

Buharism and Tinubuism: A Religio-Political Analysis of Nigerian Democratization from 2015 to the Present

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ABSTRACT

Abstract— This article analyzes the impact of Buharism and Tinubuism on Nigeria's democracy, emphasizing the effect of politico-cultural and religious dominance by central southern and northern elites on governance, citizenship, rights for individuals, and equality. It examines the governing class's political, religious, and physical endeavors from 2015 to the present and their ramifications on the current status quo. The research employs primary and secondary sources to elucidate the political-religious nature of developments and their effects on state and national politics. The paper reveals the importance of ethnic and religious elements in Nigerian democracy, especially in the southern and northern areas, where religious disparities profoundly affect advancement, democratic systems, patronage, and state security.

Keywords: Buharism, Tinubuism, Religio-Political, Nigeria, Democracy.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, the growth of political ideologies and leadership styles opposed to one another has influenced the democratization trajectory Nigeria is likely to embark on. This evolution is a reflection of the variety and complexity that exists within Nigeria's socio-political arena (Salau, 2020). The process is framed by two distinct ideologies connected: Buharism and his hostile alter ego, and Tinubuism - if such a vague construct can even be considered an ideology. Even though these leaders have played a significant role in asserting power in Nigeria, their beliefs are founded on distinct historical, theological, and political patchwork. Therefore, this article aims to examine the religious and political implications of Buharism and Tinubuism within the framework of Nigeria's democracy. Specifically, the study examines how these ideologies have impacted Nigerian society's political and religious landscape from 2015 to the present.

CONTEXTUALIZING BUHARISM AND TINUBUISM

Buharism is a term that describes the political philosophy of President Muhammadu Buhari, which is characterized by a combination of Islamic conservatism and military dictatorship. Buhari, who had previously served as the head of state in the military from 1983 to 1985, was re-elected as the civilian president of Nigeria in 2015 via the All Progressives Congress (APC) (Ottuh & Onimhawo, 2023). He reigned with an iron hand and used a mass-based strategy to eliminate corruption and enforce laws, which was most likely inspired by his prior experience in the military.

It is impossible to disentangle the theological connection between Buhari's administration and his fundamental Islamic ancestry, which originates from Northern Nigeria. In a nation where religious tensions between the mostly Muslim North and the Christian South have led to numerous acts of bloodshed, the administration of Buhari has always had to proceed with caution down the path of secularism (Sampson, 2014). During his administration, there were strong debates over the Islamization of policies, notably those about education and justice (Ciftci, 2019). An undertone of his religious beliefs could be seen in the policy choices that, in general, were appealing to his northern base but, on the other hand, alienated Christian and secular organizations.

Despite this, Buharism cannot be classified as completely religious or dictatorial. Buhari was elected on the promise of combating corruption, which had grown especially pervasive in Nigeria following even more decades of misrule by kleptocratic rulers (Obiefuna, 2018). This pledge made Buhari the candidate of choice. Critics, on the other hand, argue that the anti-corruption theme of Buharism was prejudiced and was primarily used to intimidate political opponents rather than to try to bring about structural reform (Jatau & Maza, 2023). Not only did his anti-corruption crusade resonate with Christians and Muslims equally, but it also resonated with those who valued decent administration and accountability.

Tinubuism, on the other hand, can be termed a political theory that advocates for pragmatism, coalition building, and economic liberalism. It was named after Bola

Ahmed Tinubu, now the president of Nigeria, and formerly served as the governor of Lagos State from 1999 to 2007. Known as the "Godfather," Tinubu's influence extends beyond the confines of Lagos. As a result of his involvement in the formation of the All Progressives Congress (APC), which was responsible for the overthrow of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 2015, he is recognized as one of the architects of contemporary Nigerian politics (Onapajo, 2015). Buharism is supported by conservative religious views or populism, depending on one's preference; Tinubuism is based on numbers rather than religion as the primary organizing principle. As a Southern Muslim, Tinubu frequently assumes the role of a mediator between the Christian and Muslim religious differences that exist in Nigeria. He has done this by leveraging his contacts with Christian and Muslim religious leaders. Fashola's method of administration in Lagos is recognized as having a well-oiled wheel of economic liberalization and infrastructure development that will help develop Lagos into a megacity. Tinubuism, an ideology emphasizing expansion via private industry and urbanization, is founded on this economic vision, which formed the foundation of the philosophy.

