

(Research/Review)

Issues And Challenges Of Ethnicity And Election Outcomes In Nigeria, As Well As The Strategies Model Used By The Apc To Influence The 2015 Presidential Election.

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Abstract. This study uses a qualitative methodology and secondary source data to investigate election cheating and its impact on Nigeria's democratic consolidation. It will be examined using historical and content analysis. examination. Nigerian democracy's progress has been severely hampered by election tampering. According to the report, e-election holds enormous promise and might be the solution to voter fraud in Nigeria's electoral system provided it is properly deployed and funded. It starts by looking at the constitutional, legal, and theoretical underpinnings of electronic voting. Second, it examines the real-world obstacles to the adoption and deployment of an electronic voting system in Nigeria by learning from other countries. Nigeria's elections have fallen short of expectations thus far because of a variety of electoral manipulations that have prevented the nation from holding legitimate, free, and fair elections within her political system. In addition to undermining Nigeria's democratic consolidation, election cheating has breached the fundamental human right (right to lives) of a large number of Nigerians. This essay offers some crucial suggestions that could solve the issues of election tampering and explain how those actions can support the need for a democratic atmosphere, which is a need for free and fair elections.

Keywords: E-voting, Democratic Consolidation, Democracy, Election Manipulation, and Security Forces.

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ABSTRACT : This paper's goal is to analyze and study how ethnicity affected Nigeria's 2015 presidential election results. In order to this was accomplished by adopting a historical analysis of previous Nigerian presidential elections in addition to a descriptive-statistical examination of the official election results published by the nation's Election Management Body (INEC). The results showed that bloc votes from their respective states and geopolitical zones went to the main candidates. This suggested that in order to get votes, candidates played on ethnic feelings. This scenario's policy implications include the reality that nation-building initiatives and interethnic accommodation are destroyed by ethnic bloc voting. However, it is advised that more be done to create a strong set of laws governing nation-building and national integration, which will ensure that individuals from different ethnic backgrounds can live in harmony with one another.

Keywords: elections, voting patterns, ethnic bloc voting, rational choice, and ethnicity

1.A Brief Overview

Nigeria will hold elections on February 14 to select its MPs, senators, and president. Nigerians will cast their ballots again in two weeks to choose state governors and state assembly members. Campaigning officially started in November 2014. Since ballots and results sheets arrived late in the previous general election in April 2011, officials had to postpone the various phases of the voting by one week, allowing for late modifications to the electoral calendar. There may be comparable reorganizations during the elections in February 2015. In seven states (Anambra, Bayelsa, Kogi, Edo, Ondo, Ekiti, and Osun), gubernatorial elections will not be held because of earlier court rulings that

required repeat elections in some states Ajiteru, (2023). elections, even if Abalaka (2023) states that they would choose representatives for the State Houses of Assembly.

There will be intense competition for the presidency. While a broadly cohesive opposition is attempting to take advantage of unhappiness in several areas, especially the Muslim-majority north, incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan is running for reelection. Open gubernatorial elections will, in the meanwhile, deliver fresh leadership to Plateau, a region that frequently experiences intercommunal violence, and some of the federation's most populous and economically significant states, like as Lagos, Kano, and Rivers. In order to avoid the postelection riots that tragically followed that year's vote, Nigerian election officials intend to build on the technical advancements made in 2011 (Sulaiman, 2023).

2. The significance of the elections

Nigeria is divided during this election between Perhaps more than at any other time since its first ten years of independence, it is a time of crisis and opportunity. The vote has significant implications for the economy, security, and governance. The entire continent of Africa is also affected by the elections. With an estimated 170 million people living there, Nigeria has the largest economy on the continent, with a gross domestic output of \$509 billion in 2013. Beyond its economic might, Nigeria has a variety of means to influence Africa, such as resolving disputes, sending peacekeepers to areas of conflict, and leading regional crises like the current Ebola outbreak (Abalaka, 2023).

Nigeria has made significant progress in the past ten years and has a lot of promise. The economy is expanding quickly. This is partially because to oil With daily production of up to 2.5 million barrels, Nigeria is Africa's largest producer; but, growth in the non-oil industry has been quicker. In the midst of booming industries including entertainment, real estate, services, and telecommunications, Nigeria's middle class has grown by up to 600% since 2000. Members of the diaspora with advanced skills are coming home. New social movements and expressions have been spurred by economic growth. Nigerian musicians, filmmakers, and novelists are becoming well-known throughout the world. The press is lively. When the government eliminated fuel subsidies in 2012, protests led by trade unions, internet activists, young people, and others led to a partial reinstatement of the subsidies, demonstrating the power of civil society to influence public policy. Nigeria is deserving of its standing as Africa's political, economic, and cultural giant Sulaiman, (2023).

