

# Comparative Study of 2011 and 2015 Presidential Elections in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This paper investigates comparative study of 2011 and 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria with specific focus on the Fourth Republic, from the comparative analysis perspectives. Thus, through the use of comparative theory unfolds the causes responsible for the opposition travail in the 2015 election in Nigeria. By the use of the comparative analysis we try to know what is common and find out the causes and consequences for the victory and the losses. This research also presents statistical data analysis of the both elections, for comparison. It was undertaking to ascertain the nature and character of the 2011 and 2015 election. This article therefore recommends that in order for the electoral system to be free and fair, there is need for government to place priority on education through free and compulsory education, Avoid inflammatory rhetoric, publicly denounce violence, pledge to respect rules, in particular the Code of Conduct for Political Parties, and pursue grievances through lawful channels, it also indicate that the sovereign power belongs to the people. The era of political parties taking people for granted is gone. Nigerians are very conscious of their rights; they know with their votes is they can install or remove government that failed to perform.

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*Index terms*— presidential, election, political parties, parliament.

## 1 Introduction

Nigeria's 2015 general elections the fifth since 1999, was scheduled for 14th and 28th February 2015 respectively and later changed to 28th March and 11 April 2015 respectively. All 36 states held presidential, federal parliament and House of Assemblies (state parliaments) elections. Gubernatorial polls were held in 29 states. General elections in Nigeria have always been turbulent and violent affairs. however Indeed, the 2007 election polls was widely condemned as the most violent, poorly and massively rigged in the history of Nigeria's electoral history. Even the winner of the presidential pool, a person of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, conceded flaws. Some analysts and observers considered the April 2011 elections as the most credible since the return to democracy, unlike 2007 pool where over 1,000 people were killed in postelection protests. (ibid) Nigeria has had a checkered electoral history with successive elections being marred by serious irregularities and controversy-particularly in the conduct of its electoral commission. This has led in some cases to the collapsed of democratic experiments as occurred in 1966 and 1983. The 2007 general elections in Nigeria provided a good opportunity to occasion a break with the past and rekindle public confidence in the electoral and democratic process of the country. However, this was not to be as the elections, according to several local and international observers turned out to be the worst in Nigeria's political history (European Union: 2007, Human Rights Watch: 2007, Transition Monitoring Group: 2007). Like its predecessors, INEC was accused of not being able to engender public confidence in the electoral process or organize transparent and credible elections. Unfortunately, this position has scarcely been demonstrated in a systematic manner. This paper is a systematic analysis of 2011 and 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

43 The aim of this paper is on comparative analysis of the 2011 and 2015 elections in Nigeria with sole objective of  
44 comparing the nature and character of 2011 and 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, examine why the incumbent  
45 lost to the opposition, why more votes were casted in 2011 than 2015 election, and to examine the statistical  
46 analysis of 2011 and 2015 elections.

47 This paper is divided into seven sections. The first section is the introduction and objective of the study. The  
48 second section explains the conceptual clarifications. The Third section explores theoretical framework. The  
49 fourth section examines the statistical analysis of 2011 and 2015 election in Nigeria. The fifth sections discuss the  
50 nature and characteristics of 2011 and 2015 election. The sixth section contains conclusion and recommendation.

### 51 **2 a) Conceptual clarification**

52 For a proper understanding of this paper, it is necessary to define the following concepts: Presidential government  
53 and election.

### 54 **3 b) Presidential government**

55 The Presidential system of government is a type of government in which most executive powers are vested in the  
56 president who is the chief executive. According to ??arner (1955), "Presidential government is that system in  
57 which the executive (including both the Head of the State and his ministers) is constitutionally independent of  
58 legislature in respect to the duration of his or their tenure and irresponsible to it for his or their political policies.  
59 In such system the chief of the state is not merely the titular executive but he is real executive and actually  
60 exercise the powers which the constitution and laws confer upon him". In this system the president enjoys real  
61 powers of the government.

