

Propaganda and Electioneering Campaign in Nigeria: A Case of 2015 and 2019 General Election in Ondo State.

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Abstract- *The 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria are one of the elections that have drawn the attention of so many countries as a result of their uniqueness, challenges and successes recorded. Political campaigns colouration in Nigeria took another dimension. Political campaigns and propaganda are ways by which political practitioners market themselves to voters and to win elections. This study used the case study of 2015 and 2019 elections to examine propaganda and election campaigns in Nigeria. The struggle for power at the federal level was considered tough amidst the two dominating parties: Peoples Democratic Parties (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC). The tussle for the central control made several parties to adopt numerous measures to ensure that they win the political seats which could be tantamount to propaganda. This substantiate the submission that surmise that politics whether national or international is the struggle for the minds and resources of men. In this contest, those who struggle for power use all forms of deception including lies. Those who win, win all and grow fat, while those who lose, lose all and grow lean. The study examined the different propaganda methods used by political parties in the 2015 and 2019 Nigeria's general elections vis-à-vis the issues/problems of political propaganda as regarding the election results in Nigeria using Ondo State as the case study. It also looked into the successive government efforts to curb the excessive use of propaganda by Nigerian political parties before and during elections. The study relied on the use of Rational Choice Theory as the theoretical framework for the work. Both primary and secondary data collection sources were adopted by the researcher in which a total of one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed to respondents in Ondo state. Similarly, the use of publications, journals, articles, magazines and internet sources were relied upon as basis for sources of secondary data. The questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation); SPSS and secondary data using content analysis. It was discovered that voters in Nigeria do not necessarily make independent electoral choices rather they rely on primordial decisions vis-à-vis the use of lies in propaganda of socio-ethno-religious leaders who equally double as the representatives of various political parties to make political decisions. The study recommended for an issue-based campaign which will enable the citizen vis-à-vis the electorates be given a free choice of selecting their leaders without political actors interfering in their decision.*

Keywords—Democracy, Electioneering Campaign, Electorate Political Parties and Propaganda.

I. INTRODUCTION

Democracy is today regarded as the best form of government in most parts of the world. It is a system in which the government is controlled by the people and is

considered equal when the people exercise that control. In this system of government, people have the right to choose leaders who will control them. According to Adelegan (2009), the dominance of people in democratic societies is determined by voting, which is reflected in the majority vote. Similarly, Odeyemi and Mosumola (2015) assume that democracy is the most recognized form of politics in the world, regardless of its history or socio-economic system. According to Abraham Lincoln, the sixth President of the United States, democracy is perceived as "government of people, by people, and for people." There was no specific privilege, as it was in the military era due to the fact that everything is coordinated by military leaders and there is no such thing as an election (Orji, 2015). Oni (2017) states that democracy is a form of government firmly rooted in the belief that people in any society should be free to determine their political, economic, social and cultural systems. In similar vein, democracy is primarily used to describe a political system aimed at increasing public participation in governments where power is clearly defined and restricted. Therefore, democracy is considered perfect when guided by legitimacy; separation of powers; public participation; checks and balance; the rule of law; basic human rights and regular elections. Elections around the world have been regarded as one of the most important factors that guarantee true democracy. Elections can simply be seen as the most important and visible means by which all political leaders can be peacefully elected or dismissed from political offices to ensure freedom and justice. In any democratic society, elections are seen as one of the essential elements of the transition from one government to another. Election is considered as the means and process by which voters decide who and which group will control the country's operations based on their perceived beliefs about the agenda and program presented by the group (Oni, 2017). According to Franca (2015), elections are understood as a struggle for legitimate power in the political arena. The effectiveness and efficiency of the actual elections required for democracy depends on a number of stakeholders who play an important and decisive role. Among these stakeholders are the institutions responsible for conducting elections depending on the country, the political parties whose main purpose is to gain political power, and who they want at the forefront. Also, the voters are equally strong stakeholders when it comes to election in a country because they decide the choice of candidates to rule for a specific period of time.

