

Effect of Political Thuggery on Women Participation in Politics: A Study of APC in Lagos State

Emmanuel J.U.

Department Of Political Science, Paul University Awka.
jonesphd2012@gmail.com, +2348033219853

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of political thuggery and women's participation in politics: a study of APC in Lagos State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was guided by three research questions and one hypothesis tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The population of this study included an estimated 4,670 individuals involved in politics within Lagos State, specifically focusing on the All Progressives Congress (APC). The sample of this study comprised 500 registered women voters and supporters of APC, Lagos State. A multistage sampling technique was involved in the sampling. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Political Thuggery and Women Participation In Politics (PTWPPQ)." The validity of the instruments was determined by 3 experts from the Department of Political Science, Paul University. Awka. Cronbach The alpha method of reliability was used to determine the internal consistency, and a reliability index of 0.70 was obtained. The research questions were answered using simple descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 levels of significance using analysis of variance analysis. Results revealed that political thuggery is caused by a combination of factors, including unemployment, economic hardship, politicians' use of thugs, lack of effective law enforcement, and poor governance. Political thuggery has a profoundly negative impact on women's participation in politics, discouraging them from seeking appointments, targeting them with violence, and creating a hostile environment, and women in politics face various forms of thuggery, including physical violence, verbal abuse, threats, destruction of property, and character assassination. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the Lagos state government should implement programmes to reduce unemployment and economic hardship, which can drive individuals to engage in political thuggery, and the Lagos state government should strengthen law enforcement and ensure accountability for thuggery-related crimes to deter perpetrators and create a safer environment for women in politics, among others.

Keywords: Political Thuggery, Women Participation, Gender Inequality

Accepted 10/9/2025

Published 13/11/2025

INTRODUCTION

Globally, women have been a great source of support to the instalment/enhronement of political leaders in every society due to their numbers and nature. Although half the population of Nigeria is made up of women, they occupy less than 10 percent of political positions (Mercy & Patience, 2023). Gender inequality permeates every level of Nigerian society, including the political sphere. This gender-stratified society assigns rights and responsibilities on the basis of physiological differences between men and women (Eniola, 2018). One must note that the full and equitable participation of women in public life is essential to building and sustaining strong, vibrant democracies. In addition, women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality and affects both the range

of policy issues that get considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. In addition, one will ask, "Why women in politics?" (Oguadimma et al., 2021).

Women's full and effective political participation is a matter of human rights, inclusive growth and sustainable development (OECD, 2018). The active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making and political involvement is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy and the inclusion of their perspectives and experiences into the decision-making processes. Despite this, Kumar (2018) states that in the twenty-first century, women are facing obstacles in their political participation worldwide. Women around the world at every

socio-political level find themselves under-represented in parliament and far removed from decision-making levels. As noted in the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2019), women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Strategies to increase women's participation in politics have been advanced through conventions, protocols and international agreements for gender mainstreaming, but they are yet to prove effective in achieving gender parity in the highest government rankings (Morobane, 2014). Half of the world's population are women, but today women only hold 23% of all seats in parliaments and senates globally (Chalaby, 2017; Radu, 2018).

With an estimated 170 million people in Nigeria, youths form one-third of the total population, and unfortunately, most of them are unemployed. Despite the repeated release of figures by the National Bureau of Statistics in newspapers that the Nigerian economy has been creating millions of jobs in recent years, Nnodim (2014), while quoting CBN, said that 80% of Nigerian youths are still unemployed. According to Odutola (2014), Nigeria has a very large youth population that is presently unengaged, unemployed, untrained and unskilled to positively contribute meaningfully to the prosperity and growth of the nation. This unemployment situation has created a breeding ground for largely unengaged youths to serve as willing hands for perpetrators of political and economic violence, which is presently spreading all across the nation.

The rate at which youths are involved in crimes, especially political thuggery and violence before, during and after elections, is alarming. Due to unemployment and poverty, the youths are susceptible to being used for various nefarious activities by the political class. They are used for distribution of money at polling centres, manipulation of voter registers, manipulation of election results, diversion of electoral materials, snatching of ballot boxes, and causing confusion and riot in order to disrupt the electoral process. For the young ones to be effectively and positively involved in political matters now and when they become adults, they must be able to demonstrate politically related positive habits and values.