3. The Candidates and The Parties

The incumbent People's Democratic Party (PDP) and an opposition coalition known as the All Progressives Congress (APC) will be the main contenders in the presidential election. The existing vice president, Namadi Sambo, will be the running partner of incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan, who has been selected by the PDP. Former military leader Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, who finished second in the 2003, 2007 and 2011 presidential elections, is the APC's nominee. Yemi Osinbajo, a lawyer and academic who was Lagos State's attorney general and commissioner for justice from 1999 to 2007, is Buhari's running partner for 2015. Osinbajo may have been chosen by Buhari, who some Christians believe to be a Muslim sectional candidate from the north, in part to dispel that belief: According to reports, Osinbajo is near Abalaka, to Pastor Enoch Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, one of the nation's most powerful Christian leaders (2023).

The PDP

When Nigeria started its transition to civilian governance in 1998, the PDP was established. Opponents of Gen. Sani Abacha's military regime (1993–1998) included former Vice President Alex Ekwueme (1979–1983), who went on to become the PDP's founding chairman; former military ruler Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (1976–1979), who became the party's first presidential candidate and served as president from 1999 to 2007; and Atiku Abubakar, who was the party's

first vice presidential candidate and a political protégé of Obasanjo's former second-in-command Gen. Shehu Yar'Adua (1943–1997), whose younger brother Umaru ran for president in 2007.

The PDP, sometimes referred to as a center-right party, stresses the value of public-private partnerships while frequently characterizing the private sector as the catalyst for economic progress. In the presidential elections of 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011, the PDP emerged victorious. It has consistently held a majority of Senate seats, state governorships, and, with a brief break from December 2013 to February 2014, House seats since the 1998–1999 transition (Sulaiman, 2023).

Important PDP figures include:

Adamu Mu'azu was appointed National Chairman in January 2014. From 1999 to 2007, he was the governor of the Northeastern state of Bauchi.

- Anthony Anenih of Edo in the South South is the chairman of the board of trustees. In February 2013, Anenih was elected after previously serving from 2003 to 2007. From 1999 until 2003, Anenih served as the minister of housing and works. He is Jonathan's adviser for the national campaign.
- David Mark, a native of Benue in the North Central, is the Senate's president. In 1999, Mark was elected senator for Benue South, and in 2007, he was elected Senate president.

The APC

The Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), and a portion of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) came together to establish the APC in February 2013. Despite having a wide range of political and geographic supporters that mirror the bases of its founder parties, the APC bills itself as a leftist, progressive party:

- The South West served as the ACN's base. In 2011, despite South the ACN strengthened its hold on all six governorships in the region when West states supported Jonathan in the presidential election (Ajiteru, 2017).
- The north served as the base for both the CPC and the ANPP. The ANPP has served as governor of North East states like Borno (1999–present) and Yobe, as well as North West states like Kano (2003–2011) and Zamfara (1999–2008, 2011–present).
- from 1999 to the present. In 2009, the CPC separated from the ANPP. Buhari shifted to the CPC in 2011 after running on the ANPP ticket in 2003 and 2007. In 2011, the CPC won one governor's seat in Nassarawa's North Central zone.
- The South East, which includes the governorships of Anambra and Imo, is the APGA's base. The PDP is in agreement with the Anambra APGA. My opinion The APGA faction that joined the APC is led by Rochas Okorocho, the governor of Imo.

The APC scored defections from the PDP when it was formed. After defecting to the ACN in 2006, former Vice President Abubakar ran as its candidate for the unsuccessful 2007 presidential election, finishing third with 7% of the official vote. Dissatisfaction with Jonathan and his alleged zoning disruption were used by other APC defections (see below). Five governors, four of whom were from the north, switched from the PDP to the APC in November 2013:

- ✓ North Central's Abdulfatah Ahmed of Kwara
- ✓ Rivers' Rotimi Amaechi (South South)
- ✓ Kano's Rabi'u Kwankwaso (North West)
- ✓ Adamawa's Murtala Nyako (North East)
- ✓ Sokoto's Aliyu Wamakko (North West)

Many lawmakers, mostly from these states, came after suit: In December 2013, 37 representatives defected from the PDP to the APC. Up to February 2014, when five APC representatives defected to the PDP, the APC held a majority in the House (around 174 APC members, 171 PDP members, and 15 others) thanks to these defections. However,

Speaker of the House Aminu Tambuwal joined the APC in October 2014. Additionally, 11 senators who defected in January 2014 have joined the APC.

Along with the party's presidential ticket and these well-known defectors, other significant APC figures are:

- ❖ Bola Tinubu, the former governor of Lagos, is frequently seen as the party's unofficial head.
- ❖ Oyegun, National Chairman John Odigie
- ❖ Senator Lawal Shuaibu, Deputy National Chairman (North)
- ❖ Segun Oni, Deputy National Chairman (South)

Despite not defecting to the APC, several PDP members have harshly criticized Jonathan. One such critic is Obasanjo, who in December 2013 sent Jonathan a damning 18-page open letter accusing him of not doing enough to stop oil theft, corruption, and insecurity. Obasanjo ended his letter by mentioning that key PDP leaders, including retired Gen. Theophilus Danjuma, former military ruler Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, and Ekwueme, had "concerns" about Jonathan.

