

HISTORICAL DIALECTICS OF 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: IMPLICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The Presidential General election 2015 was one of the pregnant events in the history of Nigerian Democracy. The opposition party All Progressive Congress (APC) for once was set for delivery or miscarriage of Nigerian Democracy. This tensed situation produced fertile grounds for so many unanswered questions like, creation of additional polling units not known to other political parties, the faith of 12.4 million Nigerians who did not get their PVC before election, the huge amount of 125 billion naira largest sum ever spent on election in Africa, the failure of card readers, the question of underage voting in the North, and the demographic figure of disbursement of PVC in the North. By way of an empirical narrative, predicated on Marxist political economy approach, the paper attempts to proffer a way forward in the coming election in Nigeria. It recommends a new organic composition of the structure of INEC in future election in Nigeria.

Keywords: Unanswered question, Polling Unit, election, democracy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) the body saddled with the responsibility of conducting a credible, free and fair election in Nigeria was alleged to be poorly prepared for the Presidential election that took place in March 28th, 2015. (The Punch March 2015). This position was canvassed by Governors like Sule Lamido of Jigawa State, Babangida Aliyu of Niger State, Godwill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State/Chairman, PDP Governor's Forum; Jonah Jang of Plateau State and Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State during the PDP Governor's Forum interactive session with the Nigeria media and civil society organizations in Lagos on Tuesday, March 4th, 2015. The essence of the venue was that Lagos was the headquarters of the Media and activism in Nigeria.

The reasons advanced for the postponement of the election as justifiable; They argued that, at the time the polls were shifted due to security concerns, over 23 million registered voters were yet to collect their PVCs and you know there are some countries with population of about just three million. Twenty-three million would amount to disenfranchising more than five West African countries in their own elections. It will be recalled that even the then INEC Chairman (Prof. Attahiru Jega) admitted on the floor of the Senate that over one million PVCs were yet to be printed in faraway China.

The table below shows the demographic population of these countries above

Table 1

s/no	Names of countries	Population
1.	Republic of Congo	3.7m
2.	Liberia	3.5m
3.	Mauritania	3.6m
4.	Namibia	2.3m
5.	Gabon	1.8m
6.	Togo	6.1m
7.	Eritrea	6.5m
8.	Sierra Leone	6.1m

Source: Author

Imoke (2015) said prior to 2011, Jega was seen as a man of integrity and that was why he was appointed by former President Jonathan. He however said, recent happenings in INEC were beginning to prove otherwise. (Akpabio 2015) said, *“I received a text message from some one from the United States last year, Jega had said card readers would not be used for the Ekiti and Osun Governorship elections because they were too critical to be used for experiments. INEC said the card reader would be tested in by-elections but now INEC is insisting on using card readers for elections. Are governorship elections of two states more critical than Presidential elections?”*

As if this was not enough Akpabio said the APC Presidential candidate Maj. Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtd.), truncated democracy under the guise of fighting corruption but only ended up arresting Nigerian arbitrarily. He said Buhari had returned with the same issue of corruption, who according to him is deceitful as those campaigning for him are extremely corrupt. Secondus described the sensitivity of the card reader which takes 15-20 minutes, while medium and low during accreditation takes about 5 minutes as a major default.

According to the INEC Chairman, Prof. Jega, the postponement was a blessing in disguise. How can Nigeria reconcile the purported readiness of INEC for the February 14, 2015 election with the testing of card readers

more than a month after the postponement? This paper posits that, more than three weeks after the elections have been shifted; they are then testing card readers that would have been used. Given the failure rate of the card reader during the mock exercise it is apparent that many Nigerians would have been disenfranchised even when they are registered to vote.

The pressure on ground was that elections must take place irrespective of poor preparations by INEC because the opposition was threatening fire and brimstones if they lose or if the election did not hold as scheduled regardless of the unpreparedness on the part of INEC.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE QUEER LADDER THEORY (QLT)

This paper applies itself to the analytical perspective of the queer ladder Theory (QLT). This theory was influenced by an American sociologist, Daniel Bell (1919 to 2011), who coined the idea of queer ladder in an attempt to explain functional significance empowerment and social climbing which we saw in All Progressive Congress (APC) in the presidential General election in Nigeria 2015.

