



THUGGERY OF LIBERATION AND ELECTION IN KEBBI STATE



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ABSTRACT

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Since the return of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria, thuggery has being the major issue of elections and electioneering campaign in Kebbi State. Previous studies mainly discussed the issue of thuggery and its effect on the Nigeria’s democratic system without touching on the thuggery of liberation. Thus, this research addresses thuggery of liberation and its effects on election in Kebbi State. 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 Nongovernmental Organizations such as Vigilante group. The findings revealed that liberation thuggery is a way of advancing community effort and development by making sure that members of that community participate in community development. The paper makes some recommendations on the way out.

Contribution/ Originality: This research work contributed in filling the gap on thuggery of liberation which was not been addressed by previous researchers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The major problem of democracy in Nigeria since the country returned to civilian rule in 1999 is the issue of violence in election and election related activities (Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2016). Violence is a threat to democracy globally, even in developed world it is still manifesting.

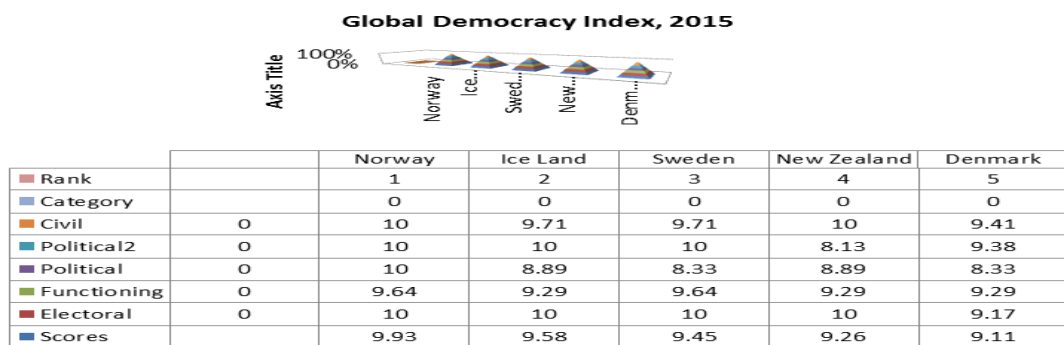


Figure-1.1. Global Democracy Index (2015)

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Index

For instance, since 1959, Britain has not had any case of election violence until recently when a member of parliament was violently killed (Jo Cox) after having meeting with her constituency (Aljazeera, 2016). The situation is worst in Africa as analysts observe that only five countries in Africa are having relatively stable democracies. In developed world the countries that have full democracy according to are as follows:-

While in Africa only five countries are able to make it to flawed democracy, many are still either authoritarian or hybrid regimes. Nigeria belongs to the latter category for democratic practices. However, the report of GDR (2015) indicates the five African countries that have flawed democracy as presented in the figure below:

