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Lethal Violence
against Women
in Nigeria
(2006 – 2014)



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Lethal Violence against Women in Nigeria (2006 – 2014)

Executive summary

Women have been at the receiving end of violence in Nigeria. The Nigeria Watch database provided the opportunity to validate the extent to which these women have been victims of homicide and manslaughter, taking note that the word ‘women’ is used generically for females. A number of factors are responsible for lethal violence against women: for example, domestic violence, rape, and sorcery, with domestic violence having the highest number of cases. However, the limitations to the study can permit only speculative deductions regarding geopolitical zones. The paper draws the conclusion that regions in the South seem to have a higher degree of lethal violence against women, perhaps because violence against women is less frequently reported in the North.

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INTRODUCTION

The upsurge in both physical and structural violence against disadvantaged groups such as women and children in Nigeria is a growing source of concern to human rights groups and the international community. Violence against women emerged as a focus of international attention when the 1993 UN General Assembly issued its Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Heise 1999). Violence against females is prevalent in Nigeria. While it can be argued that it is more prevalent in some parts of Nigeria than others, there has been no data to support the argument. The cause of violence against women can be attributed to the fact that women are deemed second-class citizens relative to their husbands. The notion of submission to male authority is seen as a permission for men to subjugate women. This is caused by the cultural background and the norms that have permeated practically all ethnic groups. For example, in Imo State the position of women predisposes them to be subject to various acts of gender-based violence. This begins with the norm that women do not have and cannot hold title to land. It is an exclusive preserve of the male and is in turn inherited by the male children in the family. As noted by Okemgbo et al. (2002), *“the Igbo socio-cultural environment degrades womanhood and exposes them to the control of men”*.

Violence against women can occur in various ways but the most common is domestic violence. Intimate partner abuse is a behaviour, attitude, and belief in which a partner in an intimate relationship attempts to maintain power and control over the other through the use of psychological, physical, and /or sexual coercion (WHO 1997). Violence against women most often leads to death, and this qualifies in general terms as homicide. In specific terminology, it is referred to as femicide. Femicide is the

ultimate form of violence against women and girls, and it takes place in multiple forms (ACUNS 2013).

Violence is a regular part of most women's experience in Nigeria, especially at home (Oladeji 2013). Acts of violence include rape (forced sex), physical abuse, verbal abuse, incest, female genital cutting/mutilation (FGC/M), denial of food, denial of time for relaxation, forced marriage, and child marriage (Joda et al. 2007). It is worthy of note that violence is not attributable to cases involving women folk alone, as there is no category of persons that cannot be subjected to violence. However, violence against females is prevalent because they are considered to be the weaker sex and are easier targets.

The causation factors of violence against women are many. However, a factor that is quite prevalent in Nigeria—yet usually neglected—is witchcraft. Women, especially the aged, are often accused of witchcraft in their homes and communities, thus triggering violence (UNIFEM 1998).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the specificities of lethal violence against women?
2. Is lethal violence against women more prevalent in the South or in the North, and why?
3. Is there existing literature on lethal violence against women in Nigeria?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this research is to examine the causes of lethal violence against women in Nigeria. The specific objectives of this research are to:

- Ascertain the specificities of lethal violence against women
- Determine the region where lethal violence against women is prevalent and why
- Contribute to existing literature on violence against women.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Despite continuous clamour for women's empowerment and emancipation, and the increasing involvement of women in politics and the socio-economic sectors, there is no doubt that women are being victimized and violated all over the world, especially in developing countries. In Nigeria, however, there is little literature on lethal violence against women. The following research thus seeks to uncover the causes of the killing of women and provide a basis for more research in this field of study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was purely desktop in nature. The data used was obtained from the Nigeria Watch (NW) database. In addition, internet sources, books, journals, and articles were consulted to provide the research with a holistic view. The target population were women, including both adults and young girls, who have died as a result of lethal violence, directly or indirectly intentional in nature. The target population cut across the 36 states of Nigeria and its capital, Abuja. The study covers a span of eight years, from 1 June 2006 to 31 May 2014. This is the period from when the database was initiated to the period when the research was conducted.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Some basic concepts and terminology are used in this paper.

Violence: Cambridge Dictionaries Online defines violence as “actions or words that are intended to hurt people”. In the words of Browne and Williams (1993), “violence is conceptualized as the threat or use of coercive force with the intent of inflicting harm, psychological or physical. Thus lethal violence refers to inflicted harm directly resulting in the victim’s death.”

According to Joda et al. (2007), there are seven types of violence against women:

Domestic violence: Simply put, this is violence within the home. It is carried out mostly by male members of the family—that is, the husband or his relatives—against women and children. These acts include, among many others, marital rape (forced sex), beating, verbal abuse, incest, FGM, forced marriage, child marriage, femicide, denial of human rights (e.g. choice of spouse, education, right to economic power), denial of food even during pregnancy—some cultures forbid it (e.g. the Guyuk in Adamawa State)—and denial of relaxation time.

Emotional and psychological abuse: These acts of violence are not necessarily physical. They include all forms of cruelty—for example, denigration and refusal of affection or sexual satisfaction. They include forcing a woman (married or not) to have sex, lack of moral support to a woman, and the effects of sharing a husband. They also include attempting to control a woman’s relationships with the wider community, friends, colleagues, or relatives. Furthermore, they include the use

of derogatory words and purposeful attempts to make a woman feel incompetent, worthless, or inferior.

Sexual harassment: These are acts such as jeering, sexist jokes, utterances referring to a woman's private parts, and the treatment of women as sex objects, via cat calling, whistling, or touching the buttocks or breasts. These act of violence usually take place in the workplace and public or private places—on the streets, at parties, in schools. They happen to domestic workers, office workers, etc. Sexual harassment may include refusal to employ, threat to sack, denial of job security, and withholding of promotion—all due to a woman's refusal of sexual advances.

