



ROLE OF SECURITY AGENCIES IN CUBING ELECTION VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA



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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the role of security agencies in cubing election violence in Nigeria using Kebbi state as a case study. Previous studies only discussed role of security agencies in maintaining law and order without mentioning their role especially during elections, therefore this research intends to close the gap. Data were sourced through interviews conducted with the stake holders such as staff of the electoral institution, civil society, security agencies such as the Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps as well as Nigerian Prisons Service and Non governmental Organizations such as Vigilante group. The findings show that politicians are conniving with securities especially the government in power during transition period in order to win election leading to massive destruction as well as loss of lives and properties. The paper gives some recommendations on how to improve the situation.

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Contribution/ Originality

The role of security agencies cannot be over emphasize, previous literatures mainly discussed the role of security agencies in maintenance of law and order without mentioning their roles in election, thus this paper cover the gap on their role in either curtailing or promoting election malpractices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the elections in Nigeria are characterize by violence and intimidation of opponents, selection of aspirant is not based on merit which is creating problem to our young and nascent democracy.

Bribery and corruption are cancan worm that have eaten deep into the electoral system in Nigeria, a lot of people are involve in collecting gratification from the politicians thereby selling their conscience and their votes ([The Guardian, 2015](#)).

In addition to the above, the economic situation is not stable, there is a lot of people dying of hunger and starvation in Nigeria, this is common in the past election most people even go to the extent of tumb printing on ballot papers throughout the night when official voting has not started, this is a cardinal point of rigging an election using the INEC officials to supply voting materials to top politicians in a particular area, hence a resident electoral commissioner of INEC do visit a big name (Politician) in its territory of jurisdiction as a mark of loyalty to pave way for smooth flow of their corrupt tendency perpetuated at the pulls.

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Also, Thuggery is rampant in the aspect of Nigerian youths, today most politicians have thugs whom they use to disrupt election and steal ballot boxes from polling stations, these are jobless youths who are trying to earn a living from dubious antecedents, these are the same youths who they use in carrying out their nefarious activities ranging from political rallies, political assassination etcetera (The Guardian, 2015).

Added to the above selection of candidates is another problem facing election in Nigeria, especially during primaries, which is not based on merit, most of the time is the god fathers that play a vital role in selection of candidates rather than merit system. The internal democracy especially in selection of flag bearer is the biggest challenge.

Also problem of lack of following rules and regulations governing registration of voter affect election in Nigeria, multiple voters registration in an attempt to win election by all means affect the nascent democracy in Nigeria. Couple with conniving with the some paramount stakeholders such as INEC officials, securities agencies in order to manipulate elections to suit their selfish interest.

Another factor is high level of illiteracy among the youths which constitute problem to our young democracy, youths are being used for election vanguard instead of casting their votes for right candidates they prefer following politician just for token amount due to lack of education and laziness.

1.1. Research Questions

What are the causes of election violence in Kebbi State?

What are the role of security agencies in election in Kebbi State?

What are the ways of improving the situation?

1.2. Research Objective

To examines the causes of election violence in Kebbi State?

To analyse the role of security agencies in election in Kebbi State?

To suggest the ways of improving the situation?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Democracy is a complex concept that centers on ensuring freedom for all citizens within a country. To provide context for democracy, political theorists created democratic models that captured societal ideals (Meier, 2016).

Developmental democracy assumes the best about society. Under this theory, citizens are engaged in civic issues and focused on what is best for society as a whole. Democracy is connected to morality. As citizens become involved in government, they acquire an understanding and appreciation of what is needed to improve services and communities. Engaged citizens are responsible community members. The developmental theory acknowledges the need for elected officials but believes the people are responsible for selection and oversight of their work (Meier, 2016). For Madison, the main virtue of government by which he meant representative government in contrast to democracy which involves direct citizen participation, is its potential for containing and diffusing the worst effects of conflict among factions. For this purpose it is best that the factions of a republic be widely diffused across a large jurisdiction and governmental functions be exercised exclusively by representatives who are, moreover, constrained by the checks and balances of a division of powers. Democracy provides forums for the exercise and the development of energetic citizen participation in public affairs Hence, to identify conditions for democracy is already to suppose democratic-theoretical principles (Chan, 2004).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative method of data collection. Data were sourced through interviews conducted with the stake holders such as staff of the electoral institution, civil society and security agencies such as the Police,

Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps as well as Nigerian Prisons Service and Non-governmental Organizations such as Vigilante group. The table below shows the informants and number interviewed.

