

PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP) ZONING ARRANGEMENT AND 2011 PRESIDENTIAL POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

One of the problems facing Nigeria social-political environment is the excruciating sentiment average Nigerian has on his ethnic group, with little or no passion attached to the country's overall general well-being. Political violence in Nigeria has always been traced to this 'monster' (regional sentiment), that has persistently remained part of our existence. The 2011 general election, including that of the president, was adjudged to be the best Nigeria has ever had since 1999. After the pronouncement of the winner by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), post-election violence followed in its wake in the northern part of the country thereby, putting a big question mark on the election. This article has been designed to critically examine the issue of zoning arrangement in PDP and the presidential post-election violence. The objective of the study is to ascertain what accounted for post-election violence after the 2011 Presidential election in northern Nigeria. The study will be guided by the following research question: Did the election of a southern president in the 2011 presidential election account for the 2011 post election violence in northern Nigeria? The study is anchored on frustration aggression theory. The article is basically library research hence we relied on documentary method of data collection. We collected data from secondary sources. Such secondary sources are text books; journals; INEC publications, seminar, conference and workshop papers; magazines, newspaper and internet materials. Descriptive and explanatory methods of analysis were adopted because the study is qualitative method. The article revealed that the jettisoning of PDP zoning arrangement as evident in the emergence of a southerner as president generated so much tension that later resulted to the wanton killing of lives, and destruction of properties after the results were announced.

Introduction

It is pertinent to note that nomenclatures such as zoning, federal character, regionalism, and sectionalism to mention a few of them are all rooted in ethnicity. Politics in Nigeria has always been built around chronic ethnic sentiment. Richard constitution of 1946 split the country into four units; the colony, the western province, the Northern Province and the Eastern province. Albeit, the Richards constitution laid the foundation for federalism in terms of ethnic accommodation, but it was a complicating rather than a mitigating factor as it more or less legalized regionalism. The three regions East, West, and North, which emerged, were not homogenous and the colonial authorities did little to lessen the inherent ethnic differences. As Elaigwu (1988:79) opined that

with the Richards constitution, Nigerians saw one another as strangers competing in a legislative setting for the big prize: the control of political power at the centre. They withdrew into their ethnic, ethno regional and geo-ethnic enclaves for mobilization in this competitive process.

Even the Mcpherson constitution which abrogated the Richards constitution, confirmed regionalism and gave wider political power to regions. The natural corollary to this was the emergence of ethnic politics, which in turn heightened ethnic distrust and suspicion in Nigeria. In the north, emerged the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) dominated by the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group in the east, the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) dominated by the Igbos and in the West the Action Group (AG) dominated by the Yoruba.

Dr Azikiwe attempt to get elected into the Federal House from the Yoruba dominated Western region was frustrated on the tribal sentiment that he was an Igbo and not a Yoruba. As Professor Echebe (1983) has observed, about Ziks "defect" in the west, That event in retrospect was the death of a dream Nigeria in which a citizen could live and work in any place of his choice anywhere, and pursue any legitimate goal open to his fellows; a Nigeria in which an Easterner might aspire to be premier in the west and a northerner become mayor of Enugu.

Regional sentiment was equally evident in the 3rd republic. The ill fated fourth republic was superintended by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida a military head of state who dilly-dallied for over eight years with his transition

However, the zoning formula for presidential seat was enshrined in PDP constitution. As such, the Southern geo-political zone was to take the first shot of the presidential seat resulting from the zoning system. President Olusegun Obasanjo had a smooth ride in winning PDP presidential flag during their Jos convention courtesy of the zoning arraignment. In congruence with the zoning arraignment, Obasanjo ruled for eight (8) years and handed the presidential power to late president Umaru Yar' Adua in a manner many believed was a manifestation of Obasanjo's (do or die affair threat) in 2007. The death of Musa Yar'Adua on May 5th 2010 and the subsequent swearing in of his deputy Dr. Goodluck Johnathan contributed in heating up once again Nigeria political firmament. The north wanted to retain power till 2015 since the south had completed theirs through Obasanjo 8 years in power.

