A META ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA'S POPULATION CENSUS RESULTS FALSIFICATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT
Demographic data obtained from population census serves as a fundamental basis for national development planning, revenue distribution, state establishment, local government creation, constituency delineation, and parliamentary representation. The significance of a precise and dependable population census in national development planning cannot be overstated. Despite its importance, population data in Nigeria is plagued by issues of inaccuracy and unreliability, often resulting in perceived falsification. Falsified population data can have adverse effects on a country's socioeconomic and political progress. This study employed an Armchair research approach to examine the falsification of population census outcomes in Nigeria and its repercussions. By delving into the historical context of census practices in Nigeria, defining census and falsification concepts, uncovering instances of census falsifications in Nigeria, and outlining their implications, the analysis shed light on intentional and unintentional falsifications, including errors in data collection instruments. The repercussions of manipulating population figures encompass incitement of unrest, inequitable revenue sharing and resource allocation, inaccurate parliamentary representation, corruption, unnecessary constituency delineations, and local government creations. To prevent the falsification of population census findings, recommendations include implementing biometric technology in data collection, establishing a comprehensive population registry for universal registration and updates, promoting public awareness on the significance of precise census data, enhancing the training of census personnel, conducting regular census exercises, and ensuring adequate funding for such undertakings.

1.0 Introduction

Population census in Nigeria has evolved into a contentious and disputable subject matter due to its implications on the configuration of geopolitical, state, and ethnic relations, as well as the distribution of power. The endeavor to ascertain Nigeria's population has been a subject of intense debate since 1866, and the determination of the total population has predominantly been based on conjecture rather than precise enumeration and data presentation. The stance of the Nigerian populace, particularly the political elite and leaders, towards population size and its impact on constituent states and regions sets the backdrop for the census-related controversies linked to Nigeria. Undeniably, population census stands as a critical concern in Nigeria owing to the profound consequences of population size and structure on societal transformation, progress, and overall quality of life.

The significance of population census in any nation lies in its pivotal role in shaping developmental strategies by furnishing essential data for effective national planning, equitable governance, and future projections. It also serves as the foundation for fair resource allocation, including revenue sharing, electoral representation, job distribution, establishment of industries, and provision of social amenities such as healthcare facilities, educational institutions, postal services, transportation infrastructure, and law enforcement agencies. Moreover, demographic data determines the apportionment of legislative seats at both federal and state levels. Consequently, the politicization of population census in Nigeria has materialized as the political class grasps the profound influence of recorded population figures on the allocation of government resources, as well as their economic and political stature within the societal framework. This correlation between population statistics and resource distribution has prompted the manipulation and distortion of census data pertaining to specific groups or regions within the country, thereby breeding political, social, ethnic, and religious contentions, along with geopolitical tensions and disputes that impede nation-building and sustainable progress.

The facilitation of political and economic advancement in Nigeria would have been considerably smoother had there existed reliable population statistics, as the dearth of accurate demographic information directly impedes the government's ability to ensure fair political representation and equitable access to crucial public resources. Regrettably, the absence of effective, dependable, and credible census data in contemporary Nigeria poses a significant challenge. Therefore, in instances where a country lacks accurate knowledge of the percentage and the overall population of its inhabitants, the process of strategic planning is prone to being disorganized. This disorganization may manifest in the inadequate allocation of resources to regions or sectors that are in urgent need, deficient political representation, improper distribution of essential infrastructure and social services, among other issues. This discrepancy is often observed in scenarios where certain areas have numerous vacant classrooms while others suffer from overcrowding, disparities in healthcare services availability, and unequal state funding from the national treasury based on inaccurate population figures. Consequently, these disparities result in widespread grievances of marginalization from certain sectors of the population, potentially escalating to calls for secession and dissolution of the federated states, as is being observed in the southeastern region of Nigeria, where groups like IPOB and MASSOB advocate for independence. The demand for restructuring through a national constitutional conference is also gaining momentum. The root cause of these tensions can be traced back to the manipulation of population census data, which has granted advantages to some regions over others. As Nigeria gears up for another census exercise, it is crucial to critically review past census data to avoid falsification of the results. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the falsification of population census results in Nigeria and evaluate its implications on the nation's growth and development.