Political parties are defined or considered as a group of people who unite and organize themselves to gain and exercise political power. According to Ogunnoiki (2018), political parties primarily recruit, train, and nominate candidates with subgenus labels and perhaps acronyms into an elected public office by voters during the electioneering period. The political party is also considered as an organized group of people who educate the masses through elections, political and socio-economic issues, clarifying and bundling the interests of the people. Political parties support national democracy and also act as guardians/watchdogs of opposition to the ruling party. They are majorly involved in campaigning and making their manifestos known to electorate during election.

Election campaigns run when candidates through their respective parties (or in the case of independent non-party candidates) continuously announce voters through manifests, ideologies, welfare plans, and community development. All of these activities are needed in today's globally evolving world, and these candidates rely on the power of publicity to achieve their aims within the political environment. The publicity of political parties is done in a variety of ways, but most political parties rely on the use of mass media, and more recently government-owned media stations or private media house to contact citizens (Egunjobi, 2014, Orji, 2015). Colouring political campaigns in Nigeria takes another dimension which is evident in the process whereby political campaigns is considered as a way for political applicants to market themselves to voters during elections. The period of election campaign is the time for election candidates to test their popularity (Orji, 2015). During this time, various gimmicks will be deployed to effectively package the campaign message in order to convince voters to win. The trend in political campaigns in Nigeria is very harsh, with defamation and character assassination campaign themes in full swing, which is unhealthy for democracy.

Election propaganda is mostly synonymous with election advertising which its main purpose is to appeal to viewers to get votes for a particular candidate. In essence, political propaganda is no different from advertising. According to Corona (2011), the word advertising is premised on informing, promoting, and disseminating something in order to stimulate demand for goods and services. Election propaganda can also be said to be primarily aimed at promoting specific candidates or recently formed political parties just as the case of APC which was a conglomeration of political parties.

According to Corona (2011), political propaganda aims to target the masses and exercise their influence with emotional effects rather than reasons. As with the product, it exaggerates the qualities of the candidate and hides its shortcomings. Political propaganda is conducted by qualified professionals and foreign consultants to interpret and respond to surveys, explore different aspects of voting behaviour, and provide people with what they want to hear. To do this, they use many persuasion strategies, some of which are more effective than others because they can put the product in a better position.

In the 2015 and 2019 elections, the media was extensively used as a promotional tool by candidates and political parties to spread hate speech and publicize suspicious election promises. Social media has been effectively used to promote slanderous campaigns against candidates and supporters with different political opinions and interests. This polarized the country into two hostile factions, Muslim North and Christian South. The increased availability of internet-accessible smartphones has allowed grassroots supporters to spread the promotion of the campaign during the elections. The struggle for power became tough amidst the two dominating parties not neglecting the other parties in the tussle for power at the federal level. The extent of tussle made several parties to adopt several yardsticks just to ensure that they win the political seat which could be tantamount to propaganda.

II PROBLEM DEFINITION

The use of propaganda manipulates the beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours of others, especially through the use of symbols (words, gestures, banners, monuments, music, clothing, badges, hairstyles, coin and stamp designs, etc.) and in one way or the another affected the choice of leaders in the democratic society. Many voters are unaware through the use of propaganda the damages done on the country at large. In most cases, the use of propaganda is directed to the negative side, which in a sense undermines the image of the whole country. Election deception was also challenged by the spread of negative propaganda. Misleading information and lies have taken over Nigerian politics, and everything that happens in the political sector is directly or indirectly related to the use of propaganda. The intelligence bureau under the ruling government's and leadership uses propaganda to promote leadership and conversely undermine the credibility of opponents during election period. The arbitrary dissemination of religious groups' agenda is a form of propaganda that has permeated Nigerian politics. For example, you can hear the typical example of the Islamic agenda. Propaganda was often used by political parties in favour of or against social opposition.

The following questions have been created to properly address the focus of the study and achieve a balanced perspective which forms the basis of the research question for this study.

- What different propaganda methods were used by political parties in the 2015 and 2019 Nigeria's general elections in Ondo State?
- What is the issues/problems of political propaganda regarding Nigeria's election results in Ondo State?
- What efforts has the government made to curb the overuse of propaganda by Nigeria's political parties in Ondo State?
- How can we improve the propaganda usage in our electioneering campaign for future elections in Nigeria?

III REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1. Conceptual Clarification

3.1.1 Democracy

Democracy includes a system of government that gives citizens the freedom to choose what they want at a particular period of election period. Ancient Greece (especially Athens) is widely believed to be the birth of the western democracy (Lioba and Abdullahi 2005). Democracy creates opportunities for citizens to choose leaders through the actual election process. According to Bangura (2013), democracy is understood as a system of government that is associated with the domination of many and is also representative of people's time interests. The concept of democracy is underpinned by three elements: sound competition between political parties; people's political participation in leaders' choice and a credible election process. Democracy is known as the mother of elections, and the two are inextricably intertwined. A true democratic government system can be achieved through elections. When discussing elections in Nigeria, the history and priorities of elections need to be considered. Without a working political system, there can be no meaningful democracy. There must be a political party with the task of promoting, hiring and sponsoring a competent personality for political leadership. Political parties are organized groups of individuals who share similar political beliefs, opinions, principles, aspirations, and interests with the goal of gaining political power. From the colonial era to the present, Nigerian political parties have failed to adhere to the basic beliefs of democracy and constitutionalism, ethnicity, religion, zoning and other primitive interests of Nigeria. Therefore, cross-carpetts are widespread and can be triggered by financial gain or promises of political appointment.

3.1.2 Election

Elections are the central body of a representative government of democracy this is because the authority of the government in democracy can only be obtained with the consent of the citizens. The main mechanism for translating this agreement into state authorities is the conduct of free and fair elections. Okolie, Enyizu and Nnamani (2021) defines elections as "the process of selecting officers or representatives of an organization or group through voting by qualified members." A study by Ayanleye (2013) claims that all modern democracies hold elections, but not all elections are democratic. Governments are chosen by citizens who enjoy a wide range of freedoms to criticize the government; publish criticisms and propose alternatives. According to Ujo (2002), "selection is the process of aggregating certain types of preferences, the process of choosing from choices." This definition specifically points out that in practice elections were held only through procedural forms recognized as binding within the political community. Elections can also be described as elections for candidates representing people of a particular country in parliament, government agencies, and in some cases other governmental fields, as stipulated in the Constitution of that country (Taiwo 2016).

3.1.3 Political and Election Campaigns

Ezegwu, Enem and Ndife (2017) stated that political campaigns are a systematic effort aimed at influencing the decision-making process of specific groups or people. Titus and Abayomi (2011) found that a campaign refers to a systematic effort to coordinate all relevant activities over time to achieve a specific comprehensive goal. Orji (2015), defined a political campaign as "the mobilization of forces by an organization or individual to influence others to bring about identified and desirable political changes." Joe (2016) argued that the political campaign was a systematic effort aimed at influencing the decision-making process within a particular group. In a political or election campaign, a representative is elected or a referendum is passed. In modern politics, the hottest political campaigns focus on heads of state or government candidates, usually presidents or prime ministers. Ginsberg (2009) cited in Owolabi, Ajijola and Wonuola (2017), sees political campaigns as a systematic effort by political party or public office candidates to win election support. They believed that political campaign includes five basic elements which includes professional public relations, polling, broadcast media, direct mail and internet.

3.1.4 Propaganda

Propaganda is an expression of an opinion or action that is intentionally performed by an individual or group in order to influence the opinion or action of another individual or group through psychological manipulation for a given purpose (Aduradola and Ojukwu, 2013). They further confirmed that this is usually repeated and broadcast in a wide range of media to help stimulate and raise voters' awareness and ultimately slander their enemies. McQuail (2010) conceptualized propaganda as "manipulation of symbols to control controversial attitudes." Scholars have characterized the political nature of the Nigerian political class in the form of party programs and agendas. Historically, what literally adorned our newspaper pages during the campaign and filled the airtime of radio and online media, especially social media, was deliberately forged falsehoods, explicit lies, and perceived. Aduradola and Ojukwu (2013) opined that this often applies to political and religious propaganda. They argued that, basically, in any society, it was the intention of the political class to manipulate people's minds and thoughts, which was symbolically expressed through printed matter and broadcast media. Especially during political movements and when they finally take office. "Human as a political animal engages in politics as a social and noble activity to express his political agenda positively or negatively," they said. World politics propaganda means is one of the true means of politics as old as the game itself.

