

A GEOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE VOTING BEHAVIOUR OF ELECTORATE IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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Abstract

The imperativeness of election in any liberal democracy is demonstrated by the fact that it serves as the platform through which public office holders are usually recruited. Therefore in view of the important functions usually performed by the public office holders, then their emergence must be devoid of any form of sentiment. This is where the voting pattern of electorate becomes crucial. Since they are to elect representatives of their choice, then they must not allow sectional interest to becloud their judgment. This study has as its general objective an examination of the impact of environmental (geographic) factors on the electoral decisions of Nigerian voters. The specific objectives of the study include: (i) to analyse the factors that can shape the voting decision of electorate in Nigeria; (ii) to examine the extent to which the voting decisions of Nigerian electorate were governed by geographic factors during the 2015 general elections; and (iii) explain the effect which sectional voting has on the cohesion of the country. The research methodology adopted was historical cum descriptive analysis. Some of the findings of this study include: (i) almost the same factors have been governing the voting decisions of Nigerian electorate over the years; (ii) that to a great extent, the outcomes of the 2015 general elections reflected voting on the basis of geopolitical groupings as demonstrated by the result of the Presidential election; (iii) sectional voting is a reflection of a situation where by a voter promotes parochial interest at the expense of national interest; and (iv) the winner takes all syndrome, promotes sectional voting. Based on its findings, the study among others, recommends that; (i) Nigerian electorate should shun sectional or geographic interest by embracing national interest while forming their voting decisions; (ii) Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria on the reflection of federal character principle on appointment makings should be expanded to cover the electoral process; and (iii) the winner takes it all syndrome in the country should be reviewed to guard against lopsidedness in appointment makings and unwarranted desperation for control of political power by different sections of the country.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Election, Voting Behaviour, Electorate/ Voter, Political party

Introduction

Since 1923 when voting began in Nigeria there has been a great demonstration of electoral decisions being governed by a number of factors. The factors which include party affiliation, ethnicity, religious affiliation, personal interest of voters, external factors, party manifestoes among others have had significant impact on the voting decisions of an average Nigerian electorate. The first election that was held in Nigeria on September 20, 1923 only covered a section of the country- Lagos and Calabar province. This was because the Legislative Council created by the Clifford Constitution only had power to legislate for the colony and Southern part of the Protectorate. According to Kurfi (1983;2-3);

Lagos and Calabar was singled out for the grant of the franchise because these towns had relatively higher concentrations of educated elites who demanded and got representation in their country's legislature.

Worthy of note also was the fact that the legislative powers of the Council were restricted to the Colony and Southern Nigeria. The Governor (the political title of the colonial head of administration in the country then) then legislated for the North. This arrangement showed that the geographical contiguity of

the country was exposed to two different laws at that time. This continued till 1946 when Richards Constitution brought the two sections of the country under one legislative arrangement with the Legislative Council having powers to legislate for the entire Federation. This was because the Legislative Councils of 1928, 1933 and 1938 maintained the arrangement under the 1922 Clifford Constitution.

One striking feature of the 1923-1938 legislative arrangements was that it sowed the seed of ethnic or sectional consciousness among the rank and file of Nigerian politicians. Its ghost continues to hunt the nature of party politics in the country up till now. All the political parties that operated in the country beginning from 1946 when the country's legislative council started having its powers covering the entire federation till 1966 when the First Republic collapsed, had regional outlooks. Even beginning from the Second Republic (which lasted from 1979 to 1983) when there were constitutional provisions which regulated party activities and electoral processes in the country, experiences have revealed that election outcomes have always reflected geopolitical voting to a large extent.

The 2015 general elections were held in the months of March and April that year. Elections were contested in two phases, namely; National Assembly/ Presidential elections (28th March, 2015) and State Houses of Assembly/ Governorship elections (11th April, 2015). The elections were contested by twenty-eight (28) political parties. However, only fourteen (14) of them took part in the Presidential election. The major contenders being the then ruling party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) which was a coalition of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and faction of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). Although this study by design aims at discussing the geopolitical nature of the voting behaviour of the Nigerian electorate during the 2015 general elections, emphasis will be on the Presidential election. The election is the mother of all elections held then. Therefore, its outcome was representative of all other election outcomes in the country then.

This study begins with introduction followed by conceptual clarifications then an exploration of the political geography of the voting behaviour of electorate in Nigeria before 2015. It further discusses the geopolitical nature of the voting behaviour of electorate in Nigeria before the 2015 general elections and ends with conclusion.

Conceptualisation of Political Geography/Geopolitics

Geopolitics or Political Geography as an area of study in both Geography and Political Science, have attracted different conceptualisations by various scholars and authors alike. Few of such efforts shall be examined here.

McLean and McMillan (2009:413-414) explain Political Geography as “the geography of states, federations, and substate units”. According to them, Andre Siegfried is the father of modern political geography because of his demonstrations of “ecological association between soil types and voting behaviour in France”. The scholars also define geopolitics as “an approach to politics originating in late nineteenth-century” Germany that stressed the constraints imposed on foreign policy by location and environment” (McLean and McMillan, 2009:221). In a similar vein, Chaturvedi (2006:131) conceptualizes geopolitics as the study of the “influence of geographical factors over the foreign and other policies of various countries”. It is note worthy that McLean and McMillan (2009) and Chaturvedi (2006) conceptions of geopolitics link the area of study to how geographic factors serve as constraints to the foreign policy decisions of a state.

In his own view, Muir (1986:5) posits that:

Political geography is concerned with the spatial interaction between political and geographical phenomena, and one of the most fundamental issues concerns the location of the subject on the spectrum between geography and political science.

In a similar vein, Roberts and Edwards (1991:57) explain geopolitics thus:

The study of the interrelationship of the geographic environment (particularly the physical, ethnic, economic, demographic and ecological aspects of that environment) with the state, and especially with the policies of the state.

In his own contribution to the discourse on geopolitics, Taylor (1991:45) explains, it from ‘class analysis’ point of view by positing that: “current usage distinguishes geopolitics as concerned with rivalry between major powers (core and rising semi-periphery states”.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that all the scholars whose views have been harnessed and reviewed in this study explain political geography or geopolitics as an area of study that focuses attention on how geographic factors shape the political decisions of a state or man. For instance, a state that faces the challenge of earthquake as it is the case in a country like Japan, will have its major policy actions dominated by how to forestall future occurrence and how to confront the problem whenever it rears its head.

Voting Behaviour Explained

Voting behaviour is usually discussed in relation to election. Election can be explained as the process whereby electorate cast their votes to elect their representatives into a particular cadre of decision making level at any point in time. This explanation reveals that while election is the means, voting is the end. It is the practical demonstration of election and the most important stage of electoral process.