4. The Four Essential States

Lagos

Lagos is probably the most populated state in Nigeria, yet according to the 2006 census, Kano had a higher population (9.4 million) than Lagos (9.1 million). With an estimated 13–22 million residents, Lagos is also probably the most populated metropolis in Africa. Since 1999, Lagos has been a bastion of the opposition, with Governor Bola Tinubu and Babatunde Fashola have received recognition on a global scale for their governance approach, which prioritizes service delivery and revenue collection (Abalaka, 2023).

Akinwunmi Ambode has been chosen as the 2015 candidate of the APC, which has controlled Lagos since 1999 (including its predecessor, the ACN). Before serving as Lagos's accountant general and auditor general from 2001 to 2012, Ambode, a businessman and accountant, held the offices of treasurer and auditor in the local government during the 1980s and 1990s. According to Sulaiman (2014), Ambode has stated that if elected, he will expand on the strategies of Tinubu and Fashola and will also put extra effort into growing the state's unorganized sector.

The APC leaders appeared inclined to select a Christian candidate for 2015, whereas Tinubu and Fashola are both Muslims. APC officials preferred a Muslim running mate, and have chosen Islamic Studies-trained educator Idiata Adebule. She is currently the state government's secretary. The possibility that Ambode would stand for continuity rather than change is increased by her inclusion on the ticket. According to Ajiteru (2023), it is improbable that his administration would be sectarian.

Kano

In 2011, there were severe post-election rioting in Kano, the most populated state in northern Nigeria. Kano has had internal rivalry for a long time. Since 1999, Ibrahim Shekarau and Rabiu Kwankwaso have taken turns holding the reins of power. Kwankwaso was a PDP governor from 1999 to 2003 until losing to Shekarau of the ANPP, a career civil servant who gained notoriety as a staunch supporter of shari'a (Islamic law, which was carried out in 12 northern states from 1999 to 2001). Kwankwaso returned to office as the PDP candidate after Shekarau served two terms. He was among the four northern PDP governors who defected to the APC in 2013, which led to Shekarau, an APC founding member, joining the PDP and becoming the education minister in President Jonathan's cabinet. The 2015 Kano gubernatorial election will be influenced by the Kwankwaso-Shekarau rivalry. Abdullahi Ganduje, the deputy governor of Kwankwaso, is the APC candidate. Salihu Takai, 47, the PDP candidate, was Shekarau's hand-picked candidate for the 2011 gubernatorial election and he was Shekarau's commissioner for water resources and local government Abalaka, (2023).

There will be significant security challenges for Kano's future governor. While the majority of Boko Haram's the North East has seen a lot of violence, and the sect has made Kano a top target. One of Boko Haram's most deadly attacks, a series of synchronized bombs and shootings in January 2012, took place in Kano. The former emir was twice targeted

for assassination by suspected Boko Haram members. Following the bombing of Kano's grand mosque in November 2014, Boko Haram threatened to kill the new emir, former governor of the grand Bank of Nigeria Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, who was also a vocal opponent of the Jonathan administration. In addition to addressing security issues, the new governor of Kano will have to address issues of job creation, agricultural improvement, infrastructure development, and school enrollment in a region plagued by poverty (Ajiteru, 2023).

The Rivers

Rivers is among the three essential states throughout the Niger Delta; it is a population hub with geopolitical importance and a financial benefit to whichever party controls it. Port Harcourt, the largest city in the Delta, serves as Rivers' capital. Of the five PDP governors who switched to the APC in 2013, Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, the state's governor, was the only one from the South. Conflicts with both President Jonathan and First Lady Patience Jonathan caused Amaechi to leave the PDP; these disputes to a climax in 2013 when the president attempted to prevent Amaechi from being elected chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum. While his wife is from Rivers, Jonathan is from nearby Bayelsa. Bayelsa, Rivers, and neighboring Delta State had been ruled by the PDP since 1999 until Amaechi's defection. This trio of moods was essential to Jonathan's triumph in 2011, giving him some of his greatest victory margins: 98.6 percent for Delta, 99.6 percent for Bayelsa, and 98 percent for Rivers. According to Abalaka (2023), the South South states will probably play a significant role in Jonathan's campaign for reelection.

Nyesom Wike, who most recently served as Jonathan's minister of state for education, is the PDP's nominee for the 2015 elections. Wike served as Amaechi's director-general for his 2011 reelection campaign and as his chief of staff during his first tenure as governor (2007–2011). Dakuku Peterside, a rookie representative from Rivers' Andoni-Opobo-Nkoro district in the National Assembly, is the APC's nominee. Peterside was Amaechi's commissioner for works from 2007 to 2011, giving him expertise in Rivers local government.

In 2015, Rivers can be a violent hotspot. The government has been the scene of bloodshed during previous elections. The State House of Assembly attempted to oust Amaechi when he defected to the APC. Protests for and against Amaechi were sparked by the situation, including one in January 2014 where police used rubber bullets to wound APC Senator Magnus Abe. Tensions in the state were reduced by the redeployment of National Police Commissioner Joseph Mbu, whom Amaechi claimed was the first lady's ally; but, the imminence of the 2015 elections may cause tension and violence to resurface (Sulaiman, 2023).

