

GENDER ISSUES, INSURGENCY AND VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA, IMPLICATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality is a source of conflict. Evidence suggests that high levels of unequal power relations and gender issues are associated with risks of war, insurgency and violence. Nigeria in past and recent times have experienced insurgencies and violent conflicts that affected women negatively especially in rural communities. Understanding these allows us to identify, direct and change the root causes of conflict in our communities. Gender integration into conflict analysis can increase the effectiveness of peace building interventions. This paper therefore examines gender issues, insurgency and violence in Nigeria, implications on sustainable development for women. It is a qualitative study that relied on secondary data. It is situated on a combination of Frustration-Aggression and Cognitive Dissonance theories. The findings revealed that the socio-political and economic landscape in Nigeria is inundated with conflicts which have radically affected women's ability to effectively contribute to sustainable development and peace building in communities. Furthermore, Nigeria security situation has significantly deteriorated creating economic hardship for majority of women in rural communities. Based on these findings, the paper recommends that Peace and Conciliation Resources be re-focused on how women become associated with conflict, their roles and ways they can be used for peace building and sustainable development.

KEYWORDS

Gender Issues, Insurgency And Violence, Sustainable Development For Women, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

There exist a nexus between insurgency, violence and gender issues globally. Understanding this relationship is important in understanding gender dynamics and conflict management. Understanding the impact of conflict on gender issues, will assist in designing appropriate measures to mitigate the effect of conflict generally. It also important to state that gender issues play significant roles in the attainment of sustainable development, particularly in developing countries.

There has been concerted efforts towards ensuring that sustainable development takes place globally. It is also expected that as nations develop, every living person will experience better living standards where necessities of live such as education, health and health care, employment as well as infra-structural provisions of water, light, roads and transportation, housing are provided without discrimination. The focus is to improve the quality of life of all irrespective of gender. However, it is evident that past approaches to sustainable development have not equally benefited all members of the societies, even in the face of political manoeuvres that portray the contrary.

Furthermore, one of the critical factors that affect sustainable development is conflict. Insurgency and violence in Nigeria create conflicts that affect not only women but sustainable development. Women are the most effected in situations of conflict. Women, undergo various forms of violations under insurgency. More importantly, women are incapacitated during conflict and therefore can no longer play their roles as critical factors in domestic production.

The discourse on the nexus between gender issues, conflict and sustainable development will be incomplete without addressing the sociocultural factors that affect women. The participation of women in economic development and conflict management are hindered by these sociocultural factors. Unfortunately, the Sustainable Human Development approach emphasizes the participation of all segments of the population ensuring that the eradication of the imbalance between sexes with respect to education, economy, cultures to mention but a few are preconditions for achieving long lasting and sustainable development (Gender Training Manual 1999).

Nigeria, rather than eradicating gender bias and imbalance, seems passive in addressing the issues as it plays a politics that is fully dominated by men. The male dominated politics syndrome has facilitated political corruption, distortion of public policies, high level insecurity and poverty in the amidst abundance. The citizens are further alienated from government and poverty blossoms amidst the nation's natural affluence. Frustrations, arising from these have created an atmosphere, where insurgency and violence thrive.

In most countries, Nigeria inclusive, women are discriminated against in governance and public administration. This disposition leaves their potentials untapped restrict the scope of labour, energy, and human resources available for sustainable development. (Bassey-Ekpo & Nkoyo-Toyo 2003). In addition, for sustainable development process to succeed, there is need to integrate women within the development framework. One of the indexes of progress and development of any nation is the position of women in a society.

It is therefore important to understand the relationship between gender issues, violence, insurgency and sustainable development. These critical variables go hand in hand towards ensuring a just, peaceful and egalitarian society, which are the primordial objectives of a nation. This paper therefore, addresses gender issues, insurgency and violence in Nigeria, implications on sustainable development for women.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the historical design, which is qualitative and explorative in nature, to examine the causes of gender issues, insurgency and violence in Nigeria. The implications of these on sustainable development for women are also pertinent. This presupposes that historical research design is effectively utilised through relevant data derived from extant literature. In other words, secondary sources such as textbooks, journal articles, internet sources, and other relevant methods were utilised.

3. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

3.1. Insurgency

Insurgency is a long-running political and military struggle aimed at overthrowing the legitimacy of a statutory government in power and to control or partially control local resources through illegal militias and illegal political parties. A common feature of many insurgent groups is their goal of gaining control of the population or territory, including its resources. For example, the uprising against the government refers to armed violence in Northeastern Nigeria that began in the early 2000's but erupted in 2009 following the death of Jama'atu leader Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati wal Jihad (Boko Haram) Muhammad Yusuf, in the custody of security personnel. The uprising is what is referred to Boko Haram activities. This has created many factions of insurgents as well as bandits involvement in cattle rustling in Nigeria.

According to Mufti (2012), insurgency refers to the use of force. Insurgents are groups of people who use violence as a means of achieving something or to show hatred or contempt for a particular group of people. Insurgency is the actual use of violence or more generally, participating in the activities of a militant group, especially those that are violent (Mufti, 2012). In this context, the activities of bandits in the Northeastern Nigeria, militant groups in the Niger Delta and Southeast of Nigeria are referred to as violent groups. However, militant soldiers are a body of armed men, who often represent a particular race, religion, ethnicity, family or other social or political group. Militants as soldiers may serve in the military directly or indirectly, act independently to fight against other soldiers or insurgent groups, commit criminal acts, or support rebels. Insurgents could be used to target thousands of national soldiers and cattle ranchers in other parts of Nigeria who have undermined sustainable development.

Various scholars put forward different approaches to the conceptualisation of the insurgency. The various dimensions are based on a number of factors. These include, the goal, strategies, size, region, duration, international importance and the character of the challenged state and victims. Additionally, many apostates have also demonstrated a combination of these features.

To support this view. Mackinlay (2002) identified forms of insurgency as lumpen, clan, popular and global.

In addition, the US government has identified five basic types of insurrection:

- "- Insurgents seek to incorporate the current political system into a completely different system, one that often involves economic and social planning. This is the kind of insurgency that is taking place now in Nigeria.
- Insurgents, with the intention of not changing the existing political system but, rather, are trying to force the government to adjust its policies or resume political, economic, or social reforms.
- Divisive dissenters who want to rule themselves somewhere. In some cases, the disputed area extends beyond national boundaries.
- Resisting rebels who try to force an official to leave a certain area.
- Commercial revolt caused by the acquisition of material resources; political power is a tool to take and control access to wealth".

3.2. Sustainable Development

Sustainability mean ability to maintain consistently, a particular outcome or process over time. It could be in strategic areas as agriculture, forestry management, or investment. Something is to be considered sustainable, meaning that it does not eliminate the material resources on which it depends.

The metaphorical use of the word “sustainability” implies dependence on social conditions; for example, peace, security, economic policy, or sociocultural practice which are stable to support political economy. In its normal application, the concept of sustainability sets the means by which environmental situations create the conditions of healthy economic, productive, and social systems.

The concept of sustainable development has been the result of a gradual change in the language of development. In the 1950s and 1960s, development focused on economic growth and productivity based on the ideas of successful production. In the 1970s, however, a growing gap between rich and poor across the region was noted, which led to a shift in focus on equality with an emphasis on social development, security and distribution of revenue as a priority (African Economic Commission, African Regional Report on Sustainable Development, 2012) . At the same time, consideration of the impact of economic growth on the environment has drawn attention to the importance of integrating environmental concerns into the development process and security reforms for sustainability.

Sustainable Development means the ability of the present generation to meet its needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It means the exploitation of natural resources for human survival without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It has to do with showing great consideration for the lives of future generations even as we strive to improve our quality of life now. Thus economic development through environmental protection (Ezekiel 2008). The Sociological approach to sustainable development sees — people as tools and beneficiaries, as well as victims of all development activities. To a large extent, Seragldin (1993) described human participation in the development process as the key to success.

Therefore, making development more participatory can be interpreted as confirming the level of participation of previously marginalized groups and development organizations(Jacob, 1994). Increased participation of women in governance is therefore essential for sustainable development.

