



## JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, POLICY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

Volume 1, Number 7 (October, 2025)

ISSN: 1595-9457 (online); 3043-4211 (print)

Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/> Email: [jppssuniuyo@gmail.com](mailto:jppssuniuyo@gmail.com)

Received: September 09, 2025 Accepted: October 02, 2025 Published: October 31, 2025

**Citation:** Andza, Saa-Aondo M.; Akuva, Iorhen I. & Tativ, Bem E. (2025). "Frantz Fanon's Political Philosophy and the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) in Benue State." *Journal of Philosophy, Policy and Strategic Studies*, 1 (7): 56-68.

### Article

### Open Access

## FRANTZ FANON'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALWS) IN BENUE STATE

Saa-Aondo Moses Andza<sup>1</sup>, Iorhen Isaac Akuva<sup>2</sup> & Bem Elijah Tativ<sup>3</sup>

Department of Political Science, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State<sup>1, 2 & 3</sup>

Corresponding Email: [akuvaaisaac@gmail.com](mailto:akuvaaisaac@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

There have been persistent widespread SALWs in Benue State with their associated consequences. This is in spite the various kinetic measures to stem the tide of the phenomenon. Although scholars have explored the situation, political philosophies of philosophers as explanatory tools seem not to attract their attention. This paper therefore employs Frantz Fanon's political philosophy on colonialism, decolonization, and violence as an explanatory tool for the proliferation of SALWs in the state. The conceptual method of research was employed for the study, which reveals that governance in Benue State is akin to colonialism as features of colonialism that reflect a complex interplay of socioeconomic marginalization of the masses, historical grievances, and systemic failure are present in the state. The study also finds that Fanon's philosophy on decolonization mirrors the situation in the state, as evidenced by the expressed disaffection of the masses towards the ruling elite's domination, oppression, and exploitation. It is also the finding of the study that the proliferation of SALWs in the state reflects Fanon's assertion that the moment a person realizes his humanity; he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure his victory from the shackles of domination, exploitation, and oppression of the ruling elite. Violence as a solution to the ruling elite's misrule is criticized for bringing about increased incidences of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicide; increased risk of cardiovascular disease; and the cause of premature mortalities. The study concludes that in spite of the criticisms of Fanon's philosophy, it offers eloquent explanations to the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State, which serves as a guide to reversing the ugly trend only if the ruling elite will summon the political will.

**Keywords:** Benue State, Frantz Fanon, Political Philosophy, Proliferation, SALWs.

Copyright © 2025 By JPPSS. Publishers: Omega Books

This is an open access article which permits unrestricted use provided the work is properly cited.

## **Introduction**

The increase in the number of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in the hands of civilians across the globe (Karp, 2018) has emerged as one of the most pressing security challenges of the 21st century. It has increased the number of fatalities in countries of the world and is a direct cost to peace, security, and development. In the United States of America, where Karp (2018) avers that 45.9 percent of the global firearms are in civilians' possession, there is an exacerbation of suicides, domestic violence, homicides, violent crimes, mass shootings, unintentional deaths, and injuries. The BBC News May 25, 2022, corroborates this when it reveals that between 1968 and 2017, 1.5 million people lost their lives as a result of the aforementioned in the supposedly safest country in the world. In 2020 alone, Gramlich (2022) held that "a total of 45,222 people died from gun-related injuries of all causes during 2020" in the United States of America. In India, Muggah and Guple (2015) indicate that SALWs are responsible for the country's inglorious second-largest position in the world with the number of homicides. Criminal violence, which has a correlation with the proliferation of SALWs according to Muggah and Guple (2015), generates at least ten times more deaths and injuries than terrorism and conflict in India. The story is not anything different from what obtains in Russia. This is because the EMISS Government Statistics (n.da) and EMISS Government Statistics (n.db) reveal that, between 2015 and 2019, there were 45,910 deaths in Russia by SALWs available in civilians' possessions. The proliferation of SALWs is also a pressing security challenge in Brazil, as the World Population Review (2022) indicates that the country recorded 49,436 gun deaths in 2019 alone. The same thing applies in Nigeria, as the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (2015-2021) reveals that between 2015 and 2021, 94,489 SALW deaths were recorded. These deaths were attributed to cattle grazing, crime, and land issues, which shows that there is a strong relationship between violence and the over six million SALWs that are said to be proliferating in Nigeria.

