

(Research/Review)

Political Propaganda, The Impact Of The Election Campaign, The Electoral Outcome, And The Dynamics Of Governance In Nigeria Following The 2015 Presidential Election

Ajiteru, S.A.R¹, Sulaiman T.H², Abalaka, J.N³

1 Relations Achievers University, Nigeria. Email: ajiterudr.sheriffdeen@gmail.com

2 Crown University, USA. Email: staiwohassan99@yahoo.com

3 Crown University, USA. Email: abalaka.james@yahoo.com

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.

1. Overview

Despite the fact that a free, fair, and credible election is generally acknowledged as one of the essential foundations of democracy and a widely used method of establishing the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Ajiteru, 2024), Election turnout continues to be a key indicator of the degree of democratic consolidation in each state, according to Abalaka (2024). Most people think that language use possesses various distinguishing characteristics that set it apart from other forms of language use in political campaigns. Even though some of these characteristics are common in ordinary life, politicians and politics nonetheless have them in a very special way. Propaganda and rhetorical language used in political campaigns are persuasive. By portraying themselves as the only qualified candidates for the position, politicians use these rhetorical strategies to persuade the public to support them and their parties. Based on 35 political campaign materials that were randomly selected from the print media (primarily from the southern region of the country) during the recently concluded elections into the

Received: Maret 20th, 2025

Revised: Maret 30th, 2025

Accepted: April 05th, 2025

Published: April 07th, 2025

Curr. Ver.: April 10th, 2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

various offices in 2007, this study examines the various political utterances used during the electioneering process in Nigeria using synchronic stylistic analysis. nationwide general elections. The stylistic point of view is used to analyze the many stylistic strategies politicians employed to accomplish their goals. This means that, like with products, different contexts require distinct language use that aims to influence people emotionally rather than rationally by highlighting a candidate's strengths and hiding their flaws. Political propaganda is created by qualified experts and outside consultants with the goal of interpreting and responding to surveys, researching various facets of election behavior, and providing the public with the information they desire (Sulaiman, 2024).

Candidates and political parties also employ campaign propaganda to change the opinions, attitudes, and actions of the voters. Above all, it is imaginatively created not only to offer a political party's or its candidates' specific, workable plans and goals, but also to persuade the public by appealing to popular sentiment. In fact, campaign propaganda has two functions: it informs voters about the next government's objectives and programs and encourages them to cast ballots in the election (Ajiteru, 2024).

The use of social media propaganda tools (like Facebook, Twitter, and blogs) to change political equations and permutations has taken center stage in intellectual debates and discourses, despite the fact that the 2015 presidential election has been hailed as historic in Nigerian democracy. Research like Abalaka (2024) made it abundantly evident how campaign misinformation influenced election turnout through the use of new media. These investigations revealed either favorable, unfavorable, or There were conflicting relationships between election turnout and political messaging. However, there hasn't been much research done on the relationship between campaign propaganda, the 2015 presidential election result, and post-election government in Nigeria. To close this gap, this paper assesses how campaign misinformation affected Nigeria's post-election government and the results of the 2015 presidential election. In particular, it examines how the ethno-religious campaign rhetoric of the two main political parties influenced people's logical voting decisions, the victory of an opposition party, and the policy stance of the victorious party, Abalaka (2024).

1.2. The study's theoretical foundation

The rational choice theory (RCT) is used in this investigation. Despite having its roots in economics, this theory has been successfully used in anthropology, psychology, political science, and sociology, among other social science disciplines (Sulaiman, 2019). The knowledge that social events cannot be sufficiently explained outside of people's rational acts or judgments, however, is a common denominator that unites various diverse usages (Hedström and Stern, 2017). Levin and Migrom (2019) define rational choice as the process of determining the available options and then picking the one that is most favored based on a reliable standard. The foundation of rational choice is the idea that people choose a path of action that best suits their particular preferences. To put it another way, it asserts that actors only use their own interests as a foundation for logical decisions or ones that align with their preferences. RCT looks at

- (i) What social environments orient actors into a context of action, influencing their beliefs, choices, and opportunities;
- (ii) how these orientations impact individuals' behavior; and
- (iii) how their decisions affect social outcomes in order to explain the intended and unintended results of individual decisions (Heath, 2015).

Ajiteru (2024), in general, the main goal of the RCT is to explain social phenomena by showing how social actors' deliberate pursuit of self-interest causes them to occur. Abalaka (2024).

RCT was developed in political analysis to challenge the previous philosophical viewpoint that, among other factors, recognized history and culture as the foundation for understanding people's political behavior. On the other hand, Riker (2018) contends that a person's interests are what drive and encourage their involvement in politics. According to Downs (2017), voter self-interest can also be used to explain important aspects of a person's political activity. According to RCT, voters are logical beings and information repositories who take in the information at their disposal and make informed decisions. It suggests that voters do not exist and function as rational beings outside of a certain social group. These social groupings work together to influence and educate people's political consciousness, feelings, and voting choices.

The two main political parties employed ethno-religious campaign propaganda during the 2015 presidential election to stoke emotions and strategically induce the backing of voters who have traditionally been involved in

local interests. Southern voters perceived Muhammad Buhari, the All-Progressive Congress candidate, as a northern jihadist determined to carry out Sheik Usman Dan Fodio's Siamization program. Buhari was viewed in the north as a savior and a believer who would uphold and advance the socioeconomic and political interests of the north. However, although being praised in southern Nigeria as the son of the land, Goodluck Jonathan, the candidate of the People's Democratic Party, was labeled an *arne* (a Hausa term for a non-believer) and a booster of the Boko Haram insurgency. The target demographic was repeatedly given these messages in their native tongues via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, radio, newspapers, magazines, and television (Sulaiman, 2024).

