

## **Electoral Violence and Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria; A Critical Appraisal of 2015 Presidential Election**

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### **Abstract**

Election constitutes a democratic and civilized process of choosing who governs people. The broad objective of the study is to investigate electoral violence and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria; A critical appraisal of 2015 presidential election. The study was theoretical hence the ex-post facto research design was employed. Secondary sources of data collection were utilized through the review of theoretical and empirical literature relevant to the study. The study adopted the Marxian theory of Conflict for its theoretical framework analysis. Findings show that electoral violence manifest in various dimensions which are pernicious and potent in undermining fair contest. To this end, the paper recommends that political actors and other stakeholders in the electoral process should see electoral contest as not a war rather a healthy political competition among the contestants who should see it as an opportunity to tell the electorate what they are offering, what they represent and what they should be judged upon and recommends that free and fair election is the only antidote to electoral violence in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *Electoral violence, Sustenance of democracy, Election and political violence.*

### **SECTION ONE**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Elections are central to the existence, stability and development of democracies; and political parties plays significant role in such democracies. This is evident, because a free and fair election promotes and ensures democracy. In the last 54 years, election has been held in Nigeria 13 times; intermittently as follows; 1951, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1979, 1983, 1991, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. (Mgbachi et al 2014).

In all these election, representative democracy was fully exercised to determine political power. Regular election constitutes a pre-condition for representative democracy. Equally, participation, accountability, transparency and responsibility constitute the major hub in representative democracy. Elections therefore, are conducted periodically to achieve the goals of democracy. (Abbass, 2008).

Taking a look at the democratic history of Nigeria, it is observed that electoral violence has adversely affected the country to the extent of causing major political upheaval and terminating democracy.

Ugiagbe (2010) highlighted that Electoral violence has regularly been reported in Nigeria and manifests in the three (3) electoral stages, namely pre-election, during election and post-election in various forms. Electoral violence in Nigeria has two broad dimensions, physical and psychological. Electoral violence ranges from acts of assault, arson, ballot box snatching and stuffing to murder/ assassination. He further observed that electoral violence amongst other forms has claimed more than 11,000 lives in Nigeria between 1999 and 2006.

The paper will therefore examine the 2015 presidential election as it is pertinent to understanding of how elections lead to electoral violence and its implication to democratic sustenance.

Politically speaking, violence has affected democratic foundation of the country. Although, it is an acceptable fact that violence is an indispensable factor in the human existence (Ayene Akeke 2008)

According to Iwu (2010) Nigeria with acknowledged resilience and reasonable economic strength, many decades of existence under dictatorship, with the unrestrained primitive accumulation of wealth that went with military regimes left the society with powerful political interests and cleavages which could easily undermined the processes of electoral democracy, if care was not taken.

He further posited that electoral violence has been one of the major impediments to the conduct of free and fair election in the country.

However, sustenance of democracy in Nigeria has always been challenged by crises, uncertainty chaos, fears, terror and insecurity challenges. It is an acceptable fact that within 54 years in which 13 times election have been held, conflict reading situation have featured prominently in those elections. (Mgbachi, et al 2014).

Quoting copiously, Abbass (2005) Election in Nigeria since independence has turn out to be a serious political liability, causing serious political turmoil and threatening the survival of corporate Nigeria.

Abbass (2008) quoting Ake (2001), Adekaye (1989), Nnoli (1987) further posited that with unprecedented political thuggery and uncontrolled violence, characterized by wanton destruction of lives and property, election period in Nigeria are best described as warfare.

It is also documented by Kolaowole (1988) that the near state of anarchy which prevailed in the country in 1965 and 1967 was as a result of unprecedented electoral violence in the western region perpetrated by the intra-party squabble within the Action group (AG), houses were burnt, property destroyed, human beings were murdered in cold blood and there was complete breakdown of law and order.

