

**'Ire Gbogbo' Political Rhetoric in Nigeria's 2015 General
Elections: An Orunmilaist Sociological Perspective**

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ABSTRACT

This paper adopts the valuation of the sociologist as the 'atokun'² of the society who applies 'ifongbo t'aiyese', and interrogates the political rhetoric used in campaign speeches and write-ups prior to the 2015 general elections along the lines of the common social values encapsulated in the principles of ire-gbogbo (the value of collectivity), ire aiku (the value of good health), ire owo (financial security), ire oko-aya (the value of companionship), ire omo (the value of parenthood) and ire abori-ota (the value of self-actualization). Akiwowo's variations in the theme of sociation provide an insightful framework for this paper, which attempts a content analysis of selected rhetorics. The paper argues that in line with ifongbo t'aiyese grounded in the Orunmilaist sociological perspective, the social values of ire - gbogbo provides the theoretical foundations for social collectivity and nationhood development, and further highlights albeit theoretically that the failings of politicians to include these core values in their speeches (or their deceptive misuse of them), under develops the nation by bringing upon it diverse forms of social ills. It concludes that Nigeria's development as a nation is inhibited by elements of igbinkugbin (stifling alien cultures) such as character assassination, insult-hurling, which are bye-products of the strife-laden ajogbe society.

Keywords: Nigeria, Political Rhetoric, Elections, Orunmilaist, Akiwowo

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding Political Rhetorics

The political landscape in Nigeria in recent times has undergone a noticeable shift, due to calls from several quarters for people-focused, accountable and transparent governance, particularly in the light of the explosion of the social media forums. Although this has not entirely stemmed the mud-slinging and hate speeches which have, over-time, characterized campaign, however, campaign and politicking speeches have begun to integrate real social issues into the rhetoric of political language (Centre for Democracy and Development, June 2015). This paper examines the political rhetoric used prior to the 2015 Elections against the backdrop of the social values prescribed for governments in the *Orunmilaist* perspective.

The importance of using language as a means of winning elections or gaining votes or support in politics cannot be over-emphasized. Ayeomoni (2005) considered language as the vehicle through which political ideologies are passed across from one group to another, from the politician to the electorate. He opined that there was a seemingly interesting inter-connectedness between political push and language use, with the latter often making the former a possibility. Adurodola and Ojukwu (2013) concurred that the importance of language in communicating political messages cannot be understated. In fact, the writers asserted that two items were needed to play the game of politics – power and language. As such, individuals have to collaborate and seek the backing of others by passing across messages that are filled with their own ideas. This can only be done through the medium of language.

However, in politics, the medium of language is not as easily applicable as stated above. This is because language use could operate with so many meanings with each meaning dependent on the user, as well as the receiver of the message encoded in the language of communication. Also, the channel of communication whether it is through the print media, electronic media or social media, at political rallies and other channels influence the type of political language is used, as well as the meanings that can be attached to the language used (Ojo, 2015). Oyeleye (2004) in the article titled "The Power of words and the Techniques of Public Communication" asserted that three factors (the situation, audience and purpose of communication) combine to determine the function and choice of language while communicating in any type of exchange. Further from the determination of language choice, he identifies two basic functions of language: the informative function and the regulatory function, with the

former expressing the speaker's experience and the latter performing the function of establishing and maintaining social mobilisation and empowerment.

The use of rhetoric in politics is usually not uncommon in a bid to serve either of the two functions afore-mentioned. Aduradola and Ojukwu (2013) point out that rhetoric (involving repetition, promise, colloquialism, word coinages, pidginize and figurative expressions) is one of the language tools most commonly used by those seeking political offices alongside slogans, persuasions and propaganda. Rhetoric is thus described as the employment of long and formal often insincere and untrue speeches, which have the purpose of casting the speaker in a good light, just so that people may be persuaded to like him/her despite the lies that he/she presents to them (Adurodola et.al, 2013). Bitzer (1981) who pointed out that political rhetoric could also refer to advertorials designed to use propaganda as a means of political communication to bring about public persuasion, both as a mode of thought and as an instrument of expression and action (Ndimele and Owuamalam, 2015). This does not mean that rhetoric has a general negative connotation; rather it implies that its use in the political sphere is often to ensure that the politician is represented to the audience in a different light with mind control or manipulation being the principal aim (van Dijk, 2006). As such, Harris (1979) asserts that the strength of language in politicking is enormous, supporting Orwell's (1946) view on the subject that political rhetoric can make lies sound truthful, and even murder respectable. Thus one notes that irrespective of the medium of use, or personality of the user, language's role in determining where power and opinions sway cannot be undermined (McDougall, 1975).

A Brief Description of Nigerian Politics in the 21st Century

The 'third wave' of democratization that swept through Africa starting from the 1980s spurred hope of inclusive political participation and good governance. While the democratization drive in Africa had witnessed appreciable progress, however, it is important to note that experience as it relates to democratic openness, entrenchment of democratic culture, values and principle and the enthronement of good governance varies across states on the continent (Joseph, 1997; 1991; Amuwo, 1992). Indeed, in many countries on the continent there remains strong impediment undermining the democratization project (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). Notable among these is the challenges of ethnic fragmentation; politicisation of ethnicity and ethnicisation of politics; weakness of enabling institutions; and attendant failing nature of the state in Africa; poor economic performance; zero sum politics and winner takes all syndrome; godfatherism; prebendalism, political

patronage and attendant endemic culture of corruption and political violence among others (Agbu, 2011; Bratton and Lewis, 2007; van de Walle, 2003). Indeed, Diamond and Plattner (2010) greatly shed light on and provides informed discussion on the progress and challenges of democratization across states in Africa with particular focus on countries in West Africa.

