

Political Behaviour and Voting Pattern in Nigeria: A Study of 2015 Presidential Election

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Abstract –Political Behaviour determines electoral process and voting pattern in every democratic regime. In Nigeria, the political and socioeconomic settings as well as historical background of the country shaped the behaviour and voting pattern of the electorates in the Presidential elections that took place in the history of the state so far. This paper examined how political behaviour and voting pattern in the recently concluded 2015 Presidential Election determined the outcome of the votes and the winner. The main objective of the paper is to examine how the 2015 Presidential Election differs from the previous Presidential Elections in Nigeria as a result of the influence of political behaviour and voting pattern of the electorates. The methodology adopted for this work is the use of qualitative data where a case study was adopted. The research concludes that, the 2015 Presidential Election is different to some extent with the previous Presidential Elections in Nigeria as a result of change of political behaviour of the electorates and voting pattern from religious affiliation, ethnicity, regionalism, nepotism, to issue-based politics including corruption, insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and many other related issues. The paper recommends that, for a better and more free and fair elections that will produce good leaders to occur, the electorates should be re-oriented to focus their choice of leaders based on performance, accountability, issue based campaign and a totally free electoral umpire that can conduct an election without any favour.

Keywords: Election, Ethnicity, Political Behaviour, Religion, Voting.

INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, many developing countries, and African countries in particular have embarked on democratizing their political system [1]. Despite the importance of elections as instruments of democracy, experimental and independent surveys of voters' behaviour in multiparty elections and new transitional democracies remain scarce [1]. In Nigeria, attempts at democratisation started under the Colonial Administration most especially the 1954 elections and 1959 elections that ushered in political independence in 1960.

Elections in Nigeria are marred with a political behaviour of rigging, the manipulation of religion, ethnicity, regionalism and nepotism as observed by many scholars [2-4]. Voters are voting during elections based on their affinity with leaders that belong to the same religious groups, ethnic cleavages, region and other sentiments. Elections were marred with the culture of rigging, malpractices, intimidation of both voters and opposition, use of violence and political thuggery most especially by the ruling party using the power of incumbency. This at times invited military to overthrow the civilian regimes. This process leads to many Republics in the country emerging and disappearing constantly.

The history of Presidential Elections in Nigeria which took place ten times; twice during the First Republic, Twice during the Second Republic, once in an Aborted Third Republic and five times in the present Fourth Republic is characterized with impunity, religious bias, ethnicity, regionalism, tribalism and rigging. Voting pattern is mostly based on the above qualities instead of issue-based campaign and elections. The political behaviour of voters is that of having their votes casted on those whom they

belong to the same ethnic, religious and regional affiliation even if the other candidate is better and has an outstanding record of better performance.

However, the 2015 Presidential Election seemed to be different from the previous ones in the sense that, political behaviour of the electorates changed which also changed the voting pattern. Campaigns were undertaken based on issues and not the previous culture of manipulation of religion, ethnic group and regions. The aim of this paper is to examine the way and manner in which 2015 Presidential Election differs from the past ones, factors responsible for that and the future of Presidential Election in the country. In doing so, the paper is structured into sub-sections which include framework of analysis, discussion of political behaviour and voting pattern in Nigeria and an analysis of 2015 Presidential Election.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general aim of this paper is to examine the nature of the 2015 Presidential Election and the major factors that made the outcome of the election different from the previous Presidential Elections in the country.

In addition, other objectives of the research are as follows: to analyse the political behaviour of Nigerians in a democratic setting; to explore the voting pattern in various Presidential Elections in the country and to evaluate what makes the 2015 Presidential Election a different one from the previous ones conducted so far.

MATERIALS AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The paper used qualitative method of data collection specifically the case study since it is studying a specific case which is the 2015 Presidential Election. The study selected informants from four categories in Nigeria where the study is carried out. Category A is politician from the two major political parties that contested for Presidential Election in 2015; All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), category B is party stakeholders including some National Executive Members of some selected major political parties. The third category, C consists of staff of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the fourth category D is Focus Group Discussion.

In total, a number of twenty (20) informants were selected for the research. The categories were selected according to their relevance in offering information

for the work as they are directly related to the research. In category A, a serving Senator, serving Member Federal House of Representatives, Governorship contestant, serving Member State House of Assembly and Senatorial contestant were interviewed. The ethical considerations is that, the exact information revealed by the informants cannot be divulged with their names attached to it and their sources of information are reserved as confidential.

In category B, APC National Treasurer, PDP National Publicity Secretary, Social Democratic Party (SDP) National Secretary and Director Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) and National Secretary of Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) were selected as informants. In category C, three INEC staff were selected; the former Director Operations, Director Political Party Monitoring and Director Finance were interviewed. In the FDG category (D), eight (8) people were selected in Unity Fountain in Abuja for discussion.

The data obtained from the field was complemented with the already existing literature in the area of study for analysis using tables and other statistical analysis with simple percentage.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

This work adopted the framework of what a combination of many works called “A Theory of Democracy in Africa”. This theory explains that African states are still experimenting with democracy in a new environment of self rule which has many variances of problems that affects its smooth operation. This view is hold by scholars [5-11].

Bigger African countries were the legacies of arbitrary colonial formation with multicultural diversities. They inherited a fragile state where the means of democratization and the institutions for democratic rule are not readily available and are not having a breeding ground to emerge. The newly emerging rulers could only lean on primordial sentiments such as their ethnic affiliation, religion, regional zone and other related patronage to secure and maintain power. In this regard, despite the beauty of elections as an instruments of democracy, electorates were inculcated the behaviour and culture of voting your own instead of the best [5].