Undoubtedly, the 2015 presidential election's voting trends and result demonstrated the ethno-religious nature of the campaign rhetoric used by the two main political parties to sway voters' opinions and decisions. The Buhari administration's seeming sectional approach, which concentrates important appointments and vital infrastructure in the north, is indicative of the dynamics of government in the years following the 2015 presidential election. The rational choice theory is generally a good fit for this research. It sheds light on how politicians and political parties in multicultural areas use ethno-religious campaign propaganda to sway voters' choices and how those choices impact the allocation of rewards of office in the government following the election (Ajiteru, 2024).

1.3. Nigerian political parties, the state, and voter conduct

The current country of Nigeria was a collection of multiethnic ethnicities without a shared social, political, or economic bond prior to the union of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 (G. Ezirim et al., 2019). According to Salawu and Hassan (2011), this cultural diversity showed up as variations in social structures, language, attire, and beliefs. There were no grounds for the unity of different ethnic nationalities with conflicting interests because these differences are clearly defined and, in many respects, practically irreconcilable. However, despite the apparent and irreconcilable differences, the diverse and hostile ethnic nations were forcibly united in a union that was subsequently named Nigeria in 1914. The unity of these multiethnic nationalities under the Nigerian state was compelled to flourish for short-term colonial expediency and the maximization of economic rewards on investment on the colonial treasury. The first arrangement, in which the incompatible ethnic groups were left to live in distrust, animosity, and hatred toward one another, was mistakenly but purposefully left intact when

Britain granted Nigeria independence on October 1, 1960. It was implausible to expect that these groups would continue to be governed indigenously as a separate entity (Sulaiman, 2024).

Elections are typically viewed as a unifying force that unites divergent entities around the platform of two or more political parties in a diverse setting where democratic governance is prioritized. The historical roots of electoral politics, however, run counter to the aforementioned assumptions. The British colonial rulers created three regional territories—the north, east, and west—between 1914 and 1915. The Igbo inhabited the eastern part, the Yoruba controlled the western part, and the Hausa/Fulani dominated the northern part. The basis for polarizing politics and, later, ethno-regional tensions was established by this ethnic split. A Nigerian patriotic movement was thwarted by the colonial tripod partitioning of Nigeria, claims Ebegbulem (2021). Rather, it changed geographic borders to further divide the diverse ethnic groups and turned ethnicity into an identity politics tool to seize political power. Due to the ensuing uneven growth within each region, this colonial creation and other administrative choices placed a strong emphasis on ethnic nationalism and regional politics (Ebegbulem, 2021, p. 77). Ezirim, G. E. et al. (2016) had maintained that the rival ethnic groups' ethno-political consciousness was strengthened by the polarizing politics used by the colonial authorities against the fledgling Nigerian state (Ajiteru, 2024).

Political parties were formed along ethnic and regional lines as a result of this development, suggesting that the British government intentionally hindered Nigerian nationalism's growth and success by sowing the seeds of conflict and animosity between the rival ethnic groups and encouraging ethnic chauvinism and nationalism as a strategy for gaining political power (Ebegbulem, 2021). Ethnic-based political parties emerged in Nigeria's first and succeeding republics as a result of this evolution. According to Ayatse and Iorhen (2013), the three main political parties that took part in the 1959 General Elections in the First Republic were established according to ethnic lines, with the Action Group becoming a Pan-Yoruba Organization, the National Council for Nigerian Citizens uniting in the East, and the Northern Peoples' Congress representing the North. Three political parties the National Party of Nigeria, the Peoples Redemption Party, and the Great Nigerian Peoples Party had legions of supporters from the northern region and actively participated in the election of the Second Republic. At the same time, the Unity Party of Nigeria continued to wield sway in the Western region, while the

Nigeria Peoples Party controlled the political scene in the Eastern region (Sulaiman, 2024).

Despite political parties' ethnic orientation, political actors are attempting to control or seize control of the media as a means of slanting reporting and propagation of hate speech. This approach has notably impacted Nigerian voting patterns as voters have responded favorably to the ethnically charged, emotionally charged messages that political parties and politicians have been pushing through their highly developed propaganda apparatuses. The nature and character of the media in Nigeria's democratization process are methodically examined in the next portion of this study (Abalaka, 2024).

1.4. Nigerian media and democratization

In the literature that is now available, the historical relationship between the media and democracy seems to have gotten a lot of attention. As a result, numerous academics have looked at these correlations from a range of angles. Some studied the media's impact on political transformation, particularly in relation to the swift shift from authoritarian to democratic governance, which spread during the past two or so decades throughout various political systems worldwide (Ajiteru, 2017). Others (Arthur, 2020; Imoh, 2013; Istenič, 2012) examined the role of media in strengthening democracy in all states. Most recently, after Barack Obama's historic rise in 2008, which was facilitated by social media, academics have concentrated on how social media is increasingly influencing political involvement, elections, and electioneering in numerous nations. Sulaiman (2019).

It became evident from the aforementioned research that the media are essential to the democratization of politics in many cultures, especially in formerly undemocratic regimes. In addition to being a means of disseminating information to the general public, it is a powerful tool for influencing or influencing the political process participants' opinions. Section 22 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution gives the media a prominent role in the nation's democracy efforts. According to the constitution, the media's dedication to Nigeria's democratization effort gives it the authority to not only monitor every facet of administration but also support the advancement and protection of the boundaries of the peoples' freedom and liberties. Furthermore, the media is tasked with reporting and analyzing news, establishing the agenda for government initiatives, and educating the public about politics in any democracy (Ojo, 2020). The media must be impartial, professional,

and free of corruption in order to fulfill this crucial role as they manage and moderate democratic processes (Abalaka, 2024).

