

Ethnicity, Voter Behaviour and Resurgence of Separatists Agitations by Some Ethnic Groups in Nigeria: Implications for Good Governance and Democratic Consolidation

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Abstract: Ethnicity has remained a dominant factor that has continued to shape the outcome of presidential elections results in Nigeria. This ugly menace was glaringly manifested in the 1979 and 1983 presidential elections. However, this ugly phenomenon took a nose dive during the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election. Even the 1999, 2003, 2007 and the 2011 presidential elections showed relative decline in the manifestations of ethnicity in voter behaviour. Against this backdrop, this study interrogates the resurgence of ethnicity in the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria after many years of its decline. It argues that despite the attendant implications of the resurgence of ethnicity for good governance and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, the outcome of the election was highly celebrated and welcomed by stakeholders of Nigerian democratic project on the mere justification that it was the first time an incumbent president lost to opposition party. The researchers employ documentary materials as source of data and utilize content analysis and trend analytical techniques for data analysis. The theoretical framework that anchors the study is the failed expectations and alternative choice theory. The study concludes that the outcome of the 2015 presidential election has substantially influenced allocation of values by the President Muhammadu Buhari led government, leading to resurgence of separatists agitations among some ethnic nationalities. The paper recommends that there should be concerted efforts by all stakeholders in Nigerian democratic project towards elimination of ethnicity in Nigerian politics through national reorientation of the citizens. It further recommends that the Buhari led government should adopt policy of accommodation and compromise to douse the embers of separatist agitations in the country.

Key words: Ethnicity • Voter Behaviour • Good Governance • Resurgence and Separatist Agitations in Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Ethnicity has remained a dominant factor that shapes the outcome of presidential elections results in Nigeria. Since 1923 voter behaviour in Nigeria has continued to reflect rashes of ethnicity as the major ethnic groups such as the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani have pinched tent with political parties controlled by candidates of their ethnic groups. Right from 1923 legislative elections in which the Clifford constitution of 1922 made provision for elective principle, the voter behaviour in terms of choice of parties and candidates to vote for by the three major ethnic groups had ethnic undertone. It was argued that even though the legislative election provided ample

opportunity for the first election in Nigerian political history, the NNDP, through the activities of the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) in 1933 manifested ethnicity leading to the factionalisation of the party [1].

The Richard constitution of 1946 further flamed the embers of ethnicity when it introduced regional political parties in Nigeria. The NNDP later metamorphosed into a mega party-the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) and became the mouthpiece of Nigerian people that championed constitutional amendment in 1948. Sooner than later, the political party began to wane due to the influence of ethnicity. This development led to the formation of ethnic based political parties that promoted ethnic jingoism among politicians and their supporters.

In this election the politicians in the country at the time were forced to go to their ethnic bases to mobilize votes for the regional assembly elections and this added more salts to the injury.

Worse still, the Lytleton constitution of 1954 emerged to recognise and encourage the introduction of political party parties with strong ethnic based. This was the period in which some politicians began to manifest some dangerous ethnic trends in voting behaviour in Nigeria. It will be recalled that the remote cause of the Kano riot of 1953 was provoked by ethnic sentiments that characterised the vote for the independent motion in the Central Legislative House in Lagos. Worse still, the entrenchment of ethnic politics and regionalisation in the 1954 general elections into the Central Legislature had prominently shown that the NCNC, AG and NPC at the forefront had overwhelming majority votes in their favour within their ethnic or regional boundaries [2].

Subsequently, during the 1959 general elections, the AG and NCNC campaigned and carried out mobilisations in their respective ethnic homelands in order to ensure victory at home. They however, carried out vigorous campaigns in the minority ethnic areas outside their ethnic domain in order to break monolithic electoral support of their political parties and widen their political horizon. Although the NPC confined its political activities in the North which was the homeland of its leaders it however had enough simple majority votes in the elections to control the legislature.

The Election results, no doubt reflected the dominant role of ethnicity in Nigerian politics. The emergence of ethnicity in Nigeria politics had been nurtured since colonial era with the trends and dimensions taking place over time and space. While the NCNC and AG won elections outside their home base, it should be noted that they won only in the minority ethnic enclaves due to the encouragement of the ethnic agitations in the struggle for political representation and power.

Worst evil of all, the colonial masters through their obnoxious policy of divide and rule fanned and entrenched embers of ethnicity to enable them perpetuate their rule, dominate and control politics and economy of post colonial Nigeria. It is gratifying to note that the British imperialist manipulated the electoral process and out rightly rigged the 1959 general election, to plant a political leadership dominated by northern elements that would protect its economic interest on the heels of colonial administration in Nigeria [3].

Furthermore, the immediate elections that followed after independence were not immune to the manifestation of this monster called ethnicity. The manipulation and falsification of 1963/64 population census by the ethnic groups in Nigeria was a preparatory ground for rigging the 1964/65 elections. This further sowed the seeds of ethnic discords among the social groupings in the country [3] as the ethnic groups manipulated the electoral processes to falsify election results in favour of their ethnic controlled political parties. As Eke rightly observed, the massive rigging, falsification of results and intimidation of political opponents that characterised the political behaviours of the ethnic groups in the 1964/65 elections worsen the hope of harmonious relations among the ethnic nationalities in the country. The flawed election process resulted into crises of 1966 coup and counter coup that led to 30 months civil war [1].

In a bid to shun the manifestation of ethnic chauvinism in Nigeria electoral process the 1979 constitution introduced presidential system which mandated the then electoral body the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) to register only parties that reflected national outlook in their memberships. Despite provision of the clause in the electoral law 1979 election was not spared by this monster called ethnicity. The presidential and parliamentary election were characterised by massive riggings perpetrated by ethnic forces. In the same manner, the 1983 general election took after the ethnic voting and ethnic coloration of the 1979 as the presidential candidates in the election had greater supports within their ethnic home lands rather than other ethnic groups.

