

'One Election, One Godfather'

Background Paper on the Anambra 18th November 2017 Governorship Election

Introduction

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has declared 18th November 2017 as the date for the Anambra governorship election. The election is an off cycle election, the result of court rulings which overturned the election victory of Dr. Chris Ngige in 2006 and in the process changed the state's governorship election cycles.

Anambra State is one of the five states in the South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The state holds a preeminent position among the South East states: it is considered to be the centre of Igboland as well as Biafra and the state contains the commercial nerve centre of the South East, Onitsha market. Furthermore, several prominent politicians who went on to play a significant role in Nigeria history were from Anambra, including the prominent nationalist Nnamdi Azikiwe and Odimegwu Ojukwu, leader of the Biafran secessionists in the 1960s.

The electoral history of the state since the country's return to democratic rule in 1999 is full of political notoriety. From 1999- 2013, the state created a new record in godfatherism. First was the Ofor-Mbadinuju saga (1999-2003), Uba-Ngige comedy (2002-2006) and later the farcical impeachment of Peter Obi as the governor of Anambra State.

Other challenges the state has faced include i) the kidnapping of a serving governor who was allegedly forced to resign; ii) an election petition for a governorship election which lasted for nearly three years in a four-year tenure; and iii) the impeachment of a governor, which was later found to be without merit but it then took months to get the governor reinstated.

The Anambra Central Senatorial District remains the only senatorial district (out of a total of 109 senatorial districts) which still has no senator representing it in the Senate. This is a result of the nullification of Mrs. Uche Ekwunife's election by the Court of Appeal sitting in Enugu. Ekwunife contested and won the election in 2015 on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Since the nullification of the election in December 2015 and a court order that a fresh election be conducted within 90 days, nineteen months have passed and elections are yet to be conducted to fill the vacancy.

The Anambra election represents a huge opportunity for state building and democratic consolidation. However, this is predicated on several variables to be discussed in this background paper. The Anambra elections will also act as an indication of how seriously the Biafra separationist agenda currently being championed by Nnamdi Kanu, and his Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), is taken. Kanu and his group are discouraging the people of Anambra not to participate in the November 18th, 2017 Governorship election as well as aggressively demanding the federal government accede to his group's request for a referendum.

This paper provides background to the forthcoming governorship election in Anambra State. It argues that godfatherism has always played important role in determining who becomes the governor of the state. It considers the political dynamics of the state and the role it plays in shaping the planning and organisation of the governorship election in November 2017, especially the failure by INEC to conduct the rerun of the Anambra Central district election.

Most importantly, it analyses the reasons for the IPOB declaration to boycott the November election and its implication on the governorship election. Finally, it provides INEC with the necessary background information for planning and organising the forthcoming gubernatorial elections.

One Election One Godfather: Elections and Godfatherism in Anambra State

Since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria in 1999, the case of Anambra state has been a confounding one. It is the only state that has paraded five governors under controversial circumstances from 1999 to 2007 (Gabriel, 2013:1). Chinweke Mbadinuju, from the then-ruling party People's Democratic Party (PDP), was governor from 1999-2003. His successor was Dr. Chris Ngige, governor of the state from 2003 to 2006, also of PDP. However, he was removed in March 2006 when the Court of Appeal in Enugu judged that his election victory in 2003 was rigged. He was succeeded by Peter Obi of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). Obi was in turn ousted by a faction of the Anambra State House of Assembly on 2nd November 2006. He was replaced by Virginia Etiaba, his deputy at that time. In a further twist, on 9th February 2007 Mrs. Etiaba handed power back to Peter Obi after the Court of Appeal nullified Obi's removal. Then, the governorship election of 14th April 2007 was declared illegal on 14th June 2007 by the Supreme Court of Nigeria, after Andy Uba, the candidate of the ruling PDP had been announced as the governor. Uba was then replaced by his predecessor Peter Obi, citing illegality in Andy Uba's election on 14th April 2007 (Gabriel, 2013:1).

With this turbulent electoral history over the past 20 years, many issues and political conflicts remain unresolved and may have impact on the forthcoming November elections. This section explains the key figures and conflicts in relation to governorship elections in Anambra State since 1999.

List of Governors of Anambra State from 1999 to 2017

Chinweke Mbadinuju	Governor	29 May 1999	29 May 2003	PDP	Anambra South
Chris Ngige	Governor	29 May 2003	17 March 2006	PDP	Anambra Central
Peter Obi	Governor	17 March 2006	3 November 2006	APGA	Anambra Central
Virginia Etiaba	Governor	3 November 2006	9 February 2007	APGA	Anambra South - Appointed when the previous governor, Peter Obi, was impeached by the state legislature for alleged gross misconduct. She transferred her powers back to Peter Obi three months later when an appeal court nullified the impeachment.
Peter Obi	Governor	9 February 2007	17 March 2014	APGA	Anambra Central - Andy Uba was elected and sworn in as the

					governor of Anambra State on 27 May 2007. He was removed by a supreme court decision on 14 June 2007. He governed the state for 14 days.
Willie Obiano	Governor	17 March 2014	Present	APGA	Anambra North

Source: <http://www.nigerianelitesforum.com/ng/states-and-lgda-specific-talks/25731-anambra-state-governors-and-military-administrators-from-1991-till-date.html>

Chinwoke Mbadinuju and Emeka Ofor Saga

In 1999, Chinwoke Mbadinuju was sworn in as the elected governor of Anambra State. However, during his term (between 1999 to 2003), two parallel governments for all intents and purposes ran the state. Emeka Ofor was said to have sponsored the elections of the governor¹, Mbadinuju, and the members of the State House of Assembly. While Mbadinuju held sway over the official government, Ofor, the godfather' ran the de facto government.