Unfortunately, the media in Nigeria lacks the aforementioned essential characteristics that are undoubtedly seen in developed democracies. Nigerian media is formed and owned by ethnic and religious groups, in contrast to most developed democracies where media are created by global businesses that rarely take an interest in domestic politics. One consequence of this ownership style is that media organizations are set up to promote and further the interests of candidates with similar ideologies, while also damaging the reputation of those on the other side (Oboh, 2017). It's interesting that this trend has continued in Nigeria from colonial to post-colonial times. For example, Nigeria's first newspapers, such as the Daily News, founded in 1925, the West African Pilot in 1937, and the Daily Service in 1933 were all considered to be party publications and useful tools of the party, according to Sulaiman (2024).

From the aforementioned, it is clear that Nigerian media, like those in other multiethnic governments, have consistently failed to perform admirably in the process of democratizing politics. According to academics, the media's ability to strengthen democracy in the region is hampered by the military's longstanding involvement in politics in the majority of African nations. However, the current study asserts that the ethnic diversity of politics resulting from the Nigerian state's pluralistic nature seems helpful in comprehending the primary element preventing the fourth estate of the realm from mediating, driving, and moderating Ajiteru (2024) discusses the nation's democratic and democratization procedures.

1.5. Campaign propaganda and political parties in the 2015 presidential election

Since political parties frequently play a crucial role in enforcing good governance, the rule of law, and the preservation of human rights, they have unquestionably assumed a vital standing in the democratization process. Beyond this, political parties are viewed as venues that enable citizen mobilization and education regarding the state's policy direction. They carry out the latter role by coordinating viewpoints and attitudes around groups of public problems that will then be communicated to the electorate via a variety of mass media. The key is to intentionally change voters' perspectives to reflect the programs, attitudes, and recommendations of the party to obtain the targeted group's support, whether objective or subjective (Abalaka, 2024).

Three types of propaganda politician-activist-driven propaganda, externally-oriented propaganda, and ethno-religious propaganda were prevalent in the run-up to the 2015 Nigerian presidential election. The Nigerian state is multi-ethnic and multi-religious, and political players try to influence voters' sentiments. This is reflected in the first type. Above all, the Nigerian state's diversity is a prerequisite for the citizens' political awareness and sensitivity when choosing their leaders. Voters' passions were evoked by political players and supporters of the two main candidates using skillfully written ethno-religious messaging. Politicians utilized ethno-religious campaign themes to further their political agendas, as shown in Table 1, goals. For example, the then-Vice President Namadi Sambo encouraged his Islamic brethren to vote the PDP during the party's presidential campaign trip in Minna, Niger State, because the party had a higher number of Muslims in its leadership than the APC. He claims that the APC has more Christians in its campaign fold, including the party chairman, the vice-presidential candidate who is a pastor, and the campaign director general, in contrast to his party (PDP), which has more Muslims in important positions like himself (the vice president), the party chairman, and the campaign director general. Olisa Metuh, the spokesperson for the PDP, concurred, urging Nigerians to vote against the APC because it is an Islamic party that is determined to spread the ideas of Sharia and Janjaweed in Nigeria. This stance may be related to a 2001 speech attributed to Muhammadu Buhari, the APC presidential candidate, in which he promised to support the full application of Sharia law throughout Nigeria. Buhari's election would signal the complete Siamization of the Nigerian state, the PDP communications officer cautioned. Alhaji Asari Dokubo, a former head of a militant organization in the Niger Delta, also vowed to plunge Nigeria into a crisis if his cousin Goodluck Jonathan was not re-elected. Additionally, the Oba of Lagos threatened to drown all Igbo citizens in Lagos state if they did not cast their ballots, and the Northern Elder's Forum, headed by Professor Ango Abdullahi, pledged to consider everyone who supports the PDP's presidential nominee as an enemy of the north for APC Ajiteru, (2024).

1.51 Disinformation

Propaganda, according to Szanto (2018: 6), is "a particular form of activated ideology." He contends that one of the ways ideologies manifest itself is through propaganda, which entails marketing particular ideas. As stated by Abalaka (2024). Propaganda exists only to intentionally indoctrinate and to mislead and misinform. The purpose of propaganda is to purposefully skew arguments and facts as well as symbol displays in ways that the propagandist believes will have the most impact. To get the most impact, the propagandist may purposefully omit important information and attempt to distract the target audience from anything other than his own propaganda. For this reason, Szanto (2018:5) contends that propaganda may be "completely untrue, on the one hand." and, on the other, a completely legitimate portrayal of truth or reality. Politicians intentionally use language in an effort to influence their audience by using statements that could harm and discredit their opponent. Propaganda, according to Longe and Ofuani (2016:17), is disparaging because it frequently "damages or takes away credit" from something or someone. Propaganda can take several forms, such as hyperbole, harsh and ambiguous statements, and rhetorical questions. Nigeria's general elections in April 2007 were marked by a heavy reliance on propaganda during the electioneering campaign (Sulaiman, 2024).

6. An Examination of Nigerian Election Riggings Throughout History

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country's aspirations to become a nation began to wane, as seen by the way elections were held following the colonial British withdrawal. Democracy was damaged by the two democratic governments of the first and second republics. In the context of Nigeria at the time, democracy was viewed as a misconceived idea that was only examined by the political elites because it served their interests. The election demonstrated this carried out in 1964, when there was widespread electoral tampering and manipulation (Sulaiman, 2023).

