



An Evaluation of Selected Newspapers' Reporting on Hate Speeches during the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria

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<p>Abstract: Election stakeholders in Nigeria continue to express worry over the growing trend of hate speech, particularly during the 2015 general elections. The influx of advertisements, political innuendos, and propaganda messages in some chosen individuals who were in the forefront of delivering hate speeches in Nigeria prior to the 2015 general elections increased the socio-political climate. With regard to the 2015 Nigerian presidential election, this study aims to investigate the effects of hate speech from a few media reports. Secondary data are heavily cited in this study such as textbooks, official reports and publications, Internet resources, journals, among others. As for analysing the various data gathered, content analysis was performed. This study found that hate speech coming from particular media reports contributed to electoral-related violence and mistrust among Nigerians. Consequently, the electoral process' credibility is affected. This study recommended, among other things, that election stakeholders, in particular INEC, CSOs, Elections Observers and Monitors, should also keep an eye on the media, particularly native language radio stations that utilise hate speech to fan the ember of ethnic and religious separation.</p> <p>Keywords: Newspaper, Election, Nigeria, socio-political climate.</p> <p>Copyright © 2024 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p>	<p>Review Paper</p>
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INTRODUCTION

All media outlets and their related technologies are now seen as crucial elements that support democracy and good governance around the globe. The public's voice and ideas on political matters reverberate through the mainstream media. A strong, participatory, and aggressive kind of political communication is frequently enabled by the seeming synergy between the new media tools that are readily available today and peoples' political lives.

The broad categories of new media technologies under concern today include, to name a few, social media, instant messaging services, and big data analytical tools. They are made up of the same mobile communication devices we use every day that have been appropriately modified and repurposed for political communication. They frequently don't come at a high cost and can be used anywhere at any time. Technical proficiency, analytic proficiency, and interpretative capability are their three key requirements.

As a result, all political actors today are somewhat dependent on the usage of new media in the

political sphere. It is useful to the electorate, political parties, electoral management bodies (EMB), civil societies, media, and the global community. We now have the wonderful chance to evaluate the various media roles in Nigeria's political process in the context of our overall national political objective thanks to the country's history of elections.

In the context of the electoral process, the issue and subject of education, information, mobilisation, and monitoring has grown to be an extremely important aspect in the achievement of national goals. This is due to the repulsive instances of numerous hate speech manifestations that have repeatedly jeopardised the prospect of credible elections and national unification in Nigeria. However, there is a justification for designating this responsibility as a key concern of the mass media on the grounds of professional competence as the fourth estate of the realm, even though the issue at hand is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the body politic.

The impacts of political actions that display hate speech, notably in Nigeria, have grown more apparent in recent democratic regimes than in earlier ones. Politicians' actions have only made the situation

worse, and keeping the populace divided today more than ever is a major source of worry for Nigerians both at home and abroad. The newspapers strongly push the idea that politics is a major concern in the majority of the world's countries. Particularly at the national level, political campaigns, candidates, and issues are heavily covered. However, a closer examination of this coverage reveals that some topics are covered more extensively than others and that politicians have turned to the media for their hate speech campaigns.

But the problems caused by hate speech exist everywhere. For instance, the 2016 US Presidential election provided fertile ground for hate speech, and the unmatched hate speech that accompanied the election continues to this day, long after the outcome of the election has been decided. Hate speech is pervasive, especially in Nigeria (Ugbechie, 2017). First, the hate speech campaign between the PDP and APC in 2015 gave rise to the current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. Both parties were unrelenting in their vile debaucheries of hate speech campaigns, which included profiling of candidates and attempting to incite various ethnic and religious groups against each party's nominee.

Meanwhile, daily life is defined by hate speech motivated by ethnicity. The roughly 250 ethnic ethnicities that make up the country known as Nigeria, including the Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Kanuri, Ijaw, Efik, and Ibibio, all have hateful words for one another. However, despite laws against slander and perjury, there has been no government response or policy to prohibit hate speech in Nigeria (Joel, 2012). Discourse analysis, on the other hand, can be used to analyse any text that has meaning (Parker, 2002), particularly hate speeches that are motivated by politics and ethnicity. This study aims to investigate the effects of hate speech in particular Nigerian newspapers' coverage on the legitimacy of the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review: Mass Media and Hate Speeches

Technology created to store and transmit messages might be referred to as media. Mass media can be distinguished out among media as a whole in terms of the meanings generated and the audience consuming them. According to a predetermined schedule of "(daily actuality)" within a national or linguistic group, mass media materials are created by specialised agencies. Media outlets run a programme: They pre-package content and disperse it in accordance with a substantive regime and a schedule; they serve as media for a wide range of meanings. Regarding the audience, the technological requirements and capabilities of mass media as well as the specific language define the bounds of their use so that, in theory, they are available for every member of a country or language community, rather than for a select few (Meulemann, *et al.*, 2009).

