

The Political Culture of North-Eastern Nigeria and its Impact on Electoral Violence and Voter Turnout in the 2011, 2015 and 2019 General Elections

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Abstract

North-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria consists of six states, including Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe State with over 200 ethnic groups spread across the states of the region, the zone is one of the most culturally diverse regions of the country. The region can be tentatively clustered into three distinct but interpenetrating socio-cultural clusters; the Kanuri, the Hausa-Fulani Muslims, and the ethnic minority Christian cluster. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this paper discovered that the political culture of the North-east is predominantly religion and ethnicity. The paper also discovered that, this culture of ethnicity and religion has influenced greatly the political behaviour of the people in the region whereby the violence and apathy experienced in the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Presidential elections in the region were caused by these twin culture of ethnicity and religion. Therefore, the paper recommends among others that; political culture of ethnicity and religion in the region should be abolished to accommodate competency and merit. Rather than voting for political candidates on the basis of their religion and ethnic group, people should be elected base on the issues and policies they represent and can deliver because everyone is always a victim of bad governance irrespective of one's religion or ethnic identity. Also, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and other

democratic architectures must exhibit transparency, openness and honesty in the conduct of elections so as to inspire confidence in the people towards participation. The electorates should also note that, participation is obligatory even in the midst of threat and provocations.

Keywords: Political Culture, Electoral violence, Voter Turnout.

Introduction

Political system is democratic to the extent that its collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote. But, the spate of bombings, kidnappings, massive fraud, intimidation, and harassment that have become the political culture of the electoral process in Nigeria not only tarnish the image of our democracy, they also grossly affect voters' interest in politics, thereby causing voter apathy. North-east Nigeria is one of the regions of the country that has witnessed electoral violence in the form of killing, kidnapping, terrorism, rigging, manipulation, and state interference and has equally experienced voter apathy resulting in low turnout during general elections from the rebirth of democracy in 1999. This paper however, examined the factors that constitute the political culture of the North-east and its relationship with electoral violence and voter turnout witnessed particularly in the 2015 and 2019 General elections in the region.

Concept Clarifications

The concepts to clarify in this study are political Culture, electoral violence and voter apathy.

Political Culture: Political culture connotes formal protocols as well as customs, traditions, and political behaviours passed down from generations and encompasses well-established political traits that characterise a society (Udim, 2014). Jatula (2019) argued that political culture is the aggregate manifestation of the psychological

and subjective dimensions of politics. It investigates the connection between actors, action, and consequences in the political arena. It can also be seen as the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments, which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system.

Electoral Violence: Electoral violence is any violence that involves political parties, their supporters, journalists, agents of the government, election administrators, and the general population, and includes threats, assault, murder, destruction of property, and physical or psychological harm. Igbuzor (2010, p.15), sees electoral violence as ‘any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities including, pre, during and post-election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes’.

Hence, any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced, blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination can be categorized as electoral violence.

Voter Apathy: Voter apathy is the lack of desire, or motive, to take an interest in politics. Voter apathy is expressed and measured by the degree of political phobia and non-participation in political activities in a country, this means that apathy is understood exclusively as an attitudinal orientation. However, Pine and Yusuf, (2020), see voter apathy as the lack of psychological involvement of voters in public affairs, emotional detachment from civic obligation, and abstention from political activity. Hence, voter apathy is evidenced in mass, collective behaviour but has its origins at the level of the individual psyche. In the aggregate, voter apathy is

revealed by attitudes and an absence of expected activity. When people cease to care about political life, withdraw from obligations to civil duties, and perform entirely nominal or rote acts—or none at all—in political institutions or organizations, apathy is indicated.

Research Methodology

This paper utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods and the use of correlational research design otherwise known as rational study. The primary source utilized in this work is interview. The population of the study is the total number of registered voters during the 2019 election in the various states that make up the North-East geo-political zone in Nigeria, which are Adamawa 1,973,083, Bauchi 2,462,843, Borno 2,315,956, Gombe 1,394,393, Taraba 1,777,105, and Yobe 1,365,913. Totalling 11,289,293 (INEC, 2019). Taro Yamane (1973) formula for determining sample size is utilised. Therefore, from the formula, the total of four hundred (400) respondents is the sample size of the study. To distribute the sample size of 400 respondents across the six states in the region, this study employ the Bourley's proportional allocation formula as indicated below;

$$Nb = \frac{n(n)}{N}$$

Where:

nb = Bourley formular

n = Element within the sample frame i.e number allocated to respondent groups

(n) = Sample or proportion of the universe used in the study (total sample size)

N = Population of the study.

