

POLITICAL ALIENATION AND RESISTANCE: EXPERIENCE FROM OPERATORS OF INFORMAL ENTERPRISES IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA: A TEST FOR POLITICAL TRUST

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Abstract

This study assessed the level and prevalence of political alienation among the operators of informal enterprises in the five states of South-East Nigeria. The instrument for the study was adapted from American National Election Studies (ANES) and was used in testing for the respondents' distrust or otherwise of state personnel and institutions. A descriptive statistical method employing percentage distribution and weighted mean score was used in determining the prevalence and level of political alienation among the respondents. The study was guided by institutional theory in establishing the role of non-market factors in determining economic behaviour. The findings revealed high prevalence of political distrust among the respondents. A weighted grand mean of 4.2 on a scale of 5 was recorded in political distrust, with lack of trust on state personnel being the dimension that predominantly impacts on the respondents. We argued that the proliferation and dominance of informal enterprises in South-east Nigeria is rooted on the high degree of political alienation among the populace. The study supports the postulation that running an informal enterprise may not only be an economic necessity and a survival mechanism but can also be a form of withdrawal and resistance to the state among politically alienated individuals or groups.

Keywords: Political alienation, informal sector, political trust, political institutions, resistance.

Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous black nation with a population of over 180 million (NPC, 2017) and also the largest economy in Africa. Its economy however is dominated by informal enterprises. A greater number of its population is engaged in enterprises that are unregistered, unincorporated and unlicensed. They neither pay corporate nor personal income tax and their products and services are not captured in the country's GDP. There are over 13,000,000 informal enterprises operating in Nigeria (NBS, 2010). The sector has been creating over 70% of all new jobs in the country, employing about 54,643,678 individuals between 2012 and 2016. The informal sector in Nigeria is highly concentrated on wholesale and retail trade, these amounts to 50% of the informal economic activities in the country. Other economic

activities that are dominated by informal sector include building, land transportation, repair and maintenance, restaurants, hotels etc. (Onyebueke & Geyer, 2011).

Many scholars have attributed the pervasiveness of informal enterprises in Nigeria to the twin factors of poverty and unemployment (Ogbuabor & Malaolu, 2013; Ikeije, Akomolafe & Onuba, 2016; Adamu, 2006; Fajana, 2000; Oduh, Eboh, Ichoku & Ujah, 2008). The simple argument is that when there is an excess labour supply either as a result of population growth or inability of the formal or public sector to absorb the increase in supply, the unemployed easily switch to the informal sector as survival mechanism. The need to survive in an unemployment situation therefore is taken to be a key factor in stimulating the expansion of the informal sector.

However a sizable number of studies have begun to investigate the informal sector from political dimension. This implies viewing the informal enterprises from the lens of noncompliance with legal norm; withdrawal from and resistance to the state. For them pervasive informal sector is suggestive of dysfunctional political situation and state failure resulting in "defensive evasion" in form of operating outside the state by politically alienated

individuals (Whitson, 2007; Biles, 2009; Adom & Williams, 2013). When a state for one reason or the other loses the trust of the citizens, there is a high tendency for people to become estranged and detached from the state and as such evade or bypass state institutions and personnel in conducting their economic activities. As observed in Chowdhury (2005) cynicism about government increases in environments marked by bad governance, people get detached from government institutions and personnel whom they perceived to be corrupt and untrustworthy and this leads to informality and shadow economies.

Southeast Nigeria which is the study area is dominated by Igbo ethnic nationality. People from this area have been expressing political frustration within the Nigerian state for the past four decades since the end of Nigeria-Biafra civil war in 1970. The frustration according to Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamadi (2016) stems from high feeling of collective victimization and low sense of inclusion in the Nigerian state. Certain government policies and actions were perceived to be against the interests and wellbeing of the Igbos and this heightens their political alienation. Some objective facts that have been interpreted as indicating the exclusion of the zone from access to power and resources in post-civil war Nigeria include, the pattern of state and local government creation in Nigeria, exclusion of Igbos from the presidency, the pattern of fixing cut-off marks for entrance into Federal Unity Schools, non-construction of second Niger bridge and refusal to construct an inland port in Igbo land.