The plateau

Since 1999, Plateau State has been controlled by the PDP. Former air commodore and outgoing governor Jonah Jang has had a contentious term in office. Since 2001, Plateau has seen frequent intercommunal conflicts that have resulted in at least 4,000 fatalities. These conflicts have entail several identities and multiple causes. There have been conflicts between predominantly Christian ethnic groups including the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizeri, who are officially regarded as "indigenes" (state natives), and predominantly Muslim Hausa "settlers" and nomadic Fulani pastoralists. Land, resources, belonging, identity, and access to political power are the main points of contention, but religious discourse has occasionally eclipsed these other aspects of the conflict. Jang is viewed by many Muslim newcomers as a supporter of the Christian natives. Jonathan is also close to Jang. Jonathan chose him, and he ended up winning the contentious 2013 election to lead the Nigerian Governors' Forum (Ajiteru, 2023).

The Plateau North senator, Gyang Pwajok, has been named by the PDP as its candidate for governor in 2015. Pwajok, an academic and activist for the Berom people, was Jang's chief of staff and director of research until 2012, when he entered a race for a Senate seat that opened up due to the incumbent's passing. Pwajok, who is also from Plateau North, would probably stand for continuity with Jang. Simon Lalong has been chosen as the APC's candidate. Under Governor Joshua Dariye, Lalong served as the State House of Assembly's speaker from 1999 until his impeachment in 2006 due to corruption allegations. Lalong may try to capitalize on voters' dissatisfaction from Plateau South who want to see the governorship alternate between the state's senatorial districts. The next Plateau State governor would

have to deal with more than only the systemic reasons of intercommunal violence, as well as the issue of the state's frequent bombings, many of which Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for. Because many Nigerians, including Muslims and Christians, believe that their coreligionists are being attacked in the state, the bombings in Plateau have a national resonance and heighten tensions throughout the nation.

Regional Inequalities from North to South

It is sometimes said that Nigeria is a nation with two unequal wheels. According to a 2013 report titled "Nigeria Unveiled" by the Russian investment bank Renaissance Capital, Nigeria's economy is booming in the south, where incomes are rising, unemployment is declining, and the population is better educated, while the north is much poorer, less educated, and struggling (Atuanya 2018). Given this disparity in wealth, the north's hegemony over Prior to 1999, power was rationalized as a tool to counterbalance the economic superiority of the south. According to Abalaka (2018), some believe that the north has lost its influence in the north-south equation because the south has controlled the presidency for 12 of the 15 years of civilian administration since 1999.

The APC's presidential candidate is Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim and former military leader with a cult following in the north. Therefore, the Muslim-Christian division and the north-south dichotomy in the nation are expected to be heavily politicized during the election, which would exacerbate the tension that already exists there (Ajiteru, 2023).

Running Mate for Vice President

APC strategists are counting on a mix of votes from the northwest, which has a large population (18 million ballots), For victory, the northeast received 11 million votes, while the southwest received 13.5 million. According to this estimate, the APC selected Professor Yemi Osinbajo, a Christian from the southwest, as its vice-presidential candidate after selecting Buhari from the northwest as its presidential candidate. It is unclear, though, if Bola Tinubu, the former governor of Lagos State who was instrumental in the APC's formation and is regarded as the party's most effective organizer in the southwest, will be eager to give the APC control of the battleground in the southwest during the elections. As a Muslim like Buhari, Tinubu expressed interest in running for the party's vice presidential nomination, but the strategists of the party believed that a Muslim-Muslim ticket may upset Christians and cement the APC was classified as an Islamic party by the PDP (Sulaiman, 2023).

5. Cash and Incumbency's Power

The "power of incumbency" and all the associated institutional support are the ruling PDP's biggest assets. In addition to having access to government resources for patronage, it also has authority over important institutions like the army, police, and anti-corruption organizations like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, all of which it might use to intimidate political rivals. Additionally, the APC has 14 governors while the PDP has 21 in the 36 states in the nation. Additionally, the PDP has significant majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Similarly, in Nigerian politics, money is crucial for media and campaigns reach and vote buying, a tactic frequently used in elections in Nigeria. Money will have less of an impact on election results when voters are sufficiently enthused about a certain cause. However, in areas where elections are near, money will play a significant role, particularly in vote-buying and other material inducements like giving out bags of food, wrappers, or motorcycles (Abalaka, 2023).

6. The Umpire Electoral

Everyone agrees that under its current chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega, who hails from the north, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the electoral umpire, has performed better in terms of the electoral procedures' logistics and openness. Nonetheless, the INEC is still seen with a high a great deal of suspicion from everyone. The APC has repeatedly implied that the PDP-controlled federal government is manipulating INEC. Indeed, soon after the 2013 Anambra State gubernatorial elections, which were tainted by late or non-arrival of voting materials and were won by a party affiliated with the PDP, the APC announced that it no longer trusted Jega to hold credible elections

(Olatunji 2013). When Jega proposed adding more voting places, the most of which were to be located in the north, he was already charged with plotting to rig the 2015 election (Nigerian Tribune 2019).