1.1 Problem Statement and Aim of the Study

Previous census exercises have been surrounded by controversies, a phenomenon that experts have attributed to the politicization of population distribution. This is due to the fact that the figures obtained are utilized for revenue allocation from the federation account as well as for the delineation of constituencies. Throughout the years, including 1963, 1973, 1991, and the most recent one, these figures have been deemed as mere fabrications by individuals seeking to manipulate the fate of the Nigerian populace (Kolapo and Faloseyi, 2007). Census activities in Nigeria are intricately linked to petty-bourgeois politics, representing a scenario where states and/or ethnic groups engage in a struggle to inflate census numbers for their own benefit. As a result, few issues have sparked as much controversy, heated discussions, and ethnic

tensions as the manipulation of national census data. This has undoubtedly inflicted significant harm on the nation. Consequently, Nigerians have developed a deep-seated apathy towards census exercises, firmly believing that no census endeavor can be successful in Nigeria, regardless of whether it is conducted under a civilian or military administration. Recognizing these challenges and the severe consequences of falsifying census data, this study aims to examine the population census in Nigeria and its ramifications. In order to achieve this goal, the research employed the Armchair research methodology.

2.0 Methodology and Description of the Study Area

Having introduced the interest of this paper which is to examine and analyze population census results falsification in Nigeria, an armchair research method was employed to conduct this research. To this, previous censuses were x-rayed so as to unfold the elements of falsification. This was done through addressing the following: clarification of the concepts census and falsification, history of census in Nigeria, evidence of population census falsification in Nigeria, its implications conclusion and recommendations.

Nigeria is part of the West African region that is also in the Sub-Saharan African continent. The country is located within the tropical belt (Figure 1), with a wide land mass area of 923,768km², and a total coastline length of 850km (National Communication, 2003; Nwilo et al, 2006). Nigeria is situated in the northern between 4° and 14' and between 3° and 15' degrees of the eastern longitudes (Oguntunde et al, 2011). This explains the country's climatic variations and the differences on the magnitude of climate change impacts being experienced across the country (Allu, 2014).

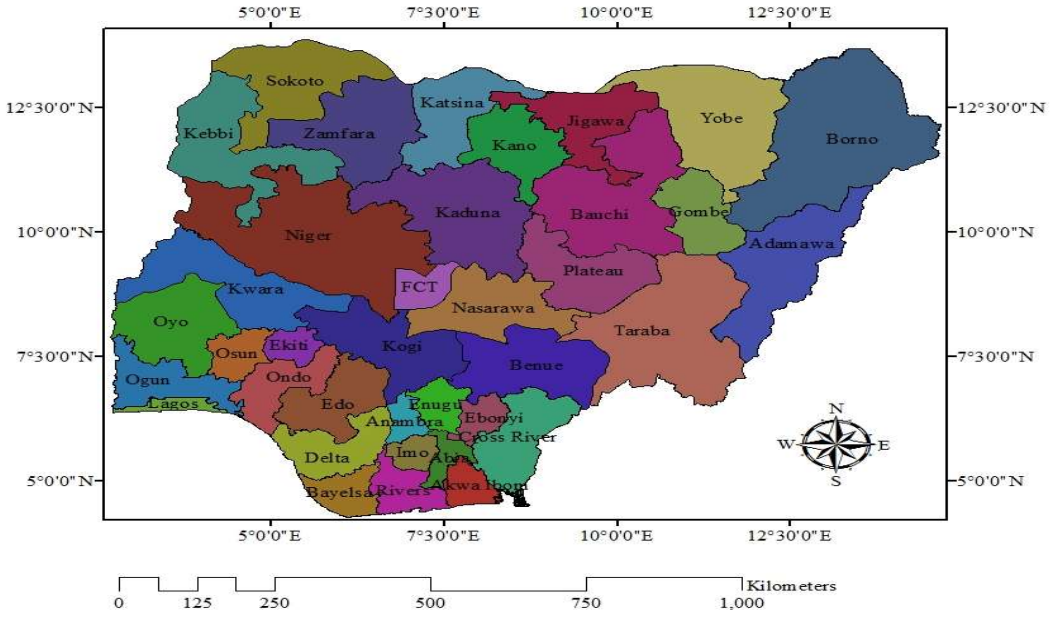


Figure 1: Nigeria showing the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