Among the six geo-political zones that make up the Nigeria Federation, Southeast zone alone has five states instead of minimum of six as applicable to other zones. It also has the lowest number of local government areas among all the zones. The implication of these is that the Southeast gets the lowest allocation from the federal government in terms of resources and employed personnel as the number of states and local governments are the basis for allocation of federal resources to zones. Since the end of Nigerian civil war in 1970 no head of state of Igbo origin have emerged in Nigeria. All other major and some minority tribes in Nigeria have occupied the post except the Igbos. Blatant refusal of all previous administrations in Nigeria to construct an inland port in Southeast Nigeria has ensured that the zone remain landlocked. A primary school pupil in Anambra, Imo and Enugu States of Southeast Nigeria must score at least ten times above his counterpart in Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Yobe and Taraba states in the Northern part of the country to gain entrance into federal unity schools in Nigeria due to the pattern of fixing the admission cut-off marks. In Marxian term these are the objective social conditions that make the Igbos of Southeast Nigeria feel estranged, disconnected and alienated from the Nigerian State. As noted in Madichie & Nkamnebe (2010: 240) a resident of Southeast Nigeria when asked about the impact of government on their livelihood responded thus: "Our life and progress are independent of government, we build our market, generate our electricity, maintain our roads and organize our security. The only thing we get from Government is repression". This summarizes the opinion of average citizen of Southeast Nigeria about the Nigerian state.

In this part of the country informal enterprises are the base of the economy, they no longer operate at the marginal fringe of the economy as the definition usually entails but have expanded into manufacturing and developing wholesale and retail chains (Onwe, 2013). Why does most enterprises in Southeast Nigeria operate outside government statutory regulation, not registered or

incorporated with Corporate Affairs Commission and as such pay no corporate or persona income tax? Why are these businesses still operating informally despite their size, volume of activities and years of existence; why the proliferation of informal enterprises in Southeast Nigeria even after the government has reduced the cost of business registration to a mere token of five Naira? These are the questions that this study investigated. We investigated a political dimension of the problem based on post-structuralism postulation that operating an informal enterprise could be a deliberate choice as a result of social, political, redistributive, resistance or identity reasons (Adom and Williams 2013). We drew a link between political opinion and attitude of this population and their economic behavior.

The main aim of the study therefore is to investigate the role of political alienation on the inclination of the population to bypass and evade government institutions and agencies in operating their businesses. Specific objectives are to-

Theoretical Framework

This study is located within the theoretical framework of Institutional Theory. The proponent of this theory in Development Economics is Douglas North. In North (1990) and North, Wallis, Webb & Weingast (2007) he demonstrated the role of non-market factors especially the organization and operation of political institutions in determining economic behavior, structure and outcome. This approach views the state not as a neutral arbiter but as a complex institution influencing the socio-economic outcome in the polity. It takes cognizance of the power plays and the way power is distributed unevenly among social groups granting access to decision making to some group while denying others. This distribution of power and economic access ultimately affects socio-economic behaviors and outcome.

The fundamental postulation of this theory is that political institutions and its operation are key determinants of economic institutions, behaviors and socio-economic outcome. As stated by Acemoglu and Robinson "it is the political process

that determines what economic institutions people live under and it is the political institution that determine how this process work" (Acemoglu & Robinson 2012, p.42). This however does not imply a denial of the mutually reinforcing relationship between the two. As North puts it "Politics and economy are inextricably linked in any understanding of the performance of an economy" (North 1990 p.23). In political science Steinmo, Thelen & Longstreth (1992) posited that actions of individuals are better explained within the political context in which they occur. They stressed the impact of political institutions on economic behavior, political institutions creates a corresponding economic institutions which in turn reinforces the political institution. Our focus on the state and institutions instead of economic factors in trying to understand the pervasiveness of informal enterprises in Southeast Nigeria is born out of this theory. The preponderance of informal enterprises in Southeast Nigeria (an economic behavior and outcome) could be traced to power play in the Nigeria state where political and economic access is claimed to be denied to the Southeast zone (Duruji and Ajayi, 2008).