Communication with the broader population is done through mass media. Communication tools that can be utilised to interact and communicate with a wide range of people in several languages are referred to as mass media. Whether it be the early pictorial messages or the high-tech media that are available today, one thing that unites us all is the fact that mass media are an indispensable part of our lives. Media and entertainment go hand in hand, but in addition to providing enjoyment, mass media also continues to be a powerful tool for conveying information, promoting products, promoting brands, and generally expressing and exchanging ideas.

However, the phrase "hate speech" is also used to refer to words like "hate," "hatred," "contempt," "hostility," "enmity," "inferiority," "racist propaganda," "xenophobia," "anti-Semitism," "aggressive nationalism," "homophobia," "Islamophobia," "antisemitism," "group defamation," "group vilification," "insult," "negative stereotype (Brown, 2017). There is no agreed-upon definition of "hate speech" in international human rights law because the term is emotive. Many people would assert that they can recognise "hate speech" when they encounter it, yet the standards for doing so are frequently ambiguous or incoherent. Different domestic laws reflect the varied requirements implied by international and regional human rights agreements for categorising and restricting "hate speech" ([https://www.article19.org/.../Hate speech report-ID-files—final.pdf](https://www.article19.org/.../Hate%20speech%20report-ID-files-final.pdf)).

The phrase hate speech is used in different ways in everyday contexts, and different meanings are connected to it. This could account for a large portion of the ambiguity surrounding the phrase and what it signifies in terms of human rights. Many different definitions of "hate speech" have been put forth in reaction to particular and egregiously discriminatory societal occurrences or incidents. As situations have changed through time, definitions have also evolved to address them, as well as to take into account linguistic changes, evolving views on equality, the negative effects of discrimination, or technological advancements.

The phrase "hate speech" refers to the expressing of prejudiced hatred toward someone; it is not always followed by a specific outcome. This definition's lowest common denominator encompasses a wide variety of expression, including authorised expression. Therefore, this concept is too ambiguous to be used in determining expression that may be lawfully prohibited under international human rights law. Beyond these two fundamental components, the definition of "hate speech" is more debatable; some claim that the mere expression of discriminatory hatred is insufficient and that more must be done.

Diverging views exist on what constitutes "hate speech" and when it should be illegal, however there is dispute on the following factors: What qualifies as a

protected characteristic for identifying a person or group who is the subject of "hate speech"; the degree to which the expression's tone and content are emphasised; The degree to which the harm caused is emphasised; whether the expression is thought to be harmful in and of itself because it is demeaning or dehumanising; or whether it is thought to have a potential or actual harmful consequence, such as inciting violence against the target by a third party or group of people; evoking an emotional reaction in the target such as insult or distress; or negatively influencing societal attitudes by "spreading" or "raising up" hatred; the requirement to establish a causal link between the expression and the alleged injury; ([https://www.article19.org/.../Hate speech report-ID-files—final.pdf](https://www.article19.org/.../Hate%20speech%20report-ID-files—final.pdf))

Therefore, interpretations of what constitutes "hate speech" might range from the definition with the lowest common denominator to one that takes into account different arrangements of the aforementioned elements. At the same time, definitions frequently provide room for interpretation with regard to one or more of these specifics, making it possible to define "hate speech" in a variety of ways, leading to ambiguity and dispute. ([https://www.article19.org/.../Hate speech report-ID-files—final.pdf](https://www.article19.org/.../Hate%20speech%20report-ID-files—final.pdf)).

In the United States, a group of legal professors first used the term "hate speech" in the late 1980s. Mari Matsuda coined the term "hate speech" in her seminal article from 1989, "Public Response to Racist Speech: Consider the Victim's Story," with the primary goal of highlighting how the American legal system failed those who were harmed by harmful racist speech by giving them insufficient options for pursuing civil or criminal redress. She presents a number of legal instances in the essay, as well as some examples that are not connected to actual legal proceedings and are difficult to implement in light of current legal frameworks.

