

HARNESSING THE MATHEMATICAL EDUCATION POTENTIALS OF POLITICAL THUGS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

¹TIMAYI, J. M., ²MASHINA, M. S., & ³ZAKARIYYA, A.

^{*1} Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, College of Education, Billiri

^{2&3}Department of Mathematics, Federal College of Education, Zaria.

^{*1}Email: timayijoe@gmail.com; ²mohsanmash@gmail.com

³Email: azeezmth@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article is on harnessing the mathematical education potentials of political thugs for sustainable national security in Nigeria. The paper presented a correlation between mathematics and politics, it also touched some latent issues that portray the use of the subject by thugs in the game of politics. Further, the connection between thugs, politics and political thuggery with respect to mathematics was discussed. The mathematical skills exhibited by political thugs as they carry out their bullish behaviour was explained. A section for national security, sustainability and thuggery was highlighted. Aspects of political thugs in Nigeria with an in-depth analysis of the potentials of the thugs misdirected were discussed. In conclusion, it is believed that political thugs have mathematical potentials that can be harnessed toward sustainable national security. Hopefully, these potentials can also be utilized in Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and related fields.

Keywords: Mathematical Potential, Politics, Thugs, Political Thuggery and National Security

Introduction

Political thugs may be looked upon as bad people. Indeed, they are, yet they play an important role in our national security. Their role in politics affects us all directly or indirectly in so many ways. Our everyday life is affected by what they do here and there. For instance, some of the politicians who are in power and making life difficult for Nigerians were enabled into their offices by these thugs. Thugs can do much for very little incentive provided by politician who take advantage of their poor sense of judgment and immediate quest for materialism to our detriment. Nigeria has witnessed many acts of political thuggery. Overall, political thuggery is characterized by robbery, intimidation, gangsterism, murder, physical assault and often involves physical combat between two opposing gangs or groups, which ultimately generates interpersonal or group hostilities (Aliyu, 2019). These and many other acts of political thugs are responsible for breach in security being experienced in Nigeria (Agba, Coker & Ogaboh, 2010; Agba, 2011; Alhaji, Doho & Sule, 2016; Rasak, & Garuba, 2017; Okafor & Okafor 2018; Aliyu, 2019)

Aliyu (2019) contributed that political thuggery has been in existence in Nigeria as far back as 1959 and it is characterized by violence. He added that it is encouraged by poverty, unemployment, financial attractiveness of elective positions, the value system of wealth accumulation, and an ineffective security agency account for the incidence of political thuggery in Nigeria. Political thuggery hinders public accountability of elective officers and thus is a bane to good governance in Nigeria. This has led to chaos and security challenges nationwide especially in recent times.

The history of the word 'thug' dates back from the 17th century through the 19th century in India where an Indian network of secret fraternities who were engaged in murdering and robbing travel-

ers and known for strangling their victims operated. They were called 'Thuggee'. During British Imperial rule of India, many Indian words passed into common English, and in 1810 thug referred to members of these Indian gangs. In today's world, the word 'thug' have many definitions which converges to evil. A thug is seen as someone with an intimidating and unseemly appearance and mannerisms, who treats others violently and roughly, often for hire. Words such as: gangbanger, gangster, goon, gorilla, hood, hoodlum, hooligan, mobster, mug, plug-ugly, punk, roughneck, rowdy, ruffian, touch, toughie and bully are synonyms of the word 'thug'. These words when used to address a person, portrays a questionable character. To be a thug is a hard thing because they go through a lot to become one. The politicians are quick to notice these qualities and take advantage of them.

The use of thugs by politicians to do their political biddings which in most cases results in violence is called 'political thuggery'. Rasak and Garuba (2017) define political thuggery is an act of political violence or behaviour by ruffians hired or instigated by politicians to intimidate their opponents. It is the intentional use of physical force threatened against another person or a group or community that either results in injury, death, psychological harm or deprivation within a political circle.