People evade and bypass government agencies and institutions in operating their business as a result of estrangement and alienation from the state. This shows the role of politics, political mechanisms and environment in determining the economic structure of a state. In tune with institutional theory we aim at using a non-economic factor (political alienation) in explaining an economic phenomenon (informal enterprises). A better understanding of socio-economic situation in a state can be gained through the study of the institutions within which they occur. The study is simply about the critical examination of ways in which political mechanisms determine economic behavior, outcome and structure in a state (North, 1990; Steinmo, 2001).

Literature Review

In almost all disciplines of social sciences and humanities alienation has been a recurrent concept. From Marx in political economy (Lavine, 1984) to Eric Fromm in psychology (Fromm,

1972), Weber and Durkheim in sociology (Weber, 1963; Durkheim, 1951). Alienation has been recognized as critical element in human life and relations. In individual life alienation can be viewed as subjective but in human relations it becomes objective, therefore it has both objective and subjective dimensions. According to Marx alienation implies estrangement and detachment from an object or situation due to some objective social condition. While the objective and subjective dimensions of alienation are incorporated in the Marxian definition, in most sociology and psychology literature Seaman (1959), Finifter (1970), Southwell (2012), the subjective dimension gained prominence. In Marx the existence of objective social condition that brought about the subjective perception of estrangement and detachment must be explained and understood before alienation can be established. Alienation is an objective societal condition with a subjective manifestation as posited by Marx, Fromm and Durkheim.

Political alienation is based on the liberal conception of the state; where the state exists for general wellbeing of the populace. The existence of a bond between the state and the society is taken to be the foundation of the state (Lock, 1952; Mill, 1969; Rawls, 1971; Fukuyama, 2006). Estrangement and detachment from the state then becomes an anomaly that distorts the society and causes a crack on the foundation of the state. Political alienation is a multi-dimensional concept. Finifter (1970); Seaman (1975) and Southwell (2012) all distinguished different dimensions of political alienation. Basically two broad dimensions were identified; they are political efficacy and political trust (Clarke & Adcock, 1989; Wheat Herford, 1992; Johnson & Hayes, 1992; Southwell, 2012). The individual's sense of political competence was termed internal efficacy while the responsiveness of the political system was termed external efficacy. Political trust is an evaluation of whether the government is producing policies according to expectations.

A politically alienated individual is one who is totally dissatisfied with the political output of the state and as such feels disillusioned with the political system. It is operationalized by opinions and attitudes that reflect a negative view of the political system and its operation. Political alienation usually results in withdrawal and/or resistance to the political system (Paige, 1971; Mierina, 2012).

In Nigeria political alienation has been identified as a major causative factor in the militancy, insurgency and secessionist agitations that the country is currently facing (Ibaba, 2008; Adetoro, 2012, Muzuan, 2014; Amadi, Imoh-Itah & Obomanu, 2016). However while the role of political alienation in determining the political behavior of an individual have been heavily researched, its impact on economic behavior is under researched. This study is focused on the impact of political alienation on the inclination of individuals to bypass and evade state institutions and agency in their business operations. The role it plays on individual operating an informal enterprise.

Review Related Empirical Literature

Very few studies have been conducted to empirically and systematically ascertain the depth, prevalence, determinants and implications of political alienation in South east Nigeria. This is part of what Ukiwo (2012) called "the paucity of systematic academic investigation to the governance challenges confronting Southeast Nigeria". The few studies that treated political alienation were mostly in reference to marginalization, insurgency, and separatist groups in Southeast zone of Nigeria. This study is therefore focused on an under investigated but prevalent phenomenon.

