

## Security Issues and Outcomes of the 2015 General Elections in North Eastern Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Security issues have the propensity to stimulate electorates to adopt positive democratic attitudes that can facilitate safety. Such as following and engaging approaches that proffers a sense of safety, self value and cause the aspiration for leaders who share these common goals. Studies of security and elections in north eastern Nigeria exist however, limited to academic standards. This study examines security issues and factors influencing the outcome of the 2015 general elections in north eastern Nigeria through a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. The study concludes that factors, that caused the victory of an opposition political party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 general elections includes. The electorates' evaluations of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) government's depressing records in securing lives and property, mismanagement of the economy, and challenges in confronting corruption; better election campaign tactics and credible candidates presented by opposition parties; and better preparation by the electoral body, particularly the use of biometric voter cards. But most importantly of the factors is insurgency that occupied the northeast region. This shows the relevance of security, economy, and political concerns as top factors influencing electoral outcomes in north eastern, Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Security Issues; General Elections; North Eastern; Nigeria.

## Introduction

The security of lives and properties of individuals in the state has wide-ranging influences on their political behaviours. Usually, when people feel insecure, either dispositional, for example because of continuous worry, they incline to be more protective, firm, violent, and delicate to sensitive intimidations (e.g. departure from family and precious ones, disappointment). Similarly, when people feel safe, they incline to be very open, flexible, pro-social, and resistant.<sup>1</sup> These general principles explain the connections between security/insecurity, political behaviour and leadership preferences by focusing on the consequences of circumstances, intimidations or nature of uncertainties.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed elaboration of discussions from several theoretical underpinnings on the wide range of influences of security and insecurity on human political behaviour. See Gillath, O., Hart, J. J., Nofle, E. E., & Stockdale G. D. (in press). Development and validation of state adult attachment measure. *Journal of Research in Personality*. Gillath, O., Mikulincer, M., Fitzsimons, G. M., Shaver, P. R., Schachner, D. A., & Bargh, J. A. (2006). Automatic Activation of Attachment-Related Goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 1375–1388. Gillath, O., Selcuk, E., & Shaver, P. R. (2008). Moving toward a secure attachment style: Can repeated security priming help? *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2/4 Gillath, O., Shaver, P. R., & Mikulincer, M. (2005). An attachment theoretical approach to compassion and altruism. In P. Gilbert (Ed.), *Compassion: Conceptualisations, research and use in psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge. Hart, J., Shaver, P. R., & Goldenberg, J. L. (2005). Attachment, self-esteem, worldviews, and terror management: Evidence for a tripartite security system. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 88, 999–1013. Jost, J. T., Glaser, J., Kruglanski, A. W., & Sulloway, F. J. (2003). Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129, 339–375.; McGregor, I. (2006). Offensive defensiveness: Toward an integrative neuroscience of compensatory zeal after mortality salience, personal uncertainty, and other poignant self-threats. *Psychological Inquiry*, 17, 299–308. McGregor, I., & Jordan, C. H. (2007). The mask of zeal: Low implicit self-esteem, threat, and defensive extremism. *Self and Identity*, 6, 223–237

<sup>2</sup> Gillath, O., & Hart, J. (2010). The effects of psychological security and insecurity on political attitudes and leadership preferences. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(1), 122-134.

Similarly, the terror management theory (TMT) highlights the methods in which insecurity inspires individuals to embrace certain types of behaviours and principles protectively. Thus, the theory is beneficial by way of explaining people's adoption of certain types of political behaviour and governance preferences as a purpose for such protective procedures.<sup>3</sup> The predictions derived from TMT stress how psychological security and insecurity has the tendency to motivate publics to embrace political behaviours that can help to recover safety such as supporting strategies that offer a sense of safety, meaning, and personal value and cause them to desire leaders who share these same feelings.<sup>4</sup> Citizens' political viewpoints reasonably reveal inspirations to preserve their lives and property's safety when confronted with threats. People prove more requirements to protect their most significant opinions and to improve their confidence.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, embracing certain changes in political behaviours and leadership preference may appear as a protective mechanism. For instance, when threatened, individuals possibly would desire a leader who is brave, strong and talented, and has the passion for the safety of his people, to a leader who cannot offer defence and secure for the safety and general confidence of the citizens. Thus, a charismatic leader who accepts violent external rule strategies will be preferred to a leader who accepts weak rule strategies.

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<sup>3</sup> Greenberg, J., Solomon, S., & Pyszczynski, T. (1997). Terror management theory of self-esteem and social behaviour: Empirical assessments and conceptual refinements. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 29, pp. 61–139). New York: Academic Press.

<sup>4</sup> Landau, M. J., Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., Cohen, F., Pyszczynski, T., Arndt, J., et al. (2004). Deliver us from evil: The effects of mortality salience and reminders of 9/11 on support for President George W. Bush. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 1136–1150.; Pyszczynski, T., Abdollahi, A., Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., Cohen, F., & Weise, D. (2006). Mortality salience, martyrdom, and military might: The great Satan versus the axis of evil. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 525–537.

