The Strength of Ethnicity in Voting Behaviour in the 2015 Presidential Elections in Nigeria: The Case of Ibadan, Oyo State

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ABSTRACT

The resurgence of voting pattern along ethnic identities during the 2015 presidential election never took an average Nigerian by surprise. The nature of Nigerian politics has always been premised on primordial factors that keep defining who gets what, how and when. The paper examines the ethnic colouration in the voting pattern of Nigerians during the election. The paper employs primordial theory of ethnicity to explain the strength of ethnicity in voting behaviour. The paper exploits qualitative and quantitative components comprising questionnaire and content analysis of two dailies and review of literature as secondary data. A sample size of one hundred respondents in Ibadan, Oyo State was analyzed on the considerations such as ethnic identities: language, religion, region, and custom among those that participated during campaign, those that voted and those that served as INEC officials. The findings showed that 86.4% of the respondents with Hausa ethnic identity and 72% of the respondents with Igbo background agreed that some variables such as ethnicity and religion were strong factors that influenced their voting behaviour in the election.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Voting Behaviour, Presidential Election

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a nation is an aggregation of several nationalities and therefore, from time immemorial, even before the advent of colonial masters, ethnic identity have defined the scope of political intercourse in heterogeneous and pluralistic societies like Nigeria prior to the forceful amalgamation of the entity nationality in 1914 such as Ibo, Hausa, Yoruba, Nupe, Tiv, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Jukun, etc was on its way to nationhood independent of one another but dependent socio-economic wise, thereby creating a chain of inter-relationships among the people inhabiting Nigeria today (Ademola, 2000). Despite the fact that Nigeria is composed of over 450 ethnic groupings, the three dominating ethnic groups are Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba with the Hausa dominating the northern part of the country; the Ibo in the eastern part and the Yoruba in the western part of the country. The amalgamation of these peoples, who are ethnically, religiously, culturally, and idiosyncratically different, coupled with the fact that structurally the emergent regions before the amalgamation were practically of unequal sizes, unequal population, and operating as many systems of government. The 1996 state creation and reorganization of the state structure in Nigeria saw these ethnic groupings being reorganized into six geo-political zones with the Hausa-Fulani comprising the north east, north west and north central; the Ibo concentrated in the south east and south south while the yorubas taking the south west. The 1996 re-organisation was the last effort by the Abacha regime in ensuring relative distribution of power and resources within the country (Mudasiru, 2015). However, agitation for state creation has not ceased, struggling for a fair share and control of the national resource, the problem has

been how to ensure equity and fairness. This complexity for fair representation has necessitated individual and group relations to choose their representatives by the imperatives of cultural symbols and ethnic identities. The resultant effect of this ineffectual reorganization has continued to have tumultuous effect on the politics of the land. Every ethnic group has continued to vie for political office in order to enrich both individual and group interest. Political party formation is not left out in this ethnic chauvinism and configuration, hence party campaign also follow ethnic sentiments. However, scholars have come up with various explanations on the determinants of voting pattern in many developed countries of the world. Generally, they have emphasized the role played by factors such as social class, race, religion and party ideology. Close examinations of their findings suggest that the democracies they investigated have developed overtime and therefore parties have had distinct image and philosophies. Though, the Nigerian democracy is still at its infancy and therefore could not be said to follow a pattern as in the case of the developed countries of the world. It is however regarded as one of the emerging democracies of the world with features that are likely to be different from the developed democracies as motivators of voters. The Nigerian presidential election that took place in the year 2015 was historic. For the first time since the formation of the Fourth Republic of Nigeria, in 1999, after another phase of military rule, Nigeria not only voted out an incumbent president but the People's Democratic Party (PDP) a party that have been described by most as not simply a political party but an institution in the country. While, in principle, there were other political parties in the political landscape – in fact, 14 political parties had candidates in the 2015 presidential race Nigeria, until this year's historic elections, relatively had a one-party system. The election, however, in the face of political fragmentation, growing economic inequality and an economic crisis, deepening social inequality and security concerns posed by the terrorist group Boko Haram, the All Progressive Congress (APC) was able to defeat the PDP, forever altering the political landscape in Nigeria. Recent observation has shown that the 2015 presidential election may not after all determined by the socio-economic and political challenges or follow the assumed position that Nigerian voters are motivated primarily by monetary incentives in deciding who and what party to vote for in any general elections. It may also be said that there are other factors inherent in the presidential election that were rooted in primordial sentiments, common ancestry, language and religion. The nature of voting alongside ethnic identities in determining Nigeria's electoral process and its political landscape since 1963 has made it imperative to conduct this research to ascertain the voting pattern of the 2015 presidential election. Thus, the present study sought to provide answers to these research questions, what factors motivated voters to vote in the 2015 presidential election? Were Nigerians influenced by psychosocial factors such as ethnic affiliation and religious affiliation as a primary force during voting? Were there any relationships between primordial ties and choice of a candidate by the electorate? Several theories on ethnicity have been propounded to

