

# **NIGERIA’S 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION AND CHANGE**

*Adeolu Durotoye, PhD*

Head, Department of International Relations and Diplomacy  
College of Social and Management Sciences,  
Afe Babalola University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

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## **Abstract**

The conduct of the 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria recorded mixed outcomes. Although fears that Election Day would be marred by serious violence were allayed to a large extent, some instances of technical hitches, vote buying and other forms of electoral manipulations were recorded in some parts. However, these electoral hitches were not sufficient to alter the expected outcome of the election. For the first time in Nigeria’s political history, an incumbent president lost power in a general election. Has Nigeria’s democracy consolidated satisfactorily? The burden of this paper is to examine the trajectories of the 2015 presidential election relying on both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The paper concludes that much has to be done if Nigeria’s democracy is to scale the second turn-over test Huntington establishes as the bench mark which if a new democracy survives two turnovers of power, then it has consolidated satisfactorily.

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**Keywords:** Nigeria, Election/Voting, 2015 Presidential Elections, Democracy, Political Change

## **Introduction**

Nigeria’s 2015 presidential election was unique in many ways. First, it marked an unprecedented uninterrupted 5th presidential election since return to democracy in 1999. The first Republic lasted only 6 years from 1960 to 1966, the second Republic lasted only 4 years from 1979 to 1984, while the third Republic was truncated after 4 years of expensive transition programmes between 1989 and 1993.

Second, it was unique because for the first time, an incumbent president lost an election. Even though many incumbent governors have lost elections at the state level, the “power of incumbency” has always been potent at the federal level.

Third, this marked the first time the loser in a presidential election will call to congratulate the winner even before the official results were finalised.

Fourth, it is also the first time there will be no post-election violence despite predictions by different observers and commentators including the US.

Fifth, it is also the first time an electronic device called the Card reader and a chip card called the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) were introduced by the electoral body (INEC).

Has Nigeria come of age politically? Are all these a fluke due only to the overwhelming desire for change or a true test of democratic consolidation?

In dealing with the research questions raised above, this paper is organised under the following subtopics;

1. What is Democratic Consolidation
2. Elections in Nigeria
3. Run-up to the 2015 presidential election
4. Conduct of election
5. Why PDP Jonathan lost
6. Recommendation/Conclusion

### **Democratic Consolidation**

The concept of democratic consolidation evolves out of concern about whether the former authoritarian regimes will be able to sustain their newly found democracy. The idea is that the task of sustaining democracy is as difficult as the task of establishing it. This has brought the concept of democratic consolidation to the centre of academic discourse.

Democratic consolidation is the process by which a new democracy matures, in a way that means it is unlikely to revert to authoritarianism without an external shock. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia).

Diamond (1999) describes democratic consolidation as the process of achieving broad and deep legitimation such that all significant political actors believe that popular rule is better for their society than any other alternative they can imagine. (Diamond L. (1999). Hence, it is a state of developed democratic cultures where political actors adhere to the democratic rules of the game.

Democratic Consolidation has also been defined as series of continuous actions and changes geared towards the replacement of an existing system of authoritarian and undemocratic rule. (Yagboyaju, (2007).

According to Asiwaju (2000), democratic consolidation implies the internalisation of democratic culture and the institutionalisation of democratic best process.

Put another way, consolidation suggests there is a democratic foundation being strengthened and built upon. Tinubu, (2009).

Nwokeke Osinakachukwu and Jayum A. Jawan (2011) wrote that democratic consolidation “implies a democracy that can last for the test of time...This is a democracy that will come and stay and which cannot come to an end suddenly or abruptly through unconstitutional acts such as military coups or dictatorships”, (p.130).

In my opinion, democratic consolidation is a journey and not a destination. It is a process not an event. It implies that the people of a particular country are imbibing and displaying a democratic culture that propels democracy and makes democracy continuously irreversible.