Therefore, the determination of each of the sample state is shown below:

$$\text{Adamawa State } 1,973,083 = \frac{1,973,083 \times 400}{11,289,293} = 70$$

$$\text{Bauchi State} \quad 2,462,843 = \frac{2,462,843 \times 400}{11,289,293} = 87$$

$$\text{Borno State} \quad 2,315,956 = \frac{2,315,956 \times 400}{11,289,293} = 82$$

$$\text{Gombe State} \quad 1,394,393 = \frac{1,394,393 \times 400}{11,289,293} = 50$$

$$\text{Taraba State} \quad 1,777,105 = \frac{1,777,105 \times 400}{11,289,293} = 63$$

$$\text{Yobe State} \quad 1,365,913 = \frac{1,365,913 \times 400}{11,289,293} = 48$$

$$\text{Total} \quad 1,365,913 \quad 400$$

Political Culture of the North-eastern Nigeria

North-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria consists of six states, including Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe State. It was established as a region in 1967, and by 1976, Bauchi, Borno, and Gongola States were created. In 1991, Yobe State was separated from Borno State, and Adamawa and Taraba States were created from the defunct Gongola State, bringing the total number of states in the North-east to five. But in 1996, Gombe State was created from Bauchi State, bringing the total number of states to six. The 2006 population census figure estimated the region's population at 18,984,299 (13.52%) of Nigeria's total population of 140,431,790 and a population of about 26 million people, or around 12% of the total population of the country in 2020. With over 200 ethnic groups spread across the states of the region, the zone is one of the most culturally diverse regions of the country. It harbours some of the poorest human development indicators; with almost 70% of the region's population living below the poverty line, the region is among the least developed in the country.

The North-east region is going through a complex mix of security challenges, including armed banditry, kidnapping,

different shades of communal violence (ethnic and religious in Bauchi, Taraba, Gombe, and Adamawa states), and a ferocious Boko Haram insurgency, especially in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, which has in many other ways affected each of the states in the region. The zone has produced militant youth groups in the fourth republic, with Boko Haram being the most extreme one; others are ECOMOG in Borno State, Yan'Kalare, and Sara-Suka in Gombe and Bauchi states, respectively.

Abdu & Okoro (2016) posit that the region can be tentatively clustered into three distinct but interpenetrating socio-cultural clusters; the Kanuri, the Hausa-Fulani Muslims, and the ethnic minority Christian cluster. The Kanuri axis covers Borno and Yobe states. They are predominantly Muslims and have historically played relatively distinct politics from the larger Northern Nigerian politics. The Hausa-Fulani Muslim axis covers Gombe, Bauchi, Adamawa, and part of Taraba states, and the axis gravitates towards the politics of the North-West and has therefore been deeply influenced by the political direction of the North-West. Against the Hausa-Fulani dominated politics of the North, the ethnic minorities, who are also predominantly Christian, have more political affinity with the Middle Belt (North-Central). The Middle Belt is politically conceived to include the minority Christian areas of the North-east. Sometimes the ethnic minority groups gravitate towards the southern parts of the country in building strategic political alliances. These political alignments and realignment go to show that religion and ethnicity is superlative in the zone.

Electoral Violence in the North-east in 2011, 2015 and 2019

The 2011 general elections were adjudged by many observers as the most credible election organised by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) since 1999. But incidentally, it is one of the most violent elections as well. Prior to the presidential polls, some Northern politicians, including Adamu Ciroma, Iyorchia Ayu,

Lawal Kaita, Bello Kirfi, Yahaya Kwande, and Bashir Yusuf Ibrahim, wrote a letter to the PDP National Chairman on September 17, 2010, requesting the party leadership to restrain President Goodluck Jonathan from contesting the 2011 elections under the party's platform. The group argued that the eight years, two-term presidency ceded to the North in line with the PDP constitution, which began with former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2007, must continue through another Northerner following Yar'Adua's death. The group warned that the failure of the ruling PDP to apply the principle of zoning would threaten the stability of Nigeria, saying; "We are extremely worried that our party's failure to deliver justice in this matter (power-shift to the North) may ignite a series of events, the scope of which we can neither proximate nor contain" (Abdallah, 2010, Obia, 2010). This position (warning) was not adhered to by the PDP and the result was the unprecedented post-election violence that ravaged the North-east.