Benue State, located in the North-Central geopolitical zone of Nigeria, has witnessed escalating violence, often fueled by the widespread availability of SALWs. It is in a bid to uncover the deeper ideological and historical currents driving one of Benue's most pressing security challenges that we explored in this paper, the proliferation of SALWs through the lens of Frantz Fanon's political philosophy. Fanon's political philosophy emphasizes the psycho-social legacies of colonialism, the role of violence in decolonization, and the struggle for dignity among the oppressed. Fanon's theory that violence can be both a symptom and a response to structural injustice sheds light on why marginalized communities may resort to arms as a form of resistance or survival. It is against this background that this paper adopts Frantz Fanon's political philosophy in explaining the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. This paper is segmented into seven sections for logical analysis starting with an introduction as the first section, followed by Fanon's biography which is the second section. Section three looks at the factors that influenced Fanon's political philosophy while section four is the exposition of Fanon's political philosophy. Section five is styled the influence of Frantz Fanon's political philosophy on the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. Section six is a critique of Fanon's political philosophy and the paper is wrapped up with a conclusion in section seven.

## **A Biography of Frantz Fanon**

There are no conflicting accounts of Fanon's birth, as Peterson (2021), Boumghar (2019), and Macey (2012) are unanimous that the Martinique-trained psychiatrist and philosopher was born on July 20, 1925, in the French West Indies, in Fort-de-France, Martinique. Micklin

(2008, para. 1) averred that Frantz's father, Félix Casimir Fanon, was a black descendant of an African slave who worked as a customs service inspector. His mother, Eléanore Médélice, was half French and owned a hardware and drapery shop (Gordon & Cornell, 2015). Frantz was the third of four sons in a family of eight children. He, however, did not have as many children as did his parents. Frantz had a child outside wedlock, Mireille, in 1948, four years before he was married to Marie-Joséphine Dublé in 1952 (Micklin, 2008). His marriage to Marie-Joséphine Dublé was fruitful, as she birthed Oliver.

The young Fanon studied at Lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France, the capital of Martinique. In 1946, he enrolled at the University of Lyon, France, where he studied medicine and psychiatry and qualified as such in 1951 (Micklin, 2008). Before his university education, Micklin (2008) contended that Fanon was enlisted in the Free French Army in 1943 and fought the Second World War. As it were, he served in Morocco and Algeria in 1944 and 1945 and then took part in the battle for Alsace. Fanon also had an ephemeral career in politics as he worked for the parliamentary campaign of his friend and mentor, Aimé Césaire. After qualifying as a psychiatrist in 1951, Cherki (2000) recalled that Fanon did a residency in psychiatry at Saint-Alban-Sur-Limagnole under the radical Catalan psychiatrist François Tosquelles, who strengthened Fanon's thinking by underscoring the role of culture in psychopathology. After his residency, Fanon practiced psychiatry at Pontorson, near Mont Saint-Michel, for another year before moving to Algeria in 1953 (Cherki, 2000; Macey, 2000). Between 1953 and 1956, Peterson (2021) avers that Fanon worked as the head of the psychiatry department of Blida-Joinville Hospital in Algeria, which was then part of France. Upon his deportation to Algeria in January 1957, Fanon found refuge in Tunis, where he openly joined the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale; FLN). Here, Fanon worked as the Front's newspaper's editor, "*El Moudjahid*," which was published in Tunis. In 1960, he was appointed ambassador to Ghana by Algeria's FLN-led provisional government, a position he did not enjoy long before succumbing to the venoms of leukemia in a Bethesda hospital, Maryland, United States of America, on December 6, 1961 (Micklin, 2008).

### **Factors that Influenced Fanon's Political Philosophy**

Personality, thinkers, schools of thought, socio-political context, and/or the existing circumstances usually influence philosophers in conceiving and expressing their thoughts. Fanon is no exception, as his experiences of the Vichy regime in Martinique informed his thought and description of the regime as "taking off their masks and behaving like "authentic racists" (Macey 2004, p. 214). Zeilig (2021) also noted that the abuse of Martinique people by the French Navy influenced Fanon, reinforcing his feelings of alienation and his disgust with colonial racism. While treating Algerians and French soldiers during the Algerian War of Independence, Fanon also observed with dismay the effects of colonial violence on the human psyche. This obviously led to his resignation from the services of the French colonial administration in Algeria, as he was quoted to have said he could no longer continue to support French efforts, even indirectly via his hospital work (Cherki, 2000; Macey, 2000).

Fanon also drew influences from a variety of thinkers and intellectual traditions, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Lacan, Negritude, and Marxism (Cherki, 2000). Aimé Césaire was also of no mean influence in Fanon's life. Césaire, a leader of the Negritude movement, was a teacher and mentor to Fanon during his secondary school days at Lycée Schoelcher. This is reflected in Fanon's referencing Césaire's writings at length in his works. In particular,

Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* bore imprints of Césaire's "The Lived Experience of the Black Man." Richards (2021) contended that Fanon's "Black Skin, White Mask" also bears imprints of Jacques Lacan's early theory of language. Fanon's preference for Jean-Paul Sartre, the French political activist and literary critic, to write the preface to his "The Wretched of the Earth," suggests Fanon's regard for Jean-Paul's thoughts. Fanon's assertion that "all forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same object: man; and that "I want the enslavement of man by man to cease forever" is consistent with Marx's postulation, as cited in Forsythe (1973, p. 160), that "labor in the white skin cannot emancipate itself until labor in the black skin is free," hence Marx's influence on Fanon's political thoughts.