However, the purpose of these instances was to highlight the restrictions placed on the legal definition of hate speech in the United States as a kind of protected expression. She compared the ideal type or model version of what the legal concept of hate speech could and should be with the American-based legal concept of hate speech. Again, she was also making reference to particular legal doctrines that pertain to hate speech in Europe. The phrase "hate speech" has now been used by legislators and legal professionals themselves more clearly thanks to the efforts of legal scholars like Matsuda. However, and this is the key, this new phrase or legalese has now also been adopted by the media and by regular people, and it has taken on a new meaning.

Additionally, a search for "hate speech" on Google reveals more than 80 million hits. Undoubtedly, a sizable number of these findings relate to the idea of hate speech as it relates to hate speech legislation. In fact, it appears likely that the phrase "hate speech" (as well as

its non-English equivalents) frequently first comes to the attention of regular people through television and radio programmes, newspaper and magazine articles, Internet message boards, social networking websites, and Internet news channels that discuss the problem of hate speech about high profile court cases, particularly those involving already well-known public figures.

The French politician Brigitte Bardot, the Australian journalist Andrew Bolt, the Indian politician Akbaruddin Owaisi, the French comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, the Kenyan politicians Moses Kuria and Junet Mohamed, and the Dutch politician Geert Wilders have all been involved in well-publicized hate speech cases (Brown, 2017).

Since nearly every legal system in the world has at least one statute that might be regarded as a "hate speech law," it is likely that every nation on earth has experienced instances of what could be called "hate speech" at some point in its history. Many legal experts have proposed potential definitions of the phrase "hate speech" (Matsuda, 1989). For instance, at the time this article was written, a Google search for "hate speech Donald Trump" produced almost four million hits. In fact, a study team with EU funding recently searched the European media using the European Media Monitor (EMM) programme to look for instances of "hate speech." The early UK data indicates an average of slightly under 100 hits per month between April 2015 and February 2016, with a peak of 224 hits in December 2015, many of which were related to headlines about Donald Trump's campaign speeches.

In addition, it appears that the common notion of hate speech is becoming more prevalent in popular culture. Consider the South Park episode from 2005 where Kyle objects, "That's not a lecture, it's a hate speech," to Cartman's school presentation about "ginger kids," who it is alleged are suffering from "gingivitis" and have "no souls." Or consider the controversy that surrounded singer Beyoncé's halftime show during Super Bowl 50 in 2016. Beyoncé's backing dancers were costumed as Black Panthers, and her recent music videos and public declarations in support of the Black Lives Matter movement were all criticised by some people, notably activists from the All Lives Matter social movement, on social media. Undoubtedly, there were others who opposed Beyoncé's public stance on the discrimination that people of colour endure in the United States and who saw it as hate speech to label her performance and music videos as such. Or consider what J. K. Rowling, the author of the Harry Potter series, tweeted after it was revealed that Donald Trump had won the 2016 presidential election (Brown, 2017).

Hate speech isn't just a legal concept in the limited sense of a concept that is used and, in some cases, even defined, explicitly or implicitly, within bodies of law and legal systems; it's also a common concept that is

(a) used by people who aren't legal professionals or writers about the law and (b) has a variety of uses not only within bodies of law and legal systems but also within a range of other social, cultural, political, and economic domains (Brown, 2017).

This overall viewpoint is described by the term "hate speech." Contrarily, opponents of hate speech laws contend that despite the fact that it has become "fashionable" to support such laws and that their supporters are (in their opinion) "well-intentioned," hate speech laws are actually harmful to autonomy and self-realization, ineffective at best and frequently counterproductive, and harmful to democracy and legitimacy, among other things (Tsesis, 2002).

The term "hate speech" has historically been most frequently associated with liberal progressives or those on the political left who use it to call attention to and criticise speech that they perceive to be racist, xenophobic, homophobic, Islamophobic, misogynistic, disablist, or in some other way targeted at minority groups in ways that allegedly violate ideals of respect, solidarity, tolerance, and so forth. Contrarily, many political and religious conservatives reject such applications of the term and see them as clumsy attempts to stifle meaningful discussion of what they see as the drawbacks of open-border policies, the shortcomings of multiculturalism as a social experiment, the sad decline of traditional moral values, political correctness gone mad, etc.

The phrase "hate speech" has a singular meaning, even if it is complicated or disjunctive, and this meaning may be defined, according to academics of hate speech legislation. Some philosophers appear to operate under the same premise.

Implications of Newspaper reportage of Hate Speeches during the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria

Politicians used a number of hate statements against their rivals during the general elections of 2015. There were numerous verbal attacks against people and groups throughout the election. This was corroborated by a study from Prof. Chidi Odinkalu, Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), which noted an increase in hate speech during the 2015 general election's pre-election campaign.

