

INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON EDUCATED ELITES PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS OF OGUN STATE, NIGERIA (2003 – 2011)

Ngozi Nwogwugwu, PhD¹

Email: nwogwugwu@babcock.edu.ng

Abstract

Active participation by citizens has been regarded as a major requirement for democracy in any society. When people actively participate especially through voting during elections in the selection of their leaders, it provides legitimacy for the government that is formed after. Several studies, especially those carried out in western countries, have advocated that the more socio-economic factors such as higher education, marital status, and higher income, positively affect the willingness of citizens to vote and to stand for election into public office. However, the record of voters' turnout has been showing declining turnout by registered voters in Nigeria's general elections. This study therefore examined the influence of socio-economic factors on the participation of educated elites in the political process in Ogun State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, which was executed over a nine-month period from September 2011 to May 2012. Stratified random sampling was used to locate the respondents who were selected from eight local governments (Ado-Odo Ota, Abeokuta South, Ikenne, Ijebu Ode, Ijebu North, Odeda, Sagamu and Yewa South) out of the twenty in the state. A total of 1720 respondents filled and returned the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected. While secondary data included relevant textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, newspaper and materials downloaded from the internet. Socio-economic factors did not have a higher level of political participation in Ogun State, as extraneous factors such as high level of insecurity, electoral violence, influence of political godfathers discouraged participation by the educated elites. The government needs to create the enabling environment for participation of the educated elites in the political process through adequate security before, during and after general elections.

Keywords: Educated elites, Socio-economic, Participation, Political Process, Ogun State.

¹ Ngozi Nwogwugwu, PhD is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Babcock Business School, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Political participation has been a major subject of discourse by political scientist in both western and developing countries as a result of its perceived importance to democratic practice. Dahl (1989) writes that political participation is considered an essential element of democratic regimes. Political participation is a necessary ingredient of every political system whether traditional or modern, democratic or totalitarian, large or small.

Regardless of the nature of a given political system, the responsibility of making political decisions must rest on a person or group of persons. A very important distinction however, is on the nature of participation in the traditional and monarchical system and the democratic systems. In the traditional or monarchical system, participation is severely restricted to a particular class 'the nobility' and its agents, whereas in democratic systems, participation, in principle, is open to all who are interested (Johari, 2010).

The essence of political participation in any society, either civilised or primitive, is to seek control of power, acquisition of power and dispensing of power to organise society, harness and distribute resources and to influence decision making in line with organised or individual interests (Arowolo & Abe, 2008 cited in Arowolo & Aluko, 2010). However, the reason put forward for making political participation open to all and sundry in a democratic system is that a democratic system is regarded as the only system that is based on the will of the people. As such, there is a need for as many people as possible to participate in the struggle for power. The desire to give meaning and force to the principle of consent, accountability and political opposition, led to the expansion of participation in a democratic society (Johari, 2010).

Nigeria is politically divided into 36 states and the federal capital territory, of which Ogun state is one. Ogun state is located in the South – West geo-political zone of the country. Ogun State was created out of the former Western Region on February 3, 1976 by the Murtala/Obasanjo military regime. The state is bounded to the West by the Republic of Benin, East by Ondo State, North by Oyo State and South by Lagos State (Daniel 2003; Onakomaiya, Odugbemi, Oyesiku & Ademiluyi, 2000). The state has a population of about 3 million, seven hundred and fifty one thousand, one hundred and forty (3, 751, 140) people (National Population Commission, 2006).

As at 2012, Ogun state was home to a total of twenty one higher institutions. Of these institutions, there are nine (9) Universities (both public and private), seven (7) polytechnics (four of them are ICT polytechnics established by the state government between 2003 and 2008), and three (3) colleges of education, one College of Health technology, and one School of Nursing. As such, the state is host to more higher institutions than any other state in the whole federation.

As one of the most educationally advantaged states in the federation, politics in the State has been intriguing. The State has produced a large number of "sufficiently educated and sophisticated men and women who have contributed in no small measure to economic, social and political development of the State." (Abosede, 2011, p. 22).

Finkel, (2000, cites Booth and Richard 1998; & Bratton 1999) in arguing that there has been extremely low levels of social and political participation in many developing democracies, including Nigeria. Scholars have equally made propositions that the level of education enhances citizens' political participation (Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Galston, 2004; Finkel, 2003; Finkel, 2000). The study examined the level of participation of the educated elite in the political process in Ogun state, between 2003 and 2011; and investigated the effect of socio-economic factors on the educated elite participation in the political process in Ogun State between 2003 – 2011.

