



**INTERNAL DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL  
VIOLENCE IN RIVERS AND BAYELSA STATES,  
NIGERIA (2015 – 2020)**

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**Abstract**

*The central issue in this study was the examination of the effects of internal democracy on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states, Nigeria. This study became necessary because little attention has been paid to the understanding of this problem, particularly around the unique role of clientelism. This study looked at the subject matter of political violence, as it is affected by internal democracy. The study adopted quantitative method. Four hundred (400) copies of a structured questionnaire were administered to respondents selected using multi-stage sampling technique from across the area of study. While 379 (93.7%) copies were retrieved, 21 (6.3%) copies were not returned. Quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study adopted the Frustration-Aggression Theory as the theoretical framework. Findings of the descriptive study revealed that internal democracy had effect on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states (2.98 grand mean). The clientelistic actions of godfathers played a role in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states (3.21 grand mean). This study concludes that internal democracy has average/moderate impact on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states. The clientelistic actions of godfathers play significant roles in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states. The study recommended among others that political parties must place limits on financial contributions of members, and also device creative means of getting funds so as to reduce the likelihood of getting godfathers.*

**Keywords:** *Clientilism, Election, Internal Democracy, Political Party, Political violence*

## **Introduction**

Since the inception of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, political violence has continued to gain prominence. Elections in the country are fraught with wanton destruction of lives and properties, as politicians adopt a *do-or-die* approach in their bid to win. Violence has become a norm in Nigeria's political life (Bardall, 2018).

Political parties are one of the institutions that are carriers of democratic principles in any organised society (Chris & Tope, 2011). Hence, when they fail to entrench democratic principles in their processes, it portends danger for them as a political party and the larger society. This discourse can best be presented with an understanding of the meaning of internal democracy. Internal democracy means that the party should be formed "bottom-up" and that the internal distribution of power should be marked by dispersion at different levels, bodies, and individuals rather than by the concentration in one organ (Giovanni, 1977 in Chukwujekwu & Ezeabasili, 2019). In a nutshell, this implies that ultimate power should reside in the party members, and not selected few.

Many political parties are operated by political 'godfathers, who use money and violence to control the political process (Corentin, 2015). It was with these blunt words that the United States Institute for Peace depicted political practices on the eve of the 2007 General Elections in Nigeria (Corentin, 2015). Little wonder political parties often have crises that result in the most terrifying candidates emerging, who then go into the General Election ready to unleash terror on the process. Hence, the recurrent political violence in the Nigerian society, particularly in Rivers and Bayelsa states.

Rivers and Bayelsa states are two states of the South-South geopolitical zone which have a high degree of political violence. Between 2015 – 2020, Rivers and Bayelsa states have suffered severely from political violence. FFP (2018) writes that "In February 2016, eighteen people were killed in Gokana during a clash between police and loyalists to an ex-militant leader; members of the Iclander cult group reportedly killed an APC member in Opobo-Nkoro LGA; in December 2016, cultists reportedly killed at least eight people in a suspected political attack in Ogba Egbema-Ndoni LGA". Sixteen people were killed in Rivers state in the 2015 presidential election, while the INEC headquarters was reportedly burnt down and two people killed during voting in the gubernatorial elections (Ndujihe and Kumolu, 2015 in Etim & Reason, 2019). They also write that before and during the 2015 election, the

Human Rights Commission received reports of 83 incidents of destruction of property, including acts of vandalism and arson.