From 1999 to 2003, the state was brought to a halt by the unfolding events between Emeka Ofor and Governor Chinwoke Mbadinuju. This was largely over the sharing of political offices in the state and by extension, sharing of contracts and money (Ibeanu, 2007). The fall out led to the closure of public primary and secondary schools over refusal to pay teachers' salaries for over thirteen months. Mbadinuju was eventually charged, then acquitted, for the murder of Barrister and Mrs. Igwe. Barrister Igwe, chairman of the Nigeria Bar Association Onitsha, who had been very critical of Mbadinju's administration.

The Chris Ngige and Chris Uba Debacle

Chris Ngige came to power as the Governor of Anambra State in 2003, in what many claimed to be a new beginning after the Mbadinuju and Emeka Ofor saga. Ngige was viewed by many in the state as a new governor with a new vision. In reality, Chris Uba had recruited Ngige to run as governor of Anambra State under PDP. Like EmekaOfor, Chris Uba claimed to have single-handedly funded the campaigns of Chris Ngige for governor and the members of the House of Assembly (Ibeanu, 2007: 12). However, having learnt from the Emeka Ofor and Mbadinuju deadlock, he made Ngige sign numerous papers. In addition, Uba took Ngige to Ulasi Shrine in Okija in Ihiala LGA to swear a preemptive oath of office to allow his sponsor run the government, including appointing all commissioners in the government. Ngige accepted all the conditions given to him by his godfather in order to become the governor. However, on assumption of office as the governor, Ngige reneged on the promises.

In 2004, the Ngige-Uba dispute reached unimaginable proportions. By 2004, the two had fallen out over the appointment of commissioners and other government officials (Ibeanu, 2007). Subsequently, retiring Assistant Inspector-General of Police for Zone 9, Raphael Ige organized

¹The godfather puts the official government in power based on a pre-election written agreement made by the candidate to the effect that the incoming government will be in agreement to the political godfather (Ibeanu, 2007)

the abduction of Governor Ngige in 2004 in order to remove him from power. When this failed, several attempts were made to impeach him, including getting a judge from Enugu State to rule that the governor be removed from office. A purported letter of resignation by Ngige was given to the State House of Assembly. The Assembly immediately accepted the letter and mandated the state chief judge to swear-in the Deputy Governor, Dr. Okey Ude, as governor. However, in a swift reaction, the Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Chuks Akunna, dismissed the resignation letter as a "forged" one, while the chief judge of the state went into hiding to avoid being dragged into the messy situation. This was followed by violent attacks by political thugs who unleashed mayhem on the people and government property in Awka and Onitsha. The battle between Ngige and his godfather, Uba, continued until March 2006 when he was removed from office by a court ruling.

The Peter Obi and Ojukwu Connection

Peter Obi contested against Chris Ngige and other candidates in the 2003 governorship elections. Obi contested the governorship election under the banner of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), a party promoted by Chief Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the former Biafran leader. Obi, popularly believed to have won the 2003 governorship election, challenged the elections in court and won at the Anambra State Election Petition Tribunal. However, Ngige filed an appeal which was eventually terminated by the Court of Appeal in Enugu in March, 2006. In this way, Peter Obi became the first governor elected on the APGA party platform.

The APGA was formed and registered in 2002 as a political party by some prominent Igbo politicians. The aim of the party was to provide a potential platform for Igbos to negotiate for political power at the centre. APGA, led by its founding national chairman, Chief Chekwes Okorie, had late Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu as its presidential candidate in the 2003 general elections. Many factors favoured the choice of Ojukwu. First, other prominent Igbo politicians approached by the party leadership, including Chief Alex Ekwueme, Senator Jim Nwobodo, and late Senator Chuba Okadigbo, declined the offer of the party's presidential ticket. Second, because of the close relationship between Okorie and Ojukwu, Okorie encouraged Ojukwu into the party, where he was chosen as the party's presidential candidate for 2003 (Akuki, 2013).

At this point, Ojukwu's place in Igbo history helped to gain Igbo support for the party. This raised great expectations from the Igbos that the party would take over at least the South East zone, which was controlled by PDP in the 2003 general elections. This remained a mirage. He had believed and doggedly pursued the political philosophy that Ndi Igbo should have a defined political cause. He became and was the symbol of the party. APGA fielded candidates in the governorship and other elections in the five South East states in 2003, which was the first litmus test of the party's popularity in the zone.

Ojukwu pleaded to be allowed to choose Peter Obi as the party's candidate in the election. The party obliged his request as a mark of respect. That was how Obi emerged the APGA candidate in 2003. In 2010 APGA won a second four year-term. This was due to Ojukwu's plea, the governor's achievements and confusion within the body of opposition parties. With that historic feat, Governor Obi not only broke the jinx of one term, but also went ahead to single-handedly produce a candidate that replaced him as the governor of the state. Since the death of Ojukwu in 2011, the question remains: who steps into his shoes as the driving force of APGA for the 2017 governorship election in Anambra State?

The Peter Obi and Willie Obiano Link

In 2013, Chief Willie Obiano was nominated by APGA to stand in the governorship election. The APGA forces, led by then incumbent governor, Peter Obi, and former national chairman of the party, Chief Victor Umeh, ensured victory for the party, with Obiano emerging as governor. However, besides the favourable performance rating of the incumbent governor, Obiano, APGA does not have as much political capital compared to when Peter Obi was a member and its national leader.

The process of Obiano eventually becoming the governor was single handedly carried out by Peter Obi. On the day of the primaries, Hon. Uche Ekwunife would have won it, but Obi pleaded with Uche Ekwunife to allow Obiano to win. To properly situate the dominance of Peter Obi, it was reported that throughout the campaign, to ensure accountability, Obi requested Willie Obiano to appoint somebody to manage the resources he would make available. He nominated his deputy, Dr. Nkem Okeke who, with Dubem Obaze, signed off all the money that was released. Obiano also authorized all expenditure. During the campaign, Obi did not receive funds from donors, rather all those that wanted to donate were asked to do so through Obiano, and therefore he did not spend any money he received from donors. As soon as the election was over and Willie Obiano sworn in the rift between Peter Obi and the new governor, who was a total stranger to Anambra politics until Peter Obi thrust him on the people as his successor, developed dramatically.

