

**INSECURITY AND POLITICAL APATHY IN NIGERIA'S ELECTIONS:
A STUDY OF KANO STATE ELECTIONS (2011 - 2019)**

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Abstract

This paper explores insecurity as a cause of political apathy that hinders political participation in Nigeria, taking Kano State as the context of the research. It adopts qualitative approach, simultaneously using both primary and secondary sources; in-depth interviews, scholarly articles and journals. Interviewees were purposively sampled. Rational Choice Theory is used as the theoretical pedestal to elucidate that partaking in political activity though an element of liberal democracy happens based on the choice and volition of citizens. Such a right could be taken away when citizens are disenfranchised as a result of insecurity; political violence, hooliganism etc. The study finds out among other things that violence emanates from the misconduct of thugs, sponsored or hired by politicians to rig elections, intimidate voters and scare off opponents at polling units. Also, belief of politicians that elections must be won by hook or crook and at all cost scares voters from falling victims at the hands of politicians and their political soldiers. Accordingly, the study recommends adequate civic education and political sensitization to citizens at early age through conventional schools and otherwise. Also, the electoral body should sanitize the system by employing stringent rules in the electoral process to ensure safe and violent-free environment before, during and after elections. Vetting and screening to-be political officers should also be rigorous, entailing character, records, use of drugs and association with political hooligans.

Keywords: *Insecurity, Political Apathy, Elections, Kano State.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of kidnapping, harassment, and all sort of violence is a widespread disease that reaches a climax during election periods in Nigeria. In addition to the popular belief of people that their votes do not count due to vast corruption, the level of insecurity during elections makes voting a risk too high and dangerous for people to take. This study will examine the effects of insecurity and how it influences voter apathy in Kano State's electoral process. In Nigeria, instances of electoral violence are primarily instigated, funded, and occasionally equipped with weapons by politicians, government officials, party officials, or their delegates. This is attributed to the significant levels of poverty, low literacy rates, and unemployment prevalent in the country (Orji and Ugodu 2012). Several unemployed youths engage in politics with the aim and objective of stirring up chaos and unrest. Many people have argued that there were no elections in 2003 but merely the intimidation of the voters and the selection of already-decided winners by elites and caucuses (Abimbola and Adesote 2012).

Conceptualizing Insecurity

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Beland (2005), insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to the absence or lack of protection. Achumba et al (2013) define insecurity from two perspectives. To begin with, insecurity refers to a state where one is vulnerable or at risk of danger or harm. This danger can come in different forms and may cause injury or damage. Additionally, insecurity can also refer to a state of exposure to risk or anxiety, which is a feeling of unease or worry about potential misfortunes. These definitions highlight the fact that those who experience insecurity are not only unsure about what might happen but are also susceptible to harm if the threats become a reality.

In a more general sense, insecurity is a disruption of peace and stability, which can arise from various sources such as historical, religious, ethnic, regional, civil, social, economic, and political factors. Insecurity often leads to repeated conflicts and can destroy property and loss of life. According to Ali (2013), ever since Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999, the fear of insecurity in the country has been steadily increasing, exacerbated by the growing threat of terrorism. Nigeria has a lengthy history of violent crime that can be traced back to the period between 1960 and 1970. The issue of insecurity first emerged during the early years of military rule, when large quantities of arms were brought into the country for use by the military

during and after the Nigerian civil war. Some of these weapons eventually found their way into the hands of civilians and ex-military personnel, who began to use them for criminal activities such as armed robbery. Additionally, there was a significant number of unemployed youths at the time, many of whom had lost their jobs during the civil war, contributing to the growing problem (Ali, 2013; Okorie, 2011; Jega, 2002; Salawu, 2010; Onyishi, 2011; Ezeoba, 2011; Lewis, 2002).

Causes of Insecurity

There are many causes of insecurity especially in Nigeria. However, the research will look at the main causes which are:

a. Corruption

According to Ekiyor (2005), corruption can be broadly defined as the illegal exploitation of power or influence by government officials, to enrich themselves or promote their interests or those of others, at the expense of the public. This definition highlights that corruption involves a breach of the official's oath of office and goes against established laws of the country. Nigeria's efforts of achieving development have encountered lots of obstacles like high cost of governance and corruption (Aliyu, 2010:P.7. Nigeria's corrupt practices have continuously hindered its development and negatively affected the hopes and aspirations of Nigerians since independence. As a result, the level of insecurity in the country has increased, with many individuals resorting to criminal activities due to being denied their basic entitlements as a result of corruption. This challenge of corruption and high cost of governance cannot be attributed to a specific government or regime type, be it military or civilian. The common factor among these governments is corruption, which has inflated the cost of governance to the detriment of the nation's overall development and its people (Aliyu, 2003:P.8).