The North-eastern states of the country were thrown into chaos and anarchy after Dr. Goodluck Jonathan was declared the winner of the 2011 presidential election. In Bauchi state, members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) who were engaged to serve as election officers became prime targets of attacks, and a number of them were killed and maimed.

On 17/4/2011 at Gombe, Jack Gynako Gumpy and his family members were killed by youth militias who invaded their residence at Checheniya quarters, behind police barrack Gombe. Also, Khamis Muhammed on 17/4/2011 was assassinated by youth militias at his residence in Gombe. Again, Moses Audu Balanga on 18/4/2011 was killed and burnt by some hoodlums alone bank road in Jemita, Yola. In the same vein, between 16/4/2011 to 17/4/2011 at least 32 Christians were killed in Bauchi by Hausa thugs, including 11 corp members. A total of 72 churches were burnt in the state over presidential elections results (interview). Human Rights Watch (2011) reported that about 800 lives were

lost as a result of the post-election violence and more than 65,000 people were displaced in the North-east.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) under the leadership of Prof. Attahiru Jega, introduced the use of a card reader and the Permanent Voters Card (PVC) for the 2015 general elections. These new measures (card readers and PVC) were introduced with the view of curbing electoral fraud and electoral violence that have characterised Nigeria's electoral history. In the months before the elections, many observers predicted that the March and April 2015 elections could trigger a major crisis. Indicators of the crisis included longstanding tensions between the North and the South; threats of militant activity in the South South sub-region; a major insurgency in the North-east (where Boko Haram had threatened to disrupt the "pagan practice" of elections); tensions over electoral management; and recurring clashes and incidents of intimidation. The public also feared there might be large-scale violence, given the multitude of security challenges, their politicization, and an apparently complete breakdown in trust and communication between the PDP and the APC (Olakunle et al., 2019).

The elections, however, took place after a controversial six-week postponement due to security agencies' insistence that the elections be pushed forward in order to accelerate the fight against insurgency in the North-eastern region. According to Olakunle et al., (2019), election-related violence killed 58 people between December 2014 and February 2015. In Bauchi state, one of the state assembly election aspirants of APC in Dass local government was assassinated by hoodlums. Almost all the states of the North-east experienced this ugly train of violence.

According to Sanni (2019), the North-east recorded about 146 fatalities before, during and after the 2019 general elections. In the North-east, on 17/1/2019 at Wukari in Taraba state, there was assassination attempt at the APC Gubernatorial candidate resulting in to five (5) death. And, Mohammed Isa Kambari was

assassinated on his way to Jalingo from Karim/lamido on 24/2/2019. In Adamawa state, there was clash between the supporters of APC and PDP where about four people lost their lives and many injured (interview). By and large, violence has been a hallmark of elections in the North-east especially during the time under review.

Voter Turnout in the 2011, 2015 and 2019 General Elections in the North-east

It is a generally accepted notion that democracy is a legitimate form of government because it is a game of numbers. Thus, from this notion, it can be deduced that it is only right when a government records majority backing through elections. This majority backing must, as a matter of fact, be commensurate with the increasing total population of the electorate because this is a sine qua non for the growth of democracy. But, in the North-east over the years, the electioneering process has witnessed plethora of decline in participation. At the rebirth of democracy in 1999, the North-east geopolitical zone had a total of 7,990,211 registered voters which represent 13.7% of the 57,938,945 total registered voters in Nigeria. From the total registered voters of 7,990,211 in the North-east, 5,059,535 votes were cast. It therefore shows that, having registered to vote, a total of 2,930,676 voters did not participate in the presidential election of 1999. However, the 5,059,535 total vote of the North-east represent 16.7% of the 30,280,052 total vote cast during the 1999 presidential election.