Like many democratizing states in Africa, the dynamics and trajectory of democratization process in Nigeria has followed an ebb and flow. Although Nigeria conducted four successive general elections after the transitional elections of 1999, the task of consolidating the democratic process and entrenching good governance remains daunting. Indeed, there are many challenges confronting the democratic process and the enthronement of good governance in Nigeria since the return to civil rule. One of such challenges is the personalized nature of politics in Nigeria and the domination of the political space by powerful 'godfathers' that control vast network of political patronage through the capture of the state that guarantee their unfettered access to state resources (Omobowale, 2008), which is informed by the pre-bendal nature of the state, wherein politics and political competition often assume a warlike character between the gladiators and their coteries of elite (Van Wyk, 2007; Sklar, 2006; Albert, 2005; Kew, 2005).

Given the intense struggle for political power and the capturing of the state, political elite in Nigeria are willing to deploy all instruments and structure within their means and reach. To this extent, the use of money and material inducement becomes an important hallmark of Nigeria politics and elite competition for power under the Fourth Republic. Indeed, the crisis of money in politics and how this drives political corruption has become a front burner in public discourse in Nigeria within the context of endemic corruption challenges facing the nation since the return to civil rule. It is within this context that, Adetula (2008) notes that the unbridled deployment of money is squeezing the political space and has become an important variable in determining who has the capacity to participate in politics and to what extent. The reality of money in politics as it relates to political participation in contemporary Nigeria is that money is gradually drowning voices and votes of the electorates. The public use of the slogan 'share the money' highlight the moral decadence that Nigeria politics had been plunged into by the perverse use of money and material inducements to access political power in Nigeria. While rent seeking behaviour of politicians, parties and voters is not a new issue in Nigeria politics, however, it important to note that rent seeking and money politics has been carried to an unimaginable level in the Fourth Republic (Adetula, 2008; Ojo, 2008; Walecki, 2008).

The perversion of the political process by the unbridled use of money in politics is not limited to vote buying alone. Money politics also undermines the democratic process as it aids election rigging and other undemocratic practices in the course of the conduct of election and electoral process. Money in politics also aid intimidation and political violence as godfathers, money bags, political entrepreneurs and office holders use state security agencies to intimidate political opponents and voters alike. Not only this, political entrepreneurs and godfathers use money to secure the service of thugs and criminals to go after real and perceive enemies as well as voters. The statement that the 2007 general elections will be a 'do or die' affairs by former President Obasanjo highlights the siege mentality and warlike characters of politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (Omotola, 2010: 548-549; Odion-Akhaine, 2009: 667). By this, the deployment of money in politics aids and the undermining of the political process (Adetula, 2008).

The unregulated deployment of money in Nigeria politics, corrupt political funding and other forms of political corruption directly compromise democratic values, principles and ideals. It engenders the growth of political apathy among voters and mistrust of political leaders by Nigerians (Walecki, 2008: 11). The crisis of voter's apathy and mistrust of political leaders has been compounded by the culture of failed promise that has characterized governance since the return to civil rule. While seeking for votes, Nigerian politicians make grandiose political promises and employ political rhetoric/statement that border on promises to deliver public goods. However, much of the promises are often nothing more than rhetoric to gather votes as they lack substance and clear agenda on how the promised services would be deliver. Thus, when politicians get to power, they often failed to deliver on their promises and this has also aided the mistrust of politicians, political leaders and political elites and compounded political apathy of the Nigerian electorates. These among others constitute the issues shaping Nigerian politics and political process since the return into civil rule in 1999.

It must be pointed out that the deployment of rhetoric in the political process in Nigeria is an area that has received little academic attention with Yusuf (2002) focusing on the dysphemism in the language of President Olusegun Obasanjo; Ayeomoni (2005) studying the language of the Nigerian political elite by analyzing the speeches of past political leaders; Ayoola (2005) analyzing an address made by President Olusegun Obasanjo to the National Assembly; Adetunji (2009) compared the inaugural addresses of Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo and America's President George Bush; Babatunde and Odegbedan (2009) analyzed the pragma-rhetorical strategies in some of the speeches made by President Olusegun Obasanjo; while Opanachi (2009) studied President Obasanjo's national address on the

8th of October, 2003 to the Nigeria Labour Congress, being among the few who have dwelt on the subject-matter. Unfortunately, none of the above-mentioned studies have looked at the subject of rhetoric along the lines of the notion of social-wellbeing as encapsulated in Akiwowo's Ire-gbogbo, thus informing this study's focus on the use of rhetoric in the political discourse in Nigeria with particular emphasis on the 2015 general elections.

METHODOLOGY

This study is anchored within the qualitative research methodology framework. To that end, it makes use of secondary documentation mainly sourced from published newspapers articles, opinion pieces, commentaries, editorials, and adverts on the political and electioneering campaigns during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. The data sourced from the newspapers are in online and hardcopy forms. The newspapers from which the data for this study was sourced were purposively selected based on their reach, coverage and affiliation. The selection was done to ensure geo-political balance as well as balance in political affiliation of publishers and founders of the selected newspapers. The selected News media are: Premium Times, Daily Trust, the Nation, the Punch, The Nigerian Eye and Vanguard. Premium Times is an online newspaper with national coverage, reach and popular among Nigeria's teeming Internet savvy youth and other segment of the population. Daily Trust is largely seen as a Nigerian newspaper based in Abuja with national coverage but greater focus on Northern Nigeria. The Punch newspaper is published out of Lagos, the commercial heart of Nigeria and with a wider audience across Nigeria. The Nation newspaper is published in Lagos, has a wider national coverage but in political term is more aligned with the All Progressives Congress, the main opposition party during the 2015 presidential election. Vanguard newspaper is also published in Lagos, has wider readership and aligned politically with the People's Democratic Party, the then ruling party.