Chaturvedi (2006: 324) explains voting as “the exhibition open or secret-of one’s preference for a person or a party or a cause”. Secret ballot’, therefore is regarded as the necessary condition for the expression of ‘free choice’. The salient aspect of this definition is seen in the fact that in a liberal democracy, voting takes place in secret ballot. This is necessary to guard against the intimidation of a voter. The foregoing explains why Hoffman and Graham (2009:67) begin their explanation with an argument that voting entails freedom of choice and that the state should not control individual choice. They there after posit that voting connotes a right to vote for either a political party or its candidate. Appadorai (2004:527) also posits that vote by ballot (or some form of secret voting) is best method to demonstrate voting in any modern democracy. He contrasts secret voting with ‘public voting’. According to him, “public voting is in theory unassailable” and that voting is a public responsibility, and, therefore, its exercise should be public”. He thereafter states reasons to explain why secret voting is prevalent in modern democracy by asserting that “under the system of secret voting; the voter is free from the sense of shame or public responsibility; he may therefore be tempted to abuse his trust, to further, his own or a class interest” (Appadorai, 2004:527).

In their own contribution McLean and McMillan (2009:553) posit that “there are three main subdivisions of the study of voting in Political Science: voting, procedures, voting behaviour in mass electorate, and voting in smaller bodies such as legislatures”. Of interest to this work is the study of voting behaviour which is a sub-set of electoral behaviour and which according to the scholars is usually based on aggregate data such as election results or ‘electoral geography’. The scholars at another level explain ‘electoral geography’ as a “term covering the geography of elections, electoral systems, and appointment” (McLean and McMillan, 2009:166). That is the study of how the various geopolitical zones of a state cast their votes during an election, whether the same voting procedures were adopted across the different sections of the country and the representativeness of appointment makings across the nation. This study however, concentrates on the voting behaviour of Nigerian electorate across the six geo-political zones in the country. These are: South East, South-West, South-South, North-East, North-West and North-Central. This will be actualised through the analysis of ‘Voter-turn-out’ (the percentage of electorate who actually cast their votes on the Election Day minus “the percentage of the population eligible to vote who actually vote” (Cohen, 1983:83).

Operational Theories of geopolitics/ political geography on voting behaviour

Scholars of different ages have made a number of propositions on electoral geography, particularly, in the area of the interrelatedness between geographic factors and voting behaviour. These propositions have been buttressed by a number of theories of geopolitics which have bearing with the voting behaviour of an electorate. They help explain the influence of geographic factors or climate on the voting behaviour of a voter.

According to Sabine and Thorson (1973:103) Plato propounded one of the early operational theories of geopolitics on voting behaviour. The theory states: “A cold climate is conducive to liberty and a hot climate slavery”. Another scholar who had propounded a theory on voting patterns is Jean Bodin (1576). His theory which is similar to that of Plato, states that:

Northern peoples are large and physically vigorous but slow of movement and of mind. Southerners are slight of build vivacious in manner, and surpass in acuteness and ingenuity. For political purposes the middle region, where the two sets of qualities are mingled, is superior, as is shown by the fact that

the great states as well as the science of politics, have originated there (Sabine and Thorson, 1973:383).

Montesquive's theory on geopolitics is another theory that establishes a relationship between geographic factors and voting behaviour. This theory which appears to be more popular than others gives a picture of why the people of southern region of any state usually embrace democratic ideas and while the people of the North are prone to authoritarian rule. His theory which he propounds in 1748 states that:

Great heat enervates human energy and courage, whereas in cold climate strength of body and mind, which makes men capable of performing acts that are long, painful, great and daring. We must not be surprised if the cowardice of peoples in hot climates has kept them free. Civil servitude in other words, slavery is linked with climate in the same way; in hot countries men are driven to perform painful duties only by fear of punishment, slavery is less shocking to human reason (cited in Sabine and Thorson, 1973:384).

Montesquive's theory has been summarised in a simple language by Harris (1979:288) thus:

People who live in warm climates will be inclined to accept authoritarian regimes, while those who live in cold climates have the courage to demand freedom.

According to Harris (1979) group of people who live in inaccessible places such as among hills or valleys cut off from the country will necessarily find it difficult to acquire a sense of belonging. This often develops a North- South antagonism, whereby as experienced in places like Korea, Vietnam, Nigeria, the United States of America, the Sudan and even Great Britain those who live at the North and South of a country frequently find themselves antagonistic. In the case of Sudan, Harris further opines that the struggle between the North and South in certain states has reduced them to no more than "geographical expressions, covering a large number of tribes or ethnic groups". This thus precipitates weak loyalties' which are often demonstrated in various ways (for example, through voting behaviour).

The various theories of geopolitics that have been reviewed above give insights into the voting behaviour of Nigerian electorate during electoral processes. They reveal how geographic environment have been influencing the voting decisions of voters from different parts of the country. That is, why the people of the South have been showing disposition to political parties that profess liberal ideologies and why Northerners have been embracing parties that exhibit conservative ideas of the moderate changes. The ingenuity of the Northerners towards the oligarchic structure in the part of the country over the years tallies with the argument that they are 'slow of mind'. In terms of land- mass, the North constitutes about two-thirds of Nigeria's tripartite arrangement thus explaining why it enjoys an advantage over the South electorally.

The Northern part of Nigeria enjoys less rainfall as compared to the South which is over-pampered by the nature. The vegetation of the South is rain forest and there is hardly anything that cannot be planted there. The paramount concern of the people of the North is how to survive the hardship inflicted upon them by the nature. Consequently they spend more time on irrigation farming since their concern is how to prevent starvation. Therefore, they do not care much about political agitation, where they do, they make sure they support only political party (ies) that promise them food, on their tables. This explains why authoritarian rule thrives in some states for example, Libya, where Muhammad Ghadaffi held sway for forty- two years in North Africa. The concern of this study is to assess the nexus between geographical factors and the voting behaviour of electorate in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

The political Geography of the voting behaviour of electorate in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

The Nigerian state is currently witnessing its Fourth Republic. The first three Republics lasted inter alia; 1960-1966, 1979-1983 and 1991-1993. Three Republics were truncated by military coups. What was common with the three collapsed Republics was the failure of political actors to organise and conduct elections that were devoid of sectional and personal interests. The first post- independence elections that were held between October and December, 1964 fell short of the rudiments of free and fair elections. The three major political parties –the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC); Action Group (AG); and National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) that operated in the First Republic, promoted sectional interests. This explained why the outcomes of the elections of 1964 and even the 1959 general elections that ushered independence into the country, reflected ethnic consciousness. The poor management of the Federal Elections of 1964 gave rise to political imbroglio in some parts of the country especially, South-West. This made the military to truncate the nascent democracy on January 15, 1966.

Nigeria's second attempt at democratic experiment was in the Second Republic. This was after a military rule of thirteen (13) years. The Second Republic lasted between October 1, 1979 and December 31, 1983. The elections of 1979 were organised and conducted by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). No serious visible challenges were recorded then but the fact remains that Nigerians still voted for the five registered political parties (Unity party of Nigeria- UPN, National Party of Nigeria-NPN, Nigerian Peoples Party-NPP, Great Nigerian Peoples party- GNPP and Peoples Redemption Party- PRP) along ethnic line. Reason being that the five parties were led by some of the old politicians of the First Republic. Each of the five presidential candidates (Chief Obafemi Awolowo, from South-West the flag bearer of UPN, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, from North-West/ the presidential candidate of NPN, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, from South- East/ the flag- bearer of NPP, Alhaji Mahmmud Waziri, from North-East/ the presidential candidate of GNPP and Mallam Aminu Kano, from North-West/ the presidential candidate of PRP) were popular politicians in the First Republic. Each of the aspirants led the election in his geo-political zone. For instance, in the South- West, Chief Obafemi Awolowo polled a total of 3,864,006 votes out of a total of 4,354,364 votes cast in the area. This represented 88.74 per cent (Adamu and Ogunsanwo, 1982: 243). In comparison, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the presidential candidate of NPN who hails from North-West, garnered a total of 1,737,939 out of a total of 3,925,569 votes cast in his geopolitical zone. This represented 44.27 per cent (Adamu and Ogunsanwo, 1982:243). It is imperative to note that Shagari's percentage could have been higher than that in the North- West if not for the fact that Mallam Aminu Kano also came from the zone.