According to Ukwueze and Uche (2015), "Before the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria, many political watchers, local and international observers, and of course the entire citizenry, were concerned about the spate of hate speeches that characterised the political campaign messages and advertisements of the two main political parties. As a result, there was a real sense of dread that the Nigerian state was perilously close to a cliff. This alarming trend highlighted the local and global communities' calls for peace. The Abuja Peace Accord, as it is commonly known, was signed as a result.

In addition, Ayo-Aderele (2015) criticised the hate speeches that characterised political campaigns in Nigeria, saying that Nigerians had never heard anything worse in recent memory in terms of campaigns. The article was published by Punch Newspapers on March 10, 2015, with the headline "When Hate Speeches Threaten an Election." Aside from sarcastic jabs, he continued, "The psychological war has been waged in media commercials, social media venues, and, in extreme circumstances, inter-personal talks."

Hate speech involves insults directed at an individual or a group based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, religion, race, physical or mental handicap, or sexual orientation. Any speech, action, writing, or display that is prohibited by law because it could inspire violence or other unfavourable behaviour against or by a protected individual or group, or because it disparages or intimidates a protected individual or group, is known as hate speech (Ukwueze *et al.*, 2015).

Due to its capacity to convey both audio and video, television enjoys the highest level of credibility among the mainstream media. Due to the audience being able to see and hear the information, it has been said that this medium has the most impact. During the nationwide campaign for the 2015 general elections, the country's television media was a major factor in the spread of hate speech. Politicians have utilised various television channels to attack their rivals and other political parties since they are aware of the enormous influence of the medium.

In the course of the campaign, a number of politicians and political enthusiasts could be seen on various television shows insulting their rivals in speeches at political rallies and even in interviews. Politicians have utilised political jingles, television documentaries, and other means of criticism and rebuke against their rivals. One of the most notable was the documentary that General Muhammad Buhari, the APC presidential candidate, and APC Chieftain Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu were the targets of on March 1, 2015, and it was broadcast on African Independent Television (AIT) (Now president). The two television stations and 21 additional broadcast stations were all charged and sanctioned by the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission for violating its code as a result of this documentary (Nigerianeye, October 28, 2016).

The mass media has a wide range of social duties to fulfil in society. They are to be employed in nation-building efforts and must avoid any news, information, or report that could incite violence or other undesirable behaviours in the community (Oyero *et al.*, 2014). Due to their employment as propaganda tools during the general election campaign in 2015, many Nigerian television stations fell short of their social obligations in the nation.

Other studies support our assertion that the majority of the federation's states joined the bandwagon of the peace deal without the help of the peacemakers in Abuja and in the spirit of encouraging peaceful elections. To prevent violence before, during, and after the election in their individual states, various states, including Lagos, Ogun, Imo, Rivers, Akwalbom, Oyo, Niger, and others, signed peace accords. For instance, in Lagos, Mr. Jimi Agbaje of the PDP and Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode of the APC signed a peace agreement in February 2015 in the official residence of the US Consular General, Jeffery Hawkins (Alabi, 2015).

Along with other state stakeholders and the U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, James F. Entwistle, the treaty's signing was also observed by the resident INEC officer, leaders in the fields of religion and security, and the resident INEC officer. Candidates for office pledged to support peace and limit their followers during the election cycle. Similar peace agreements were initiated in other states, and the INEC officials, the head of the security apparatus, and religious and eminent figures were major initiators and witnesses. These commitments made by the state's gubernatorial candidates may have played a significant part in easing tensions and lowering the rate of violence throughout the election cycle, particularly on election day and afterward (Ugbudian 2016).

The attention that the media and civil society focused on the states, particularly the most violent and strategically important ones like Lagos, Rivers, Akwalbom, Kaduna, Kano, and so on, played a significant role in calming the tension and violence in most of the states with the exception of Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and a few others. This is true even though typical Nigerian politicians are known for doing whatever it takes to "win" elections. The historic congratulations sent by the losers of the elections to the winners in the majority of the states, which may be linked to the peace agreements they signed, were in addition to the aforementioned. It is unusual for election losers to accept loss and congratulate the winners in Nigerian politics.

Overall, the 2015 gubernatorial election was remarkable because most of the states saw candidates concede loss to their rivals. This served to prevent bloodshed and, as a result, promote calm. For example, Senator Jibrilla Bindow of the APC, who was Nuhu Ribadu's opponent in the race for governor of Adamawa, received the victory and was congratulated in a message. The PDP's Jimi Agbaje congratulated Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, the APC's victory, in Lagos as well. In numerous other states, including Kaduna, Niger, Katsina, Sokoto, Nasarawa, and Benue, similar events occurred (Ugbudian 2016).