Secondary sources involved information concerning political speeches of notable political personalities in the run up to the 2015 general election in Nigeria. In all, six speeches were purposively selected and analyzed of several hardcopy and online data with similar contents. The data were sourced from Newspaper clippings published between December 2014 and March 2015, and included news reports and advertorials about the leading presidential candidates. Brief profiles of political personalities that their speeches were used are given below:

Alhaji Lai Mohammed: He is the minister of Information under the new administration and former national party secretary of the APC. South West and Middle Belt Christian Assembly: Religious group who sought to play the

religion card in support of Goodluck Jonathan during the 2015 elections. Babatunde Fashola: presently Minister of Power, Works and Housing, and the former governor of Lagos State and a member of the APC. General Mohammadu Buhari (Rtd): presently the incumbent president, and a retired Army General. He was the presidential flag bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and emerged victorious in the 2015 election.

Patience Jonathan: the wife of the immediate past president of Nigeria. Dame Patience was particular vocal during the electioneering campaign process in the course of the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Goodluck Jonathan: former president of Nigeria. The presidential flag bearer of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2015 general elections. The study performed a content analysis of selected rhetoric. Content analysis involves the evaluation of a presented message, like in the selected political rhetoric under study. The messages within the selected political campaign speeches and political rhetoric were analyzed in line with the propositions of the theoretical orientation which deal with the issue of ire-gbogbo as an expectation of society from its government, whether incumbent or proposed.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Akiwowo's variations in the theme of sociation discourses the differentiations in the *Ajobi* and the *Ajogbe* models of sociational life. In his inaugural lecture delivered in 1980 on the same subject matter, he posited that the *asuwada eniyan* (translated to mean the human society) could exist in two parallel frames, either as *alajobi* which makes reference to a society bound together by consanguinal bonds (*ajobi*), and where ties (blood or otherwise) were assumed to exist between all members of the society, whether living or dead, or as an *alajogbe* which refers to a society which was founded on *ajogbe* (co-residentship), and was fraught with different occurrences of competition, envy and strife. The values of 'Omoluabi' (a person of good character – *iwa rere*) were key attributes taught by the society to, and expected of its members, more within the *alajobi* societies than the *alajogbe* societies which as Payne (1992) notes contain elements of Akiwowo's *igbinkugbin*. *Igbinkugbin* refers to an element borrowed from without, and planted within a particular culture which stifles or smothers indigenous elements. Akiwowo (1980) opined that competition, envy and strife were originally not elements of the *ajobi* primordial sociational life and only came to the fore in African societies as a result of European incursion into African territory and culture resulting in the need to migrate to the created so-called urban centres with the consequent creation of *ajogbe* sociational life. Although the use of *Orin* (songs) or *Owe* (proverbs) to cast aspersions on persons from rival groups or of differing views is well noted in

Yoruba literature (Majasan, 1969; Apter, 1998), however, the bond of brotherhood (Okun omo-iyá) often guided the extent to which these concepts were being used, unlike in modern societies wherein competition may border on being unhealthy. However, it is not uncommon to come across societies particularly in today's society, which have a mix of the two forms of sociational life, just as it would be impossible to come across one without a mixture of the elements of association and dissociation as Akiwowo (1980) himself pointed out.

Furthermore, Akiwowo posits that the Sociologist serves from the *Orunmilaist* perspective as the *Atokun* (a role in which the sociologist serves as the way-pointer as well as the mediator) for the society who uses *ogbon* (useful insights gained from experience) derived from the world around him to guide society right in the spirit of *ifogbon t'ayese* (using such insights to set the world on the right path). The *Orunmilaist* perspective borrows from the *Ifa* divination system of the Yoruba which is based on the *Odu* verses as a source of knowledge, to understand the world (Marcuzzi, 1999). The perspective in this guise serves as a beacon to illuminate the pathway of the society towards development. Thus, Akiwowo in this light discusses the notion of *ire gbogbo* as the set of common social values (a collectivity which go hand-in-hand) that members of society expect from their society as against the concept of *ibi marun* which refer to five serious social problems that might beset societies particularly those with *ajogbe* sociational life modes. The common social values encapsulated within the premise of *ire gbogbo* (Akiwowo, 1980) are:

- i. Ire aiku (the value of good health till old age)
- ii. Ire owo (financial security)
- iii. Ire oko-aya (the value of intimate companionship and love)
- iv. Ire omo (the value of parenthood) and
- v. Ire abori ota (the value of self-actualization)