A hasty reconciliation was arranged during the burial of a former Principal of Christ the King College Onitsha, Rev. Father Nicholas Tagbo, where Governor Obiano and his predecessor met. Reports suggested that the fierce battle going on between Governor Willie Obiano and his political godfather, Peter Obi, may have finished. Governor Obiano was said to have apologized to Obi while delivering a speech. But this was far from it. For instance, it is being speculated that the animosity between Obiano and Obi is being orchestrated and fanned by Victor Umeh who has succeeded in assuming the role of king maker in the Obiano administration.

The political face-off between Willie Obiano and his predecessor, Peter Obi is getting messier, with their aides going all out to outdo each other in the media, thus polarising the Anambra political terrain. Issues that have been prominent since Obi handed over to Obiano include the actual amount of money left for the governor; the flyover bridges being built by the present government, which some people in Obi's camp describe as a waste of resources; Obi's constant visibility in the state; and Obiano's personal lifestyle, among other issues.

What is clear in the politics of Anambra State is the dominance and politics of godfatherism. This constitutes a distinct character, which has become very important in the politics of the state. However, in a state where godfatherism develops specific character and dominance, it is no longer possible to ignore its relevance to the political and economic development of the state.

The Ojukwu Factor

Ojukwu is traditionally a rallying factor for APGA. Besides from leading the Biafra secession between 1967-1970, Ojukwu was also the founding father of APGA and its first and only presidential candidate. The governor of Anambra State, Chief Willie Obiano, is now using the name of late Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu to campaign ahead of the November, 18, 2017 election. At every strategic locations across the state are giant billboards with bold inscription – *APGA bunkeanyi* meaning “APGA is our own” and the picture of the late Chief Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu who died many years ago (Ujumadu, 2017). This is not the first time Ojukwu’s name is being used by APGA for political campaigns. During the campaigns for the 2010 gubernatorial election, the major streets of the state were flooded with a particular billboard bearing the photograph of, Ojukwu raising the hand of former governor Peter Obi, with an inscription: “This is my last wish”. Having won the 2010 gubernatorial election, the APGA government of Anambra State under former Governor Peter Obi erected and hoisted new billboards in all major streets of Anambra State, in honour and to immortalize the pride and symbol of the Igbo nation, Dim Chukwuemeka Ojukwu. Similarly, every single billboard and APGA campaign material for the 2013 governorship election in Anambra State had the photograph of Dim Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, and APGA leveraged heavily on Ojukwu’s name to win the election (Ujumadu, 2017). It was observed, however, that no sooner did Chief Willie Obiano become the governor of Anambra State on March 17, 2014, than all the billboards bearing the photograph of Ojukwu, disappeared from the streets of Anambra State. But, just about six months to another governorship election in the state, the Chief Willie Obiano-led APGA government has suddenly resuscitated the name Dim Chukwuemeka Ojukwu as a rallying factor constructing billboards and branding government-owned vehicles with his photograph. It is also worthy to mention that Chief Arthur Eze is allegedly sponsoring Tony Nwoye, the APC flagbearer for the November election.

Political Dynamics and the 2017 Governorship Election

Many political parties are gearing up to take over power from the ruling APGA in the Anambra governorship election. To this end, the parties have setup formidable structures aimed at fortifying the grassroots with reliable party loyalists who could deliver results in the 2017 governorship election.

The contestants cut across the 46 INEC registered political parties operating in the state such as Progressives People’s Alliance (PPA), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC), Advanced Peoples Democratic

Alliance(APDA) etc. While some seem to be seriously aiming to take over the leadership from the incumbent governor, Chief Willie Obiano of APGA, whose tenure will end on 17th March, 2018, others seem to be political jokers who want to be noticed for future political appointment. Even so, the election will be dominated by the contest between APGA ,PDP, UPP and APC candidates.

Utilising power of incumbency, the state executive hurriedly sponsored a bill for an act to prohibit pasting of political posters in the state without making a payment of N9 million. The bill has been approved and passed into law by the state legislators. However, despite the passage of this law, campaign posters of aspirants continue to flood strategic locations across the state. Also adding to the state's already charged political atmosphere is the emergence of several political and other interest based pressure groups and associations pitching tents with various aspirants, candidates and political parties of their choice. The following are some of the drivers of political dynamics in the state.

The Issue of Zoning/ Power Rotation in Anambra State

The matter of zoning or power rotation -where elected positions rotate between different geographical areas- is emerging as a major factor in the campaign for the Anambra State governorship election. The popularity of zoning in Anambra State politics developed while Peter Obi was rounding off his eight years in office as the governor of the state. It was initially dismissed by his political opponents as a non-issue in the Anambra governorship election; Obi's advocacy for zoning was so effective that zoning became possible. Convinced about the potency of the bloc vote, Obi jettisoned Dr. Chike Obidigbo, the consensus candidate selected by the zone and settled for a former banker, Chief Willie Obiano. It was reported that his choice of Obiano was based the foundation for fiscal prosperity he laid through investments and debt free treasury and as such he wanted a banker to consummate the financial plan.

In the run up to the 2017 governorship election, the issue of zoning is prevailing in all the major political parties in the state. The three major parties are the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Among the civilian governors to have governed the state, Anambra South has the unique distinction of having produced the highest number of governors in the persons of Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife, (1992-3), Dr. Chinwoke Mbadinuju (1999 to 2003), Dame Virginia Etiaba, (November 2006 to February, 2007) and Senator Andy Uba (2007). Anambra Central follows with Dr. Chris Ngige (2003 to 2006) and Mr. Peter Obi (2006 to 2013) while Anambra North has produced its first governor in the person of Chief Willie Obiano, the incumbent governor who came to office in March 2014 on the platform of APGA(Aziken,2017). Thus, the foregoing analysis led to the agitation for the governorship seat to be left for Willie Obiano,the incumbent Governor from Anambra North Senatorial Zone, to retain his position for the four year tenure.