Studies on political alienation in Southeast Nigeria agreed that the root of the phenomenon could be traced to the Nigerian/Biafra civil war of 1969 to 1970. According to Duruji and Ajayi (2008), since losing the civil war, Igbos that peopled the five states Southeast Nigeria have not been fully reintegrated into the Nigeria state. They are still

been treated as a defeated foe and are being deliberately marginalised in access to power and resources. This view is supported by Muzan (2014) who sees the perceived incomplete integration of Igbos into the body politic of post-civil war Nigeria, unresponsive government, unequal access to power and economic resources as main factors responsible for political alienation among Igbos. For Ukiwo (2012) there is sufficient evidence that the Southeast Nigeria does not get its fair share of Nigerian resources in terms of infrastructural development and sitting of federal projects. This perceived injustice and social inequity alienates the people from the state leading to withdrawal and resistance to the Nigerian state. Politically this failure of full integration and near ostracism of the ethnic group from access to political power has led to the formation of many separatist groups like Movement for Actualization Sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) and Biafra Zionist Front (BZF), with the overall aim of seceding from the Nigeria state.

Economically, Southeast Nigeria has the least number of publicly quoted company among all the geo political zones in Nigeria (Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamadi 2016). There is almost total absence of formal enterprises in the zone as informal enterprises is the economic base. In this study we investigated the impact of the political situation on the economic structure of the zone; the role of political alienation on the inclination to bypass government agencies and institutions in operating businesses.

Materials and Method

The general aim of this study was to investigate the pervasiveness and level of distrust of state institutions and personnel among the respondents. Cross-sectional research design was used while proportional stratified sampling method was adopted as the sampling technique. The instrument which was adapted from American National Election Studies (ANES, 2008) was administered to a cross section of operators of informal enterprises in some commercial cities of South East Nigeria who were the population of the study. The instrument is considered valid for the objective because over the years ANES as an in-depth and high quality survey that tracks the political attitude and behavior of Americans have been adopted by scholars in testing for political alienation (Osakarson, 2010; Wood, 2014; Southwell, 2012).

The sample size of 400 was gotten by the application of the Taro Yamane (1967) formula on 1,320,434 which represents the number of informal enterprises in South east Nigeria according to National Bureau of Statistics (2010). The number of questionnaire allocated to each State was also based on NBS (2010) which shows the distribution of informal sector enterprises among the five States in South –East Nigeria. The sample size for each state was gotten by dividing the total respondents of 400 persons by the percentage contribution of each state to the study population as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sampled States Population of Informal Sector Operators and Sample Size

States	Population of Informal Operators Enterprises	% Population	Sample Size
Abia	316,183	23.9	96
Anambra	298,215	22.6	90
Ebonyi	230,643	17.5	70
Enugu	196,523	14.9	60
Imo	278,870	21.1	84
Total	1,320,434	100	400

Source: Researchers, field Work (2018)

Data collection was done by direct method. The research with three assistants moved from street to street, market line by line administering the instrument, waiting for the respondent to fill it out and then retrieved at the same spot. In analyzing and presenting data we employed calculated weighted mean score and percentage distribution using tables. Items 1 and 2 in the questionnaire were used in testing for distrust of state personnel while items 3 and 4 test for distrust of state institutions. In calculating the weighted mean score, the number of responses made was multiplied by the assigned corresponding values to get a product. The product was divided by the number of respondents in order to get the weighted mean score. The criterion mean was obtained by adding up all assigned values or points of 5+4+3+2+1 and divided by 5 which are equal to 3. Any item with less than the mean score of 3 was rejected and any item with mean score of 3 and above was accepted. In analyzing the percentage distribution, strongly agree and agree were collapsed into agree while strongly disagree and disagree were collapsed into disagree. Weighted mean score was

used to determine the level of political distrust among the respondents while percentage distribution was used in determining the prevalence of the phenomenon.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data were presented for each of the five states in Southeast Nigeria in an alphabetical order, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. The upper figures represent the weighed mean score while the lower figures stand for the percentage distribution. Data were presented in tables and charts using a five scale measurement of Strongly Agree=SA, Agree=A, Don't Know=DK, Disagree=D and Strongly Disagree=SD. In calculating the weighted mean score, values were attached to each response Strongly Agree=SA(5), Agree=A(4) Don't Know=DA(3), Disagree=D(2), Strongly Disagree=SA(1), while in analysing the percentage distribution Strongly Agree and Agree were collapsed into Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree into Disagree.