The theory insists that democracy is too infertile in Africa to operate the way its principle is originally designed because African states were battered by colonial rule for many decades and were bequeathed a system that lacks ingredients for the survival of

democracy. There are no genuine political parties, no competitive capitalism, no educated electorates, no political mobilisation and socioeconomic problems such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment are major obstacles against democratisation. In this regard, since democracy was imposed by the West and the African states could not do otherwise, they operate a failed democracy which survives on fragility of the newly emerging states. The broken ruling class resorted to the utilization of ethnicity, religion and regional belongings in order to acquire sustain and consolidate power. In this regard, elections are staged based on primordial sentiments while electorates lack the basics of political culture that will sharpen their determination for choice [6].

In summary, the Nigerian democratic process is that of political behaviour and voting pattern where electorates vote for political leaders on the ground of patrimonial and primordial attachment instead of those candidates that can improve their living condition and develop the country through good governance. The case of 2015 Presidential election is not much different except that the voting pattern of the electorates shifted from the normal culture to a more socialized and issue-based selection instead of religious and ethnic consideration to some extent in some parts of the country.

POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR AND VOTING PATTERN IN NIGERIA

Political behaviour is a view that there is no polity without a belief system inherent in the people. The rising and the falling of a polity is a product of a kind of political beliefs, dispositions, and orientations that run in the psyche of the people and their leaders. On the basis of that, he concludes that, the greatness of any nation is a product of the political culture that is prevalent on it [12].

Political culture is identified as the commonly shared goals and commonly accepted rules. It is that part of the general culture which that includes only the set of political beliefs held by an individual and those beliefs only constitutes part of the entirety of the belief. Political culture is a pattern of shared values, moral norms, beliefs, expectations and attitudes that relate to politics and its social context. It is the collective or shared disposition of the people to political values and common attitudes towards political events. It is the primordial orientation of the citizens of a given political community towards politics and how this affects their acceptance of any

political regime as legitimate. It involves a belief on how government, politics and economic life of a given community are to be carried out. Political culture involves the understanding and the commitment of a people to a shared way of organizing a political society [12].

It is further observed that political culture is broader than public opinion because it is enduring, not unstable and transcends generations. It is the basis of all public interactions in the realm of politics. Political culture is never an agreement but rather the possession of common, communal or collective mutual perception of the rights and obligations, the rights and duties of a government as a state institution and the rules governing citizens' involvement in their own society [12].

However, it is important to note that political culture is never a static adherence to a way of life by the people of a political community. There is the possibility of a change or transformation in political culture of a given society. Different countries of the world historically underwent political transformation of not only the system or structure of government but also the political culture of the society. There also exists the possibility of a country having political sub-cultures which implies that some sections of the society hold their own unique political beliefs and orientations [12].

In the case of Nigerian political culture, nobody can divorce the influence of history by way of looking at the forceful marriage of the present day Nigeria in 1914 during colonial rule. The Nigerian sub-societies were monarch in design and political structure before the coming of colonial rule. Monarchical system inherited was displaced with an alien imposed Western British style of Parliamentary system of government right from the onset of colonialism. The cultural imperative is evident in the fact that colonial domination, geographical location, religious biases, ethnic cleavages which influence the Nigerian political culture in general also input the same effect on the political beliefs and orientations of the in the society [12].

Political participation and democratic culture in Nigeria as a concept is one that is ridden with grievances and fears of isolation hence the struggle for central power by different ethnic groups. This struggle negatively affects electoral activities in the area of malpractices like thuggery, rigging and other political electoral violence, which is replete in party politics in Nigeria. Democratic culture of any country to a large

extent determines their political participation. A culture of democracy must reflect the norms and values that place a premium on the freedom of individuals [13].

The three main propositions on voting behaviour in Nigeria were identified to have included Sociological Approach; party identification model and rational choice. The sociological model emphasise on voting behaviour as a result of impact of social structure suggesting that social group membership influence voting behaviour. This is visible in Nigerian context where belonging to a religious group or ethnic group or certain geographical area determines voters' behaviour in an election. Belonging to a particular social group automatically qualifies a candidate to receive votes of such members of that group. Presidential elections in Nigeria are understood along that line [14].

The party identification approach is a situation where partisanship is highly stable over time. Here, voters are less likely to make distinctions between their vote choice and partisan dispositions. This situation is also applicable within Nigerian context where some sections of the population became attached to a given political party irrespective of the candidate as a result of their partisan position towards that particular party [14].

The rational choice approach lays much emphasis on voters' choice of their candidates in an election based on issues and policy design of the political parties. The choice here is rational. This situation, however, is not obtainable in Nigerian system except to a smaller extent and even this one; is found among elites who chose their party or candidates due to the economic or political benefits they will gain from voting such candidates. But, common voter in Nigerian democracy has no rationality in choice as they tend to vote according to sentiments.

The role played by ethnicity and religion in democratisation process in Nigeria is harmful to the system. He argued that, the tremendous effects of ethnic and religious crises faced by Nigeria in the current phase of democratisation are the outcome of the elite's manipulation of ethnic and religious identity. This has been associated with the problems of historical configuration of the country, the nature of political class and the manner in which they struggle. This has lead to an exclusive nature of the politics of ethnic and religious identity among different groups in the country. This has affected the political behaviour of the electorates to align themselves with ethnic and

religious political parties. This in return affects voting pattern during any elections whether Presidential or Gubernatorial [15].

General elections are generally portrayed with dominance of ethno-religious sentiments as determinants of voting behaviour and political participation across the country. From the presidential through gubernatorial, national and state assemblies' elections, aspirants were largely chosen on the basis of ethno-regional identities. In the presidential election, the president and vice president elect received almost 90 per cent of their votes on the basis of ethno-regional identity. Similarly, the incumbent president received en masse votes from his ethno-regional zones. This has been the culture in Nigerian political theatrical arena where votes are allotted according to ethnic allegiance and religious sentiments by each particular section or group in the country where their candidate emerge irrespective of whether he will win through their votes or he will loss [16].