While it may be argued that these values which encapsulate a conception of goodness (*ire*) are intangibles or immeasurable values, it is nevertheless on these seeming intangibilities that the life's choices of humans are based (Hartman, 1967). *Ire aiku* to the average member of society represents a high quality of health, and all-round wellness as well as the promise of the availability of qualitative health care services at all times till death at a ripe old age. *Ire owo* which is translated to mean financial security speaks to the quality of life wherein the individual member of society knows no fear about his / her financial fortunes. Indeed, the assumption is that the citizen is well-off and supposedly insulated against the economic downturn in the world outside of his society. *Ire oko-aya* which makes reference to the

value of love and intimate companionship could also be extended to allude to the value of continuous presence of loved ones around him / her, thus translating into a value of security for those one has affection for. Also, it could by extension reflect the value of association. The prospects of procreation without fear, as well as assurance of safety, provision of proper education, clothing, shelter and feeding for one's offspring are aspects of parenthood captured within the frame-work of Ire omo. Ire abori-ota represents the value of self-actualization that suggests that one has defeated both internal and outer demons and has achieved what one set out to achieve. Maslow (1943) describes the human need for self-actualization as the topmost on his hierarchy of needs. Society is thus only meaningful and useful for its members if it can assure the continued existence and pursuit for its members. In other words, a good society, in the axiological sense, is one whose government actively and unceasingly pursues these values for its citizens.

The failure of a government to build upon these values of Ire gbogbo brings upon the society that which he termed the 'Ibi marun'. The Ibi marun (five social ills / evils) represent five serious social problems that beset the human society whenever the government fails to pursue actively the values of Ire gbogbo. These Ibi marun (Akiwowo, 1980) are:

- i. The phenomenal rise in the number of the mentally ill
- ii. The ebb and flow in the tide of armed robbery
- iii. The rising mortality rate of young adults from the age of 25 to 45 years
- iv. The unabating abandonment of Nigerian children by young mothers; and
- v. The discovering of a self-evident truth in the world around us to which the nation can hold political leaders and upon which new ajobi and ajogbe sociations must be founded

These five societal ills (Ibi marun) which we would further discuss in the following lines are those crucial problems that are evident in contemporary societies based on their failures to pursue the values of ire gbogbo. The first highlighted problem that makes reference to increasing numbers of mentally ill patients (Ibi were) refers not just to an increase in the number of persons committed to psychiatric homes, but can be extended to include an increasing number of persons with health challenges arising out of worry, fear, anxiety, and subsequently in some cases the creation of multiple personalities, depressions and schizophrenics. Ibi ole which mentions an increase in armed robbery which also extends to capture the various forms of criminal trends such as kidnappings, 419 / internet scams, corrupt practices

and so on. Ibi iku odo speaks to a lowered average life expectancy that is a situation wherein persons particularly young adults die between the ages of 25 and 45 without reaching the ripe old ages encapsulated within the concept of ire aiku (long life). The fourth dimension of societal ills deals with the lessening value of parenthood wherein there is an increase in the number of dumped children, unwanted pregnancies and subsequent abortions, fatherless (as it is not only mothers who now abandon their children) and / or motherless children (not caused by death of the parent, but by abandonment), baby-mama syndrome and more. This which we term 'ibi aiduro se obi omo' is often but not always prompted by issues bothering on financial insecurity, lessened value for life, decreased moral values and other such issues. The final societal ill is that which makes reference to the problems which have become self-evident truths and obviously may be tagged 'the head/culmination/climax of all problems' (olori ibi). This societal problem reflects the truths that society has to contend with and must find solutions to, but which society as they would discover has little or no answer for. The problems that fall under this category are those that members blame their political leaders for, and as such the continued existence provides the basis for the creation of new forms of ajobi and ajogbe within the society. Relatable examples of this type of social ill are corruption (Ogundiya, 2009), tribalistic sentiments, electoral violence, political thuggery, terrorism and so on.

THE ANALYSIS

The selected campaign rhetorics are grouped into two categories which are pro-Jonathan, and pro-Buhari rhetoric. Analysis is done for each rhetoric as well as for the collectivism of rhetoric usage along the lines of societal realities, and subsequently, an adaptation of the theoretical approach is brought to bear on the selected rhetoric.

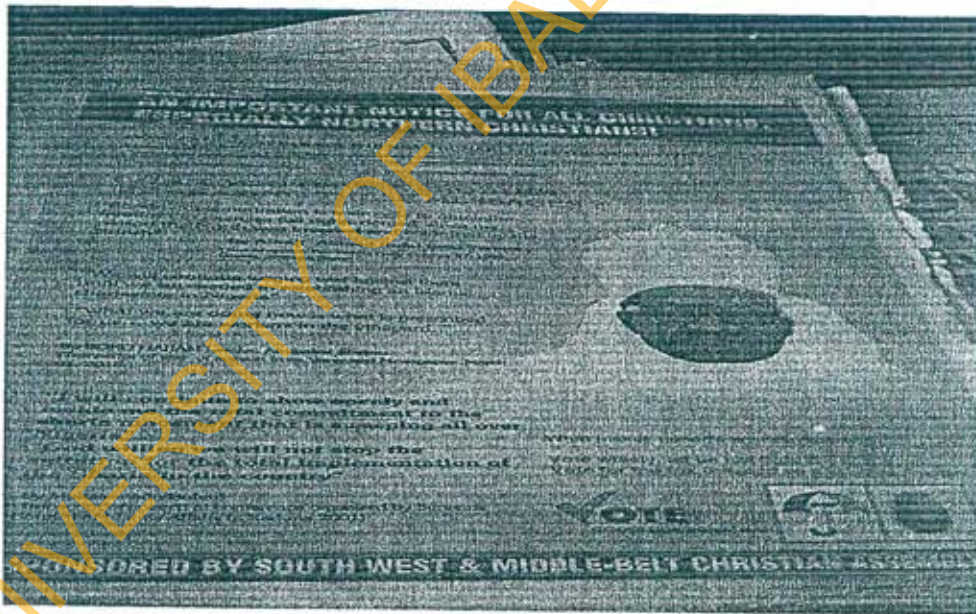
Pro-Jonathan Rhetoric

- a. The former President (Goodluck Jonathan) said although he could not claim to be perfect, majority of Nigerians would still prefer him to Buhari. He said, "*I don't think Nigerians will make the mistake of voting for Buhari. "Gen. Buhari, with due respect, is not the right option for Nigeria at this time. It is a gamble that is not worth taking. I may not be perfect as nobody is perfect. But I believe that come Saturday, the majority of Nigerian voters will choose me as the best candidate to lead the nation forward."* (Nigerian Eye, Friday, March 27, 2015.)