Thus, this became the immediate cause of the military first incursion into the nation's politics.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The major problem faced by the sustenance of democracy is the existence of electoral violence. This violence negates peaceful co-existence, law and order in addition to security concerns; it militates against the consolidation of democracy. this in turn impact on the social and economic well being of the nation and creates imbalances or instances of structural

violence (Galtung 1969; 167-191) that could lead to escalated conflict as was the cause with the Biafran war.

Iwu (2004) observed that electoral violence occur when electoral process is perceived as unfair, irresponsible, or corrupt that its political legitimacy is compromise and stakeholders are motivated to go outside the establish norms to achieve their objective.

Critical scholars and political commentators like Kolewale (1988), & Duley (1979) have tenaciously observed that the history of electoral politics in Nigeria have not been encouraging. Electoral politics has always been a source of unrestrained resentment, irrational actions and political instability. In other words, elections have also invariably been accompanied by breakdown of political regime.

Furthermore, often mention among these challenges is the negative and devastating effect that came out from this electoral violence which equally affects sustainability of democracy.

Moreover, Pruitt and Kim (2004; 109) stated that acts of electoral violence are likely to result in hostile goals like; the desire for revenge in political opponents which could lead to conflict escalation. This perhaps explains why almost all political parties in Nigeria are involved in electoral violence.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The broad objective of this study is to investigate electoral violence and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria; a critical appraisal of 2015 presidential election.

The specific objective includes:

1. To determine the extent of electoral violence and sustenance of democracy.
2. To examine the root of electoral violence and its implication to democratic stability.
3. To evaluate the forms of electoral violence in Nigeria.
4. To proffer strategies of curtailing electoral violence in Nigeria.

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of this research work is at two levels; it has both theoretical and empirical significance.

Theoretically, the research will contribute to academic and the advancement of knowledge. The study is expected to contribute to the knowledge by adding to the existing literature, electoral violence and sustenance of democracy thus investigating and stimulating further research from students and scholars.

Empirically, the study will help policy makers and stake holders in the political and election process. It will have a great utility to the government, the independent national electoral commission (INEC).

The findings of the study will serve as a veritable, credible and functional policy input for the government as it will help to provide strategies of improving electoral process in Nigeria.

### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Operationally, this study covers electoral violence and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria, with its major focus on the critical appraisal of 2015 presidential election.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this section, a review of related literature on electoral violence and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria; was embarked upon to enable us unveil contributions made in the area as well as identify gaps which exists. The literature review was categorized into empirical and theoretical reviews.

#### **2.2 THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Research has shown that elections conducted in Nigeria since the inception of democracy has been characterized with electoral violence.

According to Iwu (2010) Electoral violence is any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse of a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay, or to otherwise influence an electoral process.

In a related development, Balogun in Obakhedo (2011) posited that electoral violence connotes all forms of violence (physical, psychological, administrative, legal and structural) at different stages engaged in by participants, their supporters, and sympathizers (including security and election management body staff) in the electoral process. These forms of violence take place before elections, during elections and after or post-election, and could also be intra or inter-party.

Buttressing further, Iwu (2010) posited that, in Nigeria, the worrisome aspect of this problem is that electoral violence or threat to violence has become a veritable tactics of the super rich in Nigerian politics to recruit jobless men and women to harass, intimidate and physically hurt not only political opponents but the entire society.

Taking a look at the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria, Igbuzor (2009) as cited in Obakhedo (2011) identified that greed, electoral abuses, and rigging of elections; abuse of political power, alienation, marginalization and exclusion; and the political economy of oil, are some of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria.

Similarly, Ugiagbe (2010) highlighted that ineffectiveness of security forces and culture of impunity; weak penalties; weak governance and corruption, contributes immensely to electoral violence in Nigeria.

This work is specifically concerned with the electoral violence and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria, it is therefore imperative to look at the concepts of sustenance and democracy and its practice in Nigeria.

According to Ejiogu .A (2007), sustenance, another word for maintenance. It is also a process of re-assessment, re-alignment and addressing inequality wherever it exists. In other words, sustenance goes with equity, fairness to drive good governance.