The population of Nigeria as published by the National Population Census Commission (NPC, 2006) is about 150, 000,000 person and this is projected to 200, 000, 000 persons as at 2017 (Demographic statistic Bulleting, 2022). Table 1 shows Nigeria's 36 states in order of their total population based on the 2006 Census figures, (population.gov.ng) as well as their 2016 projected populations, which was published by the National Bureau of Statistics, (Demographic Statistics Bulletin 2022)

Table 1: Nigeria's 36 states in order of their total population based on the 2006 Census figures and their 2016

State	2006 population	2016 population	State	2006 population	2016 population
Kano	9,401,288	13,076,892	Zamfara	3,278,873	4,515,427
Lagos	9,113,605	12,550,598	Enugu	3,267,837	4,411,119
Kaduna	6,113,503	8,252,366	Kebbi	3,256,541	4,440,050
Katsina	5,801,584	7,831,319	Edo	3,233,366	4,235,595
Oyo	5,580,894	7,840,864	Plateau	3,206,531	4,200,442
Rivers	5,198,605	7,303,924	Adamawa	3,178,950	4,248,436
Bauchi	4,653,066	6,537,314	Cross/River	2,892,988	3,866,269
Jigawa	4,361,002	5,828,163	Abia	2,845,380	3,727,347
Benue	4,253,641	5,741,815	Ekiti	2,398,957	3,270,798
Anambra	4,177,828	5,527,809	Kwara	2,365,353	3,192,893
Borno	4,171,104	5,860,183	Gombe	2,365,040	3,256,962
Delta	4,112,445	5,663,362	Yobe	2,321,339	3,294,137
Niger	3,954,772	5,556,247	Taraba	2,294,800	3,066,834
Imo	3,927,563	5,408,756	Ebonyi	2,176,947	2,880,383
Akwa Ibom	3,178,950	5,482,177	Nasarawa	1,869,377	2,523,395
Ogun	3,751,140	5,217,716	Bayelsa	1,704,515	2,277,961
Sokoto	3,702,676	4,998,090	FCT	1,405,201	3,564,126
Ondo	3,460,877	4,671,695			
Osun	3,416,959	4,705,589			
Kogi	3,314,043	4,473,490			

2.1 Conceptual Issues

Concepts of National Population Census

The origin of the word "census" can be traced back to the Latin word 'censere', which denotes the act of taxing and assessing value. Conducted every decade, a population census entails a comprehensive enumeration of a nation's inhabitants, spanning back to ancient times and serving as a crucial wellspring of demographic data (Adeline and Eme, 2015). According to Skerry (2000), Haber Habermann highlights that a census offers a snapshot of a country, delineating its boundaries, strengths, weaknesses, and internal dynamics. By prompting individuals to reflect on their societal position, a census fosters introspection regarding one's place within the nation.

As defined by the United Nations, population census encompasses the entire process of gathering, organizing, assessing, interpreting, and disseminating demographic, economic, and social information pertaining to all individuals in a nation or a delimited region at a specific moment. Described in Population and Societies (2010), a national population census serves as a statistical endeavor aimed at enumerating a country's entire populace while capturing essential demographic, social, and economic data. Osinaike, et al. (2006) characterize census as a method crucial for amassing statistical insights vital for democratic governance and societal advancement. Consequently, population census emerges as a pivotal governmental duty, laying the groundwork for policy formulation across political, economic, and social realms (Peter et al., 2013). In essence, it plays a central role in strategic planning for sustainable national development, offering insights into the total population, demographic

characteristics, and residential patterns, thus informing infrastructure development geared towards enhancing citizens' quality of life (Mimiko, 2006). Despite the United Nations' recommendation of a decennial census cycle, Nigeria has not consistently adhered to this timeframe in its past census exercises. The global body advocates for government-led, synchronized, and periodically conducted censuses to ensure accurate and timely demographic information collection.