Table-1.1. Informants interviewed

S/N	INFORMANTS	NUMBER INTERVIEWED
1	Staff of the electoral institution	5
2	Civil society	5
3	Security agencies	5
4	Non-governmental Organizations	5
	Total	20

Source: Authors computation, 2016

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Conniving with Securities

Conniving with securities is another feature of Kebbi politics especially by the government in power during transition period in an attempt to win election as an informant put it.

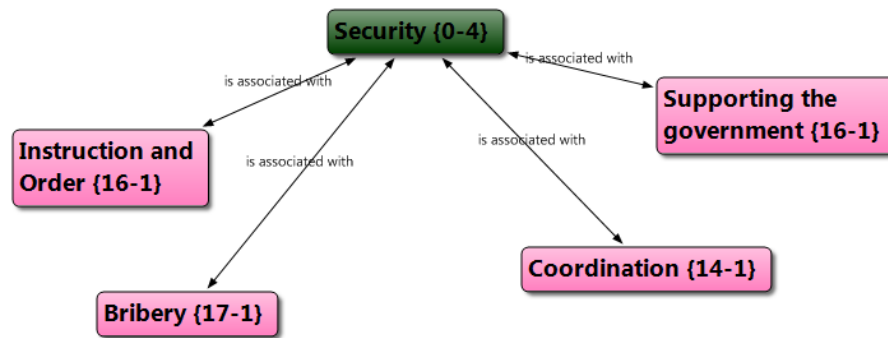


Figure-1.1. Node and child node

Source: Authors computation, 2016

4.2. Bribery

Even the security men are hungry, in the sense that the highest bidder, most of the politicians that are using this youths are the rich politician who do not have the common mandate to deliver, Because of the politicians are rich we came to realize that the same man buying the security is the same man sponsoring the youths for thuggery (P10).

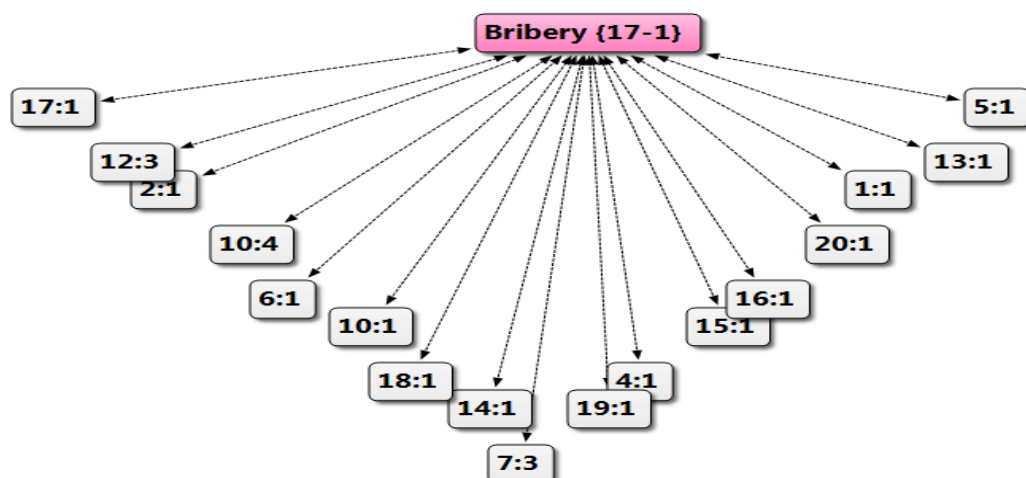


Figure-1.2. Informants responses on bribery

Source: Authors computation, 2016

4.3. Coordination

The Coordination of election by security agencies is very poor due to fact that there was no inter connectivity between the agencies as a result of gratification giving to them (16). The very fact that most of the securities are getting bribe from politicians which affecting the coordination of the programme (6). there are many instance where by securities overlooked cases of violence and election malpractices(18). For instance, a woman slapped one of the voters to creation confusion during election instead of securities to intervened they were just looking at them (15).