According to NCED (1987), the operational objectives of sustainable development are stated below;

- i. Reviving growth
- ii. Changing the quality of growth
- iii. Meeting essential needs for jobs, energy, H₂O, and sanitation.
- iv. Ensuring a sustainable level of population.
- v. Conserving and enhancing the resource base.
- vi. Re-orienting technology and managing risk.
- vii. Merging the environment and economics in decision making.
- viii. Re-orienting international economic relations.
- ix. Making development participatory.

3.3. Women

The United Nations (2015) defines women "as part of the human race which, in addition to acting as a means of improving human health, also becomes producers, consumers and agents equally committed to promoting healthy social politics and economic development in society". Women's participation in all aspects of national life contributes to development. Women's participation in power-sharing and decision-making is necessary, although not enough to get help to assess national democracy (Dauda, 2004).

Women are part of the global community and have made significant contributions to human well-being (Enemu, 1999). In Nigeria as elsewhere, women are said to have played five key roles, such as motherhood, producer, home manager, community organizer, and social, cultural, and political activism (UNDP, 1997). Despite the large number and important functions, the segregation of roles between the male and female sexes, as claimed by many cultures, provides a lower status for women. As a result, women have long suffered from various forms of discrimination, inequality and violence.

3.4. Gender

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women built into families, communities and cultures. The concept of sexuality also includes existing expectations about the characteristics, abilities and possible behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are studied. They can change over time and vary within and between cultures. Social classification processes such as political status, class, race, physical and mental disability, age etc., change gender roles.

The concept of gender is important because, it is used in the analysis of society, it reveals how women's subjection (or male domination) is constructed in society. Therefore, submission can be changed or eliminated. It is not predestined biologically and is not fixed permanently.

Gender refers to the socially constructed aspects of women and men such as the norms, roles and relationships between gender groups. It varies from community to community and can be changed. Although most people are born male or female, they are taught proper manners and etiquette, including how to interact with others of the same or different sex within families, communities and workplaces. When individuals or groups "do not engage in sexual misconduct," they often experience stigma, discrimination, or social stigma. It is important to be sensitive to different identities that do not fall into the category of male or female gender.

Gender equality, means equal opportunities for both sexes (male and female). That is the opportunity and access to resources to fully realize personal potentials in human existence, male or female. Problems of gender equality need to be addressed from a human rights perspective. This requires removing all legal barriers to women's equality; to end violence against women and to eliminate administrative, cultural, social, and economic barriers to the realization of women's rights and economic independence.

The term gender equality is defined as equality under the law, equality of opportunity (including employment equity and equity in access to employment and other productive resources), and voice equality (ability to influence and participate in the development process) (World Bank, 2001). Equal participation of women and men in power and decision-making is part of their basic rights to participate in political life and in the

context of gender equality and the empowerment of women (MDGs, 2000). Gender equality promotes gender justice.

3.5. Gendered Violence

First of all, the idea we have of war or conflict is that of male chauvinism. This concept focuses on the role of men in society as a whole and in particular conflicts. A well-known researcher in the field of sexuality and peace studies states: "Neutral bias may obscure the fact that the postwar age is full of sex decisions" (Enloe 1993). Our concept of war is based on the experience of men and does not take into account those who represent other people. A Swedish researcher at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo, Skelsbaek states: "Men's behavior have been taken to represent human behavior" (Skelsbaek and Smith 2001).

Our concept of security is also gender sensitive, because it focuses on the military aspects of conflict and not on the experiences of all citizens. In this sense 'security' is achieved when arms are laid down and for example a peace agreement is signed (negative security: non-violence). It does not care that ending an armed conflict does not eliminate the culture of violence and does not necessarily mean establishing a culture of peace (good peace). The editor of the book 'What Women Do During War' state, that violence against women continues and escalates after men return from the battlefield (Turshen 1989).

It is not just the concept of conflict of arms or insurgency that is gender biased, but the practice of war is also gender biased. Conflict occurs in societies with sociocultural factors that give men and women different roles and therefore affects their lives in different forms. Men are often called upon to take up arms and fight in the army while women carry responsibility for the family. The roles of women in tradition have always been in domestic activities and in many countries women care for the sick and injured. Because the structures in society are gender sensitive, these structures are also projected in wartimes. In Nigeria, women are traditionally treated as the weaker sex, and not naturally involved in war. War is fought predominantly by men, while women are involved in facilitating peace.