Some of the basic assumptions of QLT are:

- i. Organizer crime in an instrumental behavior; it is a means to an end.
- ii. It is an instrument of social climbing and socio economic Advancement

Applied to the purpose of this paper OLT enable us to come to terms with the words ascribed to General Buhari then aspirant: ‘Nigeria Will Be Made Ungovernable if APC does not win this election’. (Narialand Forum April 3 2013)

The concept of ‘ladder in OLT signifies untoward pattern of pregnancy that was due for delivery or miscarriage of Nigeria democracy. This was evident in the above citation as pressure build up in the election up to the very moment of announcing the final result when the announcement was disrupted on account that Prof Jaga a Northern was bias.

3.0 2015: SENATE, INEC AND POLITICS OF ADDITIONAL POLLING UNITS

Political parties and their candidates went to the polls without knowing the exact number of total votes they were canvassing for because additional polling units were created in the North, unknown to them.

(Isaiah 2015) in a country divided across regional and religious line, INEC stirred up the hornet’s nest with its planned additional Polling Units across the country, though it has explained that the idea behind the move was to decongest over populated voting centers. The spread of the proposed

Polling Units, which are about 30,000, showed that 21,615 were allocated to the states in the North, while 8,412 were allocated to the states in the South. The development was keenly contested by three body's; one led by former Vice President, Chief Alex Ekwueme, prominent Nigerian from the South who alleged that the arrangement was done to favor the North, while the North under the umbrella of the Arewa Consultative Forum, said it skewed to favor the Southern part of the country, while some civil organization threaten to take INEC to Court on grounds that the Plan by the electoral body shows it cannot conduct free and credible election in 2015.

his paper posits that, to lay credence to the argument of the creation of additional Polling Units unknown to some parties and candidates, the then Chairman Senate Committee on Environment and Ecology, Dr. Bukola Saraki (APC, Kwara) now Senate President said, *“In the last few years, Nigeria’s electoral process has been witnessing salient changes”* (The Leadership Newspaper, Oct 13, 2014).

As at the close of collection of the Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs) on Sunday, 22 March, 2015, 12,402,221 Nigerians were not able to collect their PVCs. Accordingly, the final list released by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), 56,431,255 representing 81.98% of the total registered voters of 68,833,476 hence 12,402,221 cards PVC were not distributed.

The table below shows the demographic distribution of the PVC Cards as follows:-

4.0 43 MILLION PVC DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS AND FIGURES FOR 36 STATES

Table 2

S/N	STATES	PVCs	PERCENTAGE
1.	Abia	1,239,820	73%
2.	Adamawa	1,239,820	79%
3.	Akwa Ibom	1,328,714	79.05%
4.	Anambra	1,222,002	62.25%
5.	Bauchi	1,745,441	84.97%
6.	Bayalsa	386,125	63.26%
7.	Benue	1,132,187	56.18%
8.	Borno	999,470	56.18%
9.	Cross River	776,977	66.09%
10.	Delta	1,422,595	62.52%
11.	Ebonyi	714,351	66.50%
12.	Edo	1,046,960	58.63%
13.	Ekiti	492,869	67.33%
14.	Enugu	738,933	51.70%
15.	FCT	459,913	52.18%
16.	Gombe	873,698	78.0%
17.	Imo	682,046	37.24%
18.	Jigawa	1,460,620	79.76%

19.	Kaduna	2,976,628	87.36%
20.	Kano	2,612,400	52.50%
21.	Katsina	2,245,303	79.40%
22.	Kebbi	1,232,357	83.8%
23.	Kogi	773,197	57.24%
24.	Kwara	711,920	62.33%
25.	Lagos	2,267,039	38.39%
26.	Nasarawa	850,619	66.45%
27.	Niger	1,250,379	62.07%
28.	Ogun	666,752	36.4%
29.	Ondo	824,715	54.09%
30.	Osun	995,562	70.75%
31.	Oyo	1,156,593	47.88%
32.	Plateau	1,141,260	57.01%
33.	Rivers	1,253,606	49.40%
34.	Sokoto	1,211,717	75.17%
35.	Taraba	1,079,383	80.51%
36.	Yobe	740,336	67.31%
37.	Zamfara	1,045,855	69.92%

5.0 THE POLITICS OF UNDERAGE VOTING

Table 2 below adumbrates the candidate's party, total votes scored and the graphic percentage representation in accordance with the demand of the 1999 constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria as demanded in the 2015 presidential elections.

Table 3

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	–
Total		29,432,083	100
Registered voters/turnout		67,422,005	43.65

Source: [INEC](#)

Table 4 shows votes' distribution by each candidate in each state as indicated by INEC in the 2015 general presidential elections.