#### **DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES**

Democracy according to the Greeks means the rule of the people. Democracy is both a philosophy and a form of government, as a philosophy, it is an ideology of human society and a way of political life, as set of ideas and methods motivating and guiding the behavior of

member of a society towards one another not only in their political affairs, but also in their economic, social and cultural relationship as well (Rodee et al 1957:83).

According to Lord Bryce (1921) Democracy is a government in which the will of majority of qualified citizen rules.

Merrimm (1939 :44) succinctly puts it democracy is not a set of formula or blue print of organization but a cast of thought and a mode of action directed towards the commonwealth as interpreted and directed by the common will.

Holden (1974:8) copiously see democracy as a political system of which it can be said that the whole people positively or negatively make or are entitled to making or determining decision on important matters of public policy.

In his own view, Appadorai (1968 :137) conceive democracy in a simple way, system of government under which people exercise the governing power either directly or through representative, periodically elected by themselves.

Simply put, an American president Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people.

However, democracy experiments in Nigeria, over time, have characteristically been problematic. Since representative democracy is a legitimate government, freely and fairly elected on competitive political party platforms at regular intervals by the people, it is necessary to note that those saddled with power are supposed to be accountable and responsible (Shievvely, 2001, Gana 1996, Oronaye, 1995) as documented by Abbass (2008).

Commenting on the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria, Daudu .J (2015) highlighted that the journey we undertook in the past 100 years saw us metamorphose from colonialism (1914-1960) to independence when we embraced parliamentary democracy of the west minister Export Model and practiced politics of bitterness, deceit, avarice and disunity for six (6) years i.e 1960-1966.

The novelty of the excesses of the political class during this period referred to caused the awakening or emergence of an unknown political monster i.e the Nigerian military (Armed Forces) and they seized power in the year 1966, suspended the constitution and ruled by military fiat and Decree from 1966-1979. During this period, the military defragmented the entity known as Nigeria from 4 regions to 19 states by the time they handed over power to a civilian administration in 1979.

Despite the differences, majority of these scholars Robert Dahl (1956), Joseph Nwokocho (2007), Schumpeter (1976) Huntington (1991), Ewa .E (1991), Igbuzor (2002), Okoli F.E and Okoli F.C (1990), Ogunna (2003) Lord Bryc (1921), Mirriemm Charles (1939) all agreed that liberal democracy contains some basic principles which include participation, equality, political tolerance, accountability, transparency, regular, free and fair election, economic freedom, control of the abuse of power, bill of right, accepting the result of an election, human right, multiparty system and the rule of law.

However, it should be emphasized that establishment and strengthening of democracy is ongoing process that requires effort and commitment. Any democracy that cannot deliver on the basic needs of the people will be short lived. (Ogwang J.P 1990).

Equally, it is an acceptable fact that for democracy to survive, it must encourage healthy competition for all elective position and mass participation of the people with enshrined right, responsibility or duty.

Furthermore, from ancient times to the contemporary era, key democratic institutions which discharge the executive, legislative and judicial responsibilities, contribute immensely in stabilizing democracy as it is enshrined in the constitution. Which defined complimentary function and legitimate authority, other institutions includes political parties which aggregate interest in the political terrain and seek to mobilize and rally support for the candidates the offer for election into public offices. (Jega 2007:13).

### **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ELECTION BODIES IN NIGERIA**

The history of electoral bodies in Nigeria dates back to the pre-independence era when the electoral commission of Nigeria (ECN) was established by the then colonial administration to conduct the 1959 general elections. The post-independence electoral body known as the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) was set up by the emergent Balewa administration to conduct the 1964 and 1965 regional elections.

The military coup d'état of 1966 unfortunately precipitated its dissolution in 1978, a new Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was established by the then military administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo. It organized the 1979 transitional elections which ushered in the second Republic under the leadership of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. It also conducted the 1983 general elections.

FEDECO suffered the same fate as its predecessor when General Muhammed Buhari seized power in December 31, 1983. In 1987, the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida set up the National Electoral Commission (NEC). The commission conducted the then transitional elections which established some short-lived democratic institutions. The body also conducted the controversial June 12, 1993 presidential election which was later annulled with the attendant cataclysmic political consequences. NEC was dissolved on November 14, 1993 when late General Sani Abacha seized power and replaced it with the National Electoral Commission (NECON) in 1995.