Regarding religion, Tinubu's policies do not have the overtly Islamic component that Buharism does (Akpanika, 2017; & Iccnua, 2020; Udoh, I., & Udo, 2022; Benson & Williams, 2023). Tinubu's political connections finally crossed religious barriers even though he is a Muslim, primarily because Tinubuism has been able to function in a more amicable, multi-religious Nigeria that has a controversial voting system based on religion.

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN A DEMOCRATIZING POLITY: THE NIGERIAN CASE

According to Onapajo (2016), religion has been a big factor in Nigerian politics for a considerable length of time up till the present day, and it has not only influenced the choices of voters but also the agenda of the government and the sort of leadership that would be in place. Since Christianity and Islam are Nigeria's two most prominent faiths, the political climate has been a minefield of fiery language (Ottuh et al., 2014; Callaway, 2021). Because of this, the political climate has been a minefield. When it comes to the management of the religio-political dynamic, both Buharism and Tinubuism draw from Islam, at least to some level.

Religion, particularly Islam, had a prominent role in Buhari's military dictatorship, which was characterized by a style of leadership that was consistently connected with moral rectitude and religious discipline (Mustapha & Ehrhardt, 2018). In 2015, he was driven to the president by a coalition of Muslims, the majority of whom were from the Northern region. These Muslims were confident that his government would establish Islamic orthodoxy while combating corruption. Some detractors argue that Goodluck Jonathan did not take strong enough action to defend Christian hard-liners in the North, even though these organizations further muddy the religious and the political (Uloma, et al., 2019; Ottuh & Otuyemi, 2023). Buhari's relationship with Christian rights

organizations has deteriorated, in part because he has been unable to put an end to religious violence and herder-farmer confrontations in the Middle Belt, which many people perceived to have religious undertones.

The act of being sluggish in dealing with what many Christians perceive to be a double standard that has been permitted to flourish because of the way his government has conducted itself is an example of Buhari conservatism (Ottuh et al., 2023). Nevertheless, Buhari also tried to mitigate these impressions by making symbolic efforts toward inclusion. For instance, he appointed Christians to senior cabinet positions to demonstrate his commitment to inclusiveness. Tinubuism, on the other hand, has a connection with religion that is more open to interpretation. Because Tinubu is from the South, a region of Nigeria where Christians make up the bulk of the population, he caters to the political concerns of Nigerian Christians, unlike Buhari (Akogun, 2018). On the other hand, his political maneuvering, closely linked with Christian leaders, like his Christian vice presidents, Crouch, and others, gives the impression that they are more of a strategic partnership. In Lagos, Tinubu never made religious identity a key weapon of Nigerian politics as it has become now in Sokoto; his administration and policies were not too tainted by religious concerns when contrasted with developmental and institutional changes. Because of this, tinubuism has been able to overcome religious differences more easily than Buharism has been able to do so (Akogun, 2018). Even though Although Tinubu's religious beliefs were never going to be the foundation of his political brand, they were a crucial component of how he handled religious sensitivities throughout his time in office. He is forming alliances with both Christians and Muslims, particularly in the southern and western regions of the country.

IMPACT ON NIGERIAN DEMOCRATIZATION

Both Buharism and Tinubuism are ideas that have had a significant influence on the progress of democracy in Nigeria. These ideologies have impacted governance, electoral politics, and official policy. During the time that Buhari was in office (2015-2023), power was consolidated as a result of his nomination of military and security leaders who were comprised of Northern Muslims. It generated concerns that other faiths and ethnic groups might be diminished. In addition, despite the fact that his anti-corruption campaign was very well received, it was always subject to criticism due to the fact that it was political. The use of force and the selective application of anti-corruption measures were two limitations placed on democratic accountability during the Buharism era.