Literature Review

Political Participation

Several scholars have put forward varying definitions of the concept, with each laying emphasis on certain variables as determined by their perspective. Okolie (2004, p.53 cited in Arowolo & Aluko, 2010) perceives political participation as “freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, right to influence decision process and the right to social justice, health services, better working condition and opportunity for franchise”. A definition that emphasizes the contribution to policy formulation and the outcome of policy implementation states that, “Political participation consists of taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies. It is concerned with action in protest at the outcome of a decision.” (Parry, Moyer & Day, 1992 cited in Axford, Browning & Rosamond, 2007).

Milbrath & Goel (1977, p. 2) provide an all embracing definition of political participation when they state that “political participation refers to those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics.” The definition of Milbrath & Goel (1977) covers both conventional and non conventional forms of participation. Conventional political participation includes the routine behavior that uses institutional channels of representative government, especially, campaigning for candidates and voting in elections. Unconventional political participation on the other hand includes all forms of uncommon behaviour that either challenge or defy the established government channels or accepted culture (Janda, Berry & Goldman, 1992).

Political participation is a central concept in political science and an important political phenomenon. Recently, a lot of efforts have been made to understand the worldwide erosion in political participation (Klingeman & Fuchs, 1995 cited in Liu, 2001). As a result, three famous schools of thought have emerged to explain political participation. They are the social structure school, the political culture school, and the institutional school. Respectively, these three schools take socio-economic background, political culture and institutional affiliation as their main determinant of political participation.

Almond & Verba (1963) in a study of Britain classified the country as approximating their conception of civic culture, with a highly developed participant role for the citizens. The exposure rate of citizens to politics, their level of interest, as well as actual involvement is relatively high. There are established norms that support political activity, and citizens are generally proud of their political system as a result of their satisfaction with the performance of their government.

However, Whitelley (2003) writes that in recent years there has been growing disillusionment with the political process, leading to low levels of participation. Turnout has been low in elections held since 1997. A major reason has been low level of trust in elected representatives, parties and parliament. Henn & Foard (2012) write that young people have become disconnected from the formal political process and from democratic institutions. Their rate of non participation in general elections, reached the lowest level over the last decade. This led to deeply entrenched concerns amongst the political classes that young people have disaffection for politics. This is especially so, as the level of abstentions has grown beyond what was the case with previous youth generations, and may become a habit in the future.

At the same time, levels of non-electoral participation have increased in Britain. Meanwhile, it is not the case that people engage outside the ballot box as an alternative to voting; rather, most

people use non-electoral activities as a complement to participating at elections. One reason why non-electoral participation has not declined is because people generally feel as engaged with the political process as they ever did using alternative platforms.

The convenience which advancement in technology has created in communication processes especially has to a great extent facilitated the increase in non-electoral participation. The recent use of social media by public officials, such as Barack Obama of USA and Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, to solicit input of citizens in policy making are major examples. People of different age groups utilize various social media platforms to engage in intense political debates, making input to policy making process, solicit for funding for political causes, as well as campaigning for their preferred candidates. Some of them feel they are doing enough using these platforms and as such, absent themselves from actual voting during general elections.

Whiteley (2008) links citizens' participation to government effectiveness, while asserting that there has been decreased government effectiveness in Britain in recent years as a result of low level of citizens' participation in governance, especially in the areas of policy formulation and accountability of public officials. The more citizens participate, the more they elicit effectiveness from government agencies and institutions. As public officials are conscious of the interest of the public in the way and manner they discharge their responsibilities they end up becoming more effective in the discharge of their duties.

Dalton (2007) agrees with other social scientists that political participation "is at the heart of democratic theory and at the heart of the democratic political formula in the United States" (Verba & Nie, 1972: 3). It is believed that without public involvement in the process, democracy lacks both its legitimacy and its guiding force. Moreover, studies of political participation in the 1960s and 1970s stressed the public's high activity levels (Almond & Verba, 1963; Verba & Nie, 1972). The political culture encouraged people to participate: Americans were active in voluntary associations, engaged in political discussions and involved in political affairs.

Elaborating on the influence of civil society organizations and institutions, Djube & Grant (2001) cite several scholarly studies (Gusfield, 1963; Morris, 1984; Noll, 1990; Findlay, 1993; Green, Guth, Smidt, & Kellstedt, 1996; Wald, 1997; Fowler, Hertzke, & Olson, 1999) to substantiate their claim that religion and churches in particular, have shown great potential to affect American political participation and have consistently intertwined with politics throughout American history. Churches are known while not being directly political, to provide the platform for mobilization of citizens, especially with the inculcation of relevant values, which are in tandem with the principles of democracy.