Rape: Simply put, rape is any form of sexual intercourse without mutual consent between those involved, or with a minor. Rape can happen anywhere: in the home, in the work place, on the street, on a farm, in schools and universities, at social occasions. Most rapes are known to be committed by a known and often trusted person.

Trafficking: This involves the procuring and transfer of women and girls with or without their consent for commercial sex work, forced domestic labour, or other slave-like practices, both within and outside the country.

Forced prostitution: This is when women (including wives, daughters, female wards, and house girls) are forced into prostitution. Women are forced to use their bodies to get gain for their male relatives or for their bosses in many ways—for example, providing sex in order to secure jobs for their husbands or contracts for their employers.

Some widowhood rites: In some cultures, a widow is forced to drink the water that is used to wash the husband's corpse. In addition, the widow may be shaven clean of all hair on her body, especially during the burial

period of her husband. Some cultures do not permit widows to own or retain any of the husband's property. In fact, widows are not permitted to retain their own property or joint property acquired while the husband was alive. Often, a widow is accused of being the cause of her husband's death. In some cultures, widows are an inheritable part of the husband's property, while some cultures force the widow to marry a relative of the husband if she is still to be considered as part of the family.

Homicide: The Cornell University Law School defines homicide as “when one human being causes the death of another”. Not all homicides are murder, as some killings are manslaughter and some are lawful, such as when justified by self-defence.

Women: For the purpose of this research, the term ‘women’ is used generically to cover females in their different forms, including girls and adults.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Violence against women is predominantly a male phenomenon (Brown and Williams 1993). It occurs every day around the globe but is more prevalent in developing countries as developed countries have implemented laws protecting women. Women suffer every day from their male counterparts in the home, and over 95 per cent of domestic violence has the man as the assailant (Okemgbo et al. 2002; Ilika and Ilika 2005). It is generally believed that the power within the home resides with the man. It is broadly the case that in most societies, social, economic, political, and inter-personal power remains with men. Thus, power is socially gendered (Purna 1998).

Violence often results in death of the other party, in this case, the woman. This occurs when the woman has been battered continually or maltreated in one way or the

other. The World Health Organization (WHO) has observed that among women aged 15 to 44, intimate partner violence is a major cause of death and disability in the African population, more so than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and even war (Koss 1994; Krug et al. 2002). Rape is prevalent in India, while gang raping of unsuspecting girls, which sometimes leads to their deaths, is almost a daily occurrence. This has attracted international condemnation.

Most investigations of domestic violence have centred on men as perpetrators of violence; however, this is not to deny that cases of men being victims of domestic violence also exist. (Oladapo et al. 2011). It has been reported that men have their share of the adverse consequences of domestic violence. Lethal violence against men occurs most frequently within a relationship, with partner homicide being the most common type (Browne and Williams 1993). However, documented trends in lethal violence between intimate partners with men as the victims are few. Cases of fatal violence against men by women are based on acquittals either on the basis of insanity or self-defense (Ramsey 2006).

Across Nigeria, some women are completely dependent on their husbands for survival. They are usually full-time housewives whose duties range from child bearing and rearing to cooking, laundry, and shopping (Ajayi and Olotuah 2005). Low income in the family often ‘triggers’ violence—due to monetary problems, for example, when a wife requests money for family upkeep and the husband is unable to fulfil these responsibilities (Fawole 2005).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are a number of limitations to this research, including the following:

- There was little information on northern states. Of the ten print media used in gathering information and cases for the database, most are western- and eastern-oriented and thus carry more information about happenings in the southern regions. This is because there are limited print media available in the North, and most of the available ones are inconsistent in their reporting. Hence there is less coverage of violence against women in the North.
- NW does not distinguish the gender of the victims of violence. Thus, keywords like woman, women, mother, girl, girls, lady, grandmother, and aunt had to be employed to search for and obtain data. The findings were dependent on the wish (and unreliability) of the information retrieval specialists who document incidences in the database, as they may, or may not, mention the gender of victims in the summary of the fatal accidents. To this end, it cannot be categorically stated that lethal violence against women is more prevalent in the South than in the North, or vice versa.

FACTORS OF LETHAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN NIGERIA

The factors, issues, or root causes of the deaths of women obtained from the database are many, ranging from domestic violence to politics, robbery, rape, an unwanted child, and even unintended death. For the purpose of this paper, five of the factors that had the highest number of states in which they occurred (i.e. were the most widespread) are extensively discussed: domestic violence; sorcery; rape; other forms of crime; and robbery. Less prevalent issues are also mentioned. Some

of the cases crosscut two or more issues. For the purpose of the paper, female deaths that resulted from both domestic violence and sorcery were grouped under sorcery. Cases under review can involve the death of both men and women but are cited because of the death of at least one female. It is important to note that Abuja is considered as a state in the analysis. According to the database, Sokoto State recorded no case of female violent death. While the state is alleged to be peaceful, it cannot be categorically stated that it is totally free of such deaths. The researcher would attribute the unavailability of data on cases in the state to the study limitations mentioned above.

Domestic violence

There is no universally accepted definition of domestic violence. Many definitions abound, some from state laws and others from scholarly works. These definitions are dependent on the culture of the defining state and the period in which the definition was proposed. For the purpose of this paper, however, the definition in Article 5 of the Brazilian Maria da Penha Law (2006), as quoted in the UN Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women (2009), is considered to be encompassing and thus apt. It states that:

“domestic and family violence against women is defined as any action or omission based on gender that causes the woman’s death, injury, physical, sexual or psychological suffering and moral or patrimonial damage.”

It further explains that:

“this definition includes violence committed in the ‘domestic unit’, defined as the permanent space shared by people, with or without family ties; in the ‘family’, defined as the community formed by individuals that are or consider themselves related, joined by natural ties, by

affinity or by express will; and in any intimate relationship.”