Confirmed at the moment are the following candidates

1. Willie Obiano of APGA and Incumbent Governor – hailing from Anambra North Senatorial Zone;
2. Dr. Tony Nwoye, the APCand presently a member of the House of Representatives, Anambra North Senatorial District

3. Oseloka Obaze, of the PDP, Anambra North Senatorial District. He was a former Secretary to the state government and served both Obi and Obiano government until few months ago

Apart from the above mentioned candidates from Anambra North. There are also strong contenders like Osita Chidoka, the former Minister of Aviation, who is the flagbearer of UPP. While he is said to have the financial clout, other UPP aspirants raised the issue of zoning, questioning the basis on which Chidoka from Idemili in Anambra Central should become governor so soon after Mr. Obi's tenure. The primary itself led to resignation of one of the formidable member of the Party and aspirant, Chudi Ofodile and recorded the first victim of pre-election violence, Uwakwe Maduabuchi, a ward chairman, who died as a result of fracas resulting from disagreement over delegates' list of the party.

There is also increasing agitation by the people of Anambra South for the office. Their claim is that though they have produced four former governors, their collective time in that office was not equal to the more than ten years enjoyed by Peter Obi and Dr. Chris Ngige from Anambra Central. Among the aspirants from the zone seeking to contest include Senator Andy Uba, who was governor for 17 days, Engr. Barth Nwibe, Ifeanyi Ubah, and Obinna Uzor among others, and they have all failed to emerge candidates of their respective political parties.

No agreement has been formally made on zoning among the various political parties, but their leaders are alleged to be quietly canvassing the issue, each trying to zone the election of their aspirants to Anambra North.

It is becoming obvious from the just concluded primaries of the PDP, APC and APGA, that the election will be closely contested amongst the 3 big parties and candidates from the Anambra North senatorial zone. What will likely determine the eventual winner will narrow down to religion, zoning, party affiliation, rural-urban base and possibly federal power.

Intra Party Crises ahead of the Governorship Election

APGA Crisis²

The crisis rocking the APGA started by a purported National Working Committee (NWC), probably formed by Agbaso, which passed a vote of no confidence on the National Chairman, Ike Oye and subsequently suspended him, alongside two other national officers. According to the report, they were accused of gross misconduct, which included giving the party's candidature tickets to non-APGA members without recourse to the constitutional provisions on applying for waiver through the NWC in violation of Article 24 (8) (a) (b) of the party, running the party without an approved budget and suspension of Edo State Executive Council without approval or ratification by the NWC of the party, among other offences. This created fear among many people about whether Governor Willie Obiano, the incumbent governor, would be nominated to contest the election.

The crisis has continued unresolved with two factions, one led by Chief Victor Oye and the other led by Chief Martin Agbaso, each announcing different dates for the party's primaries for the nomination of APGA candidate for the governorship election. The Agbaso group fixed 14th August 2017 as the date for his faction's primary, while Oye faction selected 15th August 2017. The primaries have finally been conducted and candidates have emerged with incumbent Governor Willie Obiano emerging as the candidate of the Victor Oye faction of APGA and Chief Ifeanyi Igwebuike as the candidate of the Agbaso faction.

What has become obvious is that APGA will be presenting two candidates for the governorship election to INEC. This is reminiscent of 2013 where the Anambra state chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party held parallel primaries and fielded two candidates, Messrs Andy Uba and Tony Nwoye. This circumstance did not only dwindle the fortunes of the party but also most importantly challenged INEC's preparation for the elections. Expectedly, there will be several court cases heralding the nomination of the two factional APGA candidates and who INEC puts on the ballot for the forthcoming elections except a political solution is found to the lingering logjam. However, we await the publication of list of the final candidates from INEC to see who will fly the flag of APGA in the elections.

APC Crisis

Political crisis and political manoeuvring are prominent in the Anambra State APC. This imminent crisis in the state chapter of the party is caused essentially due to the contest over who should be the candidate in the forthcoming governorship election. This is unconnected with the array of political heavyweights in the state, who are jostling for the party's governorship ticket. Some of those jostling for the ticket are the member representing Anambra East and West in the House of Representatives, Tony Nwoye; former Anambra Central senatorial district senator, Mrs. Uche Ekwunife; oil tycoon; APC National Auditor, Chief George Muoghalu and

² for more information on the APGA crisis see *The Crisis Tearing the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) Apart: Oye Vs Agbaso, Who Blinks First*, CDD August 2017

industrialist, Chief Chike Obidigbo, as well as businessman, Dr. ObinnaUzor. From outside the party is the Senator representing Anambra South senatorial district on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Senator Andy Uba who recently joined the APC.

Voting Patterns in Anambra State, 1999-2013

In the run up to the governorship election in Anambra State, there are some concerns as to whether a credible electoral process is possible due to current political dynamics. As voters approach voting day, indications have emerged that the election might not be a smooth ride for hitherto frontline candidates. The exercise is likely to throw up surprises, given the fact that many of the political parties are witnessing internal crises and factionalism. This development has altered the political calculations that the race would be a two-way contest between APGA and APC. However, it should be noted that Oseloka Obaze has just won the Peoples Democratic Party governorship ticket as the flag bearer in the November 18 Anambra governorship election. Expectedly, the bulk of the votes were expected to be shared between the APGA candidate Willie Obiano, Tony Nwoye of the APC, and Oseloka Obaze of PDP. To be sure, Obiano hails from Aguleri in Anambra East LGA, Obaze is from Ogbaru LGA, and Nwoye comes from Nsugbe in Anambra East LGA all in the North Senatorial District of the state. The party primaries of these three major political parties made the race dicey. The reason is not farfetched. All the candidates from the major parties are from Anambra North; hence the expectation of many that the votes from that area would be split between Obiano and the two others seems to be real.