In the above quoted text, former President Goodluck Jonathan decided to paint a picture of himself as the better of 'two evils' when compared alongside the APC's (All Progressives Congress) Presidential candidate. He fails to mention the areas wherein he has been less than perfect, or had failed the nation, opting to gloss over the issues which people would have been pressed to hear him discuss.

- b. According to Vanguard, Patience Jonathan warned Nigerians *not to make the mistake of voting Buhari because a vote for Buhari is a vote to send people to Prison*. According to her, *a dictator will always be a dictator no matter how his handlers white wash him*. She described the APC as a party of liars and propagandists adding that the party has *"nothing to offer but to grab power by all means"*. The first lady made this plea at a PDP rally held at the Gani Fawehinmi freedom Arcade ground in Akure. (Vanguard news March 24, 2015).

Patience Jonathan (the wife of PDP Presidential candidate) made the above statement at a rally while canvassing support for her husband. Rather than discuss the social problems, which the nation was facing, the first lady saw the opportunity to hurl insults at the opposition. At another of such rallies, she tried to incite supporters to stone opposition party members.



The newspaper advertorial captured above is a smear campaign aimed at soiling the reputation of the opposition candidate. The advert attempts to achieve two things in one swoop: 1. To strike terror into the hearts of Nigerians who are Christians and ensuring that the Christian-part of

Nigeria cast their votes for 'one of their own'. 2. To depict the opposition candidate as an Islamic fundamentalist who has ties with extremist groups, ensuring that he loses the votes of those Muslims who are not fundamentalists.

From the fore-going, one observes that there was a tendency to swerve towards the use of smear campaigns, incomplete messages and hate speeches. A parallel view of the above-mentioned rhetoric sees an attempt to foster the creation of an ajobi-sociational life in the minds of the voters. The newspaper clip attempts to create a bond based on Christianity/non-fundamentalist, one that is built on not only religious associations but also a hatred of extremisms and religious violence. Patience Jonathan further attempts to re-iterating this however not with religion in mind. She opines that having once been a military man (a dictator), he was not one of the ordinary Nigerian, and as such should not be voted for. Goodluck Jonathan words are however quick to remind one that this is an ajogbe, not an ajobi wherein competition is what takes place, and Nigerians are expected to make rational choices in selecting him to move the nation forward. Perhaps one critical issue that led to his eventual loss was his inability to point out those social goods that he had achieved that would inform such 'rational' decision.

Pro-Buhari Rhetoric

- a. The All Progressives Congress Presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, on Saturday March 21st, 2015 said the People's Democratic Party was Nigerians' worst nightmare in the last 16 years of democracy. He added that it would be the worst mistake Nigerians would do to re-elect the party in the 2015 general elections. Addressing supporters and party stalwarts at the North Central zonal rally held in Lafia, the Nasarawa state capital, Mr. Buhari said Nigeria was characterized by corruption and ethnic sentiments in the last 16 years of the PDP administration. Mr. Buhari said Nigerians must make a choice and the right choice that would guarantee the future of the next generation. "*PDP has destroyed Nigeria; they have made it a tradition to create poverty and crisis in the country.*" The APC presidential candidate said there was no reason why Nigeria should import petrol from the International market while its refineries are deliberately destroyed and kept idle. "*Before, we use to have airline companies, shipping companies, railways, and four refineries namely Port Harcourt, Warri, Kaduna and Lagos where our petroleum products were refined for domestic use and 22 depots but PDP has destroyed them and the country now has to import fuel. Don't make a mistake and vote PDP again because they have made it a*

