

**TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN
NIGERIA:**

(JUNE 2006 – MAY 2014)

BY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The spate of fatal road accidents in Nigeria is phenomenal. Trend analysis of fatal road accidents between June 2006 and May, 2014 using Nigeria Watch database shows that 15,090 lives were lost to fatal car accidents in 3,075 events. The highest fatality occurred in 2013 (2,061 deaths) and a 2.8% increase from 2012 record of 1,652 deaths. However, the probability for a high fatality record in 2014 remains high considering the 964 deaths already recorded between January and May. One cannot say fatal accidents have been on the increase due to the inconsistency in the number of deaths per year. On the national scene, Lagos recorded the highest number of fatalities with 1,579 deaths from 620 events while FCT (Abuja) has the highest relative number of deaths of 0.6 deaths per 100,000 populations. These findings are explained in the population and continuous urbanization of Lagos and the number of inhabitants and registered vehicles in the FCT (Abuja). On the regional level, a trend analysis of the North and South shows that more people died in fatal road accidents in the South (8,288 people (55%)) than in the North (6,792 people (45%)). Secondly, the volume of oil distribution and highway criminal activities has been more prevalent in the South than in the North. Finally, less correlation is found between political violence and accidents except for the very few occasions where Boko Haram insurgents attacked and killed commuters in Borno state.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 19th century industrial revolution resulted in some fundamental changes in the transport sector¹ and provided more flexibility of direction, speed, and timing. Since then, there has been an upsurge in both human and vehicular motor movements, a situation that, as well, resulted in an upsurge in lethal car accidents. A report by International Road Federation, Geneva Programme Center shows that about 2.4million people have died in road accidents across the world with a yearly record of 1.3 deaths and daily record of 3,000 deaths². The worst hit are middle income countries, a circumstance confirmed by Mrs. Tawia Addo-Ashong, World Bank Global Road Safety Facility Coordinator, when she opined that that 1.2million die yearly from road traffic accidents especially in low middle income countries³.

Most African countries fall within the middle income category and thus, are worst hit by car accidents. Studies carried out by Chen, 2010; Jacobs & Aeron-Thomas, 2000 and Lagarde, 2007 show that the fatality rate in African countries ranges from 10-fold to more than 100-fold of those in the United States and has a traffic mortality rate 28.3 per 100,000 populations when compared with 110 in Europe⁴. Sub-Saharan African Transport Policy, in its reported, also noted an increase of road fatalities in Africa by 350 percent between 1990 and 1998⁵. One may wonder why a less motorized Africa records the highest number of road fatalities in the world, surging above an average of 18 deaths for 100,000 populations. Most affected in fatal car accidents are young people who fall within the productive category and vulnerable children.

Concerns of the spate of fatal car accidents compelled stakeholders into road safety management including the United Nations (UN) Assembly to seek for alternative means of curbing fatalities on the road. In May 11, 2011, UN adopted the period 2011 – 2020 as the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety within which all efforts will concentrate on the official goal of ‘stabilizing and then reducing’ global road traffic fatalities by 2020. According to the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, lives would be saved through the decade of Action for Road safety. For him, it is totally unacceptable that more than one million people die on the roads and more than fifty million are

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transport>

² International Road Federation Report on the state of accidents in the world.

³ Interview with Mrs. Tawia Addo-Ashong, Programme Coordinator, Global Road Safety Facility, World Bank

⁴ Terje Assum (1998), Road Safety in Africa: An Appraisal of Road Safety Initiatives In Five African Countries

⁵ ibid

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injured⁶. Following the declaration by the UN in 2011, the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) set out to adopt and domesticate the UN Action Plan by developing a number programmes suitable for every road user in the country.

Despite integrated efforts towards reducing fatal car accidents, Nigeria still remains one of the worst hit. As the most populous country in Africa with a total land area of 910,771 square kilometers and human population of about 167 million and a high level of vehicular population estimated at over 7.6 million, the country has suffered severe loss of manpower and economy to fatal car accidents. Nigeria has a total road length of about 194,000 kilometres (comprising 34, 120 km federal, 30,500 Km, State and 129,580 km of local roads)⁷. Its population density varies in rural and urban areas at about 51.7% and 48.3% respectively and translates to a population- road ratio of 860 persons per square kilometres indicating intense traffic pressure on the available road network⁸. Undoubtedly, this immense pressure contributes to the high road traffic accidents in the country (FRSC, 2012).

Nigeria is ranked second highest in the rate of road accidents among 193 countries of the world⁹. Oladepo and Brieger (1986), argues that $\frac{3}{4}$ of all accidents on Nigerian roads involve fatalities¹⁰. Aside Boko Haram crisis, accidents are by far the main cause of violent death in Nigeria¹¹. This finding corroborates WHO 2013 report which adjudged Nigeria the most dangerous country in Africa with 33.7 deaths per 100,000 populations every year¹². According to the report, one in every four deaths in Africa occur in Nigeria with the remaining 64% in Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda¹³. The consistency in the WHO survey and Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) which reported 7000 deaths from road accidents in 2009 including 969 children¹⁴ leaves no doubt about the precarious situation in Nigeria.

⁶ A speech at the launch of the event, UN Secretary General by Ban Ki-Moon on May 11, 2011 during the United Nations Assembly.

⁷ Sumaila, AbdulGaniyu Femi, 2013. Road crashes trends and safety management in Nigeria, Department of Transport Management Technology, Federal University of Technology, Minna

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ Agbonkhese, O, Yisa, G.L, Agbonkhese, E.G, Akanbi, D.O, Aka, E.O, Mondigha, E.B (2013), Road Traffic Accidents in Nigeria: Causes and Preventive Measures. Civil and Environmental Research, ISSN 2224-5790 (Paper) ISSN 2225-0514 (Online), Vol.3, No.13.

¹⁰ Oladepo, O. Brieger, R. (2006). Road Traffic Accidents: Applying the Brake to a Killing Tree.

¹¹ Nigeria Watch Fourth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2006–2014) by Prof. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos Institut français de géopolitique, Université Paris 8 Associate Fellow, Africa Programme, Chatham House PRIO Global Fellow (Peace Research Institute in Oslo)

¹² WHO 2013 report on Accidents in Africa

¹³ WHO 2013 report on Accidents in Africa

¹⁴ The Sun (2014), Troubling Road Accident Statistics

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The causes of fatal car accidents in Nigeria have been ramped into human, mechanical and environmental factors. According to Umar, the human factor accounts for up to 90% of accidents while the mechanical and environmental factors are subservient to it¹⁵. Human factors include visual acuteness, driver fatigue, poor knowledge of road signs and regulations, illiteracy, health problems, excessive speeding, drug abuse and over-confidence while on the steering. Among the mechanical factors that lead to fatal car accidents are poor vehicle maintenance, tyre blowouts, poor lights, un-roadworthy vehicles and broken down vehicles on the road without adequate warning. The environmental factors are summed up into heavy rainfall, harmattan, sun reflection, heavy wind, pot holes and un-tarred roads. These factors have independently and/or collective contributed to the high prevalence rate of fatal car accidents in Nigeria.

The implications of fatal car accidents in Nigeria have been colossal. Despite the happiness and change of quality of family lives associated with owning a vehicle, its possession has made many families bereaved of their breadwinners or lovely¹⁶. Adekunle (2010) maintained that the socio-economic costs of RTA in Nigeria are immense and the direct cost of traffic casualties can perhaps, at best be understood in terms of the labour lost to the nation's economy. This was further expatiated when Pratte argued that persons injured in accidents on Nigerian highways and streets no longer participate in the economic mainstream and this amounts to a loss of labour of millions of person's years to the nation¹⁷.

In February 1988, the Federal Government established the (FRSC) through Decree No.45 of the 1988 as amended by Decree 35 of 1992 which is referred to in the status book as the FRSC ACT cap 141 laws of the federation of Nigeria (Nigerian Constitution 1999)¹⁸ to reduce road mishaps. To achieve this objective, the commission operates a comprehensive data on traffic road accidents including injuries and deaths unlike Nigeria Watch database¹⁹ that only deals on violent deaths

¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ Dr. Murtala Muhammad Umar, Road Transport Accidents: Causes, Effects and Prevention, General Hospital Zurmi, ZAMFARA State

¹⁷ Pratte, D. (1998) "Road to Ruin: Road Traffic Accident in the Developing World", NEXUS, Vol. 13, 1998, pp. 46 – 62

¹⁸ Agbeboh G. U. and Osabuohien-Irabor Osarumwense, 2013. Empirical analysis of road traffic accidents: A case study of Kogi State, North-Central Nigeria, Department of Mathematics, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria.

¹⁹ Nigeria Watch is a database and research project that monitors lethal violence, conflicts, and human security in Nigeria. It aims to set up a GIS (Geographic Information System) to localise dangerous spots and to assess the rise, decline or stabilisation of violence in the country. Collated data is used to provide statistics, draw maps and analyse trends and it relies on a thorough reading of reports from at least 10 Nigerian press corporations as well as human rights organisations.

including accidents. It therefore becomes imperative to draw conclusions after a comparative analysis of data from FRSC and Nigeria Watch.