advance the understanding of the term. Prominent among them are primordialism, instrumentalism and social constructivism. For the purpose of this study, the research adopted primordialism as the theoretical framework.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Hutchinson and Smith (1996) hold that the term "ethnicity" is relatively new, first appearing in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1953, but its English origins are connected to the term "ethnic," which has been in use since the Middle Ages. The true origins of "ethnic" have been traced back to Greece and the term ethnos, which was used in reference to band, tribe, race, a people, or a swarm. Jones (1997) outlines three major terms related to "ethnic": ethnic identity, ethnic group, and ethnicity. Ethnic identity: that aspect of a person's self-conceptualization which results from identification with a broader group in opposition to others on the basis of perceived cultural differentiation and/or common descent. Ethnic group: any group of people who set themselves apart and/or are set apart by others with whom they interact or co-exist on the basis of their perceptions of cultural differentiation and/or common descent. Ethnicity: all those social and psychological phenomena associated with a culturally constructed group identity as defined above. The concept of ethnicity focuses on the ways in which social and cultural processes intersect with one another in the identification of, and interaction between, ethnic groups (p. xiii). Voting Behaviour: Voting is the main form of political participation in liberal democratic societies and the study of voting behaviour is a highly specialized sub-field within political science. The analysis of voting patterns invariably focuses on the determinants of why people vote as they do and how they arrive at the decisions they make. Several factors contribute towards the formulation of voting behaviour of electorates with varying intensities. Sociologists tend to look to the socio-economic determinants of support for political parties, observing the correlations between class, occupation, ethnicity, gender, language, age and vote; political scientists have concentrated on the influence of political factors such as issues, political programmes, electoral campaigns, and the popularity of party leaders on voting behaviour. However, both disciplines share much the same terrain, and increasingly have tended to overlap in their analytical approaches (Scott & Marshall, 2009).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Ethnicity

Many theories have been propounded in the effort to explain the meaning of ethnicity. Among them are primordalism, instrumentalism and constructivism. For the purpose of this work, attention is focused on primordalism and its critiques. Primordalists, often referred to as the "Essentialists", hold that ethnicity has existed at all times of human history and that modern ethnic group have historical continuity into the far past. For them, the idea of ethnicity is closely linked to the idea of nations and is rooted in the pre-Weber understanding of humanity as being divided into primordially existing groups rooted by kinship and biological

heritage. Under primordialism, scholars have come out with different approaches in the effort to explain the theory. Essentialist primordialism holds that ethnicity is a priori fact of human existence. For them, ethnicity precedes any human social interaction and that it is basically unchanged by it. This theory sees ethnic groups as natural, not historical. Kinship primordialism holds that ethnic communities are extensions of kinship units, basically being derived by kinship or clan ties where the choices of cultural signs (language, religion, traditions) are made exactly to show this biological affinity. In this way, the myths of common biological ancestry that are a defining feature of ethnic communities are to be understood as representing actual biological history. Geertz's primordialism, notably espoused by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1963) argues that humans in general attribute an overwhelming power to primordial human "givens" such as blood ties, language, territory, and cultural differences. In Geertz's opinion, ethnicity is not in itself primordial but humans perceive it as such because it is embedded in their experience of the world. He maintained that "one is bound to ones kinsmen, ones neighbor, ones believer, ipso facto... To win in an election requires not just an individual's personality but his ethnic identity. He annexes and mobilizes votes through common religion, language and customs which bring people together."

Berreman (1972) saw ethnicity as one level of social stratification that also includes race, class, kinship, age, estate, caste, and gender. Ethnicity is ascribed at birth, but the ethnic group normally defines its cultural characteristics itself. Thus, racial categorizations, which are defined by the outsider, are normally laced with inaccuracies and stereotypes, while ethnic classification is more accurate of a cultural group because it is defined by the group itself. Primordialists believe that ethnicity is a natural phenomenon with its foundations in family and kinship ties (Geertz, 1963; Medina, 2014). Hence, it is argued that primordial bonds between individuals result from the givens of birth 'blood', language, religion, territory and culture which can be distinguished from other social ties on the basis of the 'ineffable and unaccountable' importance of the tie itself. A model by (Isaacs, 1974), for example, developed "a concept of primordial ties as a means of explaining the power and persistence of ethnic identity which he called 'basic group identity' (Jones, 1997). Isaacs's basic group identity was linked to ethnic identity, which was argued to be assigned at birth and more fundamental and natural than other social links. An added component of Isaacs's model is a psychological theory that addresses conflict between intertribal or ethnic groups. This latter concept is often tied to nationalist movements in modern societies.