It is widely acknowledged that corruption is endemic and systemic in Nigeria, impeding the country's development. The saying, "HIV and AIDS kills an individual, but corruption kills a whole generation, a whole people, and a whole country" illustrates how corruption is more lethal, deadly, and destructive than HIV and AIDS. According to the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published by Transparency International (TI), corruption has worsened in Nigeria, with the country ranking 134th out of 180 countries surveyed in 2010. In 2008, Nigeria was rated 12th out of 180 countries with a score of 2.7 points, but its CPI score

fell to 2.1 in 2010. As per the Transparency International rating scale, Nigeria ranks below Ghana, Cameroon, Niger, and Benin (Daily Trust, 2009; Online Nigeria, 2009).

b. Weak Judicial System

Ibrahim Mohammed JCA emphasized the vital role of the judiciary in a democratic society. In the Sahara Reporters and Anor vs Saraki (2018) case, he stated that the judiciary is the citizens' final defense and hope in a free and democratic society, due to its fundamental functions and role. The judiciary acts as a line separating constitutionalism from totalitarianism. Hence, when this essential institution becomes weak, it can have a significant impact on the security of the country.

One of the significant challenges Nigeria faces in its democratic journey is the inadequacy of the justice delivery system. The judiciary has been weakened by a pervasive lack of integrity, which is just one aspect of the larger justice system. This situation is due to the claimed actions of some members of the bench who, in collaboration with the bar, weaken the law. As a result of this, corruption has been able to thrive in the country (Victor, 2020). According to a report by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), a human rights organization based in Lagos, Nigeria, titled "Letting the Big Fish Swim," the investigation, prosecution, and judicial determination of corruption cases in Nigeria are seen as biased by the average citizen. The report laments over how the criminal justice system treats high-profile corruption offenders differently from average citizens who have wronged the law, The latter is directly sent to prison. This disparity in treatment is similar to Edwin Sutherland's description of "white-collar crime," where the rich and powerful often get away with their crimes and profit from Nigeria's legacy of treating the privileged better.

The challenges facing the administration of criminal justice in Nigeria are not due to a lack of laws or institutions. Instead, the problem lies in the willingness of actors within and outside criminal justice institutions to set aside their personal or group interests and apply the law fairly and justly. This is the primary reason for the low conviction rate of high-profile corruption defendants in Nigeria, which has led to a culture of impunity. Unfortunately, this unequal treatment has contributed significantly to the current state of insecurity in the country because getting away with crime is not hard for the privileged (Victor, 2020).

Nwachukwu (2021) highlighted that a good percentage of judicial officers in Nigeria do not measure up to the expected standard of intellectual capability, uprightness, character, and

integrity. As a result, the quality of judgments delivered by Nigerian courts is often poor leading to a growing problem of conflicting judgments and confusion within the legal system. To preserve public confidence and promote investment in the economy, Nwachukwu argues that the judiciary must be not only fair and impartial in administering justice but also effective in resolving disputes.

c. Bad Governance

Bad governance occurs when the government and its institutions at the national, regional, and local levels prey on the majority of the population (Ibaba 2020). Poor and bad governance creates and promotes high levels of unemployment and an unequal wealth gap among citizens of many African societies (Kreutz 2012). The wealth gap created by poor governance in many African societies often leads to high levels of frustration among the youth. As a result, some turn to criminal activities such as banditry, terrorism, and kidnapping to achieve their social, family, or political aspirations, ultimately contributing to insecurity. Good governance is widely recognized as a need for sustainable growth and development in Nigeria. According to Marke (2007), history shows that when young people lack necessities and meaningful work, they often resort to destructive behavior to draw attention to their plight. This supports the human needs theory, which suggests that poverty caused by unemployment due to bad governance can lead to conflict and insecurity, as young people seek to address their needs and aspirations.

The government's lack of care for its citizens has resulted in a situation where citizens are denied basic stuff like social amenities and infrastructure. Even when the government claims to have provided such amenities, they are often of poor quality and frequently collapse. Additionally, poor governance is also evident in the government's tendency to prioritize uneconomic projects over vital infrastructure like schools, hospitals, water supply, and access roads. These so-called leaders prefer to invest in projects they will directly benefit from and not things that are needed. Moreover, the lack of regular electricity supply has had a significant impact on production industries, leading to business closures and relocation to other countries with more stable power supply hence reducing productivity and worsening the economy (Bahir, 2017).