Bayelsa state equally has its share of political violence which plays out in outright electoral violence, cult clashes and militancy. The Guardian (2020) writes that the panel set up by Bayelsa State Governor Seriake Dickson to probe the pre-election violence in the state in 2019 reported that 21 people were killed and 195 injured in Nembe Council. Political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states is not unconnected to the desperate party politics and twisted internal democracy. As party politics continue to degenerate into the arena for retrogressive pursuits and self-seeking interests, its impact on public peace is easy to imagine. Internal democracy seems to exist only in wordings, as members violate the party constitution and display executive arrogance within the party (Chukwujekwu & Ezeabasili, 2019). These dynamics tend to have an impact on public peace. While it may seem like the government has not made serious efforts to stem the tide of the problem of political violence in the country, INEC and civil society seem to have expended enormous energies to no avail. This problem of political violence affects Nigeria's democratisation, causes voter apathy and a host of other effects on the country.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to determine how internal democracy affect political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states, Nigeria, within the timeline of 2015 - 2020. Specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate the role of the clientelistic actions of godfathers in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states.
2. Assess the effect of internal democracy on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states.
3. Explore possible ways of reducing the effect of political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states.

### **Research Questions**

There are a number of research questions to this study. They are:

1. Do the clientelistic actions of godfathers play a role in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states?

2. Does internal democracy have effect on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states?
3. What are the possible ways by which the effects of political violence can be reduced in Rivers and Bayelsa states?

### **Research Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: internal democracy of political parties has no significant effect on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Political Violence**

Political violence is aimed at achieving or resisting regime change in established power hierarchies and orders; asserting or resisting supremacy of one form of national identity over another or others; seizing and controlling economic, political or other resources in the form of mineral, key routes; or resistance to any of these forms of violence (Bardall, 2018). Here, political violence is seen from the point of resistance. Bardall (2018) does not indicate if political violence relates to force and destruction. In this regard, one may be inclined to believe that civil disobedience as a form of resistance also qualifies as political violence.

Aver et al. (2013) view political violence as "the illegitimate and unauthorised use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of other people in the society. So, illegitimate use of force is a basis for political violence. However, such force must take place with the aim to have effects on political situations. Or perhaps, the force may be a fallout of political relationships. Political violence refers to acts of violence committed by both state and non-state actors for political purposes (Tim et al., 2017).

Political violence is different from electoral violence, even though electoral violence is covered by political violence. Electoral violence involves all forms of organized acts of threats aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing of a political stakeholder or opponent before, during and after an election with the intension to determine, delay or influence a political process (Osah & Vinuyon, 2021). While political violence covers violence during elections, it goes further to include all violence relating to all political activities.

## **Internal Democracy**

Political parties are critical stakeholders for entrenching and sustaining democracy all over the world. In simple terms, internal democracy is the practice of democracy within a political party. Chris & Tope (2011) define internal democracy as a very broad term describing a wide range of methods for including party members in intra-party deliberation and decision-making. So this invariably refers to a mechanism for having the majority of party members decide party decisions.

Balint (2018) takes the definition a bit further as he defines internal democracy as "the involvement of party members in the decisions that are central to a party's political life, including programme writing, personnel selection and other intra-organizational decision-making". This definition suggests that all organisational activities within a political party must be undertaken with the consent of party members. The members own the party, so to deny them participation in the conduct of party affairs will be tantamount to democratic principles.

Internal Party democracy means that the party should be formed "bottom-up" and that the internal distribution of power should be marked by dispersion at different levels, bodies, and individuals rather than by the concentration in one organ (Giovanni, 1977 in Chukwujekwu & Ezeabasili, 2019). This perspective brings the issue of checks and balances within political parties. Hence, internal democracy is not just about the majority will. It is also about transparency and accountability, which can be ensured by sharing power among various organs of the party such that one organ does not become too powerful as to begin to abuse such powers.

## **Political Violence and Related Variables**

### **Internal Democracy and Political Violence**

Mersel (2006 cited in Nwodo, 2011) asserts that various democracies in recent times have faced the problem of non-democratic political parties, a situation where most parties only focus on external activities, neglecting internal planning and organisation. Hence, a political party is seen as democratic because it purports to conform to laws governing the political space but breaks its internal rules governing its activities. This is an erroneous view of democracy, as political parties should be their guarantors. So if a political party does not adhere to the tenets of democracy within its

system, it will be hard to expect such a party to conform to it in the general space.