A major group whose level of participation has been a major concern for political scientists is the young people. It is generally accepted that compared to previous generations arriving at voting age, young American citizens, and their counterparts in most comparable countries, are today less likely to see voting as a civic duty and to pay less attention to politics (Milner, 2008).

Armah-Attoh (2006) writes that Ghana's political history has been a checkered one, with non-democratic regimes dominating the greater part of the post-independence history until the re-emergence of constitutional rule in 1992. Sandbrook & Oelbaum (1999) described these period as hegemonic with only sporadic respect for the rule of law, as dictated by the patrimonial political leaders. However, since the restoration of civilian rule in 1993, Ghana's most notable achievement has been the progressive improvement of electoral management and the increasing acceptance of election results as fair by participants and observers alike (The Open Society Initiative for West Africa & The Institute for Democratic Governance, 2007)

According to Armah-Attoh (2006) the level of political participation in Ghana is quite high at about 80% with majority of adult citizens showing interest in public affairs and politics. Ghanaians have positive opinions about democracy and a large proportion think that multiple parties provide real opportunity to choose who governs them.

Several scholars have carried out research both qualitative and empirical on political participation, especially voter turnout (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995; Strate, Parrish, Elder & Ford, 1989 & Nie, Powell & Prewitt, 1969a). Majority of the empirical studies always emphasize the influence of socio-economic factors on voters turn out and political participation in general (Plutzer 2004; Timpone 1998; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady 1995). The socio-economic characteristics normally included as affecting political participation include; education (Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995; Leighley & Nagler 1992a), income (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995; Leighley & Nagler 1992b), age (Strate, Parrish, Elder & Ford, 1989), gender (Scholzman, Burns, Verba, Donahue, 1995), race (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady 1993), marital status (Stoker and Jennings, 1995), occupational prestige (Nie, Powell, and Prewitt 1969a; Nie, Powell, and Prewitt (1969b), and church attendance (Cassel 1999). However, Matsusaka & Palda (1999) observed that these socio-economic variables do not always influence political participation in all cases, as some other factors may affect participation.

Several western scholars have proposed that civic education can enhance the level of political participation in developing countries (Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Galston, 2004; Finkel, 2003; Finkel, 2000). As such, in several decades, democratic programmes targeting various segments of these developing countries, have been implemented with funding by various development agencies. The programmes have emphasized strengthening of civil society organizations, training of lawyers, journalists and other social elites in the rule of law, in assisting constitutional reform, and in strengthening democratic political parties (Carothers, 1999; Quigley 1997).

Theoretical framework

This research adopts elite theory as its theoretical construct. Elite theory holds that there exists in each society, “a minority of the population which takes the major decisions in the society” (Parry 1969: 30). Keller (cited in Mahajan, 2007: 820) states that “elites are those minorities which are set apart from the rest of society by their pre-eminence in one or more of these various distributions.” The major proponents of elite theory are Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Roberto Michels, and Jose Ortega Y. Gasset.

Mahajan writes that:

In order to be really effective, an elite group should possess three qualities viz, group consciousness, coherence and conspiracy. Elites are divided into two categories – strategic elites and segmented elites. The strategic elites are those who claim or exercise wide influence over the entire spectrum of social set up. The segmented elites are those who have influence or responsibilities only in a sub-domain in society. However, both of them draw their elite status from either or a combination of the following factors: heredity, excellence in arts and literature, position in the ruling class or party or bureaucratic hierarchy, material affluence and physical powers. Out of the two, the strategic elites are more important (Mahajan, 2007: 820).

Kifordu (2011 cites Mosca, 1939) when he writes that the elite are usually defined as those groups with excellent access to resources or capacities, a characteristic that sets them apart from other (non-elite) members of society. The interpretations of superiority based on the access to valuable resources leads to the justification of elite dominance and social inequality. The possession of excellent resources and capabilities is exemplified in their ability to organize, which makes the masses to look up to them for direction.

Elite theory has been criticized as being undemocratic, as it contradicts the basic assumption of democracy that power belongs to the people. Birch (2007: 226) writes that elite theory “challenges most western liberal assumptions about politics and the organization of government.” Johari, (2010: 264) writes that “elite theory stands on the classical doctrine of the natural inequality of mankind and thereby it leads to the tendency of irresponsibilism and self-perpetuation as conceived by the doctrine of a liberal-democratic state.”