Hence, a research into democratic consolidation in Nigeria should look at those input and output mechanisms that make democracy thrive.

Some scholars have argued that that the process by which a democracy becomes consolidated involves the creation and improvement of secondary institutions of the democracy. Linz & Stepan (1996).

On the other hand, some other scholars like O'Donnell (1996)' have argued that the institutionalization of electoral rules is not the most crucial feature of democratic consolidation. Rather the informal practices of actors are very vital in democratic consolidation. Consolidation therefore occurs when the actors in a system follow the formal rules of the democratic institution.

Contradicting this position are Gasiorowski and Power (1998). They asserted that the process-centric literature on democratic consolidation has paid inadequate attention to the effects of structural factors. Focusing on the Third World countries, they used three indicators of consolidation and multivariate statistical techniques. The authors' main finding is that development-related socioeconomic factors, the contagion effect of democratic neighbours, and high inflation each strongly affect the likelihood of consolidation, although the latter was significant only in the early part of the period studied. Several other factors have no apparent effect, including several measures dealing with political culture and the design of democratic institutions. These three factors together strongly predict which Third World democracies achieve consolidation.

In another vein, Regilme Jr. (2013) has controversially suggested that the cause of non-democratic consolidation in developing countries is brain drain in which high skilled workers from developing countries migrate to high-income and capital-rich countries. This leaves many new democracies in the developing world problems in terms of steering effective governance due to the lack of high-skilled professionals.

Focusing on Nigeria, some have argued that it is too early to talk of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. “With over 10,000 dead in communal

conflicts and an exponential increase in societal violence, many will argue that it is too early to talk of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Indeed, the fact that the public still casts doubt on the state's capacity to manage domestic crises and to protect the security of life and property underscores primarily the depth of disenchantment with the state of things. As Nigeria drifts down the path of increasing violent conflict, perhaps we should first move away from current disappointment and ask if anything could really have been different from the current situation, given the provenance of civilian rule". Fayemi (2012). Fayemi argued further that it is difficult to "have democracy without democrats" because of the dominance of the political party hierarchy by retired military officers and civilians closely connected to the military elite who set the tone for a party formation that pays little attention to ideology.

Tinubu's (2009) Verdict on Nigeria's democracy is that there is as yet "no true democracy" in Nigeria.

He argued that the period between 1999 and 2009 was at best, 10 years of civil rule, even if all the structures of a democratic setting, the Presidency, the National Assembly and the Judiciary (at the federal level); and the Governorship, the State Legislatures and the Judiciary (at the state levels) were all in operation, "those democratic structures are built on the quicksand of a general anti-democratic mindset: faulty elections, dubious mandates and abuse of security forces, by the ruling party, to rig elections", etc. Analysing Obasanjo's presidency, Tinubu, himself a state governor between 1999 and 2007 argued that Nigeria's was a democratic dispensation run on military temper".

".....the conduct of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo as elected president, left little or no doubt that there was a sort of "Army Arrangement".....His style was gruff and dismissive. He barely disguised his contempt for democratic finesse. He openly and unrepentantly subverted due process. He, without end, blackmailed the National Assembly on some bogus pretence to higher ideals of patriotism".

Durotoye's (2014) verdict having reviewed Nigeria's democracy was a little more balanced. "It was clear however that democracy in Nigeria could not be described as 'real democracy' during the period (1999-2007). ...in view of the different kinds of anti-democratic practices by the political class. Election rigging and brigandage, violence and election annulment were common practices. The trend is towards a reversal to the old order of despotic political rulership under the guise of civil governance. One cannot but agree that elections in Nigeria in the period under study were a fading shadow of democracy, endangering the fragile democratic project itself. The use of state power and security privilege to harass and intimidate the challenger's machinery was widespread. Harassment of the opposition was

the most intransigent legacy that has survived from the locust years of military autocracy, and those who are deeply concerned about the survival of democracy might be tempted to believe that this legacy could abort the survival of democratic values in the nation”. However, he added “considering the fact that the role of the legislature and the judiciary during the period showed that all hope is not yet lost in the match towards democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Unlike most African countries, Nigerian democracy had been strengthened by strong political institutions necessary to solidify democratic practices. Democratic contest is alive even though battered”.