However, in the Anambra Central Senatorial District where Chidoka of UPP comes from, a fierce battle is expected. Analysts expect Chidoka to have the upper hand in this zone, especially in Idemili North where he hails from. An understanding of his popularity across the state and solidarity from his people, speaks volumes. Nonetheless, APGA's popularity and incumbency may be a huge resource that might give the party more votes in the central and northern senatorial districts. With the South district seeming to be up for grabs since no candidate has emerged from there, at least from the three major political parties of APGA, PDP, and APC, the 18th November election makes the South district a battleground among the parties. Money may also play a huge role in the forthcoming election; wrappers with the heads of particular candidates and political party logos are already been distributed across the state³. Will the forthcoming governorship election produce the same patterns of results as the tables below try to show? Only time will tell.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE WINNER AND FIRST RUNNER-UP OF 6th FEBRUARY 2010 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION⁴

³Idemili council boss urges voters to discount boycott campaign

Vanguard August 4, 2017 Read more at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/08/idemili-council-boss-urges-voters-discount-boycott-campaign/>

⁴Source:<http://www.nigerianmuse.com/20100217221159zg/nigeria-watch/elections-2007/anambra-2010-summary-of-the-results-of-the-gubernatorial-election-of-february-6-2010/>

Fig 1a: Percentage of Votes that declared Peter Obi as Winner of 2010 Governorship Election

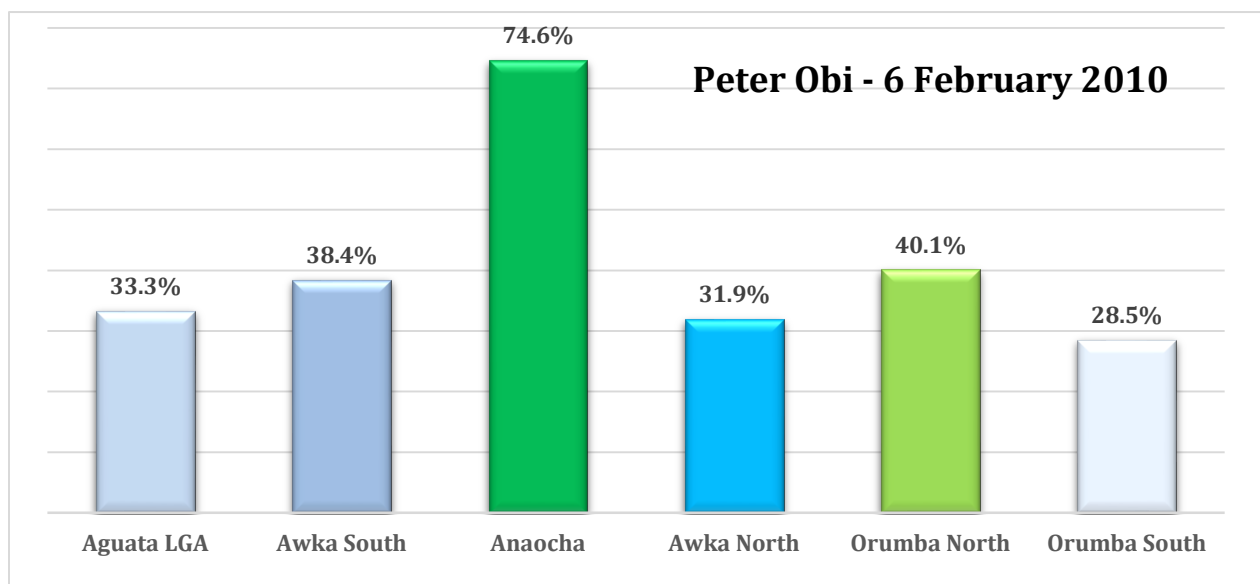
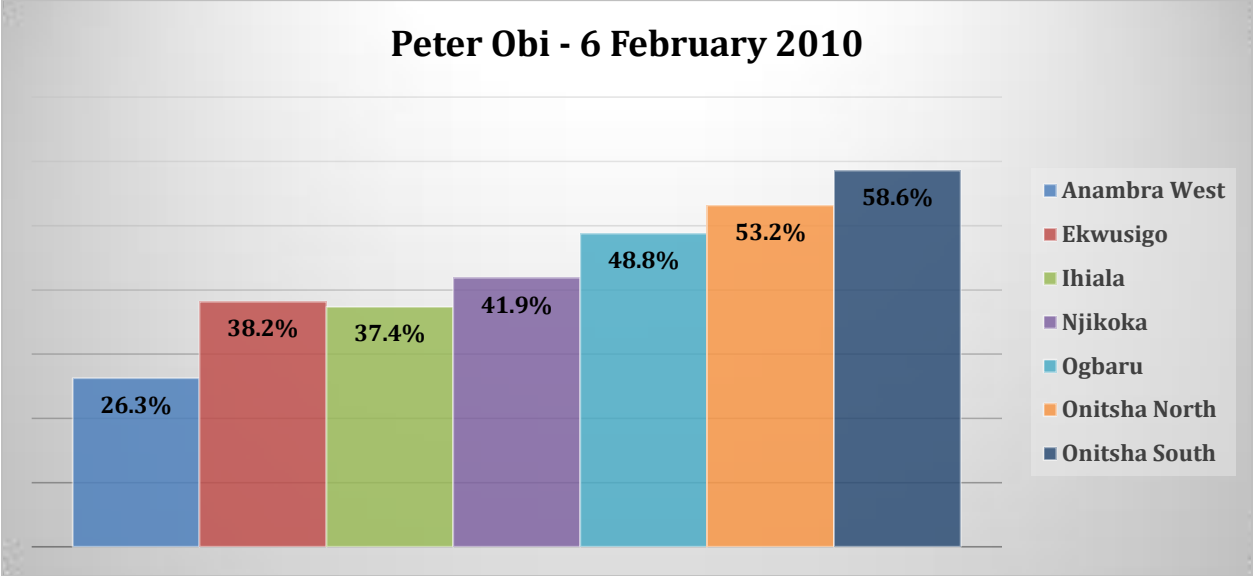
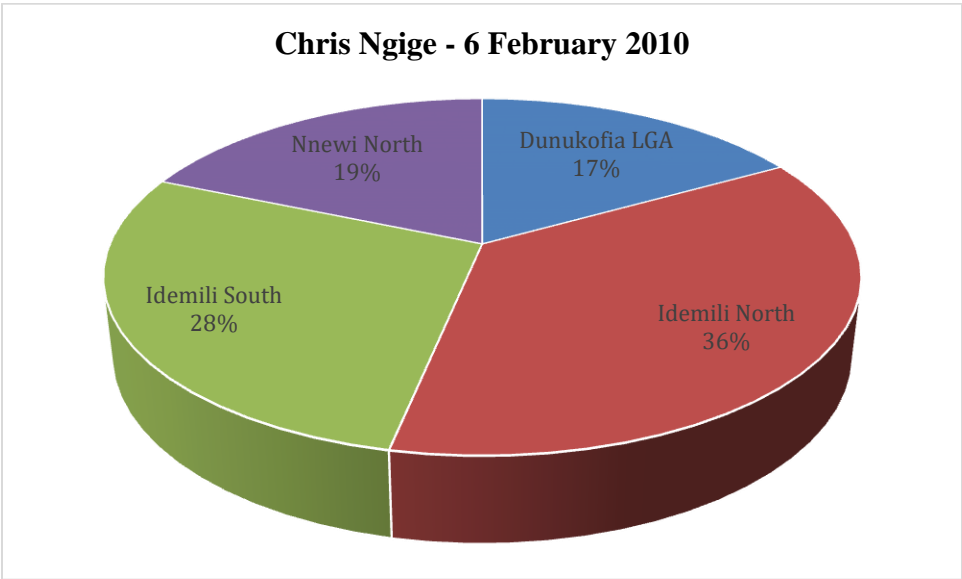


