



Partisan Mobilization and Electoral Violence in Kebbi State, Nigeria

Yahaya T. Baba¹ --- Danjuma Abdullahi² --- Aminu Musa³

¹Department of Political Science Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto Nigeria

^{2,3}Department of Political Science Federal University Birnin Kebbi Kebbi State Nigeria

Corresponding Author



ABSTRACT

Studies on strategies of mobilization by political parties in democratic process are well documented in the literature. However, while partisan mobilization instigates violence, particularly during elections, little is known, empirically about the relationship between partisan mobilization and electoral violence in Nigeria. Therefore this paper analysed the role of partisan mobilization and electoral violence using a subnational enclave in Nigeria as a unit of analysis. Data were obtained through In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with some party members, citizens, Non-governmental organizations as well as officials of electoral institution and security agencies such as Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence, Nigerian Prisons etc. The findings suggest that political parties play a central role in the violent mobilization of people during elections. The paper offers some suggestions on the strategies for non-violent partisan mobilization for democratic stability.

Keywords: Election, Mobilization, Political party, Violence, Nigeria.

DOI: 10.20448/807.2.2.96.103

Citation | Yahaya T. Baba; Danjuma Abdullahi; Aminu Musa (2016). Partisan Mobilization and Electoral Violence in Kebbi State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 2(2): 96-103.

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Funding : This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

History : **Received:** 3 June 2016/ **Revised:** 27 June 2016/ **Accepted:** 6 July 2016/ **Published:** 16 July 2016

Publisher: Online Science Publishing

1. INTRODUCTION

Political parties exercise an important degree of influence on the policymaking process [Stein & Tommasi \(2007\)](#) and are a vital component of a democracy. Parties perform crucial tasks such as candidates' selection and recruitment, political mobilization, formulation and implementation public policy among others. Outside the electoral arena, parties are also active participants in a host of other areas of modern democratic life, such as forming governments and coalitions, organizing the legislature, and aggregating and articulating the interests and preferences of the citizenry, both from within government and from the opposition ([Norris, 2004](#)). Other characteristics of parties and the party system affect the policymaking process somewhat more indirectly, influencing the nature of executive–legislative relations, the possibilities for interparty and intraparty coordination in the national legislature, and the incentives of elected officials to cater for narrower or broader sets of societal interests ([Norris, 2004](#); [Payne, Zovatto, and Mateo Díaz, 2007](#)). [Stein & Tommasi \(2007\)](#) added that all these activities, parties are deeply involved in various forms of mobilization. However, partisan

mobilization around elections stand out as the most pronounced function of political parties. This paper examines the extent to which partisan mobilization influences electoral violence in a subnational enclave in Nigeria.

1.1. Research Questions

The study will address the following research questions

- a. What are the roles of political parties in mobilizing people for election in Kebbi state Nigeria ?
- b. What are the problems of parties mobilization of people for election in Kebbi Nigeria?
- c. What are the strategic ways of improvement?

1.2. Research Objectives

The study will address the following research objectives:-

- a. To examine the roles of political parties in mobilizing people for election in Kebbi State Nigeria.
- b. To explore the problems of parties mobilization of people for election in Kebbi State Nigeria
- c. To suggest the strategic ways of improvement

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The degree of mobilization of people in politics is different from country to country. In highly nationalized party systems, national issues are likely to be central in mobilization. Political parties have greater ability to broker legislative coalitions on the basis of national issues and to negotiate with a few key national party leaders. In a weakly mobilize party system, subnational issues are likely to be more important in legislative careers. Under weak party mobilization, the central party leadership may be less able to speak for the entire party and to deliver its legislative support.

Differences in nationalization also are likely to have public policy consequences (Jones and Mainwaring, 2003). Decisions related to national transfers to subnational units, administrative reform, and subsidies may be strongly influenced by the degree of party system nationalization. Where a party's base of support is relatively constant across geographic units, it may be more likely to treat all units equally. In contrast, where its support varies widely across geographic units, the party may tend to base its decisions in part on the degree of support it receives in specific geographic units. Finally, in young democracies where pronounced ethnic or religious cleavages coincide with territory, the nationalization of some major parties may be a key factor in preserving democracy (Jones and Mainwaring, 2003). While this factor has historically in Nigerian democracy.