4. CONTEXTS OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA

Different circumstances precipitate fatal car accidents in Nigeria. Understanding these contexts (political and socio-economic contexts) gives one a better understanding of why road accident has remained a leading cause of death in the country.

Political Contexts

Fatal car accidents in Nigeria may not be directly attributed to politics. However, party activities, governance, budgetary allocations, contract evaluation, etc have direct impact on the rate of fatal car accidents in Nigeria. Operations of government Ministries and parastatals into safety measures and accident control have mostly been frustrated by poor funding. The Federal Ministry of Works and Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) suffer from apparent severe budgetary constraints leading to insufficient human and material resources and untimely acquisition of safety equipment. Further bureaucratic logjam and politicization of the award of contracts are marred with irregularities and inflated costs. This situation leads to a situation where road contracts are either abandoned or poorly constructed and do not meet up with international standards. Commuters are mostly raided by armed robbers in bad portions of the roads where vehicles come to a halt.

Government functionaries and party leaders have been identified as protagonists to fatal road accidents in Nigeria. In the last five years, accidents involving governors' conveyances are recorded in bi-monthly interval. The indiscriminate use of sirens coupled with very high speed rates by political public office holders such as government vehicles' drivers' has been reported to cause a lot of road traffic accidents in Nigeria²⁰. A renowned Nigerian Professor, Iyayi, died in an accident involving the convoy of Kogi State Governor, Captain Idris Wada, who back on December 28, 2012, was involved in another fatal accident along Lokoja – Ajaokuta Road that killed his ADC, ASP Idris Mohammed. Similarly, the convoy of Governor Oshiomole of Edo State was involved in a gruesome auto accident that resulted to the death of three reporters while returning from a party function in April, 2012 where some members of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) were being received into the defunct Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN). Same year, three political aides of governor Al-Makura of Nasarawa

²⁰ Opcit

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State were killed in a multiple auto crash involving the governor's convoy along Gadabuke – Keffi Road in the state. Zamafara State Governors' convoy is not spared from the trend. The states' governor, Abdul Aziz Yari, in 2012, involved in a fatal car accident that claimed the life of a police officer attached to his team. Also, the ADC to Katsina State Governor Ibrahim Shema and four others died in a road accident involving the governor's convoy in 2011, just 48 hours after two persons also died when their vehicle had an accident while travelling in the convoy of Niger State Governor Babangida Aliyu for a campaign rally. The list continues and one thing that remains peculiar to the convoy's accidents is recklessness and careless driving.

Economic Contexts

The rapid development of comprehensive road transportation systems is crucial to the economy of every nation. Opportunities to acquire and sell a variety of commodities necessary for industrial and manufacturing systems are expanded by a well coordinated transport system. According to Oni (2004), transport is a key element in the social and economic development of any nation. The restrictive nature of the water ways, the pitiable condition of the rail system, and the inability of an average Nigerian to afford the high cost of air travels made road transportation preferable in Nigeria. In 2006, 644387 vehicles including government motor cars and motor cycles; private motor cars and motor cycles and commercial motor cars and motor cycles were registered nationwide. The number came down in 2007 to 612, 867 but increased in 2008 to 746,814 and 777,835 in 2009. In 2010, 712,938 vehicles were registered²¹. Over 70 percent of the total movements of the registered vehicles in the country and about 80% of the freight movements are done on the road²². The over dependence on road transportation keeps worsening the condition of the roads and mounted huge pressure on motorists. These frustrations have direct and indirect impacts on number of road crashes in Nigeria.

The discovery of oil in Nigeria opened new frontiers of economic engagements. Statistics from National Bureau for Statistics (2010) show that crude Petroleum sub sector contributes over 80 % of Nigeria's foreign exchange. The discovery of oil has not been a problem per se. Rather, distribution of refined products across the country has been a thorn in the flesh of many Nigerians. FRSC in 2011 reported that Nigeria has an average of about 5,000 tankers involved in wet cargo haulage, to move about 150 million litres of fuel and 2,500 "trailers" in dry cargoes plying Nigeria

²¹ National Bureau for Statistics

²² FRSC (2011). Traffic Digestion

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roads daily²³. Though haulage business contributes to national economic development, it however portends great danger on the roads. Kayode revealed that between 2007 and June 2010, a total of 4,017 Tankers/Trailers crashes were recorded on Nigerian roads with a yearly average of 1,148 cases and monthly average of 96 crashes and a total of 4,076 persons were killed in crashes involving tankers and trailers²⁴. Due to high inflammable nature of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), fatal accidents involving petrol tankers have always been very fatal.

Aside the carnage of fire explosion involving petrol tankers, trucks and trailers have significantly contributed to fatal car accidents in Nigeria. These articulated vehicles transport agricultural goods and industrial equipments to various locations by road. According to statistics from National bureau for Statistics (2010), over 60 % of the Nigerian population engaged in agriculture²⁵. In 2006, about 99,030.00 metric tons of major agricultural crops in Nigeria were produced. The record reduced in 2007 to 97,183.10; in 2008 to 95,096.47 and went up again in 2009 to 96.050.17 and 115,424.14 in 2010²⁶. Transporting these products in trucks via bad and congested roads have resulted into fatal crashes especially on the highways. Increase in production output means increase in vehicular movements, traffic pressure and fatal road accidents.

Previous studies reveal that owners of public transport vehicles, in pursuit of increased profits, frequently force their drivers to drive at excessive speeds, to work unduly long hours and to work when exhausted. According to Olusiya, most commercial drivers are paid daily wages which range from N1, 000-N2, 500 depending on the city and the type of vehicle, which they considered meager. After daily or weekly account as the case may be, such drivers are left with meager income that cannot sustain them and their families²⁷. Under such circumstances, cars are less maintained and drivers tend to over speeding in order to cover more trips. The risk of being injured, according to Agbonkhese et al, increases exponentially with speed much faster than the average speed and the severity of accident depends on the vehicle speed change at impact and transfer of kinetic energy²⁸.

²³ Op. cit.

²⁴ Kayode Olagunju (Ph.D) 19th October, 2010. Corps Commander Corps Transport Standardization Officer, Federal Road Safety Corps, National Headquarters, Pmb 125, Abuja, Nigeria.

²⁵ National bureau for Statistics (2010)

²⁶ ibid

²⁷ Olusiya Ipingbemi, from the department of Urban and Regional planning, Faculty of the Social Science, University of Ibadan. The wrote on the Socio-Economic Characteristics and Driving Behaviour of Commercial Drivers in Southwestern Nigerian Cities.

²⁸ Op. cit

Social Contexts

Poverty remains circumstantial in the occurrence of fatal car accidents in Nigeria but may not be directly linked to it. Poor housing conditions, social isolation, overloading of passengers in slum areas, insecurity in public places and few other variables explain why the risk of fatal accidents remains high among low-income earners in Nigeria, against the rich ones that reside in metropolitan areas with overhead bridges, secured play grounds, traffic control and safety measures. Christie (1995b) argued that a link between social deprivation and the high accident rate may be explained in terms of increased exposure to hazardous environments. This assumption was expanded by Abdalla (1997) when she argued that the casualty rates amongst residents from areas classified as relatively deprived were significantly higher than those from relatively affluent areas. Schools located within slum areas lack overhead bridges and pupils and pedestrians are left at the mercy of careless drivers. Instances were seen in Anambra and Lagos where school children were crushed to death while trying to cross the expressway. Whereas parents cannot afford the huge fees paid by the high-income earners, they send their children to slum schools where they are exposed to fatal road accidents

Population density is a factor that influences the frequency and fatality rate of car accidents in large cities. Slum areas are often congested with peoples and vehicles. Lack of space encourages the dumping of wreckages on the roads. While drivers scramble for space and try to outsmart their opponents, their inflated driving skills can lead to fatal accidents. Whereas safety measures are ignored, people frequently lose their lives. Car accidents that occurred in large cities like Lagos, Kano and Ibadan mostly lead to severe fatalities.

Social analysts have argued that accidents happen more during festive periods and weekends than week days. This assumption is linked to social driving which involves driving to and fro social events, driving with peers and driving late at nights. Most victims of fatal roads accidents are youths who are most enticed with social events. Smat D et al (moos) noted that limited driving experiences, night time driving, and fatigue are particular risks for young men. Eke et al (2000), using data collection from university of Port Harcourt, found out that 70% of fatal accidents in Port Harcourt occur during the weekends²⁹, a period marked with interactions among friends and families. According to FRSC data on road accidents, 16% of road accidents between 2007 and 2010 occurred on Sunday; 15% on Saturday and 15%; 14% on Thursday, 13% on Wednesday; 14% on Tuesday and

²⁹ Eke, N., E.N. Etebu and S.O. Nwosu, 2000. Road traffic accident mortalities in port harcourt, Nigeria. Anil Aggrawals Internet J. Forensic Med. Toxicol., Vol 1(2).

13% on Monday³⁰. Social occasions, church activities and travel back to work places on Sunday increase traffic volume and the probability of having a fatal car accident. The statistics also explains high incidences of fatal road crashes on Friday and Saturday when government/civil servants leave their workplaces to spend their weekends with friends and families.