Political behaviour in Nigeria is full of incinerating and abusive language by both the contestants and the electorates. He cited former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2007 elections where he said elections is a war and you must win by all means possible. This further interpreted revealed that, in order for the incumbent to win elections, they did not rely on voters' power but through the use of coercive and subjugative method such as political thuggery, rigging and even political assassination. The electorates are inculcated with such attitude too and it formed a kind of political behaviour among the voters during an election process. Thus, the voting pattern is such in a way that voters are sometimes coerced to vote for a particular candidate or even abandon voting because it will not even count [5].

Democracy and elections in Nigeria is affected by poor institutionalisation of democratic values and culture. According to them, inter-ethnic competition or tribalism is a great weakness which leads to instability in Nigeria's democracy. In addition, constitutional democracy became so fragile in Nigerian state because it was imported. For instance, the Second Republic came to an end as a result of rioting in the Southwest and Southeast that followed the Northern candidate was announced as victorious in the 1984 Presidential election. The military took over immediately. This was as a result of political behaviour and voting culture of the electorates on the perception that only a candidate that emerges from

their ethnic or regional or even religious groups can win or rule [17].

It is also added that party affiliation does not pay much in Nigerian political behaviour except with unswerving loyalty based on sentimental attachment. Today, they conclude: "Tribalism or ethnicity or regionalism or statism is a revered political platform for aspiring politicians and for those in various offices in the country. This is a debilitating disease. In essence, the authors are denoting that Nigerian political system is not fully democratized since political behaviour of ethnic politics is inculcated as rightly studied by Nnoli (2004) before where he cited Nigerian democracy as "Ethnic Politics" [18].

Political behaviour and voting pattern in Nigeria is affected by an amalgam of rival ethnic groups that were set against each other in a fierce rivalry in a struggle for power and competition for control of scarce resources and this has been visible in the political processes. This sometimes even threatens the corporate existence of the country. This scenario has been rooted since colonial era and any political arrangement during colonial administration that is convincing failed. It takes the intervention of military to avoid the full eruption of ethno-religious conflict into national war. But, with the resurgence of democracy in 1999 exploded the politics of ethno-religion where voting pattern is anchored around ethnic and religion choice of candidate [3].

The inherent colonial legacies of merging multi-ethnic and multi-religious groups to form the present day Nigeria give the political elites the chance of usurpation of ethnic and religious variables in Nigeria's democracy towards their quest for power and this has made the political behaviour and voting pattern of the electorates to be divisive and sentimental towards the elite's manipulation of ethnicity and religion [19].

However, it is observed that most African countries suffered from the problem of ethnic conflict and this has prompted for a search of alternative towards ethnic conflict management. In the case of Nigeria, it has been minimised in his view as a result of introduction of some measures including federalism, geo-political zoning, power rotation, principle of political party formation and quota system. This succeeded in reducing the intensity of ethnic tension in Nigeria and made democratic governance from 1999 a little less ethnic and religious than the previous Republics [20].

In another approach, it is believed that the colonial amalgamation of various cultures that formed the entity called Nigeria today should not be seen as a curse in our political process and democratisation but rather a blessing in disguise. He agreed that, ethnicity and diverse cultures in Nigerian state impede good governance and genuine democratisation for many decades. Thus, he concludes that since our diversity does not add value in political development, it is high time we look inward and utilize the multicultural differences in developing our political and economic system. We should look at the diversities as a blessing that will make the country unique and forge ahead instead of lamentations unnecessarily [21].

Another scholar in his study of political culture and voting behaviour of Nigerian voters examined that ethnic militias turned into a constituted authority and an unofficial threat to the electoral process and democratic development in the country. He observed that, as a result of the entrenchment of the politics of ethnicity and regionalism, the three main ethnic groups and regions Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba dominating North, West and East formed a culture of establishing ethnic militias who became violent and intimidating during elections prompting for candidates of their ethnic belonging. Such militias include OPC in the West, APC in the North and Bakassi boys in the East. Their main role is to fight for their ethnic candidates during election. Thus, voting pattern is forcefully imposed regionally by these thugs [22].

Ethnicity has the negative role in Nigerian politics where political behaviour and voting pattern is shaped according to such variable. He appreciated the role of military in their attempt to eliminate ethnic party base that dominated the First and Second Republic politics and democratisation. Constitutionally, a law was introduced in 1979 which states that for a candidate to emerge a winner in any Presidential election in Nigeria, he must obtained at least 25 % of the total votes in each of the states of the federation. And in 1999, before the return to civilian regime in the Fourth Republic, a law was enshrined in the Constitution which states that for a political party to be registered by the electoral body, it must have a branch office in each of the 36 states of the federation and Abuja. This perhaps, might explain later how this influence the significant change recorded in the 2015 Presidential elections [23].

The above same view was shared by another scholar on the role of colonial administration in the creation of a Nigeria with multicultural entities that

affect political behaviour and democratic rule in the country for many decades [24].

In the same view, it is stress that ethnicity in Nigeria does not only affect the political behaviour and voting pattern in Nigerian democracy but it also lead to the emergence of ethnic groups insurgents as witnessed recently. They observed that over the last decades, the activities of ethnic insurgents have permeated the Nigerian state ranging from the activities of Niger Delta militants to that of OPC in Yoruba land and Boko Haram in the North. They relate such ethnic insurgency to some factors like economic, political and cultural marginalization, widening social inequalities, lack of basic infrastructure and exclusion. They conclude that ethnicity in Nigeria has been allowed to take a new dimension from electoral politics to national threat and insecurity [25].

Ethnicity has become a part of Nigeria's political history owing to the role it is playing in Nigerian political development from pre-independence to date. He further argued that the virus of ethnicity is one of the major causes of political turmoil, social crisis, injustice, inequality and religio-political instability in Nigeria. Ethnicity is seen as the major obstacle against political-economic development of Nigeria. Thus, ethnicity is not only a debilitating factor in democratic development in Nigeria but in all ramifications in terms of national development [26].