Analysis of data from the NW database showed that death as a result of domestic violence occurred in almost all 36 states and the FCT. Only four states had no such record: Jigawa, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Yobe. Domestic violence was reported to be of high occurrence in Delta, Edo, and Lagos states. Some of the reasons for domestic violence cases which have led to female death as recorded in the database include the following:

- Infidelity (see Table 1).
- House upkeep allowance (see Table 2)
- Conjugal denial (see Table 3)
- Parent–child grievance (see Table 4)
- Child–parent grievance (see Table 5)
- Sibling–sibling grievance (see Table 6)
- Lovers’ dispute (see Table 7)

Summary	Date	State	LGA
Corporal Sunkanmi Ogunbiyi went berserk and shot his wife, Corporal Oluwatosin Faremi, her landlady, the landlady's 2-year-old child, the motorcycle rider that took him to the house, and 3 others. He later shot himself.	27/03/2014	Ogun	Odeda
A 55-year-old man, Joseph Okogbu, was alleged to have hacked his wife, Anna Okogbu, to death over some domestic issues.	27/12/2013	Ebonyi	Izzi
A Bakassi returnee, Udo Ubom, butchered his unfaithful wife and turned himself in to the police.	20/02/2011	Akwa Ibom	Nsit Atai
A tanker driver was remanded in Agodi Prison for having beaten his wife to death during a face-off, accusing her of infidelity.	25/04/2009	Oyo	Ibarapa Central, East & North
A Deputy Inspector-General of Police shot his wife, accusing her of infidelity. She later died at University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.	02/11/2007	Kwara	Ilorin East, West & South
A row between a husband and wife over the man's extra-marital affair led to the man stabbing his wife with a broken bottle. He then attempted to disguise the crime as electrocution.	28/07/2007	Enugu	Nkanu West

Table 1- Infidelity cases leading to female fatalities

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A motor cycle repairer, Mr. Adewale Daramola, beat his wife, Iyabo, to death for asking for money to buy food and buried her in a shallow grave in a nearby bush.	03/07/2013	Ekiti	Irepodun/ Ifelodun
A husband (Bayo Akanbi) beat his wife (Bosede Akanbi) to death over a missing N1000 note.	08/08/2012	Ogun	Yewa North, Yewa South
A middle-aged man killed his wife and baby son after a short argument over lack of money to buy drugs for the child.	24/10/2009	Kano	Kura
A man killed his wife, upset over money matters	26/11/2008	Lagos	Ikeja
A woman asked for N200 from her husband. Not having it and desiring to go out, he slapped her for preventing him from going out. She fell and died.	23/12/2006	Oyo	Ibadan North East, Ibadan North, Ibadan North West, Ibadan South East, Ibadan South West

Table 2 - Cases of house upkeep allowance leading to female fatalities

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A 45-year old man identified as ‘Bassey Akwa Ibom’ killed his wife, popularly called Mmamma, for denying him sex.	20/03/2014	Cross River	Biase
A 25-year old wife, Victoria, lost her life after her husband, Benjamin Toma, beat her for refusing to have sex with him.	04/03/2014	Plateau	Barkin Ladi
A 62-year old man (Christian Agbaga) strangled his wife Regina Agbaga (48) at their Lagos home after she refused to have sex with him.	01/08/2012	Lagos	Ikeja
A man beat his wife to death for refusing him sex.	15/10/2008	Kaduna	Sanga
A pastor of the Redeemed Gospel Church and proprietor of a private school hacked his wife to death over sex starvation and infidelity.	04/06/2007	Cross River	Calabar Municipality

Table 3: Conjugal denial cases leading to female fatalities

Summary	Date	State	LGA
Fwangmun Habakuk (25) beat his 2-year old female child to death for urinating on the bed.	18/09/2013	Plateau	Mangu
A mother, Terdoo Aleva, was alleged to have killed her 7-month old daughter with a local substance called 'otapiapia'.	19/08/2013	Benue	Gboko
A man beat up his 19-year old daughter and tied her to a stake before an accomplice applied incisions to her body. The young woman died and her father buried her secretly, but there were witnesses. The father then confessed to the crime.	07/10/2011	Lagos	Badagry
A mother was in Maiduguri Court for the murder of her child (11). She beat her to death with a police baton over a sum of N5.	16/11/2006	Borno	Jere

Table 4 - Cases of parent-child grievance leading to female fatalities

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A 24-year old man, Godsgift, killed his 67-year old mother, Rose Jonny, and buried her in a shallow grave. The deceased, who was a mother of four, was killed in her sleep with a machete.	10/11/2013	Bayelsa	Ogbia
A 20-year old girl, Elina Shadie, killed her mother, Lydia Shadie, with a cutlass. The victim suffered severe cuts on her head and other parts of her body.	31/10/2013	Taraba	Takum
18-year old Ezekiel Adenipekun inflicted machete cuts on his mother, Funmilayo, while she was sleeping in her room. The cuts subsequently resulted in her death.	21/07/2013	Osun	Ilesha East
A man, Muhammad Gana, known as Sule, killed his mother, Hajiya Hajara, over a landed property.	17/08/2010	Adamawa	Yola South
A young man butchered his mother to death with an axe.	18/03/2008	Benue	Makurdi

