

African Partisan Politics and Its Implication to Moral Behavior of the Contemporary Youth, a Case Study of Sokoto Central of Nigeria.

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Abstract- The involvement of the youth of Northern Nigeria in politics which dates back to 1958 in the first Republic with the Northern People Congress and Northern Elements Progressive Union as regions dominate parties, has been a mixed bag of blessing. In one breath, the youths have participated the social, economic and Political development of the region, in another breath however, particularly since the return to politics in 1999 youth participation in politics has been largely violent and destructive of lives and properties. This time around they have been turned in to criminals given to drug addiction and violent expression of their political support. In view of this, this paper examines the challenges posed by those immoral behaviors of some youth participating in politics, particularly the thugs towards nation building in Nigeria in the 21st century.

I. INTRODUCTION

Immoral activities were known to some of our youth before and after the third Republic of the political dispensation in Sokoto metropolis in particular. Looking at the word indiscipline and immoral behavior, one can understand that these two words share the same meaning with regard to their effect on the society. Any act that tarnishes the image of the society or generating any controversy among members of the society is simply an immoral attitude, which is prevalent among the present youth. In this regard, any kind of indiscipline as well as political thuggery in the name of youth participation in politics was influenced by some politician in Sokoto State.

In 1956, youth participation in democratic parties was aimed at achieving noble objectives of providing social amenities to the people, and not looking for worldly accumulation, unlike some of the present youth who took center stage in politics for tarnishing the image of opposition members and spreading controversy, killings and other insurgences'

In the second republic, youth in Sokoto played a vital role towards participation in politics, but not all of the youth participated with sincere mind to move the country forward by electing good leader for the enhancement of peace and security in the country, but rather their zeal is to elect one who will concede to their personal objectives. Youth in North, especially from 1999 to 2007 supported political parties for personal reasons, they often express their political accomplishment through self-aggrandizement and arrogant attitudes.²

The objectives of this paper are to shade more light on youth participation in partisan politics from 1958 to 2007. This

with a view to expose the selfish and immoral attitude of contemporary youth (1958-2007) in politics, and how this has affected the stability and progress of Nigeria's return to politics.

II. THE CONCEPT OF YOUTHS

The youth's identity is situational; it is multi-dimensional and consists of several ranges even at international level. For some countries, age range of the youths is from 12 years to the maximum of 40 years. United Nations defines the youth in the age category of 15 years to 24 years while Commonwealth of Nations recognizes the age between 16 and 29 years. The Nigeria State defines the youths to include those in the age bracket of 18 to 30 years. The relevance of each of these depends on the objective situation, on the ground and the direction of social policy in a given social formation.³

Conceptualization of youths indicates that in whatever circumstances, youths constitute a fundamental group to any nation and the age bracket shows period of complex changes, energy and vulnerability. Their physical and intellectual processes are continuously in search for the truth and meaning of life. At this critical period, the youths need to be facilitated to have positive thinking and behavior accepted by the society. Such that they interact within the community and imbibe good behaviors, which would enable them to deal effectively with themselves, their needs and their environment.⁴

The term partisan politics:

An adherent or supporter of a person, group, party, or cause, especially a person who shows a biased, emotional allegiance. Social relations involving intrigue to gain authority or power. In another interpretation, politics means 'The activities and affairs involved in managing a state or a government'⁵

Political parties in the first republic

In the first republic, the country was split into three geopolitical regions, namely [Western Region](#), [Eastern Region](#) and [Northern Region](#) and its political parties took on the identities and ideologies of each region. The [Northern People's Congress \(NPC\)](#) represented the interests of the predominantly [Hausa/Fulani](#) Northern Region, the [National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons \(NCNC\)](#) (later renamed "National Council of Nigerian Citizens") represented the predominantly [Igbo](#) Eastern Region, and the [Action Group \(AG\)](#)

dominated the [Yoruba](#) Western Region. The Northern People Congress(NPC) took control of the federal parliament, and formed a coalition government with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). The National Independence Party (NIP) formed by Professor Eyo Ita became the second political party in the old Eastern Region. [Ahmadu Bello](#), the Sardauna of Sokoto, leader of the [Northern People's Congress](#) (NPC), was poised to become the Prime Minister, but instead he chose to become the [Premier](#) of the Northern Region, and supported is deputy [Tafawa Balewa's](#) candidacy for Prime Minister. This raised suspicions amongst the southern politicians, who resented the idea of a federal government controlled by a regional leader through his designated proxy. In the end, Tafawa Balewa of Northern People's Congress (NPC) was named Prime Minister and Head of Government, and [Nnamdi Azikiwe](#) of [National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons](#) (NCNC) was named [President](#). The most popularly parties in Northern Nigeria were [Northern People's Congress](#)(NPC) of Sardauna and NEPU (Northern Elements Progressive Union) of Mallam Aminu Kano, which was the opposition party in Northern Nigeria⁶

Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) was the first [political party](#) in [Northern Nigeria](#). Founded in [Kano](#) on 8th August 1950, it was the offshoot of a pre-existing political association called the Northern Elements Progressive Association. It became the main opposition party in Northern Nigeria after the region was granted self-governance in the 1950s. In the [First Republic](#) it maintained a steady alliance with [Zikist National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons](#) (NCNC) against the [Northern People's Congress](#) (NPC)-dominated Federal Government. These two political parties were influential on the youth from among their supporters who served the party's objectives in order to win the election.⁷

Party youth supporters in the first republic

The Northern People Congress(NPC) youth supporters named RSS (*Rundunar Samarin Sawaba*) while Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)youth supporters group named YGN(*Yan gabagadiNepu*) these two groups of youth played their role for the success of their parties. Some people regarded their effort as an attack against each other and even behaving badly to any opposition member, especially the RSS youth who were normally known as trouble-making group in the society by Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) party supporters, even though, one of the RSS members attributes that they have mutual understanding between them and YGN members (*Yan gabagadiNepu*)there was no expression of disturbances between them especially in the urban areas.⁸

Another YGN(*Yan gabagadiNepu*) youth member of NEPU party, explained that he was initially the supporter of NEPU party, but he had decamped by force from Northern Elements Progressive Union(NEPU) toNorthern People Congress(NPC) party because of the intimidation of the government against their parents, thought he remained sympathetic to the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU).

According to him when the military coup succeeded in mid-1960 I and others from RSN youth (*Rundunar Samarin sawaba*) were happiest

than ever before, hoping that we would now be safe from intimidation and harassment of Northern People Congress (NPC) Government headed by Sardauna Ahmadu Bello. He added that in most cases youth supporters from Northern People Congress (NPC) party are not fully involve into political thuggery as well as intimidation to opposition party members e.g. Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) in the urban areas especially in the early reign of Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto, until recently when first tenure of the regime is about to come to an end, virgin girls are sending to party campaign by force, their fathers were forcing to have dance front of their daughters and they were shave with breaking bottle.⁹

With regard to the above, the assumption of the general public will definitely be that the participation and habit of Northern People Congress(NPC) and Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) youth members are the same with that of present political youth supporters in terms of political thuggery,

One of the RSS (*Rundunar Samarin Salama*) youth member, denied political thuggery during Sardauna's regime. He therefore said: Sardauna And Mallam Aminu Kano, have no grudges between themselves but some times they are politically accusing each other purposely for their objectives of moving the Northern part forward, against the ambition of southern part political leaders, unlike the deed of some bad present political leaders, who sponsor our youth into making political disturbances as well as thuggery and other immoral behaviour in the society for their own personal and political interest¹⁰

The shame emanates in departure from political philosophy of the northern political hero, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, who laid foundation for their success, then turned back and destroyed the North with political thuggery and religious bigotry¹¹

In the second republic, youth in Sokoto played a vital role towards participation in political parties but not all of the youth participated with sincere mind to move the country forward by electing good leader, for the enhancement of peace and security to the countrymen but rather their zeal is to elect one who will attend to their personal objectives.¹²

The major concern now in most urban towns and cities throughout the country is the increasing rate of crimes among the youth. In the early sixties there were relatively little urban crimes in the country, and one felt safe walking the streets day and night. But now, more than thirty years later following a civil war, increasing unemployment, the spectacular growth and downturn of the economy, rapid population growth and explosion and overcrowding of the towns, serious crimes are rampant in the country. hardly a day passes by without reports of numerous inhuman atrocities such as murder, armed robbery and so on. In most cases these social problems should be referred to our contemporary political aspirants, especially in this political era where youth of today are being sponsored by these politicians in order to commit such crimes before and after elections¹³

Youth and politics, the rebirth of political transaction in 1999

Before the emergence of fourth republic in 1999 there were a group among the youth in different areas of Sokoto metropolis and environs like: Ahmadu Bello way, Emir Yahaya Road, Sultan Atiku Road, Iraqi area along Sultan Abubakar Road

etc. who were involved in such acts of immoral behavior, when these youth became involved into black market as a result of fuel scarcity in 1996 which was witness and identified observed by the people of Sokoto as an element of area boyism activities in the metropolis. The youth were attacked by one military officer who was the task force chairman in charge of sale of fuel product and distribution in Sokoto. This attack indirectly "trained" youth to be deferent and cruel in future, where usually attacking and furnishing them with severe punishment, even if they run to their homes, this has made them to behave cruelly in their society. People of this metropolis have considered that as the first approach to area boyism by these youth in Sokoto. Never the less the first person to have died in this undesired act in Ahmad Bello Road is called Sani Tamba.¹⁴