Emotional stress such as personal relationships, family problems, and financial problems are important elements in the occurrence of fatal road accidents. Drivers' capacity to attend to hazards is mostly defined by his state of mind. Phone conversation while driving, interacting with peers undermine driver's sense of judgment and responses. These in-vehicle distractions increase the likelihood of entirely missing critical events such as changes in traffic lights (Hancock Lesch Simons, 2003). Furthermore, drivers who are gripped with negative emotions exhibit a high level of distraction. They experience impaired observations and fail to recognize instructions such as traffic or debris on the road and engage in risky maneuvers, changing lanes and driving on freeways. Such distractions lead to road rage, distractions that may be unacceptable by road users.

5. COMPARING FRSC DATA ON FATAL ROAD ACCIDENT WITH NIGERIA WATCH

The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) was established in 1988 as a result of the continuous increase in the trend of fatal road accident on Nigerian road and has the vision of reducing road traffic crashes and creating a safe motoring environment in Nigeria³¹. To achieve its objectives, the commission places much value on research. It builds a strong database on road crashes with a view to putting to use findings to achieving safer roads. Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for effective surveillance to capture and monitor data has transformed into evidence based facts to address road problems and published as briefs in its Publication outfit, Road Mirror.

Nigeria Watch, an online database on violent deaths including accidents has performed similar task as FRSC since June, 2006. Unlike FRSC that operates a more advanced database on both fatal and non-fatal road accidents, Nigeria Watch only focuses on fatal crashes reported in 10 Nigerian daily newspapers and some other international media reports³², a situation which places its fatal

³⁰ FRSC report on Road Traffic Crashes (Rtc) Involving Buses On Nigerian Roads (2007 – 2010)

³¹ FRSC (2007). An article on FRSC Establishment Act. www.Frsc.gov.ng Dec 15, 2007

³² Nigeria Watch is a database and research project that monitors lethal violence, conflicts, and human security in Nigeria. It aims to set up a GIS (Geographic Information System) to localize dangerous spots and to assess the rise, decline or stabilization of violence in the country. Collated data is used to provide statistics, draw maps and analyze trends and it relies on a thorough reading of reports from at least 10 Nigerian press corporations as well as human rights organizations.

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accident records far behind the FRSC records. Irrespective of the comparative differences in the quantum of fatal road accident data that exist between the two databases, Nigeria Watch has been able to monitor the trends and patterns of reported fatal road accidents since its inception. If its panel is more restricted, it gives more details than the FRSC on each accident recorded.

6. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Nigeria Watch data focus on reported accident cases in 10 Nigeria Daily newspapers involving at least one death between June, 2006 and May, 2014. Data excludes injuries. Road accidents come under a broad category of accidents involving cars, buses, tankers, lorry/trailers, bicycle, tricycle and trains. Extracting data that relates with the above mentioned categories requires an event by-event analysis. The categories of vehicles involved in fatal car accidents by type. General causes of violent deaths are analyzed to establish the trends and patterns. Data on the overall number of fatal car accidents by year, region, state, city, severity index and most dangerous route is extracted and analyzed. The essence of categorizing the data extraction is to establish the trends and patterns of car accident deaths nationwide within the period under review. Also, the relative number of deaths is calculated in order to know the probability of someone dying from road accident per 100,000 populations. The severity index is calculated by comparing the number of people killed and the total number of crashes cases. Search results are generated from Nigeria Watch database and exported to Excel for classification. Results are presented in bar charts and frequency distribution tables.

Methodological challenges

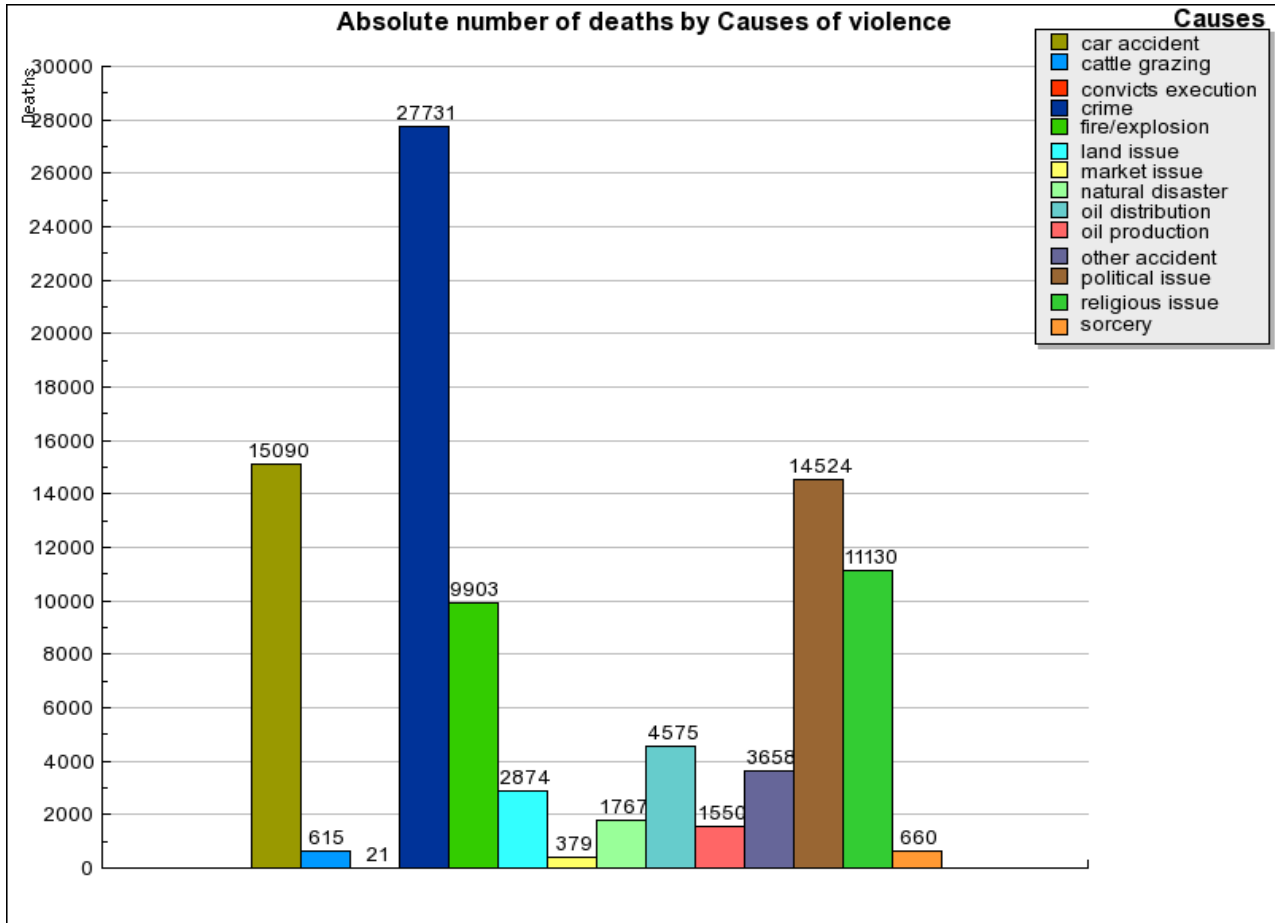
Nigeria Watch sources data from 10 Nigerian daily newspapers. Despite the consistency in news reportage in Nigeria, there are probabilities that some fatal car accidents especially those that occurred in the rural villages are not reported. The challenge calls to question the validity of the records of fatal road accidents when compared with FRSC data which most times triples the Nigeria Watch data fatal car accidents.

7. CAUSES OF VIOLENT DEATHS IN NIGERIA

Many Nigerians have lost their lives in various violent events. Such events cut across different regions and ethnic identities. Figure 1 below shows the main causes of violent deaths between June 2006 and May 2014.

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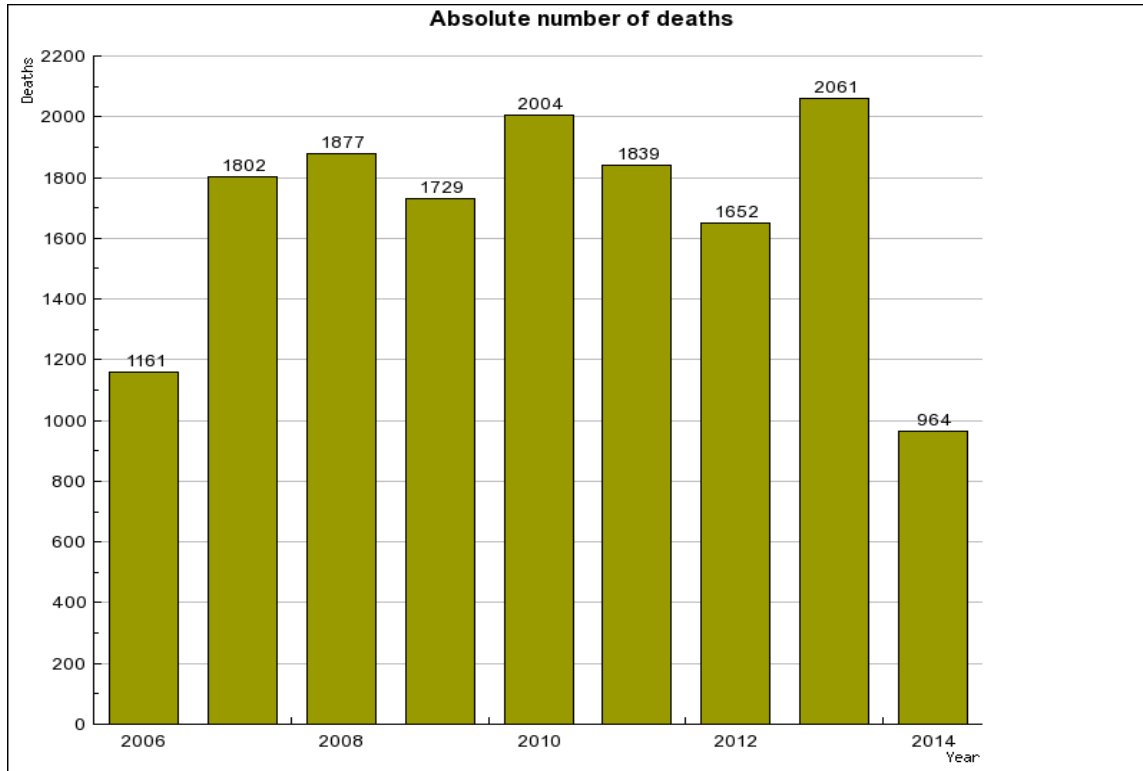
Figure 1-Causes of Violent Deaths in Nigeria, Cumulated figures June 2006-May 2014.