Critiques of the primordialist's origins of ethnicity have been that it represents a very static and naturalistic viewpoint. It does not take into account culture process and other social factors that manipulate or formulate ethnic communities. Stack (1986) viewed that primordial approaches are either too general or too obscure to possess a great deal of explanatory power. In searching for the givens of social existence, the primordial approach explains everything and nothing (p. 2). Instrumentalists believe that "ethnicity is socially constructed

and people have the ability to cut and mix from variety of ethnic heritage and cultures to form their own individual or group identities" Barth (1969) viewed ethnic identity as an "individualistic strategy" in which individuals move from one identity to another to "advance their personal economic and political interests, or to minimize their losses" (Jones, 1997). In contrast to Barth, Cohen (1974) "places greater emphasis on the ethnic group as a collectively organized strategy for the protection of economic and political interests" (Cohen, 1974). However, despite such problems, Stack (1986) and others further argue that primordial approaches capture an essential aspect of ethnicity the psychological and emotional strength of ethnic attachments.

ETHNICITY AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

Ethnicity constitutes the foundations of the African society, for it shapes communities, cultures, economies and the political structures of the peoples. More importantly, it shapes the perceptions of the African, defines his universe, and provides him with meaning, understanding and the power to interpret the world around him. It is therefore an integral part of every African, despite the deepening influences of westernization and increasing cultural adulteration, since colonial times.

First, ethnicity provides security both to the group, as a whole, as well as to the individuals constituting the group. Second, it provides each group with a common ancestry and history which creates a strong bond within members of the group. Third, ethnicity identifies each group with a common language. Through language communication, it easier to share ideas, skills, values, taboos and other cultural beliefs and customs and it assists the groups in keeping their secrets from each other, for it is through language that they derive their power to rule and to exist. Finally, ethnicity serves as an organizing force, which assists in bringing the people together to fight or seek a common goal (Nnoli, 1998). This creates a sense of communalism, family, and togetherness, which also deepens the sense of belonging. It is important to note that members of the same ethnic group not only have a lot in common and share things that are unique to them, but they also live together in a specific region of the country involved. It is common to find that the Ashantis of Ghana, the Yoruba of Nigeria, the Kpelle of Liberia are congregated in a specific region of those countries. They claim to own that region hence fight to keep intruders from taking over their land. However, ethnicity is an important factor of mobilisation during elections in African countries. Thus, it is important to understand the approaches to voting pattern of people and situate the role of ethnicity could play in this. A number of different (but not mutually exclusive) approaches to the explanation of voting behaviour can be distinguished in the literature the sociological approach, social psychological approach and rational choice theory. Structural (or sociological) approaches concentrate on the relationship between individual and social structure, place the vote in a social context, and examine the effects on voting of such variables as social class, language, nationalism, religion, and rural-urban contrasts. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argued that

not only do group identities (ethnicity) influence voting behaviour, but that cleavage structures determine the number of political parties in a given polity. In other words, political parties evolve in response to the interests of social cleavages. The sociological approach, then, holds that group identities affect attitudes and interests. These attitudes in turn affect how people vote. By implication in any given society the effects of group membership should be the same on attitudes as they are on vote (see an edited volume by Evans (1999)). Social psychological approaches relate voting decisions to the voter's psychological predispositions or attitudes, for example his or her party identification, attitudes to candidates, and such like. This approach holds that voters have long-standing psychological ties to specific political parties, and seldom waver from voting for them (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Donald, 1966; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960). These party attachments are largely due to early socialization, reflecting mostly family influences. Simply put, people are influenced by the partisanship of their parents. The party identification model can be seen as similar to the sociological approach in that partisans-come to see themselves as members of social groups (e.g., Democrats, Republicans), in much the same way that certain people incorporate religious, regional, or ethnic groups into their self-conceptions (Gerber & Green, 1998). Finally, rational-choice approaches attempt to explain voting behaviour as the outcome of a series of instrumental cost-benefit calculations by the individual, assessing the relative desirability of specific electoral outcomes in terms of the issues addressed and policies espoused by the different parties or candidates (see Harrop and Miller (1987)). Despite that ethnic mobilization are not automatic, ethnic groups consciousness can be mobilized on ethnic related issues. Nelson (1979) argued that there are high correlations between ethnic identity and voting behaviour and formalizes ethnic identity as a determinant of political behaviour. Although social groups may affect voting behaviors and attitudes in most African countries, this does not mean that voting decisions are made solely on the basis of these group-determined attitudes. However, it has generally come to be accepted that there is interplay of objective factors and subjective sentiments in determining the behaviour of voting and the choices made during most elections in African society. The objective factors cut across a population of the voters' socio-economic status and their ideological persuasion but the subjective sentiments is premised on the sectarian considerations like race, ethnicity and religion.