Table 5 - Cases of child-parent grievance leading to female fatalities

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A 62-year old woman, Ms. Yemi Olasehinde, was stabbed to death with a knife by her younger sister, Iyanu Olasehinde, over an inheritance.	12/03/2014	Ondo	Ondo West
A mother and her daughters were killed by their own blood relative, 25-year old Kamal Yusuf Aliyu.	29/05/2013	Zamfara	Gusau
Following an argument, Abdulhameed Usman killed his father Usman Bala and sister Amina. The murderer was under the influence of drugs.	10/12/2011	Kaduna	Kaduna North, Kaduna South
A 23 year-old man allegedly dropped rat poison called 'Otapiapia' into the food of his elder brother; 3 members of the family were killed, including his wife.	03/08/2008	Kogi	Ogori/Magongo
A man asked for his share of the inheritance from his father, especially a hotel business. Upon refusal, he stabbed the father and then stabbed to death his sister and mother-in-law.	01/04/2008	Ondo	Owo

Table 6: Cases of sibling-sibling grievance leading to female fatalities

Summary	Date	State	LGA
John Otoreh killed his girlfriend and her sister during a minor quarrel.	18/04/2014	Delta	Aniocha South
Ahead of Valentine’s Day, Martin stabbed his lover, Chinonso (23), to death in an argument.	10/02/2014	Anambra	Onitsha South
A 40-year old woman, Sherifat Adisa, was stabbed to death by her 23-year old lover, Abdulazeez Lateef.	19/12/2013	Lagos	Kosofe
A 27-year old girl was allegedly killed by her boyfriend and dumped in a river.	17/09/2013	Bayelsa	Kolokuma/Opokuma
A 24-year old girl, Miss Tosin Alabi, an apprentice in a computer institute, was stabbed to death by her male partner.	30/03/2013	Ekiti	Ado-Ekiti
A girl was murdered by her boyfriend.	17/07/2009	Edo	Oredo

Table 7 - Cases of lovers’ disputes leading to female fatalities

Sorcery

The Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (6th edition) defines sorcery as “magic that uses evil spirits”. Stewart and Strathern (2004) define sorcery “as the use of magical craft or knowledge to harm or benefit others”. This latter definition covers sorcery that can be negative or positive, depending on the sorcerer and intent. However, in Africa generally—and in Nigeria—sorcery is mainly considered to be negative; hence it should be avoided.

Most of the literature has tended to use the terms ‘sorcery’ and ‘witchcraft’ interchangeably, owing to their content of mystical power. However, for the purpose of this paper, witchcraft is considered as a sub-category of sorcery. It was discovered that all states in Nigeria, save

seven, had cases of sorcery that led to the death of women, though cases were more prevalent in some states than in others. Of the seven states without such sorcery cases, three were from the North-East and four from the North-West.

In the NW database, sorcery is classified into two sub-categories: witchcraft and rituals.

Witchcraft: In the words of Stewart and Strathern (2004), witchcraft is seen “as the expression of a malign power in a person’s body”. This definition portrays witchcraft as purely evil. The purpose of this paper is not to debate or analyse the concept of witchcraft, and hence it will not attempt to debate this definition.

In Africa, Nigeria being no exception, witchcraft is often associated with the feminine gender. Cases from the database allude to that fact. The selection of cases is based on two criteria: a female being killed on the accusation of being a witch, and the death of a female as a result of witchcraft (see Table 8).

Of the six geopolitical zones, three recorded such fatalities: South South (Akwa Ibom, Delta, Edo, and Rivers states), South West (Ekiti, Lagos, and Osun states), and North Central (FCT, Kogi, and Kwara states). While the states without witchcraft-related female deaths cannot be said, owing to the limitations of media reportage, to be totally free of such incidents, it can be deduced that the aforementioned states have higher degrees of witchcraft incidents than others.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
Ngofaka Iyo, a fisherman, killed his 92-year old grandmother, Mrs. Amachree, over allegations that she attempted to take his life through witchcraft.	14/05/2014	Rivers	Ogo/Bolo
Two men kill a woman on her way to Lokoja to sell	04/06/2013	Kogi	Lokoja

fura and nunu. She was the wife of one of the killers and was believed to be a witch.			
Nigeria's first female ambassador, 62-year old Mrs. Elizabeth Ogbon-Day, was killed by witches. She collapsed and died in her home. However, the witches later confessed that they shot her with 'a spiritual arrow'.	10/05/2012	Delta	Uvwie
Two sisters, Rasheedat Olanukanmi and Taibat Olanukanmi, faced Osogbo Magistrates' Court for the killing of their mother, Alimotu Olanukanmi, over witchcraft.	18/04/2011	Osun	Osogbo
A son, convinced his mother was bewitching him and was the cause of misfortune, forced her to drink acid. Neighbours rushed her to hospital, where she later died.	06/04/2010	Akwa Ibom	Eket
A man suspected of being mentally ill killed 2 of his 4 children with an axe because they were evil, disturbing his life. The mother saved the other 2 children.	18/06/2007	FCT	Bwari
A woman suspected of being a witch was lynched and burned by a mob.	03/01/2007	Edo	Oredo

Table 8 - Witchcraft cases leading to female fatalities

Rituals: For the purpose of this paper, rituals are considered to be situations where people (herein females) were killed, with parts of their bodies missing (see Table 9).

All the geopolitical zones have such cases. However, prevalence is low in the North-West zone, as four states (Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto, and Zamfara) out of seven do not have any record of fatal rituals. Only Kogi State in the North-Central zone has no record of fatal rituals, while three states (Adamawa, Gombe, and Yobe) out of six in the North-East also have no record of such cases. All states in the South-East, South-South, and South-West zones have records of fatal rituals with female victims. It is worth noting that the only two cases of lethal violence against women recorded for Kebbi State fall into this category and the victims were children.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A 4-year old girl, Fatima Mustapha, was murdered behind a hotel and her body parts were mutilated by ritualists.	18/03/2014	Kebbi	Birnin-Kebbi
A 13-year old girl, Chigozie, was found dead in an uncompleted building. Her assailants cut off some vital parts of her body, as her breast and tongue were found to be missing.	19/01/2014	Ebonyi	Abakaliki
Ritualists kidnapped several people to kill them for rituals. One young girl (Patience Bitrus) escaped and told of the execution of a victim (Sunday Noma), who was cut into pieces, with the removal of her eyes, breasts, and other	03/11/2012	Bauchi	Bauchi LGA

parts of her body.			
A 2-year old girl (Ummul-khairu Mohammad) was beheaded by persons suspected to be ritual killers, after being kidnapped while playing with another child.	04/03/2012	Niger	Chanchaga
A hunchbacked young woman was killed for ritual purposes, her hunch removed from her back.	29/09/2009	Osun	Boripe
A woman left her home in Bodo to visit her farm sharing common boundaries with 2 communities. She was found dead inside the farm, her 2 breasts removed and beheaded, apparently for ritual purposes or because of rivalry (her son is a notorious Deebam member in Bodo)	14/07/2007	Rivers	Gokana