The general elections of the aborted Third Republic (so described because the transitional elections could not be concluded before its truncation) were held at different intervals between December 1991 and June, 1993. Governorship, House of Assemblies and National elections, were successfully held. Three institutions of government were also inaugurated and functioned concurrently with military dictatorship till November 17, 1993. However, it was the annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential Election that led to the fall of the Third Republic. Presidential Election was to be the last transitional election to be held in the aborted Republic. The election was contested by the candidates of the two military- created political parties. The parties were; Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC). The candidates of the two parties were; Chief M.K.O. Abiola and Alhaji Bashir Tofa, respectively. The justification proffered by the military regime for the registration of the two political parties was that all the political associations that applied for registration as political parties were new wine in the old skin'. Consequently, the then administration of General I.B. Babangida claimed it wanted to give the country a new political culture (Nwosu, 2008: 134). However, the aftermath contradicted this expectation. The pattern of voting though better than previous elections held in the country, reflected geographic interests. There were thirty states in the Federation as at that time. Sixteen of them were located in the Northern part of the country where the presidential candidate of NRC hailed from.

The voting behaviour of the people of the North can be said to be devoid of regional consideration to some extent because the candidate of the SDP made impressive inroad into the part of the country. For instance, he defeated Alhaji Bashir Tofa in Kano, his home state. While chief M.K.O Abiola polled a total of 169,619 votes which represented 52 per cent of the total votes cast in the state, Alhaji Tofa garnered 154, 809 which was 48 per cent of the total votes recorded (Nwosu, 2008: 297). However, the same was not obtained in the South. Chief M.K.O. Abiola, from South-West, had landslide victory in ten of the fourteen states in the South. He won convincingly in all the states in South-West (Lagos, Ondo, Ogun, Osun and Oyo). In fact, his opponent did not meet the constitutional requirement of 25 per cent of total votes cast in any of the five states. For instance, the result of Ogun state where he (Abiola) hailed from revealed that he polled a total of 426,725 (which represented 87.81%) as opposed to his rival, Alhaji

Bashir Tofa who got a total of 59,246 which translated to 12.19 per cent of the total votes cast in the state (Nwosu, 2008:297). From the foregoing, it can be posited that geographic factors played a dominant role as the decisive factors of the voting decisions of the people of South-West during the election. But it should be reiterated that Alhaji Tofa also led the election in some non-Yoruba speaking states of the South, which included: Abia, Enugu, Imo and Rivers. This was not unconnected with the fact that his running mate, Dr. Sylvester Ugoh, hailed from South-East.

The Fourth Nigerian Republic began on 29th May, 1999 when the administration of General Abdulsalam Abubakar handed over the reins power to the then newly elected President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. This was after a period of a long military rule which began on 31st December, 1983 when Major-General Muhammad Buhari emerged as the country's Head of State after a group of soldiers toppled the regime of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, an elected President. The Fourth Republic is currently in its fifth phase of democratic experiment. The phases were: May 29, 1999-May 29, 2003; May 29, 2003- May 29, 2007; May 29, 2007- May 29, 2011; May 29, 2011- May 29, 2015 and May 29, 2015- to-date. Each phase is defined by an electoral period of four years. Meaning, elections are conducted every four years to elect a new set of representatives into the different strata of decision making process in Nigeria.

The transitional elections that heralded the Fourth Republic were organised by the country's Election Management Body (EMB), the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which was established in August 1998 by the administration of General Abdulsalam Abubakar. Apart from the Local Government elections that were held in December 1998, general elections were conducted by INEC in the months of January and February 1999. These covered; Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections (held on January 9, 1999) National Assembly elections (held on February 20, 1999) and Presidential election (held on February 27, 1999). But for the purpose of this study, our analysis shall be based on the Presidential Election.

The three registered political parties that contested the 1999 elections were; Alliance for Democracy (AD) All Peoples Party (APP) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). These parties were not totally new because they all had historical linkages with parties that have operated in the past in the country especially First and Second Republics. For instance, according to Simbine (2002:25) AD was an off-shoot of Afenifere (Yoruba socio-cultural association) formed at the wake of the annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential election widely believed to be won by Chief M.K.O Abiola, a Yorubaman. Most of its leaders and founders were the former members of AG in the First Republic and UPN in the Second Republic. Consequently, it was painted, a Yoruba Party. This explained why it held sway in the Yoruba speaking states between 1999 and 2003. APP was also formed mainly by some leading Northern politicians who featured prominently in the politics of the First and Second Republics. Their examples included; Umaru Shinkafi, Mahmud Waziri and Dr. Olusola Saraki. Therefore the party controlled the core Northern states like Sokoto, Bauchi and Kano. PDP was a product of G-34, a group of individuals who were opposed to the self-succeeding bid of the Military dictator, General Sani Abacha who ruled the country from November 1993 to June 1998 when he died (Simbine, 2002:24). The group was a fusion of various groups that cut across the country. This explained why PDP had a more robust national outlook than AD and APP.

Party activities and electoral processes were guided by constitutional provisions in the Fourth Republic. The experience of the First Republic made constitution engineers of the document that produced the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) to enshrine provisions on geographical factors governing party formation and electoral spread of votes in the constitution. On party formation and registration, Section 222 (b) provides that no association shall be registered as a political party unless its membership is open to all willing Nigerians irrespective of their place of origin. This was to prevent the experience of the First Republic when some political parties were formed to promote the interest of certain geographic contiguity. Similarly, Section 222 (e) prohibits the registration of an association as a political party if its logo or symbol contains ethnic connotation.

As regards the geographical spread of votes, various sections in the Constitution stipulate the proportion of votes a candidate must win before he /she can be declared the winner of any election. This was to prevent the emergence of a sectional leader who may by the virtue of having simple majority declared as the winner of an election. For instance, Section 134 (1)(b) of the Constitution provides that a candidate to the office of the President of the Federation will only be declared the winner if he/she among other conditions "has not less than one quarter of the votes cast at the election in each of at least two-thirds of all the States in the Federation, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It is imperative to note that this provision was enshrined to have a President with a national outlook. For instance, two thirds of the current thirty-six (36) states in the Federation stand at twenty-four (24). This cannot come from the North

and South alone because they have a total of nineteen (19) and seventeen (17) states respectively. Therefore, to win any election, a candidate's campaign activities should not be quarantined. Rather, it must have geographical spread because having simple majority alone does not confer election victory on a candidate.

