



**ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY  
OF THE 2011 GENERAL ELECTION IN AZARE  
KATAGUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NIGERIA**

**BY**

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the degree of Master of Human Science in Political Science**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the impact of electoral fraud, ethnic politics, and poverty on electoral violence in Nigeria. The analysis in this case study focuses on electoral violence in Azare Katagum Local Government with specific reference to the 2011 general election. The findings of the study indicate that there are various factors that contribute to electoral violence in Nigeria. These include among others corruption, electoral fraud, poverty and mismanagement. The study examines how political manipulation of ethno-religious divisions among the major ethnic groups in Nigeria has led to widespread electoral violence in the country. The analysis is conducted at two levels. First, the thesis examines the wider structural problems that contribute to the electoral violence at the macro level. Second, using the specific case study of electoral violence in Azare Katagum constituency during the 2011 Nigerian general elections, the thesis examines the direct causes and wider impact of such violence. Data analysis in the study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. A questionnaire consisting of 30 questions and using a 5-point Likert scale was employed. In addition, structured interviews were conducted to complement the survey. The findings of this research highlight several additional factors that contribute to electoral violence in the area of study. These include manipulation of societal cleavages such as canvassing for votes on religious and ethnic platforms, ethnic grievances, religious intolerance among party supporters, and politics of sectionalism, identity and religious differences. Significantly, it was noted that irregularities perpetuated by INEC officials and widespread corruption in the electoral system contribute significantly to electoral violence in the country.

## ملخص البحث

تبحث هذه الأطروحة عن تأثير السياسات العرقية وتزوير في وقت الانتخابات والفقير على العنف الانتخابي في نيجيريا. ويركز التحليل في هذه الدراسة على حالة واحدة وهي العنف الانتخابي في عاذار Katagum الحكومة المحلية، مع إشارة خاصة إلى الانتخابات العامة عام 2011م. ونتائج الدراسة تشير إلى أن هناك العديد من العوامل التي أسهمت في العنف الانتخابي في نيجيريا. وتشمل هذه وغيرها من الفساد، وتزوير الانتخابات، والفقير، وعدم قدرة هيئة إدارة الانتخابات. تبحث الدراسة كذلك عن كيف أثر التلاعب السياسي في الانقسامات العرقية والدينية بين المجموعات العرقية الرئيسة في نيجيريا من خلال العنف الانتخابي على نطاق واسع في البلاد. ويجري التحليل على مستويين؛ أولاً: أطروحة تبحث عن المشاكل الهيكلية الأوسع التي تسهم في العنف الانتخابي على المستوى الكلي. ثانياً: استخدام دراسة حالة محددة من العنف الانتخابي في عاذار Katagum الدائرة خلال عام 2011م بعد الانتخابات العامة في نيجيريا، تدرس الدراسة كذلك الأسباب المباشرة، وأثرها على نطاق أوسع من هذا العنف. وتحليل البيانات في الدراسة توظف كل من الأساليب الكمية والنوعية. ويتكون الاستبيان من 30 سؤالاً، استخدم مقياس ليكرت 5 نقاط. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أجريت مقابلة منظمة لاستكمال الدراسة. وأبرزت نتائج هذا البحث العديد من العوامل الإضافية التي تسهم في العنف الانتخابي في مجال الدراسة. وتشمل هذه التلاعب الانقسامات المجتمعية، مثل: فرز الأصوات للتصويت على المنابر الدينية والعرقية، والمظالم العرقية، والتعصب الديني بين أنصار الحزب، والسياسة النزعة القطاعية، والهوية والاختلافات الدينية. وإلى حد كبير، لوحظ أن المخالفات التي يرتكبها مسؤولو اللجنة الانتخابية الوطنية المستقلة، وانتشار الفساد في النظام الانتخابي تسهم إسهاماً كبيراً في العنف الانتخابي في البلاد.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion; it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Human Sciences (Political Science)

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole or in part for any other degree at IIUM or any other institutions.