In spite of the criticisms and counter postulations on whether elite theory is democratic or anti democratic, the study agrees with Kifordu (2011) and Ojukwu & Shopeju (2010) that elite theory is still very relevant to an understanding of politics in Nigeria. This is especially so, as Nigeria is presently in the process of transition, transformation and is expected to go through the consolidation of its democratic experiment, as experienced by the Central East European states following the collapse of Communism (Kaminski & Kurczewska, 1995; Wasilewski, 2001; both cited in Bozoki, 2002). In the face of growing inequalities in the country, there is a need for strong institutions that will be able to facilitate the attainment of good governance, and Kaminski & Kurczewska (1995 cited in Bozoki, 2002) emphasize that the elite are strong and effective institutional builders. Furthermore, given that this study focuses on elite political participation and its relationship with good governance in Nigeria, with Ogun State from May 29, 2003 to May 29, 2011 as case study, elite theory becomes the most relevant theory for this research.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was utilized in the study. The study location was Ogun State, one of the thirty six states in Nigeria, located in the South West geo-political zone of the country. Of the 20 local governments in the state, eight were selected, two from each of the four political divisions of the state. The selected local governments were Ikenne and Sagamu (Remo division); Ijebu Ode and Ijebu North (Ijebu Division); Ado-Odo Ota and Yewa South (Yewa Division); Abeokuta South and Odeda (Egba Division). Stratified sampling technique was used to locate the 1720 educated elites who served as respondents from the selected local governments.

Self constructed questionnaire titled measurement of educated elites participation in the political process in Ogun State was administered to the respondents. The questionnaire was structured and pre-coded. Descriptive statistics was utilized in the analysis of the data using SPSS software. Among the secondary data collected were relevant books, scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional papers/reports and relevant materials downloaded from the internet. The content analysis of the qualitative data gathered was carried out and presented integrated into the discussion of the findings generated through the questionnaire.

How did socio-economic factors influence the participation of the educated elite in the political process in Ogun State, during the period 2003 – 2011?

Table 1: socio-economic characteristics and card carrying membership of political parties

	Frequency	Percent
Age range		
21-30	17	8.10
31-40	61	29.04
41-50	90	42.86
51-60	42	20.00
Total	210	100.00
Gender		
Male	131	62.38
Female	79	37.62
Total	210	100
Marital status		
Married	157	74.76
Single	50	23.80
Divorced/Separated	1	0.49
Widow/Widower	2	0.95
Total	210	100
Religious affiliation		
Christianity	142	67.61
Islamic	53	25.23
Others	14	6.66
Traditional	1	0.50
Total	210	100
Education		
Masters Degree	135	64.28
PhD	75	35.72
Total	210	100
Profession		
Education/Arts	13	6.19
Medical/health	6	2.86
Bus./Finance	39	18.57
Social Sciences	56	26.67
Engr/Sciences	96	45.71
Total	210	100

Total		
	189	90
Ethnic group	9	4,28
Yoruba	9	4.28
Igbo	3	1.44
Hausa	210	100
Others		
Total		
Income		
100 ,000-		
199,000	111	52.86
200,000-299,000	57	27.14
300,000-399,000	18	8.57
400,000 and	24	11.43
above	210	100
Total		

Source: Field Survey (2012).

Table 1 above, shows that majority, 42.86% of the respondents who indicated that they were card carrying members of any of the registered political parties, were of the age range 41 – 50 years. Male respondents were in the majority, 62.38%. Majority of the respondents 74.76%, were married; Christians comprised 67.61% of the respondents; Masters degree holders formed 64.28% of the respondents; 52.86% were of the income level 100, 000 – 199, 000; 45.71% were of the Engineering/sciences professional group; and Yoruba respondents were a dominant majority at 90%.

However, 35.72% of the respondents that are PhD holders actually represent 16.23% of the total number of PhD holders surveyed, as against 64.28% of the respondents that are masters degree holders, which represents 10.73% of the masters degree holders surveyed. On the income level, 11.43% of respondents that fall under the 400, 000 and above income range, represent 14.90% of all the respondents on that income level surveyed; whereas the 52.86% of respondents on income level N100, 000 – N199, 000, represent 13.09% of total respondents on that income level surveyed.

The findings actually shows that higher education and higher income positively affected participation at the level of party membership. The findings agree with earlier studies by Smith, Scholtzman, Verba & Brady (2009), Verba, Scholtzman, and Brady, (1995), Leighley and Nagler (1992a) on higher education and income enhancing political participation. The findings also corroborate earlier findings on positive effect on participation, of the following: occupational prestige (Nie, Powell, and Prewitt 1969a; Nie, Powell and Prewitt, 1969b); marital status (Stoker and Jennings, 1995); gender (Schlozman, Burns, Verba, Donahue, 1995); while the dominance of Yoruba ethnic group can be attributed to the State of origin syndrome in Nigeria political system.