Following the death of General Sani Abacha in 1998, NECON was again dissolved by the government of General Abdusalami Abubakar who later set up the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in August, 1998. INEC organized all the transitional elections that ushered in the fourth Republic on May 29, 1999. The body has since then conducted election 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 and has continued to nurture and sustain Africa's largest constitutional democracy.

### **A REFLECTION OF PAST ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA**

Historically, 1922 became the first time elective principle was introduced in Nigeria, during Clifford constitution. By 1923, the first political party, National Democratic Party (NDDP) participated in the first election and they dominated all the election in Lagos. With the emergence of Lagos Youth Movement in 1933 which metamorphosed into Nigeria Youth Movement, election took new dimension in Lagos, subsequently between 1938 and 1941; Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) defeated NDDP in election conducted.

Equally, the operation of this youth movement began to manifest itself to ethnic sentiments and regional cleavages. Other political parties emerged like the (AG) Action Group, Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), all have regional inclinations. (Nnoli, 1985).

Furthermore, the 1952 Macpherson constitution restricted popular franchise at the regional level only and two Electoral College.

In addition, the 1954 Lyttleton constitution recognized introduction of party system with some electoral laws. The period started to witness conflict and violence because of repugnant colonial electoral laws.

The involvement of ethnic politics and regionalism in the 1954 election shows that NCNC, AG, NPC got popular votes in their own ethnic areas thereby institutionalizing tribalism in the political firmament.

X-raying the 1959 elections, Abbass (2008) posited that the NCNC and Action Group fully involved themselves in ethnic mobilization and campaign calumny to galvanize support to their members. Therefore, it is clear that the emergence of ethnic and regional politics started during the colonial era and it has expanded in the political development of the country. This ethnic regional cleavages, historically and tenaciously encouraged electoral violence in the struggle to acquire or retain power.

According to Ogunna (2003) electoral process is alien to the developing nations. Elections are designed to produce popular rulers. This can be attained only through free and fair election. Elections in developing nations like Nigeria are characterized by a variety of electoral malpractices which make the elections mere mockery of democracy. He further observed that the wide-spread election malpractices create situations of political tension, conflicts and violence. For instance, the 1964 Federal Election of Nigeria and the 1965 Western Nigerian Elections resulted in gross electoral malpractices which led to political conflicts and violence of great magnitude that ultimately gave effect to the first military coup in Nigeria in January 1966. Abbot Kirk-Green (1971:21) and Aglin (1965:173), all asserted that between 1960 and 1965, Nigeria problem centered on election and struggle for power and political domination. Stressing that the crisis in AG and the treason trial of its leaders, were all connected with electoral violence.

The 1979 election was supervised by the military and the election witnessed some incidence of violence. Although the political parties that took part in that election showed high-level of maturity but ethnicity and regional cleavages dominated the scene.

Taking a look at the 1983 election, there was a high-level of electoral manipulation, rigging, snatching of boxes, intimidation which was a replica of 1964 election. The ruling party used the power of incumbency to commit massive fraud and rigging against the opposition (Umaru 2003).

In 1993, Nwosu developed option A4 form of election, two political parties participated in that election which was supervised by the military junta, election were successfully concluded by all the levels of government unfortunately the military annulled the presidential election result and that action resulted to political violence throughout the country.

Furthermore, elections were held in 1999, 2003, and 2007. Statistical findings shows that the electoral processes of 1999 were a replica to the 1979 both were planned, co-ordinated and supervised by the military with minimal violence. However, the election of 2011 was highly

associated with violence because the election witnessed monumental rigging and fraud, executive interference, and sponsored assassination.

## **2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

The March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015 presidential election was another milestone of deepening and strengthening democratic institution in Nigeria. The election was highly competitive as over 14 political parties participated in the process. There was structural and administrative improvement on the part of the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

In appraising the election, we shall x-ray some critical factors that influenced the election. These factors include; the use of card reader and permanent voters card (P.V.C), ethnicity, religion, the role of press, security outfit, political parties, electoral body themselves, under age voting, integrity of the contestants and external influences.