In Nigeria, political thugs go by different names depending on the region and area where they are located but their modulus operandi converge to violence. Although this is debatable and in most cases denied by their sponsors, the allegation cannot be faulted. Groups such as Yan kallare, Ecomog, Sara-suka, Banu-Isra'il and Yan shinko are found in the North East geo-political region, 'Bakasi Boys' in Eastern Nigeria, the 'Niger-Delta Defense Force' in the Niger-Delta region, the 'Yan Gumurzu in Kano, the Odua Youth Movement in the Western region and many others are examples of formidable thugs easily accessible to politicians to use at some agreed price (Haruna & Jumba, 2011).

Political Thuggery involves a lot of calculation, planning, timing and precision to achieve. Thugs with less skill normally get into trouble due to risks they are exposed to. In the last general elections of 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari ordered that whoever engages in ballot box snatching does so at the expense of his life, yet some thugs got away with their act. Thugs are very smart people whose potentials could be used positively in mathematics. Thugs can become great mathematicians if given the enabling platform to do so. This is because mathematics is an intellectually stimulating subject that affects every facet of human activity such as politics, economy, science and technology (Irene & Nwigboji, 2017; Onyeka & Charles-Ogan, 2018). The taming and putting to proper use of the mathematical education potential of these thugs can lead to sustainable national security.

Sustainable national security can hopefully be attained if thuggery, in particular, political thuggery is checked by putting the unseen mathematical potentials of thugs into legitimate use. Thugs are human beings that need help. The scope of this paper includes the correlation between mathematics and politics, Thugs and politics, political thuggery and mathematics. Political thuggery in Nigeria and the potentials of political thugs with respect to mathematics were also discussed.

Correlation between Mathematics and Politics

The correlation between mathematics and politics can be seen in the use and application of the subject in politics. During the height of the enlightenment, French mathematician and philosopher Marquis de Condorcet first brought together the diverse disciplines of mathematics and politics in his renowned study of voting methods (Torpey, 2014). Countries such as Mexico use a model called the "marginalization index" to define the municipalities and consequently helped to allocate scarce resources to promote social development amenities like building hospitals, schools and others (Sánchez, 2009).

Another application of mathematics is seen in political discourses such as used in Nigeria's National Assembly (NASS) by our law makers, other politicians and Government officials. They gather facts and information from research, newspapers, news broadcasts and statistics from government agencies such as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and National Population Commission (NPC). Information from these outlets are very important mathematical pieces and puzzles used by politicians to substantiate reports and justify arguments. For instance, on the current security threat in Nigeria, information from these agencies and other platforms can become a solid mathematical base for making projections and decision making in curbing it.

Mathematics is used to identify and declare the winner after election. Thus the computation of two-third majority is a serious political mathematics. Similarly, the popular saying in democracy that "majority carries the vote" is a relational inequality. Thus, if the majority is x and the minority is y , then the statement can be represented as " $x > y$ ". Also due to the power of mathematics, it is used to rig election; in contrast mathematics is used to find out some flaws in the figures presented by mischievous politicians (Hassan, 2011).

In addition, the use of graphical representations of information from newspapers and TV news communicate relevant information which can be interpreted as mathematical models that represent a particular segment of reality. Mathematics can provide solutions to leading questions that seek the best way to perform various political procedures, from coming up with a procedure to pick a winner from a set of votes, to allocating seats to states according to population, to other problems involving the division of a fixed resource among multiple interested parties. Hence, mathematics and politics are related or simply mathematics operates in politics if we care to see the connection rather than the abstract nature and difficulty associated with the subject in our sentimental judgments (Chomo & Timayi, 2018).

Thugs and Politics

Thugs and politics go a long way in history. This is because corrupt politicians use thugs for unfair advantage by utilizing their dispositions of being easily given to violence and intimidation to get what they want. Political thuggery is characterized by snatching of ballot boxes, stuffing of ballot boxes, elimination of political opponents, riots and thuggery, forceful declaration of fake results even where no election is held, refusal to swear in winner of election or refusal to vacate office after losing election (Njoku, 2012).