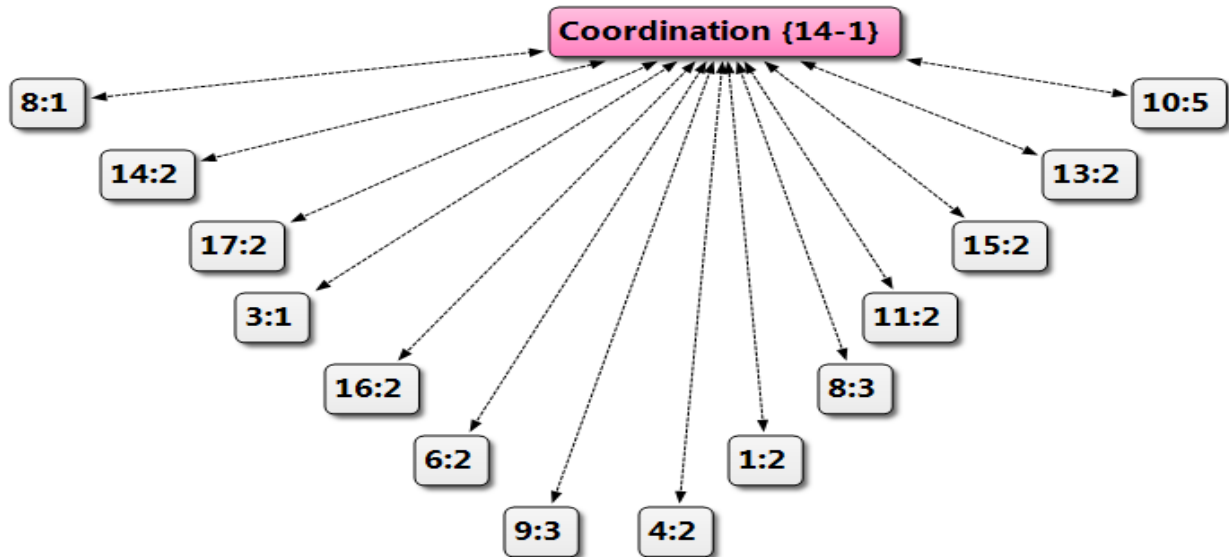


Figure-1.3. Informants responses on coordination

Source: Authors computation, 2016

Another informant added that “Police are under orders and instructions and they are afraid of court martial whenever they commit grievous offense. But thugs has no any laws guiding their activities” (P24).

The security agents are there to curtail any violence act, but because of one problem or the other, May be because you are given money, you are only there to see but not to take action, there are certain instructions they can give to you that your own role is not to supervise but to see the happenings that was going on there. If the government wants to stop all these issues of violence. They make it do or die affairs, they can change the government. During the 2015 elections, people were given money, they collected the money and went on their own and voted for candidates of their choice (P23).

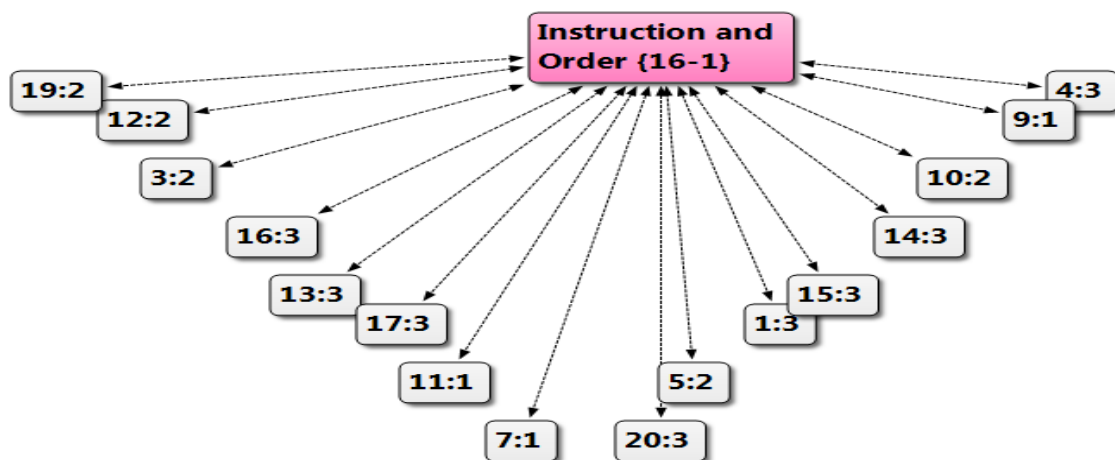


Figure-1.4. Informants responses on instruction and order

Source: Authors computation, 2016

4.4. Supporting Government

Before it was the security agencies that play a vital role in guarding election materials during election, but due to injustice people themselves plays a vital role in that now, the whole election conducted people themselves are sick of manipulation, that is why they don't take chances in allowing the government to influence things. For instance, the Police, Immigration, Civil Defence, Prisons any one of them that you carry to the polling booth is working for the government (P4).