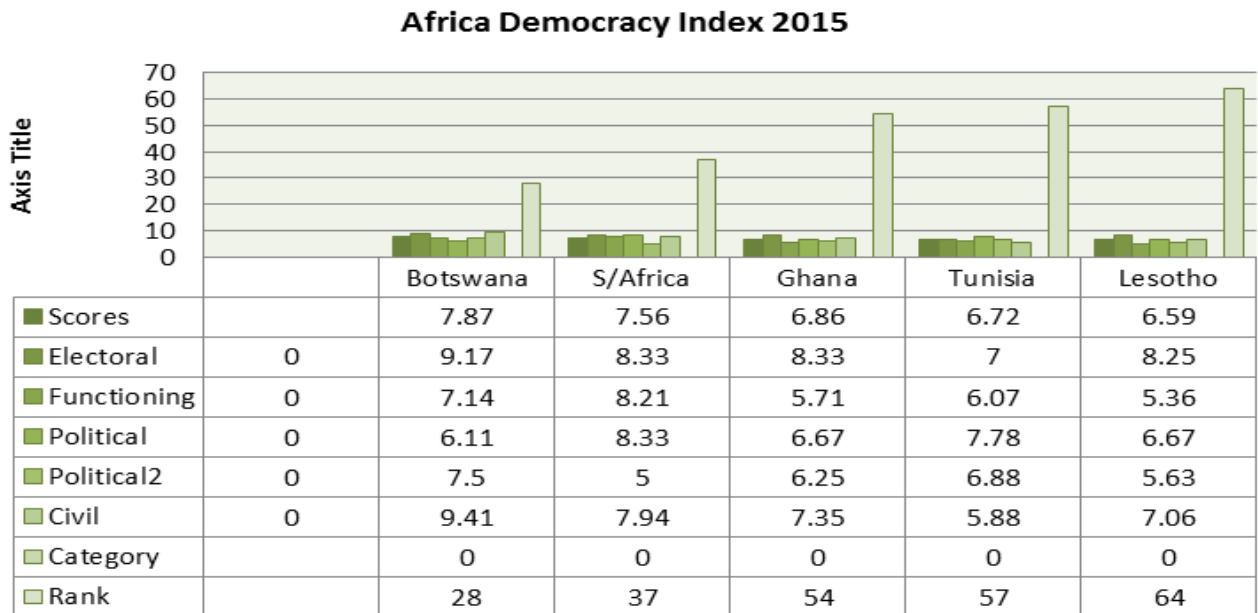


Figure-1.2. Africa Democracy index 2015

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Index

From the beginning of this Republic to date, the quality of the Nigeria’s democracy is fluctuating according to GDR (2015). For instance, in 2008, the country scored 96 and in 2009, it fell to 102. In 2010 to 98 and in 2014 it fell to 104 respectively and this does not auger well for the nascent democratic system in the country. This has been worsen by the magnitude of violence in pre, during and post-election periods in the country.

However, some groups tend to use violence in positive ways through what they call thuggery of liberation. Agitation against domination and marginalization has been the nature and the characteristics of the country’s democratic practice. Some groups that feel dominated and marginalized do resort to use of different means which include violent means through thuggery. They make use of thuggery and other related violence for liberation and self-sustainability. Kebbi State politics is dominated by struggle between and among different Emirates within the state to control the state power. The questions below are designed to guide the paper.

1.1. Research Question

1. What are the causes of Thuggery of Liberation in Kebbi State?
2. What are the impacts of Thuggery of Liberation on Polity in Kebbi State?
3. What are the ways of improving the situation in Kebbi State?

1.2. Research Objectives

1. To unravel the causes of Thuggery of liberation in Kebbi State;
2. To examine the impacts of thuggery of liberation in Kebbi State;
3. To proffer solutions on how to improve the situation.

2. THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

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 (Khan, 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 making process. 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 (Khan, 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 (Kooiman, 2003).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

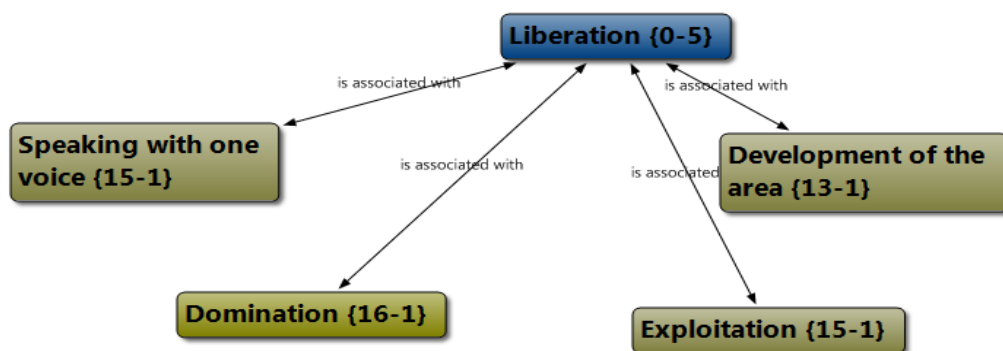
The study employed qualitative method of data collection. Qualitative method is a descriptive and analytical method rather than numerical. Data were sourced through interviews conducted with the stake holders such as staff of the electoral institution, civil society, and security agencies such as the 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 based on purposive selection.