State	Buhari	Jonathan	Ayeni	Galadima	Eke	Salau	Ahmad	Chinidu	Onovo	Kelani	Okorie	Sonaiya	Okoye	Owuru
Abia	13,394	368,303	2,766	2,194	1,046	448	569	424	745	315	330	173	213	125
Adamawa	374,701	251,664	1,549	1,166	819	595	1,012	1,163	1,212	495	334	752	289	267
Akwa Ibom	58,411	953,304	384	443	412	474	608	327	381	1,600	144	160	224	192
Anambra	17,926	660,762	2,303	1,259	1,279	475	534	537	887	547	1,121	311	286	357
Bauchi	931,598	86,085	964	232	391	173	189	128	207	131	37	128	29	46
Bayelsa	5,194	361,209	70	38	44	69	116	62	95	45	35	52	20	18
Benue	373,961	303,737	945	1,464	567	254	539	439	683	315	74	105	66	115
Borno	473,543	25,640	878	243	310	392	201	143	107	145	41	158	31	88
Cross River	28,368	414,863	532	514	381	709	749	864	930	279	1,487	312	289	237
Delta	48,910	1,211,405	478	916	813	735	888	393	670	1,473	261	311	354	166
Ebonyi	19,518	323,653	2,452	1,214	2,345	1,133	2,704	1,168	1,890	426	4,859	913	624	989
Edo	208,469	286,869	709	1,284	325	450	512	729	516	159	72	175	160	22
Ekiti	120,331	176,466	482	538	330	854	424	388	377	94	145	108	60	94
Enugu	14,157	553,003	715	479	237	269	478	407	761	441	290	203	1,623	110
Gombe	361,245	96,873	773	192	407	169	247	157	227	104	37	97	25	46
Imo	133,253	559,185	2,236	956	733	757	1,617	414	784	533	1,917	158	264	157
Jigawa	885,988	142,904	2,527	540	1,553	587	375	853	548	394	197	423	338	337
Kaduna	1,127,760	484,085	1,611	424	824	273	546	549	754	218	78	176	79	105
Kano	1,903,999	215,779	2,770	778	1,552	708	657	485	697	426	156	288	234	292
Katsina	1,345,441	98,937	1,671	402	976	283	498	254	330	183	72	215	117	47
Kebbi	567,883	100,972	2,685	361	1,794	450	472	547	519	214	238	448	207	213
Kogi	264,851	149,987	1,001	1,089	967	427	761	476	399	700	156	190	180	144
Kwara	302,146	132,602	1,165	817	910	520	438	325	394	248	102	214	81	118
Lagos	792,460	632,327	2,177	3,038	1,125	4,453	2,072	1,041	1,430	1,795	244	1,000	269	255
Nassarawa	236,838	273,460	310	95	131	74	105	164	222	40	33	48	23	4
Niger	657,678	149,222	2,006	441	1,264	403	614	449	550	307	118	305	116	198
Ogun	308,290	207,950	1,930	3,072	978	1,927	1,364	4,339	815	584	597	432	562	332
Ondo	299,889	251,368	1,139	2,406	1,012	1,237	1,227	734	846	386	221	223	184	184
Osun	383,603	249,929	1,306	1,731	1,029	1,667	937	599	767	377	159	255	124	132
Oyo	528,620	303,376	4,468	8,979	6,674	6,282	5,000	2,842	1,895	6,331	3,665	1,312	1,069	839
Plateau	429,140	549,615	618	391	237	279	406	554	693	178	29	138	54	56
Rivers	69,238	1,487,075	513	525	577	1,104	1,031	492	565	1,066	156	2,274	303	542
Sokoto	671,926	152,199	3,482	535	1,894	714	762	605	686	249	180	475	269	283
Taraba	261,326	310,800	1,306	811	1,033	586	320	680	876	962	439	153	224	161
Yobe	446,265	25,526	632	164	329	213	112	101	120	101	32	104	30	67
Zamfara	612,202	144,833	1,310	238	655	290	294	374	404	125	68	122	93	14
FCT	146,399	157,195	674	342	347	240	288	269	473	139	96	165	95	83
Total	15,424,921	12,853,162	53,537	40,311	36,300	30,673	29,665	24,475	24,455	22,125	18,220	13,076	9,208	7,435