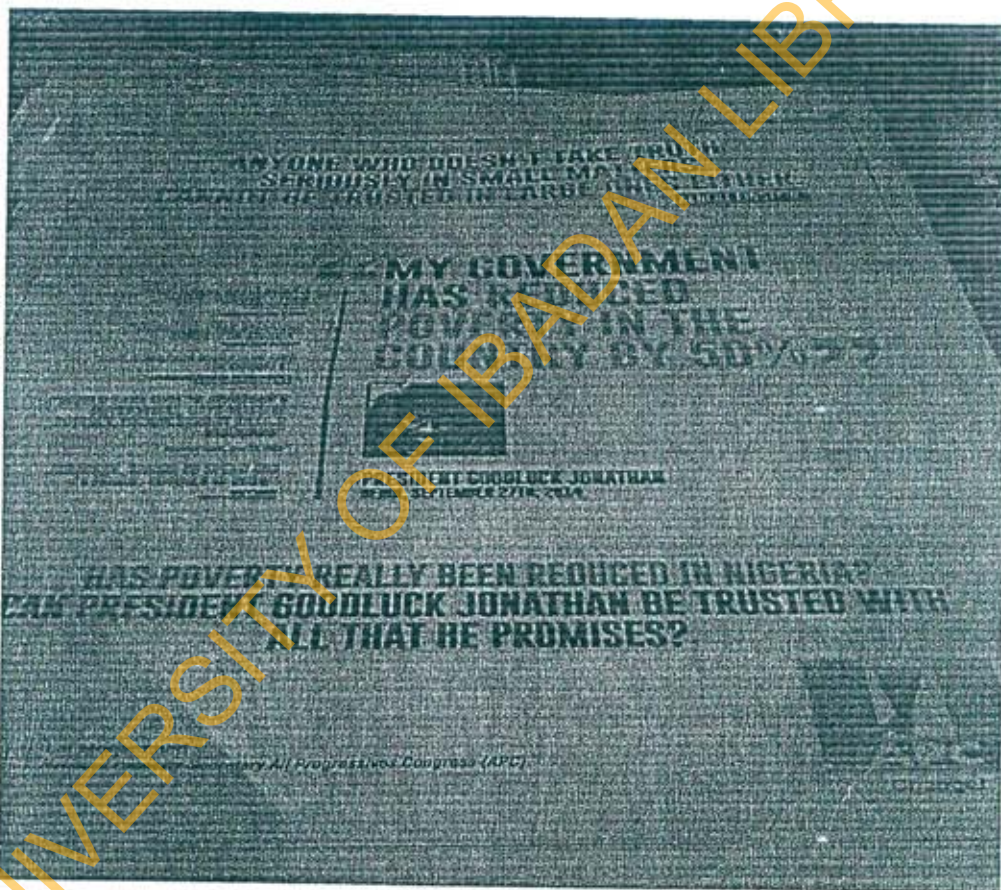
tradition to destroy the country's potential and image for selfish reasons." (Premiumtimes.ng March 21, 2015.)

In the paragraph above, the Presidential candidate of the APC reflected upon ire owo (financial security), but not on how he can guarantee it. It is clearly observed herein that while concepts within the frame of irebogbo are mentioned in this political rhetoric, they can be exploited if not clearly elaborated upon or are allowed to be used as tools for smear-campaigns.

- b. **Buhari-PDP hell-bent on stealing forever:** while making the formal declaration of his bids to contest the presidency on the platform of the All Progressive Congress at the Eagle Square, Abuja in October, 2014, General Muhamadu Buhari (Rtd) notes that then ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) superintended over Nigeria's decline for 15 years and is still hell bent on stealing forever. Rtd. General Buhari was quoted as stating that *"Since 1999, PDP has presided over our country's decline. Nigeria in my experience has never been so divided, so polarized by an unthinking government hell bent on ruling and stealing forever". "We in APC are resolved to stop them in their tracks and rescue Nigeria from the stranglehold of PDP"*. Berating the PDP led Federal Government for failing to curtail the Boko Haram insurgency and other security concerns in the country, General Buhari (Rtd) states thus, *"nearly all are in fear of their lives or safety for themselves and their families due to insurgency by godless movement called Boko Haram; by marauding murderers in towns; and villages by armed robbers on the highways; by kidnappers who have put whole communities to fright and sometimes to flight"* (Balarabe Alkassim, 2014: 1 & 5). Report in Daily Trust Thursday, October 16, 2014, Vol. 35, No. 84.

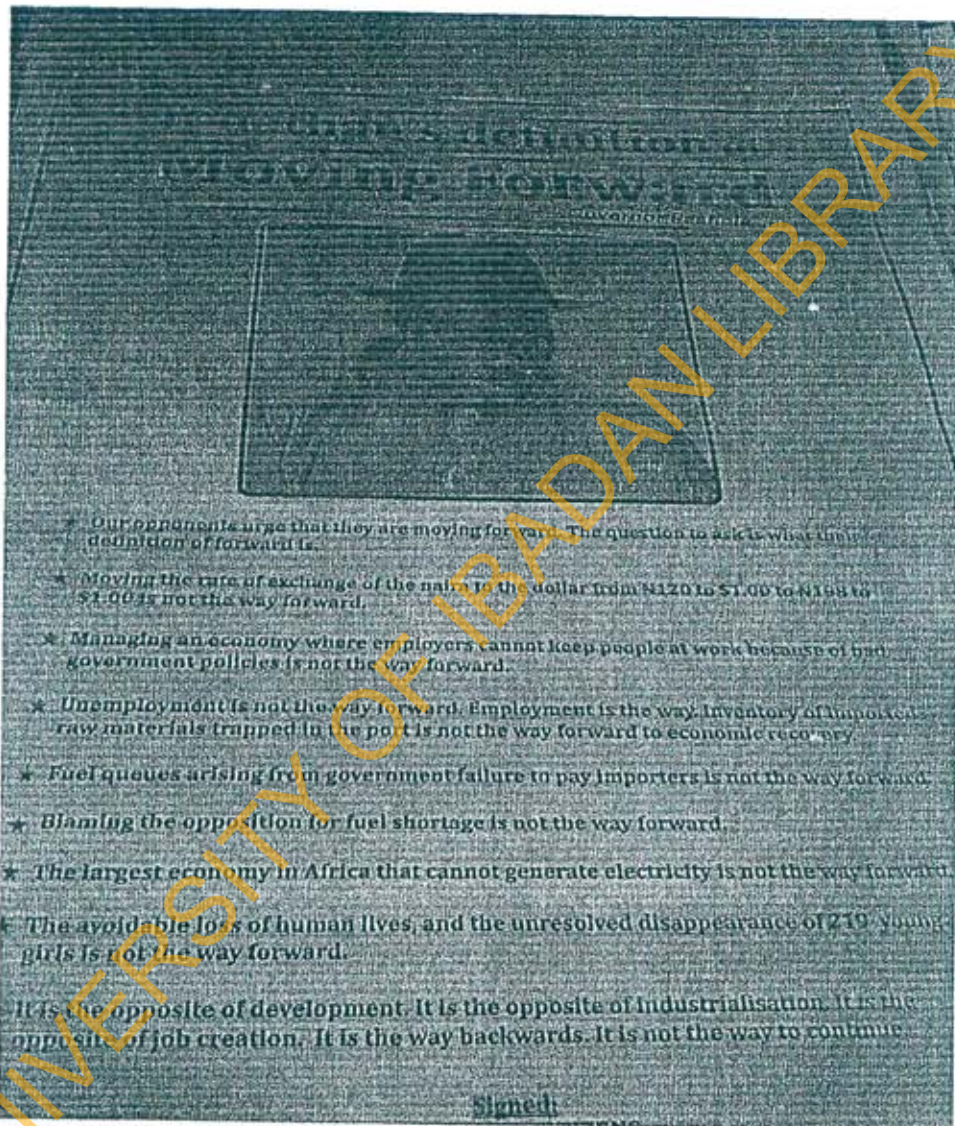
In the information presented above, the incumbent president General Muhamadu Buhari (Rtd.) extensively discussed the security challenges confronting Nigeria under the leadership of the then ruling People's Democratic Party. His concern on security as a retired Army General speaks to the palpable fears that Nigerians lived through especially in North-Eastern Nigeria where the Boko Haram sect deadly attacks against civilian targets had created 'a state of siege, lead to thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions as Internally Displaced Persons within Nigeria and as Refugees in neighbouring countries. General Buhari's electioneering speech on security speaks to the notion of "ire aiku" within the discourse of Akiwowo theory. While the concern on failing security as expressed by General Buhari depicts the situation of the country as at that time, he and his