The concept of Falsification

Falsification can be construed as the deliberate act of rendering something false through fraudulent alterations, such as counterfeiting documents or measures, and it also encompasses the manipulation of research materials, processes, and outcomes with the intent to deceive. The distortion of data or representations in an exaggerated manner can also fall under the umbrella of falsification. Larry Laudan (1977) defined falsification as the alteration or omission of research data to bolster claims, hypotheses, or other related information. In the realm of science, falsification is commonly understood as the dissemination of misleading information in association with a study, research project, or experiment. Scientific falsification fundamentally contradicts the principles of the scientific method, presenting ethical, moral, and hazardous implications. It stands as one of the gravest transgressions within the realm of research endeavors.

From the aforementioned discussion, it can be inferred that falsification may occur through human interventions or errors in instruments. In the context of the population census in Nigeria, deliberate human manipulations aimed at fraudulent activities are prevalent. The initial scholar to raise concerns regarding falsification was Sir Karl Popper, a significant figure in the 20th century intellectual landscape. Popper revolutionized the philosophy of science by proposing a novel approach to theory validation. Rather than seeking confirmatory evidence for a hypothesis, Popper advocated for actively seeking evidence that could potentially refute the hypothesis. He argued that robust hypotheses should be bold and readily testable, as they are more likely to withstand rigorous scrutiny. While Popper's framework appeared straightforward, it encountered challenges, particularly concerning the demarcation between scientific and non-scientific endeavors. The concept of falsifiability emerged as a response to the problem of anomalies in scientific inquiry, where discrepancies between established theories and empirical findings pose significant challenges. In the context of population census anomalies in Nigeria, the prevalence of human manipulations aimed at falsifying results and gaining unwarranted advantages underscores the relevance of this study.

The principle of falsification plays a crucial role in validating the contemporary scientific method, a process that cannot be exempt from the population census process. Comprehending the methodology and constraints of science is imperative for ensuring the accuracy of scientific outcomes. Inductive reasoning, being insufficient to surmount the challenge of induction due to the inescapable influence of one's perception and reality, underscores the significance of falsification in determining the validity of a hypothesis. A hypothesis that cannot be disproved is deemed inadequate. Adhering to this principle necessitates scientists to scrutinize topics critically without making justifications for their validity. Historically, scientific endeavors often resorted to invoking a divine creator to resolve uncertainties. Addressing this issue, Karl Popper scrutinized the scientific approach and posited that adherence to the scientific method hinges on the falsifiability of a theory. Nevertheless, not all unfalsifiable scientific theories are devoid of significance in shaping current scientific paradigms. An illustrative instance is the ancient Greek postulation of atoms, which could neither be proven nor refuted, thus deeming the theory unscientific. However, contemporary science has demonstrated the particulate nature of matter. The study of science encompasses three pivotal variables related to falsification: falsifiable, falsifiability, and falsificationism.

Falsification is considered a fundamental transgression, particularly in the realm of research, and its ramifications are profound. In the medical sector, for example, valid research forms the basis for determining optimal treatment strategies; hence, falsification of efficacy evidence directly impacts patient care. Scientific falsification arguably poses the most perilous threat in this context. The manipulation of data and evidence can have severe repercussions. Virtually every facet of daily life in various cultures and societies is underpinned by what is deemed as credible research. Business practices, consumer behavior, and educational approaches are all influenced by research findings. The societal structure as we perceive it is largely shaped by research outcomes. The media wields significant influence over individuals, often relying on research-based facts and figures to validate their reports. If research findings are falsified and disseminated, the repercussions are widespread and far-reaching.