Yau Idris Gadau

Signature.....

Date.....

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### **ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIAN SOCIETY: A CASE STUDY OF 2011 GENERAL ELECTION IN AZARE KATAGUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT NIGERIA**

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*This work is dedicated to my father Alhaji Idris Ibrahim, my Mother, Hajiya Maryama Daso, My Wife Hafsat Abubakar and My Daughter Fatimah Zarah.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ACN	Action Congress of Nigeria
AG	Action Group
ATR	African Traditional Religion
AD	Alliance for Democracy
APGA	All Progressive Grand Alliance
APC	Arewa People's Congress
NCNC	Council of Nigeria and the Cameron
CPC	Congress for Progressive Change
DDCM	Direct Data Capture Machine
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EBA	Egbesu Boys
EOO	Egbe Omo Oduduwa
EYF	Egi Youth Federation
EU	European Union
ERC	Electoral Reform Committee
ECN	Electoral Commission of Nigeria
ECN	Electoral Commission of Nigeria
EE	Federal Electoral Commission
FEDECO	Federal Electoral Commission
GPA	Global Peace Agreement
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
INYM	Isoko National Youth Movement
IYC	Ijaw Youth Council
IYM	Ikwerre Youth Movement
KEC	Kenyan Electoral Commission
LYM	Lagos Youth Movement
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSIED	Movement for the Survival of Itsekiri Ethnic Nationality
NDPVF	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NECON	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria
NPC	Northern People's Congress
NNDP	Nigerian National Democratic Party
NPAP	National Poverty Alleviation Programme
NRC	National Republican Convention
NPN	National Party of Nigeria
MNO'C	Multi-National Cooperation
NYM	National Youth Movement
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PDP	People's Democratic Party

PNU	Party National Unity
PRP	People's Redemption Party
SADC	South African Development Community
SALW	Small Arms Proliferation and other Light Weapon
SIECS	State Independent Electoral Commissions
SDP	Social Democratic Party
UYOMO	Urhobo Youth Movement

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with diversified ethnic groups, cultures and religions with a population of over 135 million people (Collier and Vicente, 2008. P: 10). Between 1914 and 1915, the British colonial administration formed three regional zones that described the ethno-genesis of Nigeria, which later came to define the political and ethnic tensions in the country. The three regional zones are the North (dominated by the Hausa/Fulani), the East (occupied by Igbos) and the West (dominated by Yorubas). This division reinforced separation between the major ethnic groups and fuelled the rise of ethno-political consciousness. The development of ethnic-and regional-based political parties created a structural obstacle to the creation of a national identity for all Nigerians (Ebegbulem, 2011).

Studies show that electoral violence has been in the political system of Nigeria. Some are with the view that the causes of the electoral violence is related to ethnic and religious factors while others view it as a result of widespread malpractices perpetuated by the government and other agencies responsible for the conduct of the elections. This was the case in the recent 2015 election in which no case of ethno-religious violence was reported except clashes due to the manipulation of election result and refusal to use the card reader.

With specific reference to the 2011 general election in Nigeria, this thesis presents a single-case study of electoral violence in Nigeria. The study seeks to examine how ethno-religious divisions among the major ethnic groups in Nigeria have

been manipulated by opportunistic political actors and how such activities have led to widespread electoral violence in the country.

Political conflict among major ethnic groups in Nigeria is a well-documented phenomenon (Fayeyecentre, 2012). Elections in post-independence Nigeria since 1964 have often been marked by disputes, electoral fraud and high levels of violence (Abdullahi, 2013). Since the country return to the civilian administration in 1999 after prolonged military rule, the magnitudes of the violence are increasing in every election. According to the Human Right Watch report, about 100 peoples were killed across the Nigeria in various incidences of electoral violence and in 2007 election the number increase to about 300 people (HRW, 2004; HRW, 2007). In similar report, about 800 people were killed across the country in 2011 general election; this has shown the increases of the number of the death in various elections HRW (2011).