Table 2: Weighted mean score and percentage distribution of political distrust among informal enterprises operators in Abia State

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Responses							
		SA (x5) %	A (x4) %	DK(x3) %	D (x2) %	SD(x1) %	Total N(96)	X	R
1	Almost all government officials are corrupt.	65(325) 67.7%	15(60) 15.6%	9(27) 9.3%	7(14) 7.2%	0(0) 0%	96(426)	4.44 83.3% (A) 7.2% (D)	Accepted
2	No elected government official has interacted or communicated with you in the past 12 months	77(385) 80.2%	12(48) 12.5%	7(21) 7.2%	0(0) 0%	0(0) 0%	96(454)	4.73 92.7% (A) 0% (D)	Accepted
3	The Nigeria police force is not a friendly institution.	28(140) 29.1%	40(160) 41.6%	5(15) 5.2%	22(44) 2.9%	1(1) 1.04%	96(360)	3.75 70% (A) 3.9%(D)	Accepted
4	People like you benefits nothing from the Nigeria government.	80(400) 83.3%	12(48) 12.5%	4(12) 4.1%	0(0) 0%	0(0) 0%	96(460)	4.79 95.8%(A) 0% (D)	Accepted
GRAND MEAN 4.43									

Source: Researchers field work (2018)

Table 2 above shows the weighted mean values and percentage distribution as received from respondents in Abia State. It showed the responses on the level and prevalence of political distrust among the informal sector operators in the State. In line with the research objective it was observed that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 revealed a weighted mean of 4.44, 4.73, 3.75 and 4.79 respectively and a grand mean of 4.43 was obtained showing a significant level of political distrust. The result from frequency distribution

revealed that 83.3% agreed that almost all government officials are corrupt, 92.7% have had no contact nor communication with any elected official in the past twelve months. 70% do not see police as a friendly institution and 95.8% have no faith in the government to do what they consider beneficial to them. The high rate of political distrust in Abia State was a clear indication of a population that was disconnected and alienated from the State.

Table 3: Weighted mean score and percentage distribution of political distrust among informal enterprises operators in Anambra State

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Responses							
		SA (x5) %	A (x4) %	DK(x3) %	D (x2) %	SD(x1) %	Total N(90)	X	R
1	Almost all government officials are corrupt.	34 (170) 37.7%	27 (108) 30%	15(45) 16.6%	11 (22) 12.2%	3(3) 3.3%	90(348)	3.87 67.7% (A) 15.5 (D)	Accepted
2	No elected government official has interacted or communicated with you in the past 12 months	81 (405) 90%	3(12) 3.3%	2 (6) 2.2%	4 (8) 4.4%	0(0)	90(431)	4.79 93.3% (A) 4.4% (D)	Accepted
3	The Nigeria police force is not a friendly institution.	38 (190) 42.2%	20 (80) 22.2%	7 (21) 7.7%	10 (20) 11.1%	15 (15) 16.6%	90(326)	3.62 64.6% (A) 27.7% (D)	Accepted
4	People like you benefits nothing from the Nigeria government.	23(115) 25.5%	24(96) 26.6%	27(81) 30%	10(20) 11.1%	6(6) 6.6%	90(318)	3.53 52.1% (A) 17.7% (D)	Accepted
Grand Mean		3.95							

Source: Researchers field work (2018)

Table 3 above represents the weighted mean score and percentage distribution of responses from informal sector operators in Anambra State. In Mean score analysis it revealed that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 have a weighted mean score of 3.87,

4.79, 3.62 and 3.53 respectively. Grand mean of 3.95 was recorded showing a significant degree of political distrust among the respondents. Comparatively however it was lower than that of Abia state which have a grand mean score of

4.43. On percentage distribution it shows that 67.7% of the respondents in Anambra State perceived almost all State personnel as being corrupt. 93.3% have had no contact nor communication with any

elected official in the past twelve months. 64.6% did not see the police as friendly while 52.1% feel they are not benefiting from the government.