### 62 **4 c) Election**

63 Election is an integral part of a democratic process that enables the citizenry determine fairly and freely who  
64 should lead them at every level of government periodically and take decisions that shape their socio-economic  
65 and political destiny; and in case they falter, still possess the power to recall them or vote them out in the  
66 next election. This was Obakhedo, (2011) aptly defined election thus: Election is a major instrument for the  
67 recruitment of political leadership in democratic societies; the key to participation in a democracy; and the way  
68 of giving consent to government (Dye, 2001); and allowing the governed to choose and pass judgment on office  
69 holders who theoretically represent the governed Obakhedo, (2011). In its strictest sense, there can never be a  
70 democracy without election. Huntington is however quick to point out that, a political system is democratic 'to  
71 the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections  
72 in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote'  
73 ??Huntington, 1991:661). In its proper sense, election is a process of selecting the officers or representatives of  
74 an organization or group by the vote of its qualified members ??Nwolise, 2007:155). Anifowose defined elections  
75 as the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system, Bamgbose (2012).  
76 Elections provide the medium by which the different interest groups within the bourgeois nation state can stake  
77 and resolve their claims to power through peaceful means ??Iyayi, 2005:1). Elections therefore determine the  
78 rightful way of ensuring that responsible leaders take over the mantle of power.

79 An election itself is a procedure by which the electorate, or part of it, choose the people who hold public office  
80 and exercise some degree of control over the elected officials. It is the process by which the people select and  
81 control their representatives. The implication of this is that without election, there can be no representative  
82 government. This assertion is, to a large extent, correct as an election is, probably, the most reliable means  
83 through which both the government and representatives can be made responsible to the people who elect them.  
84 Eya (2003) however, sees election as the selection of a person or persons for office as by ballot and making choice as  
85 between alternatives. Ozor (2009) succinctly gives a more encompassing and comprehensive definition of election  
86 when he noted that the term connotes the procedure through which qualified adult voters elect their politically  
87 preferred representatives to parliament legislature of a county (or any other public positions) for the purpose of  
88 farming and running the government of the country. Thus ??sumah (2002) elucidates what the basic objective of  
89 election is which is to select the official decision makers who are supposed to represent citizens-interest. Elections,  
90 according to him extend and enhance the amount of popular participation in the political system.

## 91 **5 II.**

### 92 **6 Theoretical Framework**

93 While it could be stated that there are different perspective of viewing the electoral process the researcher  
94 adopt the comparative analysis approach to the study. This theory tells us that in order to find out the causes  
95 responsible or the political happenings; we must compare the various events, recorded in the world history.  
96 Gilchrist believes that this method or theory is rather a supplement to the historical method. This theory aims  
97 at the study "of existing politics or those which have existed in the past to assemble a definite body of material  
98 from which the investigator, by selection, comparison and elimination, may discover the ideal types of progressive  
99 forces of political history". Lord Bryce says "that which entitles it to be called scientific is that it reaches general

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100 conclusions by tracing similar results to similar causes, eliminating those disturbing influence which are present  
101 in one country and are absent in another, make the results in the examined cases different in some points while  
102 similar in others.

103 The very essence of this theory lies in comparing different historical facts and political events with a view to  
104 finding out the causes responsible for any changes. By the use of the comparative method we try to know what  
105 is common and seek to find out common causes and consequences. This theory provides an opportunity to find  
106 out the lacuna between 2011 and 2015 general election in Nigeria.

## 107 **7 a) The Statistical analysis of 2011 and 2015 elections**

108 March 28 th and April 11 th 2015 election marked another turn in Nigeria's democratic history as registered  
109 voters took to the polls to elect the next set of leaders into the Presidential and National Assembly positions.  
110 The elections, conducted in the thirty six states of the country and the Federal Capital Territory, witnessed the  
111 emergence of the opposition party-the All Progressives Congress (APC) and its candidate. This outcome was also  
112 the first time an opposition party would unseat the ruling party-People Democratic Party (PDP) since Nigeria's  
113 transition into civil rule in 1999. From table 2, the values displayed were obtained by dividing the number of  
114 those who turned out to vote by the total registered voters and then multiplying by 100 in each geopolitical zone.  
115 From this table, it was observed that in 2011, five of the six geopolitical zones had higher voters turn-out except  
116 the South-West region. international media as having run smoothly with relatively little violence or voter fraud  
117 in contrast to previous elections. It was one exercise that showed that election should not be a do-or-die affair  
118 as in this clime.