In a report titled "Hate speech, Issue-based Campaigns, and the 2015 General Elections," the

Nigerian civil society in particular listed several hate speeches used during the 2015 general election campaign. According to reports, the governor of Katsina State, Shema, called his political rivals "cockroaches" and urged his supporters to kill them as they kill cockroaches. The governor of Ekiti State, Peter Ayodele Fayose, repeatedly ran front-page newspaper advertisements in January urging people not to support the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari. These advertisements, which are now commonly referred to as "death wish advertorials," implied that the presidential contender would probably pass away in office if elected, similar to the late President Yar'Adua. During a PDP women's presidential campaign rally in Kogi State, the nation's first lady reportedly referred to Gen. Buhari as old and brain-dead, calling him unfit to lead the country. Nigeria's first lady, Patience Jonathan, is also reported to have urged PDP members to stone anyone who promises them change. The tagline of the All Progressives Congress (APC) is "Change" (Adisa, *et al.*, 2017).

In the same campaign speech, Mrs. Jonathan is cited as saying, "Our folks no dey birth childrenweydem no dey fit count." The event was place on Monday, March 2, in Calabar, the capital of the Cross River state. Our males were not created for the streets as children. We don't care for those individuals. Consequently, making an insulting remark about the Northern regions of the nation, where the abhorrent practise of child abandoning known as "Almajiri" still exists. After surviving the barrage of criticism that followed the documentary on General Muhammadun Buhari, the APC's presidential candidate earlier this year, On March 1st, a well-known television network, AIT, showed the documentary "Lion of Bourdillon." Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a prominent APC leader who is known as "Nigeria's biggest landlord," was supposedly the owner of a number of buildings and businesses throughout Lagos, as shown in the hour-long documentary that was broadcast at 11 p.m. Additionally, it claimed that the APC leader had been "charged for narcotics" in 1993. (Adisa, *et al.*, 2017).

Additionally, on April 3, 2015, Oba Akiolu of Lagos declared, "On Saturday, if anyone among you goes against my wish that Ambode be the next governor of Lagos state, the individual is going to die inside this river. I swear in the name of God." 2015 is more than a matter of life or death for the Igbos and other people in Lagos; they should follow the Oba of Lagos, according to Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari. We'll meet on the battlefield because we are both men, just like you. (News Express, May 3, 2014); on Channels Television, Mujahid Dokubo-Asari claimed that General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC is a beast covered in human skin and that he will do everything in his ability to guarantee that him the President of Nigeria (Adisa, *et al.*, 2017).

Table 1: Hate Speeches before and during the 2015 Presidential Election Identities of speakers and specific hate speech

S/N	Year	Position of speakers/ Who do they speak for?	Hate speech/ Who do they address?	Source/Publication
1	2010	National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr Junaidu Mohammed	It must be a Northerner or no Nigeria... If Goodluck Jonathan wins the PDP's endorsement to contest the 2011 presidential election, there would be violence.	<i>Interview with Guardian r, 2nd November 2010/neutral</i>
2	2011	Presidential Candidate of Congress for Progressive Change, General Muhammadu Buhari	God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood	<i>Reported by Lika Binniyat in Vanguard May 15, 2012,/PDP</i>
3	2012	National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr Junaidu Mohammed	Unless efforts are made to ensure that the 2015 general election are free and fair, it may turn out to be the last election in the history of the nation	<i>Leadership March 29, 2012,/APC</i>
4	2013	National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed	There will be bloodshed. Those who feel shortchanged may take the war path and the country may not be the same again	<i>Reported by Kemy Oguns in Osun Defender, 2nd December 2013 /APC</i>
5	2013	Abu King Shuluwa	Nigeria will disintegrate if Jonathan contests in 2015	<i>Daily Independent Friday, March 8th, 2013 /PDP</i>
6	2013	Former Chairman of PDP, Colonel Ahmadu Ali (rtd)	The Yorubas are ungrateful kind of people, who do not appreciate what others have done for them	<i>Daily Sun, March 16, 2013? PDP</i>
7	2014	Publicity Secretary of All Progressive Congress, Alhaji Lai Mohammed	If the 2015 elections are rigged, the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government	<i>Leadership 21st November, 2014; /APC</i>
8	2014	Governor Shema Ibrahim of Katsina State	You should not be bordered (sic) with cockroaches of politics. Cockroaches are only found in the toilet even at homes, If you see cockroach in your house, Crush them	<i>Reported by Premium Times on 19th November 2014 / APC</i>
9	2014	Northern Elders Forum	Those who vote for Jonathan and the PDP in 2015 will be considered an enemy of the north	<i>Vanguard, 15 October 2014/ PDP</i>
11	2013	The leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Salvation Force (NDPSF), Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari	There will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we do not pray for	<i>Vanguard Newspapers, May 5, 2013,/ PDP</i>
12	2013	Chief Arthur Eze PDP Chieftain	That short man called Ngige, we gave him power and he joined the Awolowo people; the people that killed Igbos	<i>Premium Times, November 13, 2013,/APC</i>
13	2014	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu	It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out	<i>Tell, 7 July 2014./ Neutral</i>
14	2014	Former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio	Those who want to take power through the back door will die. They will die	<i>Punch, 17th July, 201/ Neutral</i>
15	2014	South East Self Determination Coalition (SESDC?)	We assure those cold blooded murderers that this time, their blood thirsty campaign will not go un-replied	<i>Reported by Clifford Ndujihe in Vanguard, 5th December 2014 /PDP</i>
17	2014	Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi	The challenge of the Nigerian military is not funding but corruption.	<i>This day and The Nation, Tuesday,/ PDP</i>
18	2015	Patience Jonathan	Please don't vote for prison. A vote for Buhari is a vote to send people to Prison.	<i>Vanguard news March 25, 2015</i>