Lawal (2019) defined "thug" as "any person who uses violence or brutality", while "thuggery" simply means "violent act or behaviour by ruffians". Also, Lawal, cited in Idris (2021), viewed thuggery as the criminalisation of politics. The author noted that when politics is criminalised, it is left in the hands of ruffians, thugs and hooligans, while the good citizens are scared away. Political thuggery hinders public accountability of elective officers and thus is a bane to good governance in Nigeria. It also increases the crime rate and the emergence of credible candidates in elections and thus is a threat to the achievement of democratic dividends and exercise of citizenship rights in Nigeria. Political thuggery is characterised by robbery, intimidation, gangsterism, murder, and physical assault and often involves physical

combat between two opposing gangs or groups, which ultimately generates interpersonal or group hostilities. As earlier stated, since the pre-independence General Elections of 1959, politics in Nigeria has been characterised by thuggery and violence, and these have threatened women's participation in politics (Oluwagbohunmi, 2023).

Thuggery is an act of violence or behaviour by ruffians hired or instigated by politicians to intimidate their opponents. Agagu (2020) viewed political thuggery as the illegitimate and unauthorised use of force to effect decisions against the will of others, while Oni (2024) defined it as the illegitimate means of seeking political power or any act of intimidation, violence, hooliganism, brutality or gangsterism, whether leading to death or not, calculated to pose a threat or scare political opponents or perceived political opponents before, during or after elections and aimed at achieving an undue political result or advantage.

According to Yahaya and Umar Kari (2018), women had been politically active and relatively less excluded in the decision-making process in many pre-colonial societies, but the colonial administration with its gender-biased policies had helped to enthrone and sustain patriarchy. They further noted that women's involvement in politics varies throughout the world, and their participation in politics and the democratic process has become an integral part of contemporary discourse on development and governance. Also, women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019).

Nigeria is a federal republic modelled after the United States. The president has executive powers, while legislative powers reside in the National Assembly, made up of two chambers – a 360-seat House of Representatives and a 109-member Senate. The current constitution was adopted in 1999 when the country transitioned to a civilian administration following 16 years of military rule. For most of its political history, Nigeria was not famous for smooth democratic transitions and changes in administrations. This historic achievement suggested democracy was deepening in Nigeria. However, the trajectory to democratic consolidation, reinforced with the 2019 elections, is problematised by the absence of increased political participation or a broadening of the political space for women. Although formal representation is enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution, women remain under-represented in elective offices and political leadership positions two decades since the last military autocracy. Not only are women relatively invisible in the political landscape, but there remains an intractable notion among Nigerians, including women themselves, that politics is male territory, and women who venture into it are 'outliers'. The persistence of this idea after five cycles of elections compels an examination of the socio-cultural and institutional apparatus that sustains it and the strategies

adopted by the 'outliers' to negotiate access to the political space. We focus on this class of Nigerians because the low percentage of women in politics challenges a core principle shared by all democracies: the inclusion of 'women as equal participants in the decision-making that affects their lives and their communities is both a rights issue and an issue of democratic integrity' (National Democratic Institute, 2021).

Specifically, Lagos State for the House of Representatives has 26 female candidates, but only five wrote the exam due to voters in affluent Ikate, Lekki, Surulere, and other areas being intimidated and harassed by thugs connected to the ruling party, the All Progressive Congress. "Thugs have destroyed ballot boxes and thrown away the ballot papers at Oba Elegushi," wrote Joey Akpan, a journalist on Twitter who happened to be at the scene. With every frantic scream of fearful women voters, every run for safety, and every curse, the myth of Lagos as the party's stronghold keeps disintegrating. As with a decaying plantain that thinks it's ripening, the party is mistaking the ability to summon hydra-headed monsters as evidence of its supremacy. As with all monsters, they will have to live with the problem of taming them.