In 2003, another election was organised where 8,823,766 registered voters in the North-east indicated interest before the election to participate, only 6,647,185 voters were accredited to vote in the 2003 presidential election. The vote cast (6,647,185) represent 15.8% of the total vote cast during the presidential election which was 42,018,735. The 8,823,766 registered voters represent 14.5% of the total 60,823,022 registered voters in

Nigeria. Meaning that, even after they had registered to vote, about 2,176,581 voters refused to turn out for the election.

Worthy of note is the fact that, even though there was a marginal increase in the level of registered voters from 13.7% in the 1999 presidential election to 14.5% in 2003, the turn out on the other hand witnessed a marginal decline from 16.7% to 15.8%.

The next election was conducted in 2007, this election was in the words of the then president Olusegun Obasanjo ‘a do or die affair’. However, a total of 9,265,056 voters were registered in the North-east which represent 12.9% of the total 61, 567,036 total registered voters in Nigeria. Even though, INEC recorded a total of 35,397,517 as the turn out of voters during the presidential election of 2007, the breakdown per state was not provided. Meanwhile, from the explanation above, it shows that there was a decline in the level of zeal to register for the 2007 elections in the North-east when compare to the preceding election of 2003.

Participation per state in the North-east during the 2011 presidential election

State	Registered Voters	Turn out	Total vote in Nig.
Adamawa	1,816,094	950,936	39,469,484
Bauchi	2,523,614	1,650,495	39,469,484
Borno	2,380,957	1,222,890	“
Gombe	1,318,377	798,683	“
Taraba	1,336,221	770,690	“
Yobe	1,373,796	662,913	“
Total	10,749,059	6,056,607	39,469,484

Source: INEC/compiled by the authors (2023)

The presidential election of 2011 as shown in the table above indicates that, a total of 10,749,059 people actually registered to participate which represent 14.6% of 73,528,040 total registered voters in Nigeria. From the registered voters, a total of 6,056,607 turnout for the presidential election in 2011 representing 15% of

39,469,484 overall turnout in Nigeria. However, worthy of note from the table above is the fact that, though there were more people that registered to vote in the election, but ironically, many people did not turn out to vote during the election as a total of 4,692,452 registered voters representing 43% of the total registered voters in the North-east actually did not turn out to vote.

Participation per state in the North-east during the 2015 presidential election

State	Total Population	Reg. Voters	PVCs Collected	Accredited Voters	Vote Cast	Total vote in Nig.
Adamawa	3,168,101	1,559,021	1,381,571	709,993	661,210	29,432,083
Bauchi	4,676,465	2,054,125	1,967,081	1,094,069	1,039,775	29,432,083
Borno	4,151,193	1,934,079	1,407,777	544,759	515,008	"
Gombe	2,353,879	1,120,023	1,070,725	515,828	473,444	"
Taraba	2,300,736	1,340,652	1,270,889	638,578	602,716	"
Yobe	2,321,591	1,099,970	824,401	520,127	491,767	"
Total	18,971,965	9,107,870	7,922,444	4,023,354	3,783,920	29,432,083

Source: INEC/compiled by the authors (2023)

From the table above, it shows that during the 2015 presidential election, the North-east had a total population of 18,971,965 out of which only 9,107,870 registered to participate in the election. Having registered to vote in the election, only a total of 7,922,444 PVCs were collected which indicates that, 1,185,426 PVCs were not collected from INEC. However, from the collected PVCs, only a total of 4,023,354 voters came out to be accredited to participate in the election which shows that, even after collecting the PVCs a total of 3,899,090 could not turn out for accreditation in line with the new technology that was introduced. Again, the table shows that, from the accredited 4,023,354 voters, only 3,783,920 voters actually casted their vote. This shows that, in every inch of the process there was a marginal decrease in the level of participation. The 3,783,920 voters that casts their vote, represent only 41.5% of the total registered voters in the North-east during the 2015 election. What this means is the fact that, even after been registered to participate, about 58.5% of the registered voters did not turn out for the election.

Secondly, apathy was also noticed in the North-east during the 2015 presidential election when compare with the 2011 presidential election in the sense that, in 2011 election, a total of 10,749,059 voters were registered out of which a total of 6,056,607 turn out to cast their vote. But, the 2015 election recorded only 9,107,870 registered voters. Meaning that despite the increase in population, a total of 1,641,187 voters did not turn out for registration. Again, only a total of 3,783,920 registered voters turn out for the 2015 presidential election lower than the 6,056,607 that turn out during the 2011 presidential election.

