Crimes in Benue State

The distribution of respondents according to sex revealed that 57.3% of the respondents are males and 42.5% are female. The relevance of sex in this study cannot be over emphasized. The higher numerical strength of males in this study may be attributed to the fact that male dominates the political scene in the state which attracted their interest. This agrees with the findings by [24] that the level of political apathy amongst Nigerian women is increasingly low since most Nigerian women see politics as a man's activity.

The age distribution of the respondents according to the data in table 1 reveals that 6.2% are between the ages categories of 18-24 years of age, 15.6% are between the age categories of 25-31 years old, 50.6% are between the age category of 32-38 years while 27.5% are 39 years and above. The mean age is 50 years. This implies active age of political participation and awareness in line with studies by [25] that Benue people are politically active.

The educational distribution of the respondents showed that 6.2% of the respondents have no formal education, 17.2% have attained only primary school and 42.6% have attained secondary school while 35.0% have attained Tertiary institution such as colleges of Education or Agriculture, polytechnics and university. This implies that about 56.2% of the sampled population can read and write and therefore enable them to have a sound assessment on social problems like political crimes. This correlates with [26] findings that Benue State since creation in 1976 has taken a giant stride in its avowed commitment to the pursuit of education and has recorded some appreciable success in this direction.

Majority of the respondents of this study who form 62.1% of the sample are Christians, the Islam counterpart represents 27.5% while the Traditionalists have 9.4% with 0%. Data from table 1 also reveals that majority of the

respondents are from Christian homes. This agrees with the findings by [27] who argued that Benue State is entirely composed of Christians.

Distribution of respondents according to marital status revealed that about 61.9% of the respondents of this study are married while 33.4% are single. Also, 3.1% of the respondents are divorced/separated while 1.6% are widowed. What this data entails is that majority of the respondents of this study are married. This collaborates with findings by [28] Socio-Economic indicators that among the states in North Central Nigeria zone, Benue has the highest population in all categories of marital status followed by Kogi while Kwara ranked 5th and Nasarawa recorded least in almost all categories.

Result on major occupation indicated that about 28.7% of the respondents are civil/public servants, 8.7% are skilled workers, 15.9% of the respondents are unskilled workers, 31.8% are farmers while the unemployed and students constitutes constitute 12.8% and 2.1% respectively. One important indication from table 1 is that majority of the respondents in this study area engaged in farming activities. This tallies with survey report by BNARDA report in [29] that Benue State is predominantly rural with an estimated 75 percent of the population engaged in rain fed subsistence agriculture.

Also table 1 further revealed that 51.6% of the respondents earn between ₦7,000 –N14,000 per month, 27.5% earn between ₦15,000-N22,000 per month while 11.9% earn between ₦23,000-₦30,000 and 10.0% earn between ₦31,000 and above monthly. By implication, low income background is related to social problems such as political crimes. This is agrees with findings by [30] that economic variables such as income inequality index, unemployment rate, per capital are positively correlated to various crimes in Nigeria.

According to the respondents of this study as shown in table 1, 71.4% strongly agreed that political crimes exist in Benue state while 15.9% agreed and

336 13.7% disagreed. On this basis, it is clear that indeed, political crimes exist in
337 Benue state, Nigeria which calls for concern in this study. This correctly
338 connotes [31] argument that a major socio-economic problem in contemporary
339 Nigerian society is crime.

340 Efforts made by the researcher to find out from the respondents the types of
341 political crimes that are common in Benue state yielded as 38.4% identified
342 rigging, 35.5% said it is violence while 15.2% pointed political
343 killings/assassinations and 10.9% said it is imposition of candidates.

344 Table 1, therefore revealed that electoral rigging is the most common type of
345 political crimes in Benue state closely followed by electoral violence,
346 killings/assassinations and imposition of candidates respectively. This is in line
347 with studies by [32] who argued that since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in
348 1999, transitional elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011 were won and lost under
349 conditions in which electoral malpractices, rigging and violence were
350 pronounced.

351 From table 1, one may see that 24.6% of the respondents identified quest for
352 power and wealth as the factor responsible for political crimes, 23.6% said it is
353 corruption, 18.1% identified greed and unemployment as a factor while 15.6%
354 recognized poverty as the causative factor to political crimes. From the above
355 data, one can infer that the above identified factors as closely related together
356 which causes political crimes in line with [13] postulation that social variables
357 such as poverty, unemployment among others are some of the causes of crime.

358 Efforts made by the researcher to find out how political crimes are perpetrated
359 yielded as 36.2% said it is through rigging/ votes manipulations while 32.6%
360 opined it is through violence being made to take undue advantage of the chaotic
361 situation. 16.7% of the respondents said political crimes are perpetrated through
362 killing/ assassination of political opponents and 14.6% said it through
363 imposition of candidates to acquire various gratifications. This again agrees

364 with the findings by [32] that since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999,
365 transitional elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011 were won and lost under
366 conditions in which electoral malpractices, rigging and violence were
367 pronounced.