The highlighted provisions revealed that electoral processes in the Fourth Republic were governed by geographic considerations and thus show the relevance of electoral geography to it. What also makes electoral geography to be relevant to the politics of the Fourth Republic was the division of the country into six geo-political zones by the administration of General Sani Abacha in 1996 but which still governs major political electoral decisions in the country till date (See Appendix 1, for the six geopolitical zones in the country). It is on this premise shall the electoral processes of the Fourth Republic be discussed.

As stated earlier in this work, the first phase of general elections in the Fourth Republic was held in the months of January and February, 1999. However, for the analysis of the geopolitical consideration of the election and the subsequent Elections to be discussed in this study, focus shall only be on the Presidential election. The justification for this is that the entire Federation serves as the constituency for Presidential election. This is unlike other elections which have divisions of the Federation as their constituencies.

The 1999 Presidential election was held on February 27, 1999. It was contested by two candidates. They were: Chief Olu Falae of APP/AD coalition and Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP. A coalition was formed by the APP and AD prior to the election with the former candidate of AD emerging as the presidential candidate of the accord. At the end of the poll, the candidate of the PDP Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was declared the winner of the election by the country's Election Management Body (EMB), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). He polled a total of 18, 738,154 votes which represented 62.48 per cent of the total votes of 29,995,171 cast in the election. Chief Olu Falae who contested the election under the platform of APP, garnered 11,110,287 votes which translated to 37.22 per cent (INEC, 1999 contained in Ujo, 2012:345). The difference in the percentage of total votes cast came as a result of voided votes occasioned by the mistake of some electors who still cast their votes for AD (See Appendix II for the detailed information on February 27, 1999 Presidential Election Results). It is imperative to note that the two presidential candidates hailed from the same geopolitical zone of the country, South-West.

The voting behaviour of some electorate reflected geographical bias to some extent while others voted as a result of the influence of other factors. This study reveals that despite the fact that the two candidates came from the same geographical zone, the voting pattern of the people of the area favoured the candidate of the APP/AD coalition, Chief Olu Falae perhaps because of the earlier position of this study that AD was an off-shoot of AG and UPN which operated as Yoruba parties in the First and Second Republics respectively. The analysis of the election result in the geopolitical zone will further buttress this position. APP had a total of 4,366,993 votes which represented 79.91 percentage of the total votes cast in the six states of the zone, namely; Lagos, Ondo, Oyo, Ogun, Ekiti and Osun. In contrast, the candidate of the PDP, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo polled 1,775,896 votes which translated to about 20 per cent of the total votes cast in the geopolitical zone. Although Chief Olusegun Obasanjo won the Presidential election, the refusal of his kinsmen to vote for him can be attributed to the origin of AD which was considered as the political party of the people of South-West. Consequently, party affiliation did not play a leading role in the voting behaviour of the people of the area.

The second phase of the general elections that were held in the Fourth Republic was held in three stages between April 12 and May 3, 2003. The stages were: National Assembly Election, April 12; Presidential and gubernatorial Elections, April 19; and State House of Assembly Elections, May 3, 2003. The focus of this study shall be on the Presidential Election. The election was contested by the candidates of nineteen political parties. However, the analysis of this study shall be on the electoral exploits of three of the parties; namely, PDP, All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), (formerly APP) and All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) one of the then newly registered parties in 2002. The analysis of this study is limited to these three parties because they were the first three political parties in order of performance. The candidate of the PDP for the election was then the incumbent President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, Major-General Muhammad Buhari (rtd.) was the flag-bearer of ANPP while Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu contested the election under the platform of APGA. Each of these contestants won majority of votes cast in his geopolitical zone. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo hailed from South-West, Major-General Buhari (rtd) North-West and Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu South-East.

At the conclusion of the 2003 Presidential poll, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who was declared the winner of the election polled a total of 24,456,140 out of a total of 39,480,489 valid votes cast nation-wide.

This represented 61.94 per cent (See Appendix III for the 2003 Presidential election results). The electoral performance of Chief Obasanjo cut across the six geopolitical zones in the country. What might have given impetus to this, perhaps, was incumbency factor. But his performance in his geopolitical zone can in addition to the incumbency factor be attributed to geographical factor. Being the only 'promising' candidate among the Yoruba candidates (others being major Mojisola Adekunle Obasanjo (rtd) of Masses Movement of Nigeria- MMN, Dr. Tunji Braithwaite of Nigeria Advance Party –NAP and Chief Ganiyu Fawehinmi of National Conscience Party – NCP), his people gave him over whelming support. Consequently, there was a paradigm shift in their ideological stance. Therefore, he led the election in five of the six states in the South West. The only state he lost to AD was Lagos. In all, he garnered a total of 6,562,231 votes in the zone which represented 78.23 per cent of the total votes cast. (Transition Monitoring Group, 2003:272). His election victory was therefore a result of geographic factor.

Major-General Muhammad Buhari (rtd) the candidate of the ANPP polled a total of 12,710,022 votes out of a total of 39,480,489 valid votes cast (Transition Monitoring Group –TMG, 2003:272). This represented 32.19 per cent of the total votes cast. The bulk of these votes came from the North and in particular, North-West where he hails from. The North West is made up of seven States namely Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa, Zamfara and Kaduna. 9,230 142 of the total votes he got came from the six states of North-West. This represented 72.62 per cent of the total votes he garnered (TMG, 2002:272). The people of the core Northern states (as North-West is usually referred to) gave support to their own (Buhari). In fact, a State like Katsina which voted for PDP during gubernatorial election, voted overwhelmingly for Buhari (the ANPP candidate) during Presidential election. Therefore, the strategy for winning Presidential poll in that area was for you to have geographical relationship with them.

Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu, the candidate of APGA had a total of 1,297,445 of the total votes of 39,480,489 cast during the Presidential election. This represented 3.29 per cent. Majority of these votes came from the South Eastern states of Anambra, Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo. In all, he garnered a total of 1,094,101 votes in the geopolitical zone. This represented 84.33 per cent of the total votes he polled (TMG, 2003:272). The impressive performance of Chief Ojukwu in the zone could be attributed to the fact that he came from the area, moreso, he was the former secessionist leader during the aborted Biafran Republic between 1967 and 1970. Therefore, he was given home support by his kinsmen based on ethnic cum geographic consideration. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the voting behaviour of electorate during the 2003 Presidential election in Nigeria had more bearing with 'electoral geography' than any other consideration.

The 2007 general elections were the Third phase of elections to be held in the Fourth Republic. The elections were significant in a sense because they marked a transition from one civilian regime to another. This was the first time such will happen in the electoral history of the country. This explains why INEC in its report on the 2007 elections posited that: "Nigeria finally succeeded in breaking the jinx of not transiting from one democratic elected government to another" (INEC, 2007:5). The administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo had spent up its maximum two terms of eight years (four years per term). INEC was the body that managed the transitional elections. The elections were held in two phases namely:

- (i) Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly Elections, 14 April, 2007.
- (ii) Presidential and National Assembly Elections; 21 April, 2007.