Worthy of note also is the fact that, the 3,783,920 vote cast in the North-east geopolitical zone during the 2015 presidential election only represented 12.8% of the total votes in Nigeria which was 29,432,083. This development shows that there was a marginal decline from 15% in 2011 to the 12.8% in 2015.

Participation per state in the North-east during the 2019 presidential election

State	Reg. Voters	PVCs Collected	Accredited Voters	vote cast	Total Vote in Nig
Adamawa	1,973,083	1,788,706	874,920	860,756	28,614,190
Bauchi	2,462,843	2,335,717	1,075,330	1,061,955	28,614,190
Borno	2,315,956	2,000,228	987,290	955,205	28,614,190
Gombe	1,394,393	1,335,223	604,240	580,649	28,614,190
Taraba	1,777,105	1,729,094	756,111	741,564	28,614,190
Yobe	1,365,913	1,261,914	601,059	586,137	28,614,190
Total	11,289,293	10,450,882	4,898,950	4,786,266	28,614,190

Source: INEC/compiled by the authors (2023)

Deducing from the table above, it shows that during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria, a total of 11,289,293 voters were registered in the North-east, which represents only 13% of the total number of registered voters in the country, i.e., 84,004,084. The table also shows that, though a total of 10,450,882 PVCs were collected, only 4,898,950 voters were accredited by the electronic card reader to participate in the election. Despite the number of

accredited voters, information from the table above goes to show that only 4,786,266 votes were cast during the presidential election, representing 16.7% of the 28,614,190 total votes cast in the country.

Interestingly, the 4,786,266 votes cast represent only 42% of the total number of registered voters in the North-east who had earlier indicated interest in the electioneering process by registering to have a PVC. This also means that 58% of the total number of registered voters refused to turn out on election day.

Relationship between Political Culture, Electoral Violence and Voter Turnout in the North-east

As noted earlier, the political culture of the North-east is predominantly an issue that has to do with religion and ethnicity. In one way or the other, participation in politics in all the states of the North-east is shaped by one's religion or ethnic group. Whether in contesting election or in voting during elections especially from 2011 to 2019, religion and ethnic identity is in the front-burner in this region that is why Christians do not win elections in Muslim dominated areas and vice versa.

In the North-east, electorates are care free with a candidate's developmental ideas and what he has to offer, what shaped vote and been voted for, is either ethnic identity or religious affiliation. For instance, a wurkum Christian candidate cannot win governorship election in Gombe state just like a kanuri Muslim cannot win governorship election in Taraba state. But a Kanuri Muslim can win governorship election in Bauchi state in the same manner that a wurkum Christian can win election in Tafawa Balewa local government in Bauchi state. Therefore, this is the extent of the relationship between the political culture of the North-east and elections in the region (interview).

The electoral processes in the North-east are being influenced by religion in which, people's participation in the process as well as the voting of candidates are done on the basis of their religion and

the reaction of the people to the election in the name of winning or losing is anchored from the standpoint of religion. Therefore, from the above position, it is clear that religion greatly influences electoral violence and voter apathy in the Northeast (interview). This was equally the position of a security personnel interviewed in Borno state. He said that;

I was in Bauchi state during the 2011 post-election violence, when the rioters were approaching our command, they were chanting 'allahuakbar, allahuakbar, allahuakbar, where are the arnals (infidel) here, come out we will slaughter you like cows, you have manipulated a faithful servant of Allah, Muhammadu Buhari, come out we will kill you'. Many churches were also razed down and most of the casualties were Christians because the rioters (hoodlums) believed that the Christians voted for a Christian southerner of the PDP.

In the same vein, when a security personnel was interviewed in Bauchi state, he responded that;

the Islamic religion sees politics as part of the religion and the adherents are enjoined by their leaders to ensure that they play the politics in such a way that it will protect their religion. So also, the Christian. Hence, religion has been the driving force of politics in the North-east especially at the rebirth of democracy in 1999. The turnout of people during elections is always been determined by the religion of the contestant, if the religion of the contestant is clearly known; adherents of that religion will troop out en mass to cast their vote in support of that candidate and if their candidate did not win, they resort to violence or abstain from other elections (security personnel).

Therefore, from the above positions, majority of the respondents concur with the fact that, religion influences electoral violence and voter apathy in the North-east despite the fact that most families are multi-religious in nature.