Table 2: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents and voting in elections

	Frequency	Percent
Age range and voting in 2003 election		
31 – 40 years	22	12.79%
41 – 50 years	88	51.16
51 – 60 years	29	16.86
61 – 70 years	33	19.19
Total	172	100
Gender and voting in 2003 election		
Male	138	80.23
Female	34	19.77
Total	172	100.00
Marital Status and voting in 2003 election		
Single	31	18.02
Married	139	80.82
Divorced/separated	1	0.58
Widow/Widower	1	0.58
Total	172	100.00
Religion and voting in 2003 election		
Christianity	124	72.09
Islam	47	27.33
Traditional	1	0.58
Total	172	100.00
Education and voting in 2003 election		
Masters	100	58.14
PhD	72	41.86
Total	172	100.00
Profession and voting in 2003 election		
Engineering/Sciences	82	47.68
Social sciences	35	20.35
Business/Finance	29	16.86
Education/Arts	6	3.49
Medical/Health	20	11.62
Total	172	100.00
Ethnic group and voting in 2003 election		
Yoruba	163	94.77
Igbo	6	3.49
Hausa	2	1.16
Others	1	0.58

Total	172	100.00
Income group and voting in 2003 election		
100, 000 – 199, 000	99	57.56
200, 000 – 299, 000	46	26.74
300, 000 – 399, 000	13	7.56
400, 000 and above	14	8.14
Total	172	100.00
Table 2: continued		
	Frequencies	Percent
Age range and voting in 2007 elections		
41 – 50 years	199	66.33
31 – 40 years	17	5.67
51 – 60 years	59	19.67
21 – 30 years	1	0.33
61 – 70 years	24	8
Total	300	100
Gender and voting in 2007 elections		
Male	211	70.33
Female	89	29.67
Total	300	100
Education and voting in 2007 elections		
Masters	189	63
PhD	111	37
Total	300	100
Income level and voting in 2007 elections		
100, 000 – 199, 000	161	53.67
200, 000 – 299, 000	80	26.67
300, 000 – 399, 000	28	9.33
400, 000 and above	31	10.33
Total	300	100
Marital status and voting in 2007 elections		

Married	260	86.67
Single	33	11
Widow/Widower	6	2
Divorced/Separated	1	0.33
Total	300	100
Profession and voting 2007 elections		
Education and Arts	22	7.33
Business and Finance	17	5.67
Medical and Health	24	8
Social Sciences	88	29.33
Engineering and Sciences	149	49.67
Total	300	100
Ethnic group and voting 2007 elections		
Yoruba	280	93.34
Hausa	10	3.33
Igbo	9	3
Others	1	0.33
Total	300	100
Religion and voting in 2007 elections		
Christianity	180	60
Islam	105	35
Others	14	4.67
Traditional	1	0.33
Total	300	100
Age and voting in 2011 elections		
21 – 30 years	68	7.54
31 – 40 years	281	31.16
41 – 50 years	433	48.00
51 – 60 years	96	10.64
61 – 70 years	24	2.66
Total	902	100
Table 2: continued		
	Frequency	Percent
Gender and voting in 2011 elections		
Male	661	73.28
Female	241	26.72

Total	902	100
Marital status and voting in 2011 elections		
Married	692	76.72
Single	168	18.63
Divorced/Separated	16	1.77
Widow/Widower	26	2.88
Total	902	100
Education and voting in 2011 elections		
Masters	661	73.28
PhD	241	26.72
Total	902	100
Income level and voting in 2011 elections		
100, 000 – 199, 000	478	52.99
200, 000 – 299, 000	268	29.71
300, 000 – 399, 000	79	8.76
400, 000 and above	77	8.54
Total	902	100
Religion and voting in 2011 elections		
Christianity	528	58.54
Islam	345	38.25
Traditional	15	1.66
Others	14	1.55
Total	902	100
Ethnic group and voting in 2011 elections		
Yoruba	748	82.93
Hausa	71	7.87
Igbo	33	3.66
Others	50	5.54
Total	902	100

Source: Field Survey (2012).

Table 2 above, shows the distribution of the respondents that voted in the general elections during the period under review. Data on the 2003 general elections shows that of 172 respondents that voted, majority 51.16% were of the age range 41 – 50 years, while none of the respondents within the age range 21 – 30 years voted. 80.23% of the respondents that voted were male; 82.82% were married; 72.09% were Christians; 58.14% were masters degree holders; 57.56% belonged to income level N100, 000 – N199, 000; 47.68% were of the Engineering and Sciences professional group; while 94.77% were of the Yoruba ethnic group.