party failed to present in clear policy term how they intend to resolve the teething security crisis facing Nigeria and Nigerians across the geo-political regions and the larger broad spectrum of Nigerians across the country. Aside security, the then presidential aspirant accused the ruling PDP of corruption but failed to discussed in concrete term and present realistic plan of how he intends to confront the challenge if he was voted into power. To that extent, it can be argued that President Buhari employed political rhetoric and speaks to the fear of people especially as it relates to security concerns of the people in North-Eastern Nigeria over the Boko Haram insurgency. The use of rhetoric as a tool to appeal to people's emotion, fear and concern without much grounding in and elaborate discussion on policy direction was the defining hallmark of electioneering campaigns in the 2015 general elections in general and of the presidential election in particular.



In the Newspaper clipping above, Lai Mohammed attempted to dwell on the issue of 'ire-owo' (financial security), and asked the pertinent question which bothered on the reduction of poverty by the administration of Goodluck Jonathan. While this again raises the question of the use of 'ire

gbogbo' in political rhetoric, it is easily observable that its use here is nothing other than a smear campaign aimed at calling the then president a liar. In fact, it holds no promise whatsoever as to whether or not the APC would attempt to reduce poverty, nor does it state how it would achieve what it was inadvertently accusing the opposition of failing to do. In fact, since the inauguration of the Buhari-led administration, the value of the Nigeria has plummeted, while prices of goods have gone through the roof.



Fashola's antagonism of the Goodluck Jonathan administration and candidacy is one as documented as that of Fayose of the Buhari candidature. In the advertorial above, Fashola's description of the features of Jonathan's notion of forward movement is captured. He raises issues concerning the

Jonathan administration's failures to improve the value of the Nigerian currency, discusses the issue of unemployment being a result of bad government policies, fuel queues arising from government decisions and continuous blaming of it on opposition, inability to generate electricity, disappearance of the 'Chibok' girls, religious violence, loss of lives, and so on.

The issues raised by Buhari, Lai Mohammed and the ex-Governor are crucial issues that have bothered the nation for a while, and also are key issues within this paper as they touch on all five common social values encapsulated within the notion of 'ire gbogbo'. The loss of lives due to extremisms touch on ire aiku, fallen value of the Naira as well as unemployment issues touch on ire owo, the issue of the missing Chibok girls and other kidnappings affect one's chances of ire-omo and ire oko-aya, while ire abori-ota becomes difficult to achieve in today's world in the face of epileptic power supply. However, while these questions have been raised and used in voting out the then-incumbent, without the opposition providing a clear path to addressing any, it is also true that the new administration with Fashola as the minister for Power, works and Housing are still facing the same challenges as the previous administration, and more including the embarrassing budget padding (Vanguard, February 25th 2016), and have resorted to blaming the opposition (Channels TV, 2015; Newsroom, 2016) and everybody but themselves for their failings.