Fig 1b: Percentage of Votes that declared Peter Obi as Winner of 2010 Governorship Election



The graphic presentation in Fig. 1a and 1b shows how people of Anambra voted for Peter Obi across 13 local government areas (LGAs) where he garnered most votes under the platform of APGA is in the total of 97,843 votes, which made him the winner of the 2010 governorship election. The distribution of the votes for Peter Obi in the 13 LGAs are as follows: Aguata (33.3% of Aguata valid votes), Anambra West (26.3% of the valid votes), Anaocha (74.6% of valid votes), Awka North, (31.9% of valid votes), Awka South (38.3% of valid votes), Ekwusigo (38.2% of valid votes), Ihiala (37.4% of valid votes), Njikoka (41.9% of valid votes), Ogbaru (48.8 of valid votes), Onitsha North (53.2% of valid votes), Onitsha South (58.6% of valid votes), Orumba North (40.1% of valid votes), Orumba South (28.5% of valid votes)

Fig 2: Percentage of Votes for Chris Ngige during the 2010 Governorship Election

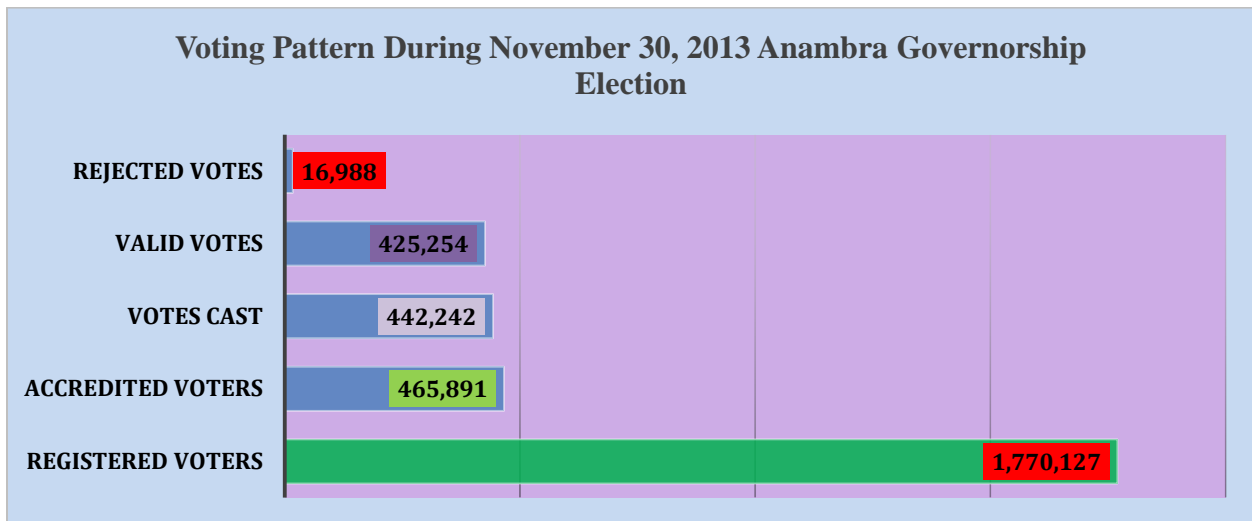


1. On his part, Chris Ngige came second under the platform of ACN in the election after winning 4 local governments areas (LGAs) with a total of 60,240 votes. The votes as Ngige gathered across the 4 LGAs are: Dunukofia (33.0% of valid votes), Idemili North (70.9% of valid votes), Idemili South (54.7% of valid votes); Nnewi North (36.4% of valid votes)

VOTING PATTERN DURING ANAMBRA GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION, 30th NOVEMBER 2013

Anambra as observed earlier is historically known for low voters' turnout during elections in Nigeria. Reasons for this has been based on several permutations and speculations. However, the Nigeria Civil Society Election Situation Room noted during the November 2013 governorship election in Anambra that there was voters' turnout was as low as five percent in several polling units. Fig 3 below further confirms that there is usually voter apathy by Anambra people during elections. For instance, out of 1,770,127 registered voters in the state, only 465,891 people were accredited to vote. During voting, some people did not come back to vote and this further reduced the number of votes cast to 442,242 thereby further reducing voter turnout.