The previous discussion highlighted the important impact of the presence, or absence, of a party system in which parties compete primarily on the basis of programmatic policy appeals and public policy achievements (Kitschelt, 2000 & Norris, 2004). An alternative form of interpartisan interaction, however, involves political competition among parties based not on programmatic policy, but rather on clientelism (Calvo and Murillo, 2005; Lyne, 2008; Taylor-Robinson, 2009). While in programmatic systems, political parties compete based on policy and are judged by voters primarily based on policy outcomes, in clientelist systems, political parties compete based on the distribution of selective incentives to voters, and are judged by voters primarily based

on their ability to distribute/deliver these incentives. Of course, no political party system falls exclusively into a purely programmatic or purely clientelist category. Even in the most programmatic party systems, the analysis of the extent of clientelism is handicapped by the lack of valid cross-national empirical measures of this concept (Kitschelt, 2000). Here, however, a proxy measure of clientelism (corruption) recommended by Kitschelt (2000) is employed.

The extent of corruption is measured using data from the World Bank (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, 2003). Specifically, the average employs some forms of clientelist practices. And even in the most clientelist party systems, parties are evaluated in part based on policy. However, these nuances aside, it is possible to locate parties along a programmatic– clientelist continuum.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of data collection were interviews, face to face interviews were conducted with some party members, citizens, Non governmental organizations as well as officials of electoral institution in Kebbi State of Nigeria and security agencies such as Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp, Nigerian Prisons etc. Atlas ti7 was used in the analysis of data.

3.1. Analysis

The results of the interviews were analyze as follows:-

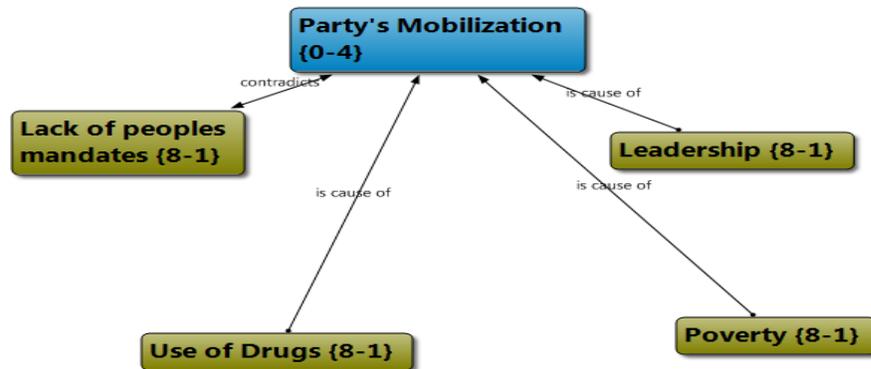


Figure-1.1. Showing network matrices of node and child nodes

Source: Authors computation (2016)

3.2. Leadership

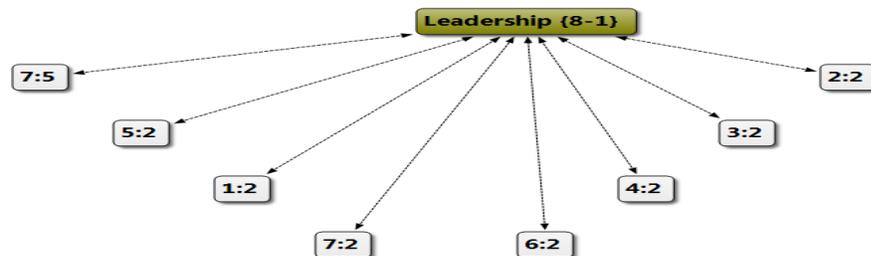


Figure-1.2. Showing child node and network

Source: Authors computation (2016)