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

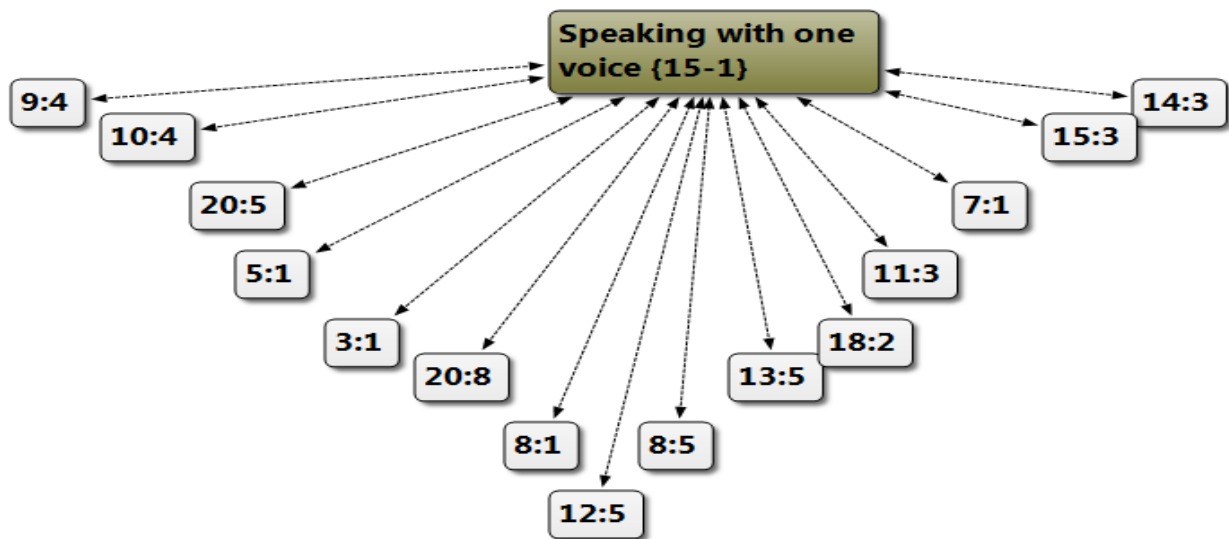
Source: Authors computation, 2016

4. DATA ANALYSIS



Node and Child node

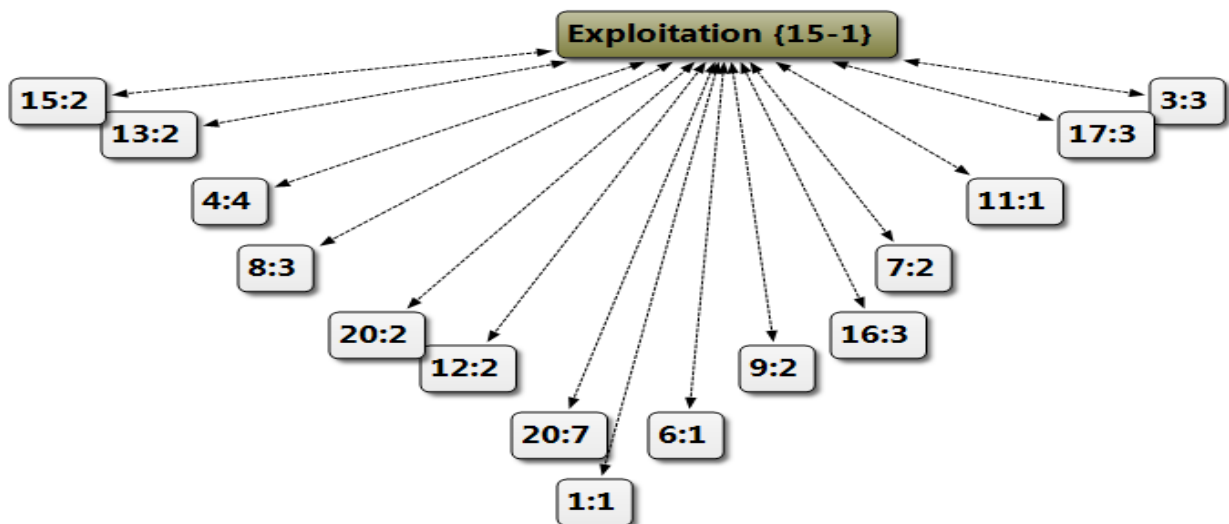
Base on the analysis of data, the following node and child nodes where formed such as speaking with one voice, domination, exploitation and development of some areas.



Network on speaking with one voice

4.1. Speaking with One Voice

Thuggery of liberation is a positive development in politics, particularly communities that are coming together to speak with one voice in order to liberate themselves from domination and exploitation of their tribes or communities. In this respect, a community may gang up to elect indigene of that community so as to bring development to their people (7; 5 & 18). Most of the less develop communities in an attempt to bring development closer to their people do come together and speak with one voice (13; 14 & 9). There are many communities that do that in Kebbi and achieve development. For instance the people of Argungu are a clear picture of that. The people of the town were able to bring many developmental programmes as a result of speaking with one voice (11; 8 & 20). They unite and mobilise people even through violence to support candidates that they are from their emirate (Argungu Emirate).