The perception by some that political offices serve as a gateway to extraordinary wealth via corruption compounds the problem (Alemika, 2011). Corruption in politics has led to elections becoming an arena of conflict characterized by ethnic hostility, prejudice and religious bigotry. It is against this backdrop that a former president of Nigeria, Olesegun Obasanjo, posited that for him and his party, People's Democratic Party (PDP), elections is a "do or die affair" and a "matter of life and death" (Daily Trust, 2007).

In 2007, the Nigerian government set up an Electoral Reform Committee to assess the country's electoral system in order to facilitate reform. The main purpose of the reforms was to improve administrative capacity and autonomy of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution. It was proposed that the INEC, among other things, should have financial autonomy and the power to conclude all electoral disputes (Ronke and Devid, 2012; Oyekami, 2013).



However, the persistence of several structural problems such as socio-economic inequalities, unemployment, poverty, insecurity, poor governance and deep seated ethnic divisions in the country complicates the task of reforming the political system.

This study examines the problems at two levels. First, the wider structural problems that contributes to the electoral violence at the macro level. With specific reference to the electoral violence of 2011 in Azare, Katagum constituency, Bauchi state of Nigeria. The thesis examines the major causes of such violence on the local population. Thus, the study also focuses on influence of political manipulation in the study area.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

This study examines the major causes of electoral violence in Nigeria focusing on Azare constituency of Bauchi state. It assumed that 2011 electoral violence in Nigeria in general and Azare in particular has been a challenge to sustainable democracy. It argues that corrupt political system beddable by lack of free and fair election may likely result to fraud and electoral violence. Moreover, free fair and credible elections provide the foundation for the emergence of democratic accountable and legitimate governments with the capacity to initiate and implement clearly articulated development programmes.

Election is one of the fundamental features of a democracy. Moreover, democracy is seen as a system that allows citizens to participate in the decision-making process of their country and this can be achieved only through election process in which elected representatives willfully represent the people's mandate and interests with full accountability of their actions to the electorate both directly and indirectly (Kwasau, 2013). Other scholars argued that since the country's

independence, the credibility of elections has been generally contested. Consequently, past elections were, characterised by fraud and violence. While, the quality of election as one of the mechanisms for assessing the extent of democratic consolidation, failure to adhere to democratic idles has lingered the progress of the system (Alemika, 2011; Victor, 2014).

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Nigeria has a long history of electoral violence. Poignantly, in every epoch of such violence, many lives have been lost and millions in value of property destroyed making this a fundamental obstacle to development efforts in the country. This situation raises the question as to why there appears to be such a strong correlation between elections and violence in Nigeria.

While academic research on the topic exists, serious and detailed analysis remains scant. In addition, most of the literature to date, while paying attention to electoral violence in Nigeria, has focused less on the causes of such violence. This study aims to be a humble contribution towards filling this gap in the current literature by investigating the causes of electoral violence in Azare following the announcement of the 2011 general election results. The suggestion of electoral mismanagement contained here is made with full cognition of the assurances by the Nigerian authorities in their commitment to improve the electoral process as well as mitigate electoral violence in the country. Suggestions and reports by international observers that the election was the freest, fair and credible ever witnessed in the country's history are also critically examined. The findings of this study should help to provide some useful pointers regarding the impact of electoral violence both at the social and economic levels.

It is also hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the government's efforts aimed at reducing the almost routine youth involvement in electoral violence in Nigeria. Finally, this research should serve as a useful contribution to the relevant academic literature and guiding further research in the area.