### **An Exposition of Fanon's Political Philosophy**

Fanon's political thoughts are found in books he penned down himself, namely "Black Skin, White Masks" (1952), "A Dying Colonialism" (1959), "The Wretched of the Earth" (1961), and "Toward the African Revolution" (1964). Apart from books, Fanon's political thoughts are also found in the editorials of "*El Moudjahid*," the newspaper where he served as one of its editors, as well as in books written about him. Fanon's political thoughts are primarily focused on but are not limited to colonialism, decolonization, and violence. It is therefore under these headings that we discussed Fanon's political philosophy. For Fanon, colonialism is a form of domination whose necessary goal for success was the reordering of the world of indigenous (native) people (Peterson, 2021). Having observed closely the workings of colonialism, Fanon (1964, p. 68) postulated that "colonialism cannot be understood without the possibility of torturing, violating, or massacring. Torture is an expression and a means of the occupant-occupied relationship". Fanon's experience as a psychiatrist in Algeria, an outstandingly colonialist country, makes him feel Algerians are in the best position to explain what colonialism is when he held that "the Algerian people are not unaware of the fact that the colonialist structure rests on the necessity of torturing, raping, and committing massacres" (Fanon, 1964, p. 72). Before Fanon's identification of torture, violation, and massacre as necessary indices of colonialism, he had vividly described the colonialists' thinking and perception of the colonized people in one of his books entitled *The Wretched of the Earth* in the following lines:

At times, this Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or, to speak plainly, turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when mentioning the natives are zoological terms. He speaks of the yellow man's reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations. When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms, he constantly refers to the bestiary. The European rarely hits on a picturesque style, but the native, who knows what is in the mind of the settler, guesses at once what he is thinking of. Those hordes of vital statistics, those hysterical masses, those faces bereft of all humanity, those distended bodies that are like nothing on earth, that mob without beginning or end, those children who seem to belong to nobody, that laziness stretched out in the sun, that vegetative rhythm of life all this forms part of the colonial vocabulary (Fanon, 1961, pp. 41-42).

Fanon also philosophized on the concept of decolonization, which Belfi and Sandiford (2021, para. 4) conceive to mean “cultural, psychological, and economic freedom for indigenous people with the goal of achieving indigenous sovereignty—the right and ability of indigenous people to practice self-determination over their land, cultures, political, and economic systems.” According to Fanon (1961, p. 35), decolonization:

Sets out to change the order of the world and is obviously a programme of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, a natural shock, or a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process; that is to say, it cannot be understood; it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements that give it historical form and content.

Apart from the historical form and content of decolonization, which Fanon emphasizes as critical to understanding the phenomenon, he also spoke about its significance when he held that:

The extraordinary importance of this change is that it is willed, called for, and demanded. The need for this change exists in its crude state, impetuous and compelling, in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who are colonized. But the possibility of this change is equally experienced in the form of a terrifying future in the consciousness of another "species" of men and women: the colonizers (Fanon, 1961, p. 35).

Fanon also gave significant attention to the concept of violence, and his thoughts on violence bore out of the conditions that existed under colonialism. This is evident in his assertion that:

The native knows all this and laughs to himself every time he spots an allusion to the animal world in the other's words. For he knows that he is not an animal, and it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory. For the native, this violence represents the absolute line of action (Fanon, 1961, p. 42).

Fanon (1961, p. 93) spoke glowingly about violence when he also held that “violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.” Therefore, for him, this justifies the use of violence against the colonialists. It was also his belief that “for the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler” (Fanon, 1961, p. 92), which is why he resigned his appointment from the colonial service and publicly joined the FLN to fight among other colonized people like himself.

