

POLITICAL APATHY IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF KADUNA STATE (2019–2023)

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DEDICATION

To God, who made this work possible, thank you for Your wisdom, strength, favour, presence and endless love.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Approval	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	
iv	
Acknowledgements	
v	
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	viii
Abstract	
ix	

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Research Questions	5
1.4 Objectives of the Study	6
1.5 Significance of the Study	6
1.6 Scope of the Study	7
1.7 Limitation of the Study	8
1.8 Operational Definition of Terms	8

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review	11
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2.2 Theoretical Review	14
2.3 Empirical Review	18
2.4 Gap in Literature	19

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Theoretical Framework	21
3.2 Application of The Theory	24
3.3 Hypotheses	26
3.4 Research Design	27
3.5 Method of Data Collection	27
3.6 Method of Data Analysis	28
3.7 Logical Data Framework (LDF)	30

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Political Apathy and Electoral Participation in Kaduna State (2019–2023)	31
4.2 Government Distrust and Voter Turnout in Kaduna State (2019–2023)	39

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings	47
5.2 Conclusion	48
5.3 Recommendations	48

REFERENCES	50
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ABSTRACT

This study examines political apathy in Nigeria using Kaduna State as a case study, with particular reference to the 2019 and 2023 general elections. It investigates how insecurity, violence, and distrust in government and political institutions influence voter turnout and broader political participation. The study is motivated by the persistent decline in civic engagement and electoral participation in Kaduna State despite its political significance in Nigeria's democratic system. The research adopts a qualitative approach, relying on secondary data sourced from Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reports, Afrobarometer surveys, Yiaga Africa reports, academic journals, and policy documents. The study is guided by Rational Choice Theory, which explains political participation as a cost–benefit decision influenced by perceived risks and rewards. The findings reveal a significant decline in voter turnout from 52.7% in 2019 to 34.2% in 2023, alongside increasing levels of political disengagement among citizens and youths. The study further establishes that insecurity, including banditry, kidnapping, and electoral violence, significantly discourages political participation by increasing the perceived risks of voting. In addition, widespread distrust in government institutions, driven by perceived corruption, poor governance, and lack of accountability, reduces citizens' confidence in the electoral process and lowers motivation to participate in elections. These combined factors contribute substantially to the rise in political apathy within the state. The study concludes that political apathy in Kaduna State is largely a product of insecurity and institutional distrust, both of which weaken democratic participation and legitimacy. It recommends strengthened electoral security, improved governance transparency, anti-corruption measures, and sustained civic education to rebuild public trust and encourage greater political participation.

Keywords: Political apathy, insecurity, voter turnout, electoral participation, Kaduna State.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The principle of democratic governance relies on active involvement of people in the political activities such as voting, political deliberation, review of policies and interaction with the public institutions. Participation is the process by which citizens are involved in decision-making and holding leaders accountable.. Nevertheless, in most democratic societies particularly in the developing countries such as Nigeria, voter turnout has kept on decreasing because of increased disillusionment in political systems. This mass exodus of the political arena is often termed as political apathy which according to Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) is simply defined as the absence of interest or involvement in politics. Political apathy is a way of undermining democratic principals as it negatively affects the legitimacy of government as well as the capacity of citizens to have an impact on the outcome of governance.

The political environment of Nigeria since the restoration of civilian rule in 1999 has been marked by increasing and declining rates of participation and growing public discontent. Although the 1999 elections were attended with much passion as citizen looked forward to a new era of democracy, subsequent elections depicted progressive disinterest. This disconnection is directly related to the judgment of political institutions, the work of the government, and the validity of the election by citizens. The more governance issues go deep, the less the confidence of the people; there is increased political apathy.

Among various factors that have contributed to apathy in Nigeria, the absence of trust in the government and political institutions has proven to be one of the most influential. One of the key aspects of the democratic theory is trust. Dahl, (1989) highlights that democracy must be in a setting that the citizens feel that participation is not a waste of time and also the leaders

are answerable to the voters. Once trust is destroyed, the citizens do not think that participation can bring about any meaningful changes and consequently vote less, withdraw themselves in political dialogues, and abdicate civic duty. This is an explicit erosion that is a threat to democratic consolidation.

The state of Kaduna can give a valuable background to studying this phenomenon. Kaduna being one of the largest and most influential states in Northern Nigeria in terms of politics has historically been at the heart of regional and national politics in the country. It is polyethnic, polyreligious, economically strategic and politically active. However, the state has experienced growing political apathy since 2018 until 2022, in spite of its importance. This has been marked by declining voter turnout, a decline in political mobilization and a general cynicism of government institutions.

There are several political and socio-economic processes that added to the dwindling credibility of Kaduna in those years. The state was experiencing a form of chronic insecurity, in the form of banditry, kidnappings, rural violence, and ethno-religious tensions, all of which undermined trust in the government as an institution that could defend the lives and property. The economy experienced inflation, unemployment and slowing of the welfare of the people and this made many residents doubt the responsiveness of governments. There was also scrutiny of the state elections processes with claims of malpractice, intimidation, and irregularities in the processes. When combined, such challenges contributed to mistrust against political elites, the electoral organ and state institutions.

The results of this institutional distrust were evident in the electoral behaviour. One of the major indicators of citizen participation is voter turnout and this dropped well in Kaduna State. According to Powell(1986), voter turnout is the percentage of eligible citizens that vote during an election. When government institutions are trusted there will be high turnout and where the

trust is low there will be low turnout. This trend was similar in the 2019 general elections in Kaduna, as well as in the post election politics as a number of the registered voters did not turn up to vote because they were not sure whether or not the elections would be free, fair or effective.

Moreover, mistrust reduced not only voting by limiting political participation to larger political processes. The citizens became less interested in political gatherings, discussions, and mobilization activities. The young people who constitute a substantial proportion of the population in Kaduna were angry about failures in governance and felt that there was systemic injustice. It was argued that the political players were not transparent and that elections were only formalities and not an expression of will of the people. The lack of trust led to the growth of apathy in the process of creating a disengagement cycle.

Kaduna State has been experiencing different types of insecurity over the years, with the most common ones being ethno-religious conflicts, banditry, kidnappings, and inter-communal violence. Such insecurity breeds fear in residents and discourages the residents to participate in political activities such as voting, politics rallies, or by taking part in civic discourse. Insecurity will generate an environment where people are more concerned about their personal security rather than the political process and thus withdrawing themselves out of political processes strengthens the political apathy. Political science research shows that fear of violence is a significant factor that leads to low voter turnout and disengagement in areas that are affected by conflicts (e.g., Powell, 1986).

The analytical significance of the period between 2018 and 2022 is that it represents a pre-election, election, and post-election cycle, which will enable the researcher to see the development of trust through time. National shocks, such as the economical impacts of recession, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, , increased insecurity and political polarization

were also experienced in Nigeria during this period. Such macro-level pressures were interacting with state-specific issues as the factor which affected political attitudes in Kaduna. Evidence of these changes in civic behaviour can be found in secondary data sources, such as INEC reports, academic literature, newspaper archives and policy documents.

The emphasis on the mistrust to political institutions is justified not only in academic terms but also practically. One of the most measurable, observable and conceptually potent predictors of political participation is trust. The trust that citizens place in institutions would increase their chances to adhere to democratic standards, vote, and the governance regimes. In case of loss of trust, the political structures find it difficult to attain legitimacy and civic involvement fails.

To enhance the Kaduna State democracy, it is therefore imperative to understand how distrust and political apathy are linked, to enable better understanding of the issue. It provides an insight on how leaders, policymakers, electoral agencies, and civil societies can restore the confidence of the citizens. The lack of this trust in Kaduna and Nigeria in general leaves the process of democratic consolidation in question.