From the Interviews conducted it was observed that the major problem of election in Nigeria is leadership as some of the respondents observed that the major breeders of thugs are the leaders who do not have the fear of God in their heart, that is what is breeding thugs as far as the violence and election is concern. Politicians are selfish, they only cares about their families, friends and relatives. Looking at Nigeria from 1999 to date, it is clear that politicians are just imposing candidates but not election that is why we found ourselves in this present situation, the 1999 election shows that almost all the senators were imposed on the populace not elected. In that period Nigeria had more than 5 senate leaders due to the fact that all of them were clamoring that they were the one that took themselves to the house without any influence of godfatherism. Since then they brought a method that before you emerge as a member of the house of representation of senate there must be influence of either governor or parties' influential figures. The same thing applies to state and local government. The worst part of it is the role of the populace, people play role of gossipers to those influential figures due to poverty and other related issues. The leaders should be blamed for all these situations the country is going through. People glorify thuggery than hand work, what thugs are getting is even more than that of laborer per day. The reason why people are putting hopes on Buhari is that he has the quality of fairness and not a corrupt leader in his endeavours which help in mobilizing people to the party that he belong. In another development, a respondent added that:-

Our leaders any time they need people you will see them going to old people that have esteem in the society and beg them that they need their assistance, they want to join politics, but the irony of things is that, the moment they are through with the election, they will disappear till another election period.

In addition to the above, an interviewee said selfishness on the part of Politicians is responsible for illegal mobilization of people through given them money and violent mobilization as some respondents said People were mobilize through thuggery in politics, but the question is which type of thuggery and how do they do it. For instance, speaking in parable, beating innocent citizens and creating problems is not what politics is all about. Politics entails respect for logo and manifestation of the party, for instance,saying PDP you said power, but due to the selfish interest of the politician, they changed it to different thing entirely.

In addition, another respondent added:-

“Politics is characterized by many manifestation. To some it is all about hypocrisy, to some it is about killing and disgracing people as well as creating problem in the society”.

From the above responses, it is clear that leadership plays a vital role in political mobilization, some of the interviewees mentioned that selfishness of the politicians is responsible for mobilizing people through illegal means like corruption, mobilizing thugs which is creating problem to our young democracy in Kebbi State and indeed Nigeria at large.

3.3. Lack of Peoples Mandates

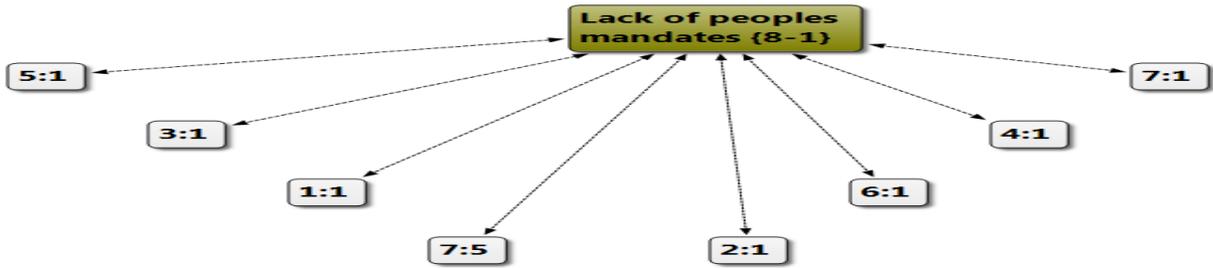


Figure-1.3. Showing child node and network

Source: Authors computation (2016)

From the sub-theme above, it is clear that part of the problem of violent mobilization in Nigeria is as a result of inability to seek for people mandate as some respondents observed. The reason why we are having thugs surrounding candidates is that those politicians are the type who do not have the gut to penetrate the society, they do not have total acceptability to the people. While some added that they cannot go through youth to vanguard, because no youth can tell who they are in local government and what are the demands of people of the local government?