Source: (Adisa, *et al.*, 2017).

From table 1 above shows, the various dimensions of hate speeches in the mass media credited

to notable politicians in Nigeria during the 2015 general election.

Table 2: Hate speeches in Northern Nigeria (2010-2015)

S/n	Year	Hate speaker	Hate speech	Sources
1	2010	The former Governor of the old Kaduna State, Alhaji Lawan Kaita	The North would make the country ungovernable if President Goodluck Jonathan wins the 2011 polls... Anything short of a Northern President is tantamount to stealing our presidency.	Jason, 2011 (See references)
2	2010	Shehu Sani, a Kaduna based civil rights activist	President Goodluck Jonathan should not contemplate contesting the 2011 presidential election. Any attempt by him to contest amounts to incitement and a recipe for political instability	www.nigerianbestforum.com/shehusani-warnsjonathan-againstcontesting
3	2010	National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr Junaidu Mohammed	It must be a Northerner or no Nigeria... If Goodluck Jonathan wins the PDP's endorsement to contest the 2011 presidential election, there would be violence.	Interview with Guardian Newspaper, 2 nd November 2010
4	2011	Presidential Candidate of Congress for Progressive Change, General Muhammadu Buhari	God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood	Reported by Lika Binniyat in Vanguard Newspaper on May 15 th , 2012
5	2012	National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr Junaidu Mohammed	Unless efforts are made to ensure that the 2015 general election are free and fair, it may turn out to be the last election in the history of the nation	Leadership March 29, 2012
6	2013	National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed	There will be bloodshed. Those who feel short-changed may take the war path and the country may not be the same again	Reported by Kemy Oguns in Osun Defender, 2 nd December, 2013
7	2013	Abu King Shuluwa	Nigeria will disintegrate if Jonathan contests in 2015	Daily Independent Friday, March 8 th , 2013
8	2013	Former Chairman of PDP, Colonel Ahmadu Ali (rt'd)	The Yorubas are ungrateful kind of people, who do not appreciate what others have done for them	Sun Newspaper, March 16, 2013
9	2014	Publicity Secretary of All Progressive Congress, Alhaji Lai Mohammed	If the 2015 elections are rigged, the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government	Leadership 21 st November, 2014; Sahara Reporters 22 nd November, 2014
10	2014	Governor Shema Ibrahim of Kastina State	You should not be bordered with cockroaches of politics. Cockroaches are only found in the toilet even at homes, If you see cockroach in your house, Crush them	Reported by Premium Times on 19 th November, 2014
11	2014	An Islamic cleric, Ima Sadiq	Muslims, vote for Buhari. It is a sin to support a non-Muslim	Twitter handle, Saturday, 27 th December, 2014
12	2014	Northern Elder Forum	Those who vote for Jonathan and the PDP in 2015 will be considered an enemy of the north	Vanguard, 15 October 2014.

Source: (Ezeibe 2015).