History of Population Census in Nigeria

Several estimates of the Nigerian population were made during the colonial period and post-colonial era. Makinwa (1985) documented that the first census took place in 1866 and covered only the Lagos area. The next was in 1871 and marked the beginning of decennial censuses in Nigeria. Following the British tradition of taking censuses in years ending with "one," other censuses of the Lagos colony and its surrounding areas followed in 1881, 1891, and 1901. In 1906, Lagos colony was merged with the then protectorate of Southern Nigeria. Consequently, the census of 1911 covered the whole of what was then known as Southern Nigeria. This was not a true census in that a house-to-house count only took place in 11 main ports, while only estimates of population were made for the rest of the southern provinces and the entire Northern Protectorate, (Petre et'al, 2013). It was the 1921 census during the colonial era that covered the whole country of Nigeria. It was conducted in two parts: one for the town, called the township census, and the other for the rest of the country, called the provincial census. In the township census, 13 townships were enumerated; it was conducted in one day and yielded fairly accurate results. The provincial census spread over a period of two months and because of several difficulties it yielded rather inaccurate results Okolo (1999). According to one account, the provincial census yielded inaccurate data owing to the difficulties arising from the hearty dislike which many tribes feel towards enumeration, and to the shortage of European staff due to World War I (Aluko, 1965).

In 1931, an effort was made to conduct a new census across the entire nation. Regrettably, due to economic hardships, locust invasions in the north, and tax uprisings in Aba, Onitsha, and Owerri between 1929 and 1930, the census was not carried out nationwide. Instead, counting of individuals occurred solely in Lagos, five other townships, 201 villages in Northern Nigeria, and among all foreign residents in the country at that time, according to Petre et al. (2013). Estimates of the population for other individuals and areas were based on existing tax documents and records. Thus, from 1866 to 1931, the censuses were largely unreliable as they did not fulfill all the recognized census criteria, such as individual enumeration, universality, simultaneity, and defined periodicity. In 1941, due to World War II, there was no national census conducted. The subsequent census post-war took place between 1950 and 1953. This process was carried out at various times across the nation. The census for Lagos was the initial one, conducted from 1950 to 1951, serving as a trial to assess new methodologies. Northern Nigeria's census took place between May and July 1952. Residents of the west and mid-west were counted in December 1952 and January 1953, while the east's census occurred in May, June, and August 1953.

Overall, this census marked a significant improvement from previous ones as it covered the entire country. It was spread out over time to allow the Department of Statistics to manage the vast amount of data collected from Nigeria's extensive area. However, the variations in timing meant that data from one region could not be compared with data from another. Additionally, the 1952-1953 censuses faced numerous other shortcomings and obstacles. Many individuals were reluctant to have their wives and children counted as, during that period, the number of wives and children was seen as an indication of a man's wealth. There were those who believed the census could lead to increased taxes for individuals with many wives and children. Some also feared that the census would bring bad luck, famine, or misfortune. Furthermore, certain individuals viewed the census as a way to identify individuals for military conscription, given the previous experience of conscription during the war. By 1952-1953, the northern, western, and eastern regions of the country were preparing for some level of self-governance from the colonial administration as noted by Makama (2006).

Since the last attempt to have census in Nigeria in 1973, no subsequent nationwide census had been held as of 1990. The significant advancements in transportation and accessibility of most regions, in technological capacity, and in the level of education across the nation, along with the widespread acknowledgment of national unity and legitimacy, contributed to the favorable outcome of the autumn 1991 census. Conducted across approximately 250,000 enumeration areas by the National Population Commission, with representation in each of the country's Local Government Areas, the census aimed to avoid potential disputes by excluding religious and ethnic data from the census forms. Moreover, the validation of state outcomes was overseen by supervisors from external regions. Some experts suggest that the endeavor to execute a trustworthy census with apparent validity could serve as an unexpectedly beneficial initiative, strengthening a collective sense of national identity and establishing a template for addressing regional and ethnic disparities.

