

POLITICS OF THUGGERY AND PATRONAGE IN THE NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The activities of thugs in the north-east geo-political region of Nigeria have become worrisome since the return to democratic rule in 1999. It has become a fashion for politicians to sponsor these thugs financially and morally in order to achieve their personal political interest. Most a times they mobilize these thugs from beginning to the end of electioneering campaign/election period. This has hindered free and fair election and consolidation of democratic governance in Nigeria's political space. To overcome this political malady which shrouded the Nigerian polity as a whole, both the state and political stakeholders must synthesize the electoral system; imbibe dialogue instead of confrontation; canvass for people's mandate instead of patronizing thugs; accept election defeat instead of violence; discourage money politics; adherence to rule of law; massive education and empowerment of these youths among other things. The study seeks to situate the scenario within the perspectives of competitive-authoritarian theorists and Marxian political economy approach. Thuggery though existed long time ago but thrives much more and became prominent in recent years in a competitive-authoritarian regime. The paper relied on content analysis from the secondary sourced data.

Keywords: Thugs, Patron, Democracy and violence