Table 4: Weighted mean score and percentage distribution of political distrust among informal enterprises operators in Ebonyi State

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Responses							
		SA (x5) %	A (x4) %	DK(x3) %	D (x2) %	SD(x1) %	Total N(70)	X	R
1	Almost all government officials are corrupt.	23(115) 32.8%	33(132) 47.1%	6(18) 8.5%	6(12) 8.5%	2(2) 2.8%	70(279)	3.99 79.9% (A) 11.3% (D)	Accepted
2	No elected government official has interacted or communicated with you in the past 12 months	57(285) 81.4%	7(28) 10%	4(12) 5.7%	2(4) 2.8%	0(0)	70(329)	4.7 91% (A) 2.8% (D)	Accepted
3	The Nigeria police force is not a friendly institution.	9(45) 12.8%	46(184) 65.7%	3(9) 4.2%	12(24) 17.1	0(0)	70(262)	3.74 78.5% (A) 17.1% (D)	Accepted
4	People like you benefits nothing from the Nigeria government.	26(130) 37.1%	16(64) 22.8%	21(63) 30%	7(14) 10%	0(0)	70(271)	3.87 59.9% (A) 10% (D)	Accepted
GRAND MEAN 4.08									

Source: Researcher's field work (2018)

Table 4 above shows the weighted mean values and percentage distribution as received from respondent in Ebonyi State. In line with research objective it was observed that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the analysis revealed a weighted mean of 3.99, 4.7, 3.74 and 3.87 respectively and a grand mean of 4.08 was obtained. The result revealed that the degree of political distrust among the informal sector operators in Ebonyi is high; it is however below that of Abia but higher than Anambra state.

On percentage distribution the responses shows that 79.9% of the respondents agreed that almost everyone in government is corrupt, 91% have neither communicated nor have any contact with an elected official in the last twelve months, 78.5% did not see the police as friends while 59.9% have no trust in government to do what they feel is the right thing. As in the case of Abia and Anambra, the respondents in Ebonyi showed lack of trust on the State.

Table 5: Weighted mean score and percentage distribution of political distrust among operators of informal enterprises in Enugu State

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Responses							
		SA (x5) %	A (x4) %	DK(x3) %	D (x2) %	SD(x1) %	Total N(60)	X	R
1	Almost all government officials are corrupt.	35(175) 58.3%	15 (60) 25%	4(12) 6.6%	6(12) 10%	0(0)	60(259)	4.32 83.3% (A) 10 % (D)	Accepted
2	No elected government official has interacted or communicated with you in the past 12 months	38 (190) 63.3%	19 (76) 31.6%	1(3) 1.6%	2 (4) 3.3%	0(0)	60(273)	4.55 94.7% (A) 3.3% (D)	Accepted
3	The Nigeria police force is not a friendly institution.	17 (85) 28.3%	27(108) 45%	0(0)	16 (32) 26.6%	0(0)	60(225)	3.75 73.3% (A) 26.6% (D)	Accepted
4	People like you benefits nothing from the Nigeria government.	43(215) 71.6%	5 (20) 8.3%	10(30) 16.6%	0(0)	2(2) 3.3%	60(267)	4.45 79.9% (A) 3.3% (D)	Accepted
GRAND MEAN 4.27									

Source: Researcher's Field Work (2018)

Table 5 above is the response from the respondents in Enugu state. Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 have weighted mean value of 4.32, 4.55, 3.75 and 4.45 respectively, with a grand mean of 4.27. Percentage distribution of responses revealed that 83.3% believed that almost all

government officials are corrupt, 94.7% of the respondents have not communicated nor have any contact with an elected official in the past twelve months, and 73.3% does not see the police as a friendly while 79.9% have no believe in the benefits of the government.