## 119 **8 Global Journal of Human Social Science**

120 The election exposed the supremacy of the interest of the nation above that of self or a cabal as in Nigeria.

121 Politics is a game of compromise gained expression in the recent Nigeria election. Among the two contending  
122 parties of All Progressive Congress and Peoples Democratic Party, what it showed was that in Nigeria, the  
123 incumbency factor did not confer any undue advantages, there was a level playing field for all parties in 2015  
124 contention, contrary to earlier tradition in 2011, which always been the opposite with the ruling party taking  
125 advantages of its position to lord it over others. Since 1999 that democracy was reintroduced in Nigeria, the  
126 Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has literally eclipsed the opposition. Analysts argue that though Nigeria has  
127 about 58 parties, the reality on ground is that it is the PDP and others. While politics here is a do-or-die affair.  
128 Over the years, politics in Nigeria has been a game of "winner takes all" while in the recent election and how the  
129 government emerged out of a consensus between the CPC, ACN and the allies showed that politics is a game of  
130 numbers and one of compromise. What matters is the collective interest of the people.

131 Moreover, despite the level of competition among the two main political parties in 2015, a spirit of  
132 sportsmanship prevailed in their actions before and after the elections. None of the candidates including the  
133 incumbent was desperate for power. The idea was to win the election and not to "capture it". There were minimal  
134 reported cases of rigging, manipulation of the votes, intimidation of the electorate and violence including outright  
135 assassination of opponents. Throughout the period of campaign and election, there was room for alternative views  
136 unlike in 2011, 2007 and 2003, where opponents are viewed as enemies.

137 Furthermore, the 2015 campaign was based on issues and not persons, but there some personality attack, the  
138 ultimate preoccupation of politicians and parties is to grab power at all cost. The campaign was based on issues  
139 as the PDP campaigned for a second term in office and battled to restore support lost while the APC struggled  
140 for dominance after losses in the 2011, they hoped to make gains and to hold the balance of power in a possible  
141 hung parliament. The parties delved into several issues particularly the economy and foreign policy including  
142 the insurgency of Boko Haram in Northern parts of the country, in contrary to many believe that Nigerians play  
143 "politics of the stomach" and not of issue.

144 Finally, the 2015 Nigerian election was a proof of the supremacy of the national interest above that of self.  
145 This is not the case where the nation is sacrificed on the altar of self aggrandizement. Many believe that part  
146 of why Goodluck Jonathan signed Accord Agreement was to ensure that the polity was not subjected to undue  
147 tension arising from the election eventually won by Muhammad Buhari, the new President of Nigeria.

## 148 **9 c) Why the incumbent lost**

149 The Jonathan government was riddled with serious allegations of corruption. A former Central Bank governor,  
150 Lamido Sanusi alleged that about \$40 billion of oil revenue was unaccounted by the Nigerian National Petroleum  
151 Corporation (NNPC). In 2013, Nigeria ranked 144th of 177 in the "Corruption by Country" rating of Transparency  
152 International. PDP was in turmoil before the elections and it is very likely that some members may have worked  
153 against the interest of the party at the polls. The Jonathan presidency was also believed to have performed  
154 woefully in the different sectors of the economy like the power, road, aviation and many other sectors. Even  
155 though Nigeria was rated the largest economy in Africa during the Jonathan presidency, not many Nigerians  
156 could feel the impact. Youth unemployment was put at over 50% (Durotoye, 2014b). Surprisingly, it appeared  
157 the Boko Haram insurgency and the kidnap of over 200 school girls in Chibok, Borno state also play a major  
158 role. This may be due to the fact that the government had sufficiently rooted out the insurgents a few weeks

159 before the elections. Another explanation might be that not many people in the North East where Boko Haram  
160 holds sway partook in the polls. The religion factor was also contributed to lost.

### 161 10 III.

## 162 11 Conclusion and Recommendation a) Conclusion

163 The cornerstone of competitive elections and democracy is free and fair election. The credibility and legitimacy  
164 accorded an election victory is determined by the extent to which the process is free and fair (Garuba,  
165 2007;Bogaards, 2007). Free and fair election serves the purpose of legitimizing such government .