The June 12, 1993 marked a paradigm shift in the history of presidential elections in Nigeria as the presumed winner of the presidential election, M. K. O Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) won substantial votes across ethnic nationalities and even defeated Bashiru Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC) even in his ethnic home town, Kano [4]. Furthermore, the 1993 presidential election was also freed from religious influences that usually characterised previous elections in the country as the presidential ticket of the (SDP) Abiola- Baba-Gana Kingibe was Muslim –Muslim ticket and they had country wide acceptability during the election.

The voting behaviour of Nigerians in the presidential elections that ushered in the Fourth Republic was also freed from ethnicity as the results of the election showed

that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Candidate Chief Olusegun Obasanjo had nationwide support across the country. Since the Fourth Republic, other presidential elections were conducted in 2003 and 2007, even though the elections were adjudged in some quarters as below democratic standard, the results of the elections across the ethnic nationalities reveal a substantial reduction of manifestation of ethnicity in voter behaviour in the country. The 2011 presidential election which was conducted in the heat of politics of power shift between the north and south of Nigeria also showed a relative decline in the manifestation of ethnicity in voting behaviour across the country. The candidate of the PDP Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan received massive supports from the electorate all over the country and even defeated Muhammad Buhari in his home state, Kastina State [5]. Unfortunately there was a manifestation of ethnic in voting behaviour in Nigeria during the 2015 presidential election as shown by the results declared by the Independent Electoral Commission for the presidential candidates of two dominant parties. The sudden reawakening of ethnicity in voting behaviour during the 2015 presidential elections has raised academic puzzle that necessitated the convocation of this study.

Statement of the Problem: The dangerous monster known as ethnicity has remained a dominant factor that shapes the outcome of presidential elections results in Nigeria. Although, this ugly menace manifested glaringly in the 1979 and 1983 presidential elections, this phenomenon however took a nose dive during the 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007 and the 2011 presidential elections as manifested in the outcome of these elections [6, 7]. In these elections the winners secured substantial votes in ethnic groups other than their own across the country.

Following this development, Nigerians and the stakeholders in Nigerian electoral process heaved a sigh relief. Unfortunately, this ugly menace resurfaced during the 2015 presidential election as the candidates of the two dominant political parties (PDP and APC) only secured majority of the votes cast only within their ethnic home lands but failed abysmally in other ethnic groups. Despite the attendant implications which this negative trend portends for good governance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria as evident in the rising spates of separatists agitations across the country, the outcome of the election was highly celebrated and viewed in many

quarters as a welcome development, on the flimsy explanation that it was the first time an incumbent president lost election to opposition party.

Granted that the election really marked a water shade in the annals of the development of Nigerian democracy, it is more rewarding to understand the implications of the resurgence of ethnicity in voting behaviour among Nigerians rather than paying fleeting attention to the development. The need to interrogate this development becomes more imperative when weighed against the backdrop of the danger this negative development portends for the Nigerian state especially when the ruling party (APC) has begun to base its political appointments and allocations of other socio-economic values on number of votes it secured in each geopolitical region. To address this puzzle, the researcher poses the following questions:

- What is the nexus between resurgence of ethnicity in voter behaviour in 2015 presidential election and the rising spates of separatist agitation in Nigeria?
- What are the implications of the resurgence of ethnicity in voter behaviour for good governance and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria?

Conceptual and Theoretical Underpinnings

Ethnicity: Ethnicity like any other concepts in social science has no generally accepted definition among scholars. It has been given various meanings and interpretations by scholars of different disciplines and ideological persuasions. Cohen [8: 4] views the term as referring to strife between groups in the course of which people stress their identity and exclusiveness. The notion implies a conflictual and competitive relationship between ethnic groups that happen to come in contact [2:5]. In his opinion, ethnicity arises when two or more ethnic groups come together or are brought together in one political union or society. In this sense ethnicity exists only within a political society consisting of diverse ethnic groups. Nnoli [2] concludes that it is the nature of relationship between the ethnic groups in a given polity that produces ethnicity.

For Osaghae [9:20], ethnicity is “the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage situations in competition, conflict or cooperation”. This definition identifies two issues that are central to the discussion on ethnicity. The first is that ethnicity is neither natural nor accidental but a product of

a conscious effort by social actors to outsmart another. The second is that ethnicity does not only manifest in conflictive or competitive relations but also in the context of cooperation. A corollary to the second is that ethnicity manifest itself in various forms, including voting, community service and violence. Thus it does totally or always imply negativity.

Contributing to the conceptualization of the phenomenon, De Vos and Romanucci [10] define ethnicity as the attribute of membership in a group set off by racial, territorial, economic, religious, aesthetic or linguistic uniqueness. For Wegh [11], an ethnic group is a self-perceived group of people who hold common traditions that are not shared by others with whom they are in contact. These tradition according to him include; religious beliefs and practice, language, a sense of historical continuity and a common ancestry or place of origin. In explanation of the pervasive characteristic of ethnic identity, Roosens [12], notes as follows:

The cultural traits by which an ethnic group defines itself never compromise the totality of the observable cultural but are only a combination of some characteristic that the actors ascribe to the selves and consider relevant. These traits can be replaced by others in the course of time [12:32].

Corroborating this view, Ukiwo [13:47], argues that “ethnic groups are groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always based on claims or myth of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory”. While all these variables need not be present before a group is so defined, the important thing is that such a group is classified or categorised as having a common identity that distinguishes it from others. Thus, ethnicity is not so much a matter of shared traits or cultural commonalities but the result of the interplay between external categorisation and self-identification [14:33]. In this context, ethnicity is employed to mean what other scholars may refer to as tribalism, denoting the behaviour, attitudes and loyalties that result from belonging to ethnic identity to gain political advantage in situation of competition. Corroborating this position Dabo [15:74] avers: “Ethnicity can simply be explained as a social phenomenon associated with contract with among ethnic groups that exist within the same political system which is characterised by culture, prejudice and social discrimination”. Ethnicity therefore, is a phenomenon

linked directly or indirectly to the forms of affiliation and identification built around ties of real kinship and all of these, the factor of common consciousness boundary of group than relevant for understanding ethnicity at any historical point of time. Nnoli [16:97] cited in Dabo [15:75] notes:

In reality, ethnicity is a very complex phenomenon like all social phenomena, it is subject to change. Its forms, place and role in society may alter. Its links with other phenomenon, subject as politics, region and class may change as circumstance changes.