Empirically, it has been proven that, armed conflict is leading to the collapse of political structures and economic systems, which increases the vulnerability of women and consequently the impact of gender (Bushra and Lopez 1994). Vulnerability can be understood in a literal sense, in that men who have fled or gone to war or have been killed for example are no longer able to protect and provide for women. It can also be understood figuratively, that the cultural codes of society can no longer protect women, as, for example, in 'dirty war'.

To understand insurgency in Nigeria, we must understand that the structures in our societies are gender sensitive, influencing our sense of violence and result in different experiences of men and women during conflict, because of their different roles in society. It is pertinent to observe that the experience of women during conflict is largely ignored because our sociocultural orientation. Our communities are built in such a way that the plight of women remains elusive.

3.6. Gender and Violence

Gender defines the expectations of socially constructed values, abstract ideas, and laws that shape masculinity and femininity (Akuboyi, 2016). Gender as a social structure has a profound impact on our lives and defines power relations across all social and political spheres in strong and restrictive ways. Gender is also a factor in political violence, including terrorism and insurrection (Okonkwo, 2018). Gender in terrorism refers to the way we view men and women's ways of participation, harassment, and victimisation. However, gender issues in relation to terrorism is complex and recognizes the various aspects of how women participate in terrorism and counter-terrorism as well as victims.

Scholars have given different perspectives on the role that women play in political violence, especially protests, terrorism and the fight against terrorism. Experts analyze both the basic and major factors in explaining how women participate in such violence, when and how they become victims, and how they respond to it. These questions reveal how political conditions, social structures, and profiles of terrorist organizations affect women in complex ways. There exist a growing body of literature on women and terrorism in order to understand the causes and effects of women's participation in terrorism as well as the vision and strategy for engaging women in such violence.

3.7. Consequences of Conflict on Women

In societies, where the power gap between men and women is high, men often work in the political arena while women work in what is considered to be the private and family life. Men live in the community while women are confined to private domains. In some Moslem communities for example, women cannot participate in public life unless they are completely covered and accompanied by her husband or a male family member. It is only within his home that he can seek his own place.

The implication of the difference between public and private life is that people often feel obligated to share what is public while privacy is beyond the control of the public and is therefore considered a family responsibility. Since home and family are 'personal', many people feel they are not allowed to interfere. For this reason it has become very difficult to deal with domestic violence. Police view domestic violence as a family affair and therefore beyond the scope of common law. It is argued that because of this gender gap in society between private and public, and in times of conflict, the sufferings of women are not visible because it does not occur in the public domain. Women are usually afraid to expose their sufferings in public because of sociocultural stigma and other societal values against women. The consequence is that most women suffer violence in silence.

In Nigeria, women's organizations have worked hard to make gender-based violence less discriminatory through many Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) and other women organizations. Women are predominantly victims of domestic violence and conflicts. It is also important to state that in some legal jurisdictions, children and relations of women affected by violence are also regarded as victims. The efforts of the women's movement can be seen as a success because it has made the suffering of women visible in the political system.

Concealment of women's suffering in relation to sexual harassment can be attributed to the presence of sociocultural barriers. As long as there is no public talk about sex, it is difficult for women to talk about sexual harassment. Instead they keep sexual harassment

and rape hidden because of shame and guilt, feelings that mean personal commitment as opposed to political actions. In recent times there have been movements within the international law in respect of the politics of sexual harassment and rape. This is to relieve women of their emotional burden arising from rape and other violations.

Over the past 50 years there has been an increase in interest in gender and conflict in international political discourse. It was not until conflict in the former Yugoslavia, that indications began to emerge across the UN about the problem of sexual violence against women during conflict. The Security Council in December 1992 observed the "massive and systematic arrests and rapes of women, especially Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina". Between Nuremberg and Tokyo on the one hand and the former Yugoslavia on the other, there emerged a strong and cohesive women's movement that exerts pressure and demands redress for atrocities against women and girls (Sorensen 1998). The United Nations has also incorporated gender into its operational documents, particularly in times of conflict.