Following multiple delays, the subsequent and most recent census in Nigeria took place in March 2006. This census marked the second in a series carried out under a democratic regime since the contentious 1952-1953 census. In November 2001, President Obasanjo inaugurated the National Population Commission, charging it with the crucial task of organizing a precise, dependable, and reputable census for the nation. The leadership of the National Population Commission was assumed by Alhaji Samaila Makama. In pursuit of an accurate and trustworthy census, the Commission formulated methodologies and integrated innovative approaches and state-of-the-art technology for the census process. For the first time, the 2006 census utilized technologies such as the Geographical Positioning System (GPS) and Satellite imagery for creating Geo-Referenced Enumeration Area maps, OMR/ICR/OCR machine-readable forms for data collection, Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) to identify duplicate entries, and Geographic Information System (GIS) for storing the census results from 2006 (Obasanjo, 2006). The initial publication of the 2006 census presents a concise defense of the census methodologies and provides, in an appendix, the interim total population figures categorized by gender and state, along with the average growth rate spanning 1999-2006.

The population total as of March 2006 was provisionally given as 140,003,542. The 2006 census, unlike that of 1991, sought to lessen controversy by avoiding questions on religion or ethnicity. The idea to remove the ethnic and religion status of respondents was greeted with mix feelings Lalasz, (2006).

3.0 Results and Discussions

Ikoba, Jolayemi & Olusola (2018) conducted a Benford-theoretic assessment of the censuses in Nigeria from 1991 and 2006. Data sourced from the National Bureau of Statistics underwent analysis through the application of Benford's probability distribution. The examination encompassed the census data overall and the aggregated data for the six geopolitical zones within the country to ascertain the degree of adherence to Benford's distribution, utilizing the Chi-square goodness of fit test. The findings indicated significant disparities from Benford's distribution in both censuses' overall counts. Notably, the North-West region exhibited the most pronounced deviation in both censuses, while the North-East and South-West displayed the lowest discrepancies in the 1991 and 2006 censuses, respectively. Nevertheless, notable consistency was observed in the dimensions of the local government areas and the population density for the 2006 census.

Bamgbose (2009) uncovered a multitude of irrefutable evidence spanning numerous years, demonstrating that census activities in Nigeria have often been marred by deliberate misinformation, with the goal of securing advantages from the government. In a bid to unveil the fabrication of population census outcomes in Nigeria, the study scrutinized past census results within the country to evaluate the overall findings and pinpoint controversies. The analysis commenced with an in-depth examination of the 1952-1953 census due to its timing coinciding with Nigeria's preparations for autonomy and sovereignty, with its results influencing the electoral process for the Federal House of Parliament. The dataset from this particular census formed the basis for allocating 50% representation to the northern region, a decision vehemently opposed by politicians hailing from southern areas (east and west). Their contention revolved around the allegation that the colonial administration had artificially inflated the population figures in the north to perpetuate political dominance by politicians from that region who were favorable to the British colonial regime. This suspicion of falsification in the 1952-1953 census, where the North secured 50% of parliamentary seats, served as the catalyst for distorting census data, as it gradually dawned on the populace that population size directly influenced political influence, manifesting in the allocation of elected representatives in Parliament or local councils, as well as the distribution of public amenities like schools, hospitals, water infrastructure, and electricity.

The 1963 census marked the initial post-colonial and post-independence census in Nigeria, yet its outcomes failed to resonate positively with the populace. The officially reported figure from the 1963 census stood at 55.6 million, a figure incongruent with the census data from the preceding decade, hinting at a seemingly implausible annual growth rate of 5.8%. Apart from potential inflation of the aggregate figure, evident intra-regional inconsistencies surfaced upon close scrutiny of the 1953 and 1963 census results. In portions of the southeast, for example, the two sets of data imply that some non-urban local government areas (LGAs) had increased at a rate of almost 13 percent per year, while other neighboring areas experienced a minute growth rate of 0.5 percent per year. Despite the controversy, the results of the 1963 census were eventually accepted.