Undoubtedly, there is a clear connection between governance, peace, stability, and development. Consequently, the lack of progress in Nigeria is directly linked to the approach

to governance adopted by successive administrations. Nigerian leaders' style of governance does not align with any established principles of good governance.

d. Unemployment

Unemployment is the condition of one who is capable of working, actively seeking work, but unable to find any work. The ILO (1996) defined unemployment, which refers to individuals in the economically active population who are not employed but are seeking and available for work. This includes those that have lost their jobs or left voluntarily. The term unemployment includes all people willing and able to work, without a job. It is a worldwide issue troubling not only the individuals affected by it but also larger global communities.

According to Adegbie (2018), the rate of unemployment in Nigeria rose from 18.8% in the third quarter of 2017 to 23.1% in the third quarter of 2018, and it is projected to reach 35% by 2023. Ahmadu (2018) contended that a nation's peace, stability, and continued existence are connected to how well its government implements policies to decrease unemployment rates and subsequently decrease the number of potential youths and adults who are prone to engaging in bad activities. Due to Nigeria's plentiful Natural and Mineral resources, the country should not be having any cases of unemployment and poverty. According to an African proverb, "A hungry man is an angry man," which illustrates why many people give in and participate in the insurgency. The government, in particular, has a very important role to play in minimizing the consequences of unemployment and poverty among its citizens. A well-nourished nation is a peaceful nation. The insurgency has inflicted significant losses on our country, including the loss of lives and resources. While budgetary allocations are supposed to be used to better the lives of citizens, they are instead diverted to the purchase of military equipment while sectors like education, health care, agricultural imputes and the growth of infrastructural facilities are being ignored (Ahmadu 2018).

e. Poverty

The idea that poverty results in insecurity has sparked debate among scholars. Some academics assert that there is a clear connection between poverty and insecurity, while others contend that other factors contribute to insecurity. Kanbur (2007) argues that poverty does result in insecurity. Ted Gurr's deprivation theory believes that frustration is the reason why individuals turn to violence. According to the theory, aggression is the result of frustration, and frustration always leads to some form of aggression (Leeds, 1978). The poor are particularly subjected to

engaging in violence due to their state of poor and having unmet needs (Odumosu, 1999). This scenario is highly applicable to the current security situation in Nigeria, where many young people have taken up arms against the state due to feelings of frustration, denial, and lack of opportunity.

As cited by Akwara (2013), Awaka (2012) notes that over 80% of deaths related to conflict have occurred in economically disadvantaged states. According to Gurr (1970) and Burton (1997), poverty and other factors detrimental to societal development contribute to conflict, violence, and insurgency. Research indicates that most of Nigeria's current security challenges stem from the high level of poverty and inequality. In terms of the number of extremely poor individuals, Nigeria ranks third globally.

The northern region has been shown to have higher rates of mass poverty compared to the national average. According to Abbas (2015), poverty, desperation, frustration, joblessness, discrimination, and injustice are the causes of Boko Haram. This view was supported by Lawan (2013), a senator from Yobe state, who stated that he believes more resources from the federal government are needed to fight poverty in Yobe and Borno states. He argues that if the goal is to address the insurgency, then poverty, which has been identified as a key factor in the crisis, must be tackled, and the federal government should provide a special financial package for these states. The Al Jazeera report of 2014 stated that Boko Haram emerged in the poorest area of Nigeria, where 71.5% of the population lives in absolute poverty and over half suffer from malnutrition. Similarly, Reuters (2014) reported that Borno state has some of the lowest economic indicators in Nigeria, and investors avoid investing in the state due to the poor security situation.

Poverty is defined by a lack of necessities to support a family, such as food and clothing, as well as the absence of educational and medical facilities and job opportunities. Poverty also brings about insecurity, helplessness, and exclusion. People living in these situations that do not know better are likely to join violent groups so they can belong somewhere and at the same time earn a living. As a result, many members of armed robbery gangs, terrorist groups, and Boko Haram, particularly the foot soldiers, are drawn from impoverished populations (Ford 2011).

Kinds of Insecurity

The research will examine the following kinds of insecurities which are fundamental to Nigeria:

a. Environmental Insecurity

Environmental insecurity refers to a state with a shortage of environmental safety. Some of the significant environmental threats affecting both developed and developing nations worldwide include lack of access to clean water sources, air pollution, changes in climate, and continuous degradation of the ecosystem. However, developing countries like Nigeria are the ones most affected.