It is justified academically and practically to concentrate on insecurity/violence and lack of trust to government as the major explanatory variables. The two are quantifiable, testable and conceptually potent predictors of political apathy and voter turnout. Their interaction in Kaduna State will offer insights on how political disengagement can be reduced, policy interventions and the discourse on democratic consolidation in Nigeria at large.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Active citizen participation in political processes is an important aspect of democratic consolidation of Nigeria. Nonetheless, Kaduan State has over the years witnessed a dismal turnout in political participation especially in the 2019 general elections and the successive

elections. Two factors, which seem to be closely interconnected within the context of this trend are insecurity and violence, and mistrust of the government and political institutions.

The Kaduna State is insecure due to ethno-religious conflicts, banditry, kidnapping and violence among communities, which has instilled fear among the citizens that they are afraid to take part in political affairs like voting, joining political rallies or even conducting civic dialogues. The prevalent feeling of insecurity does not only minimize active engagement, but also leads to the apathy of the political life, since people are focused on personal security rather than on citizenship.

At the same time, the general distrust in government, which is intensified by corruption, poor governance, and allegation of failures with the political system, has also weakened the confidence in the political system. The citizens will not vote or participate in civic processes when they feel that they will not affect the results.

Regardless of these, not much academic focus has been able to comprehensively investigate the relationship between insecurity and distrust to create a political apathy and poor voter turnout in the Kaduna State. The dynamics are vital to understanding that effective interventions should be formulated by the policymakers, electoral institutions, and civil society organizations to recover citizen participation and enhance democracy in governance. The paper thus examines the viability of insecurity and violence as explanatory factors to political apathy and the role of mistrust in government in terms of voter attendance in Kaduna State in the 2019 general elections and later elections.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How has insecurity and violence accounted for political apathy in the 2019 to 2023 general elections in Kaduna State?

2. What is the effect of the distrust towards government in Kaduna State on voter turnout in the 2019 to 2023 general elections and other elections?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Broad Objective

To investigate how insecurity, violence and distrust in government affect political apathy and voter rejection among voters in Kaduna State in the 2019 general elections and the subsequent elections.

Specific Objectives

1. To establish how insecurity and violence played a role in a politically apathetic Kaduna State in the 2019 to 2023 general election.

2. To determine the linkages between the lack of trust to government and voter turnout in the 2019 to 2023 general elections in Kaduna State and the future elections.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research work is important in a number of ways. One, it adds to the scholarly literature as it gives a thorough analysis of the issue of political apathy in a given socio-political environment. Second, the results will be useful to policy-makers, political stakeholders, and other civil society organizations to formulate specific interventions that would decrease the level of political disengagement in Kaduna State. Third, the paper provides information which can inform electoral reforms and civic education programs by pointing to how insecurity, governance, and civic participation relate to each other. Lastly, the study will make a good source of reference among students, scholars, and researchers of political science, public administration, and other related areas of study.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The current research is about political apathy in Nigeria with Kaduna State as a case study. Geographically, the study is restricted to Kaduna State, due to its strategic political relevance as a State in Northern Nigeria and its history of regular insecurity, electoral violence and varying degrees of political participation. A suitable background for the study of the causes of political apathy and poor voter turnout in a democratic system is the state.

From a theoretical perspective, the study explores the issue of political apathy through the lens of voter turnout and participation, civic involvement, and political disengagement, with a specific focus on voters and citizens. It in particular examines the extent to which insecurity and violence are drivers of political apathy and how distrust in government and political institutions affects voter turnout. Additional factors that affect political behaviour, including electoral credibility, citizens' confidence in democratic institutions, political participation of youth, governance performance and public perceptions of corruption, are also taken into account in the study.

The study was conducted on a time scale of 2019 – 2023. The time span covered in this period includes the 2019 General Elections and the political events between those two elections in 2023. The time period was notable for a number of security issues, public discontent over governance, economic problems, and shifts in political engagement within Kaduna State. An examination of this period offers a chance to determine the effect these changes had on the citizens' political attitudes and actions.

Considering data coverage, the study is based on secondary data sources such as reports by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Afrobarometer surveys, reports by Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), government documents, academic journals, textbooks, newspapers and other available scholarly materials. These sources are used to

analyze the link between insecurity, government distrust and political apathy in Kaduna State on empirical basis.

Attention is sometimes drawn to national political occurrences and experiences in other states for purposes of comparison and contextual explanations, but the focus of the study is Kaduna state in the period 2019 – 2023.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

A serious weakness of the present study is that it relies on the secondary data that can be prone to errors related to reporting or selective recording. Also, due to the lack of primary data, it is impossible to directly evaluate individual experiences of citizens. There was also a limitation of time that restricted literature reviewed. In spite of these problems, attempts were made to use the credible and diverse secondary sources in order to provide objectivity and academic rigor.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms.

Political Apathy

Political apathy is the uninterestedness, the non-concern, the lack of interest in political actions or involvement. Verba et al. (1995) state that it is the situation whereby citizens lose interest in political practices because of disillusionment, distrust or have no sense that their participation is effective.

In this context, politically apathetic means the apparent drop in the voter turnout, particularly the voting activity among the residents of Kaduna State in 2018-2022. It encompasses behavioral acts like apathy to election, poor voter registration, non-voting and overall lack of civic responsibility.

Voter Turnout

Voter turnout is defined as the percentage of the total voters who are eligible to vote and participates in an election. According to Powell (1986) it is the percentage of voting-age population that votes in an election.

In this study, the concept of voter turnout is operationalized with regard to the election turnout of Kaduna State in the 2019 general elections and the follow-up elections in the study area.

Democracy

According to Dahl (1989), democracy is the conceptualization of a political system whereby the leaders are vying with the people to vote and the citizens have the power to vote, make choices, and hold the leaders accountable.

In reference to operations, democracy means the form of government within the Kaduna State and Nigeria in general, whereby the participation of the citizens, particularly, voting, is important in the legitimacy and operation of the political process.

Trust in Political Institutions.

Trust in the political institutions is the trust which the citizens possess towards the transparency, fairness, competence and accountability of the government and political institutions. It involves confidence in elected government officials, government agencies, the judiciary, and the electoral institutions. It is seen by scholars that political trust is one of the significant predictors of civic engagement where it is believed that dwindling trust is positively related with diminishing voter turnout and more political withdrawal (Newton, 2001).

Categorically, trust in political institutions in this research study means the level of trust or mistrust that people of Kaduna state are having with the political leaders, the political

institutions, and the election process between the years 2018 and 2022 and how this affects their political intentions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a review of the academic literature concerning the topic of political apathy in Nigeria, particularly, insecurity, violence, lack of confidence on government, and voter turnout. The aim of the literature review is to put the study in the context of the current scholarly discourse and analyze the conceptualizations and explanations of political apathy given by the scholars, as well as to find theoretical and empirical approaches that may be applied to the research. The chapter is subdivided into five large components, which includes: conceptual review, theoretical framework, empirical review, and literature gap. The chapter, in the form of this review, develops the intellectual basis on which the current study is premised and explained the reason why the issue of political apathy in Kaduna State between 2019 and 2023 is relevant.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Political Apathy

Political apathy is the situation where people show a lack of interest, indifference, or withdrawal in politics like voting, political discourse and engagement in activities associated with the political system. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) theorize political apathy as lack of motivation or resource needed to engage in politics, which frequently comes to be as a result of being disillusioned with political establishments and leadership. There is political apathy that shows itself in poor voter participation, poor political mobilization and deteriorating civic responsibility.