On the other side, Tinubu's administration has taken a more liberal and critical approach to economics and has advocated for the devolution of power into the hands of the people. The state of Lagos became the economic capital of Nigeria during his stint as governor, which was marked by the construction of infrastructure, the attraction of foreign investment, and the state's overall economic growth. Hence, the paradox - Tinubuism provides a kind of democratization preoccupied with the capacity for

administration and the expansion of the economy, even though it operates inside a system that is still replete with the inequalities that democracy strives to eliminate. Regarding the development of electoral politics in Nigeria, neither Buharism nor Tinubuism can be blamed for the developments that have taken place (Okon, 2003; Okon & Akpan, 200). When Buhari emerged successful in the elections, it was seen as a key turning point in the growth of democracy in Nigeria (Ross, 2015; Obono & Onyechi, 2017; Žagar, 2019). This was the first time in the country's history that an opposition candidate could remove an incumbent president from office. His triumph, achieved via forming a coalition between the North and the South, demonstrated that two areas could effectively unify. His re-election in 2019 after a very contentious election in which widespread charges of electoral fraud were made has given rise to skepticism over the authenticity of the Buharian commitment to the democratic ethos (Oyewole & Omotola, 2022). Tinubu's political approach has been defined by the formation of coalitions and the use of patronage networks in order to keep control over crucial election areas.

Since 2015, his influence inside the APC has been critical in determining the extent to which the party has dominated the political landscape in Nigeria. The political machine founded by Tinubu, sometimes called the "Tinubu political dynasty," has been a double-edged sword for the process of democracy in Nigeria. On the one hand, it has offered stability and continuity within the APC; on the other hand, it has aroused worries about the personalization of power and the undermining of democratic institutions while simultaneously providing stability and continuity.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND RELIGIOUS DIVIDES

There is a substantial disparity in how the general public views Buharism and Tinubuism, depending on different religious and ethnic groups. The Buhari ideology has maintained significant popularity among Muslims in the Northern region. These Muslims see Buhari as a leader dedicated to combating corruption and protecting Islamic principles (Ottuh & Erhabor, 2022). Nevertheless, in the Christian South, a profound lack of faith in Buhari's leadership has been established as a result of the perception that he is biased toward Muslims from the North.

The Tinubuist movement, on the other hand, has been more effective in bridging the religious gaps in Nigeria. Tinubu's Muslim-Muslim ticket in the 2023 election caused Christians to express anxiety; nevertheless, his track record of engaging with Christian political leaders and his emphasis on economic development has served to alleviate or at least offset these worries. However, Tinubu's dependence on patronage politics has led to charges that his style of government weakens democratic accountability while simultaneously promoting economic development. These critiques have been brought about as a result of the latter.

CONCLUSION

The Buharistic and Tinubuist political ideologies are two separate but connected approaches to political administration and democracy that have been prevalent in Nigeria since 2015 to the present day. Since 2015, Buharism and Tinubuism, both political philosophies, have had a substantial influence on the path that Nigeria's progressive democracy has taken. Buharism, defined by a combination of military discipline, Islamic conservatism, and a persistent anti-corruption drive, changed Nigeria's government structure via a centralized and sometimes autocratic strategy. Even though Buhari's reign garnered popularity due to its perceived moral authority and war on corruption, it also increased regional and religious differences, particularly between the Christian South and the Muslim North. Concerns were raised over the deterioration of democratic ideals and inclusion due to the selective execution of his programs and the consolidation of power in the hands of Northern elites.

Tinubuism, on the other hand, is an ideology that is more pragmatic and economically liberal than other ideologies. Because Tinubu's political ideology is founded on the principles of coalition-building, economic growth, and a flexible attitude to religion, he was able to navigate Nigeria's intricate religious and ethnic terrain with more ease. Even though his dependence on patronage networks generated doubts about the openness and accountability of his leadership, his economic triumphs in Lagos provided the framework for a governing style centered on growth and modernization. Tinubuism has shown the capacity to bring together various political forces; nevertheless, it also presents problems in improving Nigeria's democratic system since it encourages the individualization of power.

After analyzing the religio-political dynamics of both ideologies, it is abundantly obvious that religion plays a significant influence in determining the behavior of voters and the consequences of policy decisions in Nigeria. Tinubuism advocated a more inclusive strategy, seeking partnerships across religious divisions, in contrast to Buharism, which leaned primarily on Islamic conservatism. On the other hand, both of these ideas highlight the ongoing conflict between politics and religion in Nigeria's democratic process. Ultimately, the legacies of Buharism and Tinubuism reflect the intricate interaction of religious, political, and economic factors that have shaped the process of democracy in Nigeria. Even though Nigeria is still developing, the impact of these two philosophies will likely continue to affect the future of government, electoral politics, and national unity. It is essential to strike a balance between religious pluralism, political pragmatism, and economic growth to achieve sustained democratization in Nigeria, where their achievements and failures provide significant lessons for the consolidation of democracy.

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