The acceptance of the result would be greatly influenced by perceptions of INEC's neutrality. But if the nation's electoral past is any indication, according to Sulaiman (2023), the election results will be controversial regardless of the viewpoints of election monitors.

7. A Conceptual Exposition to Ethnicity and Voting Behavior

Race and ethnicity

Every individual in today's diverse countries has an ethnic identity based on their affinity with a particular ethnic group. Like every other subject in social science, ethnicity has multiple definitions. As per Afkhami (2018, p. 6), "ethnicity is based on the assumption that a collectivity has its roots in common ancestry, heritage, religion, culture, nationality, language, and a territory." It also identifies a collective identity. Ethnicity, according to Nnoli (2018, p. 5), is a social phenomenon connected to relationships between people from various ethnic groups. Abalaka (2023). According to these definitions, social-cultural elements such as ancestry, culture, and norms define ethnicity and the sense of national identity. This implies that only in diverse communities can ethnicity exist. Enloe (2018, p. 33) took a more radical stance, viewing ethnicity as "an as unreal, an artificial basis of identification and collective organization, conjured up by outsiders looking for an efficient instrument of political and economic control." According to Azeez (2019, p. 2), ethnicity is a tactical tool that a privileged group may use to preserve its advantages or a disadvantaged group may use as a new means of pursuing political redress. Similarly, Oladiran (2017, p. 698) argues that ethnicity should be anticipated in any circumstance where a group of individuals, regardless of size and possessing unique cultural and linguistic characteristics from other groups, employs a sense of unity as a means of communication (Edlyne 2020 referenced in Oladiran, 2017 p. 698). In a nutshell, ethnicity is the sense of unity and solidarity that a group has because of sociocultural characteristics that set them apart from others, such as language, customs, traditions, and ancestry. Ajiteru (2023).

Voting Patterns

Voting in elections is one of the most efficient ways for citizens to participate in the government process under a democratic system. It is the most logical decision given their objectives and convictions. When Downs (2017) applied the RCT to party competition and election behavior, he popularized the theory. According to Turner (2021), the fundamental tenets of the RCT are that people behave in a purposeful manner because humans have hierarchically organized sets of preferences or utilities, and in order to achieve specific specified goals. The rational choice theory of ethnic bloc voting in politics makes the assumption that "a voter tends to vote for a party candidate who is a member of the same ethnic group because of the lower costs of communicating with a candidate of one's own community and because of the higher probability that the candidate will keep his or her political promises to members of their own ethnic community" (Lander & Copeland 2015, p. 436). This is predicated on the idea that "voters from a specific ethnic group are more likely to vote for candidates from that ethnic group, especially if the ethnic group is small." compared to voters of other ethnic groups (ibid.).

According to the notion, political parties in a democracy are comparable to business owners in an economy that prioritizes profits. Just as entrepreneurs create whatever items they think would generate the most profits for the same purpose, they create policies they think will garner the most votes in order to accomplish their goals (Ajiboye 2015). This suggests a connection between voting behavior and ethnicity. Horowitz (2017) provided an explanation of the connections between party systems, voting behavior, and ethnicity in developing societies by illustrating the connection between these factors. Through the development of a lasting psychological feeling of party allegiance, he claims that "ethnicity exerts a strong direct impact on electoral behavior in ethnically segmented societies." tying

people to political parties so that voting becomes a way for them to express their collective identity. As a result, ethnicity takes precedence over other social divisions (Horowitz 2018, p. 19).

Despite its importance and applicability to the study of ethnic bloc voting, especially in diverse societies, the rational choice theory of ethnic voting behavior has drawn criticism. According to Roskin (2016), it has been criticized for "mathematizing the obvious." The theory is said to have "ignored important cultural contexts, which thus rendered it unable to predict much of importance" in its quest for universal patterns. Additionally, it has been criticized for the decisions the theory attempted to explain only seemed reasonable in hindsight (Roskin 2016). In spite of these objections, the theory of rational choice has maintained its viability as a model of human behavior and attained an unparalleled status among theoretical models of human behavior. Monroe (2021) asserts that this prominence spans all social science fields. Sulaiman (2023).

8. The Results of the 2015 Presidential Election: Examination And Conversation

INEC Chairman Attahiru Jega made a pledge before to the 2015 presidential election that the results would be made public within 48 hours of the polls closing. "The presidential collation process was completed within four days, with the declaration of results and certificate of return given to the winning candidate on 1 April," according to the European Union Election Observation Mission (2015, p.1). The vote collection and counting procedure was given legitimacy by the early start of the collation and the timely announcement of the outcome.

In the 2015 presidential election, there were 67 422 005 registered voters, 31 746 490 recognized voters, and 29 432 083 ballots were cast. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (2015), there were 844 519 rejected votes and 28 587 564 legitimate votes. State-by-state results of the presidential election are displayed in Table 4 below (Abalaka, 2023).