It is the politicians that breed this thuggery because they do not have the mandate and lack acceptability to the general public as a result they are looking for the quickest way of getting into power as a respondent added:-

All these vanguard you see you will see them with politician A today and tomorrow you will see them with politician B, using youth is the common identity of weak politician, who do not see themselves as acceptable to the masses. If you are acceptable to the public you do not have to use youths as thugs.

From the above, it is clear that part of the reason for violent mobilization of people into politics in Kebbi State is lack of people mandate which some informants said is the attributes of weak politicians, politicians that want to win by either hook or crook method.

3.4. Poverty

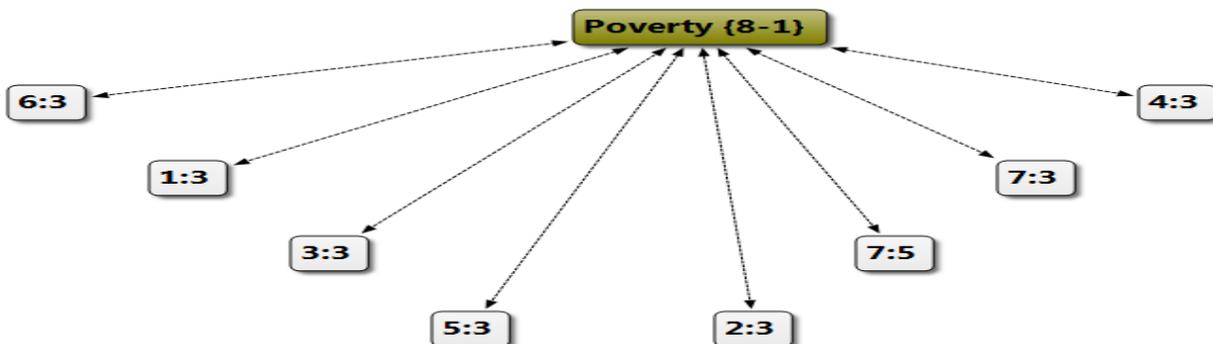


Figure-1.4. Showing child node and network

Source: Authors computation (2016)

Youth are used by politicians because they want to secure powers for themselves. But they do not have the acceptability but they have the money as some of respondents observed:- Most of the youth are jobless and with the level of poverty they will now start to buy them in order to frontier their mission. Like now even if someone wants to contest for politics, they need not go to the youth but people will come to them for who they are, whether they have the vision or not but it is much easier for somebody who may run the same election with someone who do not have the mission to go and buy the youth. These youths do not often vote, and they are considered more relevant during election than even the voters.

Things are changing because people start to realize that they are making mistake by allowing the youths to vote during election, to spearhead their election thereby leading to emergence of wrong candidates into elective posts. People became conscious of that, because it cannot lead them to success. Even the security men are hungry, in the sense that the highest bidder, most of the politicians that are using the youths are the rich politicians who do not have the common mandate to deliver. Because the politicians are rich, the irony of it is that the same man buying the security is the same man sponsoring the youths for thuggery. As a respondent observed that:-

People came to realize that they get into mess when they elect wrong candidate that do not have the mission and the vision of people at heart. Wrong people are in government that is why we do not have this, we do not have that etc. Without youths, as a politician you are in trouble. Security agencies only play minor role in politics but youths play most of the role. The role of youths in politics cannot be over emphasized, the moment people see you with the youth they will say this politician has a lot of followers..

Another respondent added that:-

Poverty is another issue, which is very rampant among the populace, when problems come up for instance, wedding, naming ceremony, people need money to enhance these activities, without money one cannot do it, some politicians get people through helping them when problem comes up. The worst part of it is getting them, some time you will spend like 7 hours waiting for him to come out before he could help you with his or her token contribution. In another development, the people that did not even participate for the election are the one surrounding him, while the people that suffered have no access to him.

From the above, it is clear that poverty is the major issue that is affecting young democracy in Nigeria. Most of the youths are jobless as a result the politicians can entice them with little gift and mobilize them for thuggery, other issues mentioned lack of strong heart by the youth to search for their sweat, they prefer easy money and so on.