It was observed that in developing countries such as Nigeria, political thuggery and violence are gaining so much ground and recognition in political gathering. Rasak and Garuba (2017) added that political thuggery is a major cause of threat to peace and democratic governance in Africa. It affects the security of lives and properties, defies law enforcement agencies strategies and brings shame to a nation. Further, it affects the socio-economic and political development of the nation.

National Security, Sustainability and Thuggery

National Security by now has become an everyday word among Nigerians that affects their lives in many ways. The instances of Boko Haram strikes, banditry, herder's attacks, animal rustling, kidnappings, robbery, thuggery, communal clashes etc. affects the wellbeing of the people. National security is a complex phenomenon, high in demand, multifaceted and affects sustainable development. Orji (2012) postulated that a symbiotic relationship exists between national security and sustainable development that cannot be undermined. National security does not have a unique definition.

Osisanya (n. d.) taking a cue from an expert in national security, summarizes the term as a state's ability to cater for the protection and defense of its citizens. In this paper, we uphold national security to mean peace, well-being and conducive environment enabled for the people to live and carry out their endeavours without fear and suspicion. Consequently, sustainable national security here implies a continuous/prolonged protection and defense of the people of a state with regard to peace, mutual existence, rights, wellbeing, needs etc. Where these a breach of the above is observed the people are unhappy and live in panic or fear.

The activities of thuggery constitute a security problem that must be tackled. Many reports of thuggery whether political or not has been unpleasant ending either in killings, robbery, looting and sustained violence that are unexplained. Political thuggery affects national security because its dividend brings about a breach of security in the nation. To ascertain national security and sustainability, political and other forms of thuggery needs to be contained.

Politics and Political Thuggery in Nigeria

Nigeria is politically constituted and institutionalized way back in history. The people are politically aware and understand the dominance, benefits and esteem that goes with the phenomenon of politics. Their lives are a product of politics which was recognized and given a quantum momentum from the Lord Lugard's era during colonial rule. Perhaps this is the reason for the strong affinity for politics in both the traditional and the governmental leadership. The stakes in politics in Nigeria is very high and like other regions of the country politicians had to involve thugs for their personal ambitions. According to Esiri (2016:1):

The political culture of thuggery with increasing massive youth involvement in Nigeria in the present democratic dispensation seems to have come to stay. The situation is worrisome and alarming especially as it indicates that the state is turning out anti-social and criminally oriented youths instead of credible youths with integrity. This has serious implications for Nigeria's development and democracy. In recent times, majority of Nigeria's politicians, some of whom occupy/play the role of political godfathers do not participate in politics with the desire to improve the living conditions of the Nigerian people. Rather they enter into politics with the desire to make themselves known or popular. That is, the desire for self-aggrandizement self-actualization and greed for wealth and power. Therefore, these politicians in their desperate determination to win elections at all cost, introduce violence, killings/assassinations, kidnappings, ballot snatching and distortion of electoral results into the democratic political process through the use of thugs majority of whom are youths. These political godfathers train, feed and brainwash them with their political ideologies, supply them with illicit drugs, sometimes involve them in rituals, and give them monetary and material gratifications. Some are given jobs as personal assistants. Thus, the youths take to thuggery to escape the pressures and frustrations of poverty, that has become the bane of many Nigerian youths today...

The foregone captures a lot about the life and activities of thugs, political thugs and thuggery as witnessed today in our contemporary societies. Nigeria has in the last decades witnessed the menace of political thugs and thuggery. In recent times, thuggery can be said to be synonymous to politics. This is because in most activities of thuggery, a political undertone is most likely indicted traceable to a politician.