In Nigeria, lack of internal democracy has resulted in ethnicisation of party politics, bad political leadership, corruption, anti-party and party indiscipline, lack of clear ideologies and manifestos, the politicisation of the military as well as the absence of internal party politics (Atelhe, Abdullahi & alagh, 2019). It, therefore, appears that internal democracy holds some positives even for the larger state. It is a string that holds all of the important variables together. Internal party democracy does affect not only the credibility of the elections but also the quality of leadership, governance and economic development (Itua, 2012). Nwodo (2010 cited in Chris & Tope, 2011) writes, "We sought to restore the image of our party (the People's Democratic Party), because the image of our dear party, the largest political party in Africa, has been grossly eroded due to strife, imposition of candidates, godfatherism, money bag politics, injustice, and lack of understanding of our party manifesto. As the ruling party, if we get it right, Nigeria will get it right.

The political parties have, all these years, failed to internalise the principles of democracy in their choice of not only candidates for public elective offices (President, governors etc.), but also for those of their party machinery (Udeuhele, 2017). Even when the parties have known principles for choosing party flag bearers or modus operandi for party activities, they often do not follow these principles. There is just as much human interference in the processes as there are interests. And oftentimes, these processes are breached to favour certain interests within the party, to the disaffection of the majority of party members.

It has been observed in recent times that many political parties in Nigeria find it very difficult to adopt an open system that will not only allow members of the party to participate in the decision making but also give them unrestricted opportunity to contest in elections under the party's platform (Chris & Tope, 2011). This is not in consonance with common global practice. In some cases, it is even against the parties' constitutions. It would seem that some party leaders already have persons they wish to give the parties' tickets to, and whatever supports that notion alone is what they will do. Also, with regards to parties' decisions, there is usually a click of power brokers within the parties who feel the party belongs to them. And they make



most of the decisions within the party and compel other members to accept them as party decisions.

Political parties that practice intra-party democracy are likely to select more capable and appealing leaders, to have more responsive policies, and, as a result, to enjoy greater electoral success and strengthen democratic culture generally (Enemaku & Makinde, 2021). With this, there will be less likelihood of political violence. It is in this regard that one may wonder if internal democracy enhances peace and reduces the potential for political violence. Enemaku & Makinde (2021) further posit that intra-party democracy encourages political equality by creating a level playing field in candidate selection and policy development within the party and ensures popular control of government by extending democratic norms to party organisations such as transparency and accountability.

### **Godfatherism and Internal Democracy in Nigeria**

Godfatherism has had a humongous negative effect on internal democracy in Nigeria. Osakede and Ijimakinwa (2016) write that Godfatherism is one of the most important factors responsible for poor democratic institutions in Nigeria. The godfathers determine virtually every major decision in the parties. They appoint the leaders of the parties who are meant to carry out their bidding. Hence, there is no room for the yearnings of the members of the parties.

Since 1999 till date, Nigeria has witnessed the emergence of various godfathers. While some have national dominance, others prevail over their states. There are even godfathers at the local levels. After the 1999 election, President Olusegun Obasanjo was considered the visible godfather. Although those were early times, as the manifestations of his traits as a godfather would only become noticeable during the politicking towards the 2003 elections. Terhembra & Godwin (N.D, p. 4) write:

*When President Obasanjo entered office in 1999, he wielded political influence, particularly within the military, but he was by no means a “godfather” himself. The Big Men of the ascendant Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) – itself largely an alliance of convenience among these powerful individuals – had, in fact, chosen Obasanjo on the faulty assumption that they could control him. Consequently, he arrived in office constrained within the webs of their*

*various networks. Over the past seven years, however, he has gradually gained ground against the godfathers, using the powers of the presidency to build alliances with some and to undermine others, most notably Vice-President Atiku Abubakar.*

He had been brought out from prison to come contest the 1999 presidential election. Apparently, he still had a good reputation as the only military leader who returned power back to civilians. So he could not, by any stretch of imagination, have wielded political reverence having just come out of prison. He had to rely on the network of those who had brought him out into the People's Democratic Party (PDP). After he won the election, he began to express his free will to govern by refusing to be lorded over. There was the belief that Olusegun Obasanjo wanted people to know that he was in charge and not subjected to those who had brought him to come to be president.

