

## Youths Participation in Election and Electoral Violence in Africa: The Nigeria Antecedence

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### Abstract

This paper provides an overview of youth's participation in Election and Electoral violence in Africa, using Nigeria as the case of departure. The paper explores how electoral violence can be solved through proactive measures taken by state and non-state actors. In concluding the paper, note was made that the key success factor for the management of electoral violence and perfect democratic festival is ensuring proposals for fostering electoral violence-free sustainability through advocacy and welfare policy in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *Youths, Participation, Violence and Nigerian Election*

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## **Background to the Study**

Youths journey towards democracy specifically and electoral violence has been very tortuously punctuated Nigeria; youths constitute 80% in our political communities and are magnanimously treasured because of their positive impact in all fora of human endeavour. Youth's activities in Nigeria have served in different functions such as, peace building, economic growth, maintenance of law and order National building, sports, agriculture and all facets of life. However, youth's involvement in election pose alot in the electoral process. Since the future of any democratic society is determined by the quality of the youths. According to the National youth policy and strategic plan of active – PGN (2000) describes youths.

As the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they regarded as legitimate leaders they are potentially the greatest investment for a country development. They serve as a good treasure of the extent to which to which a country can reproduced, as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, response conduct and roles in the society is positively co-related with the development of their country.

In the same vein, the paper consider frustration aggressive theory as the best theory in understanding the basis of electoral violence in Nigeria, process and recommendation.

## **On the Matter of Youth and Election**

As a matter of semantics, the concept of youth has worn different national perception. Some society defined a youth between the age grades 15-30; 18-30; 18-40. The current national policy of Nigeria, youth is between 18-30 years. They constitute 80% percent of the population of communities and are the most virtue group within the society. Unfortunately, most political parties in Nigeria definition is not in confronting of the current national policy.

As according to; Soka (2003) posits, youth must have a sound academic curricular with a reflection of the values of Nigeria in order to mould their character in desired, direction it means, youths must be fully educated, mobilise and expose towards protecting democratic politics in a given political.

## **Election**

Basically democratic governance prevent authoritarianism. Azeez (2005) a core element required democratic consolidation is good governance, freedom and free and fair elections. Thus, experts in democratic government outcry that election is an essential condition that citizens need to have different open channels and opportunities to air and select their political leaders without intimidation. Also, according to Khukwu (1990). Election as a democratic approach that allows an adult to exercise his/her democratic franchise independently without consultation of other electorates.

It means election creates the possibility to an electorates a chance to determine who should and capable to hold governmental position. Also, Young (1993) an election by simple definition therefore is a competition or a contest for democratic power. Similarly, Ujo (2000) argued that the basic ruling body in a democratic state is the choice of all members of a community in a state to cast their votes, legitimately without political intimidations.

Beyond this, elections are also considered as a significant feature of democracies, for without them, competition for power would be much more chaotic. As opines by Baloun (2003). Elections are generally conceived as a means for achieving a peaceful change of leadership in society. In democratic societies, election empower ordinary.

### **Election and Electoral Violence**

Electoral violence is a form of political violence mostly championed and demonstrated by youths. Nweke (2005), Armpowose (1982), Ogundiya and Baba (2005), Jegede (2003) and Olabegi (2004) as use of force, threat; of physical act by individuals or harmful act among at disorganising the electoral process ranging from the destruction of electoral materials to the intimidation of the electoral to avoid against their wish, and physically influencing electoral officials to work in favour of a particular groups, parties, persons or against an establish procedure.