### **The Influence of Frantz Fanon’s Political Philosophy on the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Benue State**

The relevance of Frantz Fanon’s political philosophy to the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State cannot be overemphasized. First of all, Fanon’s view that colonialism is a form of domination whose necessary goal for success was reordering the world of the indigenous (native) people is very relevant in understanding how the ruling elite govern Benue State. Having observed closely, governance in Benue State is akin to colonization as all the features of colonialism are present in the state. These include but are not limited to political and legal

domination of the masses by the ruling elite, relations of economic and political dependence, exploitation of the masses by the ruling elite, and inequalities between the ruling elite and the masses. To sustain these features, there have been growing violent attacks on the Benue masses by government agents or their sponsors. The Zaki Biam massacres in 2001 where Ogundele (2013) held 1, 000 civilians were killed and the killing of over 70 innocent persons, demolition of farms, schools, and hospitals in Mbator, Shangev-Tiev of Konshisha Local Government Area by the military as reported by Sahara Reporters April 9, 2021, shows the occurrence of carnage perpetrated by the ruling elite against the masses. The issues of summarily execution and disappearance of some people are also not in want in Benue State and these are orchestrated by the ruling elite in the state. The disappearance of nine people in two separate instances in Ado Local Government Area of the state as reported by the Daily Trust newspaper on October 15, 2021, is a testament to this ugly situation. The incessant invitation and maltreatment of critics of the ruling elite in Benue State by security agents and sponsored thugs is also a witness to this fact. The ruling elite in the state has also increasingly instigated inter and intra-community clashes, imposed “disaster” economic and social policies, employed divide-and-rule tactics as it were during colonialism, repressed popular resistance, and has always regrouped and strategized to perpetually stay in power to accumulate wealth from the common patrimony of state at the detriment of the masses.

Torturing, violating, or massacring which Fanon spoke of, that colonialism cannot be understood without their possibilities are very visible in Benue State. This is mirrored in the instigation of ethnic and sectional conflicts in the state which is more of the ruling elite programme of causing “disaster” to divert the attention of the masses from the violent economic and social policies imposed on them, especially since the return of democracy in 1999. Some policies aggravate multidimensional poverty, inequality, and hopelessness which manifests in unemployment, unpaid salaries, abandonment of infrastructure, and public funded education, security, and health care. As it were, the masses in the state are not unaware of the fact that the ruling elite governance structure rests on the necessity of torturing, raping, and committing massacres as Frantz Fanon philosophized. The postulation by Fanon about the colonialist thinking and perception that “at times these Manichaeism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal (Fanon, 1961, p. 41)” is very true of the situation in Benue State. The refusal to pay pensioners in the state their due and labeling them as “dead” people that should be ignored and their maltreatment by the ruling elite sponsored thugs represents what was obtainable during colonialism that prompted Frantz Fanon’s postulations as outlined above. The calling of civil servants’ animals by the ruling elite in the face of their agitation for salaries to be paid was also put to Fanon’s postulations.

Frantz Fanon’s philosophy on decolonization is also very relevant to what obtains in Benue State. Decolonization in today’s Benue State could be interpreted to mean the expressed discontentment with the ruling elite’s domination, oppression, and exploitation. It is a programme of complete disorder, to use Fanon’s words. And as Fanon noted, this expressed dissatisfaction with the ruling elite’s domination, oppression, and exploitation which has led to the socioeconomic conditions of the people of the state cannot be pursued in a friendly manner or understanding. This is because; the pains experienced by the people drive the process of dissatisfaction. This explains why Fanon said, that dissatisfaction is willed, called for, and demanded. The elite domination, oppression, and exploitation of the masses make the people call and demand a reversal that is willed to take their destinies into

their hands as seen in the Benue masses' struggle to emancipate themselves which violence is not spared.

It is unarguable that the masses in Benue State are frustrated with their socioeconomic conditions and there exists sufficient evidence to prove this. Blaire (2020) outlined the indices of frustration to include but are not limited to lower expectations of life in general (and low self-esteem), higher rates of drug and alcohol abuse, abject, debilitating poverty, susceptibility to mental illness, and low life expectancy. All these indices individually and collectively are not in short supply in Benue State. It is not an overstatement to say that the majority of the masses in Benue State have low expectations of their lives in general. The human development index which captures a multidimensional and capacity approach to economic development including especially health, education, and income shows that Benue State occupies a distant 21<sup>st</sup> position out of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory with a paltry score of 0.32 for the year 2017 (UNDP, 2019). With this result, it is certain that if Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem scale is measured in Benue State, it will produce a very negative result. It will not be a surprise that many people will strongly agree on the whole that they are not satisfied with themselves. They will certainly express feelings of uselessness and the majority will be inclined to think that they are a failure which is indisputable among other critical indices that measure people's self-esteem. So, having established that the masses in Benue State are sufficiently frustrated which is a sequel to the ruling elite oppression; it is only natural as Fanon philosophized, that some section of the masses will engage in aggressive behaviour. And aggression cannot be carried out with a profound effect without the use of SALWs. As it were, the frustrated masses in Benue State find these SALWs necessary and useful tools of aggression hence their proliferation in Nigeria and Benue State in particular.