As stated earlier in this study, the analysis of the study shall be predicated upon the presidential election. In all, fifty (50) political parties contested the 2007 general elections. However, twenty five (25) fielded candidates for the presidential election. The same criterion used while discussing the voting patterns of electorate during the 2003 Presidential election shall also be adopted here. This is zeroing the analysis down to the first three political parties in order of performance during the Presidential poll. Based on the yardstick, the parties that fell into this category were: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and Action Congress (AC). A total of 35,476,057 valid votes were recorded during the election (INEC, 2007). Of this figure, the candidate of PDP, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, polled a total of 24,638,063 votes, which represented 69.45 per cent. Next to him was the candidate of ANPP, Major-General Muhammad Buhari (rtd.), who scored 6,665,299 votes which translated to 18.79 per cent. Coming third was Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the candidate of AC, who garnered 2, 637, 848 votes. This represented 7.44 per cent. (See Appendix IV for the detailed Presidential Election result of 2007). The striking feature of the Presidential Election result was that the first three candidates who topped the list were from the Northern part of the country although they came from different geopolitical zones. Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and Major –General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd.) came from North-West and infact, the same state, Katsina. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar hailed from North-East.

The coincidence in the geographical locations of the choice of the Presidential candidates of the major political parties was caused by their zoning formulas. When President Olusegun Obasanjo, from South-West, was about to complete his second term in office, his political party, PDP, zoned its presidential office to the North. Other major political parties (ANPP and AC) followed suit by zoning their presidential tickets to the North. What informed their action was that it would amount to political suicide if a political party then zoned its presidential ticket to the same zone where Obasanjo who spent two terms in office hailed from. In fact, going by the election results, all the political parties that then miscalculated by picking their presidential candidates from the South performed poorly in the election. For instance, APGA, which came third during the 2003 Presidential Poll, was pushed to the sixth position with a paltry vote of 155,947 which represented 0.004 per cent (INEC, 2007:39). Reason, its presidential candidate Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu came from the South. The foregoing therefore showed that the general consensus that prevailed among the political class prior to the 2007 Presidential election was that the North should produce the successor of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

The six geopolitical zones in Nigeria voted overwhelmingly for the candidate of the then ruling party, PDP, in the election that was marred by what international and domestic observers described as “massive fraud and serious irregularities, including vote rigging and political violence” (Oluwole, 2008:8).

Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua led the election in North-West, his geopolitical zone. Out of total votes of 9,475,377 cast in the area, he polled a total of 5,237,023 votes which represented 55.27 per cent (INEC, 2007:34) Major General Muhammad Buhari (rtd.), the candidate of the ANPP who was also from the geopolitical zone garnered 3,269,044 votes out of a total of 9,475,377 votes cast in the area. This represented 34.50 per cent (INEC, 2007: 39). The foregoing analyses revealed that the North-West electorate were guided by geographic issue while casting their votes for presidential candidates during the election in question. This position can further be buttressed by the performance of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the candidate of AC who was from North East geopolitical zone. He polled a total of 351,195 votes from the zone out of a total of 9,475,377 votes cast. This represented 1.98 per cent (INEC 2007:39). Although the over-all performance of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, the candidate of AC, who hailed from North-East was nothing to write home about in the geopolitical zone, there was evidence of geographic voting in his home state, Adamawa, where he came second. He polled a total of 240,624 votes to trail behind Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the candidate of PDP who garnered 312,590 votes. Major –General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd.), the candidate of ANPP, came third in the state with 107,350. However, the poor performance of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar in his geo-political zone can be attributed to his late clearance by the INEC. He only got court judgment giving him a go ahead to contest the Presidential election two-days to the election.

The 2011 general elections were the fourth phase of elections to be held in the Fourth Republic. Prior to the election, to be specific on May 5, 2010, the winner of the 2007 Presidential poll, Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'Adua died. The then Vice-President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was sworn in as the substantive President after his demise. This development gave Jonathan an edge over other contestants (Alhaji Abubakar Atiku who had returned to the PDP in particular) during his party's Presidential primary despite the fact that some opinion leaders from the North wanted PDP to pick its presidential candidate from the North. However, Jonathan emerged as the candidate of his party. In all, a total of twenty (20) political parties presented candidates for the Presidential Election. But the major contenders were: Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the candidate of PDP, Major General Muhammad Buhari (rtd) of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu who was fielded by the AC. Also trailing behind them was Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau of ANPP. It is worthy of note that Major-General Muhammad Buhari(rtd.) who contested Presidential elections under the platform of ANPP, contested the 2011 Presidential election as the candidate of CPC then a relatively new party, formed in May 2010. CPC was formed in 2010 by Major General Muhammad Buhari so as to actualise his Presidential ambition when it occurred to him that ANPP's serving and ex-governors had hijacked the leadership of the party. His fear was confirmed because Alhaji Ibrahim She karau who emerged as the candidate of ANPP for 2011 Presidential poll was the serving governor of Kano State as at the time he clinged the Presidential ticket of his party, ANPP.

The 2011 general elections Kick- start on April 2, 2011. The first election, National Assembly that was held was however, aborted mid- way due to what the then INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega described as ‘logistic problem’ (*Sunday Tribune*, 3 April, 2011:1.). Therefore, after holding meeting with the leaders of the registered political parties and representatives of ‘well- meaning Nigerians’ on April 4, 2011, Professor Attahiru Jega, the then INEC Chairman, announced that the 2011 general elections had been rescheduled to hold as follows: National Assembly, April 9; Presidential, April 16; and Governorship/ Houses of Assemblies, April 26 (*Nigerian Tribune*, 5 April 16, 2011).

The 2011 Presidential Election was contested by candidates of twenty (20) of the over sixty (60) registered political parties. But as was the case with the previous analyses made in this work, focus shall be on the first three best- performed candidates or political parties. They were; Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the candidate of the PDP, Major- General Muhammad Buhari (rtd) of the CPC and Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu, the flag- bearer of the ACN. Unlike the 2007 Presidential poll when the major contenders were of Northern extraction, two of the top- three Presidential candidates (Major- General Muhammad Buhari and Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu) during the 2011 presidential poll were Northerners. The third candidate Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, who incidentally won the election came from the South- South geo-political zone. However, while Major- General Buhari (rtd.) was from North- West, Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu came from the North- East.

According to INEC(2011) (contained in Ujo, 2012:329) 38,209,978 valid votes were recorded in the Presidential election (see Appendix v for the 2011 Presidential election results) Out of this, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the flag- bearer of the PDP and the then incumbent President, who was declared the winner of the election polled 22,495,187 (See Appendix V for the detailed 2011 Presidential election result). Out of this figure, he garnered a total of 6,832,268 votes from South- South geopolitical zone where he hailed from which represented 97.19 per cent of the total votes of 6,823,484 cast in the area. The total votes he got in his geo- political zone also represented 29.0 per cent of his overall votes in the election. The South- South geo-political zone is composed of six states, namely; Edo, Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross- River and Bayelsa. The land-slide victory recorded by Dr. Jonathan in his geo- political zone borders on the issue of representation. The geo- political zone had been on the vanguard of representation since 1958. Being a minority area populated by Ijaw, Ishekiri and Ibibio the people of the area saw it as a golden opportunity to be represented by their own in the country. In fact, never in the history of electoral contest in Nigeria has any candidate recorded such a high percentage in any election. Therefore what governed the electoral decision of the people of South- South geo- political zone in the country during the election was geographical issue.

