"The Economics of Nigeria's Chronic Deadly Political Violence"
E. Wayne Nafziger

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Several cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Collier & Hoeffler 1998:563-73; Nafziger, Stewart, and Väyrynen 2000; Nafziger & Auvinen 2003; Emizet and Nafziger 2006) have examined a political economy of factors contributing to war, state killing, and conflict in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and East and Central Europe. These factors include slow growth in GDP, low per capita income, high military spending, high stakes for control of mineral export revenues, pervasive rent seeking by ruling elites, high inequality, authoritarianism, and a neglect of food and agriculture. Scholars need to test these explanations by examining individual countries experiencing deadly political violence.

This study is a preliminary analysis of Nigeria's persistent political violence, combining statistical and economic historical analyses, 1960-2007. Nigeria has experienced a civil war, 1967-70 (Nafziger 1983); a series of irregular regime transfers through overthrows, assassinations, and coups; military repression and turnover; an elected federal government only about one-third of the years since independence in 1960; and substantial violence and alleged rigging and executive misconduct during elections, including the most recent one at the time of this writing in 2007. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) (2007:13) estimates that since Nigeria's return to civilian rule in May 1999, the number of people "killed in various incidents of ethnic, religious, and communal violence . . . is one of the highest in the world - and the country is not fighting a civil war." Federal security forces have clashed with militias and criminal gangs from the Niger Delta over the benefits of petroleum, while deaths from sectarian conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria have killed tens of thousands since 2001.

This paper outlines a political economy of Nigeria's chronic deadly political violence. Factors contributing to Nigeria's violence include the pressures on coalitions of ruling elites from stagnation (real GDP per capita growth of about 00.32% yearly since 1960, according to the World Bank); large class and regional inequalities; the communal, regional, and sectarian competition for employment and revenue; the high-stakes rent seeking and conflict over revenue from oil mining rents, taxes, and royalties paid by transnational oil companies; the chronic inability to adjust to external disequilibrium; the policies of neglect of agricultural research and development and technology transfer in industry; and the high military centralization. The paper provides a framework for a subsequent larger study of how economic factors have contributed to Nigeria's chronic political instability, 1960-2007.

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