### **Elections in Nigeria**

Free and fair election is the benchmark of democracy. In other words, democracy implies that the people have the opportunity to decide who governs them. Regular elections offer the people the opportunity to accept or refuse the men who are to govern them. It is free and fair elections that confirm the legitimacy of a government as well as withdraw legitimacy from one government and gives it to the other. It is the political right enjoyed by the people to decide who should govern them in a free and fair election that separates democracy from any other kind of political system. Election has also been described as the post mortem that investigates the record of office holders to ascertain whether they have kept faith with their election promises or not. (Dickeson, 1990).

Foremost writer on democracy, Schumpeter (1947) stated that democracy ensures that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them. Hence democracy is all about elections and choosing political leaders.

A review of elections in Nigeria since independence reveals that election rigging has been a constant factor in Nigeria’s democratic process.

Osinachukwu and Jawan (2011) examined election rigging and its effect on democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Relying on qualitative approach using data gathered from secondary sources as well as historical analysis by looking into the histories of election rigging in Nigeria from 1960 to 2007, they concluded that election rigging has hindered the emergence of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Thereby, elections in Nigeria have not been able to bring about leadership change that will enforce accountability in leadership. “Election riggings in Nigeria were evident in 1964/1965, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003 and 2007 general elections.” (p.128).

Electoral frauds include illegal printing of voters’ cards, illegal possession of ballot boxes, stuffing of ballot boxes, falsification of election results, illegal thumb-printing of ballot papers, infant voting, compilation of

fictitious names on voters' lists, illegal compilation of separate voters' lists, illegal printing of forms used for collection and declaration of election results, deliberate refusal to supply election materials to certain areas, announcing results in places where no elections were held, switching and unauthorized announcement of results, harassment of candidates, agents and voters, change of list of electoral officials, as well as box- inflation of figures, among others. (P.131).

4. Catalogue of Election Rigging Methods in Nigeria As Enumerated by National Conscience Party

1. Recognition of non-existing polling units by INEC and allocation of voting materials to same.
2. Bribing of INEC officials, the police and security agents with irresistible amounts to perpetrate election rigging.
2. Use by INEC of partisan party supporters as electoral officers to man Polling Stations.
3. Diversion of electoral materials to private offices, residence and palaces of traditional rulers for manipulation and falsification.
4. Concealment or non-release of voters' register loaded with false names later used as a ghost.
5. Voters register used at polling units not numbered, thus permitting arbitrary addition of names to the register.
6. Unannounced and sudden change of location of polling stations and collation centers.
7. Pre-stuffing of ballot boxes with fake ballot papers before the day of the election.
8. Stuffing of illegal ballot boxes with illegal papers.
9. Sale of pre-stuffed ballot boxes to candidates.
10. Replacement or exchange of official ballot boxes with unofficial ballot boxes containing unofficial thumb-printed ballot papers (throwing ballot boxes into the water in riverine areas and replacing with freshly stuffed ballot boxes from illegal quarters).
11. Addition of unofficial ballot boxes to official ballot boxes containing already thumb printed ballot papers.
12. Falsification of results and forgery of figure both at polling units and collation centers.
13. Multiple voting to which INEC officials and the police are indifferent.
14. Use of under-aged children as voters to which INEC officials and the police are indifferent.
15. Use of special ethylated spirit to clean off the so-called indelible ink of fingernails to facilitate multiple voting.
16. Use of Vaseline on the fingernails before the so-called indelible ink is applied by polling officers in order to enable easy cleansing and facilitate multiple voting.
17. Thumb printing of ballot papers by INEC officials.
18. Thumb printing of ballot papers by security agents.
19. Thumb printing of ballot papers by some domestic monitors.
20. Accumulation and use of illegally acquired voting cards to vote on election days.
21. Use of party agents as surveyors of voters' cards to facilitate impersonation and multiple voting.
22. Dressing up party agents in police uniforms to intimidate opponents at polling and collation centers.
23. Use of armed thugs to harass and intimidate opponents and rival party agents.