Major- General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd.) the candidate of the CPC was of North- West stock. He was next to Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in terms of performance in the election. He polled a total of 12,214,853 votes. This represented 31.98 per cent (INEC, 2011 cited by Ujo, 2013:349). However, of the total votes he recorded, 7,451,343 came from North- West his geopolitical zone. This represented 69.61 per cent of the total votes cast in the area and 61.00per cent of the total votes he garnered across the country. The abysmal performance of CPC which was less than a year old, in the election, in North-West, confirmed a type of voting behaviour predicated upon geographic contiguity. He was given overwhelming support by the people of the geopolitical zone because they felt the death of President Umaru Yar' Adua robbed them of what would have been eight years of representation in the highest decision making arm of the country. Therefore they found in Buhari a succor. This position can further be buttressed by the pattern of voting of the people of his home state, Katsina (where late Yar' Adua also hailed from). They voted for the PDP during gubernatorial election and shifted base to CPC during Presidential election. While Major- General Muhammad Buhari (rtd) polled a total of 1,163,919 votes in Katsina state, in the election, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the candidate of PDP, garnered 428,492 votes, (INEC, 2011). The foregoing shows that it was because Buhari came from the North-West geopolitical zone that made him enjoy the over-whelming support of his people in the election.

Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu, the candidate of the ACN in the Presidential election was from the North-East geopolitical zone. The zone is made up of six states, namely; Borno, Yobe, Taraba, Adamawa, Bauchi and Gombe. Alhaji Ribadu got a total of 2,079,151 votes nation-wide, in the election. This represented 5.44 per cent of the total valid votes cast by electorate in the election (INEC, 2011) (cited in Ujo, 2012:349). Out of this figure, he polled a paltry total of 316,141 votes from the zone which represented 15.21 per cent of the votes he garnered. His performance cannot be said to be influenced by geographical factor. Rather, his poor performance in his geopolitical zone can be attributed to other factors. One of the factors was that the party, ACN, which fielded him, had ethnic colouration. It was regarded as a 'Yoruba political party' in view of the fact that it was founded by some Yoruba leaders (Simbine, 2002). Therefore, it was not 'sellable' in the North-East. Another reason that can be adduced for his poor performance was that he was a new comer into politics. He only became an active politician in 2009 after he had served out his term as the pioneer Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) one of the nation's anti-graft agencies. While serving in that capacity, he was still in service as a Police officer.

The 2015 general elections were the fifth phase of the elections to be held in the Fourth Republic. Some political developments preceded the elections; major among them was the emergence of a 'new' political party, All Progressives Congress (APC) which was a coalition of three major political parties

(ANPP, ACN and CPC) and a faction of APGA. What led to its formation in February 2013 was the awareness on the part of minority parties in the country that they could not wrestle power from the PDP, individually.

Another major political development that shaped political cum electoral decisions/ calculations prior to and during the 2015 presidential poll was the debate on 'power- shift'. Majority of Northerners believed that President Jonathan signed an agreement that he would only spend a term of four years in office to complete late President Yar' Adua's mandate and thereafter, power should rotate back to the North. References are usually made by the group which opposed the second term ambition of the then President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to a statement he made in Ethiopia in 2011 before 2011 general elections that he would not contest for second term. While interacting with Nigerians, most of whom were diplomats working in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, former President Jonathan was quoted to have said that he had no intention to stay in office beyond 2015, saying he would not contest the 2015 election. He was quoted thus:

If I'm voted into power, within the next four years the issue of power will become a thing of the past. Four years is enough for anyone in power to make significant improvement and if I can't improve on power within this period it then means I cannot do anything even if I am there for the next years. I would have loved that the Nigerians in the Diaspora vote this year (2011) but to be frank with you that is going to be difficult now. Presently the law does not allow for voting outside Nigeria. And so this year, Nigerians in the Diaspora will not vote but I will work towards it by 2015 even though I will not be running for election (cited in Alechenu, 2014:12).

The above statement generated heated debates prior to the 2015 Presidential Election between pro and anti Jonathan camps which cut across party lines and geographical boundaries. While pro-Jonathan posited he was quoted out of context, his antagonists (who came mainly from the North) argued that he must abide by his promise. This political debate precipitated political crises in the country. For instance, it explains why seven (six of which came from the North) PDP governors initially championed the campaign on second term against President Jonathan after it dawned on them that he would go for second term. Eventuality, five of them (the governors of Kwara, Sokoto, Rivers, Kano and Adamawa) participated actively in the coalition- building that produced APC and they eventually officially decamped to the party.

The foregoing scenario gave a picture of what later became North-South struggle for political representation and it turned out to be the main determinant of the voting behaviour of Nigerians during the 2015 Presidential election.

The 2015 general elections were scheduled to hold in the month of February but had to be postponed by six weeks on security ground on the advice of the then National security Adviser, Colonel Sambo Dasuki, (rtd.) he made the call on February 28, 2015. This explains why in a meeting the then INEC Chairman had with the representatives of registered political parties on February 1, 2015 he announced that the polls have been re- scheduled to hold as follows: Presidential/ National Assembly Elections, 28/3/2015; and Gubernatorial/ House of Assembly Elections, 11/4/2015. Fourteen political parties fielded candidates for the 2015 presidential election. But going by the outcome of the election, the then incumbent President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, who was the candidate of PDP and Major-General Muhammad Buhari (rtd.) who was contesting Presidential election for the fourth time, fielded by the APC, were the main contenders. The focus of this study shall be on the duo because the performances of the candidates of the remaining twelve political parties in the election were nothing to write home about. For instance, no other candidate garnered up to sixty (60) thousand votes in the election. This shows that the contest was squarely between the North geopolitical zone and South geo- political zone.

This position can be substantiated with the stand of Northern Elders' Forum (NEF) (a socio-cultural organisation in the North) on the Presidential election as presented by its Deputy Chairman, Mr. Paul Unongo. He categorically stated that the North will vote for APC because it has shown respect to the region by picking its Presidential candidate from the geo- political zone. This position shows the desperation of the North geographical contiguity to reclaim political power from the South at all cost. In fact, it was apparent that members of Arewa consultative Forum a (ACF) (a socio- cultural group of members of Northern extraction in the country) and NEF actually prevailed on other would- be presidential candidates of APC and other political parties to step down for the favoured Northern candidate, Major-General Muhamad Buhari (rtd). A case in point was the presidential ambition of the then Speaker of the

House of Representatives (Nigeria's lower chamber) Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal that was mortgaged. He dropped his presidential ambition on November 18, 2014 and picked governorship form in his home state, Sokoto. Although he claimed to have done that in the overall interest of his party, APC, what actually propelled his action was geographical consideration. (*The Punch*, November 19, 2014:9) Being from the North like Buhari, some powerful forces in the region must have influenced his action.