The second post-independence census in Nigeria was the National population census of 1991, which was not free of the element of falsification either. "The 1991 census was a time of accusations and counteraccusations of falsification and inflation," writes Okolo (1999), "and the reported sex ratio (101.3) was contested as it defied world standards and expectations. There were allegations of under-counting and over-counting, and even of manipulation of figures, with the torrent of complaints and rejections that followed the figures." The official census counts of 1991 was 88,5 million people, which was much lower than the 110 million people that many population experts expected. For example, the World Bank estimated Nigeria's population in 1990 at 119 million people, with an estimated yearly growth rate of 3,3 percent. Other sources varied on the exact figure but virtually all agreed that the annual growth rate of population in Nigeria increased from the 1950's to most of the 1980's. According to the government, population growth in most of the country increased at a rate of 2 percent between 1953 and 1962.

For the period between 1965 and 1973, the World Bank estimated Nigeria's growth rate at 2.5 percent, increasing to 2.7 percent between 1973 and 1983. The CIA World Fact book (2016). The last and the recent population census was in 2006, the result shows that Nigeria has 140.0 million people. The total is higher than the projected population of Nigeria in the UN's Revision estimates which show a mid- 2006 population of 134 million. On the politically sensitive matter of the relative proportions of the population in the northern and southern states, the census shows a virtually unchanged division from the previous censuses for instance in 1991 the North has 53.3 per cent of the population and the South has 46.7 per cent while in 2006, the North has 53.6 percent and the South 46.4. (Nigeria National Population Commission, 2006). The 2006 census which sought to lessen controversy, could not escape state- level challenges too to its completeness of estimation. Lagos in particular felt aggrieved. Thus, Weeks, (2008) in his work asserts that the 2006 enumeration exercise was far from being a complete success as there were all kinds of complaints emanating from diverse quarters while enumerators complained of shortages of vital census materials.

According to Bamgbose (2009), the arguments and counterarguments around the 2006 population census revolve around both Kano state and Lagos state. This was made clear when the former Lagos state governor, Ahmed Tinubu, expressed his anger at a book presentation on errors, miscalculations and omissions: the falsification of the census figures in Lagos state. Tinubu said, "we can afford a recount all over the country, and we want one in Lagos. This is the highest form of corruption: fudging census figures just to satisfy some people. No adjustment will make it right; the figure is rejected. We have the support and funding of the UN and the European Union, so let's have a recount."

Ayodele (2007) also raised the issue of the alleged falsification of the results of the 2006 census. According to him, Kano state, which was about the same size as Lagos in 1991, has now a population of 13.732,331, while Lagos has a population of 9.013,534. In his analysis of the 2006 census result Bamgbose (2009) revealed that the released 2006 population census results shows Kano state had 9,383,682 while Lagos had 9,013,634. From the figures released, it was adjudged that Kano state is having the highest population. The figure released by the NPC for Lagos did not match any available social indicators such as the birth rate, the number of houses or physical structures in the area, the number of vehicles per capita, children immunization rate, waste generation, the number of schools in the area, and the cosmopolitan character of the state, through which the population can be derived. According to the available data, the number of immunized children in Lagos state was 3.289,560 in 2004, 3.219,676 in 2005, and 3.186,195 in 2006. The WHO estimated a population of about 16 million in Lagos State based on the results of children immunized between 2000 and 2006. At the time of the 2006 census, Lagos had 26,000 enumeration areas and according to the NPC manual, a city/state should have between 500 and 1000 inhabitants per enumeration area. With an average population of 750 persons per enumeration area, Lagos state should have about 19,500 inhabitants (750 x 26,000).

Again, the released figure for the Lagos State by the NPC stood at 9,013, 534. This is actually far less from what the total number of the residents should be. There are twenty Local Governments in the state and going by the total number of both male and female, this should stand by 17,552,942. This data was gotten from the similar census conducted by Lagos state itself. On the other hand, the released 2006 population census showed that 'Kano has the largest population and that 'North has more population than South' (Muogbo et al., 2007). However, since 1990, Nigeria has been subjected to a cycle of polymorphous violence which has generated thousands of internally displaced persons.