368 Table 1 depicts that 56.5% of the respondents said political crimes occurs
369 during the period off elections while 25.4% said it occurs after the elections and
370 18.1% said it occurs before election period, from the data above it is obvious
371 that political crimes occurs most during the electioneering period. This aligns
372 with [3] that Nigeria has been struggling to install a viable and durable
373 democracy but its dismal political actuality characterized by consistent inability
374 to conduct credible and transparent elections in which its citizens have access to
375 adequately enforced and effectively protected opportunities, to exercise their
376 franchise in the choice of their leaders, has made the agenda of democratic
377 sustainability largely a mirage.

378 | Also ~~Table~~ 1 showed that, 54.3% of the respondents said the elites/political
379 class are the perpetrators of political crimes while 40.9% said the youths are the
380 | perpetrators and 4.7% identified the electorate. From ~~the above~~ ~~Table~~ one can
381 deduced that the elites/political class are the major perpetrators of political
382 crimes aided by the youths. This aligns with [33] that the Nigeria's governing
383 elite have been widely implicated in acts of electoral violence, corruption and
384 fraud so pervasive as to resemble criminal activity more than democratic
385 governance.

386 The effort made by the researcher to find out whether lack of proper upbringing
387 is responsible for political crime also yielded as 48.9% of the respondents
388 strongly agreed that lack of proper upbringing is responsible for political crimes
389 while 46.6% of the respondents agreed and 5.1% of the respondents disagreed.

Comment [F19]: Where?

Comment [F110]: Just mention the name of the Table. Result in Table... shows that.....

390 This agrees with findings by [34] which suggested political education a strategy
391 for curbing electoral violence.

392 Attempt by the researcher to find out if those that execute political crimes are
393 the unemployed worked out as 51.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that
394 those who execute political crimes are the unemployed while 46.4% of the
395 respondents agreed and 1.8% of the respondents disagreed. This is in line with
396 the findings by [35] that the majority of perpetrators of the criminal activities
397 are youths who are mostly unemployed.

398 Attempt by the researcher to inquire from the respondents the category of
399 people that political crimes affects materialized as 11.6% of the respondents
400 said it affects the ruling class, 26.8% said the working class while 61.6% of the
401 respondents said it does affects the masses or the lower class. Again is in line
402 with [13] argument that crime committed by the powerful in the society such as
403 corruption has adverse effects on the masses.

404 The efforts made by the researcher to find out from the respondents the
405 consequences of political crimes in the society yields as 50.3% believe it retards
406 socio-economic development of the state while 31.3% said it breed bad
407 governance and 12.5% of the respondents said it brings political instability and
408 5.9% of the respondents said they are not aware of the consequences. One can
409 then infer as demonstrated from Table 1 that political crimes are retrogressive
410 to the socio-economic and political development of any society which Benue
411 state is not exempted. This agrees with the findings [36] while stating the
412 consequences of crime in Nigeria that “Crime and violence” have taken a severe
413 toll on Nigeria, her people, its economy, its political, its social, and even its
414 spiritual life”.

415 4.0 Conclusions

416 The findings of this study have raised certain pertinent issues concerning the
417 problem of political crimes in Benue state of Nigeria. On the basis of this, the
418 study concluded as follows: that political crime exists in Benue state in
419 particular and Nigeria at large and indeed poses a serious danger to the
420 actualization of development goal. The common among as the findings of the
421 study suggests is rigging of election closely accompanied with political
422 violence, killing/assassination and imposition of candidates while some social
423 factors like the quest for power and wealth, corruption, greed, unemployment
424 and poverty are responsible for political crimes. That political crime is
425 perpetrated through rigging/ vote manipulation and ballot boxes snatching, it is
426 also carried out through political violence, killing/ assassination of political
427 opponents and through imposition of candidate to acquire various gratifications.
428 That political crime are carried out most during electioneering period while the
429 political elites/political class are the perpetrators aided by the youths who are
430 often used as executors of political crimes. More so, that lack of proper
431 upbringing is responsible for political crimes in the society while the executors
432 of political crimes are the unemployed. That political crime affects the masses
433 or the lower class. That political crime is retrogressive to the socio-economic
434 and political development of any society in Nigeria that required aggressive
435 efforts of the criminal justice system, security agents and the government in
436 addressing the problem of political crimes in Benue state and Nigeria at large.

437 **5.0 Recommendations**

438 Based on the findings, the study recommended that stiff penalties,
439 education/sensitization, and provision of employment as well as reduction of
440 poverty levels be prioritized as measures in combating political crimes in Benue
441 State and Nigeria at large.