From then onward, a political battle line was drawn between the pro zoning group basing their argument on PDP constitution and the anti zoning group that anchors theirs on the supremacy of Nigeria constitution. Political alliance was formed to ensure the success of zoning. Major northern political actors mainly from PDP extraction excluding CPC opposition party presidential candidate Muhamadu Buhari and few others in the opposition parties, formed a group know as G-15 led by Alhaji Adamu Ciroma. This group of northern political elites had one assignment, to let go individual interest and ambition in ensuring they bring one candidate from the north whom they are going to give their general supports. The character of Nigeria politics did not allow these northern political actors to look for another political party knowing that such move could amount to avoidable dissipation of political energy. Thus, they must remain in the political party in power in slugging out who becomes the PDP flag bearer. The G-15 conducted election among the presidential contestants from the north in PDP. Among the contestant are former military leader of Nigeria Ibrahim Babangida, former Vice President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, former Security Adviser to the president Alahaji Gusau. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar emerged as the PDP northern political elite candidate but that did not mean much as he was defeated by the incumbent president Dr. Goodluck Johnatan during PDP primaries election.

The emergence of president Jonathan as the PDP presidential flag bearer and his subsequent victory in 2011 presidential elections under the platform of PDP was perceived by other presidential contenders especially in the North as an injustice, a gross negation of PDP zoning arrangement and a plot to oust the North from the mainstream of Nigeria's political environment. Nigeria state was therefore plunged into post election violence

reinforcers is being thwarted by another party (or possibly by particular circumstances) and that one's reaction to this thwarting is one of annoyance. It was soon recognized that the initial claims – (a) that aggression is *always* based on frustration and (b) that frustration *always* leads to aggression – were far too general. These blaims made frustration both a necessary and sufficient condition for aggression. Miller (1941) was quick to retract the latter part of the proposal. Quite obviously, frustrations do not cause hostile or aggressive outbursts by necessity. Potential outbursts may be effectively inhibited or may result in alternative actions, such as the pursuit of other, more readily available reinforcers. Miller therefore rephrased the second part of the hypothesis to read: "Frustration produces instigations to a number of different types of response, one of which is instigation to some form of aggression".

According to this reformulation, frustration actuates motivational forces that are *diffuse* rather than specific to aggression. It is assigned the properties of a *general* drive. Such apparent moderation has not been applied to the first part of the original F-A hypothesis, however. Miller (1941) found the generality of this claim both defensible and useful.

The revised F-A hypothesis thus maintains the following: (a) Frustration instigates behavior that may or may not be hostile or aggressive. (b) Any hostile or aggressive behavior that occurs is caused by frustration. In other words, frustration is not a sufficient, but a necessary, condition for hostility and aggression (Zillmann, 1979).

Expatriating further, and using deprivation as a factor that reinforces frustration, Garr (1970) contends that relative deprivation is a necessary condition for violence; relative deprivation being a perceived discrepancy between man's value expectations and their value capabilities. He maintains that value expectations are goods and conditions of life to which people believed they are rightly entitled, while in order hand, according to him, values capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are callable of attaining and maintaining, given the social means available to them. He suggests some variables that affect the intensity of emotional responses to the perception of deprivation. The first proposition is that man see between what he seeks and what seems to be attainable, the greater his anger and consequent disposition to aggression, the second proposition boards on the greater the intensity of man's expectations, the greater their when they meet unexpected or increase resistance.

To this end, the political violence witnessed in some northern state is a dependent variable, while the zoning of the presidency is an independent variable that is the main causative factor to the political violence. Thus, the teeming unemployed youths that were aggrieved and frustrated were to take to the streets when it was clear that their geo-political zone (i.e. the North) had lost the presidential contest. Besides, the violent activities of these youths were equally reinforced by the utterances of their political elite and presidential contenders cum religious leaders who perceived the emergence of the southern president as a ploy to oust them in Nigeria's political spheres. Specially, it was/is the unrepentant believe of the northerners, going by the size of their geographical spread that political power as it affects the presidential seat is their exclusive concern, contrary, however, what is perceived as a long spell of southern presidential hegemony since inception of democratic rule in 1999, has in no doubt, created resentment and frustration and aggression phenomenon among them.

The Election of a Southerner in the 2011 and for the 2011 Post-Election Violence in Northern Nigeria

Winning PDP primaries has nothing to do with superior manifesto. It has nothing to do with the credibility of the candidate and as such what matters most is the position of the Commander-in-Chief who has the state apparatus at his whims. No wonder Ogar (2010) in his article "Reflections on the zoning Debate for presidency 2011 between Atiku and Jonathan's Aspiration for Yar'Adua's second tenure asserts that "the debate for presidency 2011 has not been over the manifestoes or capability of the candidates for the position but rather on which religion and region should produce the candidate. This debate has rather pre-occupied the polity to the extent that many are made to assume that until the president comes from a particular zone, he/she is likely to deliver better".