1.5.2 Using Exaggeration to Spread Misinformation

Political propaganda is characterized by its distinctive use of exaggeration. The over-bloating or the exaggeration of one's meager accomplishments could be the cause of the opposition's improper actions. Politicians portray the wrongdoings of their rivals in a way that makes even their followers rethink their views. Examine the following excerpt:

They claimed to have changed the economy, Which economy?

- i. No electricity! 95% of homes and businesses rely on Electric power generator
- ii. No fuel! For domestic use, the government imports all petroleum products.
- iii. Inconsiderate! Our infrastructure is abandoned, and our roads are death traps.
- iv. Insecurity! Property and life security are virtually nonexistent.
- v. Poverty The country is rife with unemployment and hunger.
- vi. They now claim that the election will be a "do or die" situation.

The passage above is a classic illustration of propaganda using exaggeration. The data shown in the sponsored commercial seemed overly dramatic. While it is true that Nigeria's electricity supply fluctuates, it is overstated to claim that 95% of houses and businesses now rely on generators. Similar to this, Dr. Andy Uba makes a big deal out of seeing President Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo, saying, "My meeting the president was made in heaven" (Daily Champion, Friday, Mar 30, 2017: 6). He hasn't been to heaven; thus, this isn't feasible.

When Senator Obanikoro was the Chairman of the Lagos Island City Council, the terms "the magnificent" and "the product of the sweat of the founding fathers of Lagos" were purposefully used to emphasize the fire outbreak that occurred in Lagos City Hall on April 30, 1998 (The Nation, Saturday, March 17, 2007. According to Ajiteru (2017), those who have never seen the City Hall before would consider it to be among the most exquisite structures in Lagos.

1.5.3 The two main political parties' ethnoreligious statements during Nigeria's 2015 presidential election.

The above table's excerpts highlight the perilous nature of campaign propaganda during Nigeria's 2015 presidential election. The long-standing hostility and electoral divisions between the North and the South are reflected in it. The main goals of the campaign messaging attributed to the majority of northern Muslims in the All-Progressive Congress were to disparage the current president and endorse Muhammadu Buhari, a Northern Muslim. However, the majority of Christians in both the North and the South purposefully started campaigns to sentiment in favor of keeping Southern Christian Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in office as president. Okonkwo (2015) supports this by pointing out that ethno-religious emotions were dangerously ingrained in the 2015 electioneering campaigns. He claims that the election saw a direct conflict as minorities from the South-South and South-East publicly opposed a Northerner's candidacy. PDP

supporters said that the APC is a group of Islamic fundamentalists that want to convert Nigerians to Islam.

Second, it was believed that western nations were promoting the foreign-based or internationally focused propaganda in an attempt to thwart Goodluck Jonathan's reelection. Some major nations reportedly felt irritated when Goodluck Jonathan signed the Same-Sex Trade Agreement following intense pressure and pleading. In 2014, the Prohibition Bill became law. In retribution, these western countries hired the US political and media consultancy company Axelrod, Kupper, Plouffe, and Del Cecato (AKPD) Media and Message, working in collusion with the then-opposition party (APC) (Okolie & Nnamani, 2016). Isaac Baker, the AKPD spokesperson, acknowledged that the company was contracted to provide APC with strategic services for nine months before being re-engaged for three weeks to assist the party in planning announcement events (Kredo, 2015). With this directive, the global media behemoth started its propaganda work by giving priority to three crucial and emotionally charged areas: internationalizing the story of the Chibok Girls' kidnapping; exaggerating the then-administration's corruption profile; and amplifying violations of human rights brought on by military actions in the conflict-torn Northeast region (Terrang, 2017).

Using the hashtag, the AKPD and other local partners launched a large media blitz against the Jonathan administration through both traditional and new media platforms in response to the Boko Haram extremists' purported kidnapping of 278 Chibok School Girls (2017). Prominent figures like Malala Yousfzai, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and Michelle Obama, the former First Lady of the United States, mobilized protests for the release of the kidnapped girls in response to the media frenzy (McKelvey, 2016). The protests, condemnations, and outcry that followed the kidnapping of the Chibok School Girls were perceived as merely a means of painting the previous administration as incompetent and callous of addressing the North-Eastern region's security issues (Ekemam, 2016). Instead, Muhammadu Buhari was portrayed by the foreign propaganda apparatus as a seasoned retired military leader who could stop the insurgency before it started (Sulaiman, 2019).

According to anti-corruption propaganda, a number of Jonathan's administration public officials, such as Mohammed Adoke, Akinwumi Adesina, and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, were sensationally charged with corruption without being given a chance to defend themselves. The purpose of the media trial was to

give the appearance that the government was heavily involved in corruption. This view, however, is in contrast to Transparency International's official corruption perception index, which for the first time removed the nation from the list of the ten most corrupt nations in the world and ranked it between 31st in 2013 and 39th in 2014. Despite this significant accomplishment, the foreign propaganda apparatus promoted Muhammadu Buhari as a man with a perfect record of zero-tolerance for corruption and reported unsubstantiated corruption accusations against Jonathan's government. It is understandable why the APC candidate stated in a number of his speeches and interviews that eliminating corruption was one of his top goals, stating that corruption would destroy Nigeria if it is not eradicated. These attacks on Goodluck Jonathan by the media were fiercely and frequently claimed to have increased Muhammadu Buhari's chances while decreasing his chances of being accepted by the majority of voters. Indeed, according to Shapiro (2014), with the help of AKPD Media and Message, the Muhammadu Buhari was seen as decisive, devoid of corruption, and a leader of the people, while then-President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was portrayed as a weak, corrupt, incompetent, and insensitive leader (Abalaka, 2024).