THE STRENGTH OF ETHNICITY IN VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIA'S 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Nigeria as a federation has been one of the most ethnically diverse country in Africa, and over time ethnic considerations were built into the electoral system itself. Monitor (2015) reports that on a geo-political zone basis, the South-South had the greatest voter turnout with 59% closely followed by the North-West with 54%. The South-West had the lowest turnout in the country with just 37%. Figure below shows the percentage of voters' turnout per geo-political zone.

Expectedly, the regions that produced the two leading presidential candidates had the two highest levels of voters' turnout.
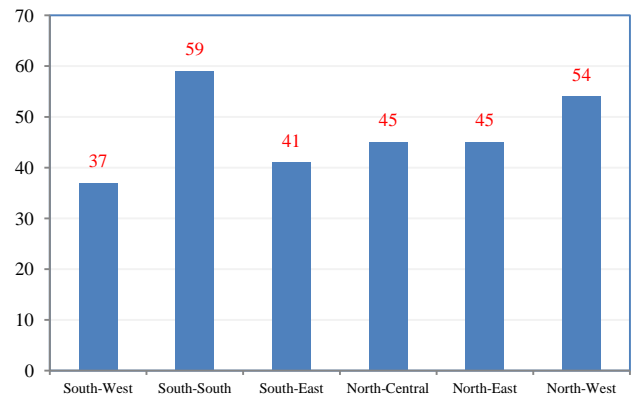

Fig 1 Percentage of Voters' Turnout per Geo-political Zone (Monitor, 2015).

The two major candidates in the elections General Muhammadu Buhari and Goodluck Jonathan states of origin were from the Muslim dominated North-West (Katsina) of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Christian dominated South-South (Bayelsa) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) respectively. In the South-South Jonathan received 89.66% of the votes while Buhari received 81.34% in the North-West. Basically 9 out of 10 people in the South-South voted Jonathan and 8 out of 10 people in the North-West voted Buhari. Following that trend the bordering zones voted in much the same way. The North-East had 75.28% of their vote go to General Buhari, while the South-East had 87.55% of their vote go to Jonathan. The slant however, being greater in the South-East zone with 9 out of 10 people in the South East voting Jonathan and 7-8 out of 10 people in the North East voting Buhari. The last two geo-political zones the North-Central and South-West did not replicate the lopsided voting in the other zones. In both regions APC garnered about 54.92% of the votes while PDP garnered about 40.08% of the votes (Elections, 2015). Nigerians largely voted along Presidential ethnic lines in the 2015 presidential elections. However zones like the South West and North Central regions which comprising almost all of the ethnically and religiously mixed Middle Belt, had the largest swing to the APC in the presidential election. Buhari getting significant votes from the South West and North Central does not mean that he is "loved" by a wide range of people in the zones who voted across ethnic lines to elect him. No! It was ethnic voting, which include religion, ethnicity and the yearning for change by a more dispersed ethnic group that produced this picture. For example if you swap the South-West and North-Central votes between Jonathan and Buhari the final election result would be Buhari 14,140,129 and Jonathan 14,137,954 a difference of only 2,175. On the surface we might presume Buhari won because of the large voting bloc in the North 18,160,946 versus the South 13,585,544. Nigeria's division has reinforced ethnic lines and

religion. There were deep division along ethnic and religious lines, along with the psychological denial of such by Nigeria.
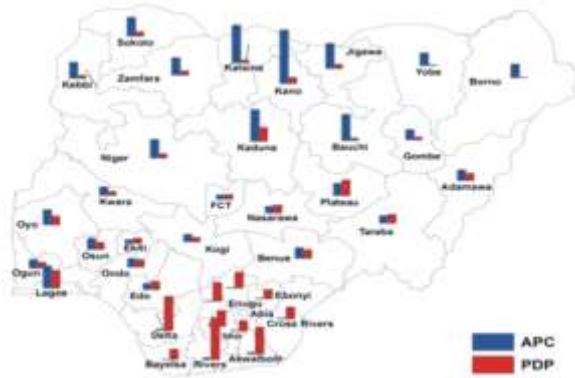