About 61,090 people lost their lives in 14,087 events nationwide during the period under review. In order of public importance, accidents of all types, including road accidents, recorded the highest number of deaths, seconded by crime, political violence, ethno-religious matters and economic issues.

Apart from Boko Haram insurgent activities in the North, accident is thus the main cause of violent deaths in Nigeria. About 15,090 lives were lost to fatal road accidents involving cars, buses, tankers and others articulated vehicles in 3,075 events between June 2006 and May 2014. Data collated from Nigeria Watch show that Lagos state recorded the highest number of car accident deaths from car accidents with 1,543 deaths, seconded by Edo (1,201 deaths) and FCT (Abuja) with 1,026 deaths. While fatal car accidents have so far reduced in Lagos in 2014, Abuja still has the highest relative number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.

Figure 2-Number of violent deaths in Nigeria caused by road accidents per year, June 2006-May 2014



8. MAPPING OF FATALCAR ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA

It is thus relevant to study the trends and patterns of car accident. This mapping covers the period between June 2006 and May 2014. Results show that Lagos state recorded 1, 579 deaths from 620 crashes, seconded by Edo with 1,129 deaths from 177 crashes and FCT (Abuja) with 1,046 deaths from 348 crashes. While the highest fatal car accidents occurred in Lagos, FCT (Abuja) has the highest relative number of deaths per 100,000 populations, as can be seen in the figures 3 and 4 below.

Figure 3- Number of violent deaths caused by road accidents in Nigeria, June 2006-May 2014

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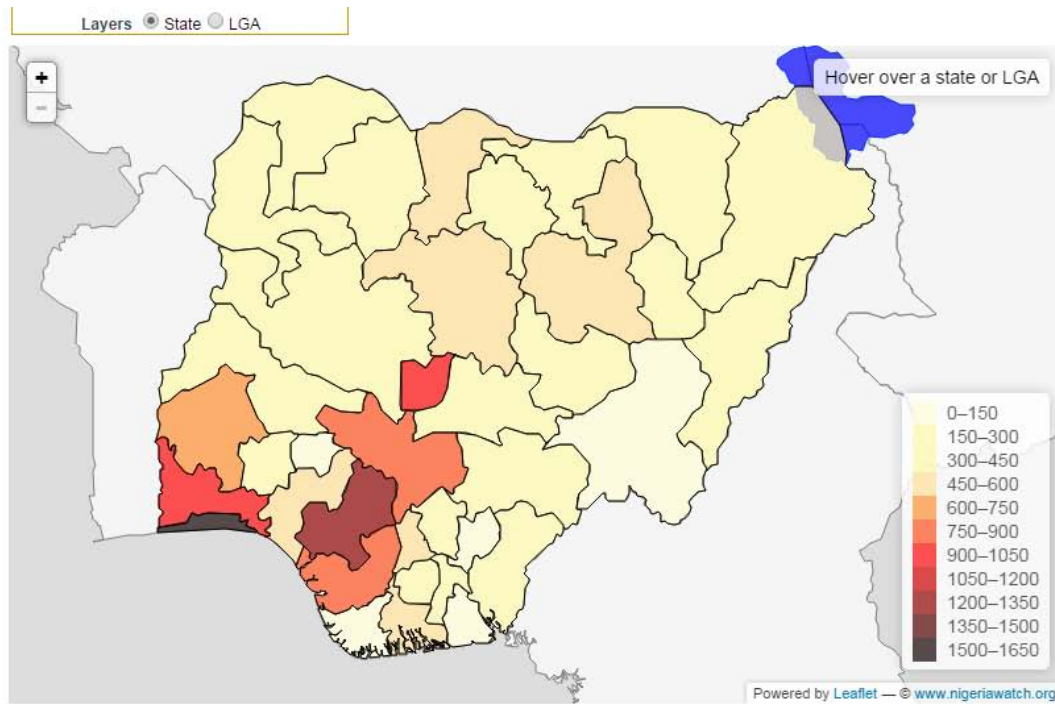
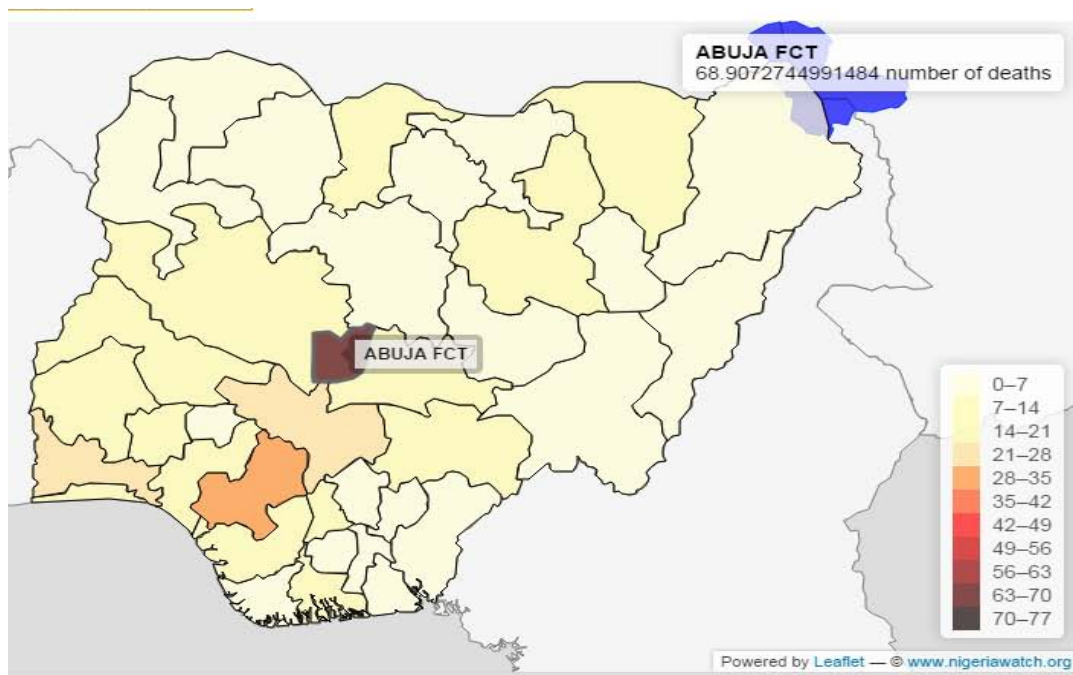