Table 9 - Rituals cases leading to female fatalities

Rape

Earlier definitions of rape focused on women, seeing them as the only victims. However, the twenty-first century has witnessed a gradual change in the definition and scope of rape, as it has been observed that men and children are also victims of rape. To this end, the World Health Organization World Report on Violence and Health (2002: 149) defined rape as “physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration—even if slight—of the vulva or anus, using a penis, other body parts or objects”.

This paper focuses on rape of females which resulted in their death. From the NW database, it was

observed that 13 states had no record of such cases, which cut across all the geopolitical zones except the South-South.

For the purpose of this paper, rape is classified into two categories: adult rape and paedophilia.

Adult rape: Adult rape is considered to be female rape cases leading to death in which the victim is 18 years and above (see Table 10). This is in accordance with Section 29, subsection 4(a) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. No state in the North-West geopolitical zone had any record within the period studied, while only Borno State recorded cases in the North-East. All states in the South-West zone (except Osun State) and South-South zone (except Cross River) recorded cases in this category. The FCT and two states in the North-Central zone (Nasarawa and Plateau) had records while in the South-East zone, Ebonyi and Enugu states had no record.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
Taiwo Omolara Shittu, a 500-level student of the Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries Management, University of Ibadan, was raped and killed at her sister's home. Her lifeless body was found with a machete stained with blood beside her. She sustained a heavy cut on her head.	19/02/2014	Oyo	Egbeda
A 70-year old woman and mother of 4, Mrs. Cecilia Ogidi-Okereke, was raped to death in the bush where she went to get some leaves for her domestic goats by a 32-year old drug addict, Mr. Ochu.	25/08/2013	Abia	Arochukwu
After being raped by four men, a	29/10/2	Akwa	Ukanafun

woman became unconscious and died in hospital.	011	Ibom	
A female National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) member was raped to death and dumped beside a river.	27/09/2009	Borno	Maiduguri
A woman was strangled to death after being raped.	02/07/2007	Nasarawa	Lafia

Table 10 - Adult rapes leading to female fatalities

Paedophilia: These are female rape cases leading to death in which the victims are under 18 years of age (see Table 11). In the North-Central zone, only Benue had records of death by paedophilia, while Adamawa was the only state with records for North-East zone. In the North-West, Kaduna and Katsina states had records, in the South-East it was Anambra and Imo states, while Ondo and Osun had records in the South-West. All states in the South-South except Rivers had records of paedophilia.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
Sunday (34) was alleged to have raped a 13-year old girl to death.	28/10/2013	Ekiti	Irepodun/Ifelodun
A 34-year old man, Mr. Samuel Chukwunyere, abducted and raped a 12-year old girl, Miss Ifunanya Favour Ibe, to death. He later dumped her corpse in a disused well. The decomposing body of the victim was found 2 months after she was declared missing.	06/10/2013	Imo	Nkwere
A primary-two pupil of St. Atana Church School was raped and murdered by her father's close friend, Samuel Atagha, a.k.a. Ufia.	01/01/2012	Akwa Ibom	Ibesikpo Asutan
A 5-year old girl was raped and mutilated by Jacob Kunini (23),	20/05/2011	Adama wa	Yola North, Yola South

an ex-convict. His accomplice, Mijinyawa Bala, a herbalist, was arrested too for ritual money purposes.			
After a traditional marriage party, a girl, between 9 and 12 years old, was raped to death and seemed also to have been strangled.	04/10/2007	Benue	Makurdi
A 7-month old baby girl was raped to death.	11/09/2006	Kaduna	Sabon-Gari

Table 11 - Paedophilia cases leading to female fatalities

Other forms of crime, including cult attack

These cases include assassinations of females for unknown reasons or in cult attacks (see Table 12). All states in the South-East and South-South geopolitical zones recorded such cases. Only Ekiti, Kogi, and Gombe states had no reports in the South-West, North-Central, and North-East zones, respectively. In the North-West, Jigawa, Kebbi, and Sokoto states had no records either.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
The lifeless body of the wife of a personal assistant to an APC chieftain, Mrs. Ibironke Sanni, was found in her apartment. It was suspected that she must have been strangled to death because there was evidence of finger marks around her neck.	23/12/2013	Lagos	Ikorodu
Gunmen attacked a family of 6 and killed all of them. The household comprised the man, his wife, and 4 children.	17/12/2013	Plateau	Barkin Ladi
Gunmen murdered a young woman (Sewuse Tyoor), injuring her baby. Before her death, she identified four	02/01/2013	Benue	Gwer East, Gwer West

NDLEA members as the murderers of her husband (Chia Tyoor), who were scheduled to face trial later that month.			
Cult groups launched an attack at the University. A nursing mother, a lecturer, and 2 other people were murdered. Others were injured.	03/06/2008	Rivers	Port-Harcourt
Taraba State governor's wife, Hauwa Danbaba Suntai, returning to Jalingo from Abuja, escaped death after an attack. Her nurse and another aide were killed.	20/07/2007	Taraba	Wukari