In 1999 two political parties were dominant in Sokoto i.e People Democratic Party (PDP) and All People Party (APP) and latter All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), these youth were politically divided into two in support of their party aspirants; the gubernatorial candidate of People Democratic Party (PDP) at that moment was Alh. Muhammad Modi Yabo, while Alh. Attahiru Dalhatu Bafarawa was the candidate of the All National People Party (ANPP). Bafarawa captured the majority from the youth thus winning election, and was sworn in on the 29 May 1999 for a first tenure that lasted till 29 May 2003.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the Weekly trust of 4th August, 2000 reported that these youth commonly called "Are Boys" began to belong to a 'gang' controlling territories to check what they call the activities of "intruders" meaning boys of their areas who come to court girls in areas other than theirs. The notorious areas then were Sokoto cinema, Assada, Kofar Kade, Bello Way/Kalfu, Emir Yahaya and parts of Kofar Atiku. Their activities then were considered as juvenile delinquency, and much attention was not paid to them until they started 'fighting among themselves with dangerous weapons over girls and other petty rivalries.'¹⁶

In 1995, their activities took a more dangerous trend when they began abducting young girls and sexually molesting them. Sometimes jewelry was snatched from girls, including married women, in broad daylight while people watch helplessly because they were said to be above the law. With the advent of the notorious "Area Boys" activities in Lagos, the Sokoto gangs also assumed the name and their activities became a serious threat to public peace. Disturbed by their lawlessness, the Nigerian Police Command in Sokoto under police commissioner Abubakar Tsav launched a special operation in 1996. That was thought to be the end of Area Boyism in Sokoto until 1997 during the Abacha local government chairmanship elections when they re-emerged as political supporters of candidates who in turn used them to intimidate their opponents.¹⁷

In anticipation of the 2011 elections there have been reports of intercepted guns and ammunitions at our borders coupled with various incidents of electoral violence in different parts of the country. On the 9th August later another political violence broke out in Zamfara State, the state that shares border with Sokoto state to the south East where many were killed in a clash between the members of the ruling PDP and those of ANPP. According to J. A Paddle

This can occur when there is intense political rivalries and the inability of security to curtail the situation. Indeed numerous cases of outbreaks of conflicts is well pronounced on election

days. The major cause is usually due to attempts by political parties to stuff the ballot boxes with pre-thumb-printed ballot papers or the inability of the security agents to maintain law and order in the polling station¹⁸

Law enforcement agents report revealed that there is a direct relationship in Nigeria between political violence and corruption which most of the present youth are committing, many public officials use stolen public revenues to pay for political violence in support of their ambitions, as well as using power to even release persecuted youth who definitely causing unrest during election, as one Niger Delta academic who maintains that his 2003 Senate campaign was derailed by the violent efforts of one of the Nigerian political parties to intimidate voters and rig the vote.

Human Rights Watch, revealed that "Most of the politicians are linked to cult groups they finance them, they maintain them, they sustain them. And all of this is from the government funds, e.g in Gombe State, a leading lawyer and former minister who is one of the law enforcement officers in the federal government, published allegations in the national press that the state government was funding the activities of "yan'Kalare" thugs using public money. If such immoral act is sponsored by state Government in using the public funds, which action should be taken against these bad youth in that state?"¹⁹

III. CONCLUSION

The cause of the high rate of political thuggery committed by our youth could definitely be attributed to our bad political aspirants whose effort is to lead the country by all means. Their effort before Election Day up to the time when votes are returned for counting, youth should be involved in making conflict during this process.

This political thuggery occurred when there are disputes over election results by the contesting parties and the inability of the judiciary to resolve these disputes, in an exact time fixed for judgment. Almost all elections in this country ranging from 1958 down to 2007 have been characterized by electoral violence.

In 1958 and 1965 during NPC/NEPU's political Dispensation, the love of country by both parties and their candidates had vitiated has vitiate the effort of bad supporters whose aims was violence and destruction of democracy.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

To refine the attitude of the youth for better democracy and sustainable peace and security in the society the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- I. Youth should respect their elders.
- II. They should also abide by law and order.
- III. They should avoid drugs in all their dealings with people during interaction.
- IV. To know that democracy in Nigeria can not be without youth participation.
- V. They should avoid any thing tarnishing their image in their society.
- VI. They should not rely on their candidates after election as a way of solving their problems.

- VII. They should be acquainted with vocational training for self reliance rather than looking at dividend of democracy.
- VIII. To also participate in politics for the progress of their people.

Note:

A sixteen year old member of one of the youth groups who insisted his name should not be mentioned told that some politicians on power in Sokoto support them with money and in turn serve as their "boys" if they complied the politicians can be responsible of whatever the boys may committed of insurgences and public harassment and no appropriate action should be taken because their political power.

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