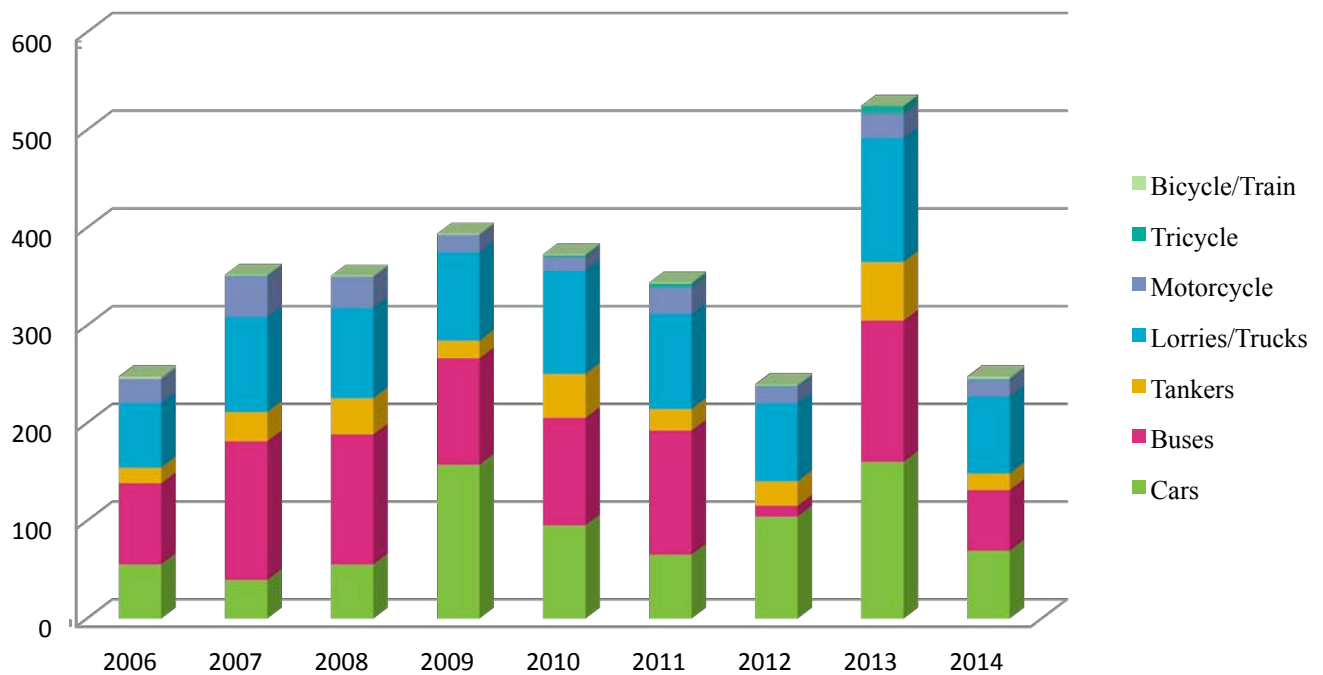
Figure 4- Rates of violent deaths caused by road accidents in Nigeria, June 2006-May 2014



9. FATAL CAR ACCIDENTS BY TYPES OF VEHICLES

Different vehicles are involved in fatal car accidents. Figure 5 shows the categorization of the types of vehicles involved in fatal car accidents in Nigeria between June 2006 and May 2014.

Figure 5- Vehicle Types and Road Accidents in Nigeria, June 2006-May 2014



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The analysis revealed that a total of 921 bus crashed between June 2006 and May, 2014. About 142 of such crashes occurred in 2007; 133 in 2008, 109 in 2009 and 110 in 2010. Bus crashes increased in 2013 to 144. It does not look unfamiliar that there are more fatal bus crashes than every other vehicle type. Luxury bus and mini bus are the most preferred means of travel in Nigeria and mostly used for inter-city transportation. They are preferred to many other vehicles due to space and speed. Fatal accidents involving bus are most prevalent on expressways. Second in the order of involvement are lorries and trucks. There were 833 fatal records of lorry/truck crashes within the period under review and 15% (127) of such crashes occurred in 2013. Undoubtedly, lorries and trucks are crucial to the economic growth of the nation. Most agrarian communities in Nigeria rely more on trucks and lorries for the transportation of agricultural products to cities. Like buses, accidents involving trucks and lorries mostly are mostly reported on the highways.

Cars are popular means of intra-city transportation in Nigeria. While many of them are registered for private usage and city cabs, few are used for inter-city transportation unlike buses. However, the inability of car owners to observe safety measures and adequately maintain their cars often leads to fatal accidents. Between June 2006 and May, 2014, there were 808 incidents of fatal car accidents. Most accidents involving car are reported in metropolitan areas.

Results in Figure 5 also reveal that 270 Tankers/Trailers crashes occurred between June 2006 and May 2014. About 16 tankers crashes were recorded in 2006 and almost doubled to 30 in 2008, an increase of 4.9%. In 2009, the crash records reduced to 18 but increased to 45 in 2010. The highest record of tanker crashes occurred in 2013 (60 crashes). As at May 2014, 17 crashes had so far been recorded and this shows a significant decrease. Though the rate of tanker crashes may seem low, the impact is severe. Apart from the fatal crashes, victims are killed by fire outbreak and explosion. Most crashes involving tankers abound in highways and roads close to farm tanks and depots.

Until the recent ban on motorcycle operation on highways and in major cities by many state governors, commercial motorcycle (popularly called okada) accidents were a major threat to commuters and pedestrians alike. An overall 216 motorcycle crashes were recorded between June 2006 and May, 2014. About 41 motorcycle crashes occurred in 2006, 25 in 2011 and 2013. Many motorcycle accidents occur in slum densely populated and rural areas with less access to good roads. The severity index of motorcycle accidents is often high due to poor safety measures by riders and passengers.

10. SEVERITY INDEX OF FATAL ROAD ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA (JUNE 2006 AND MAY 2014)

The intensity of fatal road accidents varies from state to state. Below is state ranking by low, medium and high severity index.

Figure 6-Severity Index of Fatal Road Accidents per state between June 2006 and May 2014

Group	Rank	State
A	Low (0.00 – 2.99%)	Ebonyi, Lagos
B	Medium (3.00 – 5.99%)	FCT, Ekiti, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Kwara, Osun , Cross River, Taraba, Ogun, Abia, Nasarawa, Oyo, Anambra, Sokoto
C	High (6.00 – 8.99%)	Imo, Jigawa, Benue, Niger, Edo, Gombe, Borno, Ondo, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Rivers, Zamfara, Kogi , Katsina, Kebbi, Adamawa, Yobe

Severity Index= Number of persons killed / Number of Fatal Road Accidents.

Ebonyi and Lagos states ranked low (0.00 – 2.99%) in the severity index of fatal road accidents that occurred between June 2006 and May 2014. Ebonyi had a severity index of 2.4 from 51 deaths in 21 crashes while Lagos enjoys a low severity index of 2.5 from 1,590 deaths in 620 crashes. States that are ranked medium (3.00 – 5.99%) in the severity index include FCT (Abuja), Ekiti, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Plateau, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Kwara, Osun, Cross River, Taraba, Ogun, Abia, Nasarawa, Oyo, Anambra and Sokoto. 18 states (Imo, Jigawa, Benue, Niger, Edo, Gombe, Borno, Ondo, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Rivers, Zamfara, Kogi , Katsina, Kebbi, Adamawa, and Yobe) are ranked high (6.00 to 8.99%) in the index calculation. Highest in this category is Yobe state that recorded 411 fatal road accidents from 36 crashes and has a severity index of 11.4.

11. MONTHLY ANALYSIS OF FATAL CAR ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA, JUNE 2006 - MAY, 2014

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Festive periods and environmental factors are major causes of fatal car accidents in Nigeria. Hence, some months are regarded more dangerous than others. Below are the monthly analyses of fatal car accidents in Nigeria within the period under study.

Figure 7-N° of violent deaths in Nigeria caused by road accidents, per month, June 2006-May 2014

Month	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Jan	-	135	184	85	183	130	117	123	190	1147
February	-	150	168	97	152	193	181	143	200	1284
March	-	203	142	148	327	160	197	101	294	1572
April	-	118	101	180	160	129	131	346	127	1292
May	-	107	258	210	131	119	86	116	153	1180
June	66	152	66	90	154	133	39	96	-	796
July	258	62	193	113	232	149	282	174	-	1463
August	110	120	158	111	171	146	158	182	-	1156
September	200	198	161	174	95	126	147	185	-	1286
October	104	145	72	187	104	167	90	162	-	1031
November	173	112	150	59	108	286	78	164	-	1130
December	251	300	224	275	188	101	146	270	-	1754
Total	1162	1802	1877	1729	2005	1839	1652	2062	-	15091

In order of importance, most deaths occurred in the month of December (1,754 deaths), seconded by March (1,572 deaths); July (1 463 deaths) and April (1,292 deaths). The sequence corresponds with festive and seasonal periods. Christians celebrate Christmas in December and Easter in April and sometimes March. Within these periods, people travel to celebrate with loved one. December is the climax of activities during the ‘ember’ months. According to the past Sector Commander of the FRSC, Mr. Tumes Sylvanus Dalop, accidents and deaths are higher during these “EMBER” months because of the various festivities lined up during this period and which warrant much more travelling³⁵. It is a period when commercial drivers cash in to make more money through overloading, excessive speeding, among others. Similar conditions apply to Easter period. On 3 April 2013, for instance, 70 people died after a double decker bus, a haulage truck and a petrol tanker collided along Benin-Ore expressway. The tanker exploded and killed most people on board the bus³⁶. Two days later, a multiple accident involving a Dangote cement-laden trailer, a tanker and a luxury bus led to the death of 60 persons in Edo. The bus lost control and rammed into the trailer and the trailer into the tanker. The victims were burnt beyond recognition. About 10 motorcycles and 15 shops were

³⁵ Vanguard 2012 interview with the past Sector Commander of the FRSC, Mr. Tumes Sylvanus Dalop on Ember months of road traffic accidents

³⁶ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=11317&rang=1

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destroyed by the fire³⁷. Same day in Anambra, another multiple accident involving a trailer, two minibuses belonging to the Rivers State Transport Company (RSTC) and two other vehicles claimed 25 lives³⁸. Within a space of 2 days, 155 lives were wasted on the road.