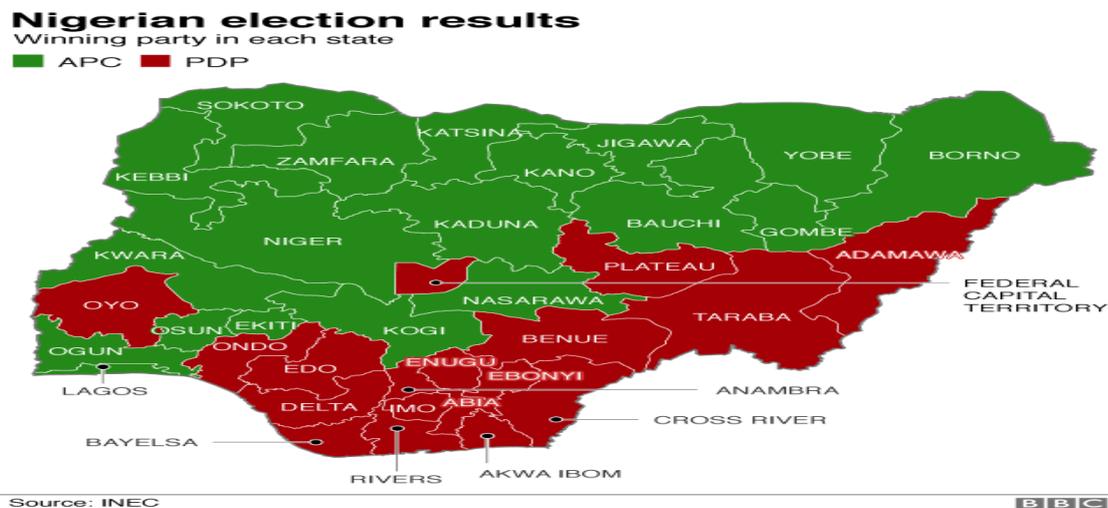


Table 4
State by State Results of the 2015 Presidential Election

S/N	State	APC (Buhari)	PDP (Jonathan)
1.	Abia	13 394	368 303
2.	Adamawa	374 701	251 664
3.	Akwa-Ibom	58 411	953 304
4.	Anambra	17 926	660 762
5.	Bauchi	931 598	86 085
6.	Bayelsa	5 194	361 209
S/N	State	APC (Buhari)	PDP (Jonathan)
7.	Benue	373 961	303 737
8.	Borno	473 543	25 640

9.	Cross-River	28 368	414 863
10.	Delta	48 910	1 211 405
11.	Ebonyi	19 518	32 653
12.	Edo	208 469	286 869
13.	Ekiti	120 331	176 466
14.	Enugu	14 157	553 003
15.	Gombe	361 245	96 873
16.	Imo	133 253	559 185
17.	Jigawa	885 988	142 904
18.	Kaduna	1 127 760	484 085
19.	Kano	1 903 999	215 779
20.	Katsina	1 345 441	98 937
21.	Kebbi	567 883	100 972
22.	Kogi	264 851	149 987
23.	Kwara	302 146	132 602
24.	Lagos	792 460	632 327
25.	Nasarawa	236 838	273 460
26.	Niger	657 678	149 222
27.	Ogun	308 290	207 950
28.	Ondo	299 889	251 368
29.	Osun	383 603	249 929
30.	Oyo	528 620	303 376
31.	Plateau	429 140	543 615
32.	Rivers	69 238	1 487 075
33.	Sokoto	671 926	152 199
34.	Taraba	261 326	310 800
35.	Yobe	446 265	25 526
36.	Zamfara	612 202	144 833
37.	FCT	146 399	157 195
	TOTAL	15 424 921	12 853 162

Source: Authors compilation with data from INEC (2015)

Muhammadu Buhari, the APC's presidential candidate, received 15 424 921 votes, or 54% of the total legitimate votes cast, according to Table 4 above. Goodluck Jonathan, the PDP's presidential candidate and incumbent at the time, received 12 853 162 votes, or 45% of all valid votes cast. Buhari, the APC candidate, was sworn in as the Federal Republic of Nigeria's president and commander-in-chief of its military forces after meeting all constitutional requirements and receiving the most votes. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy from the chart that out of the three states in the geopolitical zone from which they were elected, each candidate received the most votes per state they all came. Muhammadu Buhari received a total of 4 377 200 votes, which included 1 127 760 votes in Kaduna, 1 903 999 votes in Kano, and 1 345 441 votes in Katsina. The votes cast for his opponent, however, were 953 304 in Akwa-Ibom, 1 211 405 in Delta, and 1 487 075 in Rivers states. 3 651 784 votes were cast in total. This suggested that Buhari received almost 28% of the votes he received from just three states in the North-West geopolitical zone, including Katsina Sulaiman, (2023).