The 2012 flood disaster in Nigeria resulted in damages and losses worth around ₦2.6 trillion or US\$16.9 billion (FGN 2013). This illustrates how the environment can have a big impact on human life, highlighting the interconnection between environmental security and human security. The two are interdependent, there is no human security in an insecure environment. Khagram et al. (2003, p. 1) in capturing the relationship between the environment and security, stated that "a significant amount of human security is linked to people's access to natural resources and their vulnerability to environmental changes - and much of the environmental change is directly or indirectly influenced by human activities and conflicts."

The issue of environmental security in Nigeria gained attention in 1987. Before this time, there were few laws regulating the utilization and management of environmental resources in the country. However, the disposal of toxic waste in Koko Village in Delta State in 1987 sparked nationwide outrage. This incident was brought about by the need for environmental regulations in Nigeria. Before then, the Nigerian government had no policies or mechanisms for safeguarding the environment or enforcing laws and regulations governing environmental resources. The Koko toxic waste saga served as a wake-up call for the Nigerian government to recognize the importance of environmental security for national existence and development. The Nigerian government passed the Harmful Waste Decree 42 in 1988, shortly after the incident. This decree laid the groundwork for the creation of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA).

b. Economic Insecurity

Economic insecurity includes the fear of spending money instead of saving, as well as the concern of making a poor investment. It also refers to the fear of not having enough financial resources to maintain one's current or future standard of living. Nigeria's insecurity issue is largely driven by factors such as increasing poverty, inequality, and limited job opportunities, particularly among the youth. According to (Agusto &Co), the rise in insecurity in Nigeria is closely linked to the growing poverty levels, with an estimated 83 million people, which is 39% of the total population, living in extreme poverty as of April 2022. This marks an 18% increase from the 70 million people recorded in 2016.

The prevailing insecurity in Nigeria has disrupted the agricultural sector, which is the largest employer of labor and the biggest contributor to the country's economy, accounting for 25.9% of GDP in 2021. The high rate of food inflation in Nigeria, which went up to 17.2% in March 2022, is largely attributed to the increasing insecurity in the north. Communal clashes, banditry, and farmer-herder conflicts have persisted in Nigeria's North-Central zone and have spread to neighboring regions such as the South-West zone, as reported by (Agusto &Co 2022).

Many farmers in Nigeria are unable to access their farmlands for planting and harvesting due to insecurity, and others have to pay terrorist groups to do so hence resulting in reduced agricultural output, food scarcity, and higher food prices, as well as the safety and well-being of communities living in these areas being endangered. Furthermore, it leads to heavy reliance on food imports, which creates vulnerabilities in the economy and delays the achievement of self-sufficiency. The increasing level of insecurity pushes away investors, resulting in lower foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows. According to (Agusto &Co) Nigeria experienced FDI inflows of \$699 million in 2021, the lowest level since 2013. The impact of insecurity on tasks like production, marketing, and distribution, cannot be overstated, as uncertainty and instability negatively affect business activities.

c. Political Insecurity

According to (AG Global Strategies) political instability refers to the likelihood of a government failing due to conflicts and escalating struggles, which could be violent, between different political parties. This instability arises when the government and society fail to effectively address the concerns and complaints of the citizens or a specific group among them.

These complaints may arise from factors that could be political, internal, or external, depending on the situation (Adeyeri, 2013) quoting (Ofiaga, 2011).

Bates (2005) categorizes the causes of political instability in Africa into three main sources which are military regimes, the character of leaders in power, and the current common factor being poverty, which leads to a fragile state and violence among its people. Apogan-Yella (2005) also examines political instability in West Africa, but her analysis links the root cause of insecurity and underdevelopment to the absence of democratic institutions with proper checks and balances that would ensure leaders are not abusing power. Institutions such as the legislature, judiciary, auditor generals, central banks, and press lack the necessary independence which further worsens political instability.

Kasule (2005) examines the relationship between political insecurity and regional economic organizations (REOs) in East Africa and explores how political insecurity impacts these organizations. He identifies two factors that contribute to political insecurity in Africa namely the nature of political leadership, which often lacks legitimacy, and balkanization originating from the colonial era. Abdul-Jelil (2008) highlights godfatherism as one of the biggest causes of political insecurity in the fourth republic of Nigeria. He analyses this phenomenon using two theories i.e. the "economy of affection" and "social exchange" theories. Igbafe and Offiong (2007) examine political assassination in Nigeria between 1986 and 2005. Their research reveals that political assassination happens as a result of unhealthy competition among political rivals, the pursuit of political power, and the inefficiency of security institutions in Nigeria. They argue that the poor security situation not only allows political violence to occur but also creates a hostile environment for foreign investors, leading to an autocratic form of government. During the period studied, there were about 51 recorded cases of political assassination.

d. Job Insecurity

According to Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), job insecurity is an employee's perception of not being able to maintain their job that is under threat. The researchers emphasize two key aspects under this: (a) powerlessness, which is a feeling of helplessness (b) the perceived threat of job loss. Sverke et al. (2002) view job insecurity as the difference between the level of job security an individual experiences and the level they desire.