### **See Table 1: Incidence of Electoral Violence in Nigeria**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Nature/Location of Electoral Violence</b>	<b>State</b>
2001	Abel Chukwu, Speaker of the Enugu State House of Assembly, had bullets pumped into his car.	Enugu
2001	Felix Ikebudu was murdered and drowned in the river with an engine block in Anambra.	Anambra
2001	On December 21, the Federal Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Chief Bola Ige was brutally murdered in his bedroom at Ibadan.	Oyo
2003	A convoy of ANPP gubernatorial candidate, Alh. Adamu, was attacked by political thugs.	Adamawa
2003	Dr. Marshall Harry, the National Vice- Chairman (South-South) of the ANPP was brutally killed in his House in Abuja.	Abuja
2003	6 persons killed by youths alleged to be supporters of an ANPP senatorial candidate, Hon. Heinekein Lokpobiri, Bayelsa West.	Bayelsa
2003	Suspected thugs attacked Ebonyi Council Transition Chairman of Ikwo South Council, Mr. Alloy Agba.	Ebonyi
2003	3 persons were shot dead and journalists manhandled by suspected party thugs.	Edo

2003	Rally of PDP disrupted, one vehicle was burnt by suspected opposition thugs, while many people were injured in the attack.	Jigawa
2003	Clashes between ANPP supporters at Jato-Aka village, Kwande Local Government.	Benue
2003	Kwara Chapter of AD decried continued defacement of the posters and billboards of its governorship candidate, Alh. Lai Mohammed.	Kwara
2003	2 persons died when suspected party thugs attacked Governor Lawals' convoy, others sustained injuries.	Kwara
2003	ANPP chieftain in Kwara State, Mr. Issa Zaria, was murdered by suspected party thugs.	Kwara
2003	Unidentified gunmen opened fire on a crowd Celebrating Dr. Bukola Saraki's victory as the next Governor of Kwara State. 3 persons killed and several injured.	Kwara
2003	The Commission for Women Affairs, Mrs. Memuna Kataia and two others were feared dead in a political Clash during the House of Assembly elections.	Nasarawa
2003	PDP senatorial candidate, Alh. Ibikunle Amosum narrowly escaped being killed in an attack by six suspected assassins.	Ogun
2003	Oyo State Governor, Lam Adesina, attacked	Oyo
2003	Attack on PDP campaign train at Okehi LGA Headquarter.	Kogi
2003	PDP and AD clashed in Ute, Ose LGA	Ondo
2004	Mr. Luke Shigaba: Until his death on 3 March in the hands of assassins. He was the Chairman of Bassa Local Government.	Kogi
2006	On 22 July, Funsho Williams, a favoured candidate at the PDP primary election in Lagos State was assassinated in his house.	Lagos

2007	A fresh explosion rocked Asaba on Wednesday night. Delta	
2007	Bomb scare at Delta's PDP's office and one person Person was arrested.	Delta
2007	Violence took the centre-stage in the governorship and House of Assembly primaries of the AC.	Ekiti
2007	Gangs of armed youths broke up polling stations, snatched ballot boxes and tore opposition votes in Kaba. They filed the ballots with their own thumbprints and voted for the PDP, witness said. Election regulators in the State told staff to erase the name of Prince Abubakar Audu, the ANPP candidate for the gubernatorial Election. His picture and name were printed on the ballot papers, but scratched out with black markers or biros.	Kogi
2007	A bloody clash of Agaka/Baaboko/Idi-Ape area of Ilorin led to one dead and a Police officer seriously injured	Kwara
2007	Three male adults were injured in Oro, Irepodum LG, when Suspected supporters of two rival politicians clashed. Although no life was lost, both camps have alleged the attack as unwarranted calling on the Police to start a prompt investigation of the crisis, which was described as the first of its kind in the area in the on-going transition.	Kwara
2007	At least 30 persons were hospitalized for sustaining various degrees of injuries after a bloody clash between the supporters of the PDP and the ANPP in Galadima Village in Lapai LGA.	Niger
2008	On June 22, a group of political party thugs loyal to the PDP attacked the Action Congress supporters at Obangede in Okehi LGA. During the ensuing fracas, properties such as louvers and electronics valued at about N500,000 were destroyed.	Kogi
2008	On 22 April, there was a pandemonium at Okene-Eba and Idozumi, in Okene LGA when PDP thugs terrorized residents of the area by shooting sporadically into the air. In order to subdue the attack from the thugs, Mobile Policemen were drafted to the area. In the ensuing confusion, six persons, all civilians, were killed.	Kogi