Similarly, three South-South geopolitical zone states gave Goodluck Jonathan 28% of the total votes he garnered. This can be characterized as the outcome of territorial and ethnic bias, which is better comprehended by breaking down the presidential election results by state into geopolitical zones. The nation is separated into six geopolitical zones: North-Central, which includes the states of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau; North-East, which includes

the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe; North-West, which includes the states of Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara; South-East, which includes the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo; South-West, which includes the states of Oyo, Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti, Osun, and Ondo; and South-South, which includes the states of Bayelsa, the Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Cross-Rivers, and Edo. The results of the 2015 presidential election are shown in Table 5 below, which is based on Abalaka's (2023) six geopolitical zones.

9. Geography In Politics

In order to comprehend Nigerian politics, one must be aware of the intricate political landscape of the nation. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja and 36 states make up the federation of Nigeria. The country's political subdivisions have been divided for a long time, as evidenced by the 1996 political map. In fact, many voices continue to call for the creation of new states to represent underprivileged people. The two most populous states are Kano, the northern commercial center, and Lagos, the southwest commercial hub and home to Africa's most populated city. The three main states of the oil-producing Niger Delta—Delta, Bayelsa, and Rivers—are also important. Nigeria is usually depicted in the foreign media as being split between a predominantly Christian south and a predominantly Muslim north. This divide is useful analytically since it shows Nigeria's British colonization left behind *de facto* distinct control (1861–1956 in the south, 1900–1959 in the north). Even though Northern and Southern Nigeria were "amalgamated" by Britain in 1914, there are still substantial discrepancies and inequalities between the two regions: the north still has far less developed infrastructure and a lower completion rate for secular education than the south. But there are sizable Christian minority in the north, and millions of Yoruba Muslims live in the southwest. Sulaiman (2023).

Nigerian commentators and authorities frequently refer to six "geopolitical zones"—North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East, and South South—each of which comprises five to seven states, despite the fact that the north-south division provides some insight into the country. The zones roughly correspond to historical and cultural entities, just like the states do. The Northwest includes a part of the Sokoto Caliphate, a Muslim political entity that existed before colonization. A portion of Kanem-Bornu, another precolonial Muslim dynasty, is located in the Northeast. Although there are other sizable ethnic groups in these northern regions, such as the Fulani and the Kanuri, the Hausa are the dominant group in the North West, North East, and the entire nation. One of Nigeria's most ethnically varied regions is the North Central, sometimes known as the "Middle Belt," which was a component of the colonial Northern Region. While many Ibo, Nigeria's third-largest ethnic group, reside in the South East, which also happens to be the core of the now-defunct Biafra, whose effort at breakaway was unsuccessful, the South West is home to the Yoruba, the country's second-largest ethnic group after the northern Hausa. caused the civil conflict in Nigeria from 1967 to 1970. Lastly, the Niger Delta and other non-Ibo populations are found in the South South. In 2011, Jonathan, who is from the South South, received the most votes in his home zone, as well as in the North Central, South West, and South East. In Nigerian politics, the idea of proportional regional representation is ingrained. For instance, each of the 36 states must have one federal cabinet minister. Many Nigerians anticipate that elected positions, such as the presidency and state governorships, will alternate between different regions of the nation or within a state. According to Abalaka (2023), the purpose of rotational or "zoning" systems is to guarantee that power is distributed among the various constituencies that comprise Nigeria and its subunits.

Geopolitical Zone Map



Table 5
Six Geo-Political Results of the 2015 Presidential Election

S/N	Geo-Political Zone	APC (Buhari)	PDP (Jonathan)
1.	North-Central	2 264 614	1 558 623
2.	North-East	2 848 678	796 588
3.	North-West	7 115 199	1 339 708
Total	Northern Zone	12 228 491	3 694 919
S/N	Geo-Political Zone	APC (Buhari)	PDP (Jonathan)
4.	South-East	198 248	4 714 725
5.	South-West	2 433 193	1 821 416
6.	South-South	418 590	4 714 725
Total	Southern Zone	3 050 031	11 250 866

Source: Authors compilation with data from INEC (2015)

The two presidential contenders received more bloc votes from their respective geopolitical zones than from other zones, as shown in Table 5 above. Muhammadu Buhari received 7,115,199 votes from the country's North West geopolitical zone, which includes his home state of Katsina. Conversely, Goodluck Jonathan received 4 714 725 votes from the South-South region. Once more, it is evident that the APC presidential candidate had a significant influence on other northern regions. Muhammadu Buhari received more than twice as many votes as Goodluck Jonathan in the North-Central and North-East geopolitical zones. With nearly five million more votes than Buhari, Goodluck Jonathan won a historic victory in the South-East geopolitical zone 198 248. This is significant because the Northern geopolitical zone accounted for almost 79% of Buhari's winning votes. Similarly, Goodluck Jonathan garnered over 88% of the

votes cast, placing him in second place with 12,853,162 votes from the Southern geopolitical zone. The South-West was an outlier, where both candidates received a sizable number of votes. However, with 2 433 193 votes to his opponent Goodluck Jonathan's 1 821 416, APC candidate Buhari received 611 777 more votes in this zone than his PDP rival.