December recorded the second highest death in 2013 with 270 deaths from 76 incidents. The period is marked with various economic activities including transportation of cattle from the North to the South. About 9 persons died in an auto crash that involved 2 articulated vehicles carrying some passengers and cows³⁹. The traffic pressure on the road during the seasonal period increase fatal car accidents. Evading bad portions of the road might lead to fatal car accidents nationwide. In Sokoto, 10 people died in an auto crash involving two J5 buses. One of the vehicles had attempted to dodge potholes and suddenly lost control⁴⁰. Another incident happened along Lagos/Ibadan expressway where a multiple accident claimed 23 lives⁴¹. The crash occurred when a tanker loaded with petrol lost control and rammed into trailers parked by the roadside and ignited an inferno that burnt other vehicles trapped in a gridlock.

July is the peak of rainy season. A total of 1,463 persons died from fatal road accidents in the month of July between June 2006 and May 2014. Heavy rains make road markings less visible, collapsed bridges, fall tree on the road and overflow river banks. Adegoke rightly noted that there are lots of road crashes during the rainy season. On October 2013, for instance, 4 finance clerks of a Local Government Area were killed in an auto crash while they were returning from the Headquarters of the council during a heavy downpour⁴². Another 14 members of an emirate palace guards in Wadugur Village, Ringim LGA, Jigawa died when a petrol tanker and a coaster bus collided as a result of heavy rain that obstructed their sights⁴³. Along the Lagos-Ibadan expressway, 5 people lost their lives after two tankers rammed into each other in a heavy rain and exploded⁴⁴. Of recent in Lagos, a Nissan Sony car plunged into canal during a heavy downpour that lasted for over 4 hours, killing 1 and injuring 3⁴⁵. The situation is not different in Ibadan in Oyo state where in 2012, two

³⁷ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=11124&rang=2

³⁸ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=12573&rang=3

³⁹ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=12859&rang=2

⁴⁰ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=12871&rang=3

⁴¹ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=12990&rang=4

⁴² http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=12227&rang=2

⁴³ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=12081&rang=3

⁴⁴ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=6100&rang=4

⁴⁵ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=14262&rang=1

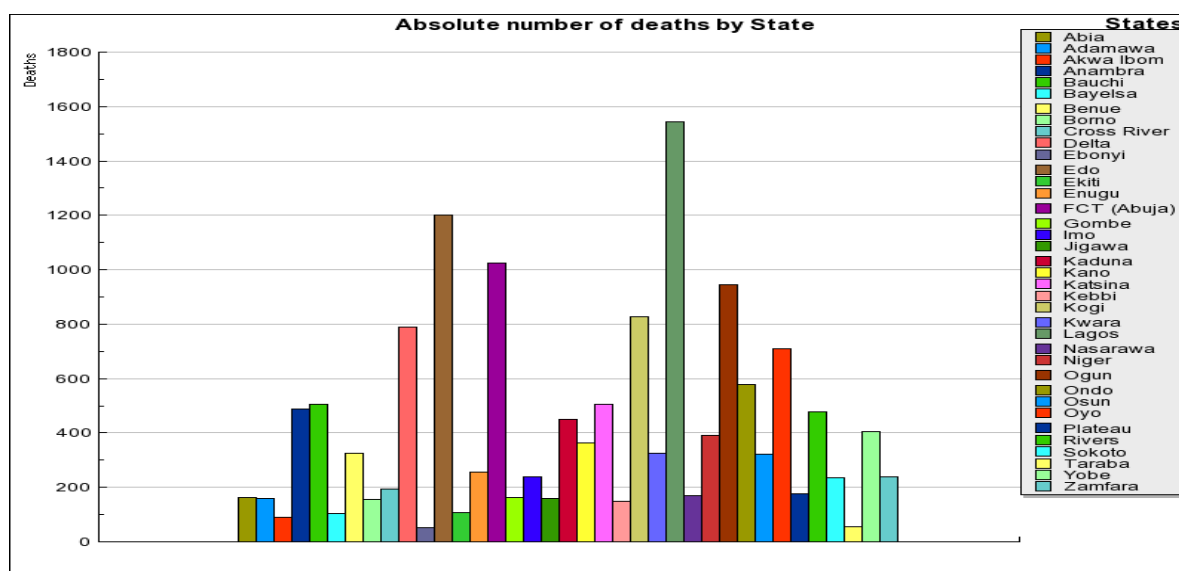
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motorists were washed away by flood after a bridge collapse on the Secretariat-University of Ibadan road⁴⁶.

12. STATE ANALYSIS OF FATAL CAR ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA, JUNE, 2006 – MAY, 2014

Fatal car accident is a national calamity though the frequency and intensity varies from state to state. This section analyzes the trends and patterns of fatal car accidents per state.

Figure 8-Number of violent deaths in Nigeria caused by road accidents per state (June 2006-May 2014)



Data collected by Nigeria Watch shows that Lagos has the highest number of fatalities on the national level with 1,579, seconded by Edo with 1,129 deaths and thirdly by FCT (Abuja) with 1,046 deaths. On the other hand, Ebonyi (51 deaths), Taraba (68 deaths) and Akwa Ibom (91) recorded little fatal road accidents.

Figure 9- Yearly breakdown of violent road accident deaths in Nigeria, June 2006-May 2014

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	TOTAL
Abia	-	28	12	3	1	5	57	42	5	153
Adamawa	-	-	54	10	39	13	30	12	2	160
Akwa Ibom	3	17	-	3	5	8	26	22	7	91
Anambra	36	22	30	78	98	35	69	96	28	492
Bauchi	23	17	69	24	65	124	88	76	19	505
Bayelsa	1	30	19	4	-	3	3	34	10	104
Benue	19	51	12	66	18	68	40	48	4	326
Borno	-	21	13	45	17	12	18	18	11	155

⁴⁶ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=9559&rang=1

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Cross River	34	21	54	10	10	10	6	26	18	189
Delta	44	82	181	39	184	44	62	112	50	798
Ebonyi	2	3	5	4	5	1	3	21	7	51
Edo	47	88	164	196	11	208	85	210	120	1129
Ekiti State	-	20	11	4	8	8	24	21	11	107
Enugu	-	5	2	40	61	44	27	35	30	244
FCT	48	80	159	120	198	134	87	162	58	1046
Gombe	20	15	19	24	40	27	5	23	-	173
Imo	26	21	71	33	17	14	20	30	7	239
Jigawa	1	24	23	14	6	10	13	32	37	160
Kaduna	43	186	24	32	28	17	48	50	18	446
Kano	36	16	31	102	49	48	13	50	28	373
Katsina	36	80	8	64	52	121	50	83	10	504
Kebbi	11	-	1	10	36	38	3	43	7	149
Kogi	33	70	58	208	172	89	86	64	56	836
Kwara	39	29	34	50	34	21	47	43	22	319
Lagos	212	260	306	148	236	156	68	119	74	1579
Nasarawa	4	64	12	29	2	7	10	19	20	167
Niger	21	18	40	37	94	70	13	51	48	392
Ogun	82	95	87	105	92	86	227	182	28	984
Ondo	67	81	59	34	148	106	53	20	15	583
Osun	13	88	75	14	9	27	29	28	27	310
Oyo	177	23	41	77	59	114	67	107	53	718
Plateau	4	9	31	33	18	32	10	40	-	177
Rivers	43	97	51	11	55	15	174	30	-	476
Sokoto	8	44	38	12	46	8	28	19	32	235
Taraba	5	9	20	11	5	1	5	6	6	68
Yobe	6	36	38	13	62	88	40	50	78	411
Zamfara	17	52	25	22	24	27	18	37	18	240
TOTAL	1161	1802	1877	1729	2004	1839	1652	2061	964	15090

Lagos state

The population of Lagos State is put at 17.5 million as at 2006⁴⁷ with 37% of the land area of Lagos State home to over 85% of the State population⁴⁸. According to World Bank demographic trend analysis, Lagos State population growth rate of 8% has resulted in its capturing of 36.8% of Nigeria's urban population estimate at 49.8 million people of the national population⁴⁹. In this context, fatal car accidents are a challenge, with 212 deaths reported in 6 months in 2006, 260 in 2007 and 306 in 2008. Yet there was a drastic reduction in accident fatality rate, with 156 and 68 deaths in 2011 and

⁴⁷ NPC 2006

⁴⁸ <http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/pagelinks.php?p=6>

⁴⁹ <http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/pagelinks.php?p=6>

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2012 respectively. The figure went up again in 2013 with 119 deaths but has been moderate in the first 5 months in 2014 (See Figure 9 above).