24. Use of police and security operatives to terrorize opponents and rival party agents.
  25. Use of armed thugs, police and security operatives to intimidate party agents of rival parties to depart from polling center.
  26. Party members of the ruling parties bearing INEC tags on polling days to facilitate moving from polling station to polling station and from one collation center to another with a view to rigging elections.
  27. Printing and use of fake election results sheets with same numbers as authentic result sheets.
  28. Forcing some party agents at gunpoint to sign forged election results.
  29. Canvassing for votes at polling centers with impunity.
  30. Members of the ruling parties claiming falsely to be party agents for rival political parties so as to give cover to the rigging of election results.
  31. Intimidating and compelling voters, in some instances at gunpoint to vote for particular parties
  32. Ruling parties compromising agents of newly registered parties by offering them bribe.
  33. Exposure of voters to the full glare of party agents in the process of voting which denied voters of privacy and negated the legal requirement of secret balloting.
  34. Posting of false results by INEC on its website for internet consumption that had borne with results emanating from polling centers.
  35. Change of candidates for election few days before election and in some cases after election.
  36. Sale of mandate to the highest bidder.
  37. Use of different fingers to make imprints on ballot papers in order to prevent easy discovery of multiple voting.
  38. Agents of ruling parties forcefully seizing ballot papers from voters known to have voted against the favoured party and deliberate invalidation of same by making additional finger imprints.
  39. Use of looted public money to bribe voters.
  40. Distribution of foodstuffs and soup ingredients such as rice, garri, beans, maize, groundnut oil, maggi and other items like sugar, slippers, roofing sheets, clothing materials, etc. to induce voters.
  41. Refusing to count and discarding of ballot papers identified as thumb printed for political parties that are not favoured,
- Source: Muhammad Aminu Kwasau, The Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, European Scientific Journal, VOL. 9, NO.8, 2013

From the above table, it can be deduced that election rigging has been a threat to democracy in Nigeria. Unfortunately, politicians who carried out this dastardly act have gone scot free. “In as much as politicians are not nailed in their previous manipulation of elections, the future politicians keep re-strategizing manipulations for subsequent elections, thereby making election rigging inevitable in Nigerian politics”. Osinakachukwu & Jawan (2011:136).

Apart from the political class, electoral manipulations in Nigeria were aided and abetted by biased electoral umpires.

“Since the return to civil rule on 29 May 1999, Nigeria has held three general elections, aside from sundry re-run elections and local government

polls. Of the three general elections, none of them met the muster of sane polling, even if to be fair, the 1999 election, under the direction of the late Ephraim Akpata, appeared the cleanest of the three. But a disturbing trend is that as each general election was worse than the preceding one (2003 was worse than 1999; and 2007 was worse than 2003), each succeeding electoral umpire was also worse than his predecessor”. (Tinubu 2009).

Ranking the different electoral chiefs, Tinubu added “Chief Akpata did a fair job. But that cannot be said of Dr. Abel Guobadia who succeeded him. Of course, Prof. Maurice Iwu, the current (as of 2009) Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman appears to have broken all bounds in how not to conduct elections; the latest example being the Ekiti governorship re-run and the drama and controversy that surrounded the final “result”. Prof. Iwu, with his perfidy, is surely leading Nigeria into the abyss and our democracy into a dungeon. If immediate action is not taken, Iwu will lead our electoral system into a state where candidates will prepare for war instead of electioneering. That would result in a situation of mutually assured destruction. But even with his extremely bad record, he is unfazed. He supervises the conception, monitoring and execution of mandate robbery – and he does so with reckless abandon! No thanks to Iwu, INEC has BECOME a nest of election riggers. Despite all that, he goes on an ego trip, when reacting to his troubled conscience, claiming that he has a lot to teach both Ghana and the United States in the ABC of clean elections. Yet by universal consensus, he conducted the worst election in Nigerian history in 2007. Since then, he has continued his electoral rascality with phoney re-runs in which he and his collaborators, not the Nigerian electorate, decide who win or lose elections!”