One other main issue that determines political behaviour and affects voting pattern in Nigeria is religion. Nigeria is mainly divided among Muslim/Christian dichotomy. For instance, it is observed that since Nigeria's political independence in 1960, ethno-religious factor determines largely who becomes what in Nigerian politics.²⁸ Nigerians are more loyal to religion than state. This according to him can be observed from the trend of what he termed "Religiosity of politics" where religious affinity determines the outcome of election in a democratic dispensation. This affects voting behaviour of the electorates and one can never imagine doing away with the influence of religion in Nigerian election [27].

Similar to the above, it is emphasises that Nigeria is one of the most populous Muslims countries in the world where religion is a major factor in politics. In his assertion, Islam has been the major determinant of politics in the country for many decades as the candidates' religion is first considered during voting before anything else and since the Muslims are the

majority, a Muslim candidate always likely emerged.⁴ There is the view that religion plays a vital role in shaping political behaviour and voting culture of the electorates in Nigeria. It is assumed that both Islam and Christianity are playing an influential role in voting behaviour of Nigerian electorates in any election [28].

Apart from ethnicity and religion, other issues that determine political behaviour and voting pattern of electorates in Nigeria include rigging of elections, Prebendelism, manipulation and political violence. Nigerian democracy is identified as prebendel where the leaders who control power used every means possible to maintain power at all cost while those outside the corridors of power are using every available means possible to capture power all for personal interest.⁶ This include massive rigging of elections, intimidation and harassment of voters and opposition, manipulation of electoral process, vote buying, use of political thugs, political assassination, corrupt practices etc. this has been the norm for many decades to the extent that voters either vote towards that process or abscond away from the election process there by rendering democracy absurd with electorates not determining who will lead.

One issue worthy of discussion in political behaviour and voting pattern of Nigerian electorates is the politics of Godfatherism. Godfatherism is the major factor in determining who will get the platform of contest among political parties and to a larger extent, the emergence of the winner in the general election. Some powerful cabals constituted themselves into a gangster that influence who should be elected. They sponsor these godsons and manipulate the electoral process to ensure he emerges by hook or crook means [29].

In some other time, politics of money influence voters' behaviour to the extent that politics of give and take is much influential in the emergence of winners in any election in Nigeria. Politicians indulge in the habit of giving out money during campaign and elections in order to secure the votes of the electorates and this culture has been normalized to the extent that, no matter how good a candidate is, if he could not give out money he may likely lost out in the elections.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS: 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

It has been observed that, the 2015 elections are different to some extent as a result of socialization through media and social media which influenced

voters' behaviour. Socialization changed voters' orientation which leads to a shift in political, economic and social contexts. This is as a result of complexities that characterize the political socialisation process and its outcome. Indeed, political socialisation has impacted positively on the outcome of 2015 elections [2].

In order to understand how different the outcome of 2015 Presidential elections is, it is pertinent to briefly discuss the previous elections most especially to review the voting pattern of the electorates in the choice of their Presidential candidates. It is important to note that the first elections that were held under Colonial Administration took place only in the South in 1922 where two political parties participated; the Nigerian National Democratic Party and National Youth Movement (NYM) in 1934. All the contestants too were from the South excluding the Northern Region then. This was as a result of the low level of education, nationalist activities and non existence of political parties in the North.

The foundation for the emergence of ethnic political parties started during colonialism where in 1944 Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe established an Eastern political party National Council for Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC). This triggered the emergence of ethnic based political parties Action Group (AG) in the West in 1951, Northern People's Congress (NPC) in 1951, Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) in 1952, and United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) in 1948. These political parties were the major actors that contested for national power in 1959 when political independence was given. It should be note that, they are regionally based, ethnically oriented and religiously inclined. Thus, the root of political behaviour and voting pattern was entrenched right from colonial era [30].

A glance at the outcome of the 1959 Presidential election shows clearly the role of ethnic, regional and religious factors in the result or the voting pattern. The table below shows the result of 1959 Federal Parliamentary Elections in Nigeria.

The table indicates clearly a case of voting pattern across region and ethnic groups if we take the analysis ineptly. For instance, the NCNC is headed by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who is regarded as the leader of the East and the Southern Cameroon. The party in the East scored the majority of the votes (64.6 %) in the Parliamentary elections as against the NPC and Ag. The AG too recorded some success there because there were many Yoruba inhabitants in the East then

who aligned themselves with their region; the West where it was the stronghold of AG. The NPC was totally absent in the East which was seen as a party belonging to Northern Hausa/ Fulani Muslims.

Table 1. Showing the Result of 1959 Federal Parliamentary Elections in Nigeria

Region	Political Party	Total votes	Percentage	No. of Seats Total
East	NCNC-NEPU	1,246,984	64.6	58
	AG	445,114	23.1	14
	NDC	237,626	12.3	1
West	AG	933,680	49.5	33
	NCNC-NEPU	758,462	40.2	21
	NPC	32960	1.7	-
	Small Parties	162,107	8.6	7
North	NPC	1,994,045	61.2	134
	AG	559,875	17.2	25
	NCNC-NEPU	525,575	16.5	8
	Small Parties	179,022	5.5	7
Lagos	NCNC-NEPU	61,608	55.9	2
	AG	48,137	43.8	1
	NPC	189	0.2	-
	Small Parties	138	0.1	-

Source: Ojo, 2010 [31]

In the West, AG won the majority of the seats (33 seats) because it was led by Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Samuel Akintola who were seen as Western leaders. The NCNC coalition with NEPU earned a significant result (21 seats) because the Eastern Igbos were many then living in the West and decided to vote for their party of ethnic group which was NCNC. In the North, it was clear that the NPC controlled by the duo of Northern leaders Sir Ahmadu Bello and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa dominated the result with more than 61 % of the total votes and about 135 seats as a result of ethnic voting. Although NCNC entered into a coalition with NEPU, a Northern political party with a radically different ideology from that of NPC as headed by Malam Aminu Kano, they could not record any significant result as they got only 8 seats.