Fig 2. Map showing vote distribution between APC & PDP in the election

From the voting pattern presented in the map above, the two major political parties in the 2015 presidential election, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC), played an indisputable religious and ethnic card. The General Superintendent of Holy Spirit Mission Church, Charles Ighele, was of the opinion that the 2015 presidential election was among the worst in Nigeria's history. "When I say worst, I don't mean in the area of being free and fair. Ethnicity and religion played key roles. The politics we left in the 1960s is what we have gone back to. One of the unfortunate fall-outs of the polls was that the Muslim clergy played serious religious politics up North and nobody talked about it, but when the clergy in the South played theirs, heaven was let loose... In this last election, in the North, messages were going round the mosques on whom to vote for, then in the south, the President (Jonathan) was going round visiting churches." While the PDP was playing its religious cards in the South and parts of the North, the APC was playing their own in the core North...both parties played a high level religious and ethnic card which is dangerous to our nationhood (Ighele, 2015). Obiora Ifoh argued further that a review of the voting pattern shows that ethnic and religious cleavages played major roles in the outcome of the presidential election. Buhari won convincingly in the North, particularly in the North-West and North-East, President Jonathan dominated in the South-East and South-South. Everybody won their home turf. However, a large majority of the Muslim voted for the Muslim candidate, General Buhari; likewise, most of the Christians even in the core North voted for the Christian candidate, Jonathan. Thus, any emerging regional or sub-regional pattern thereof merely reflects religion and or ethnicity. For instance, Buhari's victory in Kaduna State did not come as a surprise, considering the religious and ethnic factors which played a major role in the highly tensed polls. APC won for three reasons, which include religion, ethnicity and sympathy for Buhari as a northerner whom they believe can perform. Kaduna North and Central zones, highly populated by Muslims voted for APC, while Jonathan won

massively in Southern Kaduna which is predominantly Christian (Obiora, 2015).

DATA COLLECTION, PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was designed to address the objectives of this study with eighteen questions which were divided into two (2) sections, namely the section A and section B. The section A comprises of the socio demographical characteristics of the respondents while section B contains questions on issues in ethnicity and voting pattern. It presents the major findings of the study relating to the research questions and depicting their relationships. One hundred and fifty copies of questionnaires were distributed to one hundred and fifty (150) respondents selected purposively, but 100 (66.7%) were returned to the researcher. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was employed in analyzing the data collected.

Table 1. Distributions of Respondents by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-28	41	41.0
29-39	28	28.0
40-50	22	22.0
51 and above	9	9.0
Total	100	100
Sex	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	59	59.0
Female	41	41.0
Total	100	100
Ethnic group	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yoruba	32	32.0
Hausa	23	22.0
Igbo	24	25.0
Others	21	21.0
Total	100	100
Religion	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Christianity	51	51.0
Islamic	42	42.0
Traditional African R	5	5.0
Others	2	2.0
Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Trader	11	11.0
Civil Servant	52	52.0
Student	19	19.0
Self Employed	12	12.0
Unemployed	6	6.0
Total	**100**	**100**

AGE

The data reveals that 41% of the respondents were within the age bracket of 18-28 years, constituting the highest population in the sample; followed by those aged 29-39 with a percentage distribution of about 28%. Those aged between 40-50 and 51 and above had a percentage distribution of about 22% and 9% respectively.
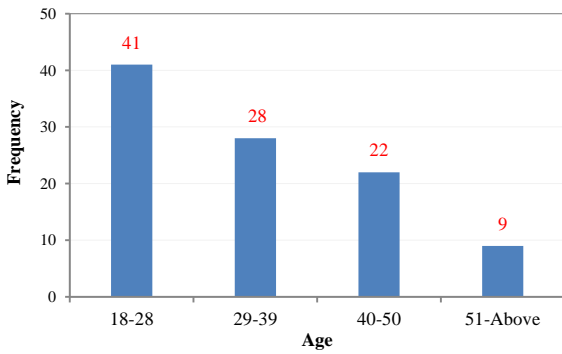
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Fig 3 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Age

SEX

The sex composition of the sample population was dominated by males with about 59% while females made up the remaining 41% of the sample population.

ETHNIC GROUP

The illustration from the table showed that respondents with Yoruba origin had the highest percentage distribution of 32% of the sample population. A major reason for this is because the study area is located within Ibadan, Oyo State. Aside those that have Yoruba ethnic identity, respondents from the Igbo ethnic identity had the second largest percentage distribution with 25% of the sample population. This may not be unconnected from other ethnic identities of Middle belt and others made up 21% of the respondents. This indicates minority representation in Nigeria.
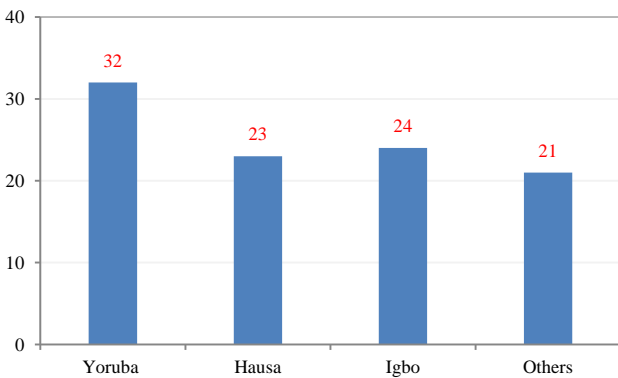