2010	On 26 July, a gubernatorial aspirant. Dipo Dina was assassinated.	Ogun
2010	PDP thugs loyal to Gabriel Dauda, Council Chairman Ogori-Magongo LGA and a group suspected to be antagonist to the Chairman clashed. During the incident, Deji Orifunmishe was critically injured and his entire Household destroyed. These include vehicles and other Valuables worth millions of Naira.	Kogi
2011	Police lost two men, 3 AK 47 riffles in the face-off at Okengwe, Obehira and Agewa in Adavi and Okene LGAs	Kogi
Nov. 2013	A supporters of Opeyemi Bamidele, the Labour Party, LP, candidate, was shot and killed after clashes between Mr. Bamidele's supporters and people believed to be APC Members at EmureEkiti.	Ekiti
April 2014	Ado Ekiti, the State capital was thrown into confusion As gunshots rent the air at the popular Adebayo area of The city. The attack allegedly occurred around 6pm when Governor Fayemi and his supporters were returning to Ado-Ekiti from a campaign rally in Ekiti East local Government area of the state.	Ekiti
May, 2014	Unidentified numbers of people have been injured in Kura, Shanono and Bebeji Local Government Areas of Kano State as political thugs attempted to snatch ballot boxes during local government election in Kano.	Kano
June, 2014	On Sunday, June 8, one person was killed in violence That erupted in Ekiti State in the run up to the gubernatorial election.	Ekiti

**Sources:** Marco, D, (2007).

**A Compendium on Newspaper Extracts on the 2003 and 2007 Elections. Abuja: IDASA. Daily Trust (2010) and Nigerian Tribune (2010), Nigeria Watch (2014).**

### **Theoretical Framework**

Elections reflect the dynamic and functioning of a society; and then it follows the stories of electoral violence and fragility can only be understood with societal context. Thus, the theoretical framework adopted for the study is the frustration-Aggressive theory postulated by Dollard, Dooh, Muller and Moower in 1939. This hypothesis assumes that aggressive is always caused by frustration and that people always respond to stressful events by striking out at others with aggressive or violent behaviour.

### **Elections in Nigeria! An overview**

Elections are used in Nigeria in choosing representatives into federal, state and local government executive and legislature arms. The history of election started from the dual mandate era of colonialism. The first election in Nigeria took place in 1923 in two major historic towns, Lagos and Calabar. This was made possible following the introduction of the Clifford constitution in 1922. The 1933 constitution (Clifford) made four provisions for four elected members of the legislature councils. The legislature council gave Lagos the constitutional mandate to produce three (3) while one member for Calabar. Its means the political impact was restricted to Lagos and Calabar with the participation of few circle of political elites.

The rest of the Geo-political zones were left under the canopy of political darkness until 1946, when Richard constitution provided for a legislative council for the whole protectorates in Nigeria.

Ogude (2003).

*The practice of election continue until 1958 when Littleton constitution replaced the indirect election as the means of choosing members to the federal house of representative.*

In 1960, Nigeria gained political independence, most of Nigerians were allowed to participate in direct elections as to fill the regional and federal legislative council. When Nigeria gained political independence from British, direct elections were conducted to fill the regional and federal legislative as well as considerable number of local councils. Thus, the youths were granted magnanimous freedom to decide who to vote and protect them on issues that relates to growth and development.

### **Types of Election**

Elections types and characteristics are scholarly explained. Katuka (2013) opines; election is a good product and festival of democracy that enable electorates to take democratic decisions and possibilities exercise their political franchise. There are two types of election. They are:

- a. **Direct election:** This enables the electorates to vote or make selection directly in a wholesome general election to elect their leaders. It creates mass participation as well make those representative elected committed accountable and responsible.
- b. **Indirect election:** It involves limited members of people in the voting system as in the first republic in Nigeria. (Parliamentary) as according to Francis (1999).  
The system is not democratic as it deprives voters the right to select their leaders directly which could lead to political friction and instability.  
The youths are at disposal to adopt any types of election, depending on the environmental situation of given political state.