According to the aforementioned study, Muhammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan both garnered bloc votes from their respective ethnic bases. Therefore, the bloc votes that the candidates from each candidate's geopolitical zone received might be characterized as heavily impacted by one's ethnicity. Antiethnic remarks dominated the pre-election campaign period preceding the 2015 presidential election. When Goodluck Jonathan announced his intention to run for president in 2011, it was the beginning of what might be considered the origin of anti-ethnic hate speech. The northerners viewed this as a violation of the contract. When then-President Ya' Adua passed away, Northerners thought that since he couldn't finish his term, another Northerner should run for president in 2011 in accordance with the PDP's rotating presidency practice. Goodluck Jonathan's decision to run in this election was strongly opposed, especially by the political elites in the north (Sulaiman, 2023).

The northerners obviously desired a northern competitor and, above all, a president from the North. Their aspirations were crushed, nevertheless, by Goodluck Jonathan's ultimate victory in the 2011 presidential election. They were therefore prepared for a confrontation with the South in the upcoming presidential election of 2015. Both northerners and southerners made anti-ethnic remarks during the pre-election period. According to the Vanguard Newspaper of October 15, 2014, the Arewa People's Congress declared that "those who vote for Jonathan and the PDP in 2015 will be considered an enemy of the north" (Ezeibe 2015, p. 15). Abu King Shuluwa was also quoted as saying that "Nigeria will disintegrate if Jonathan contests in 2015" in the Daily Independent on Friday, March 8, 2013 (Ezeibe 2015, p. 15).

10. Implications in a Heterogeneous State for Democratization

Voting by ethnic blocs has significant effects on how democracies evolve in sharply divided cultures like Nigeria. The prospect that elections in sharply divided countries might provide only ethnic consensus has long been foreseen by scholars. According to Ishiyama (2017), these elections lead to obstacles that weaken interethnic harmony. In ethnically diverse cultures, ethnic bloc voting can lead to widespread ethnic conflict rather than peaceful coexistence and political stability. In these situations, elections turn into blatant displays of bigotry or ethnic bias. According to this viewpoint, voters use the voting process to express (and hence record) their ethnic group identities. Abalaka (2023).

When elections are coming up, political leaders compete for the support of citizens who, in turn, seek direction from their leaders. Inter-ethnic violence is typically the result of politicized ethnic groupings being ready for combat with rival groups whose elites share the same goals (Okonta 2017, p. 13). Nonetheless, there has been discussion among political scholars over the connection between democratization and ethnicity. Studies on ethnicity and politics have "primarily focused on the reciprocal impact of ethnicity and multi-party democracy," according to Ibeanu (2020, p. 55). According to Parenti (2017), there is a negative correlation between ethnicity and multi-party democracy because ethnicity is encouraged by these systems. However, some contend that the two have a beneficial relationship and that through the Democracy offers a potential setting for addressing ethnic inequalities through the use of egalitarian pluralism (Osaghae 2018).

Nation-building initiatives are severely hampered by ethnic bloc voting in highly fragmented cultures. Voting for a politician that shares the voter's ethnic background along ethnic lines results in a voting pattern that can be described as a "psychological affirmation of group identity" (Horowitz 2015). Efforts to create a strong and cohesive nation among disparate and radically different ethno-cultural linguistic groupings are thwarted by this sense of ethnic identity. Although voting on the basis of ethnicity compromises the legitimacy of the resulting government, a politician who wins with a large number of votes from a diverse nation typically enjoys the support of the populace regardless of their regional and ethnic ties (Ajiteru, 2023).

11. Policy Recommendations and Conclusion

Ethnic pluralism and disintegration define the Nigerian state. Ethnic conflict and ethnic militias have increased throughout the nation as a result, and ethnic bloc voting has continued to be a barrier to Nigeria's democratic process. Since Nigeria gained its independence, ethnicity has played a significant role in the country's political environment. Ethnicity did, in fact, play a role in the establishment of political parties in Nigeria, as the Nigerian First Republic's political parties sprang from the sociocultural associations of the nation's numerous ethnic groups, thus endowing them with an ethnic character. As a result, ethnicity was the primary factor in the votes cast during elections deciding element. However, this research points out that the 2015 presidential election's outcome is influenced by a number of factors besides ethnicity. These include of social standing, political party affiliation, religion, money politics, and charisma.

Each candidate in the fiercely contested 2015 presidential election had a strong hold on his ethnic base. Each candidate received bloc votes from his geopolitical zone, according to an analysis of the election results. Voting by ethnic blocs has been shown to be detrimental to Nigeria's democratic process and attempts to bring the nation together and integrate. The threat of ethnicity and ethnic bloc voting needs to be addressed in order to create a strong, united nation and a sound electoral system. In order to accomplish this, more needs be done to offering a set of guiding principles for the development of the country that ought to be incorporated into the constitution. Furthermore, a commitment to equitable socio-economic and infrastructure development should be made. A nation's unequal socioeconomic and infrastructure development leads to feelings of exclusion and the concern that the less developed parts of the nation will dominate and marginalize it. In order to foster positive connections between the various ethnic groups, policies and programs should be developed to reorient those that are separated along ethnic lines. Sulaiman (2014).

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