Godfatherism relies on clientelism. In clientelistic systems, money is used to advance and fund clientelistic networks and maintain patron-client relations between and during elections (Sulaiman 2014, p. 128). Money is a huge factor in Nigeria's party politics. More so, when such money comes from only one or a few individuals, things are bound to get exacerbated. With the high level of poverty in the country, such that people join political parties to earn money, the person with enormous wealth which is used to grease the wheels of the party has overwhelming power with which to subvert internal democracy in his favour.

Finance has been the major bane in the development of the country's political system, as there is no effective laws, or culture, or strong institutional regulatory framework about how to finance political parties and sources of such finances (Ejikeme, 2016). The more problematic use of money is in using it to induce party members and officials to act in favour of certain interests. This is how funding is used to subvert internal democracy. In any case, it is said that 'one who pays the piper dictates the tune'.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Frustration-Aggression Theory**

In 1939, Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears published a monograph on aggression in which they presented what has come to be known as the



frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dennen, 2005). Although the book was small in size, its impact was great throughout the social sciences, and the ideas it advanced quickly attracted considerable attention (Berkowitz, 1988). This was the origin of the Frustration-Aggression theory, and they were known as the proponents. The original frustration-aggression hypothesis postulated that although the drive created by frustration was aggression-specific, a displacement process could take place, and the drive then would be reduced through a process of catharsis (Roland 1989). Here, a physiological explanation for aggression exists.

Dollard and his colleagues presented two basic propositions in their monograph: one maintaining that every act of aggression can be traced to a prior thwarting, and the second holding that every frustration creates instigation to aggression (Berkowitz, 1988). In essence, they posited that aggression was retaliatory. On the other hand, they posited that aggression was always a fallout of frustration. The frustration-aggression hypothesis was one of the first theories to suggest that frustrating circumstances elicit aggressive responses (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939 in Tyler & Jonathan, 2011).

The appeal of the frustration-aggression theory, as presented by Dollards and his colleagues, is its simplicity. This is best captured by Dennen (2005, p.2):

*The principal hypothesis is uncomplicated and easy to grasp. The theory is generally well structured and clearly articulated, a fact that again facilitates comprehension. Second, the theory does not involve overly abstract concepts or elaborate procedures. It is very close to common sense – seeming to be built on it. Finally, the theory tends to provide a justification for behaving aggressively: ‘Being frustrated made me do it!’ Like the aggression amnesty provided by instinct notions (‘It can’t be helped because we’re built that way’), although not as strong, this kind of justification can be drawn upon as a ready-made excuse for uncontrolled (or premeditated) hostile or aggressive actions.*

While simplicity is appreciated, the logic can be criticized as generalizing. As noted above, it may be interpreted as justifying aggression. Dennen (2005) writes that Both Maslow (1941) and Rosenzweig (1944), suggested that frustrations instigate aggression only when they are associated with

threat. They, therefore, criticized the frustration-aggression theory as generalizing when in essence, it should only apply to specific situations. Breuer & Elson (2017) also criticized the frustration-aggression theory as presented by Dollard and his colleagues. Taken verbatim, "the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration" suggests that aggression does not occur without any form of prior frustration, and the assertion that frustration "always leads to some form of aggression" implies that aggression is a certain outcome of any frustration. Breuer & Elson (2017) also write that "These deterministic assumptions were somewhat qualified in a 1941 publication by the same authors in which they stated that "frustration produces instigation to aggression, but this is not the only type of instigation that it may produce" (Miller, Sears, Mowrer, Doob, & Dollard, 1941, p. 339)."