The introduction of the card reader was a scientific and innovative approach in the 2015 election. It helped to minimize fraudulent practices like manipulation of names and figures and it enhanced voting stability and facilitated electoral statistics with the use of card reader, INEC was able to come up with the polling statistics total number of registered voters, 67,422,005, total number of accredited voters 31,746,490, total number of valid votes, 28,587,564, total number of rejected votes, 844,519, total number of votes cast 29,432,083. (INEC, 2015).

Although the permanent voters card was meant to stop multiple voting and improve the credibility of electoral participation the electoral voting process but a greater percentage of the electorate were not issued with permanent voters card, which was also part of disenfranchisement and calculated rigging. However, the use of the permanent voter's card reduced the unprecedented delays that used to characterize the previous elections.

One striking phenomenon that featured prominently during the 2015 presidential election was the underage voting. In most of the states in the North, it was fully televised that underaged children participated in the election. This development was never challenged by the electoral officers neither the results from these areas were cancelled rather there was massive infiltration and inducement to these underage children that enable them to participate in the voting process. Indeed, this is an abuse of the electoral process.

The 2015 presidential election, witnessed high level of ethnic and regional cleavages. The two major presidential contenders were former president Goodluck Jonathan of PDP Mohammed Buhari of APC. The campaign was hot and aggressive all the ethnic groups mobilized their people for the election, in the voting process, former president won in South-East, South-South while president Mohammed Buhari won in South-West, North-East, North-West and North-Central with 21 states while president Jonathan won in 16 states.

According to Dauda (2015:3), it was observed that the violence that characterized the 2015 had been predictable. Leading to election day there had been violent expressions of political rivalry among stakeholders and agents of political parties leading to the use of thugs, arson, terrorism and other extreme criminal measures. The magnitude of insecurity arising from political activities reached the point that government introduced elements from the armed forces such as the Army and Air force in order to keep the peace during elections. The result showed a slight reduction in the criminal activities during elections when compared to the data from the 2007 and 2011 elections. He further highlighted that the National Human Rights Commission, observed that no fewer than 58 people have been killed in election related



violence from December 3, 2014 to February 2015. He stated the statistics that in Lagos 11 incidence were tracked with 2 dead people for each incident, an average of 22 people killed over a span of just 52 days. Also during that period in Kaduna state, there were three incidents and nine killings, Rivers has six incidents, including the detonation of explosives and attacks on courts.

According to his studies, it was also recorded that in Akwa-state, three persons were killed during the gubernatorial and House of Assembly elections. In Rivers state, four persons including a soldier were feared dead during the presidential and National Assembly elections in the state. During the governorship and House of Assembly, five persons were feared killed in Benue state, four in Kebbi, two each in rivers and Lagos; and one, each in Plateau, Bauchi and Ebonyi.