Source: INEC

Nairaland Forum Wednesday, 26th, 2015 recorded that millions of underage voters predominantly from the Northern part of Nigeria, with states like Kano, Katsina, Bauchi, Niger, Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Nasarawa, Borno and Yobe had underage people who voted in the Presidential election. The issue of underage voting was recorded in 2011 as observed by International Monitors, but was never addressed as a Presidential candidate was declared President. In 2015, the issue came up again and this time most Nigerians are pointing accusing fingers at INEC and APC. This paper investigated the report that these underage persons came to INEC office and exchanged their temporal voters card (TVCs) and it was handed properly to them by the INEC Staff representing these states. The fundamental question is who should be blamed; Jega, President Goodluck Jonathan, heads of the government agencies or INEC staffs.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) took a political war of attrition, PDP called for cancellation of election in seven states, claiming that there was underage voting, late night voting and violence in the some states in the North. APC, on the other hand, raised the alarm over the delay in the release of results from the South-east and South-south. The affected Northern states where PDP was calling for cancelation of results are Gombe, Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa, Katsina, Bauchi and Kogi State.

Rumors in circulation about election malpractices in Kano, appeared from underage voting was the night voting and the breach of security in Gombe, there was a security scare where the Boko Haram insurgents attacked three Local Government Areas. Eligible voters could not vote, yet results of the election were released.

In Kaduna the same act of underage voting and late night voting took place with the attendant scare that gave room for rigging.

6.0 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND FUNDS MANAGEMENT.

In a very recent work, Gaiyu Rabo 2015 opines that, the expensive nature of the 2015 general elections, no doubt, puts Nigeria ahead of African states as the most vibrant political entity in the continent where huge sums of money are frittered by party candidates on the tormentors' pathway to power.

The major gladiators in the frenzy to wrest power at the various levels were more than busy dipping hands into bank accounts as they fret away resources in an unimaginable proportion to the chagrin of the electorate. The electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), was not left out in the burning of scarce resources in the prosecution of Africa's most expensive election.

With a whooping average expenditure of up to N125 billion by INEC for the 2015 elections, it's not surprising that Nigeria's general elections wear the coveted crown as the biggest election in Africa; thanks to the large voters' register.

The elections provided breaks for quick business for people with the connection in the murky waters of politics as both the real and the fake business people swam on political party candidates and their parties for windows of businesses.

7.0 The man Jega

Jega's term enjoyed a lot of goodwill from the international donor community. These donors supported INEC directly and indirectly by funding some of its programmes and projects. Areas in which their supports were most pronounced were Voter Education, Voter Registration, election Security and election Day logistics. The support from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems which has been working collaboratively with INEC since 1998 led to the establishment of the INEC Graphic Design Centre where the commission now designs and prints some of its election and administrative materials; Election Management System and Election Operation Support Centre from where election day logistics is now tracked. Other donors like the UNDP assisted INEC to produce first of its kind Gender Policy while I-IDEA supported the commission to produce an Election Risk Assessment tool.

A number of things are unique with Jega's term apart from all the aforesaid. It was the first to conduct two general elections; that is 2011 and 2015. It was under him that we had the first successful merger of political parties to form a formidable opposition party. Hitherto, we had working alliances among the political parties. Jega was the first to also conduct a general election in which a ruling party lost at both the executive and legislative arms of government at the centre. It was under him that INEC began the monitoring of candidates campaign finances. It is also noteworthy that at present both the acting chairman and the secretary of INEC are women. This is unprecedented! Now, Jega is out with six of his national commissioners and about 16 of the resident electoral commissioners. The immediate challenge before President Muhammadu Buhari's government is how to find suitable replacements for these crops of patriots who have served their country meritoriously.

8.0 Unfinished business

It is worth mentioning that Jega, in spite of his sterling performance, left many unfinished business in INEC. Some of the reforms he initiated are either inchoate or yet to be properly mastered. Among them are the issue of

distribution of Permanent Voter Cards and the use of Smart Card Readers. Others include the operationalization of the Election Day logistics particularly the use of Registration Area Centre camping to ease distribution and movement of election materials. The failed Memorandum of Understanding with the leadership of the National Union of Road Transport Workers which led to the late movement of election materials and commencement of voting procedures during the last elections needs to be revisited. Also deserving of being looked into is the lingering issue of special salary scale for INEC workers and the aborted amendment of the fourth amendment of the 1999 Constitution and Electoral Act 2010. The new INEC board needs to lobby the Eighth National Assembly for quick passage of the new electoral framework.

9.0 Conclusion

Lastly, the incoming board of INEC needs to sustain the goodwill enjoyed by Jega's board with donor partners, the civil society as well as the political parties under the auspices of the Inter-Party Advisory Council. In addition they should ensure that the organic composition of INEC should be made up of credible members from registered political parties and the chairman from a seemingly neutral body from the judiciary be appointed.

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