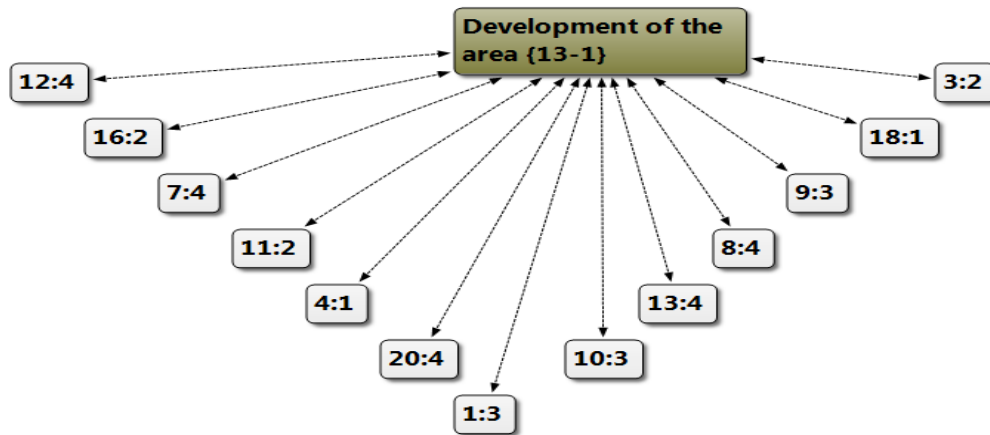


Network on exploitation

4.2. Exploitation

In another development, Ethnic exploitation is another cause of thuggery of liberation in Kebbi State. Once a particular ethnic group came to power, they view it as an avenue of exploiting other ethnic group, which is another

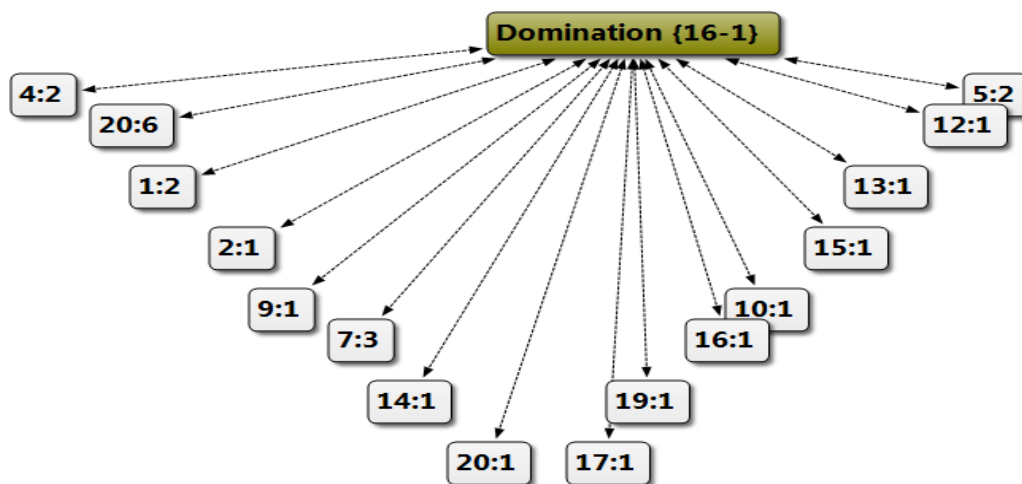
reason why some community gang up in form of thuggery of liberation to prevent others from exploiting them. For instance, due to competition for scarce resources, the politics in Kebbi State has been hotly contested along emirate basis. There is rivalry among the emirates such as Zuru, Yauri, Argungu and Gwandu which constitute problem to the politics of the state. The emirates that have never produced governor in the state are always struggling. They claim being marginalized, dominated and exploited by the Gwandu Emirate. It is clear from the above discussion that exploitation is a clear manifestation of the causes of thuggery of liberation in Kebbi (15; 13; 6 & 7).



Network on Development of the area

4.3. Development of the Area

The liberation struggle is carried out in Kebbi State for the purpose of bringing development to their people (12 & 16). There are four Emirates in Kebbi state. All of these Emirates are competing among themselves in terms of bringing candidates out and the one that will bring development to their respective zones. For instance, Aliero did Governor and developed town. Saï'du used his Governorship position and transformed his town (Dakingari) ever one knows how Dakin Gari was before he assumed office, no good roads, but as at now, the rate of development in Dakin Gari is something to write home about. This is the reason why many emirates are coming out with candidates and mobilizing people to support them irrespective of party affiliation. To them, this type of thuggery is good because it brings development of particular group to them (11;2 & 10).



Network on Domination

4.4. Domination

There are two types of thuggery, that is liberation thuggery and money thuggery, the liberation thuggery is been done to liberate people from any form of domination and humiliation and protection of rights and during the first generation of our politicians that is the type they did but the second is so rampant during the fourth republic. It was during this time that unemployed youths came out on rampage for what they will get to feed themselves, in contrast with the liberation thuggery which is about collective action for members of community to come together in order to liberate themselves (5;1; 13& 10).

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5. CONCLUSION

Thuggery of liberation has opened a new chapter in the Nigerian political process. Thuggery, globally speaking is known to portray a negative consequence through the instigation of violence. Some groups use violence for the purpose of emancipation from the shackles of domination and exploitation. The nature of political competition in Kebbi State has informed some people to group along their respective Emirate for the purpose of liberation. As argued above, among the four major Emirates in Kebbi State, only one has been producing governor at the expense of the others. Those that felt left out are always struggling to have their sons as Governors. In achieving this, they resort to using different means to mobilizing their people violently.

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