S/NO	STATE	JONATHAN	BUHARI
1	Ekiti State	176, 466 (54.51%)	120, 331 (37.17%)
2	Ogun State	207, 950 (34.05%)	308, 290 (51.82%)
3	Enugu State	553, 003 (89.76%)	14, 157 (2.30%)
4	Kogi State	149, 987 (26.00%)	264, 851 (45.91%)
5	Osun State	249, 929 (36.58%)	383, 603 (56.15%)
6	Ondo State	251, 368 (40.67%)	299, 889 (48.52%)
7	FCT	157, 195 (45.64%)	146, 399 (42.50%)
8	Oyo State	303, 376 (28.25%)	528, 628 (49.23%)
9	Nasarawa State	273, 460 (48.58%)	236, 838 (42.07%)
10	Kwara State	132, 602 (28.74%)	302, 146 (65.48%)
11	Kano State	215, 779 (9.13%)	1, 903, 999 (80.53%)
12	Kastina State	98, 937 (6.27%)	1, 345, 442 (85.23%)
13	Kebbi State	100, 972 (14.92%)	567, 883 (83.88%)
14	Gombe State	96, 873 (21.03%)	361, 245 (78.43%)
15	Sokoto State	152, 199 (18.24%)	671, 926 (80.54%)
16	Jigawa State	142, 904 (12.39%)	885, 988 (76.81%)
17	Kaduna State	484, 085 (27.73%)	1, 127, 760 (64.59%)
18	Anambra State	660, 762 (85.32%)	17, 926 (2.32%)
19	Abia State	368, 303 (83.23%)	13, 394 (3.03%)
20	Akwa Ibom State	953, 304 (92.68%)	58, 411 (5.68%)
21	Imo State	559, 185 (69.75%)	133, 253 (16.62%)
22	Plateau State	509, 615 (47.33%)	429, 140 (39.85%)
23	Ebonyi State	323, 653 (88.94%)	19, 518 (5.36%)
24	Niger State	149, 222 (18.34%)	657, 678 (80.83%)
25	Lagos State	632, 327 (43.80%)	792, 460 (54.89%)
26	Bayelsa State	361, 209 (97.17%)	5, 194 (1.40%)
27	Cross River State	414, 863 (92.08%)	28, 368 (6.30%)
28	Rivers State	1, 487, 075 (94.99%)	69, 238 (4.51%)
29	Yobe State	25, 536 (5.33%)	446, 265 (93.21%)
30	Bauchi State	86, 085 (8.44%)	932, 598 (91.40%)
31	Adamawa State	251, 664 (39.57%)	374, 701 (58.91%)
32	Zamfara State	144, 833 (19.03%)	612, 202 (80.44%)
33	Benue State	303, 737 (44.45%)	373, 961 (54.73%)
34	Edo State	286, 869 (57.32%)	208, 469 (41.66%)
35	Taraba State	310, 800 (53.62%)	261, 326 (45.08%)

36	Delta State	1, 211, 405 (95.55%)	48, 910 (3.86%)
37	Borno State	25, 640 (5.11%)	473, 543 (94.35%)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12, 857, 152</b>	<b>15, 424, 921</b>

**TABLE 1: 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS**

Source: (Vanguard Newspaper 2015).

This election has shown that ethnicity is another cause of electoral violence.

**TABLE 2: SOUTH EAST**

S/N	STATE	JONATHAN	BUHARI
1.	Abia	83.23%	3.03%
2.	Anambra	85.32%	2.32%
3.	Ebonyi	88.94%	5.36%
4.	Enugu	89.76%	2.30%
5.	Imo	69.75%	16.62%

Source: (Field survey 2015)

**TABLE 3: SOUTH SOUTH**

S/N	STATE	JONATHAN	BUHARI
1.	Akwa Ibom	92.68%	5.68%
2.	Bayelsa	97.17%	1.40%
3.	Cross River	92.08%	6.30%
4.	Delta	95.55%	3.86%
5.	Rivers	94.99%	4.51%
6.	Edo	57.32%	41.66%

Source: (Field survey 2015)

**TABLE 4: SOUTH WEST**

S/N	STATE	JONATHAN	BUHARI
1.	Ekiti	54.51%	37.17%
2.	Lagos	43.80%	54.89%
3.	Ogun	34.05%	51.82%
4.	Ondo	40.67%	48.52%
5.	Osun	36.58%	56.15%
6.	Oyo	26.25%	49.23%

Source: (Field survey 2015)

**TABLE 5: NORTH EAST**

S/N	STATE	JONATHAN	BUHARI
1.	Adamawa	39.57%	58.91%
2.	Borno	5.11%	94.35%
3.	Bauchi	8.44%	91.40%
4.	Gombe	21.03%	78.43%
5.	Taraba	53.62%	45.08%
6.	Yobe	5.33%	93.21%

Source: (Field survey 2015)