Types of propaganda

Taking into account the work of Baran and Davis (2012), they identified three major types of propaganda commonly used which include the white propaganda which is the intentional suppression of potentially harmful information and ideas, combined with deliberate promotion of positive information or ideas to distract attention from problematic

events. The second one is the black propaganda which is considered to be deliberate and strategic transmission of lies and the third which is gray propaganda which deals with the transmission of information or ideas that might or might not be false without making any effort to determine their validity. They argued that the secret of propaganda is to simplify a complex issue and repeat that simplification over and over again.

IV LINKS TO MEDIA, PROPAGANDA AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN 2015 AND 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

One of the basic roles of the media is to keep the public informed, which requires them to do so ethically, professionally, objectively, accurately and fairly. They are expected to reflect all opinions without fear or favour of all involved (Akubor, 2015). As part of their social responsibility, the media is commonly seen as the watchdog of society to create and present unbiased, non-political media content that brings about peace and unity of the people. However, the unrestricted access and rights of citizens to the mechanisms of media content creation and distribution triggered by the advent of social media ensure that mainstream media professionals and managers maintain the holiness and standards of their profession. Things are getting harder and harder because of the gatekeeping barrier that has been broken down and media consumers are no longer restricted to what is broadcast only on traditional media such as radio, television and newspapers. Civilian journalism is expected to promote the interests of the people, but given the state of the country, social media is politically currently using channels to raise smear campaigns, especially as general elections approach in the country. Disinformation, publicity, and selfish agenda in a desperate effort to win the election at all costs hijacked by the actors in the electoral process. Since social media platforms, especially since Facebook gained popularity through their use in Barack Obama's political campaign in 2008, many countries around the world, including Nigeria, have been actively involved by different people in political participation. As pointed out by Okoro and Nwafor (2013), what is noteworthy in the 2015 general election is that politicians, political parties and voters have adopted social media, especially Facebook, as a platform for political participation. It is undisputed that social media is a tremendous force for social and political election advertising and is the current medium for political participation and communication. This is because technology is participatory, interactive and inexpensive (Okoro and Nwafor, 2013). Similarly, Nigeria has been positively accepted and popular in that it has become an important source and news source for Nigeria (Dauda et al., 2017). Hate speech, fake news, and so on has its harmful use by politicians to spread political propaganda, and its associated consequences have robbed it of its value. There have been many "social media wars" that have become viral on various social media platforms that use all sorts of offensive languages. All kinds of attacks and counterattacks among supporters of various opposition parties and groups (Okoro and Nwafor, 2013). In the 2015 general election, when the PDP was defeated by the

incumbent APC, the general slogan of APC presidential and vice presidential candidates Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo was "change." Her party also actively sold this propaganda to its members during the 2015 election campaign. It is undisputed that all political classes, regardless of political tendencies or affiliations, are deliberately pursuing strategies to trick voters into accepting party ideals and manifestos. In addition, political parties and their candidates rely on the former carotid artery in attempts to betray the enemy, ignoring attention and dignity.

V THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on Rational Choice Theory (RCT). Although this theory has a historical origin in economics, it has also been effectively applied to other areas of social science such as psychology, politics, sociology, and anthropology (Green & Shapiro, 1996; Swedborg, 1990). However, the common denominator pervading these interdisciplinary uses is the understanding that social events cannot be adequately explained outside of the individual's rational actions/ decisions (Hedström and Stern, 2017). According to Levin and Migrom (2004), rational selection refers to the process of determining available options and selecting the most preferred one. According to a unified benchmark, reasonable decisions are based on the belief that individuals choose the course of action that best suits their choices. In other words, actors rely solely on their own interests to make rational decisions and to make decisions that suit their tastes. RCTs examine the intended and unintended consequences of individual decisions by examining how the social environment adapts actors to the context of their behavior and influences their beliefs, decisions, and options. In general, the core of RCTs is to explain social phenomena by showing how they arise from the planned pursuit of self-interest by social actors. In political analysis, RCTs have emerged, among other things, to counter the early philosophical perspectives of using history and culture as the basis for understanding people's political behavior. On the contrary, Ryker (1962) argues that personal interests require and promote participation in political activity. Similarly, Downs (1957) argues that an essential element of his political life can be explained by the self-interest of voters. RCTs consider voters to be a reasonable unit and knowledge accumulation that absorbs the information available to them and makes appropriate decisions. Voters do not exist as rational entities and act outside of certain social groups. It is these social groups that collectively shape and influence individual voting decisions, moods and political consciousness. In this context, the actor makes the choice to best advance his/her goals on the one hand and the goals of his/her social group on the other. These decisions are usually evaluated using cost-benefit analysis, as well as a list of strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the theory argues that an individual or group in an election votes for a candidate based on how the intended promise is beneficial to them. Voters tend to vote for party candidates that belong to the same ethnic group. This is because candidates are likely to keep their political commitments to members of their ethnic community (Synder, 2015). In other words, most African