Table 12 - Cases of female fatalities as a result of other forms of crime

Robbery

Many robbery incidents have been known to lead to loss of life, especially if the victims appear uncooperative or attempt to play smart on the robbers. In other situations, the robbers kill to cover up their tracks, eliminate possible witnesses, or create fear in the minds of those present at the robbery scene. Cases of female deaths as a result of robbery abound. There were also cases of deaths of females who led, or were part of, a robbery gang (see Table 13). Of the 36 states and the FCT, 12 had no record of female death caused by robbery. All 6 geopolitical zones recorded cases. Three states in the North-East (Adamawa, Gombe and Taraba) recorded no cases, while Kogi and Niger states recorded no cases in the North-Central zone. Kaduna, Kano, and Zamfara recorded cases in the North-West, while Abia, Anambra, and Ebonyi recorded cases in the South-East. Akwa Ibom was the only state that recorded no case in the South-South, while all the states of the South-West recorded cases.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A recharge card seller and a pregnant woman were killed by a gang of armed robbers during a robbery incident. The victims were returning from a stream when it happened.	19/01/2014	Delta	Ndokwa East
A middle-aged woman was killed during a robbery operation.	25/03/2012	Ebonyi	Abakaliki
A woman died during a bank raid. Some sources reported she was the leader of the gang who raided the bank, though direct evidence was missing	12/12/2008	Ogun	Sagamu
Armed robbers stormed a house and stabbed a nursing widow, who is still alive, 6 times. A police woman who was visiting her was killed by the bandits.	09/10/2007	Yobe	Damaturu LGA
Robbers attacked a woman and her colleague in their car. The woman was killed.	04/09/2007	FCT	Abuja Municipal
Armed robbers attacked a village and people in a commuter vehicle. They killed 3 women, including a teenager, and raped and injured others before leaving with their loot	15/06/2007	Zamfara	Maru
A female student was killed by armed robbers who had been terrorising the town for a long time,	14/02/2007	Osun	Ila

leading to violent protest of students.			
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Table 13: Robbery cases leading to female fatalities

Others factors

Apart from the above five major categories, there are a number of other causes for the death of females. While they are not considered less important than the five major causes mentioned above, they have less coverage or records in terms of the number of states. They are as follows:

Kidnapping: There were a number of cases of kidnapped female victims who were either killed because no ransom was paid, killed before the ransom could be paid, or killed despite the payment of ransom. Sometimes, suspected female kidnappers were also lynched (see Table 14). There are a total of 15 states with cases of female kidnapping that resulted in deaths. The North-East had no such case, while Jigawa was the only state that recorded cases in the North-West. The South-West had the highest number of cases, most of the victims being children.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
An elderly woman suspected to be a kidnapper was lynched and set ablaze by an angry mob.	06/05/2014	Lagos	Ifako-Ijaye
A female kidnapper was killed by an angry mob.	16/04/2014	Kwara	Ilorin-South
The decomposed body of 84-year old Madam Adiza Ogbo, wife a traditional ruler, who was kidnapped by unknown gunmen, was recovered from a shallow grave.	14/09/2013	Enugu	Igbo Eze North
Mrs Reginat Obi Daity (72), kidnapped in Delta in	20/04/2013	Delta	Aniocha South

March 2013, was murdered because the ransom paid on her was considered paltry. The gang had demanded N10 million but received N2 million.			
Mrs. Martha Oyediya Kalu (79) was kidnapped and has yet to be seen since 2012. It is assumed she was killed, since no contact has been established with the victim since then.	10/08/2012	Abia	Ohafia
A young girl, Hadiza Husaini, was kidnapped from Hadejia town and killed by her abductors in a nearby village. Her heart and eyes were removed from her body.	24/11/2009	Jigawa	Dutse
A mother and daughter were taken hostage and shot by unknown gunmen.	08/02/2007	Ogun	Ifo

Table 14 - Kidnapping cases leading to female fatalities

Politics: Here, either the female victims were directly involved in politics or had some form of relationship with politicians, thus putting them in danger when the politician was attacked (see Table 15). Fourteen states across all the geopolitical zones recorded such cases.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
The Woman Leader of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in a ward, Mallama Hadiza Yar'auta, was killed by political thugs during the party's congress. She was attacked by supporters of her opponent.	29/03/2014	Zamfara	Talata Mafara

Two PDP Chieftains were killed by an armed gang. One of the victims was the Woman Leader of Shehuri North Ward, Hajiya Gambo.	11/03/2013	Borno	Maiduguri
Unidentified gunmen shot dead a female politician, Hajja Bayayi. She was a councillor representing Bolori Ward 1.	15/07/2012	Borno	Maiduguri
Fulani people murdered the Chairman of the PDP in Sharubutu Ward of Bachit District of Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State, John Baren, his wife, and child when they were returning from funerals.	28/06/2012	Plateau	Riyom
Grace Obaretin Osakue (87), leader of ex-party UPN in the old Bendel State, was murdered by 3 men. She was the mother of a chieftain of the PDP in the state, Martins Osakue.	08/09/2010	Edo	Oredo
Although the PDP party called a reconciliatory meeting at Iragbiji between two factions, there was a clash leaving a woman dead and 2 members injured.	17/11/2008	Osun	Boripe
A female councillorship aspirant was shot dead by unidentified gunmen during the polls	23/11/2007	Benue	Gboko