Fig 4. Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Ethnic Group

RELIGION

With respect to religion respondents, the results show that about 51% of the respondents had Christian background, 42% were Islamic faithful while those practicing African Traditional Religion and others formed 5% and 2% respectively. We saw the massive turnout by Christians and Muslims in Ibadan during the 2015 presidential election because of the religious background of the two leading presidential candidates.
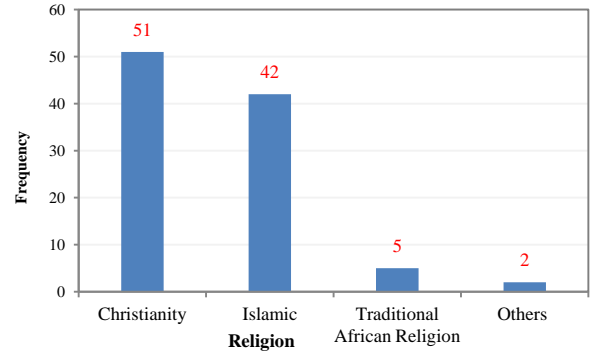

Fig 5 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Religion

OCCUPATION

The occupational percentage distribution peaked at the third civil servants with about 52% of the respondents. Civil servants had the highest percentage which is in line with the character of city with dominant institutional centers. Respondents who were students had a fair share in the occupation percentage distribution. Students made up about 19% of the sample population. The presence of several institutions which include: University of Ibadan, The Polytechnic, Ibadan, University Teaching Hospital, Ibadan among others and several private higher institutions. Those that are self employed accounted for the 12% of the sample population while 11% of the respondents were traders as at the time of the survey. The unemployed made up 6% of the sample population.
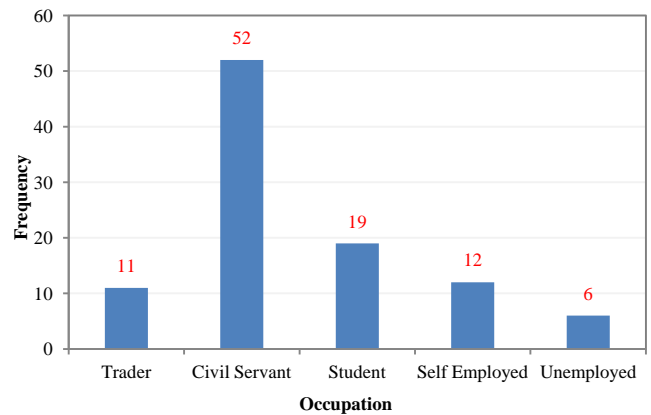

Fig 6 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

The Table(2) shows the return rate of respondents' state of origin. The data shows that a majority of the respondents of 8% hail from Oyo State, followed by 7% who are from Abia State while respondents from Benue State, Osun and Kaduna made up of 6% of the respondents each. It is not surprising though that Oyo State had the highest number of respondents. The study was carried out in Ibadan and as such this might explain the majority of respondents voted in Ibadan. Other respondents from other states represented 67% of the entire sample population.

Table2. Return Rates of Respondents by State of Origin

State of origin	Frequency	Percent
Abia	7	7.0
Adamawa	3	3.0
Akwa Ibom	2	2.0
Anambra	4	4.0
Bauchi	3	3.0
Bayelsa	3	3.0
Benue	6	6.0
Borno	1	1.0
Cross River	4	4.0
Delta	3	3.0
Ebonyi	4	4.0
Edo	1	1.0
Ekiti	5	5.0
Enugu	3	3.0
Imo	4	4.0
Jigawa	1	1.0
Kaduna	6	6.0
Kano	3	3.0
Kogi	3	3.0
Kwara	2	2.0
Lagos	2	2.0
Ogun	5	5.0
Ondo	4	4.0
Osun	6	6.0
Oyo	8	8.0
Rivers	1	1.0
Sokoto	4	4.0
Taraba	2	2.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

MAJOR FINDINGS

This section describes the various responses given by the respondents and their implications to the questions that were raised in the course of the research.