social parties and candidates rely on ethnocentricity propaganda to gain the support of their relatives in elections. In other developed territories, voters' loyalty and support for political parties and candidates is based on informed decisions based on idealism, history, manifestos, and capabilities (Olayode, 2015). Individuals have strong ties and loyalty to ethnic nationalities and religions, as these variables often form the basis of political backing and rewards. As a result, voters are unable to make objective political decisions based on the candidate's history and capabilities, and the idealistic direction of the party. Rather, individual voting decisions are shaped by ethnic, regional and religious considerations, and voting behavior reflects a deep polarization of voters in the interests of his group. In fact, political parties and candidates are taking advantage of this deep gap to shape the propaganda of campaigns that represent the North-South dichotomy and influence election results (Olayode2015). In the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections, two major political parties used the promotion of ethnic religion campaigns to inspire emotions and tactically gain the support of voters. For instance, Muhammadu Buhari, a candidate for the Progressive congress, was all presented to Southern voters as a Northern jihadist who wanted to push the Islamic agenda of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio. In the North, Buhari was considered a believer and savior to protect and promote the socio-economic and political interests of the North. Conversely, People's Democratic candidate Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in the North was considered as Arne (a non-believer in Hausa) and sponsored of the Boko Haram rebellion while being welcomed as the son of the soil in Southern Nigeria. These messages were repeatedly broadcast to the target audience in the local dialect via radio, newspapers, magazines, television, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

VI METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research design

A descriptive research method was used in this study. The questionnaire was used to collect responses from selected respondents in Ondo. The questionnaire was created on the Likert scale format.

6.2 Research participants

According to the 2006 census, the population surveyed included all residents of Ondo, which was three million, four hundred and sixty thousand, eight hundred and seventy-seven citizens. (3,460,877) (National Population Commission, 2006). Samples were taken from the population for manageability and empirical information.

6.3 Sampling procedure

The method used to select the respondents for the research study was a convenience sampling method due to its large size. Therefore, research participants are drawn based on their closeness to the researcher.

6.4 Sample Size

The sample size used in the survey was 150, conveniently selected from the three senatorial district within the state.

6.5 Method of Data Collection

The study made use of structured questionnaire in line with the study work which was distributed to respondents within the area. Also the use of face to face technique to distribute the questionnaires for easy retrieval after completion was adopted by the researcher.

6.6 Analysis Mode

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions, and the decision rule of acceptance level is anything from 1.50 and above, while the rejection level is anything below 1.50.

VII RESULTS

7.1 Research Question 1: What different propaganda methods were used by political parties in the 2015 and 2019 Nigeria's general elections?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the different propaganda methods used by political parties in the 2015 and 2019 Nigeria's general elections

S/N What different propaganda methods were used by political parties in the 2015 and 2019 Nigeria's general elections in Ondo State?					
		N	X	SD	Decision
1	Political parties resulted into name calling to canvass for votes from the electorate.	150	2.37	1.721	Agree
2	Hate speech is a major instrument used during 2015 and 2019 general election in Nigeria election	150	1.91	1.313	Agree
3	There was the use of fake new to discredit an opponent in the 2015 and 2019 general election in Nigeria.	150	2.15	1.450	Agree
4	The use of slogans or glittering generalities are widely used by political parties in the election	150	2.03	1.383	Agree
5	Most of the political parties made use of bandwagon in the general elections.	150	2.44	1.468	Agree
Cumulative Average			2.2		

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 1 shows that all the sampled respondents agreed that the listed various propaganda measures were used by political parties in the 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria, since the mean values obtained were above 1.50 which is the acceptance level. This table also shows that the cumulative average mean of academic staff responses is 2.2.