Table 3: Hate speeches in Southern Nigeria (2010-2015)

S/n	Year	Hate speaker	Hate speech	Sources
1	2012	Chinua Achebe, a foremost Nigerian writer	The Igbo culture being receptive to change, individualistic and highly competitive gave the Igbo man an unquestionable advantage... Unlike the Hausa/ Fulani, he was unhindered by a wary religion and unlike the Yoruba, he was unhampered by traditional hierarchies	Achebe, Chinua (2012: 74)
2	2013	Femi Fani-Kayode, a former Aviation Minister	The Igbos are collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained and crude in all their ways... Money and the acquisition of wealth is their sole objective and purpose in life	Daily Post, August 8, 2013
3	2013	The leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Salvation Force (NDPSF),	There will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta, but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we do not pray for	Vanguard Newspapers, May 5, 2013

S/n	Year	Hate speaker	Hate speech	Sources
		Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari		
4	2013	Chief Arthur Eze PDP Chieftain	That short man called Ngige, we gave him power and he joined the Awolowo people; the people that killed Igbos	Premium Times, November 13, 2013
5	2014	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu	It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out	Tell, 7 July 2014.
6	2014	Former Governor of AkwaIbom State, Godswill Akpabio	Those who want to take power through the back door will die. They will die	Punch Newspaper, 17 th July 2014
7	2014	South East Self Determination Coalition (SESD)	We assure those cold-blooded murderers that this time, their bloodthirsty campaign will not go un-replied	Reported by Clifford Ndujihe in Vanguard Newspaper, 5 th December 2014
8	2014	Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari	2015 is more than do-or-die. You are a man and I am a man, we are going to meet at the battlefield	News Express 3 rd May 2014
9	2014	Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari	If they contest (Northerners) they are wasting their time. He who pays the piper will dictate the tune. We own them. We are feeding them. They are parasites. A beggar has no choice... They are beggars and parasites	http://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/12/north-ungratefulparasites-asaridokubo .
10	2014	Rivers States Governor, Rotimi Amechi	The challenge of the Nigerian military is not funding but corruption. Now they want to kill some 50 officers for their own failure to equip them properly to fight terrorism. The soldiers have the right to protest for the federal government's failure to fully equip them	This day and Nations, Tuesday, 9 th December 2014
11	2015	Wife of former President, Patience Jonathan	<i>Wetin him dey find again? Him dey drag with him pikin mate, old man wey no get brain, him brain don die patapata-</i> What is Buhari looking for? Old man that does not know his age. Your brain is dead.	At a PDP rally in Kogi state, Reported by The Express New, 4 March 2014
12		Wife of former President, Patience Jonathan	Our people do not give birth to uncountable children. Our men don't give birth to children that they dump in streets. We are not like people from that part of the country (apparently the northern Nigeria)	Presidential campaign in Calabar, The Nation, March 10, 2015
13	2015	Wife of former President, Patience Jonathan	Anybody that come and tell you changes, stone that person... What you did not do in 1985, is it now that old age has caught up with you that you want to come and change... You cannot change rather you will turn back to a baby	The Complete Works of Patience Jonathan, The Nation on Sunday, 15 th March
14	2015	The Governor of Ekiti State, Peter Ayodele Fayose	Buhari would likely die in office if elected, recall that Murtala Muhammed, Sani Abacha and Umaru Yar'Adua, all former heads of state from the North West like Buhari, had died in office	January 19, 2015, This Day and other national dailies
15	2015	Oba Akiolu of Lagos	On Saturday, if anyone of you, I swear in the name of God, goes against my wish that Ambode will be the next governor of Lagos state, the person is going to die inside this water... For the Igbos and others in Lagos, they should go where the Oba of Lagos heads to...	This Day Newspaper, 4 th April 2015
16	2015	Dr Abraham Ariyo, U.S based Nigerian Doctor	You see how they (Igbos) are being slaughtered in South Africa. That is what is going to happen to them in Lagos... When are they (Igbos) going to be slaughtered in Abuja? We will continue to bus them to Onitsha	Facebook page of Dr. Ariyo, Reported in Quick News Africa, April 20, 2015.

Source: (Ezeibe 2015).

Table 2 demonstrates how hate speech is prevalent in both northern and southern Nigeria. Additionally, it considers political party, ethnicity, religion, and geography. Comparing tables 2 and 3 above, we found that whereas hate speeches credited to

southerners primarily tried to keep the position in the South, hate speeches credited to northerners were 100% focused on bringing back the position of Nigeria's President to the North. Table 3 also reveals that 12.5% of the hate speeches called for the North to reclaim the

presidency, while 31.25 % denigrated either the Igbo or Yoruba ethnic communities. Regardless of its intended audience, Adibe (2015) highlighted that hate speech is a major contributor to sectarian deaths and election violence.