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are:

- 1- To examine the major structural factors that contribute to electoral violence in Nigeria.
- 2- To evaluate how the manipulation of the various cleavages in the Nigerian society contributed to electoral violence in the country.
- 3- To critically examine the effectiveness of the various measures taken to reduce electoral violence in Nigeria.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Specifically, this study seeks to address the following questions:

- 1- What are the major structural factors that contribute to electoral violence in Nigeria?
- 2- How has the manipulation of the societal cleavages in Nigerian society contributed to electoral violence in country?
- 3- To what extent have the measures taken to reduce electoral violence in Nigeria been successful?

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW**

As a result of what has often been referred to as the third wave of democratisation around the world during the mid-1990s, the percentage of democratic countries in the world were increased from 27% in 1974 to more than 60% two decades later. Arguably, democracy had become the foremost form of government around the world (Diamond, 2005).

On the other hand, Abdullahi (2013) argues that whenever there is political competition, there is often an element of violence related to it, especially during elections. Throughout history, individuals and groups resorted to violence as an approach to political action. In a democracy, elections are a means towards popular participation and often involve a considerable degree of competition and rivalry as individuals compete for positions of power at various levels of government. In Africa, violence has been one of the longest standing features of the African democratisation process (Omotola, 2010). The magnitude of violence in some African countries has even threatened the prospects of democratic stability and consolidation. Elections have often been characterized by uncertainties due to the possibility of election-related violence. Election-related violence takes place at different phases of the electoral process: either before, during or in the aftermath of elections. Electoral violence is usually a tool that is used by groups that hold power, by groups that are seeking to acquire power or by groups that lose power (Adele, 2012; Atuobi, 2008).

The credibility of elections provides and maintains a democratic government which in turn facilitates and enhances the capacity for formulating and implementing developmental programmes and policies in the society (Okafor, 2011; Orji and Uzodi, 2012). Elections provide stages for debate and common rules for selecting representatives of the people in the executive, legislative, as well as other

governmental institutions. Elections in this sense are a critical means of social conflict management through peaceful discussions and decision-making processes in which parties abide by the pre-election promises and the losers are given the opportunity to provide constructive criticism as the opposition or simply wait until the next election period (Ronke and Devid, 2012).

### **1.6.1 Ethnicity and Electoral Violence**

Ethnicity signifies a group of individuals who consider themselves to have shared collective characteristics which distinguish them from other groups within a definite society. Distinct cultural behaviors are established and ethnic groups are recognized in terms of religion, politics, occupation and language. As a social construct, ethnicity can be viewed as the employment of ethnic identity and differences to take advantage in situations of competition, conflict and cooperation (Aleyomi, 2012; Azeez, 2009; Fawole and Bello, 2011). Ethnicity is not inherently negative; what normally happens is the manipulation of ethnic factors in political contestation which often result in negative outcomes. With regard to Nigerian society, ethnic consciousness is so deeply rooted among the different groups to the extent that any governmental programme or action is influenced by ethnic considerations. This condition has become a value among Nigerians and has been propagated to seize political positions only to bring more harm than good to national integration and harmony (Ata-Agboni and Abdullahi, 2013).

The immediate causes of widespread inter-ethnic violence is said to have been deeply related to democratisation of the electoral cycle which has been politically instigated rather than primordial. With the establishment of multi-party democracy, particularly in Kenya, the political history becomes content in such a way that the

leaders of the larger ethnic groups form coalitions and with the leaders of smaller ethnic groups to control their rival. In similar research, it is also learnt that the lack of political awareness manifestation is the reason why people resort to insisting on the election of a candidate from a particular ethnicity or area irrespective of his qualification and ability to effectively hold the office he is vying for. This has been one of the reasons why there is usual manipulation of electoral process in favor of some candidates (Ibagere, 2013). This movement results in the polarization of electorate and occurrences of violence between rival members of ethnic groups (Wanjiru and Njorege, 2014).