Data on the respondents that voted in the 2007 elections shows that of 300 respondents that voted, the age range 41 – 50 years remained the majority with 66.33%, while 0.33% of the

respondents were of the age range 21 – 30 years. Majority of the respondents, 70.33% were male; 63% were masters degree holders; 53.67 % were of the income level N100, 000 – N199, 000; 86.67% were married; 49.67% were of the Engineering and Sciences professional group; 60% were Christians; while 93.34% were of the Yoruba ethnic group.

The data on 2011 elections shows that the age range 41 – 50 remained in majority with a slight decline to 48% of the respondents, following increase in participation by age range 31 – 40 years (31.16%) and 21 – 30 years, (7.54%), over the 2007 figures. The older generations, age range 51 - 60 years and 61 – 70 years experienced marginal decline. Male respondents remained in the majority at 73.28%; 76.72% were married; 73.28% were masters degree holders; 52.99% were of the income level N100, 000 – N199, 000. There was decrease in participation for the higher income levels, N300 – N399, 000 and N400, 000 and above. 58.24% of the respondents were Christians; 82.93% were of the Yoruba ethnic group, following marginal increase in participation by the Hausa, Igbo and other ethnic groups.

The findings on the age range of respondents, is in agreement with earlier research findings by Calenda (2007), Mindich (2005) and Putnam (2000) which indicate that young people are not as active as the older generations in terms of voting at elections. On the dominance of the male respondents, the study confirms the proposition of Goel (1970) that persons with higher education and higher income are more likely to be male.

On the educational qualification of respondents that voted, the findings corroborates Berinsky & Lenz (2011), Kam & Palmer (2008) and Tenn (2007) that higher education does not necessarily correlate to improved political participation. It therefore contradicts traditionally held belief that educational attainment increases political participation (Brady, Verba & Scholtzman, (1995); Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). On the income range of those that voted, the findings disagree with Milbrath & Goel (1977) that people with higher income are more likely to participate in politics. The findings agree with Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi, (2005) that in Africa, education and income are not consistent predictors of political participation. On the religious affiliation of the respondents that voted, the findings are in agreement with earlier studies by Jones-Correa & Leal, (2001), Calhoun-Brown, (1996), Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, (1995) that churches play positive roles in the political mobilization of citizens.

Discussion of Findings

Findings in tables 1 and 2 show that socio-economic status; especially higher education and higher income, were not consistent indicators of higher political participation by the educated elite. The effect of socio-economic factors was positive in terms of membership of registered political parties; the same result was not achieved in terms of participation at general elections. This contradicts earlier research done mainly in the developed societies of the West by Brady, Verba & Scholtzman, (1995), Rosenstone & Hansen, (1993), Wolfinger & Rosenstone, (1980) and Milbrath and Goel (1977) which showed positive correlation between socio-economic status and political participation.

The findings agreed with Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi, (2005) that in Africa, education and income are not consistent predictors of political participation. This is as a result of other extraneous factors. In Ogun State, among the extraneous factors were electoral violence, thuggery and irresponsibility, general insecurity, and electoral corruption which affected political participation.

The educated elite comprise what is referred to as the middle class of the society. Their possession of higher education with the accompanying higher income guarantees some level of

financial independence which means they should be people of integrity who have risen above little pecuniary incentives. In a nation where data from the National Bureau of Statistics, indicate that 71.5% of the population are living on less than \$1 per day, (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2012), majority of those who are active in politics fall within this category. Their poverty level would make it difficult for them to resist the lure of the pecuniary incentives of the political godfathers that control the political parties. The participation of a large number of educated elite becomes necessary to counteract the influence of the political godfathers.

The fact that majority of the educated elite that voted 82.92% voted according to their assessment of the candidates that stood for election reflects their independence of thought, and being above inducement by corrupt politicians. Findings by the researcher as a participant observer, showed that the major parties in the ward where the researcher voted during the 2011 governorship, house of assembly and house of representatives elections in Ogun state offered between N1, 000 and N1, 500 for electorates to vote for candidates of their political parties. Some of the electorate, (the poor ones) actually collected money from agents of parties to vote for party candidates. This is something the educated elite by virtue of their socio-economic status would not stoop low to engage in.