### **Process of Election**

Election require observance of process Katuka (2013) opines the processes, they are as follows:

1. Election Commission in modern democracy, the state ensure that an electoral commission is constituted with responsibilities to organise and conduct free and fair elections.
2. Political Gerrymandering for political and administrative convenience, there should be delimitation of constituencies, wards, and polling units to enable the smooth running of voting exercise during election
3. Registration of Political Parties. The citizens are allowed to register from any political party; without any intimidation.
4. Registration of voters: Voting age who are eligible voters are registered as enshrined in the Nigeria constitution must be allowed to register.
5. Display of voters list: Voters list must be displaced after registration to entertain claims and objections
6. Planning and projections There must be a preparation before elections are conducted. For instance, provision of transportation, communication gadgets, electoral officer, electoral materials and security agents.
7. Election: This stage involves collection, counting and declaration of results
8. Election Tribunals: The state must constitute an electoral panel to receive petition of aggrieved contestants. Where there is no electoral tribunal, the electoral process is incomplete.

Youths must make sure that electoral process are structured as to give an opportunity of seeking redress.

Similar Scholar Karim (2011) Ujo (2005) Barwo (1990) up held their views on the variables aforementioned.

### **Common Negative Approaches Adopted by Youths**

Youth's electoral violence starts on the day of election demonstrating physical violence. Karim (2014) opines similar crude methodologies adopted by the youth to disrupt electoral ethnical values.

- a. Political thuggery: Politicians organise the youths as to disallowed other people from demonstrating their franchise
- b. Box-snatching: This is an organised approach, to snatch the electoral materials for boxes to favour a candidate of a particular political party.
- c. Rigging: It is an approach to falsify election result to favour an aspirant or a political party.
- d. Connivers: This is another approach where security agents, electoral officers or party agents connives to falsify elections to favour a disadvantage candidate.
- e. Leprosical approach: Organise reprosical patients to be part of voting. Instead of separating the lepers with non-lepers.
- f. Use of knockout and masquerades: youths are always using knockout to scare voters or masquerades as a fastest way of rigging election. All these approaches are adopted to negate free and fair election.

## Management of Electoral Violence

Seducing methods in the electoral violence: Katuka (2013) Karim 2011 and Alex 2014 agreed that most of our political leaders use several methods in seducing the youths or woo them to partake in undemocratic acts. These are the following.

- a. Denial/Unequal distribution of resources  
Most political gains are benefited by some few individuals who are the close associates of the politicians
- b. Recruitment of youths as informants; Some youths are unofficially employed as informants. Some information are not filtered by their political god parents but resort to vendetta.
- c. Conversion of youths as thugs/unconstitutional police. This situation today is becoming devastating. Majority of youths are converted to serve the politician as thugs, or unconstitutional police who insult others to protect their political god fathers.
- d. Invoke of fear through utterances

Most political leaders will always invoke fear to the youths, threatening not to give them employment. At times youths are forced to organised mischievous congratulatory messages: also most political loyalist are fond of sponsoring jingles of lies to cover the deceitful rhetoric's of their political masters. They kept on nagging lies on pages of newspapers on the achievement of their political master. According to obasanjo; 2012,

*Legislative members of the National Assembly, Abuja are all crooks and rogues that are not doing well in saving the major economic and political growth of Nigeria.*

As the recent statement of president Buhari and party stalwarts, rarefying on their pledge of paying N5, 000 Naira to unemployed youths and generating 3 million Jobs in the first quarter 2016.