The problem of women is multifaceted and includes a) physical safety concerns, as women may face direct threats to their physical well-being, including assault, harassment, or other forms of violence, which can discourage them from being visibly active in politics; b) psychological impact, as the fear of potential violence or intimidation can have a profound psychological impact on women, leading to stress, anxiety, and a sense of disenfranchisement; and c) societal and cultural norms, as in some societies, cultural norms and gender biases may already limit women's participation in public life. Thuggery exacerbates these challenges by adding an additional layer of risk for women who defy these norms. d) Legal and Institutional Barriers: inadequate legal protections or lack of enforcement can contribute to a culture of impunity for perpetrators of political thuggery, further discouraging women from participating in politics; e) Economic Constraints: the economic costs associated with security measures to protect against thuggery can be prohibitive for women candidates, who often have fewer resources than their male counterparts and e) Impact on Democratic Representation: the under-representation of women in political offices due to thuggery can lead to policies and legislation that do not adequately address the needs and interests of the entire population.

Given the fact that many states have ratified international conventions and protocols on gender equality and women's political participation, the low level of women's representation in politics in Lagos State may be considered a violation of women's fundamental democratic rights. The African government's public commitments have not materialised into better protection for women and support for victims, and this has made women play outside the political ground. According to DiLanzo (2016), many African states sign and commit

themselves to promoting gender parity in political participation but end up shelving the agreement. Abuse of office and desire to acquire power through self-centred means has resulted in the state ignoring women's concerns. Thus, women continue to be under-represented in governments across the nation and face barriers that often make it difficult for them to exercise political power and assume leadership positions in the public sphere. Olubela (2023) concurs and states that "women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalised from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women."

Women have always been discriminated against when it comes to politics; men have an upper hand over women. The political playing field is uneven and not conducive to women's participation. Women who enter politics find the political, cultural and social environment often not women-friendly. It is in the light of this persistent unfavourable political system to

Nigerian women that this study will critically examine the effect of political thuggery on women's participation in politics: a study of APC in Lagos State.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of political thuggery on women's participation in politics: a study of APC in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the causes of political thuggery in Lagos State politics
- ii. Ascertain the effect of political thuggery on women's political appointments in Lagos State
- iii. Identify the form of political thuggery that affects women's participation in Lagos State;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided that study:

1. What are the causes of political thuggery in Lagos State politics?
2. To what extent does political thuggery affect women's political appointments in Lagos State?
3. What forms of political thuggery affect women's participation in Lagos State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. Political thuggery has no significant effect on women's political appointment in APC Lagos State

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analysing data from a sample of people or items considered to be representative of the entire population. Nworgu (2015) explained that a descriptive survey involves a systematic and comprehensive collection of information about the opinions, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviour of people. This method of research design was used because it helped to elicit relevant information/opinion on the effect of political thuggery on women's participation in politics: a study of APC in Lagos State.

The area of the study focuses on Lagos State, Nigeria, specifically examining the effect of political thuggery on women's participation in politics within the context of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Lagos State is Nigeria's economic hub and a significant political battleground, often shaping national politics. The population of this study included an estimated 4,670 individuals involved in politics within Lagos State, specifically focusing on the All Progressives Congress (APC). The target population comprises: Women Politicians: Female candidates and aspirants within the APC Women in leadership positions, such as party executives, coordinators, or council members. Male and female party members, including those at grassroots and state levels. Women voters in Lagos State who have experienced or witnessed the effects of political thuggery. The sample of this study comprised 500 registered women voters and supporters of APC, Lagos State. The sample size is purposively determined and is good enough to cover women in different areas. The multistage sampling technique is involved in sampling. In the first place, stratified and proportionate random sampling is used to select those from different areas. At the second stage, a convenient sampling technique will be adopted to select the sample for the study. The purpose of using convenient sampling was to make sure that only the APC women voters and supporters who give their consent are eligible to participate in the study. The instrument used for

data collection was a researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Political Thuggery and Women Participation In Politics (PTWPPQ)". Questions are drawn based strictly on the stated objectives and literature reviewed. The questionnaires were structured in two sections. In section A, the respondents were required to provide their demographic information. Section B will elicit information on political thuggery and women's participation in politics in APC Lagos State. This section was divided into 8 clusters. ABCDEFGH. The response format on cluster 1 is a 4-rating scale of very high, high, low, and very low, while the response format for other clusters is a 4-point rating scale of strongly agree (SD) (4 points), agree (A) (3 points), disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point).