The study's concluding discussion examines the contributions made by local political actors and activists in the run-up to Nigeria's 2015 presidential election, whether they were operating independently or under the auspices of civil society organizations. In the context of this election, propaganda driven by politicians and activists comprises of sets of facts and false information that are utilized by influential local players to influence voting patterns and the results of the 2015 Nigerian election. For important local players, politics or political dominance is a profitable business and frequently a means of survival. Nigerian local political players prosper from rent-seeking, political patronage, and perennialism. In order to either overthrow a government that did not serve their interests or strengthen their hold on political power, this group depended on the effectiveness of media outlets to launch a campaign of defamation, hate speech, character assassination, and voter fragmentation along ethnic and religious lines. The Nigerian presidential election of 2015 demonstrated this trait (Ajiteru, 2024). To support this, Animashaun (2015) describes and emphasizes the type of derogatory campaign rhetoric that dominated Nigerian politics before to the 2015 presidential election: Vote for a Democrat rather than a dictator; vote for continuity rather than change; vote for good governance rather than luck; and vote

against the continuation of corruption and Boko Haram. However, some Specifically, the People's Democratic Party-sponsored commercials that denigrated the personality of General Muhammadu Buhari, the opposition presidential candidate, included Don't let this dictator drag us back to the Buhari Pull Over, Faces of Hypocrites, and the Era of Doom and Brutality, among other things. The evidence shown above indicates that the major players blatantly violated the conditions of the peace agreement, even though the two main parties signed it to refrain from acts or statements that could incite hatred, violence, or rancour (Sulaiman, 2024).

6.3 The 1983 General Election

Literature suggests that a variety of factors, including pecuniary inducement, ethno-religious identification, and the personality of the voter, may affect voting behavior in developing democracies. candidate, party structure and messaging, and the state of the economy (Ali & Yakubu, 2017; Sule et al., 2017). However, there is no denying the distinct and powerful influence that campaign messaging has in influencing voters' decisions. Three methods were described by McNair (2019) for assessing how propaganda affected voters' attitudes and actions. These include sending messages to candidates' communication strategies during a political campaign, determining how people respond to particular messages and compiling these responses into statistically significant aggregates, typically in the form of public opinion polls, and carrying out experiments to specifically isolate the effects of specific communication process elements. Abalaka (2019).

The aforementioned rationale leads to the supposition that the campaign messaging' consequences are typically at the peak, when the information is in line with the recipients' current beliefs, attitudes, and values. Therefore, when changes take place, they are primarily the result of a variety of factors originating from social context, powerful and masculine mass media, group interactions, the public's acceptance of an idea being expressed without coercion or inducement, the perceived credibility of the information sources, and the influence of opinion leaders. Ajiteru (2024).

Therefore, when campaign propaganda is based on and entwined with an existing belief (such as the fact that millions of Nigerians struggle with extreme poverty and barely make ends meet, or that the PDP Government's rigging, which has been practiced since 2003, is the worst kind of injustice), it is result-oriented.

corruption is the biggest violation of human rights); when it takes the form of policy recommendations, like establishing a social welfare program worth at least N5000 to help the 25 million poor and most vulnerable citizens, which is equivalent to N1.00 to 1.00 USD; stabilizing oil prices; creating three million jobs annually; bringing down the price of fuel to 45 Naira per liter; eliminating Boko Haram within three months; and making sure that no Nigerian has an excuse to travel abroad for medical care (as seen in the Boko Haram insurgency and the alleged kidnap of the Chibok girls).

Ogaraku (2019) claims that prior to the 2015 general election, the opposition party's (APC) campaign propaganda was intended to increase the dislike of the then-ruling party (PDP), which they felt had dominated the government apparatus for sixteen (16) years with little to no beneficial influence, rather than to force the Nigerian public to embrace the propaganda's propagandist (the APC). In order to gain the support of less literate and unemployed Nigerians, the APC, which controls the main traditional media outlets and social media sites like Facebook, blogs, Twitter, and YouTube, used emotive and dubious messaging, as shown in Table 1. Compared to the educated, independent, and employed citizens, the aforementioned groups are typically more vulnerable to manipulation in all its forms because they require less knowledge and motivation to take action Abalaka, (2024).

In addition to the previously given facts, Table 2's geographic voting analysis demonstrates how ethno-religious campaign feelings and messaging were crucial in the 2015 presidential election. To put it another way, people were fed and brainwashed into believing campaign rhetoric that was laced with chauvinism based on race and religion. Should these facts be acknowledged as the historical foundation for Nigeria's political dominance, it would explain why votes were distributed geographically, with Muhammadu Buhari, the presidential candidate of the All-Progressive Congress, receiving the most votes in all three of the northern axis' zones with the largest Muslim populations. South-South and South-East voters simultaneously cast large numbers of ballots for the People's Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, Democratic Party. However, the South-West geopolitical zone's vote in favor of the All Progressive Congress may not be unrelated to three current political realities: the region's historical grievances and hostilities with the South-East, which stem from the former's role against the latter during the 1967–1970 Nigerian Civil War; the All Progressive Congress's selection of Professor Yemi

Osibanjo, a native of the South-West zone, as its vice presidential candidate; and the South West zone's alleged marginalization under Goodluck Jonathan Ajiteru's administration (2024).

Table 2 shows the outcomes of Nigeria's 2015 presidential elections in each of the country's six geopolitical zones.