The Mathematics in Political Thuggery

Political thuggery presents an evil face anytime it comes up whether on the news, discussions, talks, articles and other presentation. However, there are many mathematics involved in political thuggery that could be surprising. Some of the observed mathematics carried out by thugs in their biddings include:

Permutation and Combination: Political thugs form committees through selection of thugs each with a different ability to carry out different assignment. This may sound strange but happens. Thugs don't just jump at their activities. They assign thugs with varied abilities for purposes they must carry out. Recall that these thugs are highly connected or better still the politicians are acquainted with thugs from different settlement whom they can bring together to achieve their goals.

Statistics: Thugs make good use of statistics in their trade of political thuggery. They know for instance how many polling units are in a ward, districts etc. they know areas that have more women or men that can be convinced to vote or will constitute a problem for the politician they work for. They know the strong holds of their masters and where they may likely loose. The area they are likely going to lose is their target of disruption. They can also give you figures of past votes accruing to an area. They know percentages and can do the arithmetic involved. They are good in estimated census and demographic record keepers.

Prediction/forecasting and Calculations: The aspect of forecasting and prediction is very crucial in politics. Perhaps this is one key area that makes thugs desirable to politicians. Thugs have the ability to make forecasts and prediction being members themselves of their immediate environment. This leads to some reasonably good statistical data that the politicians can use.

Modelling: It is funny to say that thugs know modelling. However, it is true. They may not know the differential equations involved or the Chi-square analysis that will produce the necessary model but they can use a model. Thugs rely on past models of thuggery that they have used in a particular area to actualize their plans. They may make slight changes or adjustment here and there to meet the present target.

Problem solving: Problem solving is the heart of mathematics. Thugs solve problem for the politician they represent. Even though what they do in the cause of solving problems is wrong yet they solve the problems that the politicians cannot solve. In problem solving thugs use time, do calculations, planning, use statistics and iterations (trial and error). They also perform addition and subtraction and solve simultaneous equations of life in many variables that are unbelievable.

The Mathematical Potentials of Political Thugs

Clearly, there are some forms of mathematics in political thuggery that can be harnessed. Political Thugs display some mathematical skilled even though in a crude way which helps them solve problems for their hiring politician who use them and dump them in the end. Great mathematical potential lies untapped in political thugs if the society cares to see. The purpose may have been misdirected due to many reason outside the scope of this paper but highlighted by Ukwu (2016) such as unemployment, corruption, inadequate security, misinterpretation of politics and poverty to mention a few. These political thugs can contribute great potential mathematically to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in terms of development and career related field in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Political godfatherism and thuggery are a twin evil that not only wastes away the lives of many Nigerian youths but leave them with little or no hope of taking over the political affairs of this nation. The youths involved are brain washed, deceived and kept as mercenaries that take the politicians to the state thrones (Esiri, 2016). Political thuggery of all sort converges in violence. Every region of the country has political thugs of various nomenclature and exposure.

The stakes in politics in Nigeria is very high and like other regions of the country politicians had to involve thugs for their personal ambitions. These thugs make use of some mathematics such as permutation and combination, statistics, forecasting, modelling and problem solving etc. in their bidding unconsciously. These misdirected mathematical potentials can be redirected towards personal, societal and national goals given the right environment and encouragement. Hence, there is an unseen potential and connection between mathematics and political thuggery in Nigeria. Hopefully, these potentials can be made to converge in STEM for the enhancement of lives of youths in Nigeria.

Suggestions

Based on the foregone discussions, the following suggestions are made:

1. The Mathematical Association of Nigerian (MAN) in conjunction with various State Ministries of Youth and Sports in Nigeria should develop a programme to bring youths out of political thuggery into STEM Education to help their lives. Hopefully this may lead to sustainable national security.
2. Vigorous enlightenment campaign and rehabilitation centres funded by government (State and Local) and private companies (as cooperate social responsibility) across the nation should be encouraged to move youths away from the life of thuggery.
3. Governments should create employment opportunities for parents and youth. This will assist in the reduction of this (thuggery) social problem.

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