166 In fact, the quality of elections is part of the criteria for assessing the level of consolidation of new democracies.  
167 Elections are therefore considered as vital and indispensable for determining the democratic nature of a political  
168 system. When election is not managed quite satisfactorily, it can pave the way for deeper ethnic and regional  
169 divisions, lost of legitimacy of elected authorities, protest, violent contestation, social explosion, and doubt  
170 about institutions, violence, and instability or even threaten the entire democratization process. In fact, poor  
171 management of elections is a real and prolific source of conflicts, violence, insecurity and instability (Hounkpe  
172 & Gueye, 2010). Second, there was a heightened sense of insecurity among Nigerians, with causes such as the  
173 Boko Haram insurgency in the North, the possibility of the incumbent not willing to accept the outcome of the  
174 election should it not be in its favour, the effects of the election postponement, Also, there is the perception that  
175 'votes do not count' and that the outcomes have been pre-decided by an elite minority.

176 The successful of the election can also be attributed to: determination of the opposition party to win the  
177 election, the positive attitudes of politics, the introduction of card readers, the competence of the electoral  
178 commission to manage the election, a well organized opposition, effective of the social media and the peace  
179 accord agreement signed by the candidates.

180 b) Recommendations ? To sustain ongoing capacity building programs for major institutions involved in the  
181 elections, particularly INEC and the police, the government should increase technical and financial support to  
182 relevant civil society organizations. ? The Electoral body should deploy observer missions for longer periods  
183 before and after the votes to monitor the process more comprehensively. ? The civil societies should engage more  
184 actively with youth leaders especially in poor urban and rural areas, strengthen participatory early warning and  
185 early response systems, and raise timely alerts of possible violence. ? The mass media should ensure that there  
186 are factual and balanced reporting of all election-related developments, and avoid publishing hateful, divisive  
187 and inflammatory statements. ? The government should direct publicly all officers to ensure neutrality in  
188 relations with all parties and apply exemplary sanctions against any officer who fails to comply. ? The politicians  
189 should avoid inflammatory rhetoric, publicly denounce violence, pledge to respect rules, in particular the Code  
190 of Conduct for Political Parties, and pursue grievances through lawful channels. ? The political parties should  
191 respect party constitutions and particularly allow democratic candidate selections. <sup>1 2</sup>

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Figure 1: Fig. 1 :



Figure 2:



Figure 3:

## 11 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION A) CONCLUSION

1

Party 2011	Party Notes Logreceived 2011	% of Vote received 2011	Party 2015	Party Notes Logreceived 2015	% of Vote received 2015
ADC	51,682	0.14%	AA	22,125	0.08
ANPP	917,012	2.40%	ACPN	40,311	0.14
APS	23,740	0.06%	AD	30,673	0.11
ARP	12,264	0.03%	ADC	29,666	0.10
BNPP	47,272	0.12%	APA	53,537	0.19
CAN	2,079,151	5.41%	APC	15,424,921	53.96
CPC	12,214,853	31.98%	CPP	36,300	0.13
FRESH	34,331	0.09%	KOWA	13,076	0.05
HDP	12,023	0.03%	PDP	12,853,162	44.96
LDPN	8,472	0.02%	PPN	24,475	0.09
MPPP	16,492	0.04%	UDP	9,208	0.03
NCP	26,376	0.07%	HOPE	7,435	0.03
NMDP	25,938	0.07%	NCP	24,455	0.09
NTP	19,744	0.05%	UPP	18,220	0.06
PDC	82,243	0.21%			
PDP	22,495,187	58.89%			
PMP	56,248	0.15%			
PPP	54,203	0.14%			
SDMP	11,544	0.03%			
UNPD	21,203	0.06%			

Figure 4: Table 1 :

2

Zone	2015 approximate	2011 approximate
North Central	43.47	49
North East	45.22	56
North West	55.09	56
South East	40.52	63
South South	57.81	62
South West	40.26	32

[Note: Source: 2011 and 2015 Election in Nigeria (Africa elections database). African elections tripod. <http://www.inecnigeria.org/?page-id=31> (The above diagram is represented below)]

Figure 5: Table 2 :

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