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

1.7. Election pledges and governance dynamics in the presidential election after 2015

One of the essential components of representative democracy, which is how aspirations and expectations are established and maintained in any society, is election promises. It also refers to the broader framework of tactics used by political parties to encourage followers to cast ballots, increase voter turnout, and eventually influence election results. Campaign promises influence and affect the degree of voter engagement and accountability in government, according to Manin et al. (1999). Crucially, a political party does more than only serve to compile and express the different societal interests; it also actively works to transform these disparate demands into specific words. The tripodic relationship between campaign promises, election results, and post-election governance has thus consistently been the focus of scientific investigation due to the general mistrust that citizens have for election promises. The main focus of the inquest has essentially been examining the electoral pledges made by candidates and political parties prior to an election, figuring out how much of an impact they had on the result, and comprehending the procedures in place to faithfully translate these concepts into reality in the post-election governance. Ajiteru (2024).

Previous research has analyzed the degree to which campaign pledges are kept following elections (Sulaiman, 2024). While some parties carried out their pre-election promises, others became entangled in the web of breaking their

commitments after winning. at the polling station. However, Naurin's (2018) research shows that the actual form of governance has a significant impact on how electoral promises are realized. The United States records a lower percentage of 60 to 70% because of a constitutional arrangement where the President, the Senate, and the House of Representatives have joint control over decision-making. In contrast, single-party majority governments in Canada, Britain, and New Zealand fulfill between 70 and 85 percent of the promises made in their election manifestos (Naurin, 2013). The study also discovered that systems with frequent coalition governments have the lowest levels of fulfillment. According to Naurin (2013), electoral pledges are generally fraught with suspicion because they are getting harder to find any situation where campaign promises' favorable ratings exceed their unfavorable ones (Abalaka, 2024).

1.7. Election pledges and governance dynamics in the presidential election after 2015

One of the essential components of representative democracy, which is how aspirations and expectations are established and maintained in any society, is election promises. It also refers to the broader framework of tactics used by political parties to encourage followers to cast ballots, increase voter turnout, and eventually influence election results. Campaign promises influence and affect the degree of voter engagement and accountability in government, according to Manin et al. (1999). Crucially, a political party does more than only serve to compile and express the different societal interests; it also actively works to transform these disparate demands into specific words. The tripod relationship between campaign promises, election results, and post-election governance has thus consistently been the focus of scientific investigation due to the general mistrust that citizens have for election promises. The main focus of the inquest has essentially been examining the electoral pledges made by candidates and political parties prior to an election, figuring out how much of an impact they had on the result, and comprehending the procedures in place to faithfully translate these concepts into reality in the post-election governance. Ajiteru (2024).

Previous research has analyzed the degree to which campaign pledges are kept following elections (Sulaiman, 2024). While some parties carried out their pre-election promises, others became entangled in the web of breaking their commitments after winning. at the polling station. However, Naurin's (2018)

research shows that the actual form of governance has a significant impact on how electoral promises are realized. The United States records a lower percentage of 60 to 70% because of a constitutional arrangement where the President, the Senate, and the House of Representatives have joint control over decision-making. In contrast, single-party majority governments in Canada, Britain, and New Zealand fulfill between 70 and 85 percent of the promises made in their election manifestos (Naurin, 2013). The study also discovered that systems with frequent coalition governments have the lowest levels of fulfillment. According to Naurin (2013), electoral pledges are generally fraught with suspicion because they are getting harder to find any situation where campaign promises' favorable ratings exceed their unfavorable ones (Abalaka, 2024).

1.7.1 The two main parties' campaign pledges for the 2015 Nigerian presidential election

In terms of security, Goodluck Jonathan, the PDP's presidential candidate, stated in his Eagle Square Abuja declaration of presidential intent on November 11, 2014, that his government is prepared to use multilateral engagements to fight insecurity, especially the growing wave of insurgency in the country's northeast geopolitical zone (Channels, 2014). Regarding infrastructure development, the PDP candidate pledged to build on the progress achieved in the power sector by finishing the 3,050-megawatt Mambilla hydropower plant in Niger state and the 450-megawatt Azura power plant project in Edo state. Good luck, Jonathan. His government has received additional praise.

For revitalizing the ailing rail industry by repairing the Lagos-Kano and Port-Harcourt-Maiduguri gauge train lines, respectively, and pledging to link other regions of the nation in the event of a 2015 reelection. Additionally, he promised to keep up the current ICT-based public sector reform in order to minimize the impact of the corruption wave. Additionally, Goodluck Jonathan reaffirmed the accomplishments of his administration in creating jobs and empowerment programs for young people through the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programs (SURE-P), YouWin, the Graduate Internship Scheme, the 220 billion naira grant to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and the 3 billion naira grant to the Nollywood industry during the PDP flag-off of the 2015 presidential campaign in Lagos on January 9, 2015 (Sahara Reporters, 2015). He vowed to use these programs to generate 2 million jobs a year if his government were reelected.

On the other hand, the APC promised to implement a significant shift that would improve the living conditions of the underprivileged group of Nigerians in both its manifesto and a number of speeches made by the party's presidential candidate between 2014 and 2015. The APC presidential candidate pledged to create 3 million jobs annually in the human development sector, offer interest-free loans to university and technical school students who fulfill the necessary prerequisites, and give discharged but unemployed people a twelve-month allowance while they participate in the skills and entrepreneurial development program (APC, 2014). Additionally, Buhari promised that his government would revive the Ajaokuta steel company in order to launch an ambitious manufacturing program and fixing the issue in the power sector (Vanguard, 2015). In particular, he committed to producing, transmitting, and distributing a minimum of 20,000 megawatts of electricity in the first four years, with the goal of reaching 50,000 megawatts in the next ten. With real GDP growth of 10% per year on average, the APC candidate also aimed to make Nigeria's economy one of the fastest-growing in the world. The APC candidate also pledged to enforce the National Gender Policy, which prioritizes giving women at least 35% of appointed jobs, to prohibit all public officials from seeking medical care overseas, and to require public officials to declare their assets and liabilities (APC, 2014).