### **1.6.2 Nigerian electoral process**

Electoral process refers to the entire election cycle ranging from delimitation of electoral boundaries, voters' registration, candidate nomination, election campaigns, setting election time as well as the announcement of election results along with setting up a tribunal for resolution of electoral conflicts resulting from the participation of other organizations, groups and peoples (Elekwa and Okechukwu, 2014). Scholars have argued that poor electoral process or procedures could lead to legitimacy crisis which is one of the major obstacles to democracy in many developing countries. In the case of Nigeria, for example, elections have often resulted in political chaos emerged due to poor electoral process. There are many complex reasons behind such violence. Some of these include ethnicity, interference in or lack of judicial independence, incompetence or, at times, partial election bodies, poor political culture, etc. (Omodia, 2009).

Since the colonial era, successive elections in Nigeria have lacked adequate mechanisms for ensuring a completely free and fair electoral process. Instead, the

elections in Nigeria have constantly witnessed manipulation of decisions and actions at different phases of the electoral process either by governments or politicians. In addition, there have been several complaints of corruption, rigging through stuffing, snatching and destruction of ballot boxes, pre-and post-election violence and ineffective electoral dispute mechanisms (Alemika, 2011; Adeline 2014).

### **1.6.3 An overview of electoral violence in Nigeria**

Electoral violence in Nigeria revolves around tightly intertwined social and economic concerns which include dissatisfaction of government performance, God-fatherism, electoral fraud and manipulation of election results, poverty, lack of internal democracy in political parties, inflammatory rhetoric and institutional changes, the culture of impunity, ineffective institution and law enforcement agencies, favouritism and corruption from electoral and security officials, manipulation of electorates through mobilization of ethno-religious, regional and other primordial sentiments (Ogundiya and Bala, 2007; Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart, 2010; Orji and Uzodi, 2012; Abdullahi, 2013; Aniekwe and Kushie, 2013; Victor, 2014).

Furthermore, the perception by some that political offices and appointments is a mechanism for gaining extraordinary wealth is a significant addition to this long list (Alemika, 2011). Others suggested that electoral violence is caused by greed, abuse of electoral and political power, marginalization and exclusion, the political economy of oil, and partisanship of traditional rulers and monetisation of political office (Neville, 2011). These reasons have made politics so complicated to the extent that violence becomes the simplest way of getting in the cycle of power for the benefits associated with.

Abbas (2008) observes that the problem associated with the democratic process in Nigeria. According to him almost all the elections that have been conducted in the country's history have failed to produce legitimacy as a result of manipulation or annulment of election results. Uncertainty and political instability often surround elections as Nigerians witness election results being challenged before the court of law, electoral protests, boycotts, election rigging and other malpractices. Abdullah (2013) notes that the problems with the Nigerian democratic system is that the politicians who are expected to manage the occurrence of political violence are those who sponsor violence. Abbas (2008) cites Jega (2007: 249) who succinctly describes the situation as follows:

Elections in Nigeria have historically been conflict ridden. The campaigns preceding elections are invariably marked by pettiness, intolerance and violence. Already, there are several reported incidences of intra-party, as well as, inter-party, violence, and conflicts, including abductions and assassinations. And the elections and their outcome have often been neither free nor fair, characterized by violations of the process (both inadvertent and wilful), corrupt conduct by officials, rigging of results and so on. Again, reports indicate that incidences of these were pervasive during the party primaries and that some candidates are busy scheming to ensure a favourable outcome for themselves, by hook or by crook, in the on-coming elections.

Since Nigerian's independence in 1960, the political system has been synonymous with political and electoral violence. The 1964 general election and the Eastern Region supplementary election in 1965 was marked by boycotts, malpractice and violence. The widespread electoral malpractices and violence that witnessed the 1964/5 election had frustrated the Nigerian military into taking over power in 1966 on the grounds that civilians were not ready for a democratic government (Aniekwe and Kushie, 2011). The second republic showed strong political competition between contesting parties. Indeed, different incidences of violence and threats to order as well as instability were reported in various parts of the country and some of these clashes