What one can glean from the above is that Nigeria has fared very badly at each passing election and electoral manipulation is the greatest single threat to Nigeria’s democratic survival.

Apart from electoral fraud perpetrated by politicians and aided by the electoral umpires in some cases, there are many other challenges facing democratic consolidation in Nigeria which include the balkanization of the society along tribal and religious sentiments, the absence of true federalism, abject poverty, disjointed and manipulated (mis) information by the media, corruption, the politics of godfatherism and insecurity among many other factors. Kwasau (2013)

The perennial problem of lack of credible and democratic electoral process has been linked with the phenomenon of “failed, uncaring and unresponsive governance” in Nigeria. Inokoba and Kumokor (2011:139). No wonder, years of civil rule since 1999 has failed to deliver on good roads, functioning health amenities, quality education, uninterrupted power supply, living wages for workers, effective petroleum sector, genuine electoral

reform, equitable distribution of wealth and so on. Hence, Nigeria's democracy has been described as merely formalistic and devoid of substance. (Ibid. p.139).

If credible elections are the barometer for measuring democratic consolidation, then we can say that Nigeria is maturing democratically if only the 2015 elections can be adjudged to be freer and fairer than previous elections. To this task we now turn.

## **Run Up to the 2015 Presidential Elections**

### **a. Emergence of APC**

The All Progressive Congress (APC) was formed in February 2013 as an offshoot of a merger of Nigeria's three biggest opposition parties – the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) – and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). For the first time since 1999, a formidable opposition was formed to take on the PDP in the general elections. The new coalition was approved by the nation's electoral umpire Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on 31 July 2013 to become a political party. Branding itself as a social welfarist party, APC was admitted as a consultative member into the Socialist International on 12–13 December 2014. The Socialist International (SI) is a worldwide association of political parties most of which seek to establish democratic socialism. It consists mostly of democratic socialist, social-democratic and labour political parties and other organisations. Formed in 1951 it has grown to include more than 160 member parties from more than 100 countries

### **b. Emergence of Buhari as APC's Candidate**

On 10 December, 2014, former military ruler and three-time presidential candidate, Major General Muhammadu Buhari, emerged the presidential candidate of the party having scored 57.2 percent of the 5,992 votes cast to defeat Kano State Governor Rabiu Kwankwaso, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Imo State Governor Rochas Okorochoa and newspaper owner Sam Nda Isaiah. On 17 December, 2014, APC chose a lawyer and academic, Professor Yemi Osinbajo as the running mate of General Buhari. APC's voter base is in the North and the South West.

### **c. Rumpus in PDP and Mass Defection to APC**

In November 2013, five serving Governors from the governing PDP defected to the APC, a fallout of the Governors Forum's (An informal Organisation of the 36 States' governors) election in which the candidate of the president and governor of Plateau state, Jona Jang, was recognised as the winner of the chairmanship election by the presidency even though he scored fewer votes than Governor Rotimi Amaechi, the incumbent chairman and

governor of the oil-rich Rivers state. The fallout of the governors' forum imbroglio was that 5 PDP governors decamped to the APC. The governors who defected to the APC were Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, Abdulfatah Ahmed of Kwara State, Rabiu Kwankwaso of Kano State, Murtala Nyako of Adamawa State and Aliyu Wamakko of Sokoto State. 49 PDP federal legislators also decamped to APC. This initially gave the APC a slim majority of 186 legislators in the Lower House out of a total of 360 legislators. After months of intrigues and political bickering, National Chairman of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Bamanga Tukur also resigned his position in January 2014. Bamanga Tukur was not very popular with majority of the PDP governors.