Okene (2000) examines the concept of job security in the context of the "right to a job" or "right to work". He argues that the right to work is essentially a right to obtain and maintain employment as a means of sustenance. Therefore, the concept of the right to work is closely linked to the security of the employee against having no job.

Adegbie (2018) notes that Nigeria's unemployment rate has been increasing, reaching 23.1% in the third quarter of 2018, and is expected to reach 35% by 2023. This high rate of unemployment poses a significant challenge to the country, as it has contributed to a rise in criminal activities because people without jobs engage in illegal activities for survival and maintenance.

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence refers to any form of violence that occurs during an electoral process, including activities that range from intimidation and threatening of voters, physical violence, and the overall disruption of electoral grounds, which can result in the damage of lives and property. It is often used as a weapon by political actors to influence the process and outcome of elections. Electoral violence is a worldwide issue that many governments struggle to solve in order to provide safe grounds for political participation. The damaging effects of electoral violence on the democratic process cannot be overstated, as it can prevent people from voting, influence the way people vote, and even lead to civil unrest or conflict. Nigeria provides an example of the impact of electoral violence on democratic processes. Since the return of civil government in 1999, the political landscape has been dominated by two major parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) which has made them very hostile to each other. This intense rivalry has contributed to a significant increase in electoral violence across the country. It has resulted in creating lesser public trust in the electoral process and has prevented people from voting and generally engaging in political activities.

Political Apathy

Political apathy refers to a lack of love and dedication to one's country. It involves citizens not being interested in all things regarding politics like elections, public opinions, and civic responsibilities. Political apathy is the lack of interest of citizens in the social and political matters of their nation. Politically apathetic individuals are indifferent about things like voting, contesting in elections, having political discussions, or learning about political aspirants.

Examples of political apathy in Nigeria include a decline in voter registration, refusing to vote, failing to protest against election rigging, and neglecting to provide helpful information to security officials (Yakubu, 2012).

Agba (2011) states that most Nigerians are not happy with the way elections are conducted and would rather not participate in the voting process. Falade (2014) argues that there is no longer any debate about the existence of voter apathy in Nigeria, as the low voter turnout in the 2011 general elections serves as enough evident proof of the lack of interest and apathy of some sections of the electorates towards elections. When most people in a country refuse to participate in an election, it means the results will not accurately represent the will of the people, which poses a threat to democracy. According to Emerson (2016), this threat suggests that a minority may end up selecting a government that will not govern in the interests of the majority. Griguoli (2018) states that a healthy democracy will be realized when there is a high voter turnout from an informed electorate and that many citizens do not take voting seriously, are uninformed about the effects of their abstinence from voting, and vote based on emotions and not logic.

Voter Apathy

Voter apathy occurs when eligible voters intentionally choose not to participate in elections. According to Crew et al. (1992) in Fagunwa, (2015, p.6), apathy is characterized by no response, indifference, and nonchalance towards the election process. This attitude involves a lack of passion and attachment among voters, for various reasons. Elections provide citizens with an opportunity to have a say in how they are governed and who governs them. The apathetic and nonchalant attitude expressed by citizens during elections can indicate a failing representative democracy. Without a sufficient voter turnout, the legitimacy of an election and the government that comes into power may be questioned. Low voter turnout represents the preference of only a few individuals and not the majority, raising doubts about the credibility of the election and the government. On the other hand, a high voter turnout validates the credibility of an election and the legitimacy of the government elected. Yakubu (2012) notes that, one of the political obligations of citizens to the state is to vote during elections. However, many people fail to vote due to leaders' incompetence in fulfilling their obligations. These individuals also feel that their votes do not count in producing elected officials because they believe election malpractices/rigging takes place. Yakubu (2012) observes a decline in the interest of Nigerians to register and vote between 1999 and 2011 and concludes that bad

governance has contributed to making people less interested in their political affairs. Froiland (2015) adds that the majority of eligible voters in Nigeria either do not vote or vote irregularly with youth apathy contributing to this low voter turnout.