3.8. Women and sustainable development in Africa/Nigeria

Africa is notorious for its endless/ongoing conflict and violence (Albert, 2002). For almost 40 years now, the issue of war has been a major problem for African nations. From Liberia to Sierra Leone, Mali to Cote d'Ivoire, Somalia to Sudan, Rwanda to Burundi and insurgency in Nigeria. Africans are fighting each other in violent wars that have a devastating effect on regional peace and security (Adams 2013). It is therefore doubtful that its development may occur in a contradictory environment where little is said about production. The productive capacity of African nations are threatened by incessant conflicts. The current current insurgencies and banditry in Northern Nigeria has reached a climax, threatening the business presence and stability of the region. Noting the magnitude of the intense wars in Africa, Bolle's (2000) states:

- i) More than one in five Africans live in a war-torn country,
- ii) And about 20 countries have been embroiled in civil war since 1960
- iii) Ongoing conflicts ravaging the African continent create social and economic burden.
- iv) During conflict, many of a country's resources are often diverted to developing and supporting conflict.

However, women can bring unique benefits to conflict situations. Research shows that women can play significant roles in the peace process.

According to Animashaun (2013), the presence of women in peacekeeping operations (including women police officers, interpreters, and specialists) make a positive difference. According to the report of Independent Experts Assessment on Women, War and Peace,(2016) the presence of women helps in:

- 1) Improving access and support for local women;
- 2) facilitates communication with victims of assault, sexual assault, violence, etc .;
- 3) provides a greater sense of security for local people (women and children)
- 4) Helps to create a safe environment for women when they are not afraid to speak out;
- 5) Makes peacemakers think and be responsible;
- 6) Extending the set of skills and styles for productive ventures;
- 7) It can help reduce conflict and conflict.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is situated on a combination of Frustration-Aggression and Cognitive Dissonance Theories to analyze insurgency, violence, gender issues and its impact on sustainable development, especially in Nigeria. Some scholars have argued that some individuals or groups of people put their complaints in the criminal justice system of the world or in government while others resort to violent self-help. For this reason, some scholars point to discrimination, deprivation of social necessities, poor leadership, bad governance, and religious disunity as major causes of civil unrest in Nigeria. Therefore, this study adopted these theories to examine the extent to which these factors, especially social exclusion, political discrimination, religious divisions and extremism can lead to frustration which ultimately ends in cruel behavior towards women.

4.1. Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration-aggression theory was propounded by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears in 1939 to explain why people behave violently especially when the goals they had hoped for failed. The Theory was further developed by Miller and his colleagues in 1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1969. The main theory proposed by Dollard and his colleagues argued that, "aggressive behavior often leads to anger". This means that frustration may lead to aggressive behavior that also triggers resistance or an attempt to block the source of frustration. This is what they interpret as a response to bad activities that thwart an expected goal. This was also interpreted by Dennen (2005) when he saw the term frustration not only as a process of preventing a person from enforcing the law but also as a response to a ban.

Dollard et al.(1939) highlighted the dynamic force of violence as a function: the amount of reinforcement of the frustrated goal response, degree of frustration of this response, and number of sequences of the frustrated response. Clearly, anger caused by frustration, in one way or another, is stored within a person or a group of people and may lead to unbearable frustration that could lead to aggressive behavior. They assert that, "the strength of any hostile or aggressive response to a source of frustration depends on the level or amount of residual from previous sources of frustration (Dollard et al., 1939).

Thus, this theory explains the cause or other major causes of the uprising in Nigeria when the people are so frustrated that they resort to violence to register their frustration caused by underdevelopment and neglects by successive governments. For instance in the North, frustration caused by poor governance and raging poverty are the triggers of insurgency and violence. The South East region sees the turmoil or threat from IPOB as a resistance to Ibo marginalisation and alienation in Federal political affairs. They feel that for decades the Nigerian government has discriminated against them by systematically selecting other major ethnic groups, especially the Hausa-Fulani background, to their detriment. In recent times, the desire for self determination has fueled a number of military actions to end the IPOB secessionist campaign by the Nigerian State Government (Tayo & Mba, 2017). All these affect women.