ETHNICITY AND ITS STRENGTH ON ELECTORATES VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Table (3) illustrates the role of ethnicity in voting behaviour during the 2015 presidential election in Ibadan, Oyo State. All the ethnic groups in Nigeria adequately participated during the presidential election in Ibadan, Oyo State. 31.3% of the respondents with Yoruba ethnic identity concurred to the fact that ethnicity influenced voter's behaviour in the election while 68.7% of them refuted the claim.

Table 3. Do you consider ethnic identity as a primary force during voting in the 2015 presidential election?

Ethnic group	Yes	No
Yoruba	31.3%	68.7%
Hausa	82.6%	17.4%
Igbo	75.0%	25.0%
Others	81.0%	19.0%

Among the Hausas, 82.6% of the respondents agreed that ethnic identity is a primary force during the voting with 17.4% negating the assumption. A greater number of respondents with Igbo identity believed that ethnicity was a force in the voting behaviour of the electorates during the election. 75% laid claim to that while 25% maintained that ethnicity did not influence voting behaviour in the presidential election. 81% of other people with different ethnic identities believed that ethnicity was a force that influenced how the electorates voted in the presidential election. 19% of them maintained that ethnicity did not influence the voting pattern.
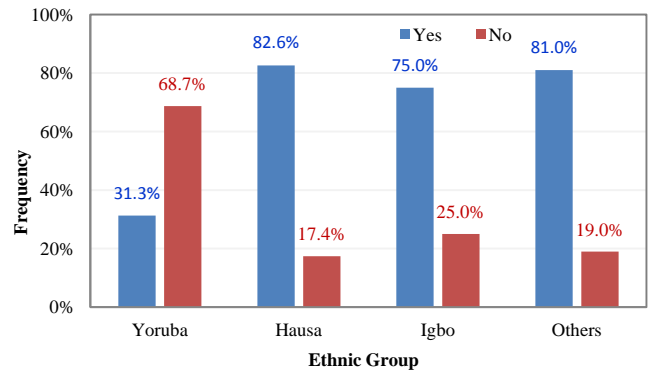

Fig 7 The Strength of Ethnicity on Electorates Voting Behaviour (Do you consider ethnic identity as a primary force during voting in the 2015 presidential election?)

The result of the findings from the table corresponds with (Geertz, 1963) argument. He argued that there are high correlations between ethnic identity and voting behaviour. His work formalizes ethnic identity as a determinant of political behaviour (Geertz, 1963). Gill and Gainous (2002) further expanded on the strong affinity between ethnicity and voting behaviour when he said that people will tend to vote for candidates and positions of parties they have come to identify with. Except for the Yorubas who did not field their own candidate became rational in choice making and choose the party candidate, which comes closest to their own interests, values and priorities, other ethnic identities confirmed that voting tilted towards the candidates that shared the same religion, language or ancestry irrespective of the voter's place of residence and polling booth.

PRIMORDIAL TIES AND THE CHOICE OF A CANDIDATE

The Table 4 illustrates the relationship between primordial ties and the choice of a candidate by the electorates.

Table 4. Could ethnicity have influenced the results of the 2015 presidential election?

Ethnic group	Yes	No
Yoruba	63.3%	36.7%
Hausa	77.3%	22.7%
Igbo	84.0%	16.0%
Others	60.9%	39.1%

All the ethnic identities sampled concurred that there is a relationship between primordial ties and the choice of a candidate. More than two thirds of the Igbo ethnic identities making up the 84% of the respondents with Igbo ethnic identity believed that there exist a relationship between primordial ties and the choice of a candidate while 16% was of the opinion that there is none. 77.3% of the Hausa ethnic identity agreed that there is a relationship between primordial ties and the choice of a candidate with 22.7% of the same sample population disagreeing to that assumption. Furthermore, 60.9% of other ethnic identities also agreed of the relationship while 39.1% said none existed. The Yoruba identity that believed in the relationship was 63.3% and those that did not believe in it were 36.7%.
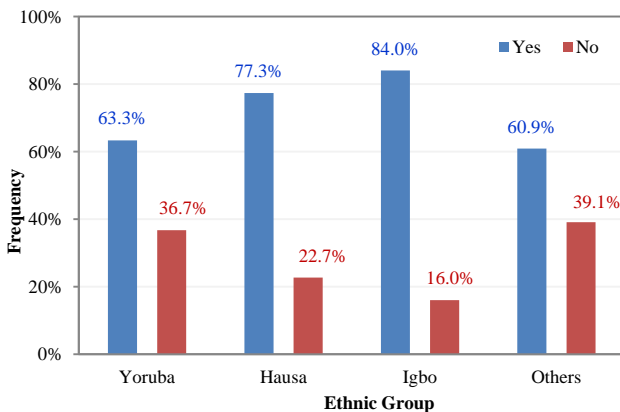

Fig 8. Relationship between Primordial Ties and the Choice of a Candidate (Could ethnicity have influenced the results of the 2015 presidential election?)