It would be an understatement to suggest that the people of Benue State lack the basics of life. The regular payment of workers' salaries, entitlements, and pensions to retirees, and welfare packages for the masses to boost human development by strengthening human potential are among the things that the masses in Benue State want from the state's ruling class. Others include the availability of jobs, the development of an environment that supports people in starting and maintaining long-term profitable enterprises, and the provision of reasonably priced public schools to guarantee high school enrollment and a high literacy level. Due to the ruling class's ostensibly purposeful failure to offer these, there is a significant disparity in wealth and income. Not more than a fraction of what the masses in Benue State seek is realizable. The civil servants in Benue State are owed several months of salaries in arrears, and until recently, the salaries were not even regular, much less other entitlements, which they have not enjoyed for very many years. This has created a discrepancy between what the masses in Benue State seek and what is attainable, and it is significant enough that it has generated anger and the propensity toward violence, hence the proliferation of SALWs in the state as the tools of violence.

There is also no single welfare package designed and implemented by the Benue State Government to build the capacity of the poor, empower them, and reduce poverty. Rather, the ones designed and being implemented by the Federal Government under the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP) has been hijacked by the ruling elite and their cronies in the state. The ruling elite and their cronies are the beneficiaries of programmes that are conceived as ways of fostering resource distribution, especially for women, youth, and children, to contribute to poverty reduction and economic development. As it were, the number of beneficiaries is not proportionate to the people in need of such welfare packages

in the state; hence, the target of the programmes has been thwarted. As such, there is a significant difference between what the masses in Benue State seek and what is attainable, and it is apparent that it has generated anger and the inclination to violence has escalated, hence the proliferation of SALWs in the state as tools of aggression.

Also, the poor working conditions and lack of motivation of staff in public schools in Benue State, as reflected in but not limited to owed arrears of salaries and lack of refresher programmes, have made the public schools unattractive for some people to enroll their wards in them. These, coupled with the high cost of especially state-owned tertiary institutions, explain the exodus of Benue indigenes to especially the far northern part of the country to seek education. Those who could not afford education either way have been seen dropping out, which explains the rising number of out-of-school children and adult illiteracy in the state. The Federal Ministry of Education, as cited in Duru (2020), indicates that as of November 2020, Benue State accounted for over 260,000 out-of-school children in Nigeria, thereby placing the state on the list of states with low school enrollment rates in the country. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2012) also held that 54.9 percent of the adult population in Benue State is illiterate. So, the inability of the ruling elite in Benue State to provide functional, affordable, and staff-motivated public schools for the people has created significant differences between what the masses in Benue State seek and what is attainable. As it were, it has generated anger and the inclination to violence, which has escalated, hence the proliferation of SALWs in the state as tools of aggression.

The situation of unemployment in Benue State is also pathetic and at variance with the expectations of the people from the ruling elite. Sasu (2022) averred that Benue State registered by the end of 2020 the highest unemployment rate in Nigeria, as the figures were 43.5 percent using the most common international definition of unemployment as a gauge. This means that 43.5 percent of the labour force in Benue State did nothing or worked for less than 20 hours a week. With these statistics, it is crystal clear that there is a great difference between what people in Benue State seek from the ruling elite and what is realizable. The situation is not anything different from the creation of an enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the state. So, anger and the inclination to violence are not in short supply in this unfortunate situation, and as it were, the proliferation of SALWs, which are tools of aggression, has become necessary. Fanon's philosophy on violence is also very relevant to the understanding of the prevailing socioeconomic conditions and the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. Fanon's assertion that "... it is precisely at the moment he realizes his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure his victory (Fanon, 1961, p. 42) suggests that people will take to violence if they are dominated, oppressed, and exploited, as is the case in Benue State. Viewed from the prism of Fanon's philosophy, therefore, violence is an unpleasant way of alerting the elite of the masses' realized humanity. As Fanon said, for the frustrated masses in the state, violence represents the absolute line of action to secure their victory from the inhuman treatment that they have been subjected to by the elite. This is because, as Fanon philosophized, the use of violence by some sections of the masses in Benue State frees them from their inferiority complex, despair, and inaction, makes them fearless, and restores their self-respect. Violence is a cleansing force, and its tools are SALWs; hence, they are proliferated in the state.