**TABLE 6: NORTH WEST**

S/N	STATE	JONATHAN	BUHARI
1.	Jigawa	12.39%	76.81%
2.	Kaduna	27.73%	64.59%
3.	Kano	9.13%	80.53%
4.	Katsina	9.13%	80.53%
5.	Kebbi	14.92%	83.88%
6.	Sokoto	18.24%	80.54%
7.	Zamfara	19.03%	80.44%

Source: (Field survey 2015)

**TABLE 7: NORTH CENTRAL**

S/NO	STATE	JONATHAN	BUHARI
1.	Benue	44.45%	54.73%
2.	Kogi	26.00%	45.915
3.	Kwara	28.74%	65.48%
4.	Nasarawa	48.58%	42.07%
5.	Plateau	47.33%	39.85%
6.	FCT	45.64%	42.50%

Source: (Field survey 2015)

Looking at the tables, table two and three shows the voting pattern were Jonathan had more votes in South-East and South-South while the other tables four, five, six and seven reflects Buhari's winning in other geo-political zones.

Equally, the press played a very important role in terms of dissemination of information to the people. The press both media and electronic ensured wide coverage of the election both pre and post. Nigerians were completely fed with complete information of the aspirates to the extent that the environment was over charged and there was high level of information dissemination to the grassroots.

Again security was another critical factor that influenced the 2015 presidential election. Though there was security challenges in the North-East where insurgency dominated the zone. However, the security outfit of the country helped to promote and protect democracy. In spite of the frequent attack by the insurgency or Boko-Haram group, the security outfit demonstrated high level of protection of the electorate during the period. They also help to reduce killing and destruction of voting.

### **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Violence is a natural phenomenon and therefore an inevitable aspect of society. It occurs evenly in the best of human society. (Sani Shehu in Akpuru Aja 2009:12).

This study which focus on electoral violence is basically on political power struggling in a democratic environment.

The work have different theoretical framework to examine its contest. The theoretical frameworks are:- the political economy approach (Marxism theory of conflict) propounded by Karl Marx, the games theory by Mattin Shubik and others, frustration aggression theory, and systematic theory.

However, for the purpose of this study, this work will adopt Marxian theory of conflict.

This theory is one of the earliest attempts at explaining social conflict. Marx saw social classes as the outcome or arising from the relations of production under capitalist mode. He underscored that the social relations of production under capitalism generates two major and distinct classes in the society based on access to the means of production (in Anugwom, 2009:42). The structure is such that those who possess the means of production (bourgeoisie) control, dominate, subjugate and exploit those who do not possess capital but depend only on their labour as a means of living (proletariats/ have-nots). Economic issues, according to Marx, are the major or primary causes of tension and violence in all societies. (Aja Akpuruja, 2009).

It should be realized that the fierce struggle to win election and control state apparatus and invariably exploit the situation for personal economic aggrandizement and advantage sparks off the roots of all electoral violence in Nigeria. (Abbass, 2008).

### **SECTION THREE**

#### **3.1 CRITIQUE OF THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The position views and ideas of scholars on electoral violence and the sustenance of democracy and other cognate issues were reviewed in the literature of this study. Some of the scholars and researchers whose works and studies were reviewed include; Abbass .I.M (2008) whose study was on electoral violence in Nigeria and the problem of democratic politics evaluated electoral violence in Nigeria and the problem of democratic politics; Obakhedo, N.O (2011) whose work was study is on curbing electoral violence in Nigeria; the imperative of political education. Others are Joseph Daudu (2015) whose study was entitled “2015 general elections and survival of democracy in Nigeria, his work highlighted the 2015 presidential violence. Iwu (2010) whose seminar work was on Electoral violence in Nigeria: implications for security peace and development, Otoghile .A, (2009) electoral violence and Elections in Nigeria evolution, effects and solution, Usman Y.B (2002) Electoral violence in Nigeria; the terrible experience 1952-2002, Jega, .A and Ibeanu, O. (2007) elections and the future democracy in Nigeria. Jega .A.M and Wakili, H. Umar, M.A (2003) strategies for curving election-related political violence in Nigeria’s North-West Zone and Ejiogu (2007) sustaining the good governance in Imo state in the years ahead; and Igbuzor, O. (2009) Electoral Violence in Nigeria.