Just before Tukur's resignation, PDP's former general secretary, himself a former state governor and military general defected to APC on account of the failure of the party to reinstate himself despite a court order to the effect. Oyinlola described the APC as the only formidable party in the country, saying that his decision to join the party was as a result of the ideology of the party and the performances of its governors.

Probably the most devastating blow to the ruling PDP was the resignation of former President Olusegun Obasanjo tearing his party card describing the PDP as a "useless party" while launching a public attack on President Goodluck Jonathan whom he had helped install as president. He was reported to have said "I have reason to believe that most or should I say all of you are wondering why I have chosen to defect to the APC and I must say that if I had been told that I would have to switch party some 5 years ago, I myself would have argued it. I believe in transparency and integrity but unfortunately, PDP is an opposite of such attributes". (See OBJ Defects To APC And Calls Jonathan Administration, "Useless Government". Retrieved on 15 April 2015 from <http://news.nigeriannation.com/lo-ba-tan-obasanjo-defects-to-apc-photos-of-defection-party-photo-news/s>).

President Jonathan's emergence as the PDP's presidential candidate on 10 December 2014, further led to the defection of some PDP members in the House of Representatives to APC.

d. INEC Insists on the use of PVC and Electronic Card Readers for the Elections

- Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) produced Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) for the 68,833,476 persons in the biometric Register of Voters ahead of the March 28<sup>th</sup> and April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 general elections. The PVC replaces the Temporary Voter Card (TVC) issued on the heels of registration of voters since 2011.

These cards have many components and specialized features (e.g. base substrate, security printing, personalization, lamination and chip

embedding), and it is designed with an average life span of ten (10) years. The PVC also has an embedded chip that contains all the biometrics of a legitimate holder (including fingerprints and facial image). On Election Day, it would be swiped with a Smart Card Reader at the polling unit to ensure 100 per cent authentication and verification of the voter before he/she is allowed to vote. The PVC has security features that are not easily susceptible to counterfeiting.

Despite PDP and the Presidency's opposition to its use for the 2015 elections, INEC insisted that only voters who have their PVC will be allowed to vote in the 2015 general elections. INEC extended the collection of the PVCs beyond the initial 8 March 2015 deadline by two weeks to ensure that all eligible and registered voters collected their PVCs.

The elections were postponed by 6 weeks to enable all eligible voters collect their PVCs and allow the security forces sufficiently push back the Boko Haram insurgents in Nigeria's North East.

- **Card Readers**

Equally, INEC insisted that for the first time in Nigeria's electoral history, electronic voter authentication system (Smart Card Readers) will be deployed for the 2015 general elections. The card reader uses a highly secure and cryptographic technology that is used commonly in devices that need to perform secure transactions, such as paying terminals. It has ultra-low power consumption, with a single core frequency of 1.2GHz and an Android 4.2.2 operating system. According to INEC, the card reader units have been broadly subjected to Quality Assurance, Integrity and Functionality testing and found reliable in ease of use, battery life and speed of processing. For instance, it takes an average of 10 seconds to authenticate a voter. The electoral umpire further announced that the card readers would also be subjected to Stress testing in the states and FCT ahead of the March 28 and April 11, 2015 elections. INEC promised to make a card reader available at every voting point in the 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) during the 2015 elections, with a substantial number of spares available to address contingencies.