Conclusion

The socio-economic characteristics such as education and income which have been proved to positively affect political participation in developed countries (Smith, Scholtzman, Verba, & Brady, 2009; Verba, Scholtzman & Brady, 1995; Leighley & Nagler 1992a; Leighley & Nagler 1992b), did not achieve the same purpose in this study. The inability of socio-economic variables to positively affect political participation in the state was linked to the high level of general insecurity, especially the incidences of political violence which pervades not only the state, but the entire country in general, electoral corruption and electoral violence amongst other factors.

Among the factors that made the socio-economic factors not to lead to enhanced political participation included the non development of a political culture that encourages participation by the citizenry. The relevant institutions charged with performing some strategic functions connected with democratic practice have been weak and inefficient. There are reports of high level of incidence of political violence, general insecurity, electoral corruption and electoral violence not only in the state, but across the country.

Recommendations

The government should provide adequate security before, during and after elections to encourage the educated elite to participate in the political process and governance of the State. A secured environment would encourage the educated elites' to willingly discharge their civil responsibilities of voting during elections.

The government should create an agency that will monitor operations of political parties to ensure they do not engage in electoral malpractices starting from the conduct of their party primaries. The enormous responsibilities that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is currently saddled with, does not create room for the agency to effectively perform that responsibility.

The National Orientation Agency in collaboration with the INEC should organize massive enlightenment programmes targeting the educated elites to get them to actively participate in the electoral process in the State, and country in general.

Political parties should de-emphasize the overbearing influence of the political godfathers, and deliberately recruit educated elites who have excelled in their chosen professions for public office in order to win the support of most of the educated elites who complain on the quality of the candidates fielded for public office by the political parties.

References

- Ayooade, J. A. A. (2008). Godfathers in Politics. In Adetula, V. A. O. (ed) (2008). *Money and Politics in Nigeria*. (85 – 96). Abuja: International Institute for Electoral Systems.
- Berinsky, A. J. & Lenz, G. S. (2011). Education and Political Participation: Exploring the Causal Link. *Political Behaviour*. 33, 3, pp. 357 – 373.
- Birch, A. H. (2007). *The concepts of theories of modern democracy* (3rd ed.), New York: Routledge.
- Bozoki, A. (2002). Theoretical Interpretations of Elite Change in East Central Africa. EUI Working papers, European University Institute. Retrieved online from http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/WP-Texts/02_55.pdf.
- Brady, H., Verba, S. & Scholzman, K. (1995). Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *American Political Science Review*. 89, pp. 271 – 294.
- Bratton, M., Mattes, R. & Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2005). *Public Opinion Democracy and Market Reform in Africa*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Calhoun-Brown, A. (1996). African American Churches and Political Mobilization: The Psychological Impact of Organizational Resources. *The Journal of Politics*, 58, pp 935 – 953. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2960144>.
- Carothers, T. (1999). *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The learning Curve*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Goel, M. L. (1970). The Relevance of Education for Political Participation in a Developing Society. *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol 3, No 3, pp. 333 – 346. Retrieved online from <http://cps.sagepub.com/content/3/3/333.extract>.
- Henn, M. & Foard, N. (2012). Young People, Political Participation and Trust in Britain. *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol 65, 47 – 67. Doi: 10.1093/pa/gsr046.
- Johari, J. C. (2009). *Principles of Modern political science*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Jones-Correa, M. A. & Leal, D. L. (2001). Political Participation: Does Religion Matter? *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 54, no. 4, pp. 751-770. Doi: 10.1177/106591290105400404
- Kam, C. D. & Palmer, C. L. (2008). Reconsidering the Effects of Education on Political Participation. *The Journal of Politics*, 70, pp 612 – 631. Retrieved online from <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/display>.