Political apathy has been on the rise especially in Nigerian context where governance has failed, there is corruption, malpractices in elections, insecurity amongst others. When citizens feel they are not getting their way in political processes or that the processes are poor, they tend to withdraw because they do not feel that their participation in political processes will bring a positive change. In Kaduna State, the concept of political apathy will be operationalized by the form of waning voter turnout in the 2019 general elections and lack of civic engagement in the series of elections that followed.

2.1.2 Insecurity and Violence

Insecurity is a state where individual lives, property, and even stability of the society face threats, which are usually brought about by violence, conflict, crime or state failure. According to Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998), insecurity is a condition whereby, individuals or communities perceive existential threats which disrupt their security and survival. Insecurity can be in the form of armed clash, terrorism, bandits, kidnapping, communal clash or ethno-religious violence.

Insecurity has been a primary social political issue in Nigeria especially in states such as Kaduna where banditry is common, and communal violence as well as ethno-religious conflicts are equally common. Insecurity disheartens the political turnout by instilling fear and constraining the movement of the citizens during the election period. Through the election process, the people feel that the election is a dangerous process and thus they can avoid voting which will enhance political indifference. The concept of insecurity and violence in this research is considered as structural conditions that directly and indirectly lead to political apathy in Kaduna State.

2.1.3 Trust in Government and Political Institutions.

Trust in government is defined as the trust citizens have towards the integrity, competence as well as accountability of political leaders and institutions. According to Newton (2001), political trust is a basic factor that defines democratic participation since the willingness of the citizens to participate in political systems is influenced by the trust. Participation is greater when there are high levels of trust; apathy and withdrawal when there are low levels of trust.

Corruption, inappropriate service delivery and electoral irregularities have reduced trust in political institutions in Nigeria. Numerous citizens think that the elections are not the reflection of the will of people and political leaders are not responsive to the needs of the population. In Kaduna State, the level of mistrust among the people about the government institutions has had a great impact on voter participation and civic expression. Trust in political institutions in this research will mean how much citizens trust the government, electoral processes in the years 2019-2023.

2.1.4 Voter Turnout

One of the greatest indicators of political participation in a democratic system is the voter turnout. According to Powell (1986), voter turnout refers to a ratio of the number of eligible voters who vote during an election. When voter turnout is high, it is an indication that the population has a belief in the democratic process, whereas when it is low, this may indicate lack of satisfaction, interest or fear.

Nigeria has also experienced a decreasing voter turnout in consecutive elections with insecurity and distrust being the major explanatory variables. The 2019 general elections and the later elections in Kaduna State have also affected voter turnout as a result of security reasons and

low trust in the credibility of the electoral process. In this research, the turnout, among the voters, is the measurable result of political apathy.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Cleavage Theory

Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) came up with Cleavage Theory that can be used in explaining the patterns of political behavior and participation that are made on the basis of deep-rooted social division in the societies. This theory holds that structural cleavages like ethnicity, religion, region, class, and language are structural features that form political alignments and participation levels that are long term. These fissures tend to define political allegiance, party affiliation and the political inclinations towards political establishments.

Lipset and Rokkan believe that cleavages arise as a result of historical processes which include the formation of states, the process of nation-building and industrialization. These divisions are institutionalized once they have been formed into political systems and this has an impact on the way the citizens see politics and feel represented or marginalized. In cases where the political systems do not succeed in controlling these divisions, the citizens might become disinterested in political participation because they feel excluded, marginalized, or insecure.

Cleavage theory comes in specifically in plural society such as in Nigeria. A high level of ethnic, religious and regional fragmentation typifies Nigeria, and both often influence the political competition and political governance. Politics, in most instances, is not seen as a system of making decisions together but as a place of war between warring groups. This kind of perception usually results in distrust of the political institutions and intensified political tension which may even lead to violence.

The cleavage theory in Kaduna State can be used to explain the relationship between insecurity and violence and political apathy. The state has been a place of ethno-religious and communal struggles and the outcomes of these conflicts have brought polarized communities and suspicion amongst groups. Achieving elections in such settings are perceived to be based on group survival instead of a democratic choice. This makes political participation dangerous and people might shun the whole process to prevent violence or victimization.

Moreover, the perception of political institutions as having the interests of a certain group at the expense of another one may make the members of the marginal groups feel estranged. Such feeling of not belonging dishearten political involvement and strengthen apathy. Cleavage Theory can thus be used to present a good model of how structural divisions and insecurity in the state of Kaduna are part of the decline in voter turnout and political disengagement.

2.2.2 Political Culture Theory

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) in their masterpiece *The Civic Culture* made a contribution to the development of the Political Culture Theory. The theory is concerned with the importance of attitudes, values, beliefs, and orientations of the citizens in the direction of politics and authority. According to Almond and Verba, stability and effectiveness of democracy is highly determined by the nature of political culture of a society.

They singled out three broad categories of political culture:

- Parochial political culture, in which citizens are not well aware or concerned with politics;
- Subject political culture: this is where citizens are conscious of political power but mostly inert;
- participant political culture: where citizens take an active part in the political processes.

Almond and Verba give a healthy democracy to be one where a participant political culture exists where citizens think that political participation matters and that there is responsiveness and accountability in institutions. Political apathy will develop where the political culture is marked by cynicism, fear or distrust.

In Nigeria, history of military rule, corruption, election malpractice, and weak institutions of governance have been the determinants of political culture. These experiences have created a culture of doubt and mistrust of political leaders and state institutions. The problem of politics is perceived by many citizens as a preserve of the elites, instead of a participative process that involves popular will.

Political culture has been further distorted in Kaduna State through insecurity and violence. Constant wars and election violence have strengthened fear, hopelessness, and withdrawal out of politics. The citizens who are constantly exposed to insecurity usually form negative views towards elections and perceive it as dangerous or useless. This is a climate where a subject or parochial politicking culture is cultivated instead of a participatory one.

The Political Culture Theory thus elaborates on why people in Kaduna State are apathetic towards politics as the result of attitudes and experiences acquired. Indifference is normalized when citizens experience recurrent incidences of electoral violence, bad governance and non-responsive leaders. The theory assists in the explanation of why even in the presence of formal democracies political disengagement remains.

2.2.3 Rational Choice Theory

The Rational Choice Theory is a theory of political behavior which was popularized by Anthony Downs (1957) in *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, and defines political action as a consequence of rational choices of individuals. The theory presumes individuals are utility-

maximizers who use the expected cost as compared to the expected benefits in making decisions. Within the sphere of political participation, citizens opt to vote or not vote depending on whether they see the participation as worthwhile or not.

Downs subjects that voting is only rational when the perceived payoff, meaning the ability to influence the outcomes of the policy, hold officials to account, politically to a preferred candidate, etc, is greater than the cost incurred, which may be in the form of time, effort, money invested and personal risk. Rational individuals tend to exit out of political processes when the cost of political participation is high and the benefits are not so sure.

The Rational Choice Theory comes in handy especially in the case of political apathy where insecurity and institutional distrust exist. Political participation is very expensive due to insecurity in the Kaduna State. Voting is a risky process because of the fear of violence, intimidation or disturbances during elections. Meanwhile, the large-scale mistrust in the government diminishes the perceived gains of involvement since people do not believe that participating in elections will make any difference.

According to the rational choice, it is rational to avoid voting in such conditions. The people can come to a conclusion that they are even getting into more trouble when taking part in elections since they are not assured of better governance and accountability. The Rational Choice Theory then explains political apathy not by ignorance or laziness, but calculated reaction to unfavourable political conditions.