The result from the table correlates with (Jones, 1997) argument on ethnicity saying that ethnicity is regarded as constituting the shared beliefs and practices that provide a group with the boundary maintenance and organizational dimensions necessary to maintain and compete for, socioeconomic resources. Voters had collective or individual interest protected by casting votes to candidates that could protect those interests. The two major blocs during the 2015 presidential elections, the 'political South and 'political North' carried out campaigns that motivated voters along ethnic lines. There was massive mobilization for APC candidate in the dense Hausa Muslim Northern regions and for PDP candidate in the dense Christian South-South and South-East regions. The mobilization brought to the limelight the influence of ethnicity in the Nigerian politics and showed

why the two major candidates captured a majority of the votes in places with their primordial affiliations.

RESULTS

This section presents the summary of major findings with respect to the research questions and the study objectives. The following findings were made:

1-The study reveals that some significant relationships existed between ethnicity and voting behaviour of the electorates. The results show that some variables such as common ancestry and language of the voters, ethnic and religious affiliation and other primordial bonds did significantly influence voting behaviour of the electorates during the 2015 presidential election. This was evident among the Igbo and the Hausa ethnic identities because the major contestants emerged from the two ethnic identities. Most Igbo voted for the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan because he is from south-south region. Most Northern settlements in Ibadan voted massively for Muhammadu Buhari because they shared a common ancestry irrespective of the location they cast their votes.

2-The election witnessed an intense politicization of the Muslim-Christian divide and the north-south dichotomy in the country. The name 'political south' and 'political north' was induced by voters particularly in the south-east, south-south and north-east, north-west regions. The result released by INEC in the south-south and south-east saw PDP securing 87.55% and 89.66% respectively of the entire votes for Jonathan while north-west and north-east saw APC securing 81.34% and 75.28% respectively of the votes for Muhammadu Buhari.

3-Primordial ties with the presidential candidates during the 2015 presidential election   played a vital role in the emergence of such candidates emerging winners in such places of the ties.

CONCLUSION

The study on the strength of ethnicity in voting behaviour in Nigeria's 2015 presidential election has some limitations. It is limited in term of the size of the sample which should have included samples from other geopolitical zones of the country. Also, the adoption of content analysis of two dailies in addition to the questionnaire administration technique would have revealed the voting behaviour of Nigerians during the election. It is expected that further research will be conducted to identify other variables that are predictors of voting pattern in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Socio-Demographic

1.   Age:_____
2.   Sex: Male (   ),   Female (   )
3.   Religion: Christianity (   ), Islamic (   ), Traditional African Religion (   ), Others (   )
4.   State of Origin:_____
5.   Ethnic group: Yoruba (   ), Igbo (   ), Hausa (   ), Others (   )
6.   Educational qualification: Secondary (   ), Tertiary (   ), Post Graduate (   ) None (   )
7.   Occupation: Trader (   ), Civil-Servant (   ), Student (   ), Self-employed (   ), Unemployed (   )

Section B: Issues in ethnicity and voting behaviour

8.   Did you participate during the March 2015 presidential election: Yes (   ), No (   )
9.   If yes, how did you participate? Campaigning (   ), Voting (   ), INEC Official (   )
10. If No, why? Fear (   ), Dissatisfaction (   ), Apathy (   ), All of the above (   )
11. Do you consider ethnicity as a primary force during the voting? Yes (   ), No (   )
12. Were there any signs during the presidential election that voting pattern was based on ethnic affiliation? Yes (   ), No (   )
13. How did ethnicity influence voting behavior?
     A. People voted for people from the same ethnic groups with them (   ). B. Different religious voted for people in the faith (   ). C. All of the above (   ). D. None of the above (   ).
14. Could ethnicity have influenced the result of the presidential election? Yes (   ), No (   )
15. How did it influence the result?
     A. There were massive votes in places of strong ethnic background (   ). B. Results were rigged to favour ethnic representatives (   ). C. Voters were forced to vote for candidate of their primordial ties (   ). D. All of the above. (   ) E. None of the above (   ).
16. What is your opinion about voting on ethnic grounds?
     A. It is natural (   ). B. It is being biased (   ). C. It is outdated (   ). D. All of the above. E. None of the above (   ).
17. The politicization of ethnicity is high when voting behavior and group identity are closely related. Agree (   ), Strongly Agree (   ), Disagree (   ), Strongly Disagree (   )
18. Voting in Nigeria is based on
     A.   Ethnic consideration (   ). B. Outstanding candidate running for the position (   ). C. Political party manifesto (   ). D. Man knows man based on social class consideration (   ).