The formation of PDP as a political party and the way it operates ignited frustration among the northern political elites who in a bid to stop the emergency of the incumbent went and conducted their own election just to increase the chances of one of their own by reducing the number of northern aspirants. That arrangement favored Atiku Abubakar who emerged as northern sole candidate. With the north having only one candidate, it would have been a free and easy ride for Atiku to win the PDP presidential ticket. But that was not to be. Table 1 and 2 show the result of PDP primaries in 2006, and their result in 2010, a period of just 4 years gap. The shift in the

voters as recorded in most south south and south east states raises a lot of questions on the purported credibility. It is an obvious truth that apart from very few exceptions, votes in Nigeria always toe the line of the sitting president and it is more evident when the sitting presidents is in contention too. President Goodluck emergence as the winner of 2011 Presidential election as announced by the INEC chairman Prof Attahiru Jega triggered the violence that followed the result. Also activities of some groups that supported some presidential candidates of the ruling party, especially those that supported General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, as well as those that promoted the issues of regionalism also contributed to the eruption of the crisis. Below is the result of 2011 presidential election

Party	Total scores of votes	Percentage
CAN	2,079,151	5.41%
ADC	51,682	0.14%
ANPP	917,012	2.40%
APS	23,740	0.06%
ARP	12,264	0.03%
BNPP	42,272	0.12%
CPC	12,214,853	31.98%
FRESH	34,331	0.09%
HDP	12,023	0.03%
LDPN	8,472	0.02%
MPP	16,492	0.04%
NCP	26,376	0.07%
NMDP	25,938	0.07%
NTP	19,744	0.05%
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%

Source: *Aligo, 2011:3.*

The post-election violence that had threatened the political stability and corporate existence of Nigeria was credited to utterances of the northern political elites and religious leaders after their efforts to intimidate Jonathan

Democratic Party (PDP) as the winner of the 2011 presidential election by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

According to him, the unfortunate situation of violence resulted in the destruction of property and homes, and untimely death of many Nigerians especially youth corps members serving in Bauchi State. He however, regrets that such repugnant and uncivilized act of killing and destruction could be visited on Nigerians at the period when local as well as international observers had expressed satisfaction with the conduct of April polls and adjudged them the best so far.

According to Human Rights Watch (2011), the April presidential election had divided Nigeria along ethnic and religious lines. As election results trickled in on April 17, and it became clear that Buhari had lost, his supporters took to the street of northern town and cities to protest what they alleged to be rigging of the election results. But to Onabule (2011), the circumstances surrounding the post presidential election violence are traceable to presidential electoral results which according to him, were fraught with manipulations.

To this end, he contends that since the elections and the results were controversial, angry reaction of the people should be no surprise. He queries whether it could rightly be ascribed as their birth-right to rule Nigeria of those who protested against the elections. Violence according to him is an integral part of a political system and could only be intolerable when it is patterned along religious lines.

Also the agitators for zoning in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), led by Adamu Ciroma, Yakassai, IBB, Raymond Dokpesi and others, had threatened that Nigeria would be ungovernable without the president of northern extraction of 2011. These stalwarts of the PDP heated the country to the boiling point in the months leading to the PDP primaries through incendiary comments and language of annihilation. They prepared the minds of the masses of the North for a no-compromise stance.

Indeed, the loss of presidential ticket of the PDP by Atiku Abubakar to President Jonathan was greeted in the North with street protests. These political demagogues, as super headed by desperadoes never went back to the youth in the North that they had changed their minds of the issue of zoning. They never abandoned the struggle even though it waned in the days leading to the April 16, 2011 presidential pool. So, the masses in the North, beside the infections popularity of Buhari in the North, saw in the retired

attention to manifestoes and electoral program. Instead they are immersed in religious/ethnic sentiment, and that has giving an awful definition to our kind of politics. To worsen it all, we discovered that the ethnic sentiment as represented by zoning has little or no positive effect to the downtrodden Nigerians who are at the receiving end of the whole malady. Zoning is the sentiment the political elites of different region in Nigeria uses in taken turn as they continue to feasting on the 'national cake' at the expense of millions of Nigeria who are starving and dying on daily basis since an altruistic detribalized selfless leader is yet to come. We suggest that such things that undermine devolution of power as should be practiced in true federal state and other things that hamper the independence of INEC should be expunged from our law so that peoples wish should be reflected in our election both party primaries and general so that confidence should be restored.

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