The impact of such ethnic voting was that, no party claims a majority seats to form a government. A coalition must be formed. Later, NPC entered into a coalition with NCNC to form a national government

with the NCNC leader; Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe becoming the President while Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa the Prime Minister. The same trend continues in the Second Republic. The above ethnic and regional sentiments as well as religious attachment in politics were seen as the major factors that led to the demise of the First Republic. And it was the same problem that re-occurred during the Second Republic as we shall see in the below in the Presidential elections across the states.

Just like the 1959 Federal Parliamentary Elections, the 1979 elections also followed the same pattern. Even the political parties were formed base on ethnic background. In the North, NPN was formed which was seen as the replica of NPC. PRP was formed by Malam Aminu Kano also exact replica of NEPU. UPN was formed by Obafemi Awolowo which replaced AG. NPP was established by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe which replaced NCNC. Waziri Ibrahim formed a party also Northern GNPP. The political parties were seen as the old wine in a new bottle.

The campaign and political activities were staged along ethnic and religious lines from the inception. All efforts by military to curb ethnic and religious politics in the transition process proved abortive. The elections took place amidst all these issues and the result revealed how ethnicity and religion proved a decisive factor in the voting pattern as shown below.

Table 2. Showing the Result of 1979 Presidential Election in Nigeria across the States

State	Total Votes Cast	GNPP	UPN	NPN	PRP	NPP
Anambra	1,209, 038	1.6%	0.75%	13.50%	1.20%	82.58%
Bauchi	998,683	15.44 %	3.00 %	62.48 %	14.34 %	4.72 %
Bendel	669, 511	1.23 %	53.23 %	36.19 %	0.73 %	8.60 %
Benue	538, 879	7.89 %	2.57 %	76.39 %	1.35 %	11.71 %
Borno	710, 968	54.04 %	3.35 %	34.71 %	6.52 %	1.35 %
Cross River	661, 103	15.14 %	11.76 %	64.40 %	1.01 %	7.66 %
Gongola	639, 138	34.09 %	21.67 %	35.52 %	4.34 %	4.35 %
Imo	1, 153,355	3.06 %	0.64 %	8.80 %	0.89 %	86.67 %
Kaduna	1, 382,712	13.80 %	6.68 %	43.12 %	31.66 %	4.72 %
Kano	1, 220,763	1.54 %	1.23 %	19.94 %	76.41 %	0.91 %
Kwara	354, 605	5.71 %	39.48 %	53.62 %	0.67 %	9.57 %
Lagos	828, 414	0.48 %	82.30 %	7.18 %	0.47 %	9.57 %
Niger	383,347	16.50 %	3.69 %	74.88 %	3.99 %	1.11 %
Ogun	744, 668	0.53 %	92.11 %	6.23 %	0.31 %	0.32 %
Ondo	1,369, 547	0.26 %	94.51 %	4.19 %	0.18 %	0.86 %
Oyo	1, 396,547	0.57 %	85.78 %	12.75 %	0.32 %	0.55 %
Plateau	548, 405	6.82 %	5.29 %	34.73 %	3.98 %	49.17 %
Rivers	687, 951	2.18 %	10.33 %	72.65 %	0.46 %	14. 35%
Sokoto	1,348, 697	26.61 %	2.52 %	66.58 %	3.33 %	0.92 %
Total	16,846633	10.02%	29.23 %	33.82 %	10.32 %	16.7 %
		1,686,489	4,916,651	5, 688, 85	1,732,113	2, 822523

Source: Richard 1979 [6]

The table 2 shows that the outcome of the Presidential Election in 1979 shows that ethnicity and religion determined the result of the election. States were created by various successive regimes created states in order to alleviate minority fears of domination. The states are geographically distributed this way.

The North has Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gongola, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Niger, Plateau and Sokoto making ten of them. In the West, the states are; Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Oyo while in the East are; Anambra, Bendel, Cross River, Imo and Rivers. The results if analysed can clearly reveal that the pattern of voting behaviour is ethnic and religious. The NPN is the majority Northern party which fielded Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari and the other Northern party is PRP which placed Malam Aminu Kano as their Presidential candidate. There was another minority party in the North GNPP by Waziri Ibrahim from Borno who contested for Presidency under the platform of the party. The UPN in the West allowed Obafemi Awolowo to contest for President while the NPP' contestant was Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The analysis of the result showed that NPN got almost all its votes from the North most especially core North where Hausa/ Fulani Muslims are the majority. This in comparison with what NPN obtained in Western and Southern states is the lion share that determined the success of NPN in that election. In the West, NPN got a total percentage of 7.18 % in Lagos, 6.23 % in Ogun, 4.19 % in Ondo and 12.75 % in Oyo. In the East, NPN also recorded abysmal performance. In the West, UPN dominated the result because Awolowo was the candidate and is a Yoruba from the West; 82.30 % in Lagos, 92.11 % in Ogun, 94.51 % in Ondo and 85.78 % in Oyo. In the North and the East, UPN recorded low scores like 3. 00 % in Bauchi, Kano 1.54 %, 0.75 % in Anambra and 0.64 % in Imo. This clearly displayed ethnicity in the voting pattern.

The same scenario of ethnic voting can be seen if that of the East is analyse where Nnamdi Azikiwe is the candidate from the region under the platform of NPP. In Anambra NPP scored 82.58 %, 86.67 % in Imo, Rivers 14.35 %, Bendel 8.66 % and Cross River 7.66 %. Perhaps, NPP recorded low result in Bendel, Cross River and Rivers because they were not core Igbo states and they entered into alliance with the North NPN. In the other part of the country apart from East, NPP recorded a low performance.

Therefore, the result became controversial because the 1979 Constitution stated that for a

candidate to emerge a winner in the Presidential election, he must get 25 % in at least 2/3 of the states of the Federation in addition to the majority of the votes. No political party was able to secure that and a court interpretation was sought which finally allowed NPN's candidate Alhaji Shehu Usman Aliyu Shagari to emerge the winner. This clearly disclosed that the Nigerian political behaviour and voting pattern is affected by ethnic affiliation and religious lineage.