The validity of the instruments was determined by 3 experts from the Department of Political Science, Paul University Awka. To ensure that the instrument is validated, the researcher gave the instrument (questionnaire) to the supervisor and some other research experts to make the necessary corrections. This was to ensure that the test instrument covers the objectives of the study. They examined the instruments with regard to their contents, relevance, clarity of items, and coverage of essential curriculum components. Their corrections and contributions were used to produce the final version of the instrument. To test the reliability of the questionnaire instrument, the Cronbach's alpha method of reliability will be used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, and a reliability index of 0.70 was obtained, which deems the instrument reliable. The research questions were answered using simple descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages, mean and standard deviation. The four-point scale was used to compute the mean. Values were attached to the categories of responses, namely Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). This means that the cut-off mark is 2.50. Hence, items with points above the cut-off mark of 2.50 were retained, while those below 2.50 were not accepted. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance with appropriate degrees of freedom using t-test analysis. The hypothesis of no significant difference was retained if the p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance; otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected.

RESULTS

1 Demographic Information of respondents

Table 1: The demographical data of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	82	16.8
	Female	405	83.2
	Total	487	100.0
Age	20 – 30	192	39.4
	31 – 40	207	42.5
	41 – 50	71	14.6
	51>	17	3.5
	Total	487	100.0
Qualifications	>Olevel	45	9.2
	Diploma	45	9.2
	Degree	293	60.2
	Postgraduate	75	15.4
	Others	29	6.0
	Total	487	100.0
Thuggery Witness?	Yes	476	97.7
	No	11	2.3
	Total	487	100.0

Table 1 revealed the demographical data of the respondents. From the table, it can be seen that 82 (16.8%) of the respondents are male, while 405 (83.2%) are female. Based on the respondents' qualifications, 45 (9.2%) of the respondents are FSLC/WAEC/NECO holders and diploma holders, respectively. 293 (60.2%) are degree holders, while 75 (15.4%) are postgraduate degree holders, and 29 (6.0%) have unclassified or unrevealed certificates. This shows that the respondents have the necessary qualification to interpret what they saw during elections, vote and be voted for and also answer this questionnaire. Out of the 487 respondents, 87 (17.9%) are civil servants, 229 (47.0%) are business owners, and 156 (32.0%) are artisans, while 15 (3.1%) have uncategorised occupations. Furthermore, the table revealed that 476 (97.7%) of the respondents have been

witnesses to political thuggery, while 11 (2.3%) have not witnessed any form of thuggery. The demographic information so obtained shows that the respondents possess the inclusion criteria for participating in this study, as they are women politicians. Female candidates and aspirants within the APC, women in leadership positions, such as party executives, coordinators, or council members. The information so obtained from the respondents will provide insights into the challenges women face due to political thuggery.

Research Question One:

What are the causes of political thuggery in Lagos State politics?

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard deviation of respondents on causes of political thuggery in Lagos State politics

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Unemployment and economic hardship contribute to the prevalence of political thuggery in Lagos	3.15	.803	Agree
2	Politicians' use of thugs to intimidate opponents and voters is a major cause of political thuggery.	3.19	.815	Agree
3	Lack of effective law enforcement and impunity for thuggery-related crimes contribute to its prevalence.	3.24	.705	Agree
4	Youths' desire for power and influence in politics leads them to engage in thuggery.	3.07	.984	Agree
5	Politicization of ethnicity and religion fuels thuggery in Lagos State politics.	3.08	.980	Agree
6	Poor governance and lack of trust in democratic institutions contribute to the rise of political thuggery.	3.41	.639	Agree
	Cluster Mean Scores	3.19	0.821	Agree

Table 2 sought to provide an answer to research question 1. Data from the table revealed that the cluster mean of items 1-6 was 3.19. This is above the benchmark score of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that political thuggery is caused by a combination of factors, including unemployment and economic hardship, which drive individuals to engage in such activities. Politicians' use of thugs to intimidate opponents and voters is a major contributor, while the lack of effective law enforcement and impunity for thuggery-related crimes allows it to thrive. Additionally, youths seeking power and influence in politics may turn to thuggery, and the politicisation of ethnicity and religion fuels this behaviour. Ultimately, poor governance and a

lack of trust in democratic institutions also contribute to the rise of political thuggery. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of items 1-6 was 0.821. This also shows that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their responses on the causes of political thuggery in Lagos State politics, adding further validity to the mean.

Research Question Two

To what extent does political thuggery affect women's political appointments in Lagos State?