<sup>5</sup> Cohen, F., Solomon, S., Maxfield, M., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2004). Fatal attraction: The effects of mortality salience on evaluations of charismatic, task-oriented, and relationship-oriented leaders. *Psychological Science* 15, 846–851. Cohen, F., Ogilvie, D. M., Solomon, S., Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T. (2005). American roulette: The effect of reminders of death on support for George W. Bush in the 2004 presidential election. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 5, 177–187. Greenberg, J. Koole, S. L., & Pyszczynski T. (Eds.), (2004). *Handbook of experimental existential psychology*. New York: Guilford.

Moreover, under intimidating circumstances, individuals prefer to approve particular political behaviour that are more self-protective in nature because of the hope that such behaviours would re-establish or reserve protection and safety of life and property. Thus, it is rational to forecast that circumstances that create emotional state of insecurity will influence people's political behaviours and the motivation to adhere to vote out incompetent leaders.

The Peoples Democratic Party PDP lost to an opposing APC during the 2015 general elections despite been an incumbent ruling party. Factors connected to such defeat by the PDP remains a significant gap that this study attempts to fill.

## **Methodology**

Qualitative technique allows a researcher to understand, describe and analyse peoples' views through discourse analysis with observed evidences and facts. Some characteristic of social life, experiences, and attitudes of people, by means of verbal expression or discussions with varying methodological practices<sup>6</sup>.The study uses a qualitative means in its data collection and analysis.

## **Findings**

The first subtheme frequently mentioned by respondents #CS3, #LG3, #CSR2, AC5, #AC4, #JO2, #BP3, #PA3, #PA4 and JO3 within the major theme of security factors is insurgency. The respondents have in one way or the other express views and opinions that are related to security

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<sup>6</sup> McCusker and Gunaydin, (2015); Gough and Lyons, (2016)

challenges resulting to the failure of the national government. The major issues in this respect have to do with threats of Boko Haram sect, the sara-suka hoodlums, kidnappings, political rivalry and killings, particularly, among youths sponsored by wicked unpatriotic politicians. These and other related threats to the lives and property of the people are the key elements that worsen insecurity in north eastern Nigeria and the major factor for the defeat of the PDP government.<sup>7</sup> The people and media spread this accusation within and outside the cities and villages that it is the failure of the government to tackle this menace that leads to the complication of the insecurity issues.

Similarly, there is the issue of security vote to the governors and other top government security officials which is not legally utilized. The security vote is not properly used; it is utilized for selfish interests among top security officials and this breeds corruption because the security vote is meant to be a top secret and to be used for security measures of government. For instance, the case of the current prosecution of the former Nigerian chiefs of staff and other officers from the armed forces indicates mismanagement of this top secret security fund to combat the insurgency menaces.

The assertion of Gilbert and Ordu that it is the responsibility of both the state and federal government to protect the lives and properties of the citizens and validate the people of north eastern Nigeria's claim that even though the government is expected to protect the lives and property of its people, however, the government has shown inability to fulfil this vital responsibility.<sup>8</sup> This is demonstrated in protest by people against the government's inability to

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with respondents #CS3 on 2 April 2017; #LG3 on 20 April 2017; #CSR2 on 10 June 2016; AC5 on 15 March 2017; #AC4 on 3 March 2017; #JO2 on 7 May 2016, #BP3 on 6 March 2017; #PA3 on 8 June 2017; and #PA4 on 27 June 2017; JO3 on 13 April 2017; and LG1 on 9 June 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Ordu, G. E. O., & Nnam, M. U. (2017). Community Policing in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Current Developments. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*, 12(1).

curb the menace of insecurity in the region. They protest in spite the fact that the federal government controls the security agencies. The activities of Boko Haram in the northeast part of Nigeria in particular, has curtailed the undeniable rights of protection that are expected to be provided to the community by the state, and endangered by the continual bombardment by the terrorists, and killings of innocent people in some areas of Bauchi as well as causing ethno-religious crises with its neighbouring state of Plateau.<sup>9</sup>

At the beginning of Boko Haram insurgency in 2009, the group has brutally attacked several government institutions, destroying many lives and properties, murdered over eight hundred persons in Maiduguri, Borno, Yobe and Kano. In Potiskum, Yobe State, three police officers, and one-fire service officer were murdered. Boko Haram's persistent attacks at custom offices, mosques, police stations, primary schools, prisons, churches and many villages wrecked more havoc to the state authority and raised fear among the general public.<sup>10</sup>

Although Nigeria was quite new in facing this evolving insecurity trend, it seems at the beginning the country underestimated the dangers of terrorists and militant activities and their consequences to the country's corporate existence. Thus, the government's attitude toward the problem of insecurity posed by Boko Haram has paved the way for the sequences of outbreak of similar threats in many parts of the country. These terrorists and militants generate deliberate confusion and panic among the citizens by attacking infrastructures, human and material resources,