Ethnicity according to Young [17:234] is defined thus:

The active sense of identification with some ethnic unit whether or not this group has any institutional structure of its own, or whether it has any real existence in pre-colonial epoch.

Ethnicity or ethnic identity also involves, in addition to subjective self-consciousness, a claim to status and recognition either as superior group or as group at least equal to others groups. Ethnicity is to ethnic category what class consciousness is to class [18: 19].

Joan [19: 376-377] views ethnicity as an alternative form of social organization and identification to class but it is a contingent and changeable status which like class, may or may not be articulated in particular contexts or particular times. Ethnicity, that is the conversion of cultural differences into basis for political differentiation between peoples, arises under certain circumstances. One of the circumstances that give rise to ethnicity is explained by elite competition. Competition between or among the elite precipitates ethnic conflict under specific conditions which arise from the broader political environment rather than from differences in the cultural values of the ethnic groups in question. This view is consistent with the assumption that ethnic identification is a variable rather than a fixed or given disposition [18:13]. Another theoretical argument for the rise of inter-ethnic conflict is the critical role of the relationship established between the elite and the state particularly the roles of collaborators with the opponents of the state authority [18:14].

Ethnicity has long been recognized as one of the more fundamental threats to institutional stability, political order and state cohesion in multi-ethnic societies of the

third world [20]. This is not to imply that ethnicity is just a third world or parochial phenomenon. There are few places on earth where ethnic politics cannot be found. Ethnic conflict just as we have in the third world like Afrikaners versus Bantu, the Kurd versus Iraqi, so also it exists in the developed countries, conflicts such as that between Ukrainian versus Great Russia, Turks versus Greek Cypriot, Welsh versus English, blacks versus white [21: 6]. The list is endless.

Hence ethnicity sometimes finds expression in political domination, economic exploitation, psychological expression and class manipulation. Ethnicity dominates our every aspect of national life because it is an instrument for the struggle for both resources and power within a polity. It is often used as a tool in the conflictive power play and struggle by groups to control resources and obtain certain advantages in society.

Voter Behaviour: Samuel S. Eldersveld in his 'theory and Method in voting Behaviour research' writes. "The term 'voting Behaviour' is not new. But it has been used of late to describe certain areas of study and types of political phenomena which previously had either not been conceived or were considered irrelevant" [22]. They further assert that voting behaviour is not confined to the examination of voting statistics, records and computation of electoral shifts and swings. It also involves an analysis of individual psychological processes (perception, emotion and motivation) and their relation to political action as well as of institutional patterns, such as the communication process and their impact on elections.

In the words of Plana and Riggs, cited in [22], voting Behaviour, is a field of study concerned with the ways in which people tend to vote in public elections and reasons why they vote as they do. For Bratton, voting behaviour is a set of personal electoral activities, including participation in electoral campaigns, turnout at the polls and choosing for whom to vote [23]. The voting Behaviour has recently been expanded in the meaning and is taken as one major and broad area of study.

Separatist Agitation: Ogban [24: 24] links separatist agitation to ethnic phenomenon. For Ogban separatist agitation refers to a condition where members of an ethnic group demonstrate an attempt or a threat to achieve a separation from the existing state. Alluding to this assertion, Nwobashi [25] describes separatist agitation as bodies in struggle for secession. He maintained that

separatist agitation entrepreneurs base their struggle on principle of national self determination. Supporting this argument [26:9] posits that "secessionists' position and activities always intertwine with the principal goal of self determination." This according to Johari [27: 467] implies that every nation should be organized as an independent political entity which may not border us here.

Based on this principle, most people who constitute a nationality existing in a multinational nation state aspire either to be independent or to live under a political arrangement of their own choice or be allowed a larger measure of political autonomy. It calls as a national right of the people of a particular nationality to chart their political destiny which many constitutions of many nation states do not permit.

Marxists also align themselves to the same point, given impetus to the Lenin constitution of 1924 which he frankly recognized the right of a nationality to secede from the Soviet Union. Stalin said that:

It is equally good and may under certain circumstances better if nations come together willingly and organize themselves in a multinational state on the basis of complete national equality consistent with democracy and non discrimination [28: 480, 29: 91, 27: 468].

But several objective questions have been raised from this principle. If the people of all nationalities would be allowed the rights to demand self determination and achieve their own states, they would be chaos and anarchy in many states considering the uncontrollable number that would be acting in a theatre of world politics. In a swift reaction, Garner [30: 35] in his words:

If the right of every group however small which may happen to be ethnically and linguistically distinct from the rest of the population, to separate and organize itself into a state, were admitted and exercised in practice, it would lead to chaos and anarchy.

Again, the problem of viability of these very small states will be called to questions because of uneven endowment of national resources, be it human or natural. Allowing this principle in practice would make French Quebec in Canada, the Scots in Britain, the Red Indians in United State of America, the Kurdish in Iraq, the Rashats

in Pakistan, the Yoruba in Dahomy, the Tamils in Sri Lanka and all the ethnic groups in Nigeria to demand same. John EE Dalbeing-Action lord action cautioned that the principle of national self determination was a retrograde step in human history [27: 466]. He further says:

Where political and national boundaries coincide, society ceases to advance and nations relapse into a condition corresponding to that of a man who remains in intercourse with his fellow men.