One constructive critic of the original frustration-aggression theory was Berkowitz (1988). Berkowitz revised the frustration-aggression hypothesis further by combining the original formulation that frustration builds up an aggression specific state ("anger") with Miller's amendment that aggression does not necessarily presuppose frustration (Roland 1989). Berkowitz introduced 'suitable cues', and he explained that frustration only creates readiness for aggression. By this, it makes aggression probable and not definite. In an attempt to integrate Dollard et al.'s emphasis on environmental contingencies of frustration with a more recent understanding of frustration as an internal process, Berkowitz (1989) reformulated the theory, arguing that frustrations are still defined as aversive events but that they "generate aggressive inclinations only to the extent that they produce negative affect" (Breuer & Elson 2017).

Many critics of the frustration-aggression theory turned out to be supporters of the theory with contributions to improve it. One of such supporters was Miller. Dennen (2005, p. 8) writes:

*The application of Miller's (1944) conflict model to aggressive behaviour, specifically to the displacement of aggression onto substitute targets, proved to be a highly influential extension of the frustration-aggression theory. Miller (1948, 1959) proposed that both the substitute target and the intensity of the attack directed against it could be predicted on the basis of three antecedent conditions: (a) the strength of the drive that motivates aggression against the original target, (b) the*

*strength of inhibitory response tendencies, and (c) the degree of stimulus similarity between the original and substitute targets.*

The above quote from Miller explains how frustration affects aggression. It states that aggression is often proportionate to frustration. It also introduces a host of variables besides from frustration which instigates aggression.

The frustration-aggression theory is relevant to the understanding of political violence. Oftentimes, violence within the political space is an expression of deep-seated frustration. Frustrations can lead to open aggression as well as to hostile ideas and judgment (Berkowitz, 1988). Aggression and violence can be regarded as synonyms. When a candidate loses in an election due to rigging, he/she feels frustrated by the system. In Nigeria, the outplay of aggression in this regard is that they incite their followers to destroy and brutalize properties and persons.

The aggression frustration theory is more easily noticeable in the subversive activities of opposition political parties which feel cheated and oppressed in Nigeria. The willingness they display in supporting anti-government activities such as protests and riots, even when those activities are violent, shows their frustration with the status quo.

### **Methodology**

This study was carried out using the quantitative method. The population of the study was drawn from Rivers and Bayelsa states. It included all eligible voters on INEC list for both states. According to *Premium Times* (2019), Rivers state has 3,215,273 registered voters, and Bayelsa state has 923,182 registered voters. In total, both states have 4,138,455 registered voters. To be able to draw the right sample for the purpose of this study, Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size. This gave a sample size of 400 for the study. The multistage sampling technique was adopted for this study, covering both stratified and purposive sampling. The primary source of data collection was used for this study, adopting the questionnaire as main instrument. The descriptive statistics was adopted as method of data analysis.

### **Data Analysis, Presentation of Results and Discussion of Findings**

A total of 400 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and 379 were retrieved and fit for analysis which gave a response rate of 93.7%. These were subjected to analysis, and the result presented.

**Demographic Information of the respondents (Questionnaire)**

Table 1: demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Female	201	53
	Male	178	47
<b>Age</b>	18-30 years	190	50.1
	31-40years	79	20.8
	41-50years	70	18.5
	51-60years	32	8.4
	61 years and above	8	2.1
<b>Academic qualification</b>	SSCE	139	36.7
	NCE/OND	38	10.0
	HND/Bachelors	123	32.5
	Masters/PHD	72	19.0
	Others	7	1.8
<b>Party affiliation</b>	APC	14	3.7
	PDP	99	26.1
	Others	17	4.5
	None	249	65.7

**Research question one: Do the clientelistic actions of godfathers play a role in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states?**