The Rational Choice Theory is utilized in this paper to give a micro-level explanation of the politics apathy in the connection of insecurity and distrust. It supplements Cleavage Theory and Political Culture Theory because it connects the conditions of the structures and culture with the behavior of individuals.

2.3 Empirical Review

Adebayo (2013) in his research *Youth Unemployment and crime in Nigeria*, analysed political disengagement with youths through a survey data and descriptive analysis. The researchers discovered that political apathy was caused by economic insecurity and lack of confidence in leadership. It however did not emphasize on electoral insecurity.

Okafor (2011) in his article *Youth Unemployment and Implications for Political Stability*, used the analysis of secondary data and discovered that civic engagement was decreased by socio-economic insecurity. The research failed to study electoral behavior at the state level.

Ucha (2010) examined *Poverty in Nigeria: Some Dimensions and Contributing Factors*, through the qualitative techniques and established that political participation was discouraged by insecurity and bad governance. The research ignored patterns of voter turnout.

Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) researched on *Youth Unemployment: Entrepreneurship Development programme as an Invention Mechanism*, using mixed method, they identified a correlation lack of job opportunities and political withdrawing but never analyzed trust of institutions.

Adetula (2015) in his work titled *Electoral Violence and Democratic participation in Nigeria*, based on election reports and interviews. The results indicated that voter turnout was low because of fear of violence. The research was not centered at Kaduna State.

According to the reports by INEC (2019), the voting patterns were analyzed, and low turnout was reported in the areas that were prone to violence. The reports however had not been theoretically explanatory on political apathy.

Ojo (2018) analyzed The Political Participation in Nigeria by looking at the survey data on Political Trust and Electoral Participation. The researchers established that distrust had a great influence on voter turnout but did not consider the factor of insecurity.

Ibrahim (2010) in his work titled *Insecurity and Democratic Governance in Northern Nigeria*, applied the qualitative analysis and discovered that insecurity undermined democratic participation. Thoughts of rational choice were not incorporated in the study.

2.4 Literature Gap

Even though previous literature has looked into the issues of political apathy, insecurity, and voter turnout in Nigeria, the majority of the literature reviewed uses the national scope or individual explanatory variables. Not many studies combine insecurity and the lack of trust in government as two determining factors of political apathy, especially on the state level. Further, little academic focus has been considered in particular to the Kaduna State during the electoral year of 2019/2023. This research plugs this gap by offering a narrow and theory-based discussion of the interplay between insecurity and distrust in influencing political apathy and voter turnout in Kaduna state.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is the body of theory and procedure relating to the methods used in a field of study. It involves the techniques, rules and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Within research, methodology offers the framework for the entire research process, ensuring the study is undertaken in a systematic, coherent and valid way.

The Oxford English Dictionary (2023) states that methodology comes from the Greek *methodos* (a way or path) and *logia* (study or discourse), and so is the study of methods. This describes methodology as being about the use of, study of, and justification for, methods in research.

Crotty (1998) describes methodology as a strategy, plan of action, or design lying behind the choice and use of methods and which connects them to the desired outcomes. This implies that methodology is more than methods, but rather includes the theoretical framework of the research. Likewise, Kothari (2004) defines methodology as a mode of arriving at the solution of a research problem by rationally adopting steps. This highlights the procedural aspects of methodology within research.

Moreover, Clough and Nutbrown (2012) consider methodology to be the strategy for examining a research problem, the connection between theory and methods. Similarly, Silverman (2013) suggests that methodology is not just about the instruments of research but also the principles that guide the research process in ensuring rigor, validity and reliability.

In view of this, it can be seen that methodology is more than a matter of techniques; it is about reasons, justifications and philosophical stance that are behind the research process. It offers a structure that ensures the coherence between research aims, data collection and analysis techniques.

In this study, methodology describes the processes and strategies used to investigate political apathy in Kaduna State from 2018 to 2023. Because of the nature of this study that uses past data and events, the methodology has a secondary-sources qualitative approach. This methodology enables a detailed examination of trends, patterns and relationships between insecurity, government distrust and political apathy.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Theory plays a pivotal role in research as it offers an explanation for social phenomena and it provides a focus for research. Theory is a cohesive set of ideas that explains something, particularly one derived from a general principle independent of the thing to be explained. In social science research, theories are used as tools to guide researchers in their interpretation of observations, and to construct relationships and predictions.

Hughes (2009), defines a theory as a set of concepts, definitions, and propositions that explain a specified set of phenomena by laying out relationships between variables in order to predict and explain phenomena. This brings attention to the role of theory in explaining and predicting phenomena.

Likewise, Blaikie (2007) describes theory as a systematic set of concepts and explanations about empirical phenomena that prescribes interpretation of data. This implies that theory not only explains the world but is also a means to interpret data. Similarly, Giddens (2013)

considers theory to be a way of thinking about the world, which allows researchers to link empirical evidence to generalizations.

Moreover, Popper (2002) stresses the importance of testability and falsifiability for a scientific theory. This means that theories should yield propositions that can be tested and falsified. This view reiterates the notion of theory as an evolving and testable construct.

In research, the importance of theory is that it serves as a basis for analysis, aids hypothesis generation and helps to interpret results. It also contributes to the delimitation of a research study by identifying key variables and relationships in a study.

For this study, which is focused on political apathy in Kaduna State from 2018 to 2023, the Rational Choice Theory is the most appropriate theory to use. This is due to the theory's ability to explain how people make use of their choice, especially as it relates to voting in an election.

3.1.1 Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory is a very influential theory in the fields of political science and economics, most notably formulated by Anthony Downs. He presented it in a coherent manner in his book *An Economic Theory of Democracy* in 1957.

Rational Choice Theory rests on the idea that people are rational beings who make decisions on the basis of the costs and benefits of the different alternatives. Political actions, such as voting, are explained by Downs (1957) as the outcome of rational calculations by individuals who attempt to maximise their utility.

The central idea of the theory is that people will select the alternative that offers them the highest benefit for the lowest cost. For political behavior, this implies that an individual will choose to vote in an election if they believe that the benefit of voting is greater than the cost.

Benefits might include the ability to affect election results, to vote for one's favourite candidate or to fulfil one's civil duty, whereas costs might include time, energy, money or danger.

The theory has been developed by a number of scholars over time. Riker and Ordeshook (1968) proposed the "calculus of voting" which incorporates a sense of civic duty into the cost-benefit calculation, to explain why people may vote despite the low chance of affecting election results. Likewise, Olson (1965) in his theory of collective action suggests that people will not participate in collective actions unless there are selective benefits to participation.

Political apathy is also rational according to the Rational Choice Theory. If people believe their actions will have little impact on politics, or the benefits of participating are outweighed by the costs, they may become apathetic. In such cases, apathy may not be a result of ignorance or disinterest, but a rational choice in response to perceived ineffectiveness.

The theory, while widely used, has not been without its critics. Some critics claim that it simplifies human behavior by reducing it to economic reasoning, overlooking emotional, social and cultural factors. Academics also highlight the "paradox of voting", which challenges the motivation to vote considering the limited influence of individual votes. Despite these criticisms, the theory is still important as it offers a rational approach to decision-making in political participation.

Rational Choice Theory remains a popular approach to studying voting, political engagement, and collective decision-making. Its focus on individual decision-making and cost-benefit analysis makes it particularly relevant in studying phenomena like political apathy, particularly in a situation where insecurity and distrust may come into play in the decision to vote or not.