Hate speech was the main topic of conversation thus far and was used as a tool in the general election campaign in 2015. Because of this, it was evident from the appearance of varied hate speech in numerous publications that the media had been used to incite animosity and foment violence among political and ethnic groups both during electioneering campaigns and in everyday life. Similar to this, media must take care not to overreact when prominent people try to outdo one another by making hateful speeches, even though notoriety is a factor in determining newsworthiness. Journalists must evaluate speakers and their statements, check their facts and assertions, and carefully assess the motive and possible impact on society because politicians and other important persons frequently spread hate speech out of self-interest (Cowan, *et al.*, 2002). Although it is not the responsibility of journalists to take opposing positions, claims and facts should always be investigated, according to the Ethical Journalism Network (2016).

Furthermore, we found that in Nigeria, women and children are the worst afflicted by hate speech and election violence. Election-related violence can have a negative economic impact by reversing gains in the economy, albeit the costs are difficult to quantify. Affected general economic activities include trade, agriculture, and food production as a result of the electoral violence. For instance, the post-election violence in Kenya between 2007 and 2008 cost the government its tourism revenue, and the post-election violence in Nigeria in 2011 cost Nigeria an astounding N 40 billion (forty billion Naira) (Chedotum, *et al.*, 2013).

Despite the existence of sufficient regulatory frameworks to guarantee a violent-free election in 2015, incidences of pre-election violence were documented in Lagos, Kaduna, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, and Jos. According to NHRC (2015), between December 2014 and February 2015, a total of fifty days, 61 distinct incidences of pre-election violence took place in 22 states, spanning Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. According to the report, 58 people were killed and several others were injured. During the 2015 pre-election violence, the three most volatile regions were Lagos (south-west), Kaduna (north-west), and Rivers (south-south).

CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, the peace agreement was crucial in fostering harmony and preventing violence during the 2015 general election in Nigeria. This was shown by President Jonathan, who lost the presidential election, and the majority of the governorship

contenders, who also lost and accepted defeat. The individuals and groups who contributed to making this happen have received praise on a national and international level. There remain glaring gaps in the peace agreement despite all of the praise from around the world and the significant impact it had on reducing violence throughout the election season. Violence during elections is a result of hate rhetoric aimed at attaining political power. There are several justifications for the use of hate speech given the history of intolerance in Nigeria.

This study found that in May 2010, following the passing of President Yaradua and the rejection of the PDP zoning consensus to alternate the presidency between the north and the south every eight years, ethnic, religious, and regional leaders in Nigeria elevated hate speech to the status of a campaign strategy. Violence during elections has increased as a result of this hate rhetoric. Notably, the number of hateful statements in Nigeria grew between the presidential elections in 2011 and 2015. Because they were at the forefront of recording and publicising these hate speeches and campaigns targeting certain people, ethnic groups, political parties, and geopolitical zones, both the print and electronic media in Nigeria also played an antidemocratic role at this time.

The study also found that a large number of pre-election violent occurrences were caused by hate speeches broadcast in Nigeria in the run-up to the 2015 presidential election. Because President Jonathan acknowledged defeat and congratulated the opposition, the mounting unrest in the Nigerian polity following the escalation of hate speech did not result in post-election violence in 2015 as anticipated.

Recommendations

First, INEC, the Inspector General of Police, media representatives, and the head of the judiciary should not be named observers in the peace accord agreement; rather, these authorities should be made signatories to the agreement, because these parties play a significant role in ensuring a peaceful election process and a free, fair, and credible election process. Thus, making them signatories to the agreement would therefore impose obligations on them, including a duty to carry out their tasks in the national interest impartially and wisely. The media, for example, serves as a platform to stop the propagation of hate speech, whereas INEC officials and security personnel could affect the results of the election and its repercussions.

Second, sanctioning the wrongdoing election participants should be specified in the peace accord agreement as well. The peace agreement's failure to impose punishment on the guilty parties has mainly reduced it to a moral one. In other words, adherence to the agreement is up to the signatories' moral judgement and dedication.

Additionally, the Nigerian government and civic society should keep an eye on the media, particularly local radio stations that spew hate speech to stoke ethnic animosity.

Furthermore, other election stakeholders should make sure that media coverage is carefully watched so that hate speech is not used during campaigning in the future.

Last but not least, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), particularly those that support democracy, should reactivate political activism in Nigeria through boycotts, nonviolent mass protests against populist policies, and educating the populace about the importance of a hate speech-free election campaign.

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