## Effects of Youths Electoral Violence

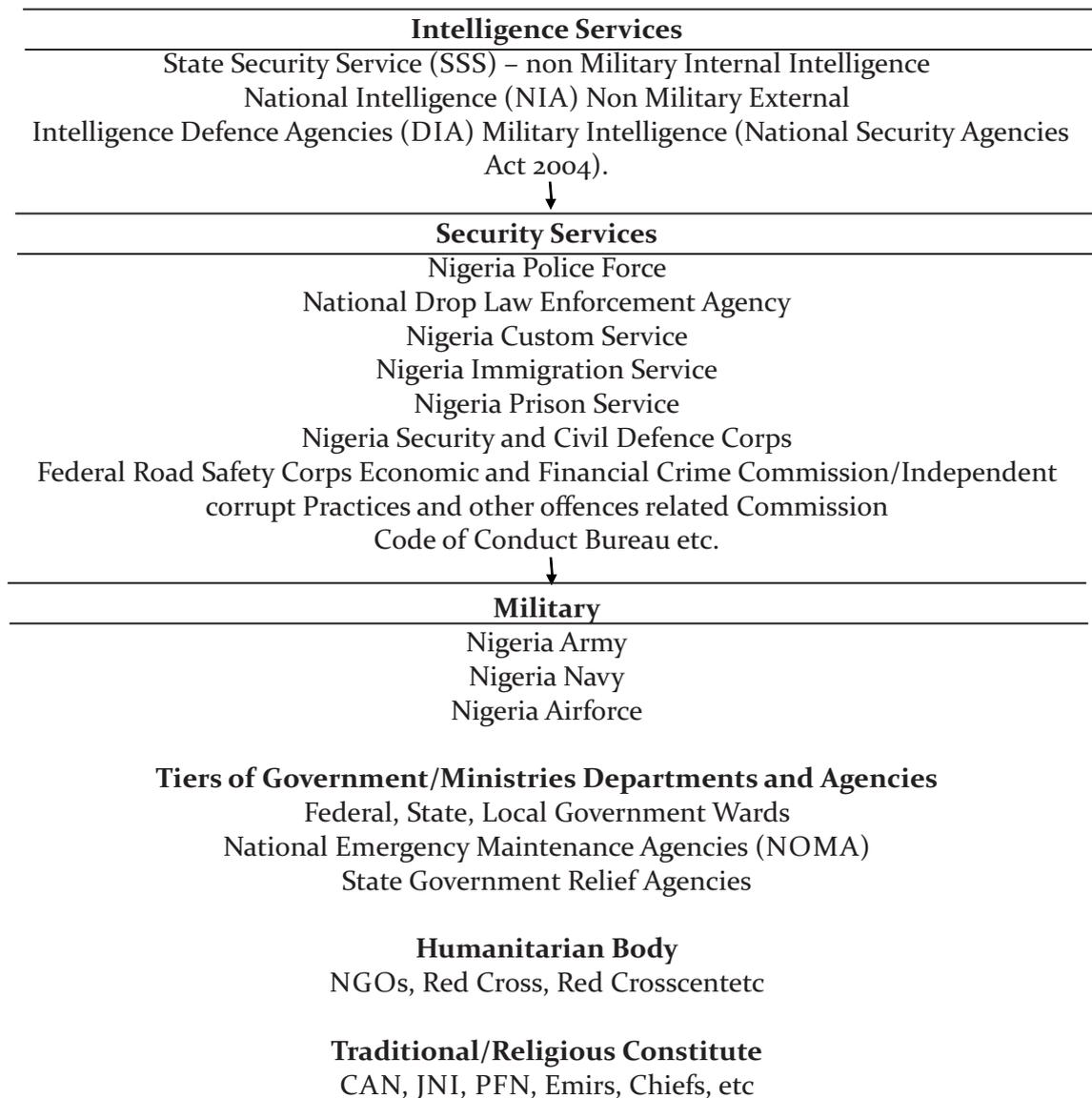
The consequences of electoral violence are multifaceted. In Nigeria, the phenomenon has affected every aspect of human endeavour. Karim and Adeoye (2011) violence affects electoral society powers, infrastructure electoral personnel, the electorates, media electoral information, votes, registration campaign materials polling units and counting centres. It also, threatens the peace and security literally and create uncertainty on foreigners who intend to invest in the country. The effects of electoral violence witnessed, hijacking of election materials killing of innocent people, bombing private and public property and mass displacement falsification of results and many forms of human degradation.