## **Election Conduct and Results**

Fourteen candidates contested the election but it was a straight battle between the PDP's President Goodluck Jonathan and APC's Muhammadu Buhari. The breakdown of the result as shown in the table below shows that the APC won 53.96% of the votes as opposed to the PDP's 44.96%. APC won convincingly in 4 of the 6 geo-political zones namely the North West where its presidential candidate hails from, North East riddled with Boko Haram insurgency, North Central and the South West where the APC's Vice

presidential candidate hails from while the PDP cleared the votes in the South-south-home base of president Jonathan and the South East.

• 2015 President Election Results

Buhari		53.96%
Jonathan		44.96%

Margin: **2,571,759**

Candidate	Party	Votes	%
Muhammadu Buhari	All Progressives Congress	15,424,921	53.96
Goodluck Jonathan	People's Democratic Party	12,853,162	44.96
Adebayo Ayeni	African Peoples Alliance	53,537	0.19
Ganiyu Galadima	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria	40,311	0.14
Sam Eke	Citizens Popular Party	36,300	0.13
Rufus Salau	Alliance for Democracy	30,673	0.11
Mani Ahmad	African Democratic Congress	29,665	0.10
Allagoa Chinedu	Peoples Party of Nigeria	24,475	0.09
Martin Onovo	National Conscience Party	24,455	0.09
Tunde Anifowose-Kelani	Accord Alliance	22,125	0.08
Chekwas Okorie	United Progressive Party	18,220	0.06
Comfort Sonaiya	KOWA Party	13,076	0.05
Godson Okoye	United Democratic Party	9,208	0.03
Ambrose Albert Owuru	Hope Party	7,435	0.03
Invalid/blank votes		844,519	–
<b>Total</b>		<b>29,432,083</b>	<b>100</b>
Registered voters/turnout		67,422,005	43.65

Source: INEC

Muhammadu Buhari was declared the winner of the presidential election having scored the majority of the votes and one quarter of the votes in two-thirds of the state as stipulated by the 1999 constitution. Even though the election was believed to be generally free and fair, there were a few irregularities listed below;

- Several polling units across the country opened later than scheduled occasioned by the late arrival of election officials and materials
- The polling environment was reasonably secured with minimal disruption as members of the Police Force and other security agencies established a noticeable presence within the polling environment with most operating unarmed
- Card readers failed to function properly in some areas including the President's polling unit and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) directed election officers to manually accredit voters using the voter register in those places.
- Electoral irregularities were witnessed in some polling units in Kano and Sokoto states where party supporters were unduly assisting election officials in the polling process
- Voting cubicles were not seen in several polling units in Kano, Kaduna and Osun States which means voters were unable to cast their votes in secret.
- Bomb explosives were detonated in Enugu and there were explosions in Akwa, Anambra states.
- There was hijacking of a vehicle conveying election officials and materials in Ebonyi state
- Assault on some members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) who were ad-hoc staff of INEC in Ijiam-Ekpomata ward, Ikwo LGA of the state.
- In Rivers state, there were reports of sporadic shootings in Ozuaha community in Ikwerre

LGA by thugs who barricaded the road into the town and in the process opened fire on a team of policemen and military police escorting NYSC members to polling units. (See CDD REPORT: Matters arising from Voting Phase of Nigeria 2015 Presidential, National Assembly Elections at <https://nigeriaelections.org/newsfeed/37> retrieved on 28 April 2015). Many observers commended the conduct of the elections for being peaceful, free and fair. It was also believed that the election represents a victory for democracy and the right of the people of Nigeria to determine who rules them. The security apparatuses were also believed to have ensured the peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections. (Soniyi, 2015).

### Why Jonathan/PDP Lost

Many reasons could be adduced for the defeat of PDP in the presidential election. Some of the reasons have been highlighted above. In addition, this paper will rely on an online survey by Globalreportersnews.com. The survey question posed was “What could be the major reason Jonathan lost to Buhari?”

The result posted on April 6, 2015 is recalled below:

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Corruption	29%
Manipulation/betrayal by party members	26%
Poor Performance	21%
Ethnic/minority background	11%
Boko Haram/Chibok girls	9%
Religion	3%

Globalreportersnews.com. Accessed April 6, 2015.