Table 5.4: the role of the clientelistic actions of godfathers in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states

SURVEY ITEMS	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	SD
	<b>Political party godfathers in Rivers and Bayelsa states had undue influence over party leaders whom they used to undermine internal party democracy from 2015 - 2020</b>	183(48.3)	159(42)	22(5.8)		
<b>Godfathers of Rivers and Bayelsa states played active roles in the</b>	208(54.9)	123(32.5)	17(4.5)	31(8.2)	3.34	.898

rigging of primary elections of their political parties within 2015 - 2020						
Godfathers in Rivers and Bayelsa states of Nigeria used thugs to enforce obedience within their political parties from 2015 - 2020	187(49.3)	126(33.2)	50(13.2)	16(4.2)	3.28	.848
Imposition of candidates in political parties of Rivers and Bayelsa states furthered the interests of godfathers, even against internal democracy within 2015 - 2020	132(34.8)	222(58.6)	16(4.2)	9(2.4)	3.26	.648
Profiteering was a motive of godfathers in Rivers and Bayelsa states from 2015 - 2020, as they undermined internal party democracy	157(41.4)	160(42.2)	62(16.4)		3.25	.719
Godfathers of Rivers and Bayelsa states were open to selling the tickets of their parties to highest bidders from 2015 - 2020, unmindful of party democracy	103(27.2)	207(54.6)	44(11.6)	25(6.6)	3.02	.808
The people of Rivers and Bayelsa states found it hard to submit to the domination of a godfather. Hence, the frequent violent reactions from 2015 - 2020	109(28.8)	158(41.7)	102(26.9)	10(2.6)	2.97	.814
Grand Mean					3.21	.785

**Decision rule: if mean is  $\leq 2.49$  = low,  $2.5=2.99$ =average  $3.0-3.49$ =high,  $3.5-4.0$ =very high**

The grand mean in table 5.4 proves that the clientelistic actions of godfathers play significant roles in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states (mean=3.21, SD=.785). This is further explained by the responses of the participants. As in the result, the respondents agreed that political party godfathers in Rivers and Bayelsa states had undue influence over party leaders whom they used to undermine internal party democracy from 2015 - 2020 (mean=3.35), and that they played active roles in the rigging of primary elections of their political parties within 2015 - 2020 (mean=3.34). The godfathers also used thugs to

enforce obedience within their political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states (mean=3.28), and the imposition of candidates in political parties of Rivers and Bayelsa states furthered their interests, even against internal democracy (mean=3.26), because profiteering was the motives of the godfathers in Rivers and Bayelsa states, even when it undermined internal party democracy (mean=3.25). The respondents also agreed that Godfathers of Rivers and Bayelsa states were open to selling the tickets of their parties to the highest bidders from 2015 - 2020, unmindful of party democracy (mean=3.02), and that the people of Rivers and Bayelsa states found it hard to submit to the domination of a godfather. Hence, the frequent violent reactions from 2015 - 2020 (mean=2.97).

Godfatherism has had a humongous negative effect on internal democracy in Nigeria. Osakede and Ijimakinwa (2016) write that Godfatherism is one of the most important factors responsible for the poor democratic institution in Nigeria. The godfathers determine virtually every major decision in the parties. They appoint the leaders of the parties who are meant to carry out their bidding. Hence, there is no room for the yearnings of the members of the parties.