Additionally, in violation of the APC's promise to produce, transfer, and distribute 20,000 megawatts or more of electricity in four years, Although Nigeria reached a high generation capacity of 4,800 megawatts prior to Muhammadu Buhari's inauguration in 2015, the rise of the APC government reduced the power capacity to 2,591 megawatts in 2016, according to data from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission. According to Nnodim (2016), the country's power crisis deteriorated on March 31, 2016, when the power generation completely failed at precisely 12:58 p.m., reaching zero megawatts, and stayed there for around three hours. Furthermore, the Nigeria Electricity Supply Industry revealed on December 25, 2016, that around twelve power plants in the nation were unable to generate electricity during the off-peak period, resulting in their inability to generate even one megawatt of electricity (Sulaiman, 2019).

Regarding security, there is increasing worry that Many residents have been killed and abducted as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency and banditry,

which has escalated in the majority of northern states (Onuoha & Oyewole, 2018). Nigeria made great strides in the fight against corruption under former President Goodluck Jonathan, according to the annual corruption perception index, which ranked the country as the 136th least corrupted in 2014. However, the President Buhari administration's anti-corruption efforts took a hit when Nigeria was ranked as the 148th least corrupted out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2018). Additionally, some think that the Buhari administration's poor economic management may have contributed to the currency rate's increase from 190 naira to the dollar in 2015 to over 400 naira now per dollar in 2019 and a rise in Petroleum Motor Spirit (fuel) pump prices from 86 naira (\$145) per liter in 2015 to 145 naira (\$145) per liter in 2017 (Fick, 2016; The Economist, 2019).

This study observes that the incumbent government has continued to garner strategic and unwavering support from supporters primarily drawn from the northern axis of the nation, who may make up a sizable portion of Nigeria's voting population, despite the stark discrepancy between the promises made by the All Progressive Congresses during the 2015 presidential election and the realities that have emerged in the post-election period. This ongoing support could be explained by the incumbent's unfair and exclusive policies, which focus significant political appointments and development projects in the northern area and among Muslims, who the President felt provided him with significant support in the 2015 election (see Ajiteru, 2017 for more information on these). Local political figures also provided similar support, as the incumbent administration emphasized, safeguarded, and guaranteed their political and economic interests. Based on the aforementioned, the current study makes the assumption that the APC government's increased support during the election was caused by the sophistication of its propaganda apparatus, which was strategically used to incite ethno-religious sentiments during its nationwide campaigns. These strategies, which include the establishment of asymmetrical policies, have been demonstrated to be helpful in the consolidation and retention of power as well as the legitimization of Abalaka (2018) discusses their control on post-election government.

1.8 The Linguistic Variability of Political Campaigns

Dialect and ditype (register) are the two categories of language varieties, according to Longe (2015:26). According to his definition, register is "the variety

of language according to use" in contexts including political campaigns, religious worship, and advertisements (35). One intriguing aspect of register is that it conveys the speaker's attitude, feelings, and mood toward the topic of discussion and the other participants. Style, which is a significant component of register in and of itself, is how this is expressed (Sulaiman, 2019).

Political campaign rhetoric is used in a variety of ways to get past the necessary information to the voters in order to persuade or appeal to them. It is typically emotionally charged and has the power to influence voters to change their minds about a certain topic. Politics is a "lexicon of conflict and drama, of ridicules and reproach, pleading and persuasion, color and bite permeated," according to Szanto (2018:7). A language that is intended to uplift men, ruin others, and alter the perceptions of others.

The one area of human endeavor that employs propaganda the most is politics. Because propagandists have rarely hesitated to fabricate or misrepresent the facts in order to convince and rally support, the word is frequently linked to dishonesty. Propaganda can actually be truthful or dishonest, and its goal could be to garner assistance or damage one's reputation. One essential tool of the political language is propaganda, according to Abalaka (2024). It is employed to shape and alter perceptions.

Rhetoric, which includes simultaneous use of promises, biblical allusions to God, repetition, metaphorical language, etc., is another characteristic of political campaign language that sets it apart from other language usage. To persuade the voters, politicians enrich their statements with rhetorical devices. This occasionally affects how many votes he ultimately receives at the polls. In a really democratic setting, a politician's rhetorical style actually plays a major role in his success. A politician needs to be well prepared verbally to stifle an opponent while also possessing the ability to evoke feelings of rage or sympathy in the electorate. There are promises made to the electorate in political campaign language, whether it is declarative, imperative, exclamatory, or interrogative (Ajiteru, 2024).

1.9 Figurative Phrases

Figurative expressions are words or phrases that are used differently than they are in regular language in order to give them a unique meaning. As a result,

we ought to interpret them according to their connotative meanings rather than their denotative ones. Figures of speech are employed as rhetorical tactics, according to Sulaiman (2019), particularly when politicians are faced with complex ideas that are challenging to express for the layman's simple comprehension. This indicates that politicians employ certain figurative language to enhance the impact of their speeches. Metaphor and idiom are the figures of speech that will be covered in this part, according to Abalaka (2024).

1.10 Phrases

Phrasal constructs or verbal statements that are intimately related to a particular language are called idioms. Idioms are popular among Africans, particularly Nigerians, and are used in everyday speech. Examine the following instances:

1. "People in the Niger Delta made the mistake of putting all their eggs in one basket, which is the root of the region's issues, which extend beyond the derivation fund issue. For eight years, they have been members of the same party. (The governor of Sokoto State and Democratic People's Party (DPP) presidential candidate, Niger Delta residents are being urged by Altahiru Bafarawa to vote against the PDP in the general elections. *Spectator Weekly*, March 18, 2003: 24
 2. The tunes are determined by the person who pays the piper. Watch out, Ekiti! Once more, the devourers are present. (April 16, 2017, *Friday Punch*: 18)
- According to Ajiteru (2024), the italicized portions of the aforementioned excerpts are excellent illustrations of idioms that politicians employ during political campaigns to add additional significance to their statements.