Difference between Political Apathy and Voter Apathy

Political apathy refers to the lack of interest of citizens to be involved in political activities like elections, having political discussions, current events, advocating and supporting political parties, etc. Voter apathy, however, is a narrower concept of political apathy that refers to the unwillingness or hesitation of eligible voters to cast their votes during elections. While political apathy involves disinterest in all political matters, voter apathy is limited to the act of voting. An individual with voter apathy can participate in other political activities other than voting while an individual with political apathy does not participate in all matters involving politics. A person can be interested in political issues but still choose not to vote due to factors like believing their votes will not make a difference or lack of knowledge about candidates.

Political Participation

Political science scholars have different definitions of political participation. It is said to be the involvement of citizens in activities that impact the selection of political representatives and their actions. Political participation refers to the different methods used by people to express their political views and influence the whole political process Chatora (2012). Abubakar (2011) explains political participation as people's involvement in any political process before a final decision is reached. Political participation involves citizens' engagement in discussions of socio-political and economic issues, which are used to pick out potential leaders. It may also include evaluating the performance of governments in power and bringing forth solutions to societal problems to create a better and more successful country.

Political participation in simple terms is the act of engaging in any political activity like political campaigns, voter registration, the casting of votes, writing, and signing of petitions, attending protests, joining interest groups that engage in lobbying, advocating for political beliefs, monitoring and reporting of cases of violation of the electoral process such as frauds, rigging, intimidation, violence, bribery, underage voting, etc.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY BY ANTHONY DOWNS

According to the rational choice theory, individuals use logical reasoning to make calculated decisions that will provide results that align with their personal goals and objectives (Akhilesh Ganti, 2022). The theory posits that individuals are rational and motivated by self-interest when making decisions. They utilize available information and resources to make decisions most beneficial and advantageous to them. According to this theory, individuals assess the costs and benefits associated with various options and select the one that provides the greatest benefit at the lowest cost. Additionally, the values, beliefs, and philosophy of individuals also play a role in shaping the rationality of their choices and decisions (Micheal I. Ogu, 2013). For example, person A could choose to engage in smoking which is less expensive than therapy as a way of relieving their stress while person B due to religious beliefs could choose therapy over smoking as smoking is considered a sin and ending up in hell is more costly than therapy. This shows how the beliefs of individuals determine their rational choices.

Social scientists can use rational choice theory to make predictions about how individuals will react to situations. For example, in the field of economics, rational choice theory can be used to predict how individuals will react to an increase or decrease in prices. In politics, rational choice theory can be used to predict how voters will make choices between different candidates during elections.

Rational Choice Theory Applied

Rational choice theory in the context of this research suggests that voters will engage in a cost-benefit analysis before deciding to or not to vote especially under an atmosphere of insecurity. Rational voters will deter from participating in elections in the presence of insecurity knowing there is a chance they could be harmed. This largely informs the low voter turnout in Nigeria. Politicians often contribute to the build-up of a tense atmosphere through their negative utterances during the campaign thereby orchestrating violence like when Kano states APC party chairman said “Koda tsiya tsiya stimuli be”. Due to concerns for their safety, many rational citizens choose to stay at home instead of taking the risk of voting for their preferred candidates. Politicians have exploited this situation by often employing thugs to instigate violence and create insecurity in areas they anticipate limited support. Consequently, this has resulted in a significant level of voter apathy in Nigeria.

A voter's decision is driven by the desire to maximize their expected utility; therefore they will pick the option they foresee the most benefit from. This can be shaped by factors like their measurement of the candidate's competence, the party's manifestos, policy proposals, etc. For instance, a voter seeking free healthcare and education is more likely to support a candidate who includes such policies in their platform. The rational choice theory also suggests that candidates adopt strategic behavior to secure victory in elections. They select policies they believe will attract the majority of the voting class and make efforts to assemble their supporters to participate in the voting process.

3. ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN KANO

Nigeria's North West where Kano state falls has turned into a hotbed of violence as armed groups engaging in kidnappings, cattle rustling, and retaliatory killings – commonly referred to as bandits – escalated their activity. Rural banditry has intensified against the backdrop of ongoing tensions between Fulani pastoralists and Hausa farmers that extend to the Middle Belt region, often leading to mobilization along ethnic and religious lines. Amid a volatile conflict environment, federal and state government officials cited the heightened violence as the reason for interdictions of political campaigning in some LGAs. Within the region, electoral violence was highest in Kano, where tensions between and within parties have occasionally turned deadly (Election Watch, 2023).