Table 6: Weighted mean score and percentage distribution of political distrust among operators of informal enterprises in Imo State

S/N	Questionnaire Item	Responses							
		SA (x5) %	A (x4) %	DK(x3) %	D (x2) %	SD(x1) %	Total N(84)	X	R
1	Almost all government officials are corrupt.	35(175) 41.6%	36 (144) 42.8%	12 (36) 14.2%	1(2) 1.1%	0(0)	84(357)	4.25 84.4% (A) 1.1% (D)	Accepted

2	No elected government official has interacted or communicated with you in the past 12 months	76(380) 90.4%	6(24) 7.1%	0(0)	2(4) 2.3%	0(0)	84(408)	4.86 97.5% (A) 2.3 % (D)	Accepted
3	The Nigeria police force is not a friendly institution.	13 (65) 15.4%	46 (184) 54.7%	0(0)	24(48) 28.5%	1(1) 1.1%	84(298)	3.55 70.1% (A) 29.6 % (D)	Accepted
4	People like you benefits nothing from the Nigeria government.	44 (220) 52.3%	15(60) 17.8%	19 (57) 22.6%	5(10) 5.9%	1(1) 1.1%	84(348)	4.14 70.1% (A) 7% (D)	Accepted
Grand Mean 4.20									

Source: Researcher's Field Work (2018)

Table 6 above shows the weighted mean values and percentage distribution of responses as received from respondents in Imo State. In line with research objective it is observed that items 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the analysis revealed a weighted mean of 4.25, 4.86, 3.55 and 4.14 respectively. A grand mean of 4.20 was obtained from the analysis. The result revealed that the degree of political distrust among the informal sector operators in Imo State is significantly high; higher than Anambra, Ebonyi, and Enugu States but lower than that of Abia State. Percentage distribution analysis shows that 84.4% of the respondents agree that almost all state officials are corrupt, 97.5% have had no communication or contact with an elected official in the past twelve months while 70.1% neither saw the police as friend nor see any benefits they are getting from government.

Discussions

The study revealed a high level of political distrust among the respondents. In aggregation, 318 out of 400 respondents amounting to 79.5% held the view that almost all state officials are corrupt. 376 out of 400 amounting to 94% of the respondents have neither

communicated nor had any contact with an elected official in the past twelve months prior to this study. 71% saw the police as predatory rather than friendly institution while 72% see themselves as non-beneficiaries of any state benefit. This position represents a classic case of a population that is totally disconnected, disillusioned and estranged from the state; a politically alienated population.

Political alienation among the population was operationalized in total distrust of state personnel and institutions (political distrust). The external manifestation of political alienation is what Paige (1971) described as dissident attitude which culminates in either withdrawal or resistance or both. Operating an informal enterprise in Nigeria bears the hallmark of withdrawal and resistance. The operator withdraws himself and his enterprise from the confines of the state. He pulls out of the laws and regulations that guide business establishment and operation in the state and run his enterprise outside government regulations. Daily on streets of Nigeria one witnesses the battle between the operators and the state. The more the illegal shops, kiosks and stalls are destroyed the more they spring up, the

more the state agents arrest the street vendors and hawkers the more they increase in number: the resistance is visible. According to Scot (2012) there is a psychological contract between the population and the state based on the people's perception of the role of government and its obligations towards them. People became disillusioned and withdraw from the state when they perceive this contract as being broken by pervasive corruption and weak state institutions. This seems the case in South-east Nigeria.

In existing literature the role of the state in stimulating the informal sector has not been generally recognized when compared to the role of economic factors. However there are few previous studies that did recognize and highlighted the relationship between nature of the state and economic in formalization; how the actions and inactions of the state stimulate the informal sector. In *Informal Economy, Governance and Corruption*, Chowdhury(2005) stated that in an environment marked by bad governance and institutional corruption people easily resort to avoiding government institutions especially on business registration, product licensing and quality standard approvals. Also Quedrago (2017) using data from 23 Sub-Saharan countries was able to establish a positive correlation between corruption, bad governance and the size of unofficial economy. Other studies that emphasized the political dimension of the informal economy include, Igudia, Ackrill, Coleman & Dobson (2016) and Gerxhani (2004). These studies highlight institutional patterns through which the state creates the informal sector; they emphasize the role of the state and political factors in contributing to the pervasiveness of informal sector in Developing countries. Gerxhani(2004) states "in an atmosphere in which the government losses the trust of the population and the people no longer feel that government supports them, a step into the informal sector will be taken much easier"pp.13. Igudia et al. (2016) in the study "Determinants of the Informal Economy of an Emerging Economy" conducted

between May 2012 and March 2013, employing direct method of street to street interview and administering over 1,200 questionnaire in twenty three out of thirty six states of Nigeria reached the conclusion that corruption is a key determinant of the informal economy in Nigeria. In these study 318 out of 400 respondents amounting to 79.3% affirms that almost everybody in government is corrupt, and perception of the government as being corrupt is key element of political alienation.