7.2 Research Question 2: What is the issues/problems of political propaganda regarding Nigeria’s election results?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the issues/problems of political propaganda regarding Nigeria’s election results

S/N	What is the issues/problems of political propaganda regarding Nigeria’s election results in Ondo State?				
		N	X	SD	Decision
1	Electorate are manipulated on how they think, speak and act in the general election in Nigeria.	150	3.14	1.331	Agree
2	Empty words/Vague terms occupied the conducts of the 2015 and 2019 general election in Nigeria.	150	1.67	0.909	Agree
3	Social media was influenced to carry discredited information leading to fake news in the 2015 and 2019 general election in Nigeria	150	3.21	1.292	Agree
4	Propagandist discredit government of the day to achieve their goals	150	3.37	1.245	Agree
5	Propagandist portray the enemy as purely evil, murderous and aggressive in order to achieve their aims	150	1.65	1.256	Agree
Cumulative Average			2.6		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 indicates that problem of political propaganda on electoral outcome are numerous since the respondents agreed that the above listed problem have a large impact on electoral outcome, hence if this problem keep existing, election cannot be free and fair. This table also indicated that the cumulative total mean average of the problems of political propaganda on electoral outcome is 2.6.

7.3 Research Question 3: What efforts has the government made to curb the overuse of propaganda by Nigeria’s political parties?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the efforts government has made to curb the overuse of propaganda by Nigeria’s political parties

S/N	What efforts has the government made to curb the overuse of propaganda by Nigeria’s political parties in Ondo State?				
		N	X	SD	Decision
1	Social media bill is enacted to reduce the excessive use of propaganda in time of election	150	2.15	1.478	Agree
2	Formulation of hate speech law against political parties	150	2.39	1.455	Agree
3	Fostering unity among ethnic and religious groups within the country	150	2.73	1.786	Agree
4	Information stations and media houses are free from the controls of the political parties	150	2.72	1.564	Agree
Cumulative Average			2.5		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 indicates that so many efforts are put in place by government to curb the excessive use of propaganda by political parties in Nigeria since it was agreed upon by respondents. This table also indicated that the cumulative total mean average of the efforts to curb the excessive use of propaganda by political parties is 2.5.

7.4 Research Question 4: How can we improve the propaganda usage in our electioneering campaign for future elections in Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation on how the use of propaganda in electioneering campaign can be improved upon in Nigeria’s future election.

S/N	How can we improve the propaganda usage in our electioneering campaign for future elections in Nigeria?	N	X	SD	Decision
1	Politicians should see themselves as one	150	1.88	1.356	Agree
2	Political campaign should be geared towards the betterment of the citizens	150	1.94	1.307	Agree
3	Social media usage should be regulated to curb the excesses of politicians	150	2.37	1.430	Agree
4	Laws should be enacted to prohibit the use of hate speech before, during and after elections	150	2.46	1.500	Agree
5	Every electorates should be allowed to choose the leaders of their choice without interfering in their decisions during elections	150	2.26	1.363	Agree
Cumulative Average			2.2		

Source: Field Survey 2021

Table 4 indicates that for propaganda to be improved upon in electioneering campaign in Nigeria in future elections, the agreed strategies should be implemented and many more within the country this will enable all stakeholders to be actively carried along in the process of election. This table also indicates that the cumulative total mean average of how the use of propaganda in electioneering campaign can be improved upon in Nigeria is 2.2.