3.2 Application of the Theory

Anthony Downs' Rational Choice Theory (1957) is an appropriate theory for the study of political apathy in Kaduna State in the period of 2019-2023. The theory assumes that people are rational decision-makers who weigh their options for a decision based on the costs and benefits that they anticipate encountering. In politics, citizens vote, campaign, and engage in other civic activities if they believe there will be rewards to the activity that are greater than the costs.

The relevance of the theory to this study is that it explains how many citizens in Kaduna State did not actively participate in political processes during the study period. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the level of insecurity and violence as well as the level of distrust in the government had an impact on the political behavior of citizens, and also played a role in the rise of political apathy.

Insecurity and violence led to rising perceived costs to political participation, as circumstances became less secure. Insecurity and violence led to rising perceived costs to political participation, as circumstances became less secure, first. Kaduna State had been plagued by security problems over the years 2019 to 2023, such as banditry, kidnapping, communal conflict and electoral violence. Citizens became fearful and uncertain due to these circumstances. Rational Choice Theory suggests that as the danger of political involvement increases, will people be less inclined to engage in it? Voting, attending political meetings or engaging in electoral activities was seen by many citizens as unsafe and risky due to the threat of violence and insecurity. As such, it was of rational choice to abstain from political participation for the purposes of ensuring personal safety.

Secondly, people did not trust the government or political institutions resulting in a decreased return from political participation. The study shows growing discontent with government performance, a high level of corruption perceptions, low levels of accountability and trust in electoral institutions. Rational Choice Theory states that individuals are more likely to engage in civic activities if they think it will matter for political outcomes and if they expect the activity to be beneficial. But when people feel that they can't expect to see significant change from the elections, or that political institutions are ineffective, the benefits of participating in the political process decrease. Citizens in Kaduna State felt the political system did not address their needs and concerns. This led them to see little reason to vote, resulting in reduced voter turnout and political disenfranchisement.

Another assumption of Rational Choice Theory is that voter turnout is lower in 2023 (34.2%) than it was in 2019 (52.7%). Although the number of registered voters was up, their turnout was down. This meant that many citizens evaluated the risks they had to take in voting against the expected benefits, and determined that they did not outweigh it. Thus, in this context, it seemed logical to stay at home. So, given the political and security context, electoral abstention was a rational way to respond.

The theory also accounts for the high amount of youth political disengagement found throughout the period of the study. It was found that many of the young people were not confident about the government institutions and showed reduced interest in politics. Youths felt less incentivized to participate in the political process due to high levels of unemployment, insecurities, and poor governance, and due to unfulfilled political promises. As a result, many of the young people chose to opt out of political engagement, because they felt it would not help their socio-economic situation.

Also, Rational Choice Theory gives a good account of why political apathy was not spread evenly throughout the population. Some people continued to engage in politics due to political interest, party membership, and/or self-interest, while others did not get as involved in politics due to the increased cost and decreased benefit. The theory's prediction that political participation is tied to personal costs and benefits calculations in politics is supported by this variation.

To conclude, Rational Choice Theory offers a comprehensive explanation of the political apathy of Kaduna State in 2019 – 2023. The theory showed that the costs of political participation also rose as a result of insecurity and violence, and that as people lost their trust in government and political institutions, so did the benefits. Under these circumstances, many citizens made a rational decision not to be politically engaged, resulting in a decreasing voter turnout, less civic engagement, and increasing political apathy. The theory thus provides an appropriate framework that can be used to understand the relationship between insecurity, government distrust and political disengagement in Kaduna State.

3.3 Hypotheses

This study will be carried out with the following hypotheses:

1. Violence and insecurity are significantly associated with political apathy in Kaduna State during the 2019 general elections and other elections.
2. Government distrust has a significant impact on the turnout rate in Kaduna State during the 2019 general elections and subsequent elections.

3.4 Research Design

Research design is the framework of the study that is used to address research questions. Kerlinger (1973) defines it as the plan of investigation used to answer research questions.

This study uses ex-post facto research design, which involves the study of events that have taken place without manipulation of variables. This design is appropriate for this study as it focuses on political apathy in Kaduna State from 2018 to 2023, which has already occurred.

The researcher uses available data to explore the impact of insecurity, government distrust and political participation. As such, these factors cannot be manipulated, making the ex-post facto design suitable for this study.

In addition, the use of this design is consistent with the use of secondary data sources (such as electoral rolls, academic articles, and government documents). It allows the researcher to draw inferences from historical events in an objective manner.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

This research uses the secondary data collection method, where data already collected by other researchers and organisations are used. Secondary data help in understanding past events and trends without having to be in the field.

The data used for this research are from reliable sources including journals, textbooks, government publications, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reports, policy documents, newspapers and publications from national and international institutions. These materials offer insights into insecurity, political participation, voter turnout, and trust in government in Kaduna State.

The use of secondary data is suitable for this study as it examines events that have already taken place between 2018 and 2023. It enables the researcher to gain access to a broad spectrum of information, to compare different viewpoints and to draw conclusions across time.

Additionally, secondary data contributes to the credibility of the study, as it is sourced from reliable and credible sources. It is also time and cost-effective, and provides a broader picture of the research topic.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used in this study is qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is a process of systematically analyzing and interpreting text to uncover patterns, themes and meanings.

The secondary data sources including academic publications, INEC reports, policy documents, and media reports will be carefully examined. This will allow key data related to insecurity, distrust in government, political apathy and voter turnout to be identified and grouped.

The method of thematic analysis will be used to identify similar ideas and patterns. This will help the researcher make logical inferences between the variables (factors) and give a comprehensive picture of the relationship between insecurity and distrust and political participation in Kaduna State.

The qualitative content analysis approach is ideal for this study as it enables a comprehensive interpretation of non-statistical data and provides a meaningful description of social and political events. It also guarantees that the analysis is true to the study's design, which uses secondary data and seeks to explain rather than statistically measure relationships.

3.7 Logical Data Framework (LDF)

In this study, the Logical Data Framework (LDF) is used to structure the research variables, hypotheses and analysis methods. It assists in mapping the research questions to the hypotheses, variables, data sources and methods of analysis.

The LDF improves transparency, consistency of the research process and provides direction for data collection and analysis. It also helps to discern relationships among variables and keeps the study on track with its research objectives.

Table 3.1: Logical Data Framework

Research Question	Hypotheses	Independent Variable (X)	Dependent Variable (Y)	Empirical Indicators	Method of Data Collection	Sources of Data	Method of Data Analysis
1. How has insecurity and violence accounted for political apathy in the 2019 general elections in Kaduna State?	Insecurity and violence are significantly associated with political apathy in Kaduna State during the 2019 general elections and other elections.	Insecurity and Violence	Political Apathy	Banditry, kidnapping, communal clashes, election violence	Secondary Data	INEC reports, academic journals, newspapers, policy documents	Thematic Analysis
2. What is the effect of distrust in government on voter turnout in Kaduna State?	Government distrust has a significant impact on the turnout rate in Kaduna State during the 2019 general elections and subsequent election	Distrust in Government	Voter Turnout	Corruption, poor governance, lack of accountability, electoral irregularities	Secondary Data	INEC reports, government publications, academic literature, media sources	Thematic Analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Political Apathy and Electoral Participation in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

The political apathy has emerged as one of the great challenges facing democratic governance in Nigeria. It is a condition when citizens are not interested in any political activities, including voting, political discussion, civic involvement, party activities, and public decision-making. Active political participation is essential for legitimacy, accountability and good governance in democratic societies. But, when citizens are politically apathetic, democratic institutions grow weak over time as peoples' participation in the political activity declines and people's faith in the process of governance becomes less.