- Kifordu, H. A. (2011). Political Elite Composition & Democracy in Nigeria. *The Open Area Studies Journal*. 4, 16-31.
- Kila, A. (2006). Season for suspension of political apathy, retrieved online from <http://www.dawodu.com/kila2htm>.
- Leighley, J. E., & Nagler, J. (1992a). Individual and Systemic Influences on Turnout – Who Votes 1984. *Journal of Politics* 54, 3, 718 - 740.
- Leighley, J. E., & Nagler, J. (1992b). Socioeconomic-Class Bias in Turnout, 1964-1988 – the Voters Remain the Same. *American Political Science Review* 86, 3, pp. 725- 736.
- Liu, A. (2001). Political Participation and Dissatisfaction with Democracy: A Comparative Study of New and Stable Democracies. Retrieved online from <http://www.researchmethods.org/polParti-new-dem.pdf>
- Madhav, G. (2007). Report of one man committee on good governance, July Human Right and watch (2007) “Election or selection?” Human rights abuse and threat to free and fair election in Nigeria, retrieved online on 10/06/2011 from <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/africa/nigeria0407/index.htm>.
- Mahajan, V. D. (2007). *Political theory*, New Delhi: S. Chand.
- Masiky, H. (2009). Apathy on eve of important local elections, retrieved online from <http://www.moroccoboard.com/viewpoint/68-hassan-massikj/496-apathy-on-eve-of-important-local-elections>.
- Matusaka, J. G., & Palda, F. (1999). Voter Turnout: How Much Can We Explain? *Public Choice*. 98 (3-4):431-446.
- Milbrath, L. W. & Goel, M. L. (1977). *Political Participation*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Milner, H. (2008). The Informed Political Participation of Young Canadians and Americans. Centre for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, Working Paper 60. Retrieved on from <http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP60Milner.pdf>
- Lyons, Williams & Alexander, Robert (2000). A tale of two electorates: generational replacement and decline of voting in presidential elections, *journal of politics*, Vol 62, No 4, Nov. 2000, pp 1014 – 1034.
- Nie, N. H., Powell, G. B. & Prewitt, K. (1969a). Social Structure and Political Participation - Developmental Relationships. *American Political Science Review* 63, 2, pp. 361-378.
- Nie, N. H., Powell, G.B. & Prewitt, K. (1969b). Social Structure and Political Participation - Developmental Relationships. *American Political Science Review* 63, 3, pp. 808-832.
- Ojukwu, C. C. & Shopeju, J. O. (2010). Elite Corruption and the Culture of Primitive Accumulation in 21st century. *Nigeria International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*. Vol. 1(2), pp. 15-24.

- Olukoshi, Adebayo O. (2002). A transition to Nowhere, Electoral Politics in Nigeria during Abacha years 1993 -8 in Cowen, Michael & Liisa Laakso (eds) (2002). *Multi-party elections in Africa*, Oxford: James Curry.
- Oyebode, A. (1996). The judiciary, corruption and democratization in Gboyega, Alex (ed.) *Corruption and democratization in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Agbo Areo Publishers.
- Petrov, Nikolay (2011). Russia before the storm: More politics, less stability, Carnegie Moscow Center Briefing Vol 13, Issue 1, March 2011, retrieved online from www.carnegie.ru/publications/?fa=43610.
- Putzer, E. (2004). Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood. *American Political Science Review* 96, 1, pp. 41-56.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Quigley, J. M. (1997). Fiscal Federalism and economic Development: A Theoretical Overview. In Anderson, A. E., Harsman, B. & Quigley, J. M. (eds) (1997). *Government for the Future-Unification, Fragmentation and Regionalism*. (83 – 101). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Elsevier Science B. V.
- Rosenstone, S. & Hansen, J. (1993). *Mobilization, Participation & Democracy in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Olarinmoye, Omobolaji Ololade (2008). Godfathers, political parties and electoral corruption in Nigeria, *African journal of political science and international relations* vol. 2 (4) pp 066 – 073, December 2008, retrieved online from <http://www.academicjournals.org/AJPSIR>.
- Schlozman, K. L., Burns, N., Verba, S. & Donahue, J. (1995). Gender and Citizen Participation: Is There a Different Voice. *American Journal of Political Science* 39, 2, pp. 267-293.
- Smith, A., Scholtzman, K. L., Verba, S. & Brady, H. (2009). The Internet and Civic Engagement. Retrieved online from <http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2009/The%20Internet%20and%20Civic%20Engagement.pdf>
- Tenn, S. (2007). The Effect of Education on Voters turn out. *Political Analysis*. 15, 4, pp. 446 – 464.
- Transparency International (2009). Global corruption report retrieved online on 13/06/2011 from transparencyinternational.org
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2010). Baseline Readiness of Nigerian Media as Forum for citizen Engagement in 2011 Elections. Retrieved online from <http://www.ng.undp.org/dgd/Media-Report-Baseline-Survey-October-2010.pdf>.
- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa - UNECA (2005). Human Rights and Rule of Law. Retrieved online from <http://www.uneca.org/agr2005/chap6.pdf>
- Varma, S.P. (2004) *Modern Political theory*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

Verba, S., & Nie, N. H. (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social*. New York: Harper & Row.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L. & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and Equality : Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L. & Brady, H. (1993). Race, Ethnicity, and Political Resources - Participation in the United States. *British Journal of Political Science* 23, 4, pp. 453-497.

Wolfinger, R. & Rosenstone, S. (1980). *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press.