3.5. Use of Drugs

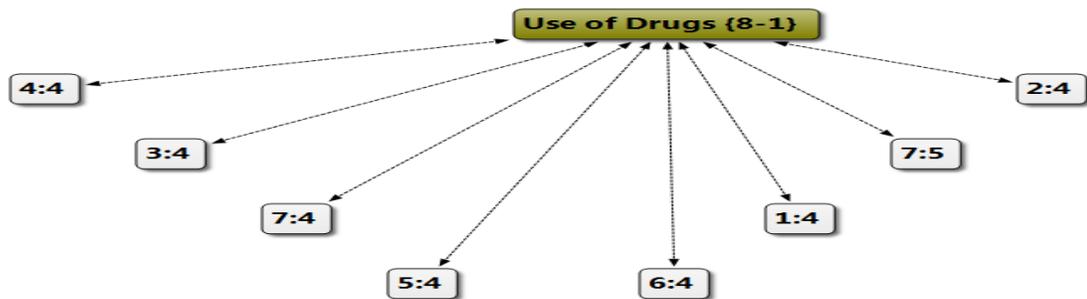


Figure-1.5. Showing child node and network

Source: Authors computation (2016)

The use of drugs in election is another manifestation of problem of mobilization of people toward politics as some respondent observed. Most of the time politicians do convince people with money in order to follow their party, some people that are into drugs for instance, they do give them money to buy drugs in order to draw their attention to follow their party or some time they will give them drugs. There is also popular adage that says that an idle mind is a devil workshop, some are using the opportunity of youth unemployment to draw them into their party. Some time they will call them to enter vehicle free of charge and they will give them feeding money, such kind of ways are used by politicians in drawing the attention of the youths to join their party, the moment they enter that vehicle they have no say. They accept the instructions given by the boss who gave them money to buy food. In another development, another respondent also observed that youths are hungry as he put it:-

Many youths in the state cannot afford three square meals per day, due to unemployment, they are convinced by just a little thing and become mobilized for thuggery, the politicians are wise, hardly to see their children at the same time their relatives participating as thugs. Even the food given to them some time the politicians do drugs it, that is why they do attack, abuse their fathers' mate without any sign of remorse.

Finally, it is clear that use of drugs is another manifestation of youths violent mobilization into politics in Kebbi, due to the fact that majority of the population are the youths who are neglected.

Table-1.1. Summary of the interviews

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE								
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PD-Filter: All [7]								
Quotation-Filter: All [29]								
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 5	P 6	P 7	TOTALS:
Lack of peoples mandates	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8
Leadership	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8
Poverty	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8
Use of Drugs	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	8
TOTALS:	4	4	4	4	4	4	8	32

Source: Authors computation (2016)

4. CONCLUSION

The paper discussed problems associated with mobilization of people by political parties in Nigeria. The findings show that leadership, poverty, lack of people mandates and use of drugs are the major problems of mobilization of political party toward election in Nigeria. From the above responses, it is clear that leadership play a vital role in political mobilization. Some of the interviewees mentioned that selfishness of the politicians is responsible for mobilizing people through illegal means like corruption, mobilizing thugs which is creating problem to our young democracy in Kebbi State and indeed Nigeria at large. From the above, it is clear that part of the reason for violent mobilization of people into politics in Kebbi State is lack of people mandate which some informants said is the attribute of weak politicians, politicians that want to win by either hook or crook method. Besides, it is clear that poverty is the major issue that is affecting young democracy in Nigeria, most of the youths are jobless as a result the politician can entice them with little gift and mobilize them for thuggery, other issues mentioned lack of strong heart by the youths to search for their sweat, they prefer easy money and so on.

Finally, it is clear that use of drugs is another manifestation of youth violent mobilization into politics in Kebbi, due to the fact that majority of the population are the youths. Also, youths suffer from unemployment and the attitude of the politicians make the them to become lazy by converting them to political thugs.

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