The lack of political will was more evident in Kaduna State from 2019 to 2023, driven by various socio-economic and political reasons. The ongoing insecurity, economic difficulties, unemployment, electoral violence, lack of trust in political leaders and concerns about governance, all played a role in reducing the political involvement and participation of citizens. These conditions undermined the trust people had in the elections and their willingness to actively engage in democratic processes.

In Kaduna State, the 2023 general elections were testimony to growing political disengagement despite the political awareness being heightened by social media, civil society organisations and political campaigns. Political activities were still present throughout election periods, but citizens were not very committed in terms of turnout and continued civic involvement.

Political participation in this study includes voting in elections, attending political meetings, being involved in civic discussion, participating in political campaigns and participating in

democratic decision-making processes. Political apathy manifests in voter turnout, political apathy, lack of trust in institutions and lack of civic participation and apathy.

The relationship between political apathy and electoral participation is significant because it relies heavily on citizens' engagement in political processes for the development of democratic governance. Elections lose representativeness, political accountability diminishes and the legitimacy of the democratic process becomes increasingly fragile when the political apathy becomes widespread. Therefore, it is important to know the trends and size of political apathy in Kaduna State so that the level of democratic participation in the study period could be assessed.

4.1.1 Trend of Voter Turnout in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

One of the most apparent measures of political participation in democratic systems of government is voter participation. High turnout rates can be a sign of civic involvement and trust in the electoral process, whereas low turnout rates can be a sign of political apathy, lack of trust in political institutions or a feeling of dissatisfaction with the quality of governance. The voter turnout at election in Kaduna State between 2019 and 2023 reflected the varying active citizens' engagement in the democratic process.

The table below shows the trend of voter's participation in Kaduna State between the period of study.

Table 4.1.1: Voter Turnout Trend in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Year	Registered Voters	Votes Cast	Voter Turnout (%)
2019	3,337,469	1,757,868	52.7%
2023	4,335,208	1,482,701	34.2%

Sources: *Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Election Reports (2019; 2023); compiled by the researcher.*

The voter turnout in Kaduna State has significantly reduced from 2019 to 2023 as shown in the table. Registered voters at the 2019 election were over 3.3 million and participated in the election about 1.76 million, representing a 52.7% turnout. The voter turnout in 2023 was approximately 1.48 million (34.2%) even as the number of registered voters rose to over 4.3 million.

It suggests that registered voters voted, but fewer actually did. This reflects a growing apathy among citizens in the state and demonstrates a drop in participation when compared to a prior year. The overall downturn may be attributed to ongoing insecurity, economic difficulties, unemployment, and frustrations with governance which undermined citizen trust in political and electoral processes.

It also indicates a general mistrust of the electoral system as a tool for real transformation in socio-economic development, resulting in the non-participation of many people in political processes. In addition, although there is growing political awareness in the media and in civic participation many citizens were still politically disengaged because of dissatisfaction with the results of the governance process. Overall, the trend shows that there has been a decline in the level of political engagement and electoral participation in Kaduna State from 2019 to 2023.

4.1.2 Political Participation Patterns Among Citizens in Kaduna State (2023)

Democratic societies have more than just election voting. Participation in politics is not just about voting during elections. It encompasses citizen participation in political debates, political gatherings, political campaign, civic activities and interaction with democratic institutions. Citizens' involvement in these activities contributes to the strength and stability of democratic governance in a state.

The civic engagement of citizens during the 2023 general elections in Kaduna State was reflected in the political participation of citizens. Although some were actively engaged in political activities, many people were either passively or increasingly involved. This trend is indicative of the rise in political apathy and distrust of institutions and socio-economic issues over the engagement of democracy within the state.

The following table gives the disparity in political participation of the electorate in Kaduna State during the 2023 general elections.

Table 4.1.2: Political Participation Patterns Among Citizens in Kaduna State (2023)

Category	Percentage (%)
Actively involved in political activities	26%
Passive political participation	38%
Politically disengaged citizens	36%

Sources: Afrobarometer Nigeria Survey (2023); Yiaga Africa Civic Participation Report (2023); compiled by the researcher.

The figure indicates that among the citizens in Kaduna State, only 26% was engaged in political activities at the 2023 general elections. This group consists of people who regularly attend campaigns, civic actions, political events and political debate about elections, reflecting overall low sustained political participation.

Another 38% played an active role, but in a limited, episodic manner, such as when they cast their ballots in elections or when they heard political events, but have not been deeply involved or continuously engaged in democratic processes. Significantly, 36% were politically disengaged, with little or no engagement with political or civic activities, and this is an increase in political apathy in the state.

The overall pattern shows low and sporadic political participation, where many citizens are not involved in democratic process. This has grown as people lose faith in political institutions and have less confidence that participation will impact governance outcomes.

This situation was exacerbated by economic hardship, lack of security, deprivation, and low levels of satisfaction regarding governance, and many citizens focused more on survival and safety than on civic engagement. Electoral violence and lack of confidence in political actors also contributed to a decline in participation. As a result, most political involvement in 2023 was motivated by short-term concerns rather than a commitment to democracy, resulting in a rise in disengagement from formal political involvement.

4.1.3 Political Apathy and Electoral Behaviour in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Electoral behaviour involves how citizens act in the electoral process; it includes voting, action in elections, campaigning, party allegiance, and participation in elections. It is expected in democratic systems that citizens' political interests, ideology and confidence in governance will influence their electoral behavior. But if there is political apathy in a larger degree, an electoral behavior is sometimes marked by the withdrawal of the voters, their low participation, the lack of party attachment and the decrease of the interest of the voters in the democratic activities.

From 2019 up to 2023, voter attitudes towards election increasingly exhibited signs of apathy amongst the citizens of Kaduna State. Media coverage and political campaigns helped to keep political awareness fairly high, but citizens expressed loss of trust in elections, and they were less inclined to be engaged in democratic activities. Insecurity, economic difficulties, electoral violence and lack of trust in the political leadership and dissatisfaction with governance outcomes were factors in this situation.

The 2023 general elections, in particular, showed that voters in Kaduna State are increasingly becoming politically disengaged. Although some citizens continued to be politically engaged, many voters exhibited passive or inconsistent electoral engagement, particularly with respect to voting, campaign involvement, and long-term civic engagement. This is indicative of a trend toward political engagement in times of frustration and uncertainty instead of robust democratic engagement during this period.

The table below shows the electoral behaviour of the Kaduna people on the eve of the 2023 general elections.

Table 4.1.3: Political Apathy and Electoral Behaviour in Kaduna State (2023)

Electoral Behaviour Category	Percentage (%)
Regular electoral participation	29%
Occasional participation	41%
Electoral withdrawal/apathy	30%

Sources: Afrobarometer Nigeria Report (2023); Yiaga Africa Election Observation Report (2023); compiled by the researcher.

In Kaduna State, as revealed in the table, only 29% of the citizens participated in the general elections of 2023 regularly. Limited sustained democratic involvement was observed, as members of this group were regularly involved in voting, election-related discussions, civic involvement, and other democratic processes.

Another 41% occasionally, primarily during elections; they were not engaged outside of the election. They engaged largely because of pressing political conditions, rather than because of confidence in and familiarity with the institutions, or a long-term civic interest. Also, 30% of

the citizens expressed a lack of interest in the elections and lack of faith in the political system, indicating a decrease in electoral interest and a disillusionment with the democratic system.

Generally, the pattern reveals that voters' turnout in Kaduna State was highly affected by political apathy from 2019 to 2023. Citizens' participation interest was dampened by insecurity, economic problems, poor governance, and electoral credibility issues. This thus meant electoral participation was largely volatile and piecemeal, indicative of a decline in democratic engagement and rise in political disengagement in the state.