For the masses in Benue State, the ruling elite are the major cause of their frustration. This is because the ruling elite has seemingly deliberately refused to provide what the

masses seek from them, both in quantity and quality, disproportionate to the teeming population of the people. The ruling elite in Benue State is also the major cause of the masses' frustration because they have consistently dashed the hopes of the masses in the face of persistent increases in expectations as reflected in the socioeconomic conditions without a genuine commitment to addressing the issues. In effect, there has been a demand for SALWs as the most potent tools of aggression, with the ruling elite as the major target. Aggression has also been directed at the security agents who shield the ruling elite because they constitute a threat to the SALW-bearing people in Benue State. As a result, many security agents have been killed by these SALW-bearing people, in addition to some of the ruling elite they shield. However, not only the ruling elite, who are the major cause of frustration for the masses in the state, are the target of aggression. Many people's lives have been cut short by SALWs bearing people in the state. In this category are real and/or perceived informants of the ruling elite and security agents, people who are opposed to the aggression of the frustrated SALW-bearing aggressors, those who resist the "authority" of the SALW-bearing people, and innocent people who are caught in crossfires between these aggressors and security agents.

Though the violence by some sections of the masses in Benue State cannot be said to be a direct collective confrontation of the governance of the ruling elite, members of the ruling elite are individually targeted by the SALW-bearing section of the masses. There are also strong tendencies that, if not brought under control, may sooner or later snowball into seeking to take over and control the governance of the state, as it was during colonialism that spurred Frantz Fanon to philosophize. After all, the collection of taxes and levies by SALWs bearing people in some areas of the state and the constitution of "courts" or "judges" for settlement of disputes among people, and some people are more comfortable taking their cases to them without let or hindrance by security agencies in the state, is a clear indication of usurpation of the powers of the ruling elite governance in the state.

Though we acknowledged the fact that the issue of proliferation of SALWs is a global problem, hence in our introductory segment, we also mentioned the developed countries as also being plagued with the menace. And issues of frustration resulting from oppression and other forms of enslavement, which give rise to aggression that demands the use of SALWs, are also not lacking in those countries. In the United States of America, for instance, the vice chair of the Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress, Don Beyer, admitted the visible economic and political progress made by Black Americans as reflected in the rise in the number of Black members of Congress and the House of Representatives over the past decades. He was nevertheless, quick to note that "these very visible signs of improvement, however, mask deep inequities that relegate tens of millions of Black Americans to second-class status, with far fewer opportunities to achieve good health, political influence, prosperity, and security than other Americans" (Beyer, 2020, p. 1). This is also reflected in the country's criminal justice system, where Thompson (2020, p. 226) noted that "the overzealous policing of people of colour, and their disproportionate subjection to ill-treatment at the hands of police in the nation's cities and correction officers in the nation's prisons eventually led them to rebel in the 1960s." Over sixty years after the rebellion of the people of colour, their oppression has not abated, as incidents of police brutality against them are still on the rise. Between July 17, 2014, and April 4, 2022, Lyn (2022) indicated that there were fourteen incidents of white police officers brazenly murdering Black Americans. The task to put a stop to such incidents is arduous. This is mirrored in the not too fruitful several protests and movements against this in the country

that ironically champions human rights. The ruling elite's oppression of the masses, which has led to their frustration in America, is obviously the reason for the rising gun violence witnessed in the country. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (2020, p. 1) justifies the oppression of the American masses as mirrored in income and wealth inequalities as the reason for frustration and violence in the country when it held that to address the problem of gun violence, "policymakers must address the social and economic inequalities that are the root causes of gun violence in impacted communities of colour". This therefore shows how relevant Frantz Fanon's political philosophy is in analyzing the issue of the proliferation of SALWs.

The justification for Frantz Fanon's political philosophy in analyzing the socioeconomic conditions and the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State is evident from its ability to concretely, independently, wholly, and convincingly explicate the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State. It has explained the Benue masses' frustration in a manner that is unparalleled by any known philosophy in the social sciences. The philosophy has laid bare in a captivating manner the deprivations that the Benue masses have suffered, as mirrored in the socioeconomic conditions of the people occasioned by the ruling elite, which has frustrated them. The socioeconomic conditions of the people of Benue as a source of frustration are also adequately explained, devoid of ambiguities and gaps. This is unequal to all philosophies and theories that seek to explain the menace of the proliferation of SALWs. The philosophy has also unequivocally explained in an unprecedented manner why members of the ruling elite, their relations, associates, and cronies are attacked by frustrated and aggressive SALW-bearing people in Benue State, hence its choice in this study.