It is imperative to examine the conditions for a successful secession. Pearson [31] formulated an analytical framework for assessing the chances of the success of a separatists struggle based on the concept of resources. According to [31], this embraces the consideration of the cost and risk of attempting to separate from an existing state. its elements are: (1) socially mature environment or mobilized population through mass literacy and communication, industrialization and urbanization, (2) empowered counter elite, (3) international support including that of the emigrant Diaspora and the expresses its declining strength, (5) war; the failure of the Caribbean, the Middles East and African states indicates the difficulties of successfully seceding from an established state [32: 294-295].

Ethnicity and Voter Behaviour: The influence ethnicity on voter behaviour has been explored by scholars over the years. These scholars have embarked on both empirical and theoretical studies to support their various theoretical views. The implication is that voting behaviour is so complex that no one model is complete in itself [33]. In support of this view, De Vires *et al.* [34] argue that one of the most influenced findings of the voting behaviour of the past two decades is the realization that the clarity of domestic institutional context influences the relationship between economic perceptions and the vote choice. For example, Erdman [35] in a study of Zambia reports that ethnicity matters for voter alignment and even more so for party affiliation. The survey results indicate that ethnicity or ethno-political identity matters but certainly not the only factors that amount for election outcomes. Erdman [35] concludes that ethnicity provides the basic social cleavage for voting behaviour in many African countries, Campell *et al.* [36] suggest that ethnicity should not be abandoned as a determinant of the vote choice but the

way it is looked at most obviously be redefined in support of the Andrews and Inmann [37] study. Lindberg and Morrison [38] reported that "clentelistic and ethnic predisposed voting are minor features of the Ghanaian electorate. Lindberg and Morison [38] find that voter's evaluative behaviour is related to the actual or expected performance of the candidates and not politicians or governments' ability to provide private and public goods to its constituents. Dendere [39] in a study of Zimbabwe, challenges the commonly accepted notion that "African elections are mere ethnic consensus" showing that voters make their choices based on policy and economic preferences underlying a preferred ideology. Thus, political preferences are shaped by institutions, economic conditions and personality. This corroborates the assertion about elections by Horowitz [40] when he described elections as nothing more than "ethnic consensus" In a related study of the Ghanaian electoral competition in the 1990s, Perre and Mesples-Somps [41] reported that public transfers seem irrational as the ruling government invests more in opposition districts (especially, where the leading opposition members were very powerful) to avoid political agitation originating in these districts.

In a another study of Ghanaian election, however, Harding [42] using data based on the 2004 and 2008 elections, reports that when the provision of public goods (in this case roads) can be attributed to political action, it is likely to be affected by electoral support especially in the rural areas. This is not surprising as recent studies [43, 44, 39] do show that rural voters differ in their understanding of democracy, policy preferences, access to independent media and knowledge about opposition political parties, all of which influence support for or against the ruling party. In the last few years ethnic and racial influence on voting decisions was studied more than other issues. Race and ethnicity had great influence on voter behaviour [23]. Social class plays a significant importance in voting behaviour. However, other factors are showing an ever increasing importance today, such as, social class, party policies and ethnicity and region issues [45]. Voting for a candidate of one's own race might be a product of racism, or it may be the result of reliance on a simple, readily available cue. In other words, voters may support a candidate for their own race or ethnicity based on the assumption that a candidate who shares their racial or ethnic background also shares their basic political views [46]. Ihonybere and Shaw [47] record that

electoral competition in Nigeria is almost synonymous with ethnic competition, thus the manipulation of ethnic sentiments becomes part of the dynamics of the patrimonial system.

Good Governance: The concept of governance is a contested one. As Pierre and Guy [48:7] observe it is a concept that is notoriously slippery, frequently used by social scientists and practitioners without a concise definition. However, the existing definitions of governance can be subsumed into two broad categories. They are those who view governance in a technical sense and those who see it as a holistic one that transcends the state and its institutions. In the first case, the concept borrows directly from its usage in the corporate world. It implies the efficient management of state institutions. Issues of public accountability and transparency in government operations are emphasised, rule of law and public sector management are emphasised. This restricted view of governance was adopted by the World Bank [49, 50, 51]. The essence of this approach is to discipline the state and its institutions in realizing their economic objectives. Stoker [52:39] notes that "governance is the acceptable face of spending cuts". Governance in this sense represents the political construct of a minimalist state.

In the second sense, governance is a holistic one that transcends the state and its institutions. Governance is seen as the process of steering state and society towards the realization of collective goals. It is dynamic and problematic and often times, has contradictory relationship between the state and society [48, 53, 52, 54]. In this direction, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) defines governance as a process of social engagement between the rulers and the ruled in a political community. Rule making and standard setting, management of regime structures, outcome and results of the social pact are its component parts (IJNECA) in [55]. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) views governance as:

"the totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising of the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and mediate their differences. It encompasses the political, economic, legal, judicial, social and administrative authority and therefore includes; government, the private sector and the civil society" [56:9].

While there are variations in this holistic conception of governance, there is consensus that the major actors or agencies do interface in the governance project. These are the state, the civil society and the private sector. No matter the required synergy between these actors, the state remains a major actor in the governance agenda. The latter conception of governance is broader and it is not problematic. It also has an economic perspective, which is driven by the private sector. The market economy in this regard is promoted and reinforced.

Good governance flows logically from the concept of governance. According to Mohideen [57], governance becomes "good", when it operates in accordance with legal and ethical principles as conceived by society. In other words, good governance ensures that a society provides a guide and direction to itself through standards, ideals and norms that are embedded in the governance idea. The urge to steer state and society according to defined rules and procedures and ensure that governance in all its ramifications serves the interest of the greatest number of people in the society through a collective participatory, transparent and accountable mechanisms.

Democratic Consolidation: This implies a democracy that can last for the test of time. This can be assured if those values that made democracy worthwhile are fully institutionalized. Supporting this assertion, Okolie [58:12] views democratic consolidation "as the institutionalization of democratic principles and practices as part of everyday culture in given polity which finds expression in the behavioural patterns towards acquiring the basic ingredients of democratic ideals."