4.2. Cognitive Dissonance Theory

This study is also anchored on the Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT). This theory became popular through the works Festinger in 1951. This theory is based on social influence and structures, called cognitive dissonance which is one of the most important

psychological concepts that illuminates insurgent's behavior. Cunningham (2003) emphasizes that people prefer a state of consistency in relation to values, morals and environmental conditions. When there is a difference between what they see and their desire (a condition called cognitive dissonance), they seek to reduce the dissonance by limiting the consequences by actions, reactive information or changing opinions. Cognitive dissonance is therefore a condition that arises as a result of conflict between areas of the preferred value and the actual value. Such a situation has a tendency to produce hatred, anxiety, fear and desire to hurt or eliminate the source. These conflicts or disagreements can occur in the economic, social, cultural, political and religious spheres and form a low level of analysis that can be considered as structural conditions applicable to each level.

For example, Boko Haram's tendency to revolt can be seen between the real or perceived conflict between their preferred way of life (maintaining the sanctity of the orthodox religious belief) and the real nature of their existence (the state of the world) in Nigeria. The voice of a few elements initially responding to the assumption of incompatibility creates a resistance which in the process of time gain popular support. In fact, personal conflicts develop into a level of dissatisfaction at the group level. The common belief shared by the sect and other employed members of the general public provides a simple platform for raising awareness and mobilizing groups for political action that may lead to civil unrest, riots, and insurrection. In this particular case, it progresses to terrorism as the organization enjoys open or covert support among the dissatisfied elements of society (Akubuya, 2017). The goal of such people is to remove obstacles by any means which Cunningham. (2003) refers to negative approaches. Wrong approaches can include building a terrorist organization and carrying out acts of terrorism. All these have enormous consequences on their perception about women in society, which affects the contributions of women to development.

5. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Undoubtedly, gender plays an important role in promoting or slowing down the process of socioeconomic development. As observed earlier, women play critical roles towards the sustainable development of nations, particularly developing nations. It has also been observed that sociocultural values in most cases impose constraints on women through gender inequalities and attendant restrictions. More importantly, such factors as insurgency, banditry, violence and other forms of conflict affect women negatively in various forms. All these curtail the activities and contributions of women to sustainable development. Unfortunately, the society is so negatively skewed in terms of gender values. Suffice to state that women are oftentimes relegated to the background in the scheme of things, including politics and economic planning.

In recent times there are new perspectives on gender inequalities, values and recognition. The desire to address gender issues has led to the emergence of a number of organizations and programs aimed at empowering women and encouraging them to become active participants in politics, public institutions and development. Although many of these policies are commendable but have not yielded desired results.

Therefore, this paper appreciates the various initiatives on gender equality, particularly on policies that encourage women participation in politics. It concludes that each gender role, especially the role of women in the home and industry, is as important as the role of men. However, this does not mean that women should loss their key roles in the family as the basic unit of society.

Based on the above discussions and findings, this paper recommends that men and women see their roles as equally important in their respective contributions to national development.

Since conflict in any form negatively affects women, government should ensure that it promotes policies that will address the root causes of frustration among citizens. There should be policies that will mitigate the sufferings of the populace and reduce the tendencies for violence.

Government and Non governmental organisations should embark on the sensitisation of the public on gender equality and related issues, as well as encourage women participation in politics and economic development.

Also, women should not only strive to do something by gaining positions outside the home, thus having little or no time to play their primary role in the family but should see their primary role as a key to achieving social development because it will also build lives that will make nations.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Insurgency and violence as components of conflict affect women drastically. As evident, women are critical factors of sustainable development both domestically and nationally. Understanding, sociocultural factors that affect gender issues and the macroeconomic ramifications in relation to equity, peace and development is important. Therefore, government should through its macroeconomic policies and political institutions give leverage to the womenfolks. The findings herein, will help government to design policies that encourage more of women participation in politics, peace and development. Furthermore, this paper brought into focus the causes of insurgency and violence. It is expected that government will find this useful in mitigating the preponderance of insurgency and violence with the concomitant consequences.

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