Table 15 - Political conflicts leading to female fatalities

Communal clashes: Female deaths also occurred as a result of internal or cross-border community crises—for example, over land disputes. Sometimes, outsiders were involved (see Table 16). Fourteen states recorded such cases and they can be found in all the geopolitical zones.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A pregnant mother, Mrs. Esther Effiong, and Mr. Bassey Okon, were killed in a renewed community clash among Effiat communities.	29/11/2013	Akwa Ibom	Mbo
An elderly man and a girl were killed on their farm during an attack on their community.	01/09/2013	Kaduna	Kaura
Gunmen, divided into two groups, attacked Song LGA secretariat and the police headquarters, setting them ablaze. They also attacked a security checkpoint. A soldier, a policeman, and a grandmother and her granddaughter were killed, with many others injured.	03/01/2013	Adamawa	Song
About 50 armed men attacked a community early in the morning, killing 3 women and a man. Houses were burnt and many villagers fled.	16/02/2012	Nasarawa	Keana
20 bandits stormed a community in 5 vehicles; 2 girls (16 and 4 years old) were killed.	04/12/2007	Ogun	Yewa North, Yewa South
There was an economic struggle to control the toll collected from a mining firm, Crushed Rocks Company, and a general political struggle for control of Ishiagu. The house of the President of the	17/06/2006	Ebonyi	Ivo

Community Development Union was destroyed and his pregnant wife murdered.			
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Table 16 - Communal clashes leading to female fatalities

Security forces: It is not news that security operatives around the world illegally cause the death of people. In Africa, especially Nigeria, security operatives consider that they should not be challenged, must be obeyed no matter what the situation or what they say, and have the power to rough-handle anybody. In addition, they are sometimes used by politicians and businessmen to harass and terrorise other citizens. They often do so with impunity. Some cases extracted from the database showed that women were not spared from extrajudicial killings (see Table 17). No state in the North-West recorded a case, but the South-South and South-West zones recorded cases in three states each, as against two each in the South-East, North-Central, and North-East zones.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
Mrs. Itota died after she was beaten by soldiers who were invited by a retired military person.	12/05/2014	Edo	Oredo
A police corporal killed a pregnant woman over a N20 bribe	02/04/2013	Ondo	Akure North, Akure South
Two people died in a civil disturbance: a woman was shot by soldiers and a boy was killed by male members of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense.	20/10/2011	Bauchi	Bauchi LGA
A policeman killed a woman while shooting at an escaping driver.	27/02/2010	Anambra	Ekwusigo

After the JTF killed a 12-year old girl, residents asked for the withdrawal of the army from the area.	06/08/2011	Borno	Maiduguri
Police killed 5 Igbo traders and their female companions.	08/06/2006	FCT	Abuja Municipal

Table 17 - Activities of security forces leading to female fatalities

Unwanted children: This factor has to do with the killing of female babies or the abandoning of female babies to die because they are not wanted by one or both parents. The perpetrators are usually the mothers, while the most observed excuse for such infanticide is rejection of the baby by the father, (e.g. in the case of pregnancy outside wedlock). There were a number of cases in this category, and they cut across all the geopolitical zones in the country (see Table 18).

Summary	Date	State	LGA
A 32-year old man, Musa Adamu, poisoned his 4-day old baby girl to death. He apparently did this to avoid taking responsibility for the baby.	11/03/2014	Kaduna	Sabon-Gari
A week-old baby girl was found dead in a sack. The corpse was found on a railway track.	09/11/2013	Abia	Aba North
Mr Abubakar Saidu was remanded in prison for killing his 3-month old baby girl. He killed her by administering some chemical substances to the baby.	19/08/2013	Niger	Rafi
Nsidibe Effiong, a 19-year old mother, killed her 3-	10/02/2012	Akwa Ibom	Ibesikpo Asutan

week old baby girl and dumped the corpse into a latrine. The father of the baby ran away when the young girl was pregnant.			
A mother buried her 1-day old baby alive, on the grounds that the man who impregnated her had denied being the father of the child and let her down.	08/09/2011	Ogun	Obafemi-Owode
A mother killed her baby inside a toilet.	01/07/2010	Borno	Hawul

Table 18 - Cases of unwanted children leading to female fatalities

Abortion: Simply put, abortion is the removal of an unwanted foetus. However, the process sometimes leads to the death of women, especially when the abortion is performed wrongly or medical complications arise. Reported cases of abortion leading to the murder of women were all based on pregnancy outside wedlock (see Table 19).

Summary	Date	State	LGA
The corpse of a 23-year old pregnant woman, Blessing Musa Abarshi, was found by the roadside. She was suspected of having died as a result of the complications that arose from an abortion.	08/05/2014	Bauchi	Bauchi LGA
A 22-year old sales girl, Uchenna Mba, was killed by a doctor during an abortion.	15/09/2013	Anambra	Awka North
Vasty, an expectant mother of 16 years old,	07/06/2011	Taraba	Karim-Lamido

was cut into several parts by a chemist during an abortion. Her relatives lynched her boyfriend and the chemist.			
A fake doctor injected a woman, 5 months pregnant, with oxytocin into the foetus to cause abortion. The process led to the woman's death.	09/09/2008	Oyo	Unidentified LGA in Ibadan
A girl died after having drunk a concoction to abort. Afraid of the police, her boyfriend and an accomplice buried her in his room. A new tenant discovered the corpse 4 months afterwards.	30/11/2007	Rivers	Port-Harcourt
A fake doctor gave a pregnant woman different treatments to abort. After 3 days, she received analgesics against pain and died immediately. The quack doctor dumped her corpse in a bush and later confessed the murder was for rituals.	30/10/2007	Ondo	Odigbo

Table 19 - Abortion cases leading to female fatalities

Religion: This factor covers female fatalities as a result of differences in religious beliefs or attacks based on religion. In addition, it encompasses deaths of women resulting from strong belief in the spiritual powers they possess (see Table 20). Cases related to the Boko Haram insurgency are not analysed here.