Kaur [59] asserts that democratic consolidation is attained when there is credible opposition capable of replacing an incumbent government by offering an alternative outline of politics and strategies that is likely to appeal to the electorate. By the concept of democratic consolidation, it connotes a deliberate political process in a polity by which democracy is "so broadly and profoundly legitimized among its citizens that it is very unlikely to break down" (Ouyang, <http://www.oycf.org/perspective/6-063000>). This is level of democracy when attained comes and stays and cannot come to an end suddenly or abruptly through unconstitutional acts such as military coups or dictatorships. To consolidate democracy, it needs behavioural and institutional changes that normalize democratic politics and narrow its uncertainty. Democratic consolidation is an off-shoot of good governance which encompasses accountability, security of human rights and civil liberties, devolution of

powers and respect for local autonomy, which all constitute a challenge to democratic regimes [60: 22]. In fact, democratic consolidation can be measured by the percentage of voters in a country who consider democracy as an indispensable way of life and are ready to go every length to protect it.

Theoretical Framework: The theoretical framework that anchors this study is the failed expectations and alternative choice theory. The theory is an off-shoot of the rational choice theory and the expectancy theory. The central proposition of this theory is that human beings are rational creatures and as such make only choices that would lead to the realization of set objectives or goals. The theory affirms that human beings are rational elements and as such cannot make choices that are opposed to their interests. Simply put, any choice made by human beings is tied to the realization of expected objectives or goals [61, 62]. These objectives or goals could be socio-economic or political and if the choice cannot produce the expected goals, either in the short run or in the long run, individuals are likely to abandon such choice for other alternative that are likely to guarantee the realization of those goals which their earlier choice had failed to realize [63, 64, 65, 66, 67]. Individuals are therefore more inclined to make choices that would yield maximum benefits and avoid choice that would lead to losses. Hargreaves-Heap *et al.* [68] opine that people calculate the likely costs and benefits of any action before deciding what to do.

Relating the above theoretical propositions to the problem under study, it is axiomatic to argue that the Nigeria voters were rationally guided by their socio-economic and political interests in their choice of the candidates they voted for, during the 2015 presidential election. Their choice of a particular candidate was tied to the belief that their new alternative will lead to the realization of what their previous choice had failed to realize.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted qualitative method in carrying out its investigation. The data employed for the study were gathered from secondary sources. As such, data used for this study were collected from public libraries as well as private libraries of a number of colleagues and associates within and outside the country. Besides, the study also made use of internet materials wherein relevant articles were carefully retrieved. The study utilized both content

analysis and trend analytical techniques for the analysis of data. As such the information employed for analysis in the study were carefully extracted from logical chains of evidence presented in journal papers, conference papers, periodic papers, edited books, documentary materials among others.

Results and Interpretations: The result presented in the line graph above indicates that the NPN's presidential candidate in the 1979 election, Alhaji Shehu Shagari from the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast in the Northwest, North-central and Northeast, his ethnic home land and South-South. The presidential candidate of the UPN Chief Obafemi Awolowo, from the Yoruba ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast only in South-West, his ethnic home land. The presidential candidate of the NPP Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, from the Igbo ethnic nationality won the majority of the votes cast only in South-east, his ethnic home land. The result also indicates presidential candidates of the other minor political parties also secured little votes in their home lands but fail woefully in other ethnic home lands. This indicates a high prevalence of ethnicity in voter behaviour among Nigerians in this period as the candidates of the three dominant parties secured substantial number of the votes cast only in their ethnic home lands but fail abysmally in other ethnic groups.

The result presented in the line graph above indicates that the NPN's presidential candidate in the 1983, Alhaji Shehu Shagari from the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast in the Northwest, North-central and Northeast, his ethnic home land and South-South. The presidential candidate of the UPN Chief Obafemi Awolowo, from the Yoruba ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast only in South-West, his ethnic home land and failed to secure substantial votes in other ethnic groups. The presidential candidate of the NPP Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, from the Igbo ethnic nationality won the majority of the votes cast only in South-east, his ethnic home land and also failed to secure substantial number of votes in other ethnic groups. This also indicates a high prevalence of ethnicity in voter behaviour among Nigerians in this period as the candidates of the three dominant parties secured substantial of the votes cast only in their ethnic home lands but fail abysmally in other ethnic groups.

The result presented in the line graph above indicates that the SDP's candidate in the 1993 election, Chief Bashorun Abiola from the Yoruba ethnic nationality won the majority of the votes cast in the South-west,

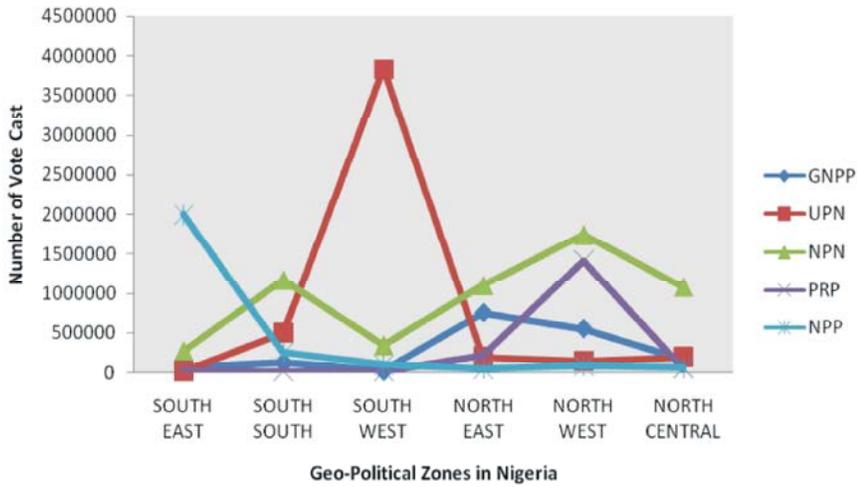


Fig. 1: Voting Pattern in the 1979 Presidential Election by Geo-Political in Nigeria