**Research question two: Does internal democracy have effect on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states?**

Table 5.3: effect of internal democracy on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states

<b>Survey items</b>	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	SD
<b>Godfatherism within parties allowed for wrong candidates to lead parties from 2015 - 2020, portending danger for states within Rivers and Bayelsa states.</b>	279(73.6)	93(24.5)	7(1.8)		3.72	.490
<b>Lack of transparency in the activities of political parties within</b>	188(49.6)	157(41.4)	25(6.6)	9(2.4)	3.38	.716



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<p><b>Rivers and Bayelsa states aggravated animosity which caused violence from 2015 - 2020</b></p> <p><b>Imposition of candidates on political parties of Rivers and Bayelsa states around 2015 - 2020 had the tendency to cause violence</b></p>	<p>132(34.8)    198(52.2)    31(8.2)    18(4.7)    3.17    .770</p>
<p><b>Ethnic differences and aspirations within political parties were responsible for political violence within Rivers and Bayelsa states from 2015 - 2020</b></p>	<p>90(23.7)    146(38.5)    106(28)    37(9.8)    2.76    .924</p>
<p><b>Lack of ideology in political parties of Rivers and Bayelsa states was responsible for political violence within 2015 - 2020</b></p>	<p>99(26.1)    134(35.4)    84(22.2)    62(16.4)    2.71    1.028</p>
<p><b>Poor literacy level about party democracy within 2015 - 2020 was responsible for many of the aberrations within political parties which caused violence</b></p>	<p>61(16.1)    150(39.6)    117(30.9)    51(13.5)    2.58    .915</p>

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<b>within Rivers and Bayelsa states</b>						
<b>Culture played a role in the violent reaction of Rivers and Bayelsa states' people to manipulated internal democracy from 2015 - 2020</b>	80(21.1)	96(25.3)	150(39.6)	53(14)	2.54	.976
Grand mean					<b>2.98</b>	<b>.831</b>

**Decision rule: if mean is  $\leq 2.49$  = low, 2.5=2.99=average 3.0-3.49=high, 3.5-4.0=very high**

As seen in table 5.3, internal democracy has effect on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states. **The grand mean (2.98, SD=.831) reveals that internal democracy has average/moderate impact on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states.** This is true as respondents agreed that godfatherism within parties which tampers with party democracy, allowed for wrong candidates to lead parties from 2015 - 2020, portending danger for states within Rivers and Bayelsa states (mean=3.72). Also, lack of transparency in the activities of political parties within Rivers and Bayelsa states aggravated animosity, which caused violence from 2015 - 2020 (mean=3.38), and imposition of candidates on political parties of Rivers and Bayelsa states around 2015 – 2020 had the tendency to cause violence (mean=3.17). The respondents also indicated that ethnic differences and aspirations within political parties were responsible for political violence within Rivers and Bayelsa states from 2015 - 2020 (mean=2.76), and that lack of ideology in political parties of Rivers and Bayelsa states was responsible for political violence within 2015 - 2020 (mean=2.71). The respondents also agreed that poor literacy level around party democracy within 2015 – 2020 was responsible for many of the aberrations within political parties, which caused violence within Rivers and Bayelsa states (mean=2.58). Lastly, the respondents also indicated that culture played a role

in the violent reaction of Rivers and Bayelsa states' people to manipulated internal democracy from 2015 - 2020 (mean=2.54).

With a grand mean of 2.98, one can say there is an average belief as to whether internal democracy has effect on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states. While many people believe so, a number of people disagree. Mersel (2006 in Nwodo, 2011) asserts that various democracies in recent times have faced the problem of non-democratic political parties, a situation where most parties only focus on external activities, neglecting internal planning and organisation. In Nigeria, lack of internal democracy has resulted in ethnicisation of party politics, bad political leadership, corruption, anti-party and party indiscipline, lack of clear ideologies and manifestos, the politicisation of the military as well as the absence of internal party politics (Atelhe, Abdullahi & alagh, 2019).

The political parties have, all these years, failed to internalise the principles of democracy in their choice of not only candidates for public elective offices (president, governors etc.), but also for those of their party machinery (Udeuhele, 2017). Even when the parties have known principles for choosing party flag bearers or modus operandi for party activities, they often do not follow these principles. There is just as much human interference in the processes as there are interests. And oftentimes, these processes are breached to favour certain interests within the party, to the disaffection of the majority of party members. This situation tends to have consequences on peace.