442 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

443 Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX 1

Comment [F111]: Its not normal to refer to real Table containing data collected and analysed as APPENDIX

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to socio-economic characteristics

Socio-economic indicators	Frequency	Percentage [%]	Mean/Mode
A. SEX			
Male	184	57.5	Male
Female	136	42.5	
Total	320	100	
B.AGE (Years)			
18-24	20	6.2	50 Years
25-31	50	15.6	
32-38	162	50.6	
39 and Above	88	27.5	
Total	320	100	
C. Educational Attainment			
No Formal Education	20	6.2	Secondary Education
Primary Education	55	17.2	
Secondary Education	133	42.6	
Tertiary Education	112	35.0	
Total	320	100	
D. RELIGION			
Christianity	202	62.1	Christianity
Islam	88	27.5	
Traditional	30	9.4	
Total	320	100	
E. Marital Status			
Married	198	61.9	Married
Single	107	33.4	
Divorced/Separated	10	3.1	
Widowed	5	1.6	
Total	320	100	
F. Occupation			
Civil/Public Servant	92	28.7	Farmers
Skilled Workers	28	8.7	
Unskilled Workers	51	15.9	
Farmers	102	31.8	
Unemployed	38	12.8	
Students	8	2.1	
Total	320	100	
G. Income Level			

595	₦7,000- ~~₦14,000~~	162	51.6	
596	₦15,000- ~~₦22,000~~	88	27.5	
597	₦23,000- ~~₦30,000~~	38	11.9	
598	₦31,000 and above	32	10.0	
599	Total	320	100	₦7,000- ~~₦14,000~~
600	I. Respondents' Perception on whether ~~they think~~ political crimes exist in			
601	Benue			
602	Strongly Agreed	225	71.4	
603	Agreed	51	15.9	
604	Disagreed	44	13.7	
605	Total	320	100	Strongly Agreed
606	J. Respondents' Perception on the types of Political Crimes that are common			
607	in Benue State			
608	Rigging	106	38.4	
609	Political Violence	98	35.5	
610	Killing/Assassination	42	15.2	
611	Imposition of Candidates	30	10.9	
612	Total	276	100	Rigging
613	K. Respondents' Perception on the causes of Political Crimes			
614	Quest for Power and Wealth	68	24.6	
615	Corruption	65	23.6	
616	Greed	50	18.1	
617	Unemployment	50	18.1	
618	Poverty	43	15.6	
619	Total	276	100	Quest for Power
620	L. Respondents' Perception on how Political Crimes are Perpetrated			
621	Through rigging/votes manipulation			
622	and ballot boxes	100	36.2	
623	Through Political Violence	90	32.6	
624	Through killing and assassination	46	16.7	
625	Through imposition of candidates			
626	to acquire gratification	40	14.5	
627	Total	276	100	Through rigging
628	M. Respondents' Perception on when political crimes occurs			
629	During elections	156	56.5	
630	After elections	70	25.4	
631	Before election	50	18.1	
632	Total	276	100	During election
633	N. Respondents' Perception on who are the people that perpetrate political			
634	crimes			
635	The elites/political class	150	54.3	
636	The youths	113	40.9	
637	The electorate	13	4.7	

Total	276	100	The elite
O. Respondents' perception on whether lack of proper upbringing is responsible for political crime			
Strongly agreed	135	48.9	
Agreed	127	46.0	
Disagreed	14	5.1	
Total	276	100	Strongly agreed
P. Respondents' perception on whether those that execute political crimes are the unemployed			
Strongly agreed	143	51.8	
Agreed	128	46.4	
Disagreed	5	1.8	
Total	276	100	Strongly agreed
Q. Respondents' perception on the category of people that political crimes affect			
The ruling class	32	11.6	
The working class	74	26.8	
The masses or the lower class	170	61.6	
Total	276	100	The masses
R. Respondents' perception on their awareness of the consequences of political crimes in the society			
It retards socio-economic development	161	50.3	
It breeds bad governance	100	31.3	
Brings political instability	40	12.5	
Not aware of the consequences	19	5.9	
Total	320	100	Retard socio-economic Development

Sources: Researcher's Field Survey, September, 2010

APPENDIX 2

Table 2 Crime Statistic from Nigerian Police Force Benue State Command FROM 2010-2015

S/N	OFFENCE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	TOTAL
1	MURDER	8	15	15	36	29	5	108
2	ATTEMPTED MURDER	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	1
3	MANSLAUGHTER	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
4	SUICIDE	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	2	NIL	2
5	GRIEVOUS HURT	47	34	94	402	155	12	744
6	ASSAULT	52	32	94	322	104	10	614

7	CHILD STEALING	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	1
8	SLAVE DEALING	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
9	RAPE AND INDECENT ASSULT	NIL	1	1	4	6	2	14
10	DEMAND WITH MENACE	NIL	2	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	2
11	KIDNAPPING	1	1	2	NIL	NIL	NIL	9
12	ARMED ROBBERY	20	18	24	44	62	14	182
13	THEFT AND OTHER STEALING	96	20	138	292	132	20	698
14	BUGLARY	NIL	NIL	2	4	NIL	1	7
15	HOUSE BREAKING	33	8	50	75	42	6	214
16	STORE BREAKING	NIL	2	12	24	NIL	1	38
17	FALSE PRETENCE	10	3	27	112	46	3	201
18	UNLAWFUL POSSESSION	12	22	62	34	52	6	188
19	BREACH OF PUBLIC PEACE	30	6	44	NIL	NIL	4	84
20	RECEIVING STOLEN PROPERTY	NIL	2	NIL	32	11	6	51
21	ESCAPE FROM LAWFUL COSTUDY	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	NIL	NIL	1

Sources: Benue State Police Command, Makurdi.