In the Aborted Third Republic, the Presidential elections was not anything different from the previous elections except that apart from ethnic factor, religious factor played a more deeper role this time around and the election was adjudged the most free and fair in the history of Nigeria then before the recently concluded 2015 elections. The military in its effort to curb ethnic and religious influence in the transition towards democratic rule, established only two political parties NRC to the right and SDP to the left. The parties were not genuinely political and democratic in the sense that it was the military that formed them and many contestants were banned. The results showed that two Muslims contested in both parties MKO Moshood Abiola in SDP from the West and Bashir Tofa in NRC from the North. Since both the candidates were Muslims, religious factor played a vital role in the election. Abiola during the campaign process displayed extreme attachment and sentiment towards Islam and Islamic values which secured him the support of many Northerners who saw every Muslim from any part of the country as their own. The result below shows how the election took place across the states.

From the table 3, one can see directly the influence of ethnicity and religion in the outcome of the election. In the West or Yoruba land where Abiola hailed from, he won all the five states with a wide margin; 85.54 % in Lagos, 84.42 % in Ondo, 83.52 % in Oyo, Ogun 83.52 % and Osun 87.78 %. This shows that the Yoruba people voted heavily for their candidate who is also a Yoruba man. But, unlike the previous Presidential elections, Abiola, a Yoruba from the West also won many states in the North including Kano 52.27 % where surprisingly the other contestant Tofa hailed from, Kaduna 52.20 %, Plateau 61.68 %, Jigawa 60.72 %, Benue 56.99 %, Borno 54.40 %, Kwara 78.23 % (it is a Northern but Yoruba state which explains the higher margin in the win), Taraba 61.42 % and Yobe 63.59 %.

Table 3. Showing the Presidential Election Result of 1992 in Nigeria

State	Zone	SDP (Abiola)	NRC (Tofa)	Total
Lagos	South West	883,965 (85.54 %)	149,432 (14.46 %)	1,033,397
Kano	North West	169,519 (52.27 %)	154,809 (47.73 %)	324,328
Sokoto	North West	97,726 (20.79 %)	372,250 (79.21 %)	469,976
Bauchi	North East	339,339 (39.27 %)	524,836 (60.73 %)	864,175
Rivers	South South	370,678 (36.64 %)	640,973 (63.36 %)	1,011,651
Kaduna	North West	389,713 (52.20 %)	356,880 (47.80 %)	746,593
Ondo	South West	883,024 (84.42 %)	162,994 (15.58 %)	1,046,018
Katsina	North West	171,162 (38.70 %)	271,077 (61.30 %)	442,239
Oyo	South West	536,014 (83.52 %)	105,785 (16.48 %)	641,799
Plateau	North Central	417,565 (61.68 %)	259,394 (38.32 %)	676,959
Enugu	South East	263,101 (50.88 %)	254,050 (49.12 %)	517,151
Jigawa	North West	138,557 (60.72 %)	89,636 (39.28 %)	228,193
Benue	North Central	246,830 (56.99 %)	186,302 (43.01 %)	433,132
Anambra	South East	212,024 (57.76 %)	155,029 (42.24 %)	367,053
Borno	North East	153,490 (54.40 %)	128,684 (45.60 %)	282,174
Delta	South South	327,277(69.15 %)	146,001(30.85 %)	473,278
Imo	South East	159,350 (44.86 %)	195,836 (55.14 %)	355,186
Niger	North Central	136,350(38.11 %)	221,437 (61.89 %)	357,787
Akwabom	South South	214,782 (57.41 %)	159,342(42.59 %)	374,124
Ogun	South West	365,266 (83.52 %)	72,068 (16.48 %)	437,334
Abia	South East	105,273 (41.04 %)	151,227 (58.95 %)	256,500
Osun	South West	425,725 (87.78 %)	59,246 (12.22 %)	484,971
Edo	South South	205,407 (66.48 %)	103,572 (33.52 %)	308,979
Adama wa	North East	140,875 (45.72 %)	167,239 (54.28 %)	308,114
Kogi	North Central	222,700 (45.59 %)	265,732 (54.41 %)	488,432
Kebbi	North West	70,219 (32.66 %)	144,808 (67.34 %)	215,027
Cross River	South South	153,452 (44.77 %)	342,755(55.23 %)	496,207
Kwara	North Central	288,270 (78.23%)	80,219 (21.77 %)	368,489
Taraba	North East	101,887(61.42 %)	64,001(38.58 %)	165,888
Yobe	North East	111,88 (63.59 %)	64,061 (36.41 %)	175,948
FCT	Capital	19,968 (52.16 %)	18,313 (47.84 %)	38,281
Total		8,357,246 (58.71 %)	5,878,685 (41.29 %)	14,235,931

Source: National Electoral Commission 1993[32]

It is not surprising that Abiola won this way in the North because of the perception of him being a strict Muslim with much adherence to Islamic practices than Bashir Tofa who is from the North. If Abiola is a Christian, definitely he will not win a single state in the North. In addition, most of the Northern elite who are power brokers sided with Abiola who rigged on his behalf and even engaged in the act of vote buying and manipulation of religion.

In the Fourth Republic, five elections took place. But, this paper will give much emphasis and detail only to the 2015 Presidential election. The first one in 1999 between Obasanjo of PDP and Olufalae of AD all Yorubas and also Christians. The Northern elite supported Obasanjo and made him President in order to appease the Yoruba ethnic group of the wound of annulment of June 12 1992 election. Obasanjo was the anointed candidate and he won with majority of the votes albeit, a low turnover of voters in the North and East. The West voted for Olufalae instead of Obasanjo but Obasanjo enjoying the support of power brokers from the North and the East emerged victorious. In 2003, Obasanjo contested under the platform of PDP with the power of incumbency and Muhammadu Buhari of APP where Obasanjo won in a landslide victory amidst outcries of massive rigging and electoral malpractice.