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<sup>9</sup> Interviews with respondent's #AC4 on 3 March 2017; #SCR3 on 5 April 2017 and #CS3 on 2 April 2017

<sup>10</sup> Adams, D., & Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2014). Ethnic and regional violence in Nigeria: Implications for national security. *J. Pol. & L.*, 7, 20; Vanguard Newspaper. (2017) Retrieved from [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) Accessed 20th April. Pp.1-3; Premium Times (2016). 1st November, p. 1. Retrieved from [www.premiumtimesngr.com](http://www.premiumtimesngr.com). Accessed date: 8 February 2016. Pp-1; see also Okoli, A. C., & Iortyer,

inculcating fear in the general public and security operatives with a view to raising and achieving their political and economic goals.<sup>11</sup>

Many scholars such, as Comolli, Ucha, Nwogwugwu, Emmanuel and Egwuonwu, Ayegba and Arowosegbe, have acknowledged the role of insecurity in Nigeria with sequences of kidnapping, killings and abduction of innocent people by Boko Haram and other criminal elements destroying properties in the northern Nigeria. The increasing criminality rate has been associated to the nature of the state and mismanagement of economy, poor governance, and religious bigotry, increasing poverty, unemployment, frustration, anger and instability.<sup>12</sup>

Ordu submits that, in the year 2011, the inability of the Nigerian government to decisively deal with the emergent security threat paved the way for Boko Haram terrorist group to courageously keep attacking the civilian population and government infrastructures, mostly in the Northern States of Nigeria such as Jos, Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Yola, Zaria and Niger States. Many people have lost their lives and many people have been displaced due to these terrorist acts. For instance, in the year 2012, Boko Haram maintained consistent attacks and massacre of both state security forces and civilians in Kaduna, Abuja, Kano, Yobe, Plateau and Bauchi States, etc.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ordu, G. E. O. (2017). Trends and patterns of Boko Haram terrorist and militants' aggression in Nigeria. *Aggression and* Accessed date: 8 February 2016. Pp-1; see also Okoli, A. C., & Iortyer,

Ordu, G. E. O. (2017). Trends and patterns of Boko Haram terrorist and militants' aggression in Nigeria. *Aggression violent behaviour*.

<sup>12</sup> Ucha, C. (2010). Poverty in Nigeria: Some dimensions and contributing factors. *Global Majority E-Journal*, 1(1), 46-56; Nwogwugwu, N., Emmanuel, A. O., & Egwuonwu, C. (2012). Militancy and Insecurity in the Niger Delta: impact on the inflow of foreign direct investment to Nigeria. *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(1), 23.; Ayegba, U. S. (2015). Unemployment and poverty as sources and consequence of insecurity in Nigeria: The Boko Haram insurgency revisited. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 9(3), 90-99; Comolli, V. (2015). *Boko Haram: Nigeria's Islamism insurgency*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Ordu, G. E. O. (2017). Trends and patterns of Boko Haram terrorist and militants' aggression in Nigeria. *Aggression and violent behaviour*, 37, 35-41.

Respondent's #PA2; BP1; CS3 and AC2 describe the year 2013 as the most horrible year of experience to the people in northeast Nigeria when Boko Haram terrorist group seemed to defy the government forces with its increasing activities despite counterterrorist measures taken by the state security agencies, which are supposed to have reduced the excesses of this terrorist group significantly.<sup>14</sup> Boko Haram attacked Bama Town of Borno State and murdered fifty-five people in the month of May 2013, forty-six people were also slain in Yobe State in July of the same year. Another two hundred and seventy-six female students of Government Secondary School, Chibok in Borno State of Nigeria were kidnapped by Boko Haram members. These expose the inability of the PDP government at the national level to live up to the expectation of providing security measures for the protection of the entire citizenry.<sup>15</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that factors, that caused the victory of an opposition political party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 general elections includes. The electorates' evaluations of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) government's depressing records in securing lives and property, mismanagement of the economy, and challenges in confronting corruption; better election campaign tactics and credible candidates presented by opposition parties; and better preparation by the electoral body, particularly the use of biometric voter cards. But most importantly of the factors is insurgency that occupied the north east. This shows the relevance of

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with respondents #PA2 on 22 August 2016; BP1 on 12 May 2016; CS3 on 2 April 2017 and AC2 on 5 April 2016

<sup>15</sup> Daily Sun (2014). 20th July, P. 14. Retrieved From [www.dailysunngr.com](http://www.dailysunngr.com), Accessed Date: 8 February 2016; World Almanac of Islamism (WAI) (May 2014). Start Background Report, National Consortium for The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. American Foreign Policy: Boko Haram.

security, economy, and political concerns as top factors influencing electoral outcomes in north eastern, Nigeria.

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### **Author Contributions**

R. A. G designed and analysed the data and draft the manuscript. M.N.U. and A.S.S contributed in the manuscript draft and data curation. All authors reviewed and edited the manuscript.

### **Competing Interest**

The authors affirm no competing interest.

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