Fig. 3: Voting Pattern during November 30, 2013 Anambra Governorship Election



RESULT OF ANAMBRA GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION, 30th NOVEMBER 2013

S/N	Contestant	Gender	Political Party	Votes Received
1	OKEKE CIKA JERRY	M	AA	249

2	CHUKWUEMEKA NWANKWO	M	ACCORD	185
3	DR. IFEATU EKELEM	M	ACD	490
4	ENGR. ANTONY ANENE	M	ACPN	899
5	COMRADE AARON IGWEZE	M	AD	180
6	CHIEF ANAYO A. ARINZE	M	ADC	699
7	PATRICK C. IBEZIAKO	M	APA	1,607
8	SEN. (DR.) CHRIS N. NGIGE	M	APC	95,963
9	CHIEF WILLY M. OBIANO	M	APGA	180,178
10	CHIEF AUSTIN NWANGWU	M	CPP	879
11	CHIJIJOKE G. NDUBUISI	M	DPP	632
12	CHRISTIAN I. OTTI M	M	ID	205
13	CHIEF DENNIS N. OGUGUO	M	KOWA	321
14	PATRICK I. UBAH	M	LP	37,495
15	PASTOR SIMON C. OKAFOR	M	MPPP	155
16	OKONKWO EMEKA WEBSTAR	M	NCP	696
17	PRINCE LEONARD UCHENDU	M	NNPP	696
18	TONY NWOYE	M	PDP	97,700
19	EZEEMO G. CHUKWUNENYE	M	PPA	5,120
20	20 HON. BASIL IWUOBA O.I	M	PPN	325
21	ONUORA B. ONYEACHONAM	M	SDP	235
22	22 BARR. OKOYE G. MGBODILE	M	UDP	153
23	PROF. BENEDICT N. AKANEGBU	M	UPP	624

Biafra Agitation and the 2017 Governorship election in Anambra state

The leader of the IPOB has called for a boycott of the Anambra election unless a referendum is conducted to determine the realization of Biafra. Ever since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country has been striving for national unity and development. However, the more it strives for it, the more divided it becomes. This is in spite of decades of pursuit of national integration; Nigeria remains close to falling apart.

Presently, old prejudices are rearing their ugly heads again, with the Biafra agitation for a separate state. Biafra is a social formation constructed from class considerations which emerged in 1967, but its resurrection in 1999 explains the reemergence of old prejudices that characterize the Nigerian state. Biafra is a social construct and every social construct makes sense only within a specific socio-historical and ideological and class context that produces it. However, it is primarily defined as a primordial group emerging from the Igbo extraction based on ethno-communal and religious identities. Nigerians define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs, and institutions. They identify with cultural groups, tribes, ethnic groups, and religious communities. People use politics not just to advance their interests but also to define their identity (Huntington, 1998: 21 & 42).

One of the major triggers of the recent protests by Biafran separatists was the 19th October 2015 arrest of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and director of web-based Radio Biafra, on charges of sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony. The IPOB and Radio Biafra represent the most high-profile and radical movement for a separate State of Biafra that currently exists. However, the weakening of MASSOB seems to have opened the way for IPOB to continue the agitation. The recent upsurge in the demand for a separate Biafran State calls for an inquiry to understand why the agitation has persisted, nearly 50 years after the end of the Nigerian civil war. Elections stand out among critical moments in separatist agitations, especially in Nigeria where ethnicity is the dividing factor. This is because they congeal all the hopes and fears of the Biafran group which perceive themselves as collectively victimized (Ibeanu et al, 2016). Such ideas and the threat to boycott and disrupt the 2017 governorship election may be a leading factor in the escalation of culture of violence and militarization of the South East.

In multi-ethnic and plural societies such as Nigeria, appointments into major political positions are critical elements of politics. There are excessive premiums on power and positions which create personal wealth. In this sense, positions of power mean wealth and to get them, so to have access to money one has to occupy a good political position in government. There is equally a dominance of exclusive rather than inclusive strategies for power and positions especially under the current Buhari Federal Government. These general characteristics makes appointments very contentious and leads to significant discontent and agitation. This was particularly the case after the 2015 general elections, where there was unrest amongst Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria. To be sure, the South East has not had it smooth in terms of representation and appointments in top public offices under Buhari's government. Consequently, the fears of domination of one zone over the others plays a central role in the agitation of the Biafra separatist movement. The narrow base of the President's close advisers is giving the impression that he is running a closed government in a political environment that requires a participatory approach of all relevant sections and stakeholders. Nigeria is a large country and has a complex history with a commitment to federal governance.

In the first appointments made by Buhari, no one was appointed from the states in the South East. The failure led to the various separatist groups and agitations such as Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), IPOB, and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)

among others. In the case of IPOB and MASSOB, there were frequent demonstrations by pro-Biafra activists and clashes between them and the security agencies after the 2015 general elections to vent their anger.