2. Final Thoughts

This study aims to highlight the significant impact that campaign propaganda played in influencing voters' decisions in the 2015 Nigerian presidential election. It made the case that Nigerian voters depend on the decisions made by the electoral process rather than making their own decisions comprising leaders of diverse ethnic and religious groups who also serve as representatives of different political parties in order to make political choices. Nigerian presidential elections typically feature fierce competition between different ethnic groups vying for governmental authority to further their own interests. The occupant can share political positions and lucrative contracts with members of the same faith and ethnic group when they have access to governmental authority. Additionally, it enables political leaders to focus important development initiatives on areas that

supported them with a majority of votes. Therefore, in order to win over people who are unable to go beyond the boundaries of race and religion, hate speech, ethno-religious campaign messaging, and dubious campaign promises are employed. These facts, which are often regarded as the primary factors influencing Nigerian voters' choices, undoubtedly played a part, and finally decided how the 2015 presidential election turned out. Muhammadu Buhari, an opposition candidate, defeated incumbent Goodluck Jonathan to win the presidency for the first time in Nigeria's democratic history.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abalaka, J. N. (2024). The impact of inadequate governance on security in Nigeria: The approach of Police Force Command Abuja. *International Journal of Law and Society*, 1(4), 162–180. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijls.v1i4.185>
- [2] Ajiteru, S. A. R. (2024). The impact of inadequate governance on security in Nigeria: The approach of Police Force Command Abuja. *International Journal of Law and Society*, 1(4), 162–180. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijls.v1i4.185>
- [3] All Progressives Congress (APC). (2014). The manifesto of the All Progressives Congress. APC.
- [4] Baker, C. E. (2017). *Media, markets, and democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- [5] Castells, M. (2019). *Communication power*. Oxford University Press.
- [6] Downs, A. (2017). An economic theory of political action in a democracy. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 65(2), 135–150. <https://doi.org/10.1086/257897>
- [7] Elster, J. (2016). Introduction. In J. Elster (Ed.), *Rational choice* (pp. 1–33). New York University Press.
- [8] Ezirim, G. E., Nnamani, K. E., & Nnaegbo, O. (2016). Democracy at the crossroads: Ethno-regional power contestations and democratization in a diversified Nigeria, 1960–2015. *South East Journal of Political Science*, 1(1), 96–123.
- [9] Gottfried, J. A., Hardy, B. W., Winneg, K. M., & Jamieson, K. H. (2013). *Did fact checking...*
- [10] Green, D. P., & Shapiro, I. (2016). *Pathologies of rational choice theory: A critique of applications in political science*. Yale University Press.
- [11] Hassan, I., & Hitchen, J. (2019, April 18). Nigeria's 'propaganda secretaries'. *Mail & Guardian*. <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-04-18-00-nigerias-propaganda-secretaries/>
- [12] Jebiril, N., Stetka, V., & Loveless, M. (2013). *Media and democratization: What is known about the role of mass media in transitions to democracy*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
- [13] Khadka, N. (2015, October 17). Election is backbone of democracy in Nepal. *NewsBlaze*. http://newsblaze.com/thoughts/opinions/election-is-backbone-of-democracy-in-nepal_204/
- [14] Landa, J., Copeland, M., & Grofman, B. (2015). Ethnic voting patterns: A case study of Metropolitan Toronto. *Political Geography*, 14(5), 435–449. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0962-6298\(95\)93405-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0962-6298(95)93405-8)
- [15] Moehler, D. C. (2015). *Free and fair or fraudulent and forged: Elections and legitimacy in Africa (Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 55)*.
- [16] National Bureau of Statistics. (2018). *Labor force statistics - Volume I: Unemployment and underemployment report*. NBS.
- [17] Nwangwu, C., Ononogbu, O. A., & Okoye, K. (2016). Politicisation of the counter-insurgency operations in Nigeria: Implication for the political economy. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 42–63.
- [18] Owen, O., & Usman, Z. (2015). Briefing: Why Goodluck Jonathan lost the Nigerian presidential election of 2015. *African Affairs*, 114(456), 455–471. <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adv037>
- [19] Payne, G., & Payne, J. (2014). *Key concepts in social research*. Sage Publications.

- [20] Radnitzky, G., & Bernholz, P. (Eds.). (2017). *Economic imperialism: The economic approach applied outside the field of economics*. Paragon House Publishers.
- [21] Royed, T. (1996). Testing the mandate model in Britain and the United States: Evidence from the Reagan and Thatcher eras. *British Journal of Political Science*, 26(1), 45–80. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400007419>
- [22] Sulaiman, T. H., & Ajiteru, S. A. R. (2024). The impact of inadequate governance on security in Nigeria: The approach of Police Force Command Abuja. *International Journal of Law and Society*, 1(4), 162–180. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijls.v1i4.185>
- [23] Ukonu, M. O. (2015). Influences of media ownership patterns on media freedom and professionalism in Nigeria. *Nsukka Journal of the Humanities*, 15, 144–159.
- [24] UNICEF. (2015). *Out of school children initiative report*.
- [25] Woolley, S. C., & Guilbeault, D. (2017). *Computational propaganda in the United States of America: Manufacturing consensus online (Working Paper No. 5)*. Project on Computational Propaganda, Oxford Internet Institute.