4.1.4 Youth Political Disengagement in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Youth participation is a key aspect of democratic governance as youth makes up a large percentage of the voting population and are a significant force in mobilizing, promoting civic engagement and democratic development. In a democracy, youth engagement in elections and governance fosters political accountability, political stability and political legitimacy. But as youth become disengaged from politics, so does the strength of democratic participation, and so does the political apathy.

The trend of disengagement among youth from political activities was observed to be on the rise in Kaduna State from 2019 to 2023. While many youth expressed some familiarity with political developments via social media, civic campaigns and political discussion, a significant number of youth exhibited minimal hands-on engagement with political and election activity and democratic processes. This disconnection was manifested in a drop in youth voter turnout, minimal involvement in civic life and diminished confidence in political institutions.

There are a number of socio-economic and political factors that have led to a disengagement of youth from politics during the period of review. Lack of employment, insecurity, poverty and dissatisfaction with governance demoralized many youths to trust in democratic

institutions and electoral processes. Additionally, frequent cases of electoral violence and political manipulation deterred many youth from engaging in political activities.

The table below describes the trend of political engagement and disengagement among young people in Kaduna State during the 2023 general elections.

Table 4.1.4: Youth Political Engagement Pattern in Kaduna State (2023)

Category	Percentage (%)
Actively engaged youths	23%
Passive youth participation	35%
Politically disengaged youths	42%

Sources: Yiaga Africa Youth Participation Survey (2023); Afrobarometer Nigeria Report (2023); compiled by the researcher.

The table indicates that during the general elections of 2023, only about 23% of the youths in Kaduna State were involved in political activities. Strong sustained youth involvement was generally observed with this group, who also consistently engaged in the following activities: voting, campaigns, civic advocacy, political meetings, and democratic discussion.

A third of the respondents engaged in politics passively, indicating intermittent interest in politics primarily during election periods, but without regular involvement in democratic processes. They were primarily engaged in watching political news, engaging in discussion or voting sporadically. More importantly, 42% were politically disinterested – expressing little or no interest in elections and government – which indicated growing political apathy and distrust of government among the youth.

The overall trend indicated that large number of youths were not involved in the formal political processes in Kaduna State. This is an element of rising discontent with socio-economic

problems, as well as with governance results. The lack of employment and economic conditions forced many youths to focus on survival over engagement, and insecurity and electoral violence further deterred citizens from participating in elections for fear of safety and distrust of the electoral process.

Hence, the level of youth involvement in politics during that period was highly volatile, depending on the prevailing socio-political environment, rather than on longterm democratic commitment, thus contributing to a growing youth political apathy between 2019 – 2023 in Kaduna State.

4.2 Government Distrust and Voter Turnout in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

4.2.1 Government Trust and Voter Turnout Trends in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Citizens' trust in the government is a key determinant of their electoral behaviour. In democratic systems the extent to which voters turn the polls or are aware of voting opportunities also depends on how confident citizens are in government institutions and the electoral results. Citizens are more likely to feel their vote counts and that it can make a difference when elections result in change when they trust the government. Citizens are more likely to feel that their vote counts and that it can make a difference when they trust the government, and when elections produce change. On the other hand, if there is low trust, electoral participation is likely to decrease as voters become apathetic.

The voter turnout pattern observed in Kaduna State, 2019-2023, is a gradual downward trend in citizens' participation in elections, which may be interpreted as a rise in citizens' distrust of government institutions. Citizens voiced complaints on governance deficits, insecurity, corruption claims, and lack of accountability of political authorities. These factors led to a loss of trust in democratic institutions and influenced the turnout of voters.

The trend of voter turn out and perception of government trust in Kaduna State in the period under review is presented below.

Table 4.2.1: Government Trust Perception and Voter Turnout Trends in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Year	Voter Turnout (%)	Level of Public Trust in Government (Survey Estimate)	General Trust Pattern
2019	52.7%	Moderate (about 48%)	Relatively stable trust
2021	—	Low (about 38%)	Declining trust trend
2023	34.2%	Very Low (about 29%)	Severe distrust

Sources: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Election Reports (2019; 2023); Afrobarometer Nigeria Survey (2019–2023); Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) Reports; compiled by the researcher.

The above table demonstrates a clear relationship between voter turnout and trust in government institutions in Kaduna State from 2019 to 2023 as the voter turnout declined, the level of distrust in the government institutions increased. In 2019, 52.7 % of voters cast their votes, reflecting a relatively low level of public trust in government. In this time, challenges existed including insecurity and economic hardship, but a considerable number of the electorate still had some level of confidence in the electoral process and governance system.

But by 2021, there was significant loss of public trust. Afrobarometer and other institutions monitoring performance of governments reported a decline in citizens' satisfaction with government performance, especially on security, employment and corruption. This loss of

confidence led to a drop in political participation, such that citizens became less satisfied with the responsiveness and credibility of government agencies.

The figure of voter turn-out was also quite low, at 34.2% until 2023, when the figure correlates strongly with very low levels of public trust. By this point, many of the citizens were politically disillusioned and felt that elections were less effective at delivering tangible results in terms of governance. This perception led to high voter abstention and disinterest in politics.

The results indicate that the drop in voting participation in Kaduna State is not only due to logistical and electoral issues, but has also a strong relationship with the loss of confidence in government institutions. If citizens become disillusioned with government, they are less likely to consider it their civic duty to vote, lowering the motivation to do so.

The same trend also points to a more general question of legitimacy of political authority as it is undermined by the chronic failures of government. In these settings, electoral events can veer into formality, rather than reflecting a democratic decision, as citizens become less involved in the political.

4.2.2 Public Confidence in Electoral Institutions

Voters' trust in electoral institutions is an important factor in shaping voters' actions in any democratic system. Transparency, credibility and impartiality are expected of election security agencies, political parties, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among others. If citizens have trust in these institutions, they will be more inclined to vote. But as people become less confident, they become more apolitical, and abstain from voting.

The Indices of public confidence in electoral institutions decreased in Kaduna State from 2019 to 2023. This was driven in part by claims of election malfeasance, fears of vote rigging, election logistics issues, and some perceived lack of impartiality of institutions. All of these factors led to loss of citizens' confidence in the electoral system.

Table 4.2.2: Public Confidence in Electoral Institutions in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Year	Confidence Level in Electoral Institutions (%)	Key Public Perception
2019	55%	Moderately credible elections
2021	42%	Rising doubts about credibility
2023	31%	Low confidence and distrust

Sources: Afrobarometer Nigeria Survey (2019–2023); Yiaga Africa Election Reports (2023); INEC Post-Election Reviews; compiled by the researcher.

There is a gradual downward trend in public trust in electoral institutions in Kaduna State as presented in the table. However, although there were concerns, in 2019 a small majority of citizens still saw electoral institutions as relatively credible. By 2021, however, the level of confidence had declined considerably because of growing discontent with governance and electoral processes.

In 2023, the level of public confidence reached a low of 31% due to the high level of mistrust of electoral institutions. This was a direct factor in the decrease in voting turn out and rise in political apathy. A lot of people started to see elections as non-competitive, opaque and not delivering the political results they expected.

The results indicate that loss of trust in institutions is a key factor in voter apathy in Kaduna State.

4.2.3 Perception of Corruption and Political Participation

Citizens' attitudes toward corruption significantly affect their political actions. If citizens think that political elites and institutions are corrupt, they are less likely to turn out for elections. Transparency undermines trust, diminishes political motivation, and raises perceptions of political cynicism.