Kano state is one of the many Nigerian states that often experiences election related violence, whether over federal or local contests. In 2011, post-election riots took place in Hotoro, Kawo, Giginyu, Dakata of Nasarawa LG, Zoo Road, Hausawa, Gyadigyadi of Tarauni LG, Sheka,T/Maliki of Kumbotso LG, Gandu, Emirs Palace Road, Sharada,D/agundi, K/Nassarawa, Sabuwar Kofa of Kano Municipal LG, and Dorayi, Chiranchi, Ja'in, Kabuga FCE of Gwale LG. Violence also occurred in Dala, Kura and Wudil LGs. The violence was not specially target at women but women like men also were victims of the indiscriminate attacks. At the beginning violence was directly against electoral officials and the PDP. It targeted powerful politicians from both the ruling PDP and opposition ANPP. For example, the residence of the former House of Representative Speaker, Ghali Naabba was set ablaze, the house of the ANNP stalwart; Alhaji Bashir Tofa was also attacked. The 2011 violence did not have respect even for the traditional rulers as attempts were made to attack the residence of the late Galadiman Kano, Tijjani Hashim. However later it turned into a class war, as any person seen in flashy car was turned into a victim (Peace and Security Working Group, 2015).

Reporting on electoral violence in Kano state, the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) maintained that violence, vote trading and intimidation of voters characterised the supplementary governorship election in Kano State, the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) while reporting on the exercise monitored by 20 of its observers. The mission said it was disturbed that both the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies did little to address the violence and malpractices, which spread to many parts of Kano State. Also in the statement, the EU said its deployed observers, some of whom were prevented from accessing some polling units, witnessed widespread interference and vote-buying by party agents during the supplementary poll.

“Extensive electoral security problems were observed in some areas, with groups of men with weapons intimidating and obstructing the process, and security agencies ineffective at protecting citizens’ right to vote,” the EU said in its report sent to PREMIUM TIMES on Monday afternoon. “In particular, parts of Kano were largely inaccessible to EU observers and citizen observers and journalists were also obstructed. EU observers also witnessed increased interference by party agents and cases of vote-buying,” the major foreign observers’ group found.

In the build up to the 2023 general election, November 2022 to be precise, supporters of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) and the APC clashed in Gwale LGA, as both sides accused each other of instigating violence. Earlier in the year, fighting broke out in March between supporters of rival candidates in the gubernatorial APC primaries in Rano LGA, with heavy clashes resulting in at least one person killed (Election Watch, 2023).

It is common knowledge that the youth who readily submit themselves to perpetrate these acts of thuggery are unemployed and wallowing in poverty. The moments of electioneering campaigns is a moment that many put in whatever they can in the expectation of what they hope to benefit when the person they are supporting wins. For many of the thugs, some good promises are made relating to job expectations or contracts awards. For some, it is for some paltry sums of money paid to hire them. The dirty jobs these thugs do are not the kind of jobs gainfully employed people or literate people will be involved in. Not even the children of these politicians will go into the field to be directly involved in these acts of thuggery for the sake of ensuring victory for their parents. The point must be made that wide spread poverty and unemployment is a result in most societies deliberately unattended to by the governments of

the day. This is consciously used as a device to keep people hungry so that when they see little money, they can jump at it and do the will of the giver (Shankyula, 2020).

4. KANO IN NATIONAL POLITICS

Through the history of Nigeria, Kano had served as not only a necessary nucleus for the taking up of events, but as one strong force never to be stopped once it surfaced on the national scene. For time immemorial, any movement that started in Kano used to be of national interest due to the nature and complexity of its ideology and firm belief for upholding revolutionary movements (Nadir, 2022). In the 1950s when the great Northern People's Congress (NPC) was formed as a political party with dominance in the entire northern region, Kano became the starting point. Due to the serious opposition coming from various political parties, specifically the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), which was radical in its workings, the NPC deliberated thoroughly on how to win the race.

During that time, the general assumption was that, Sir, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa would take on the position of the Premier of the northern region while Sir Ahmadu Bello of Sokoto would become the Prime Minister. This stand was challenged by some members of the party. It was for that same reason that the then emir of Kano, Muhammadu Sanusi sent Bello Dandago, a Kano famous broadcaster and an educated elite to reconcile (Nadir, 2022).

Kano state occupies a strategic position in national politics with a population of over 20 million. This makes every successive presidential aspirant to be conscious of how to get votes from Kano state. The intrigues that characterised the 2019 general elections in Kano state led to the declaration of the results as inconclusive. Kano state is the most populous in Nigeria with an estimated population of over 20 million, politically versatile and dynamic and an important centre that no party could afford to lose (Alechenu, 2020).