Summary	Date	State	LGA
Muslim fanatics killed a Pentecostal pastor, Ishaya Kadah, and his wife Selina. The burnt bodies were discovered two days after they were kidnapped.	16/04/2010	Bauchi	Tafawa-Balewa
An okadaman, after having attacked residents of his home town, stabbed his grandmother to death, confessing he obeyed a voice.	26/10/2008	Oyo	Iwajowa
Rampaging Muslim students killed a Christian female teacher for alleged desecration of the Holy Quran during their end-of-term examination. They also set the school ablaze.	21/03/2007	Gombe	Gombe LGA
A pastor, Chukwuemeka Ezeugo Kingsley, a.k.a. The King, set ablaze 6 church members, one of whom (a woman) died. He used to flog his church members and extort large sums of money from them.	23/07/2006	Lagos	Oshodi-Isolo
A young woman was doing street Christian evangelism. Muslims decided she had to be killed for insulting the Prophet Mohammed. Police tried to rescue her, but as their station was stormed by Muslims they abandoned the girl, who was stoned to death.	28/06/2006	Niger	Chanchaga

Table 20 - Religious issues leading to female fatalities

Land: There were a few cases of women killed as a result of land tussles between families or individuals (see Table 21). It is worth noting that such cases can also be related to communal clashes (see Table 16).

Summary	Date	State	LGA
2 people, one of them a woman, were killed during a communal clash between 2 communities over a piece of land.	06/05/2014	Plateau	Bassa (Plateau)
Two persons, Bayo Oodunaro and Adufe Dada, are killed in a village over land speculation. The hoodlums, led by Alhaji Mutairu Owoeye, attacked a church, vandalizing the furniture and other property.	03/07/2012	Ogun	Ado-Odo/Ota
A member of the Tekobo family claimed the ownership of a piece of land which is contested by the Ogundele family since 1999. The court made a decision in favour of the Ogundele family. The dispute led to the death of one woman.	10/06/2010	Osun	Oriade
Four persons—a man, his wife, their baby, and their house help—were burned to death following a dispute over family land. The man, a younger brother who had failed to reach an agreement with his elder brother, had predicted the	01/01/2010	Abia	Umuahia South

death of the latter before 2010. As elder brother died on December 25, his children set the younger brother's house ablaze in revenge.			
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Table 21 - Land cases leading to female fatalities

CONCLUSION

Proven beyond reasonable doubt is the fact that lethal violence against women exists in Nigeria, irrespective of the form it may take. The NW database has been able to provide a basis for research to validate this statement. While bearing in mind the limitations of the study, analysis of cases extracted from the database make it safe to conclude that lethal violence against women occurs more often in the southern part of the country than in the northern part. This conclusion is confirmed by the charts below, which show that the three geopolitical zones of the North total only approximately 29 per cent of all the cases of female homicides in the country (see Figure 1).

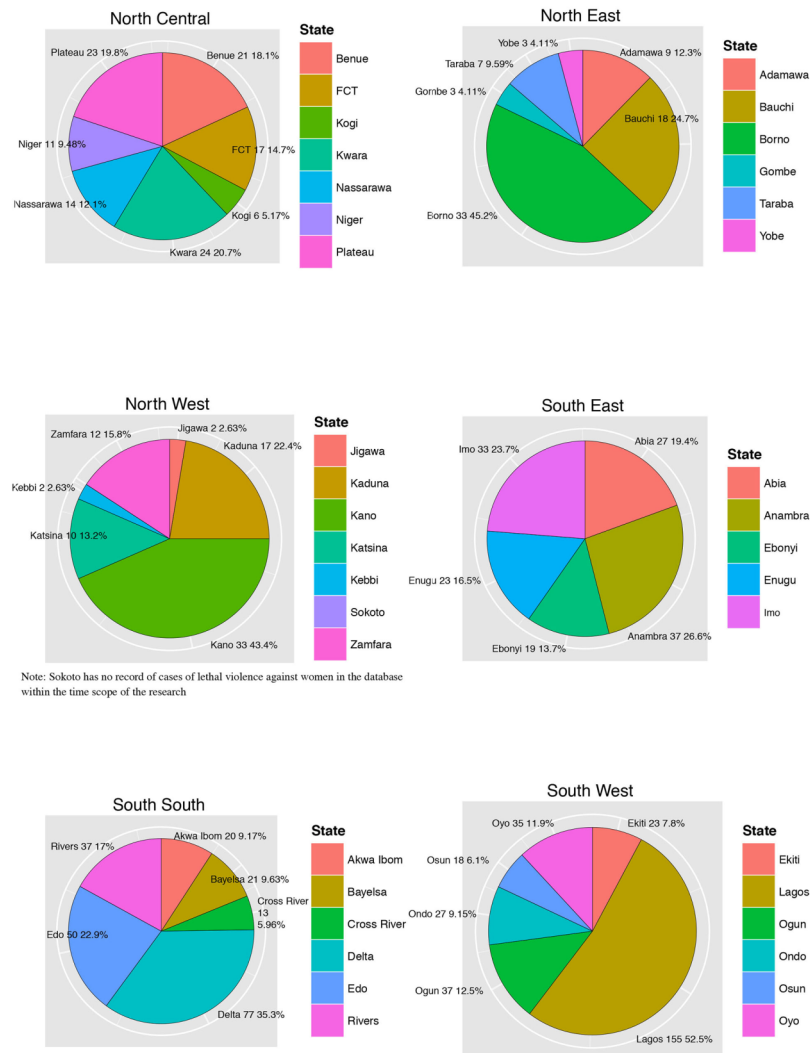


Figure 1 - Number and percentage of female violent deaths per state in the six geopolitical zones, Nigeria, June 2006 – May 2014¹

¹ Sokoto State recorded no cases of female violent death.

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ACRONYMS

ACUNS	Academic Council in the
United Nations System	
APC	All Progressive Congress
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGC	Female Genital Cutting
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
LGA	Local Government Area
NW	Nigeria Watch
PDP	People's Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for
Women	
WHO	World Health Organization