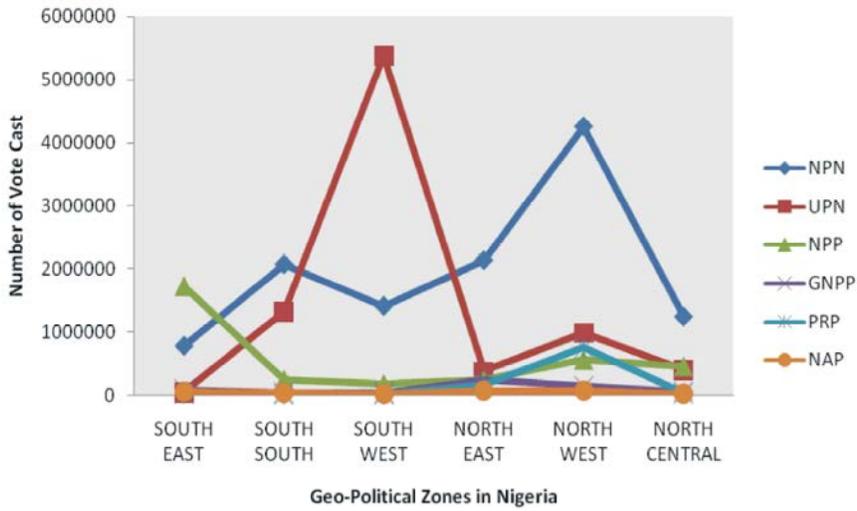


Fig. 2: Voting Pattern in the 1983 Presidential Election by Geo-Political in Nigeria

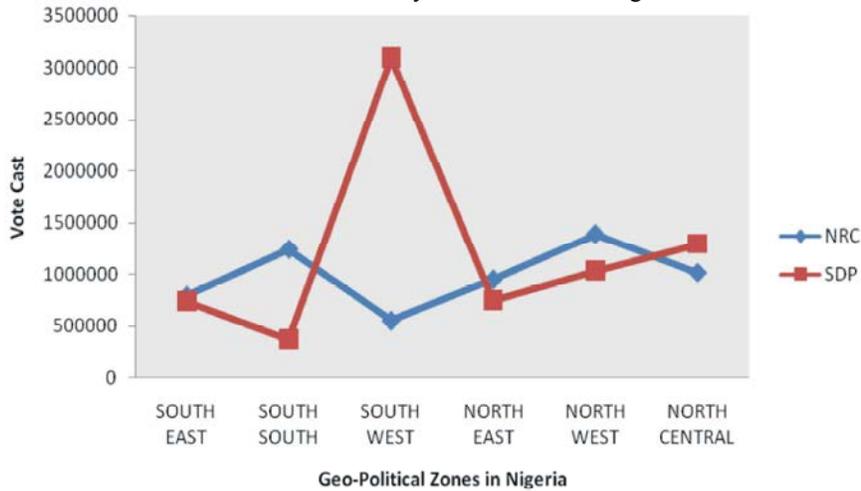


Fig. 3: Voting Pattern in the 1993 Presidential Election by Geo-Political in Nigeria

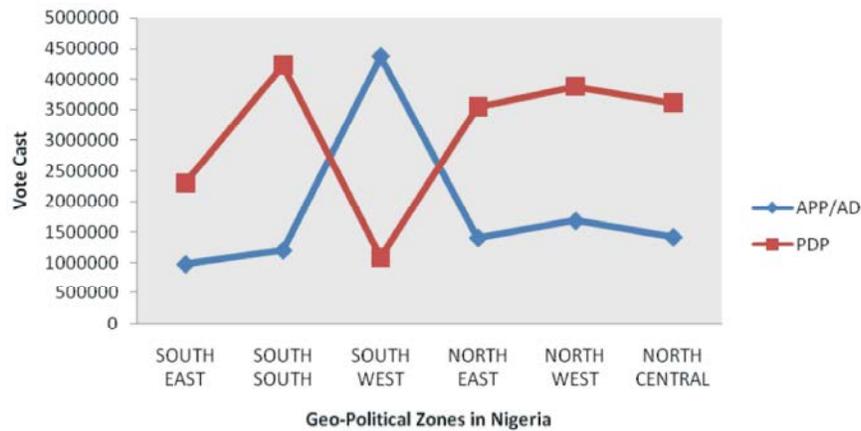


Fig. 4: Voting Pattern in the 1999 Presidential Election by Geo-Political in Nigeria

North-central and Northeast while the candidate of the NRC Alhaji Bashiru Tofa won the majority of the votes cast in South-South, Southeast and Northwest. This indicates a relative decline of ethnicity in voter behaviour among Nigerians as the candidates of the two parties won substantial number of the vote cast in ethnic groups other than their ethnic groups even though there was high manifestation of ethnic voting in Southwest.

The result presented in the line graph above indicates that the PDP's candidate Chief Olusegun Obasanjo from the Yoruba ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast in the South-east, South-south, North-central, Northwest and Northeast while the candidate of the APP/AD, Chief Olu Falae from the same ethnic nationality won the majority of the votes cast only in South-west. This indicates a zero prevalence of ethnicity in voter behaviour.

The result presented in the line graph above indicates that the PDP's candidate in the 1999 election from Yoruba ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast in the South-east, South-South, Southwest, North-central and Northeast while the candidate of the ANPP, Muhamadu Buhari from Fulani ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast only in Northwest. This indicates a relative decline of ethnicity in voter behaviour as the candidates of the PDP won substantial of the vote cast in ethnic groups other their ethnic groups even in the Hausa/Fulani dominated geopolitical zones.