The online poll may have its limitations. Only 903 people participated in the poll which looks an insignificant number. Besides, their demography, location, ethnic and religious backgrounds were not stated. Hence likely prejudices could not be ascertained. However, the website guarded against multiple voting as no one could vote twice on a computer unit. Despite the limitations, the survey result appears a true reflection of the mood of the majority of Nigerians before the presidential elections. The Jonathan government was riddled with serious allegations of corruption. A former Central Bank governor, Lamido Sanusi alleged that about \$40 billion of oil revenue was unaccounted by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). In 2013, Nigeria ranked 144<sup>th</sup> of 177 in the “Corruption by Country” rating of Transparency International. As stated earlier, PDP was in turmoil before the elections and it is very likely that some members may have worked against the interest of the party at the polls. The Jonathan presidency was also believed to have performed woefully in the different sectors of the economy like the power, road, aviation and many other sectors. Even though Nigeria was rated the largest economy in Africa during the Jonathan presidency, not many Nigerians could feel the impact. Youth unemployment was put at over 50% (Durotoye, 2014b). Surprisingly, it appeared the Boko Haram insurgency and the kidnap of over 200 school

girls in Chibok, Borno state did not play a major role. This may be due to the fact that the government had sufficiently rooted out the insurgents a few weeks before the elections. Another explanation might be that not many people in the North East where Boko Haram holds sway partook in the polls.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The conduct of the 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria recorded mixed outcomes. While fears in some quarters that Election Day would be marred by serious violence were allayed to a large extent, some instances of technical hitches, non-compliance with electoral regulations, vote buying and other forms of electoral manipulations were recorded in some states of the Federation.

However, it did not appear that these electoral hitches were sufficient to alter the expected outcome of the election. The electorates were patient and determined to cast their votes. The clamour for change was the driving force for many of them.

Nigeria's democracy has scaled the huddle of one turn-over test of political change. It remains to be seen whether or not it will fulfil the second turn-over test enunciated by Huntington. Samuel Huntington establishes the bench mark of the 'two turnover test' in which if a new democracy survives two turnovers of power, then it has consolidated satisfactorily (Huntington 1993:267).

The following recommendations are put forward by this paper;

- Appointment of INEC chairman: As suggested by a panel headed by a former Chief Justice of Nigeria, the Uwais panel, the position of INEC chairman must be advertised and the short-listing of three after adequate screening by the National Judicial Council (NJC). NJC then passes the short list to the president who picks one and sends his name to the Senate for confirmation. This will deny any sitting president the chance to plant a party sympathiser as electoral chief.
- Time-limit in electoral adjudication: Every electoral petition should be dispensed with before the swearing-in. The current practice enables someone alleged to have stolen the vote enjoys the plums of office and even spends government money on his petition defence before eventually losing at the court.
- Electoral Offences Commission: This is to strengthen the state's capacity to punish electoral criminals. Such a commission should be made to dispense justice faster than the conventional courts, without necessarily sacrificing the principles of justice and fair play. Any elected office holder found guilty must not only be barred from future elections, he must go to jail for the offence. So too must colluding electoral and security officials.

- Independent candidature: This will enrich our democratic process and curb cases of imposition in the parties and lack of internal democracy, knowing that an alternative platform is open to aggrieved but popular candidates.
- The present introduction of the Permanent Voter Card (PVC) is a step in the right direction. The PVC captures the biometrics of the voters on the roll. The use of Electronic Card Reader must be perfected to avoid technical hitches as experienced during the last elections.
- Ballot Scanning machine should be introduced to scan used ballot papers and record votes in real time.
- There must be compulsory Presidential Debate to enhance quality of choice. Political campaigns in the last elections were bereft of ideas and more of character assassination and mundane issues.
- There must be intense war against Poverty to discourage vote selling.

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