Obasanjo attempted a third term tenure against the legal provision of the Constitution but it was resisted in the build up to 2007 Presidential elections. As a result, he anointed sick incapacitated Yaradua to contest in which he eventually won against Muhammadu Buhari's ANPP in a highly controversial election full of rigging and malpractices. One vital issue that one should consider in the Presidential elections in the Fourth Republic in Nigeria is the fact that, the elite from all sections of the country united and were rigging the outcome of the elections as against the will of the electorate. But, still, there is escalation of the use of politics of ethnicity and religion even more pronounced than before.

Yaradua died while on the seat of the Presidency in 2010 where his Deputy Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan emerged President after a Constitutional crisis that led to an interpretation which allowed him to become an executive President. President Jonathan contested for Presidency in 2011. It was opposed vehemently in the North on the ground that the PDP constitution; the ruling party from 1999 to date then, states that power rotation should take place for two term of four years tenure between the North and the

South; that the North tenure started by Yaradua must be completed by a Northerner. However, Jonathan utilizing the power of incumbency defied all party arrangements and contested against Muhammadu Buhari's CPC and won in an election perceived to have been massively rigged and which led to post election violence in Northern states.

In the build up to 2015 Presidential elections, many factors should be considered which affect voting behaviour of the electorates. The Jonathan government became the most corrupt in the history of the country. Insecurity worsened and other socioeconomic conditions became more terrible than ever before. Many voters from both South and North perceived the manipulation of religion and ethnicity as the tool that lead to bad governance and the poor being the most affected. Poverty level increased with unemployment reaching an unbearable level in addition to other hardship. Educational system was almost grounded.

The electoral body, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) became determined to curb rigging of elections result and other electoral irregularities introduced electronic card reader which must be used during the election to screen the voters before they are eligible to vote. The rationale behind this according to INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega was to avoid inflation of result and rigging. This really played a vital role also in determining the outcome of the result. It was believed that previous elections of 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 had their outcome rigged and inflated by the incumbents. This time around it was minimised.

In addition, the build up to 2015 Presidential election was dominated by issue-based campaign instead of the usual tradition of manipulation of ethnicity and religion; although it was heavily used still, issues such as corruption, insecurity, poverty, unemployment, education etc dominated the campaign slogan most especially by the coalition of opposition which formed All Progressive Congress (APC). Initially, the opposition realized that, they will never defeat the incumbent PDP until they form a coalition. Such an attempt was made in 2011 but it died at the late hours. The most powerful opposition Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) headed by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu from the West or Yoruba land, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) by Muhammadu Buhari, All Nigerian People Party (ANPP), All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) from the Igbo East, and a faction of disgruntled PDP

members called new PDP headed by Alhaji Atiku Abubakar the former Vice President under President Obasanjo and five sitting PDP Governors of Kano, Sokoto, Kwara, Rivers and an APGA Governor in Imo all joined the newly formed APC.

Thus, the opposition became more stronger than even the ruling party as it took over the control of the leadership of the House of Representatives as the Speaker Aminu Waziri Tambawul defected to APC from the ruling PDP. The electorates from all parts of the country became more socialized and determine to vote based on credibility of the candidate rather than the ethnic and religious sentiments. The ruling party, PDP which used to carry all along became a regional and ethnic party dominated by Ijaw and Igbo the President Jonathan's kinsmen. Such seclusion made even top members of the party to work against the party and committed anti-party activities. This further weakened the party and strengthened opposition.

While the opposition party was busy campaigning on burning national issues, the ruling PDP resorted to blackmail and blackpaint of the opposition contestant Muhammadu Buhari as Islamic extremist, as a Northern Hausa/Fulani Muslims oligarch agenda of controlling Nigeria by all means. President kept on manipulating Christians and Christianity going from one church to another campaigning and organizing dinners with eminent pastors while courting minority Northern Christians to support him. The campaign became full of tension that the opposition contestant was tagged ill with terminal disease, he has no minimum certificate requirement, is old and tired and all sorts of blackmail but he kept on gathering large crowd and followers in return. This was as a result of the socioeconomic hardship that all Nigerians from each geopolitical zone suffered alike which changed their perception that a credible candidate is what the country need and an ethnic or religious chauvinist could not solve these problems.

The Presidential election was fixed on 23 March 2015 but when the ruling PDP sensed inevitable defeat shifted the election to 14 April under the pretext of insecurity of Boko Haram in Northeast. It was alleged that the shift in three weeks led to dollar rain as the ruling PDP was estimated to have spent more than N 2 trillion in three weeks. However, this did not save PDP from the impending failure as the result shows below.