The above result indicates that the PDP's candidates from Yoruba ethnic group won the majority of the votes cast in the South-east, South-South, Southwest, North-central, while the candidate of the CPC, Muhamadu Buhari from Fulani ethnic group won the majority of the

votes cast in Northwest and Northwest. This indicates a relative manifestation of ethnicity in voter behaviour even though the candidates of the PDP won substantial of the vote cast in ethnic groups other his ethnic group, but lost in northeast and northwest dominated by the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group where the CPC candidate came from.

The above result indicates that the APC won the majority of the votes cast in the South-west, North-central, North-west and Northeast while the candidate of the PDP won the majority of the votes cast in south-east, South-South and the FCT. Further analysis of the votes scored by candidates of the two dominant parties in the elections shows that APC secured a total of fifteen million, four hundred and twenty two thousand, nine hundred and twenty three (15, 422, 923) votes to defeat the presidential candidate of the PDP that scored a total of twelve million, eight hundred and fifty three thousand, one hundred and sixty four (12, 853, 164) votes. The analysis of the voting pattern reveals that the twenty three (23) states won by APC during said the election are in northern and western parts of the country where the APC candidates and his running mate hail from while the thirteen states won by PDP in the election are located in the south-south where the presidential candidate of the party came from and southeast where there it is popularly believed that G. E. Jonathan, the PDP presidential candidate has strong sympathy for the course of the Igbo ethnic nationality. Invariably, this is a clear indication of that ethnicity was a determinant of the outcome of the 2015 presidential election. This further reveals the resurface of ethnicity in the voting behaviours among many Nigerian.

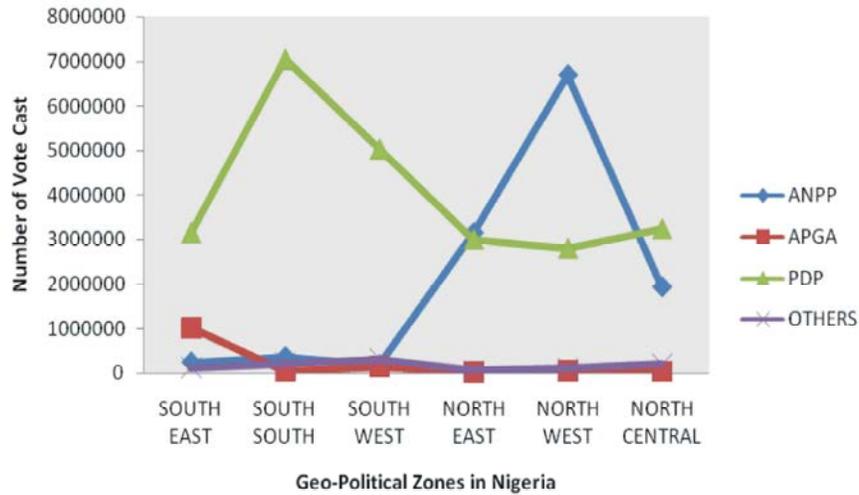


Fig. 5: Voting Pattern in the 2003 Presidential Election by Geo-Political Zone in Nigeria

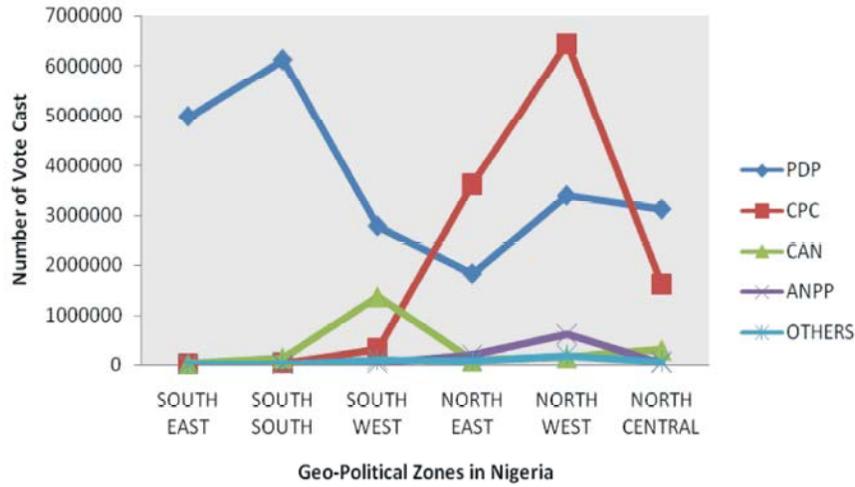


Fig. 6: Voting Pattern in the 2011 Presidential Election by Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria

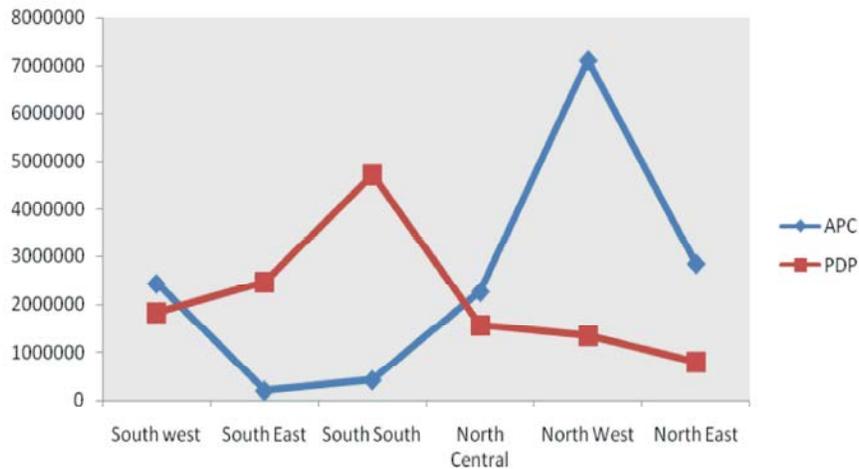


Fig. 7: Voting Pattern in the 2015 Presidential Election by Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria

A Theoretical Discourse and Analysis: The resurgence of ethnicity on voter behaviour constitutes a great threat to good governance and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. This is because it promotes the embers of ethnocentrism and parochialism that lead to disunity of the country. Ethnicity has been identified as one of the major factors militating against the evolution of the truly modern and democratic nation where the interest, well being and the rights of the citizens are protected, irrespective of the ethnic, racial, religious, geographical, social and economic background of the individual.