**Research question 3: What are the possible ways by which the effects of political violence can be reduced in Rivers and Bayelsa states?**

Table 5.6: possible ways by which the effect of political violence can be reduced on internal democracy and party politics

SURVEY ITEMS	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	SD
<b>Governments of Rivers and Bayelsa states must create jobs for their teeming youths so as to reduce</b>	308(81.3)	63(16.6)	8(2.1)		3.79	.456

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<b>possible thugs for desperate politicians</b>						
<b>The judicial system within Rivers and Bayelsa states should be made more robust in dealing with political crimes, so as to place deterrence</b>	222(58.6)	141(37.2)	16(4.2)		3.54	.577
<b>Security agencies within Rivers and Bayelsa states need to be more impartial and proactive in handling matters of political violence</b>	232(61.2)	116(30.6)	24(6.3)	7(1.8)	3.51	.699
<b>Political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states must place limits on financial contributions of individual members, and also device creative means of getting funds, so as to reduce the likelihood of having godfathers</b>	176(46.4)	189(49.9)	7(1.8)	7(1.8)	3.41	.625
<b>Civil Society Organisations within Rivers and Bayelsa states should improve their capacity, and decline partisanship, so as to effectively discharge their functions and reduce political violence</b>	183(48.3)	164(43.3)	32(8.4)		3.40	.640
<b>The electoral body, INEC, needs to enforce compliance to party democracy in political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states</b>	198(52.2)	139(36.7)	35(9.2)	7(1.8)	3.39	.732
<b>Traditional gods of the people of Rivers and Bayelsa states should be used to swear in politicians into office, instead of the bible</b>	56(14.8)	28(7.4)	109(28.8)	186(49.1)	1.88	1.070

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The result in table 5.6 reveals the possible ways the impact of party violence on internal democracy and party politics can be reduced. The respondents on the average indicated that the governments of Rivers and Bayelsa states must create jobs for their teeming youths so as to reduce possible thugs for desperate politicians (mean=3.79). They also indicated that the judicial

system within Rivers and Bayelsa states should be made more robust in dealing with crimes, so as to place deterrence (mean=3.54); and that security agencies within Rivers and Bayelsa states need to be more impartial and proactive in handling matters of political violence (mean=3.51). Also, the respondents, on average (mean=3.41), agreed that political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states must place limits on financial contributions of individual members and also device creative means of getting funds so as to reduce the likelihood of having godfathers; they also indicated that another solution would be for civil society organisations within Rivers and Bayelsa states to improve their capacity and decline partisanship, so as to effectively discharge their functions and reduce political violence (mean=3.40). The respondents also suggested that the electoral body, INEC needs to enforce compliance to party democracy in political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states (mean=3.39).

### **Summary**

This study looked at the impact of internal democracy on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states, Nigeria. Since 2015, most elections held in Rivers and Bayelsa states have been marred by violence, leading to human and material losses. The quantitative method was used for the study. Through descriptive statistics, a number of findings were revealed.

### **Conclusion**

Having undertaken the study on the impact of internal democracy on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states, a number of conclusions were reached. First of all, the study concludes that internal democracy has an average/moderate impact on political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states. The study reveals as well that the clientelistic actions of godfathers play significant roles in the issues of internal democracy within political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states. Lastly, a number of recommendations were revealed as to how to reduce political violence in Rivers and Bayelsa states.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, certain recommendations are pertinent.

They are:

- i. The judicial system within Rivers and Bayelsa states should be made more robust in dealing with political crimes so as to place deterrence.
- ii. Political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states must place limits on financial contributions of individual members, and also device creative means of getting funds so as to reduce the likelihood of having godfathers.
- iii. The electoral body, INEC, needs to enforce compliance to internal democracy in political parties in Rivers and Bayelsa states.
- iv. Governments of Rivers and Bayelsa states must create jobs for their teeming youths so as to reduce possible thugs for desperate politicians.

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