The findings of this work established that lack of trust on state agents and personnel is the key element in breeding and expanding the informal sector in Nigeria. This is also collaborated by a study conducted by the Nigeria Pension Commission on "Incorporating the Informal Sector in Nigeria into the Contributing Pension Scheme" PENCOM (2014). Although respondents acknowledged the benefits of pension scheme, most expressed fear over the credibility of the scheme. "I hope they should do as they said and no disappointment", "I will just wait and see if things will work as they say". These are some of the expressions from the respondents which portray complete lack of trust on government policies and agents.

This lack of trust on government personnel and agencies offers an explanation why all the policies of the government aimed at taming the informal sector have not achieved the desired result. In 2007 Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) was established to lure the informal sector enterprises which constitute the bulk SME to formalization. However after years of implementation of these policies the expansion of informal sector in Nigeria has not abated more because there is a disconnection between the people and the state as shown in this study.

The situation in South-east Nigeria clearly show that the people believe that all state agencies and personnel are corrupt and untrustworthy, they feel that government do not care about them and is irresponsible to their needs, and there is no

contact or communication between the elected officials and the populace. The relationship between the state and society is thus broken and everybody is fending for himself whichever way he can, as a result the informal sector is booming. This simply is what this study shows. Trust building, transparency in state operations and social integration are key political elements that can effectively contribute in reducing the size of informal economy in Nigeria if embraced by the government.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Among the conclusions of this study is that corruption among state officials, lack of communication and interaction between elected officials and the populace, hostile and predatory state institutions, government inefficiency and political marginalization and exclusion are major factors that engender political alienation in Southeast Nigeria. The study also concluded from data presented that there is a high prevalence of political alienation among the operators of informal enterprises in Southeast Nigeria. This high prevalence of political alienation among the populace to a great extent explains why they evade and bypass government institutions in their business operations. Logically this leads to the conclusion that operating an informal enterprise could be a form of withdrawal from and resistance to the state.

We recommend that Nigerian government initiate measures that will ensure openness and transparency in governance. This will go to a great extent in dissipating the perception that almost everyone in government is corrupt and straightened the bond between the populace and the state. There is also need for constant interaction and communication between the elected officials and the populace to give them a sense of belonging and inclusiveness in the governance of the state. Above all improvement in social services and provision of safety nets for vulnerable groups will enhance trust building between the state and the society.

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Appendix

Appendix A:

American National Election Studies Questionnaire (ANES, 2008).

As indicated in the text, the instrument for the study was adapted from American National Election Studies (ANES). The exact questions asked in ANES are as follows.

[C. TRUST IN GOVERNMENT]

[C1] How much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government in Washington DC to do what is right:

- (1) Just about always
- (2) Most of the time
- (3) Only some of the time

[W. PARTICIPATION]

[W2] During the past 12 months, have you phoned, emailed, written to, or visited a government official to express your views on a public issue, or have you not done any of these things in the past 12 months?

- (1) Have done this in the past 12 months
- (2) Have not done this in the past 12 months

M3a2. Public officials don't care [VERSION NEW]

- (1) Agree strongly
- (2) Agree somewhat
- (3) Neither agree nor disagree
- (4) Disagree somewhat
- (5) Disagree strongly

M1d. How many in government are crooked

- (1) A great deal
- (2) A moderate amount
- (3) A little

Source:

https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/3?start=0&sort=TITLE_SORT%20asc&SERIESQ=3&ARCHIVE=ICPSR&PUBLISH_STATUS=PUBLISHED&rows=50

These questions were modified in our instrument to suite Nigerian political situation.