Ethnocentrism is a universal phenomenon when different ethnic group comes in contact, but taken to an extreme dimension it becomes ethnicity or ethnic nationalism. The situation can be said to, have been encouraged by the colonial masters. The idea of separating strangers from natives as was practice in the north continued and intensified ethnic mistrust. The policy of Sabon Gari is in itself akin to apartheid.

The political elite that inherited power from the colonial masters took advantage of the ethnic differences that existed between the people for their person accumulations in terms of economic in the examination of the factors that enhanced the growth and development of ethnicity in Nigeria, colonialism is usually considered as one of such factors. Inter-ethnic strife between the people helped to facilitate the divide and rule policy of the colonial master. The Nigerian indigenous elites are also not free of blame in the nurturing of ethnic nationalism. They have been accused of using ethnic sentiments to mobilize support in their personal struggles for political and economic gains. They have been able to use this as a result of the general level of enlightenment in the country. Our literacy level is still very low that those who cannot easily fall to the manipulations of the elite are very few.

Ethnic clashes have resulted in bloodletting from various part of the country. Communities in rural area claiming entitlements of ethnic bases have found it necessary to take on their neighbours perceived to be hindrance. Some of these rural base crises are Hausa-Kataf, Junkun-Tiv, Kuteb-Junkun, Hausa-Mambilla, Ogoni-Andoni, Ilaje-Ijaw, Urhobo-Itsekiri.

Other major destructive incidence on the trail of ethnicity in Nigeria are the Jos riot of 1945, the Kano riot of 1953, the Tiv uprising of 1959 to 1960 and 1964, the general election crisis of 1964 and the western election crisis of 1965 which led to the imposition of a state of

emergency and eventually military incursion into politics, the ethnic massacres within the army and in the North which preceded the civil war in 1967 and the civil war which lasted for 30 months [69: 53].

Ethnicity has in the past threatened the co-operate existence of the nation as various ethnic groups have at one time or the other express the desire to secede from the federation. The Yoruba threatened to Secede in 1953 and 1954, the Hausa and Fulani in 1966, the Igbo in 1964. Succession has been declared twice in the history of Nigeria, the Republic of Biafra in 1967 and the Delta Peoples Republic in 1966 [69:53]. These attempt were forcibly repressed by the federal forces, That of Biafra was very costly in terms of lives and other resources that was committed to the prosecution of the civil war that followed the declaration of sovereignty by the Biafra leader.

Ethnicity has remained a serious problem in the development of the Nation. We see it comes to play often in issues such as employment into the federal civil service and in admission into institutions of higher learning. It is common phenomenon in the Nigerian society to see a section or sector or its higher echelons dominated by people of a particular ethnic group, a good example is the domination of the army and sectors like the Judiciary also dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group.

In the study of ethnicity in Nigeria, its effect has also been greatly exhibited in our voting pattern. Some of the results of our election present a picture of ethnic lines instead of the candidates, not assessing his personality and even past records. In some other cases the decision to vote or who to vote for is taken by the leaders of the community. The members of the elite group who by their training or education are expected to promote the political education of the electorate so as to enable them to be more critical in deciding on how to go about their civic duty (voting), but they turn out to be instrumental in making the electorates to be more parochial in their political outlook. The members of the elite group in their struggle to acquire or retain political power manipulate the ethnic cleavages in the society. This tendency has not allowed the development of National parties rather our political parties are more of organizations for promoting ethnic interest.

Another development in the issue of ethnicity in Nigeria is the recent rise of ethnic militia in various parts of the country. The idea of cultural union dates from the colonial era, when we had the Igbo State Union, the Egbe

Omo Oduduwa, the Jani =Iyyar Mutare Arewa (Northern People's Congress) and a host of others sponsored by various minority groups. Having ethnic militias however is really something novel in the political development of Nigeria. Some of these ethnic militias include the Odua People's Congress of the Yoruba ethnic group, the Bakassi Boys and the Movement for the Survival of the Sovereign state of Biafra (MOSSOB), a Biafra revivalist movement of the Igbo ethnic group, as the Egbesu boys and several others of the Niger Delta Area. The existence of some of them came to the open after they had a clash with the government, with such development; the country can be described as under siege or resting on a time bomb.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Ethnicity has remained a dominant factor that shapes the outcome of presidential elections results in Nigeria. Existing records show that in 1979 and 1983 presidential elections there was very high prevalence of ethnicity in voter behaviour among Nigerian as presidential candidates of the period secured substantial votes only within their ethnic nationalities. Besides, in 1993 presidential election, there was zero prevalence of ethnicity in voter behaviour among Nigerians. Unfortunately, this democratic feat was not consolidated as the 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 manifested some rashes of ethnicity in voter behaviour among Nigerians. This ugly development reached unprecedented height in the 2015 presidential election where the presidential candidates of the two dominant political parties secured substantial number of votes cast only in their ethnic home lands except in southwest where APC secured majority of the votes cast, which could be attributed to its political alliance with the southwest. This ugly menace was glaringly manifested in the 1979 and 1983 presidential elections. The study affirms that the resurgence separatist agitation among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria is a consequence of the rising wave of ethnic consciousness that dominated the 2015 presidential election. The study posits that the outcome of the 2015 presidential election has substantially influenced allocation of values by the Present government, leading to resurgence of separatist agitations among some ethnic nationalities. The paper recommends that there should be concerted efforts by all stakeholders in Nigerian democratic project towards elimination of ethnicity in Nigerian politics. It further recommends that the Buhari led government should adopt policy of accommodation and compromise to douse the embers of separatist agitations in the country.

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