The political game plan of having someone who comes from a particular geopolitical zone as the President of the country was not restricted to the North. Most of the socio- cultural organisations in the South also declared open support for the candidature of the then President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. They included; Afenifere (a Yoruba socio- cultural association) Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) (a Yoruba socio- cultural cum militant group in the South- West geopolitical zone) to mention some but a few. Some prominent indigenes of the South also declared open support for the then President Jonathan and reiterated the position of the geopolitical area on his (Jonathan) candidacy. For instance, Chief Eze Ife, of Igbo extraction from the South- East geo- political zone who was a former governor of Anambra state, 1991-1993; and who was also a prominent member of Ohaneze Ndigbo beared his mind and that of his geopolitical zone on the 2015 Presidential election on November 10, 2014 thus: "Nigeria will break if Jonathan is not allowed to contest". (*The Punch*, November 11, 2014:4). He followed his 'threat' with another one eight days later when he said: "Stopping Jonathan in 2015 will have grave 'consequences' *The Punch*, November 19, 2011:6). These statements were clear indications that what governed the voting behaviour of the majority of the people of the Southern Nigeria was not, for instance, based on party affiliation but geographical issue.

From the foregoing it can be deduced that both the North and South were embroiled in supremacy contest over 2015 Presidential Election. Therefore, the outcome of the election which many observes, for example, European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), described as the best election Nigeria has ever had, failed the litmus test of fairness. The Presidential election was held across the country on March 28, 2015; the results revealed that the candidate of the APC, Major – General Muhammadu Buhari, a Northerner from North – West geo- political zone (the same zone that produced late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua) won the election. He polled a total of 15, 424, 921 votes out of the total valid votes of 28,582, 182 cast in the election. (INEC, 2015:66) This represented 53, 97 per cent. It is instructive to note that of the total votes he garnered in the election, 11, 924, 491 came from the North. This represented 77.37 per cent of the total votes he got (see Appendix vi for the 2015 Presidential election result) Furthermore, 6, 821, 199 of the total votes he garnered in the North, came from the seven North- West geopolitical states composed of Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, Jigawa, Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina. This represented 57.16 per cent of the total votes he received from the North and 44.22 per cent of his over- all votes. In fact, he led the election in sixteen of the nineteen states of the North. The three states where President Jonathan defeated him were Taraba (in North -East), Plateau and Nasarawa (both in North Central).

A second look at Major- General Buhari's (rtd.) performance shows that only 3,490,430 votes of the total votes he garnered in the election nation- wide came from the South. This translated to 22.63 per cent. This study is of the view that this was not a good performance for a President who has the entire country as his constituency. Therefore, his performance suffers a deficiency in the geographical spread of his votes. However, this boiled down to the earlier struggle between the North and South to produce the country's President in 2015.

The then incumbent President, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was defeated in the election. He trailed behind the candidate of the APC, Major- General Muhammad Buhari (rtd.) who won the election. Dr. Jonathan polled a total of 12,853, 162 votes. (INEC, 2015:66). This represented 44.96 per cent of the total valid votes recorded in the election. Out of this number, 9,001,048 votes came from the South made up of seventeen states (INEC, 2015). This translated to 70.03 per cent of the total votes he garnered in the election. Further analysis of his performance, reveals that 4,714,726 of the votes he received in the election came from the South- South. This represented 52.38 per cent and 36.68per cent of the total votes he garnered in the election.

As it was observed while analysing Major-General Buhari's (rtd) performance in the election, Dr. Jonathan's performance did not also reflect geographical representation in the real sense of it. This was because notwithstanding the votes cast in most Northern states, the fact remains that since only 29.97 percent of his total votes came from the North, his performance equally failed to meet the parameter of geographical representation in the spirit of electoral geography. In fact, he led the election convincingly in both South- South and South- East geopolitical zones. It was only in South-West his performance suffered

a setback. Out of the six states in the geo- political zone, he lost five to Major- General Buhari (rtd). The only state he won was Ekiti. However, his poor performance in the zone can be attributed to the fact that the running mate of Buhari, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, hails from that zone. Ostensibly, his kinsmen (Yoruba people) gave him home support.

At this juncture, it can be argued that the foregoing confirms the earlier position of this study that geographical factor was what dominated the voting behaviour of the electorate of the North and South during the 2015 Presidential election.

Conclusion

This study has examined the voting behaviour of the Nigerian electorate by focusing on the Fourth Republican Presidential Election. It started with introduction then conceptual clarifications, theoretical framework and an analysis of the voting behaviour of the Nigerian voters during the Fourth Republican Presidential election. This was discussed by first having a cursory look on the previous elections that have been held in the country before 2015.

The study observes that;

- i. Beginning from 1959 when Nigeria was first exposed to general elections to date, electorate in the country have always been influenced by geopolitical consideration in their voting decisions during electoral processes. This is often more glaring whenever a choice is to be made between the candidates of different political parties who do not come from the same geopolitical zone.
- ii. More often than not, geographical factor dominates the thinking of an average Nigerian voter when it comes to making his or her voting decisions. Consequently, other factors like, party affiliation, party ideology, party manifesto, religion and the social class of contestants have not been playing visible role in the voting behaviour of Nigerian electorate.
- iii. The issue of two- terms syndrome have been known to have precipitated crisis when an incumbent died in office. This generated heated debates on whether or not Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan should be allowed to spend a term or two terms in office.
- iv. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) has not properly addressed the principle of electoral geography. Although Section 134(2) of the Constitution provides that for a candidate to win a presidential election, he/she must score at least 25 per cent of the total votes cast in at least two- thirds of total number of states in the Federation, it gives room for a president not having geographic representation to emerge as the elected President of the country. For instance, a presidential candidate who manages to have 25 per cent of the total votes cast in twenty four states may emerge the winner of the election over another candidate who meets the requirement in all the thirty- six states, if his geopolitical zone votes for him massively. Following from the above findings, the study here by recommends that in order to reduce the menace of geographical voting in a plural state of Nigeria, the following policy actions should be taken by the various electoral stakeholders.
 1. Political parties in Nigeria should de-emphasise the policy of rotation of political offices on geographical basis. This is because it does a great harm to the cohesion of the country. Rather credible and competent candidates should emerge through party primaries not minding where they come from. The current practice is prone to breeding incompetent candidates all in the name of rotating political power to the next zone. Other geopolitical zones that do not produce the President can be compensated in other (political) appointment makings.
 2. The Constitution of the country should be amended to allow for only a term in office by political office holders. Towards this end, Section 135 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria that allows elected political office holders to spend two terms of eight years (four years each) should be reviewed and reduced to a single term of six years. This will reduce the acrimony that always greet two terms as witnessed in 2015.
 3. Nigerian voters should be exposed to political education that will make them promote national interest as opposed to geographic interest. This can be actualised through the activities of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture or through the enlightenment programmes of one of its agencies, National Orientation Agency (NOA) which has the statutory responsibility of giving political education to Nigerians on national issues.