Oyibare and Olaguasu (1996) opines that since election as a feature of democracy. That Nigeria democratic experience must be in response to our local problems. There are overwhelm evidences that youth after election have suffer neglect bootlicking and marginalization and intimidation of democratic structures and national development.

## Management of Electoral Violence (Two)

The phenomenon of electoral violence is obvious that required management. In the same vein, positive measures must be adopted to enforce the success of every election. The 1999 constitution and the various Acts provide three types of electoral tribunals as well as the regular courts for administration of justice. Karim (2014) electoral violence has been mainly managed by the government through inter security agencies. Armed force the (Army, Airforce and Navy) the Nigeria Police Force, Intelligence Service, Nigeria Prison Civil Defence Corps and so many others to guarantee electoral security.

**Table I: Management of Electoral Violence**



**Source:** Nigeria Mass Media; Army troop operation, on selected violence 2002.

In the same vein, Karim and Albert Kan (2011) security agencies help in the management of electoral violence by providing intelligence services, report regarding to electoral violence, prosecute identified electoral offenders profiles of suspects including their Bio data cultists arms and ammunition flash points international Boarder control as well records electoral violators and convicts in their custody... also, the management of electoral violence in Nigeria also include positive measures as argued by Adedayo and Oladeka (2012) that the government of Nigeria of recently installed closed circuit television (CCTV) in some major cities, Abuja, Lagos Ikorin among others in tracking electoral violations and perpetrators of violence, election riggers and so many others.

Diamond (1994) Diamonand Macdonald (1996) dealing with election violence involves the synergy of the government, other state holders, professional businessmen, private citizens researchers, internal and external observers, activists, religious and traditional leaders/ and Inter Agency Security Committee. Other measure include proper advocacy, appropriate legislation, roles media, peace education, party frame international observers.

### **Conclusion**

The democratic journey of our elections in your political community has been marked with irregularities. The youths are victim of poverty, squalor and unemployment; they are being side-lined in term of appointment to lucrative positions. The youths must ensure that political kind makers, stake holders, desperate power seekers, respect democratic freedom as to exercise democratic franchise. Finally, youths as major stakeholders, future leaders can transform the political weakness into strengths, given some discipline, collective action and mutual tolerance. The youths must resolved and scarified their pleasures and convenience to look for peace in our own political communities. Also, youths must emulate our heroes such as Macaulays, Azukiwe, Tafawa Balewa, Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, and Mal. Aminu Kano, who spent their life time this nation walk shoulder high among the comity of nation. Youths must come together to shape their political process now and the future.

### **Recommendation**

Nigeria politics is a replica of colonialism. The system cardinal motive is towards economic and political gains. It is my strong conviction that for this country to achieve its developmental gaols, the following are expected from the youths.

- a. Youths must encourage a solid political foundation for a democratic polity so as to create a peaceful atmosphere needed for human development
- b. Youths most encourage elected leaders to designed problem solving programmes to which legacies must go beyond their tenure in meeting the aspiration of electorates in our political communities rather than hand-picking individuals and close relation in solving their basic wants and needs.
- c. Youths must also discouraged desperation politicians who desired is to rule than to lead in our political community. It is true that after election, most political leaders are commander, rulers and believers of the concept of authoritarianism.
- d. Youths must also encourage democratic game of politics; a winner must be supported and loser be encouraged to accept defeat in good faith youths must not be involved in undemocratic games such as rigging, thuggery, such can create a clarion call to violence
- e. Youths must also take bold steps in correcting abnormalities during and after elections

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