Figure 10- Summary of fatal car accidents in Lagos per LGAs and Routes, June 2006-May 2014

LGAs	No. of deaths	Most Dangerous Routes
Amuwo-Odofin	9	n.a.
Epe	49	Lekki-Epe Road; Epe/Ipeju Expressway
Ibeju/Lekki	49	Lekki/Epe
Ifako-Ijaye	28	Abeokuta Expressway
Kosofe	48	Lagos Ibadan Expressway; Ketu, Mile 12
Mushin	28	Agege Motor Road; Ladipo
Ojo	58	Lagos-Badagry expressway
Shomolu	41	Ikorodu Road; Gbagada Expressway.
Lagos Mainland	29	Third Mainland Bridge
Lagos Island	44	Obalende
Ikorodu	148	Ikorodu Expressway
Surulere	55	Apapa-Oshodi Expressway; Ojuelegba
Oshodi-Isolo	180	Oshodi-Apapa Expressway
Ikeja	266	Lagos-Ibadan Expressway
Eti-Osa	62	Lagos-Epe Expressway
Badagry	143	Badagry Expressway; Eko bridge
Apapa	72	Apapa-Oshodi Expressway' Tin Can Island
Alimosho	150	Igando road; Lagos-Abeokuta Express way
Agege	97	Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway
Ajeromi-Ifelodun	23	Ajegunle
TOTAL	1,579	

Ikeja, the capital of Lagos state, recorded the highest number of deaths from car accidents. Most lives were lost in the Ikeja axis of Lagos-Ibadan expressway. The strategic location of the area places it at the center of fatal car accidents, with a record of 266 car accident deaths. Another route that has claimed several lives is the ever busy Oshodi-Apapa Expressway. Oshodi is one of the most populated areas of Lagos state, with major industries located in the LGA. Within the period under study, 180 persons died in fatal car accidents. The expressway is a major link to Tin Island, where most companies involved in oil distribution are located. The presence of these companies has kept Apapa, Mainland, Island and Eti-Osa ever busy with commercial activities. Oil pipelines cut through many residential areas in Lagos state. Distribution of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), a major cause of

deaths along Apapa/Mile 2/Oshodi expressway, has always been ongoing. The volatility of such refined products makes it fatal each time tankers have accidents.

In May 2008, for instance, an explosion occurred after a bulldozer hit an oil pipe and about 100 people were gutted by fire, especially school children⁵⁰. Other protagonists apart from oil companies have been identified as protagonists to road accidents in Lagos state. Activities of government security agencies have severally culminated into fatal accidents in the state. Commercial bus drivers often cause fatal accidents each time they are being chased by Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) and FRSC. The police are not exempted as protagonists to fatal road accidents. About 54 people died in a multiple road accident caused by a police checkpoint on Shangisha Bridge, between the Toll Gate and Berger Bus Stop near Otedola Housing Estate. A trailer belonging to Dangote group, transporting sugar, lost control as a result of brake failure and rammed into vehicle which exploded and burnt several persons⁵¹.

However, the administration of governor Fashola (2007-2015) has achieved a reasonable success in the reduction of road accidents in Lagos state. Through its policies, agencies like LASTMA have been created to reduce deaths, injuries and economic losses from road accidents by employing modern traffic management techniques. These agencies are empowered, among other things, to relocate tankers to industrial parks; to impound tankers and cars parked by the road side without authorization and to ensure strict adherence to safety measures by bus drivers and motorcycle riders. The use of overhead bridges is constantly monitored and offenders who refuse using such bridges are arrested and prosecuted. These polices on road safety management has drastically reduced the rate of road accidents in the state. Accidents have been reduced from 19% in 2008 to 9% in 2009. It was further reduced to about 8% in 2013 and keeps showing signs of great reduction in the first five months in 2014.

Edo

Edo state recorded the second highest fatal road accidents in Nigeria between June, 2006 and May 2014 with 1,129 deaths in 177 accident cases. There was a high record of fatal car accident in 2013 with 210 deaths, seconded by 208 deaths in 2007, 196 in 2009, 164 in 2008 and 120 between January and May 2014. The strategic nature and location of Edo state as a major link to South West, South-

⁵⁰ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=3502&rang=1

⁵¹ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=6634&rang=2

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South, South East and North Central places it on a list of states with high risk of fatal car accidents. The state also serves as a major terminal to most drivers travelling to different parts of the country. The Figure below shows the distribution of fatal car accidents in Edo state within the period under study.

Figure 11- Summary of fatal car accidents in Lagos per LGAs and Routes, June 2006-May 2014

LGAs	No. of deaths	Most Dangerous Routes
Akoko-Edo	46	Okene-Abuja expressway
Egor	1	n.a.
Esan Central	12	Benin-Okene Highway
Esan North-East	10	Irrua Benin road
Esan South-East	1	n.a.
Esan West	20	Benin-Auchi road
Etsako east	19	n.a.
Etsako West	24	Ekpoma road
Iguegben	4	n.a.
Ikpoba-Okha	23	Benin-Oluku by-pass
Oredo	419	Benin-Ore-Lagos road
Orhionmwon	33	Benin-Lagos Expressway; Benin-Auchi road, Benin-Asaba road
Ovia North-East	176	Benin-Ore express road
Ovia South-West	286	Benin-Lagos Expressway
Owan-East	5	n.a.
Uhunmwonde	50	Benin-Asaba expressway
Total	1,129	

Oredo LGA recorded 419 deaths from 83 accident cases, seconded by Ovia South-West (286 deaths from 20 cases) and Ovia North-East (176 deaths from 24 accident cases). Benin-Ore expressways cuts across the three most affected fatal car accidents in the state. The route has been one of the most dangerous routes in Nigeria for decades. In April 2013, for instance, an accident that involved a cement-laden Dangote trailer, a tanker and a luxury bus along the route led to the death of 60 persons⁵². The bus, suffering a burst tyre, rammed into the trailer which rammed into the tanker and the 60 victims were burnt beyond recognition within minutes. About 16 vehicles, 10 motorcycles, 15 shops by the road side were also destroyed by fire.

Another dangerous route in the Edo state is the Benin-Auchi-Okene highway. The route connects the state with Kogi and serves as a major route to persons travelling to the South West. The

⁵² http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=11124&rang=1

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traffic volume on the road makes it the second most dangerous route within the period under study. In 2009, for instance, an 18-seater bus collided with an oncoming trailer along Okene/Auchi/Benin highway and killed 15 people including a lecturer at Auchi Polytechnic⁵³. Data from Nigeria Watch also shows that in six months only, between December 2008 and May 2014, 74 people have died in the notorious Ewu Hill along Benin-Auchi-Okene highway⁵⁴. However, the recent reconstruction of some roads in the state by the Federal government is expected to be a form of palliative measure to the spate of fatal car accidents in the state.

FCT (Abuja)

FCT recorded the third highest death toll of 1,046 lives lost in 348 fatal accidents between June 2006 and May 2014, most of which occurred along Abuja-Kubwa and Abuja-Lokoja expressways and within the urban settlements. 198 deaths were reported in 2010, 162 in 2013, 159 in 2008 and 120 in 2009. Abuja Municipal recorded the highest fatal car accidents with 344 deaths, seconded by Kwali with 248 and Abaji with 212. While road accidents is widely distributed in FCT (Abuja), the Municipal area accounted for 34% of the entire road accidents deaths, followed by Kwali (23%), Abaji (21%) and Gwagwalada (18%). Roads in Kuje were very peaceful with just one death in one event within the period under study. Figure 12 shows the distribution of fatal road accidents in FCT.

Figure 12- Summary of fatal car accidents in FCT (Abuja) per LGAs and Routes

LGAs	No. of deaths	Most Dangerous Routes
Abaji	212	Abuja-Lokoja highway
Abuja Municipal	344	Abuja-Kubwa-Zuba, Airport road; Abuja-Nyanya- Keffi
Bwari	39	Abuja-Zuba expressway
Gwagwalada	182	Abuja-Lughe-Gwagwalada road; Abuja-Lokoja Highway
Kuje	1	n.a.
Kwali	248	Abuja-Lokoja Highway (Yangoji)
Total	1, 026	

Reasons for the high rate of fatal accidents in FCT (Abuja) can be narrowed down to the good state of roads and number of registered cars in Abuja. Abuja-Kubwa-Zuba, awarded for construction in 2012

⁵³ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=5153&rang=1

⁵⁴ www.nigeriawatch.org

by the Federal government of Nigeria is the best and widest in the country with 10 lanes. Motorists, however, are ignorant of dangers associated with smooth roads and have little consideration for safety measures. There is so much confidence among road users that a slightest brush lead to altercations and tailgating. Secondly, there is a high increase in the number of vehicles plying the roads in the city with its accompanying chaos. Understandably, this led to the ban on the use of mini buses for commercial purposes and the restriction of motorcycles and tricycles to the outskirts of the city⁵⁵.

13. ANALYSIS OF FATAL CAR ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA BY REGION AND GEO-POLITICAL ZONES

Nigeria is broadly grouped into North and South. North is comprised of Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and Federal Capital Territory. Others include Taraba, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Gombe, Yobe, Kaduna, Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina State. Its southern counterpart is comprised of Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Abia, Anambra, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross River, Rivers and Delta State. Others are Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo and Osun.

Based on the 2006 census, the nation's population is put at 140 million; the North accounts for 73.6 million and the South 64.9 million. Kano is the most populated state in the North with 9,383,682 while FCT (Abuja) has the least population with 1,405,201. The population of Southern Nigeria is dominated by Lagos (9,031,534) while Bayelsa is the least populated with 1,703,358.