### **A Critique of Fanon's Political Philosophy**

Fanon's postulations are heavily criticized on the basis of his view on the indispensability of violence as a solution to the problem of colonialism. As Smith (1973, p. 32) noted, "Fanon's view of the necessity of violence as part of the anticolonial struggle has been a particular topic of contention for critics, commonly leading to accusations of 'barbarism and terrorism'". The effects of violence are manifold, as it is found to increase incidences of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicide; increase the risk of cardiovascular disease; and cause premature mortalities. Though the proliferation of SALWs, which Fanon's philosophy finds useful in understanding its prevalence in the prevailing socioeconomic conditions in Benue State, may not be exclusively culpable for the indices of the effects of violence, it could however be said to have and/or will aggravate the situation in the state. The depressive and anxiety figures in Nigeria for 2016 were 7, 079, 815 and 4, 894, 557, representing 3.9 percent and 2.7 percent of the country's population, respectively. The proliferation of SALWs in the country and Benue State in particular can also not escape culpability, though not exclusively for the occurrence of the 42 percent post-traumatic stress disorder in the country, as contended by Sheihk *et al.*, as cited in Aluh *et al.* (2020). WHO (2019) also indicates that Nigeria had 17,710 suicide cases in 2016, which is the highest among countries on the African continent. According to Odili *et al.* (2020), 38.1 percent of Nigerians were also hypertensive in 2017, indicating that the proliferation of SALWs cannot be abated.

Though evidence exists that Fanon's solution to the ruling elite domination of the masses has rather led to another problem, his critics seem not to have seen this as a consequence of the ruling elite oppression. In other words, the frustration that has bred the aggression of the masses leading to the proliferation of SALWs in Benue State is apparently

not considered. Perhaps Fanon's abhorrence of negotiation for independence stems from the fact that anything gotten on the platter of gold is not valued. This conceivably explains why the conditions that have accentuated the proliferation of SALWs are most prevalent in countries that got their independence devoid of violence, of which Nigeria, which has birthed Benue State, is one. This is reflected in these countries' Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI scores of Benin, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria, who negotiated their independence, are 0.55, 0.43, 0.39, and 0.54, respectively, for the year 2019 (Statista, 2020). This is unlike Algeria, whose HDI is 0.75 for the same year. In spite of criticism of Fanon's thoughts, they have deeply influenced social movements beyond the African continent. They provide valuable insights into the effects of the ruling elite's dominance, exploitation, oppression, and insults to the masses across the globe.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that the deplorable socioeconomic condition of the people of Benue State is responsible for the high rate of the proliferation of SALWs in the state. This is because the high rate of unemployment, low income rate, inequalities, unmet expectations from the ruling elite, and other factors have made some sections of the people of the state susceptible to crime, which demands the use of SALWs as tools, hence their widespread in the state. This situation has long been envisioned by Frantz Fanon, whose philosophy was influenced by the brutal Vichy regime in Martinique, the effect of colonial violence on the Algerian psyche during the country's war of independence, and other influences. As it were, Fanon's philosophy persuasively explains the Benue situation in spite of the philosophy's criticism of fostering depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, suicide, increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, and premature deaths. This suggests that the solution to the proliferation of SALWs in the state does not necessarily lie in kinetic approaches, as is being done, but in addressing the socioeconomic conditions of the people.

### **References**

- Aluh, D.O., Okoro, R.N., & Zimboh, A. (2020). The prevalence of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder among internally displaced persons in Maiduguri, Nigeria. *Journal of Public Mental Health* 9(2), pp.159-168
- BBC News (2022, May 25). "America's gun culture in seven charts" - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41488081>
- Belfi, E. & Sandiford, N. (2021). Decolonization Series Part 1: Exploring decolonization. In: S. Brandauer and E. Hartman (Eds.), *Interdependence: Global Solidarity and Local Actions. The Community-based Global Learning Collaborative* – <http://globalsolidaritylocalaction.sites.haverford.edu/what-is-decolonization-why-is-it-important/>
- Beyer, B. (2020). The economic state of Black America in 2020 - [https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/\\_cache/files/ccf4dbe2-810a-44f8-b3e7-14f7e5143ba6/economic-state-of-black-america-2020.pdf](https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/ccf4dbe2-810a-44f8-b3e7-14f7e5143ba6/economic-state-of-black-america-2020.pdf)
- Blaire, D. K. (2020, November 30). 5 symptoms of oppressed populations. <https://medium.com/an-idea/5-symptoms-of-oppressed-populations-4b1159d91686>
- Boumghar, S. (2019, July 12). Frantz Fanon a-il ete dechu de sa nationalite fraçaise? - [https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/2019/07/12/frantz-fanon-a-il-ete-dechu-de-sa-nationalite-francaise\\_1739620/](https://www.liberation.fr/checknews/2019/07/12/frantz-fanon-a-il-ete-dechu-de-sa-nationalite-francaise_1739620/)
- Cherki, A. (2000). *Frantz Fanon: Portrait*. Seuil