DISCUSSIONS

Usage of Ire Gbogbo in Political Rhetorics in Nigeria

The political landscape in Nigeria in recent times remains a very tense one, and despite the supposed reverts to issue – based electoral campaigns and promises as mentioned earlier (Centre for Democracy and Development, June 2015), it would be absolutely untrue to abide by such a stance. In fact, while there has been more mention of social issues in the campaigns prior to the 2015 general elections, it is most noticeable that the so-called mentions of issues have been a subtle adaptation of these issues to form arms and ammunitions to hurl at the opposition. Expressing concerns over the use of rhetoric and abusive language in the presidential political campaign, Father Hassan Matthew Kukah, the Catholic Arc-Bishop of Sokoto diocese was quoted to have note that;

"The 2015 General elections have been turned into a theatre of hate speeches and campaigns coloured in a form that defies logic and common sense. Various politically

motivated hate speeches about various candidates and especially the two leading Presidential candidates of All Progressives Congress and Peoples Democratic Party have been bandied. I am sure if experts should collate analyses of contents of the social media this year, Nigeria will rank top because arguably more than 40 million young Nigerians who have since graduated and have no means of livelihood have found solace in the various social media platforms and are busy churning out divergent messages. The use of hate speeches in Nigeria preparatory to the coming general elections has become notorious to an extent that you would think and feel that sooner rather than later Nigeria may witness genocidal killings similar to what occurred in Rwanda some few years back between the Hutus and Tutsis" (Akubor, 2015, pp 13).

Within the rhetoric of campaign language employed prior to the elections, rather than use the social issues and values highlighted within the concept of ire gbogbo as major campaign points to discuss how the lives of the citizenry can be bettered, the notions inherent within the common social values were sparsely used, and whenever it at all they did come up, they served only the political purpose of winning the election (and may just be empty promises), and not bettering the lives of the common man or fostering the sense of collective social values. Ademilokun (2015) notes that when crucial issues were raised and a change in a positive direction was promised, it was only done to serve one purpose which was to create a positive self-image to the populace while creating a negative other representation for the opposition. The above-stated examples show that despite the fact that Nigeria is one of the nations that prides itself on the strength of its kinship ties which is an essential feature of ajobi societies, it is imperative that one reads between the lines and discovers that the speech patterns and rhetoric usage which do not emphasize the ire gbogbo values especially during the 2015 general elections point out that Nigeria, but rather contain elements of igbinkugbin as manifested in the slander, insults and negative branding, is becoming more of an ajogbe society as pointed out by Akiwowo (1980), and worse yet, one whose leaders do not have the best interests at heart for commenting on the use of abusive language in the conduct of media campaigns for the 2015 Presidential election by media outlets and political parties, Tom Adaba, who was the pioneer Director General, the national media regulatory agency, the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, (2015) notes thus:

Let the truth be told, we have simply behaved as if there is no tomorrow for Nigeria. The campaigns or advertisements of mudslinging and derision, which we have allowed to appear on the screens, have not been helpful to the cause of this nation. It has indeed helped to divide us as a people...The media are expected to be the unifying factor for all interest groups but unfortunately some of us have come out to be brazenly partisan. The advertisements are to say the least, banal, puerile, uncultured and primitive.

One of the greatest values the Nigerian is identified with is respect. Our morals, and indeed our religious institutions teach us to honour our elders and our leaders...The advertisements have not in any way reflected respect and honours for the candidates and the office of the president they are aspiring to fill (Adaba, 2015).

The view echoed by Adaba highlighted the lack of decorum, the use of uncultured and abusive language and the lack of focus on substantive policy issues in the media campaigns for the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Although the two contending candidates for the office of the president often make allusion to social issues in their campaigns in traditional media outlets and social media platforms, however, such remains at the level of rhetoric as there is glaring lack of depth in the discussion on these issues. The deft use of rhetoric at the expense of substantive discussion of important socio-economic, political and development issues confronting Nigeria and Nigerians alike was a major shortcoming as it relates to campaigns particularly for the 2015 presidential election. The lack of policy direction by the All Progressive Congress after its electoral triumph speaks directly to the lack of substantive discussion of policy issues in the media campaigns for the presidential election.

Ayeomoni (2005) studied the language of the Nigerian political elite analyzing the speeches of past presidents, heads of state, governors, ambassadors and political advisers from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Yusuf (2002) focused on the dysphemisms in the language of President Olusegun Obasanjo; Adetunji (2009) compared the inaugural addresses of Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo and America's President George Bush; while Babatunde and Odegbedan (2009) examined the pragma-rhetorical strategies in selected speeches of President Olusegun Obasanjo. None of these studies explicitly examined the use of values within these speeches. The failings of the contestants in the 2015 general elections as well to address the issues encapsulated within the ideology of the 'irc

gbogbo' thus gradually gives room for the emergence as predicted by Akiwowo (1980) of the 'ibi marun' from within the shadows to take center-stage in social dialogue as observed in the recent increase in violent acts particularly theft and vandalism representing 'ibi ole' among youths (Muhammad, 2005) which often lead to an increasing death toll; increased cases of mental disorder ('ibi were') in the country (Boyce and McArdle, 2008; Busari, 2017); as well as the increasing number of orphans and vulnerable children in the country.

From the fore-going, the rhetoric and general language use in the 2015 general elections reflect a rather tense political landscape before and during the elections as the word craft used by the political parties and politicians to promote their ambitions as well as market themselves to the Nigerian man were more often than not filled with hate messages, anti-opposition branding, and slander, and often devoid of reference to social issues or nation-building.

CONCLUSION

This paper has dwelled on political rhetoric employed during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. The speeches were looked at in line with the common social values encapsulated within the theoretical orientation of Akiwowo's variations in the theme of sociation, and the common social values (ire gbogbo) that should be the basis of any government's actions, and the paper concludes, having observed the continued usage of abusive, insulting words which are not elements of our indigenous culture but are made manifest due to envy, strife and competition as products of igbinkugbin, that ajogbe is more the order of the day in the nation rather than ajobi. It's therefore recommends that citizens and politicians alike should begin to be more aware of the need for the values of 'ire gbogbo' ahead of future polls.

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