Corruption perceptions have not decreased in Kaduna State during 2019 – 2023. Public dissatisfaction and political withdrawal was due to reports of mismanagement of the public resources, lack of accountability and allegations of political patronage.

Table 4.2.3: Perception of Corruption and Political Participation in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Indicator	2019 (%)	2021 (%)	2023 (%)
High perception of corruption	61%	68%	74%
Citizens willing to vote despite corruption	58%	45%	33%
Political disengagement linked to corruption	29%	38%	47%

Sources: Transparency International Reports (Nigeria section), Afrobarometer Surveys (2019–2023), CDD Governance Reports; compiled by the researcher.

The table shows a rise in perception of corruption and a decrease in political participation over time. Even though citizens have concerns about corruption, a majority cast their vote in 2019. But in 2023, only a minority was actively engaged in the political process, as growing distrust prevailed.

This suggests that corruption conduct significantly involves the political apathy in Kaduna State. When citizens feel that the political system is corrupt, they are less motivated to turn up at the polls or engage in other forms of civic involvement. Citizens who perceive that the political system is corrupt are less likely to feel voting is meaningful, which can lead to lower turnout and civic involvement.

4.2.4 Youth Distrust and Electoral Participation

Youth are a large share of the electorate and their engagement is essential to the stability of democracy. However, when people don't trust the political institutions, they tend to lack participation in the electoral process, lack engagement and political apathy among youth.

Young people in Kaduna State grew more frustrated over governance, unemployment, insecurity, and political non-inclusion in 2019-2023. This led to less confidence and participation in the elections.

Table 4.2.4: Youth Distrust and Electoral Participation in Kaduna State (2023 Focus)

Category	Percentage (%)
Youth with trust in government institutions	27%
Youth who vote regularly	24%
Youth politically disengaged	49%

Sources: Yiaga Africa Youth Survey (2023); Afrobarometer Nigeria Report (2023); compiled by the researcher.

As indicated in the table, in 2023, almost half of the youths in Kaduna State were politically disengaged. Very few showed confidence in government institutions and even fewer reported that they voted regularly.

This shows that there is a strong link between youth distrust and electoral withdrawal. There is a sense that young people do not have a voice in governance and elections are not about them. This has helped to increase political disinterest among youth.

4.2.5 Government Performance and Political Apathy

Government performance in areas like security, economic development, infrastructure and service delivery greatly influences political participation. When they are not performing well, they tend to be unsatisfied and this may result in political apathy.

Citizens in Kaduna State were not satisfied with the performance of government in general during 2019-2023; especially in the areas of insecurity, unemployment and poverty. This lack of satisfaction led to lower political engagement and participation.

Table 4.2.5: Government Performance and Political Apathy in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Indicator	2019 (%)	2021 (%)	2023 (%)
Satisfaction with government performance	46%	38%	28%
Political apathy linked to poor performance	32%	41%	55%
Electoral participation rate	52.7%	—	34.2%

Sources: NBS Reports, Afrobarometer Surveys, INEC Election Data (2019–2023); compiled by the researcher.

The data in the table reveals that there is an inverse relationship between government performance and political participation. Political apathy grew greatly as satisfaction with

governance fell. By 2023, one in two respondents linked their political withdrawal with the poor performance of the government.

This implies that people's political disaffection is more likely to be triggered by the feeling that the government is not fulfilling their socio-economic demands.

4.2.6 Institutional Distrust and Democratic Participation

Instability in democratic institutions (judiciary, legislature, electoral bodies, security agencies) is the expression of institutional distrust. Lack of institutional trust has a significantly negative impact on democratic participation.

Kaduna state's institutional trust declined from 2019 to 2023 because of the perceived inefficiency and corruption issues, insecurity, and low accountability. This led to less civic participation and voter participation.

Table 4.2.6: Institutional Distrust and Democratic Participation in Kaduna State (2019–2023)

Indicator	2019 (%)	2021 (%)	2023 (%)
Trust in democratic institutions	54%	40%	28%
Participation in elections	52.7%	—	34.2%
Civic engagement level	Moderate	Low	Very Low

Sources: Afrobarometer (2019–2023), CDD Reports, INEC Data; compiled by the researcher.

The table shows that the trust in democratic institutions has been declining while political participation has decreased. Overall, institutional trust was comparatively low in 2019, which

helps to promote increases in turnout. But by 2023, there was a huge drop in both trust and participation.

This is an affirmation that lack of confidence in institutions is one of the major factors contributing to political apathy in Kaduna State. Lack of trust in democratic institutions (civic engagement) degrades democratic consolidation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the issue of political apathy in Nigeria with a particular focus to Kaduna State from 2019 – 2023. It examined how insecurity, violence and distrust in the government affected political engagement, particularly voter turnout and engagement. This study was based on two research questions, which were supported by two hypotheses, and secondary data obtained from INEC, Afrobarometer, Yiaga Africa, CDD and other relevant sources were used. The study has revealed that based on the data presented and analysed in Chapter 4, the following is found:

Insecurity and violence played a major role in the political apathy in Kaduna State.

First, in Kaduna State, one of the causes of political apathy is insecurity and violence. The results showed that citizens were deterred from voting because of threats, including banditry, kidnappings, communal violence and electoral violence. This is manifested in reduced voter participation and abysmal electoral withdrawal and youth participation figures from 52.7% in 2019 to 34.2% in 2023. The study thus validates the fact that citizens' participation in democratic processes is directly connected with their sense of security.

Secondly, there was found to be a high negative relationship between government distrust and voter turnout in Kaduna State. The results of the study revealed that from 2019 to 2023, there was a gradual drop in public trust in government institutions and a rise in corrupt practices, poor governance, and lack of accountability. Voters' participation in the elections also fell considerably as their confidence in these electoral processes waned, suggesting that people were becoming more skeptical about the impact of elections on a change for the better. One of the key factors identified as contributing to political apathy and electoral disengagement is institutional distrust.

Overall, the results confirm that lack of political interest in Kaduna State in the period under study was largely due to insecurity, violence and the loss of confidence in the government institutions, all of which affected democratic engagement.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on this finding, this work concludes that insecurity and government distrust were the key factors that affected political apathy in Kaduna State in the period of study (2019-2023). One can safely say that the low voter turnout and high political disengagement seen in the study reflect low level of democratic participation in the state.

The study also finds that insecurity led to fear, which limited citizens' physical and psychological willingness to vote; and that citizens' mistrust of government also undermined the effectiveness and credibility of the electoral process. These factors undermined the political trust and led to an overall phenomenon of citizens retracting their political participation.

Thus, the political apathy in Kaduna State is not an isolated phenomenon, but a byproduct of enduring insecurity issues and growing mistrust of institutions. If these problems continue, the legitimacy and democratic participation in the state may further decline.

5.3 Recommendations

The study findings and conclusions led to the following recommendations:

Strengthening Security to enhance political participation.

Government at the Federal and State levels should improve security architecture, with a particular focus on high risk areas of Kaduna State for elections as insecurity and violence were found to have significant negative impact on political participation. Police and civil defence should have the necessary resources to ensure electoral environments are safe and have been adequately trained and deployed. This will help to quell the fears of citizens and spur increased voter turnout and citizen engagement in democracy.

Restoring public confidence in the government and electoral systems

The lack of trust in the government has a significant impact on voter participation so there is a need for greater transparency, accountability and credibility in governance and electoral administration. Public electoral bodies like Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should create electoral transparency using reliable technologies and open communication. Moreover, government officials should focus on good governance and anti-corruption policies, as well as inclusive policies, to build citizens' trust and mitigate political apathy.

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