- Daily Trust Newspaper October 15, 2021 "Tension Heightens Over 9 Missing People in Benue Community" - <https://dailytrust.com/tension-heightens-over-9-missing-people-in-benue-community/>
- Duru, P. (2020, December 13). Benue accounts for 260,000 out-of-school children in Nigeria – Education Ministry. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/12/benue-accounts-for260000-out-of-school-children-in-nigeria-fmoe/amp/>
- Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (2020, March). The root causes of gun violence - <https://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/EFSGV-The-Root-Causes-of-Gun-Violence-March-2020.pdf>
- EMISS Government Statistics (n.da). Number of registered deaths by main classes and selected causes of deaths (operational data) - <https://www.fedstat.ru/indicator/33559>
- EMISS Government Statistics (n.db). The number of deaths by main classes and individual causes of death per 100, 000 population per year - <https://fedstat.ru/indicator/31270>
- Fanon, F. (1952). *Black Skin, White Mask*. Pluto Press.
- Fanon, F. (1961). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Weidenfeld.
- Fanon, F. (1964). *Toward the African Revolution*. Grove press.
- Fanon, F. (1959). *A dying colonialism*, Maspero
- Forsythe, D. (1973). Frantz Fanon – The Marx of the Third World, *Phylon*, 34(2), pp. 160-170
- Gordon, L. R. & Cornell, D. (2015, January 1). *What Fanon said: A Philosophical Introduction to his Life and Thought*. Fordham University press.
- Gramlich, J. (2022, February 3). What the data says about gun deaths in the US. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/02/03/what-the-data-says-about-gun-deaths-in-the-u-s/>
- Karp, A. (2018). Estimating global civilian-held firearms - <https://www.smallarmssurvey.org/sites/default/files/resources/SAS-BP-Civilian-Firearms-Numbers.pdf>
- Lyn, D. (2022, May 25). Timeline of black Americans killed by police, 2014-2022: List of events before and after George Floyd's murder 2 years ago - <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/timeline-of-black-americans-killed-by-police-2014-2022/2596913>
- Macey, D. (2000). *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*. Picador Press
- Macey, D. (2004). Fanon or the Difficulty of Being Martinican. *History Workshop Journal* 58, pp. 211-223
- Macey, D. (2012). *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*. Verso Books publishers
- Micklin, A. (2008, June 9). Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) - <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/fanon-frantz-1925-1961/>
- Muggah, R. & Guple, J. (2015). *Tackling gun violence in India*. Institute of Development Studies.
- Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (2015-2021). Nigeria watch: Fifth to eleventh report on violence
- Odili, A.N., Chori, B.S., Danladi, B., Nwakile, P.C., Okoye, I.C., Abdullahi, U., Nwegbu, M.N., Zawaya, K., Essien, I., Sada, K., Ogedengbe, J.O., Aje, A., & Isiguzo, G.C. (2020). Prevalence, Awareness, Treatment and Control of Hypertension in Nigeria: Data from a Nationwide Survey 2017, *Global Heart*, 15(1):47, pp.1-13
- Ogundele, K. (2013, March 15). Our Ordeal, by Victims of Zaki Biam Invasion - <https://thenationonlineng.net/our-ordeal-by-victims-of-zaki-biam-invasion/amp/>

- Peterson, C. (2021, December 2). Frantz Fanon: West Indian Psychiatrist and Philosopher - <https://www.britannica.com/science/psychotherapy>
- Richards, S. (2021). The Logician of Madness: Fanon's Lacan, *Paragraph*, 44(2), pp. 214-237
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton University Press.
- Sahara Reporters April 9, 2021 "Breaking: How Nigerian soldiers killed over 70 innocent persons, demolished farms, schools, hospitals – Benue residents" - <https://saharareporters.com/2021/04/09/breaking-how-nigerian-soldiers-killed-over-70-innocent-persons-demolished-farms-schools>
- Sasu, D.D. (2022, September 5). Unemployment rate in Nigeria 2020, by state - <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1119533/unemployment-rate-in-nigeria-by-state/>
- Smith, R.C. (1973). Fanon and the concept of colonial violence. *Black World/Negro Digest*, 22(7), pp. 23-33.
- Statista (2020). Human Development Index of Africa 2019, by Country - <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1244496/human-development-index-of-africa-by-country/>
- Thompson, H. A. (2020). *The racial history of criminal justice in America*. Hutchins Center for African and African American Research.
- UNDP (2019). Beyond country-level averages: Construction of sub-national human development index for the Nigerian states. <http://cseaafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Human-Development-Index-CSEA.pdf>
- UNESCO (2012). Action plan Nigeria. <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Nigeria.pdf>
- WHO (2019). Suicide in the World, Global Health Estimates - <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326948/WHO-MSD-MER-19.3-eng.pdf>
- World Population Review (2022). Gun deaths by country 2022 - <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-deaths-by-country>
- Zeilig, L. (2021). *Frantz Fanon: A political biography*. I. B Tauris