Indeed, a synthesis of related literature reviewed that the scholars acknowledged that violence is a major feature of political life which varies in intensity, trends and dimension such as physical, psychological, administrative, legal, and structural from one political system to another. This violence takes place before election, during election and after election. They further posited that free and fair election is the only antidote of electoral violence in a democratic rule.

#### **3.2 CRITIQUE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

As stated earlier, the theoretical framework of which this work is based is Marxian theory of conflict. Considering the articulation of the theory especially the relation between people in the production processes are symbiotically connected with the nature and direction of the political struggle to capture political power in order to determine economic factors. The position of the Marxian theory of conflict conforms to the conclusion of Abbass (2008) that the fierce struggle to win election and control state apparatus and invariably exploit the situation for personal economic aggrandizement and advantage sparks off the root of all electoral violence in Nigeria.

Similarly, Obakhedo .N.O (2011) collaborated with Ugiagbe Thompson (2010) on electoral violence in Nigeria; implication for security, peace and development. In this aspect, dialectical materialism is premised on the issue of man's inherent motivation of economic pursuits and needs. Thus, man's fierce inclination and struggle to acquire control and maintain political power at all cost is the cost of conflict and violence.

This, justifies the relevance of the choose of this theory to the study.

### **3.3 STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES OF ACHIEVING THE STATED OBJECTIVE**

The four objective of the study stated in chapter one are hereby restated including the strategies of achieving them.

- i. To determine the extent of electoral violence and sustenance of Nigerian democracy. This was achieved by reviewing Nigerian previous election that was characterized with conflict and violence.
- ii. To examine the root of electoral violence and its implication to democratic stability. This was achieved by using deductive and inductive reasoning in interpreting and analyzing some historical and empirical facts.
- iii. To evaluate the forms of electoral violence in Nigeria. This was achieved by using content analysis of secondary data collected specifically public documentary sources of content analysis and pictorial views were also used.
- iv. To proffer strategies of curtailing electoral violence in Nigeria. This was done through recommendation and education of the electorates.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

The conceding of defeat by former president Goodluck Jonathan to President Mohammed Buhari is a remarkable development in the political history of Nigeria. That acceptance indeed reduced what we call persistent and endemic electoral violence associated with the country's political system as previously witnessed in the past.

Simply put, electoral violence is no doubt a failure of the democratic practice and a threat to democracy, however in Nigeria but 2015 election has carefully exonerated that principle in the mindset of the Nigerian electorate, and this has justified our earlier Statement that free and fair election is an antidote to electoral violence.

### **3.5 RECOMMENDATION**

This study indicates that Nigeria has some challenges in electoral process particularly in sustaining democracy.

The following are therefore recommended for improving electoral process in Nigeria.

- i. Political education: the political education will inculcate a new value and ethics In the minds of the people, this will affect the family, the peer group, the society as agents of socialization. The ultimate is the development of a new political and democratic order to the electorate.
- ii. Improvement in the electoral reform: the electoral reform will inculcate new provisions as a way to checkmate electoral abuse and malpractices and also prosecute perpetrators of electoral offences.
- iii. Fighting of corruption must be invigorated: the underlined problem of political instability is lack of good governance. Therefore, corrupt leaders must be punished accordingly, stimulate the economy through diversification of economy will create employment and reduce the rate of unemployed youths who are usually used as canon folders during the election period.

- iv. Improvement in the security outfit; the security and other security agencies need to be strengthened to enable them perform effectively during the election period.
- v. Furthermore, the media, the civil society and other stakeholders should collaborate to ensure accountability, social justice, rule of law, transparency, gender equality, due process, and equality in the building of the democracy.
- vi. What is more, political parties, their agents should shun all forms of electoral and political violence and should embrace peace, order, discipline as a means of improving democratic institution and deepening democracy.
- vii. Finally the winner takes it all syndrome that is the zero sum game is not ideal in our democratic project because it is willful, violent breeding, parochial, discriminatory, elite based, unethical, and individualistic.

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