Figure 13- Number of violent deaths in Nigeria caused by road accidents by regions (2006-2014)

⁵⁵ <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/daily/city-news/30374-abuja-a-city-of-good-roads-several-accidents>

□

Regional Fatal Accident Statistics

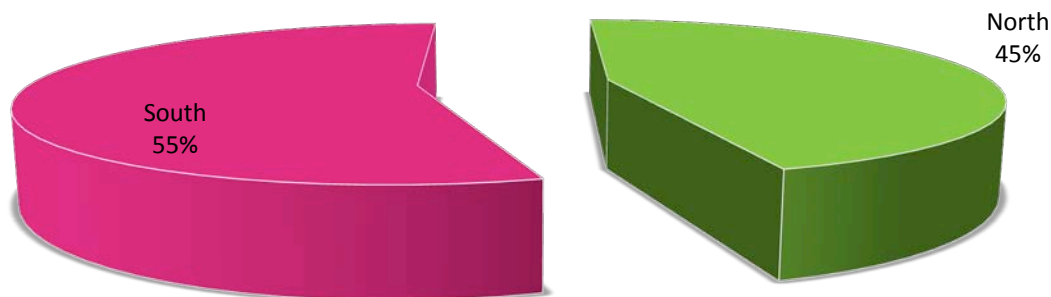


Figure 13 above shows statistics of car accident deaths in the North and the South of Nigeria. Between June 2006 and May 2014, 8,288 people (55%) died from road accidents in the South while 6,792 people (45%) died in the North. In the South, many people died on Lagos-Ibadan, Benin-Ore, Enugu-Port Harcourt expressways prior to their recent renovations. In the North, FCT (Abuja) has one of the best road networks in the country. Yet good roads also entail over speeding and a high risk of fatal accidents. Abuja indeed records the highest fatality rate due to car accidents.

Oil distribution through the activities of tankers is also an important factor in the spate of car accidents in the South. Tankers are rocked with fire explosions each time they fall on the roads. Several commuters have lost their lives in such incidents especially along Lagos-Sagamu-Ibadan expressway, East-West road in Rivers state and Benin-Ore road in Edo. The failure of the government to renovate the railway system forced greater pressure on tanker drivers to use road transportation.

Furthermore, rampant criminal activities on the expressways have caused several fatal road accidents in the South. Arguably, the South is a home of different networks of criminal gangs. Motorists are both robbed and laid on the tarred road only to be crushed by oncoming vehicles. In other cases, they are chased into fatal accidents. In 2008, August 1st, 30 Igbo traders were held captive by robbers in Ijebu Ode after being robbed. They were forced to lie face down on the road and were crushed to death by an oncoming trailer⁵⁸. Similarly, 32 passengers of a bus were victims of

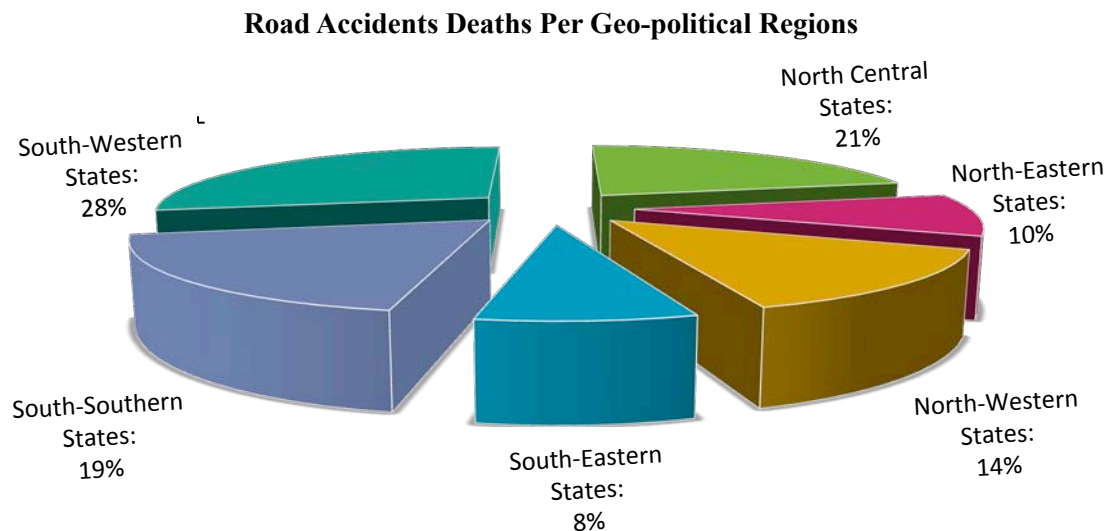
⁵⁸ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=5121&rang=4

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robbery attack when they were forced to lie on the road and were crushed to death by an oncoming luxury bus⁵⁹. The above fundamental and structural issues have always given the North a comparative advantage with respect to the number of fatal accidents in Nigeria.

However, when comparing death figures from road accident in the six Geo-political zones in Nigeria, South-West recorded the most number of deaths with 4,239 and seconded by North Central (3,242). (See Figure 14 below). This result is unsurprising given the immense contribution of Lagos and Oyo states (South West) and FCT (Abuja) and Kogi states (North Central) to fatal road accidents in Nigeria.

Figure 14- Number of violent deaths in Nigeria caused by road accidents by regions



14. POPULATION, RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION AND FATAL ROAD ACCIDENTS IN NIGERIA

Urbanization has a huge toll on fatal road accidents in Nigeria as one of the countries in the developing world with high rate of rural-urban migration and fast growing cities. Though a global phenomenon, 90% of growth in urban population occurs in developing countries and place intense pressures on urban infrastructures, particularly transportation⁶⁰. The National Bureau of Statistics put Nigeria's population at 166.2 million people in 2012. This represents 2.35 percent of the world's

⁵⁹ http://www.nigeriawatch.org/index.php?urlaction=evtView&id_evt=8168&rang=10

⁶⁰ Rodrigue J (2009). *The Geography of Transport Systems*, 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge.

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total population which arguably means that one person in every 43 people on the planet is a resident of Nigeria. In this context, very large metropolitan area like Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, Kaduna and Port Harcourt face congestion problems that often occur when traffic pressure is mounted on the transport systems. A high number of accidents happen due to general impatience and ill-tempered nature of road users and conflict between pedestrians and other different means of road transport in the cities⁶³.

Figure 16- Population Estimate of States/Cities and Absolute Number of Deaths

State	National Population Commission (NPC, 2006)	Major City	City Population (NPC, 2006)	Absolute Deaths (Nigeria Watch, June 2006-May, 2014)
Lagos	9,013,534	Ikeja	8,029,200	1,579
Kano	9,383,682	Kano	3,248,700	373
Oyo	5,591,589	Ibadan	3,078,400	718
Kaduna	6,066,562	Kaduna	1,458,900	446
Rivers	5, 185,400	Port Harcourt	1,053,900	476

Source: <http://www.mongabay.com>

Lagos, the most populous city in Nigeria, is the second fastest-growing city in Africa and the seventh in the world.⁶⁵ Rural-urban migration, immigration, unemployment, inadequate social amenities and the lack of urban planning explain infrastructural decay including the road transportation system and vastly account for the 1,579 road accident deaths between June 2006 and May 2014.

By order of importance, Ibadan, capital city of Oyo State, is the third largest metropolitan area in Nigeria, after Lagos and Kano. It recorded the second highest fatal car accident deaths within the time under study. Ibadan, mostly seen as the centre of administration of the old Western Region, consistently witness massive rural-urban migration from neighbouring communities. The state has a network of dual roads including the Ojoo-Sango-Mokola road, Ring road-Orita-challenge-New garage ways and recently completed Dugbe-Eleyele-Jerico Road. However, most of the 718 accident deaths that happened within the city occurred on these roads.

⁶³ Ogunsanya AA (1993). Directions in Urban Transport Studies in Nigeria. In Ikya, S.G. (ed.). *Urban Passenger Transportation in Nigeria*, Heinemann Educational Books (Nig.) Plc.

⁶⁵ World's fastest growing cities and urban areas from 2006 to 2020, by CityMayors.com

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Port Harcourt, another major city in Nigeria, recorded 476 car accidents deaths between June 2006 and May 2014. The city is an epicenter of oil activities by a large number of multinational and local firms. Hence, oil distribution has been a major threat to the city when it relates to tanker accidents, explosions and fire outbreak. Aside oil related activities, Port Harcourt is known for its bustling night activities and entertainment. Late night driving, under-age driving and drink driving are factors that have contributed to the number of fatal road accidents in the state. Finally, the volume of trade within the city due to its proximity to Aba, the commercial center of Abia state, increases the volume of traffic pressure from traders flocking in and out of the state. The increase of traffic volume often causes fatal road accidents.

15. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the trends and patterns of road accidents in Nigeria between June, 2006 and May, 2014. After studying causes of violent deaths in Nigeria from a holistic point of view, fatal road accidents was discovered to be the deadliest apart from Boko Haram insurgency. Different contexts precipitate fatal car accidents in Nigeria. Understanding these political and socio-economic contexts gives a better insight on why road accident has remained a leading cause of death in the country. The distribution of fatal car accidents among the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory shows that Lagos state recorded the highest number of fatal car accidents but was less dangerous after calculating the severity index. Abuja is more dangerous when compared with the number of inhabitants. Results further show that regional variations exist in the fatality rate of road accident with more deaths occurring in the South than in the North. Results prove that state and city population estimates, number of registered vehicles, trade volume are among variables that determine the fatality rate of car accidents in Nigeria. Mapping fatal car accidents in most states shows little correlation with political violence except for few accidents that were caused by Boko Haram attacks on commuters in Borno. As a result of government's inability to appropriately budget and monitor road constructions and maintenance, criminal networks have also taken advantage of bad spots on the highways to rob, causing fatal car accidents.

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