VIII. DISCUSSION

The study answered four questions on propaganda and electioneering campaign in Nigeria: a case of 2015 and 2019 election in Ondo State. Results on research question 1 revealed that the respondents agreed that the 5 items they responded to are some of the various propaganda measures used by political parties in the 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria these measures are names calling, hate speech, fake new to discredit an opponent, slogans or glittering, bandwagon and so on. Once these measures are used in a political environment, the problems they have on

electoral outcome are numerous which was the basis of research two that this study examined. Based on the outcome of the research it was discovered that the electorate are likely to be manipulated on how they think, speak and act which is a major problem propaganda tends to bring to the system. Similarly, it was also observed from the result that due to the use of propaganda in the election under study, empty words occupied the conduct of the election from different political parties just to ensure that they gain the maximum support from the electorates most especially in the 2015 election in Nigeria. Moreover, the use of propaganda was greatly utilized by social media usage even though it was observed that the information moving up and down was to discredit a particular party or opponent there making the information to become fake even though the motive is to ensure that they gain the most perception of people. The result of table three reveals that despite the positive aspect of propaganda, there is still an iota of negativity that is why efforts are put in place to curb the excessive use of propaganda by political parties. Some of the efforts as agreed to by the respondents are the establishment of social media bill which is to control the way citizens abuse the of media also the formulation of hate speech law against political parties but the major efforts is the fostering of unity among ethnic and religious groups within the country and also the independent of media houses to control the use of fabricated words to suit a particular political party. The research question four examined the numerous ways to which propaganda can be used in electioneering campaign in order to improve future election in which the respondents agreed that politicians should see themselves as one and that political campaign should be geared towards the betterment of the citizens. They also agreed that the use of social media should be regulated to curb the excessive use by the political parties for their selfish interest by enacting laws that will prohibit the use of hate speech before, during and after elections.

This finding lends credence to the findings of Dunu (2018) which identified eight various propaganda techniques that was deployed in the conduct of the election. In most of this propaganda, many have resulted into the use of social media or mass media to generate and to make their voices known to the general populace. Similarly, Agbaje (2015) in his work on the untold story of social media and the 2015 Nigerian election he perceived that social media has become an avenue and a powerful tool used by political parties to make them achieve their mains and goals. And Ogaraku (2015), in his own view, perceived that the campaign propaganda of the then opposition party (APC) before the 2015 general election was not designed for the Nigerian electorate to compulsorily accept the dispenser of the propaganda (the APC), but to deepen their hatred against the then ruling party (PDP) who they believed to have controlled the machinery of governance for sixteen (16) years without considerable positive impact. According to Onafunwa (2017), many people believed that propaganda has both negative and positive effects on the citizens. Those who believed in the positive opined that every action the government takes, is subject to scrutiny by all and sundry, therefore there must be transparency. It has

helped, to further put the new administration in check. “It has created an awareness that nothing will remain hidden from the public for too long.

IX. CONCLUSION

This study has been an attempt to bring to the limelight the historical role of campaign propaganda in influencing the electoral choices of voters in the 2015 and 2019 presidential election in Nigeria with particular reference to Ondo State. It argued that voters in Nigeria do not necessarily make independent electoral choices rather they rely on the decisions of ethno-religious leaders who equally double as the representatives of various political parties to make political decisions. Presidential election in Nigeria is usually a heated contest between various ethnic nationalities struggling to acquire state power to advance sectional interest. Access to state power enables the occupant to share political positions and juicy contracts to people of same religion and ethnicity. It also allows political leaders to concentrate key development projects in those regions that overwhelmingly voted for them. As such, hate speeches, ethno-religious campaign messages and questionable campaign promises are used to elicit the support of voters who are incapable of thinking outside the realm of ethnicity and religion. These realities are largely seen as the proximate determinant of voting behaviour in Nigeria, no doubt, played out, and ultimately determined the outcome of the 2015 and 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. It can be concluded that the extent to which propaganda plays significant roles in the election goes beyond the comprehension of citizen within then country and if proper measures are not taken to curb the issue it will keep agitating and tends to destroy the political development of the country at large.

X. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to strengthen the administrative, financial and institutional autonomy of INEC to regulate the use of hate speech during electioneering. In most cases, the EMB lacked the capacity to punish highly placed public officials who violate extant electoral rules and guidelines mainly due to institutional incapacitation. The institutional weakness no doubt, has hindered effective coordination of the electoral processes by the EMB.
2. Social media should be used during election not to discredit or tarnish the image of other contestant but should be used for making their manifestos and plans they intend to carry out known to the people. Also, measure should be taken to regulate the conducts of supporters in the use of social media.
3. For political development in a country, there is a need for citizens to be given a free choice of selecting their leaders without political actors interfering in their decision. They should be allowed to choose their leaders.

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