Table 4. Showing result of 2015 Presidential Election between APC and PDP only

State	APC	PDP	Total	Winner
Abia	13,394(3.51 %)	368, 303(96.49 %)	381, 697	PDP
Adamawa	374, 701(59.82 %)	251, 664(40.18 %)	626, 365	APC
Akwalbom	58, 411 (5.77 %)	953, 304 (94.23 %)	1, 011, 715	PDP
Anambra	17, 926 (2.64 %)	660, 762 (97.36 %)	678, 688	PDP
Bauchi	931, 598 (91.54 %)	86, 085 (8.46 %)	1, 017, 683	APC
Bayelsa	5, 194 (1.42 %)	361, 209 (98.58 %)	366, 403	PDP
Benue	373, 961 (55.18 %)	303, 737 (44.82 %)	677, 698	APC
Borno	473, 543 (94.86 %)	25, 640 (5.14 %)	499, 183	APC
Cross River	28, 368 (6.40 %)	414, 863 (93.60 %)	443, 231	PDP
Delta	48, 910 (3.88 %)	1, 211, 405 (96.12 %)	1, 260, 315	PDP
Ebonyi	19, 518 (5.69 %)	323, 653 (94.31 %)	343, 171	PDP
Edo	208, 469 (42.09 %)	286, 869 (57.91 %)	495, 338	PDP
Ekiti	120, 331 (40.54 %)	176, 466 (59.46 %)	296, 797	PDP
Enugu	14, 157 (2.50 %)	553, 003 (97.50 %)	567, 160	PDP
Gombe	361, 245 (78.85 %)	96, 873 (21.15 %)	458, 118	APC
Imo	133, 253 (19.24 %)	559, 185 (80.76 %)	692, 438	PDP
Jigawa	885, 988 (86.11%)	142, 904 (13.89 %)	1, 028, 892	APC
Kaduna	1, 127, 760(69.97 %)	484, 085 (30.03 %)	1, 611, 845	APC
Kano	1, 903, 999 (89.82 %)	215, 779 (10.18 %)	2, 119, 778	APC
Katsina	1, 345, 441 (93.15 %)	98, 937 (6.85 %)	1, 444, 378	APC
Kebbi	567, 883 (84.90 %)	100, 972 (15.10 %)	668, 855	APC
Kogi	264, 851 (63.84 %)	149, 987 (36.16 %)	414, 838	APC
Kwara	302, 146 (69.50 %)	132, 602 (30.50 %)	434, 748	APC
Lagos	792, 460 (55.62 %)	632, 327 (44.38 %)	1, 424, 787	APC
Nassarawa	236, 838 (46.41 %)	273, 460 (53.59 %)	510, 298	PDP
Niger	657, 678 (81.51 %)	149, 222 (18.49 %)	806, 900	APC
Ogun	308, 290 (59.72 %)	207, 950 (40.28 %)	516, 240	APC
Ondo	299, 889 (54.40 %)	251, 368 (45.60 %)	551, 257	APC
Osun	383, 603 (60.55 %)	249, 929 (39.45 %)	633, 532	APC
Oyo	528, 620 (63.54 %)	303, 376 (36.46 %)	831, 996	APC
Plateau	429, 140 (43.85 %)	549, 615 (56.15 %)	978, 755	PDP
Rivers	69, 238 (4.45 %)	1, 487, 075 (95.55 %)	1, 556, 313	PDP
Sokoto	671, 926 (81.53 %)	152, 199 (18.47 %)	824, 125	APC
Taraba	261, 326 (45.68 %)	310, 800 (54.32 %)	572, 126	PDP
Yobe	446, 265 (94.60 %)	25, 526 (5.40 %)	471, 791	APC
Zamfara	612, 202 (80.87 %)	144, 833 (19.13 %)	757, 035	APC
FCT	146, 399 (48.22 %)	157, 195 (51.78 %)	303, 594	PDP
Total	15,424,921(54.55 %)	12,853,162(45.45 %)	28,278,083	

Source: INEC 2015 (Total and percentage computation by the authors)[33]

It should be noted that not only APC and PDP that contested for 2015 elections. The implication is the total number of political parties recorded insignificant result that will influence the original outcome.

The result above so far shows that, although still ethnic and religious sentiments played a great role in determining the voting behaviour, it was less influential than the previous Presidential elections in the history of the country. APC, the party represented by Muhammadu Buhari from the North swept away almost all the Northern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara. Still, in the North, states that have significant number of

Christians voted for PDP candidate who is a Christian against the Northern candidate of APC including Nassarawa, Taraba and Plateau.

The change trend in the voting pattern shows that Western states that never voted for a Northern candidate in the history of Nigeria voted for APC this time around since APC won in Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ogun and Ondo states while the party lost in Ekiti. However, the Eastern states of especially Niger-Delta and Igbo states voted for President Jonathan but the rate of rigging was minimised especially in Imo and Edo states controlled by APC states as compared to the results of 2011 elections.

CONCLUSION

It should be noted that, the 2015 Presidential election is a landmark achievement as it was the first time that the sitting incumbent President was unseated by opposition party and the voting pattern changed where issues based campaign garnered momentum ahead of ethno-religious politics. Also, the electorates voted as a result of the intense pressure of insecurity, poverty, unemployment, corruption and other socioeconomic issues ahead of their ethnic and religious leaders. Even some Pastors preached in support of the opposition candidate even though a Muslim and a Northerner. The outcome of the election presents a new era in the political history of Nigeria and beyond. There was no much change in the ethnic and religious influence of the political terrain except that the voting pattern changed against the usual tradition showing desirability for a more credible candidate than other sentimental factors.

The Theory of Democracy in Africa explains the findings of this research work in the sense that, it has espoused classically the manner in which African politics is played based on utilization of ethnicity and religion to harbor favour for the contestants but because of long practice the tradition has been broken in the 2015 General Elections and other factors such as the coalition of diversity and the eschewing of ethnic/religion and regional sentiments towards politics of issues and ideology.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that, the electronic voting system introduced through card reader should be consolidated to avoid rigging. It was observed as reported by many newspapers (Sahara Reporters, News rescue, Premium Times, Leadership and Daily

Trust) that in some areas most especially Niger-Delta card readers were discarded and this offered an opportunity for alleged massive rigging of the election and also the collation of the result was manipulated in some areas since it was done manually. Let the election and the collation to the final stage be done computerized using the electronic media. This will curb rigging seriously.

The outcome of the 2015 Presidential created a special sense of belonging and political socialisation never witnessed before in the history of the country. Therefore, such should be maintained by the government since it was the beneficiary. Transparency and accountability must be maintained and information dissemination which will allow the electorates to measure the performance of the political office holders in order to determine whom to vote in the next election.

Any political party that fails to maintain a national outlook in terms of membership should be scrapped and only a national party should be allowed to exist and contest in national elections which are able to have a membership across all segments of the society in terms of geography, ethnic groups and religious affiliations.

Opposition political parties must be strong and allowed to flourish in their legal political activities that are within the boundary of the Constitution in order to serve as a watchdog in the process. Also, Civil Society Organisations should intensify their activities of political socialisation and political awareness which will improve the political behaviour and voting pattern of the general public. This will help a long way in the consolidation of democracy and democratic governance in Nigeria and Africa in general.

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