Despite the fact that the region has over 100 ethnic groups or linguistic dialects, the alignment is always done in the dichotomy of major and minor ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups in the region are the Hausa/Fulani and the Kanuri's while all other ethnic groups are considered to be the 'minorities'. The 'major' ethnic

groups most times will always advance or project the view that represent their interest or guarantees their interest, while on the other hand the minor ethnic groups in most cases always feel threatened due to the demographics of the major ethnic groups and also their level of influence. This position was further agreed by one of the respondents interviewed in Taraba state. He said that;

Ethnicity in this region is a major factor that influences participation and violence in the sense that, people that are of the same ethnic identity with a particular candidate or a particular party steward, tend to throw their support to such a candidate or party steward more than candidates and party stewards from other ethnic group... for instance, no matter how unqualify or corrupt a wurkum candidate may appear to be, a wurkum voter will prefer him to a qualify mumuye man during election because they will say 'khegoh ma khegoh' (always support your kinsman no matter what) and once their kinsman did not win the election, it can result to violence against the other ethnic groups that are seen as opposition (INEC staff).

Also, in line with the above positions, a respondent interviewed from Borno state had this to said;

you know why Ali Ndume despite his political relevance will not contest nor win governorship election in Borno state? The reason is that he is not a kanuri man, his tribe is seen as a minority. So, any attempt to enthrone him will be resisted. Also, despite the quality of a Hausa/Fulani politician in Borno state, he can never be a governor because they are considered as minority and if that attempt is made, it will be resisted. This is the same case in all the states of the North-east. Hence, ethnicity influences participation and violence in this region. That is why a Jukun man in Taraba state will say 'nwuza shi nwuza' (your brother is your brother) (Electorate). Even though some of the respondents interviewed observed that, the political culture of the North-east is poverty and hunger. Where they said that;

once any candidate brings food and money to the electorates and also promise that he will provide infrastructural development as well as give employment opportunities to the teeming youths, he wins their hearts..... People in the North-east are not too particular about ethnicity and religion

but their immediate needs, in fact, from 2007, what is shaping the pattern of participation in the zone is, the promise to tackle insecurity rather than religion and ethnicity (interview).

It is clear that religion and ethnic identity is the political culture in the North-east and it greatly influences electoral violence and voter apathy. Therefore, as important as ethnic identity is, in the North-east it has dual advantages of been a negative and a positive factor in the political arena. It is negative because it can be used to cause mayhem and it is positive because it can be used to garner support and enthrone a popular choice which is one of the basic tenets of democracy.

Conclusion

North-east Nigeria is one of the regions of the country that has witnessed electoral violence in the form of killing, kidnapping, terrorism, rigging, manipulation, and state interference and has equally experienced voter apathy resulting in low turnout during general elections from the rebirth of democracy in 1999. However, though other factors like poverty and illiteracy do shape the action of an electorate, but the strongest factors that shape people's actions during elections (2011, 2015, 2019) in the region are ethnicity and religion. That is, the North-east's political culture is based on religion and ethnicity and it has caused violence in the sense that where a candidate's ethnic group or religion members are minority, no matter how prudent and good such a candidate is, he/she will never win an election in such places and when there is a perceived irregularity, members of the candidate's ethnic group or religion will be maimed or their properties destroyed. Also, it causes apathy in the sense that, where people feel they are minority, they abstain from participation for the fear of been attacked by the majority especially where they belong to different political party and faith.

Therefore, the paper recommends that, the political culture of ethnicity and religion in the region should be abolished to

accommodate competency and merit. Rather than voting for political candidates on the basis of their religion and ethnic group, people should be elected base on the issues and policies they represent and can deliver because every one is always a victim of bad governance irrespective of one's religion or ethnic identity.

Secondly, parties and candidates should freely canvass for votes and support from both the majority and the minority ethnic and religious group so as to engendering the feeling of inclusiveness by all, rather than the campaign of violence and threats base on sentiments that will bring about violence.

Thirdly, The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and other democratic architectures must exhibit transparency, openness and honesty in the conduct of elections so as to inspire confidence in the people and be perceive by all the players and actors as providing a level playing ground. Also, the electorates should note that, participation is obligatory even in the midst of any form of threat and provocation.

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