Therefore, the result of the 2015 general elections which many people from the zone see as unfavourable and which also led to greater exclusion and marginalization from federal politics and positions, especially appointments after the elections at the federal level, has worsened the fears of the people from the zone. The threat of disrupting the 2017 gubernatorial election in the state emanates from the above narratives and may cause confusion and panic in the run up to the election. The IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu has given one condition as to why the 2017 Anambra governorship poll may not hold Kanu argues that unless the country is restructured before October 2017, there will be no election in Anambra state (Oluwatobi, 2017). However, the reaction generated so far by his call for an election boycott has made some prominent Igbos such as President of Ohaneze Ndigboto make a statement reminding Kanu that he is not the leader of the Igbos and insisting that there will be an election in Anambra state come 18th November 2017. Such a threat by the IPOB leader may instill fears in the minds of voters who might not come out to vote on the day of the governorship election. However, the problem of the call for a boycott is that if it fails, it will definitely diminish the popularity of Nnamdi Kanu and the agitation for Biafra. This is because he is not strategic and does not in any way want dialogue with the authorities.

INEC and the 2017 Governorship Election in Anambra State

INEC has scheduled the forthcoming governorship election in Anambra state for the 18th November 2017. This is accordance with the provisions of 1999 Constitution (as amended) and the Electoral Act (as amended), that elections shall be conducted not later than 30 days to the expiration of office of the incumbent⁵.

According to the INEC timetable for the election, campaigns by political parties will start on 18th August and close by 16th November, while primaries will be held between 22nd July and 2nd September, INEC has challenges ranging from administrative to personnel, machines and logistics. For instance, the Resident Electoral Commissioner in charge of conducting the election was sworn in on 7th July 2017 and has just resumed office on 10th July 2017, and only has about 130 days to prepare for the election.

The deployment of election logistics remains a major and recurring challenge for INEC - not only in the Anambra governorship elections but also in the conduction of general elections in Nigeria. To be sure, in the 2013 governorship elections, observer groups noted the late distribution of electoral materials, late commencement of voting and accreditation, particularly in Idemili North, Idemili South, and Ogbaru Local Government Areas. The challenge of multiplicity of voter registers was also noted and this was argued as the basis of the APC plan to boycott the 11th January local council election in Anambra State, Eastern Nigeria (Channels TV). The 2013 Anambra State Governorship Election was so bitter that three of the major political

⁵The tenure of the Governor of Anambra State will expire on the 16th of March, 2018. In pursuant to the provision of Section 178 (1) and (2) of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and section 25 (7) and (8) of the Electoral Act (as amended), the earliest day for the conduct of the election shall be October 18, while latest date for the election shall be February 14, 2018.

parties⁶, PDP, APC and Labour Party all called for the cancellation of the election, claiming it was marred with monumental irregularities.

Aside from the logistic challenges INEC may face in the conduct of the elections, the state has always posed severe challenges to the electoral management body. For instance, in the 2013 elections, while 23 candidates were put forward by the political parties, there was multiplicity of candidates fielded on the platforms of APGA and PDP, thus by the closure of nominations on 17th September 2013, INEC was confused as to who the candidates for the two political parties shall be. The situation was also as there were several court judgments to deal with the matter. For instance, the Federal High Court in Awka ruled that INEC accept the two governorship candidates from APGA, but it took the court vacating its order for a final candidate to be selected. The same was the case on the candidates of PDP in the matter between Chukwujekwu Ukachukwu versus Tony Nwoye⁷; INEC eventually relied on the last order of the Federal High Court sitting in Port Harcourt, Rivers state to determine the candidate of PDP for the election. The trend reveals a pattern of pre-election and post-election lawsuits in elections conducted in the state and the impact this has on INEC in the dispensation of its duties.

INEC then declared the election conducted in Anambra inconclusive, with a supplementary election held 30th November 2013. The governorship election in Anambra was declared inconclusive due to the inability of all the candidates to poll the required statutory 25 percent of votes in two-thirds of the 21 local government areas in the state.⁸ INEC also considered the margin of difference between the total votes of Willie Obiano, the APGA candidate, who polled the highest number of votes (174,710) and Tony Nwoye (94,956), the PDP candidate who emerged as the first runner-up and revealed that the difference is less than the figure of the cancelled votes. A total of 89,997 votes were cancelled in Idemili North alone, while 636 were cancelled from Idemili South. The same challenge of inconclusive elections reared its ugly head during the 2015 general elections in the state. Consequently, INEC will have to prepare for a likelihood of electoral violence in the forthcoming elections, particularly as it relates to the threat of holding the election. The Nnamdi Kanu-led IPOB have declared elections will not be held in the state.

While the police in Anambra have assured everyone that no person or group could stop the forthcoming governorship election in Anambra, it is important that INEC, political parties, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, and the security agencies do not take such a declaration as an empty threat in order not to scupper the election. The federal government must also refrain from using the threat of possible violence to militarise the state to prevent voter apathy.

Conclusion

⁶Senator Chris Ngige (APC), Mr. Ifeanyi Uba (Labour Party (LP) and Mr. Tony Nwoye (PDP) called for outright cancellation of the governorship election on the basis of irregularities.

⁷Suit No. FHC/PH/CS/296/2013

⁸INEC declares governorship poll inconclusive Daily Trust November 19th, 2013 accessed at <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/daily/politics/10334-inec-declares-governorship-poll-inconclusive>

Although the forthcoming election may have gone beyond a contest on who governs the state, after the declaration by the Nnamdi Kanu that there will be no governorship elections in the state, this may likely change the landscape of the electioneering campaign and battlegrounds. However, the fear of the possible disruption of elections should not serve as a basis to militarize the elections. Any form of militarization may lead to voter' apathy. Historically, the South East geo-political zone has been held to be republican in nature, the 2007, 2011, 2015 elections witnessed low voters turn out and Anambra state is not an exception. It is also important for INEC and relevant stakeholders to commence confidence building voter education campaign to guide against not just voter apathy but encourage potential election officials to participate in the elections.

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