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Appendix I

The six geo-political zones in Nigeria

S/No	Geo-political zones	State
1.	North-Central	Kwara, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Benue, and Plateau
2.	North-East	Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe
3.	North-West	Kano, Kaduna, Kebbi, Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara and Jigawa
4.	South-East	Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Imo
5.	South-West	Ekiti, Ondo, Ogun, Lagos, Osun and Oyo
6.	South-South	Bayelsa, Delta, Cross-River, Akwa-Ibom, Edo and Rivers

Source: Researcher's Finding, 2016

Appendix II: Results of 1999 Presidential election in Nigeria

Political Party	Candidate	Votes
All People's Party (AD-APP coalition)	Olu Falae	11,110,287
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Olusegun Obasanjo	18,738,154
Total Valid Votes		29,848,441

Source: Ujo, (2012:345)

Appendix III: Results of 2003 Presidential election in Nigeria

Political Party	Candidate	Votes
All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)	Muhammad Buhari	12,710,022
All Progressives' Grand Alliance (APGA)	Odumegwu Ojukwu	1,297,445
All People's Liberation Party (APLP)	Okereke Osita	26,795
African Renaissance Party (ARP)	Yahaya G.K	11,501
Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP)	Nnaji Ifeanyi	5,937
Democratic Alternative (DA)	Ferreira Anthonia	6,700
Justice Party (JP)	Chris Okotie	119,535
Liberal Democratic Party of Nigeria (LDPN)	Chris Pere Ajuwa	4,467
Movement for Democracy and Justice (MDJ)	Yusuf M. Dikko	21,393
Masses Movement of Nigeria (MMN)	Mojisola Obasanjo	3,745
National Action Council (NAC)	Olapade Agoro	5,751
Nigeria Advance Party (NAP)	Tunji Braithwaite	6,924
National Conscience Party (NCP)	Ganiyu Fawehinmi	159,447
National Democratic Party (NDP)	Ike Nwachukwu	132,964
New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)	Kalu Idika Kalu	23,807
Progressive Action Congress (PAC)	Sarah N. Jibril	157,329
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Olusegun Obasanjo	24,456,140
People's Mandate Party (PMP)	Nwanko Arthur	57,498
People's Redemption Party (PRP)	Balarabe Musa	100,756
United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP)	Nwobido Jim	167,591
	Total	<u>39,480,489</u>

Source: INEC, 2015 (Contained in Otoghagua, 2007:329-330)

Appendix IV: Results of 2007 Presidential Election in Nigeria

Political Party	Candidate	Votes
Action Congress (AC)	Atiku Abubakar	2,567,798
African Democratic Congress (ADC)	Patric Utomi	50,849
African Political System (APS)	Lawrence Adedoyin	22,459
A Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)	Muhammadu Buhari	6,607,419
All Peoples Liberation Party (APLP)	Okereke Osita	22,459
All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	Chukwuemeka Ojurwu	155,947
Alliance for Democracy (AD)	Pere Ajuwa	89,511
Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP)	Goodswill Nnaji	11,705
Citizens Popular Party (CPP)	Mazi Ogbu	14,027
Democratic Peoples Party (DPP)	Attahiru Bafarawa	289,324
FRESH	Chris Okotie	74,049
Hope Democratic Party (HDP)	Ambrose Owuru	28,518
Masses Movement of Nigeria (MMN)	Mojisola Obasanjo	4,309
National Action Council (NAC)	Olapade Agoro	5,692
National Conscience Party (PCP)	Osagie Obayuwara	8,229
National Democratic Party (NDP)	Aliu Habu Fari	21,974
National Majority Democratic Party (NMDP)	Abore Solomon	5,666
National Unity Party (NUP)	Aminu Gambari Abubakar	4,355
New Democrats (ND)	Isa Odidi	5,408
New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)	Galadima Liman	21,665
Nigeria Peoples Congress (NPC)	Asakarawon Olapere	33,771
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Umaru Musa Yar'Adua	24,784,227
Peoples Mandate Party (PMP)	Nwakwo Arthur	24,164
Peoples Progressive Alliance (PPA)	Orji Uzor Kalu	608,833
Republican Party of Nigeria (RPN)	Sunny Okogwu	13,566
	Total	35,476,057

Source: INEC, 2007 (Contained in *Nigerian Tribune*, 24 April, 2007)

Appendix V: Results of 2011 Presidential election in Nigeria

Political Party	Candidate	Votes
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	22,495,187
Congress for Progressive Change (CPC)	Muhammadu Buhari	12,214,853
Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN)	Nuhu Ribadu	2,079,151
All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)	Ibrahim Shekarau	917,012
People for Democratic Change (PDC)	Mahmud Waziri	82,243
People's Mandate Party (PMP)	Nwadike Chikezie	56,248
Peoples Progressive Party (PPP)	Lawson Aroh	54,203
African Democratic Congress (ADC)	Peter Nwangwu	51,682
Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP)	Iheanyichukwu Nnanji	47,272
FRESH	Christopher Okotie	34,331
National Conscience Party (NCP)	Dele Momodu	26,376
National Majority Democratic Party (NMDP)	Solomon Akpona	25,938
African Political System (APS)	Lawrence Adedoyin	23,740
United National Party for Development (UNPD)	Ebiti Ndok	21,203
National Transformation Party (NTP)	John Dara	19,744
Mega Progressive Peoples Party (MPPP)	Rasheed Shitta-Bey	16,492
African Renaissance Party (ARP)	Yahaya Ndu	12,264
Hope Democratic Party (HDP)	Ambrose Owuru	12,023
Social Democratic Mega Party (SDMP)	Patrick Utomu	11,544
Liberal Democratic Party of Nigeria (LDPN)	Christopher Nwaokobia	8,472
	Total	39,469,484

Source: INEC Official Website (Contained in Ujo, 2012:349)

Appendix VI Summary of 2015 Presidential Poll results of APC and PDP

S/No	State	Political Party	
		APC	PDP
1	Abia	13,394	368,303
2	Adamawa	374,701	251,664
3	Akwa-Ibom	58,411	953,304
4	Anambra	17,926	660,762
5	Bauchi	931,598	86,085
6	Bayelsa	5,194	361,209
7	Benue	373,961	303,737
8	Borno	473,543	25,640
9	Cross River	28,368	414,863
10	Delta	48,910	1,211,405
11	Ebonyi	19,518	323,652
12	Edo	208,469	286,869
13	Ekiti	120,331	176,466
14	Enugu	14,157	553,003
15	Federal Capital Territory (FCT)	146,399	157,195
16	Gombe	361,245	96,873
17	Imo	133,253	559,185
18	Jigawa	885,988	142,904
19	Kaduna	1,127,760	484,085
20	Kano	1,903,999	215,779
21	Katsina	1,345,441	98,937
22	Kebbi	567,883	100,972
23	Kogi	264,851	149,987
24	Kwara	302,146	132,602
25	Lagos	792,460	632,327
26	Nasarawa	236,838	273,460
27	Niger	657,678	149,222
28	Ogun	308,290	207,950
29	Ondo	299,889	251,368
30	Osun	383,603	249,929
31	Oyo	528,620	303,376
32	Plateau	429,140	549,615
33	Rivers	69,238	1,487,075
34	Sokoto	671,926	152,199
35	Taraba	261,326	310,800
36	Yobe	446,265	25,526
37	Zamfara	612,202	144,833
	Total	15,424,921	12,853,162

Source: INEC (2015)