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard deviation of respondents on extent political thuggery affect women's political appointment in Lagos State

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Political thuggery discourages women from seeking political appointments in Lagos State.	3.21	.685	Agree
2	Women are often targeted by political thugs, making it difficult for them to participate in politics.	3.04	.869	Agree
3	The prevalence of political thuggery in Lagos State reduces the number of women appointed to political positions.	3.41	.639	Agree
4	Political thuggery creates a hostile environment that prevents women from fully participating in politics.	3.13	.985	Agree
5	Women are less likely to be appointed to political positions in areas with high levels of political thuggery.	3.26	.597	Agree
6	The fear of violence and intimidation from political thugs deters women from pursuing political appointments.	3.05	.752	Agree
Cluster Mean Scores		3.18	.7545	Agree

Table 3 sought to provide an answer to research question 2. Data from the table revealed that the cluster mean of items 1-6 was 3.18. This is above the benchmark score of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that political thuggery has a profoundly negative impact on women's participation in politics. It discourages women from seeking political appointments, targets them with violence and intimidation, and creates a hostile environment that prevents them from fully participating. As a result, fewer women are appointed to political positions, particularly in areas with high levels of thuggery. The fear of violence and intimidation ultimately deters women from pursuing political careers, limiting

their representation and influence in governance. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of items 1-6 was 0.7545. This also shows that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their responses on the extent political thuggery affects women's political appointments in Lagos State, adding further validity to the mean.

Research Question Three

What forms of political thuggery affect women's participation in Lagos State?

Table 4: Mean Scores and Standard deviation of respondents on extent political thuggery affect women's political appointment in Lagos State

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	Physical violence and intimidation are common forms of political thuggery that affect women's participation.	3.41	.6386	Agree
2	Verbal abuse and harassment are used to deter women from participating in politics.	3.36	.870	Agree
3	Threats to family and loved ones are used to intimidate women from participating in politics.	3.18	.812	Agree
4	Destruction of property and assets is a form of political thuggery that affects women's participation.	3.48	.884	Agree
5	Character assassination and smear campaigns are used to discredit women in politics.	3.37	.862	Agree
6	Economic coercion and bribery are used to influence women's participation in politics.	3.48	.884	Agree
Cluster Mean Scores		3.38	.8251	Agree

Table 4.4 seeks to provide an answer to research question 3. Data from the table revealed that the cluster mean of items 1-6 was 3.38. This is above the benchmark score of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale. This implies that women's participation in politics is affected by various forms of political thuggery, including physical violence and intimidation, verbal abuse and harassment, threats to family and loved ones, destruction of property and assets, character assassination and smear campaigns, as well as economic coercion and bribery. These tactics are used to deter, discredit, and influence women, creating a hostile environment that limits their involvement in politics. The table also revealed that the

cluster standard deviation of items 1-6 was 0.8251. This also shows that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another in their responses on the forms. Political thuggery affects women's participation in Lagos State, adding further validity to the mean.

Hypothesis one

Political thuggery has no significant effect on women's political appointments in APC Lagos State.

Table 5: Analysis of variance on the significant effect of thuggery on women's political appointment in APC Lagos.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.345	4	.836	2.999	.018
Within Groups	134.390	482	.279		
Total	137.735	486			

The result in Table 5 shows that an F-ratio of 2.999 with an associated exact probability value of 0.018 was obtained. This probability value of 0.018 was compared with 0.05 set as level of significant for testing the hypothesis and it was found to be significant because 0.018 is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis, which stated that political thuggery has no significant effect on women's political appointment in APC Lagos State, is therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that political thuggery is caused by a combination of factors, including unemployment and economic hardship, which drive individuals to engage in such activities. Politicians' use of thugs to intimidate opponents and voters is a major contributor, while the lack of effective law enforcement and impunity for thuggery-

related crimes allows it to thrive. Additionally, youths seeking power and influence in politics may turn to thuggery, and the politicisation of ethnicity and religion fuels this behaviour. Ultimately, poor governance and a lack of trust in democratic institutions also contribute to the rise of political thuggery. This agrees with the findings of Joy (2019) on political violence and women's political participation in Nigeria: A Study of Ebonyi State, 2015 - 2019, which focuses on how political violence is a factor for the low participation of women in Nigerian political activities, particularly in Ebonyi State. The study establishes that political violence is prevalent in Ebonyi state and it is caused by unemployment, poverty, imposition of candidates among others. It further recognises the fact that the level of women's participation in politics is low owing to ignorance, gender inequality and political violence.