On the day of the supplementary election, a tragic incident occurred, which broke the hopes of voters and other people that had good hopes in the election. In the early morning, the Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Wakil, who was highly recognized for his integrity and honesty in things regarding security and politics, was intentionally relieved of his duties by the Nigerian Police Force Headquarters. He was replaced by an Assistant Inspector General (AIG) and two Deputy Inspector Generals (DIGs). This unusual replacement made people suspicious as the Commissioner had successfully managed previous election-related disturbances that affected the entire state. How could he then fail to maintain peace and security in just a few

areas for the supplementary election, to the extent that three high-ranking police officers had to take his position on that day? Many believe there was a hidden motive behind this decision, with suggestions of involvement from the national level, where the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) wanted to by all means retain control over Kano state for its political advantage. Others claimed that the Commissioner had been attempted to be bribed with hundreds of millions of Naira to allow the ruling party, APC in Kano to engage in violence and manipulate the election results through voter intimidation and suppression. However, the Commissioner allegedly stood his ground and refused to accept their bribe. This, according to another informant, as likely as true as it may seem, the opposition PDP was not spared in the act of violence and an attempted manipulation too (Baabayo, 2022).

Apart from the security breach planned by the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), which provided it with an advantage on the day of the supplementary election, there were reports of thugs moving around affected areas, particularly in Gama Ward in Nassarawa local government area displaying terrifying weapons. Once the accreditation process for the election started, these thugs used their weapons to unleash violence upon voters, opposition party members, civil society groups, observers, and the media. Various media outlets, including Channel TV, TVC News, VOA Hausa, BBC Hausa, and local radio stations, reported that their reporters were chased away as they were threatened with death by these thugs. The informants interviewed revealed that what occurred in Kano was nothing more than a charade planned by individuals desperate to emerge victorious in the election at any cost. Multiple reports from observers and media sources stated that the election was completely covered with violence, resulting in the deaths of many innocent individuals whose bodies were circulated on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Media outlets reported various incidents of mayhem, with some electoral officers abandoning their positions in fear for their lives. One electoral official shared his experience with researchers, he stated how he was threatened by armed thugs with his life, they demanded that he surrender all voting materials to them, both sensitive and non-sensitive, including the electronic card readers. Cases of ballot tampering, ballot stuffing, ballot box snatching, and the fabrication of results were also reported, as noted by a member of the civil society interviewed in Kano. He stated that what occurred in Kano could not be described as an election but rather something like an imposition, mandate stealing, or robbery. The result of the election was challenged up to supreme courts but all the courts unanimously upheld the election as valid (Babayo, 2022).

With more than 5.9 million registered voters for 2023 general election, according to the Nigerian Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Kano is the second most populous city in Nigeria, second only to the megalopolis of Lagos with 7 million registered voters. In 2015, Buhari won 1.9 million of its votes, making up about 12.5% of the total votes for him. "Kano can really change the dynamics of a presidential election," pointed out Kabiru Said Sufi, a professor at the Kano College of Education. "The electoral weight of this state, or Katsina State, is equivalent to that of three states in southeast Nigeria!" (Liza, 2023).

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has examined the relationship between insecurity and political apathy in Nigeria's electoral system. The whole foundation for the practice of an electoral system is to achieve representative democracy. A government of the people's choosing it's not really of the peoples choosing when the majority of citizens do not participate in its selection. Insecurity breaks down the idea of representative democracy. It stops the people from exercising their civic rights and from making choices they believe will be beneficial to them. It's restricts the people to their homes in fear for their lives and safety. It provides a minority chosen government and instigates, fear and political apathy in the people. Insecurity further proves to the people that they cannot trust democratic institutions with their safety and wellbeing. Witnesses and victims of insecurity during electoral processes would be reluctant to put themselves in a similar situation again, hence the widespread political apathy.

Recommendations

Political education and awareness is of utmost importance in reducing insecurity and political apathy. Voters, especially, should be educated on the importance of voting, and how it can impact their lives. The belief of most people that their votes do not count should be removed from their minds and replaced with a sense of nationalism and loyalty to their country and to themselves. Also, opposition parties' candidates should be awarded some sort of compensation after they have lost elections. This will reduce the desperation of politicians to get into power. Finally, the use of modern technology can help people be more politically active. Online voting would create an easier and safer way of voting hence solving the issue of voter apathy that stems from insecurity.

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