Securities are not playing any paramount role in protecting lives and properties of especially the opposition party. Most of the elections experience has shown they are supporting the government in power instead of maintenance of law and order. Sometime even if the security are willing to protect you, their Ogas at the top will not allowed them due to the nature of their hierarchy, some of them even if they intends doing the right thing they will just receive phone from the top, directing them not to do it. But Dan Banga plays a very important role in the sense that by the time they beat you, next time when you see them you will run away (P7).

If your man is in power, and thuggery is being carryout in his party, even if they are arrested as thugs, they will be released by the ruling party officials, those in power can do and undo, it is only those that are not in power that cannot influence the security agencies, but some of the thuggery are being carry out by the ruling party(P27).

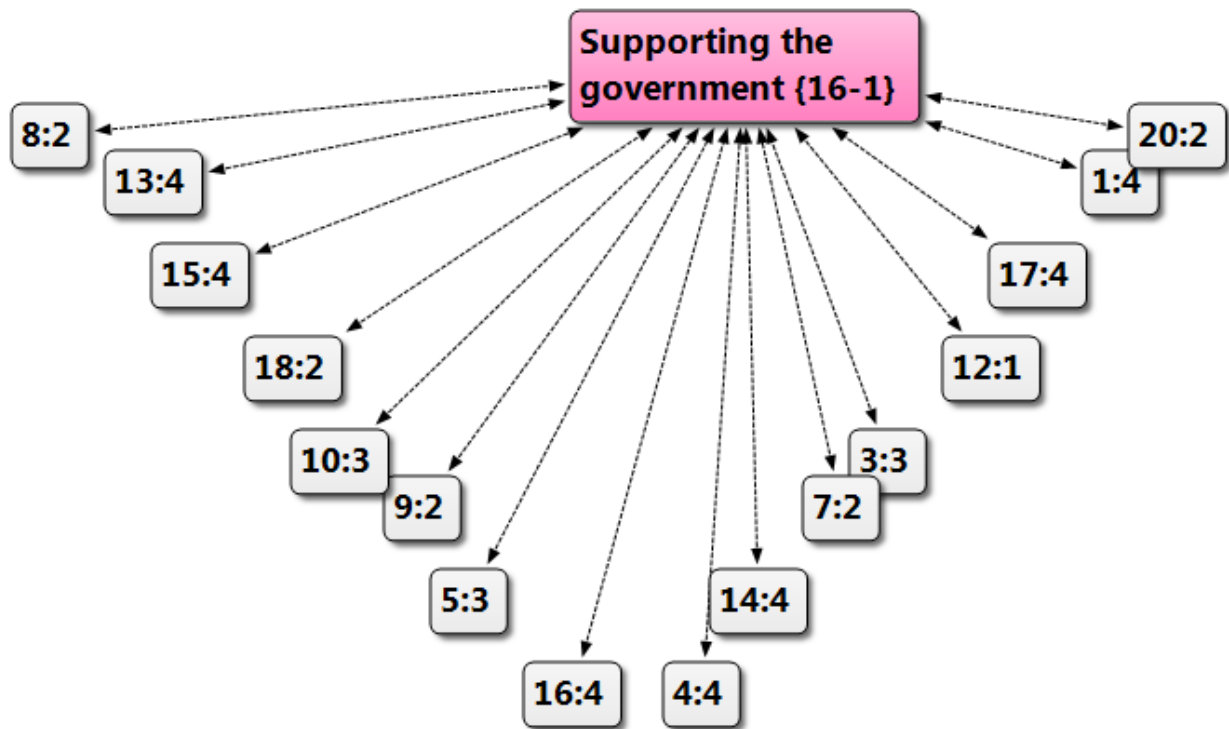


Figure-1.5. Informants responses on supporting government

Source: Authors computation, 2016

Table-1.2. Code summary

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE																					
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Code-Filter: All [5]																					
PD-Filter: All [22]																					
Quotation-Filter: All [63]																					
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	P15	P16	P17	P18	P19	P20	TOTALS:
Bribery	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17
Coordination	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	14
Instruction and Order	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	16
Supporting the government	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	16
TOTALS:	4	1	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	5	2	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3	63

Source: Authors computation, 2016

5. CONCLUSION

The findings above shows that poor coordination, supporting government in power to win election, bribery and corruption and instruction and order from the top hierarchy of security agencies are the problems militating against free and fair election in Kebbi and Nigeria in general.

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