Finding from the study further revealed that political

thuggery has a profoundly negative impact on women's participation in politics. It discourages women from seeking political appointments, targets them with violence and intimidation, and creates a hostile environment that prevents them from fully participating. As a result, fewer women are appointed to political positions, particularly in areas with high levels of thuggery. The fear of violence and intimidation ultimately deters women from pursuing political careers, limiting their representation and influence in governance. This validates the findings of Ibrahim (2017) on factors that limit women's participation in Nigeria's politics using the case study period between 1999 and 2015; among these factors are socioeconomic development, the country's cultural heritage, historical legacies and institutional designs. The study found that the Nigerian political culture of thuggery and gangsterism has made the political terrain too dangerous for most women to venture into mainstream politics. Besides, the stigmatisation of women politicians by fellow women discourages the political participation of the former, while religious beliefs and institutional arrangements that restrict women to family responsibilities in the country, coupled with a lack of genuine and decisive affirmative action to encourage women's political participation, have created a legacy that limits women's political participation in the country as a whole.

Additionally, the study revealed that women's participation in politics is affected by various forms of political thuggery, including physical violence and intimidation, verbal abuse and harassment, threats to family and loved ones, destruction of property and assets, character assassination and smear campaigns, as well as economic coercion and bribery. These tactics are used to deter, discredit, and influence women, creating a hostile environment that limits their involvement in politics. Agreeing with the findings of Lawal (2019) on the causes and effects of political thuggery in Nigeria. Which revealed that thuggery is violent behaviour, especially of a criminal nature. A cowardly act of mindless thuggery: "The Nigerian political scene has experienced violence and thuggery in varying degrees. Ruffians hired or instigated by politicians to intimidate their opponents define 'thuggery' as an act of violence or behaviour. It is therefore safe to say that thuggery in Nigerian politics is a means to an end. Overall, political thuggery is characterized by robbery, intimidation, gangsterism, murder, physical assault and often involves physical combat between two opposing gangs or groups, which ultimately generates interpersonal or group hostilities. Since the pre-independence General Elections of 1959, politics in Nigeria has been characterised by thuggery and violence. The study reveals that poverty, unemployment, the financial attractiveness of elective positions, the value system of wealth accumulation, and an ineffective security agency account for the incidence of political thuggery in Nigeria. Political thuggery hinders public accountability of elective officers and thus is a bane to good governance in Nigeria. Relying on secondary data, a theoretical mode of analysis was adopted in order to

understand that ethical issues and party intrigues, as well as political violence, became so prevalent in the electioneering process in Nigeria and called for sober reflection. It is in the light of this that this paper believes that political thuggery has brought a lot of conflicts in Nigeria among ethnics, nations, religions and tribes.

Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings of the study is based on the research questions and hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Subsequently, findings from the study revealed that

1. Political thuggery is caused by a combination of factors, including unemployment, economic hardship, politicians' use of thugs, lack of effective law enforcement, and poor governance.
2. Political thuggery has a profoundly negative impact on women's participation in politics, discouraging them from seeking appointments, targeting them with violence, and creating a hostile environment.
3. Women in politics face various forms of thuggery, including physical violence, verbal abuse, threats, destruction of property, character assassination, and economic coercion.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study highlights the pervasive and damaging impact of political thuggery on women's participation in politics in Lagos State. The findings reveal that political thuggery is fuelled by a complex array of factors, including unemployment, economic hardship, and poor governance. The consequences for women are severe, ranging from psychological distress and socio-economic instability to intimidation and coercion at the polls. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Lagos government should implement programmes to reduce unemployment and economic hardship, which can drive individuals to engage in political thuggery.
2. The Lagos government should strengthen law enforcement and ensure accountability for thuggery-related crimes to deter perpetrators and create a safer environment for women in politics.
3. The Lagos government should implement programmes to empower women in politics, including training, mentorship, and support to help them navigate the challenges of political participation.
4. The Lagos government should establish safe spaces

and support systems for women politicians to report incidents of thuggery and receive protection and support.

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