Implications

Any nation's ability to plan for its residents' well-being through government and institutional planning is greatly enhanced by an accurate population census, Nduka (2006). Because the statistics give information for efficient national planning, equitable governance, and future planning, precise statistical knowledge of Nigeria's population is therefore essential to the country's development objectives. In addition, it provides the foundation for the distribution of resources, including revenue, employment, representation of constituencies, and the location of businesses and public facilities like roads, schools, hospitals, and police stations. It also determines the distribution of legislative seats among states in the federal and state houses of assembly. On the other hand, data fabrication may pervert the equity principle, which advocates for fairness and balance distribution of resources and development projects across the state with several implications across economic social and cultural and development indices of the country. This paper therefore summarizes the implications of falsifying population census results in the following paragraphs.

An attempt at falsification could sow the seed of fear of domination among the geopolitical zones as more people become aware of the advantages of having a large population in terms of controlling political power. An attempt to resist the domination could result in riots, as was the case in the 1962–1963 Nigerian census riot, where the eastern and mid-western regions criticized the results and saw it as a ploy by the western and northern regions to dominate them. As a result, they categorically rejected the findings. Thus, the fabrication of census results may provoke a crisis that eventually results in national anarchy.

In Nigeria, the allocation of infrastructures and government facilities, such as schools, hospitals, roads, and portable water supply, is predominantly based on population size among various other factors. Thus, any manipulation in the population census outcomes might lead the government to misplace these essential facilities and infrastructures. Consequently, regions in dire need may suffer deprivation, while those less in need may receive preferential treatment due to inaccurate population data. This disparity is evident in Nigeria, where certain areas have empty classrooms while others are overcrowded, hospitals with vacant beds contrasted with patients lying on bare floors due to insufficient bed capacity. In some regions, animals have access to tap water while humans resort to drinking unhygienic water from streams due to the absence of portable drinking water sources. Therefore, the repercussions of falsifying population data may result in the misallocation of priorities, government facilities, and infrastructures.

In Nigeria, the central government controls the resources and revenues generated by the states, distributing them among the federal, state, and local government levels based on a sharing formula that incorporates population size among other considerations. Consequently, inaccurate population figures could lead to inequitable distribution and allocation of revenue. Often, falsifications are motivated by a desire for political supremacy, particularly evident in Nigeria, with far-reaching implications for the democratic process as misrepresented figures can be exploited to manipulate election outcomes in favor of certain individuals. This trend is notably prominent in the Nigerian federation, where the northern region typically wields significant influence in determining the central government's composition. Thus, the falsification of population data may fuel electoral misconduct, as highlighted by Adeline and Eme (2015).

Furthermore, the study also highlights how falsifying population data impacts the establishment of states and local governments, constituency delineations, and the apportionment of seats for parliamentary representation in both the upper and lower houses. In Nigeria, decisions regarding state and local government creation, as well as constituency delineations, are primarily influenced by population size and other relevant factors. Consequently, erroneous population data may result in unfair seat allocation in the parliament, potentially leading to claims of marginalization and the protection of specific group interests at the expense of others.

Upon considering the significant implications of population data manipulation, it is crucial to assert that falsifying such data amounts to corruption, contravening principles of fairness, justice, and proper governance. Such actions have the potential to unravel the unity of our federation, hinder our development progress, and sow chaos, anarchy, and unrest through crises and lopsided development.

4.0 Conclusion

The distribution of resources within the political system is based on the data obtained from population censuses. In Nigeria, census outcomes highlight the workforce availability and determine the allocation of resources. The 2006 census was

exaggerated due to the understanding that these exercises not only determine the nation's size but also the sizes of different ethnic groups. Moreover, census activities are utilized within the state to assess the political power and impact of various ethnic groups. Since the 1914 unification, ethnic groups in Nigeria have consistently sought increased influence and authority. Consequently, the 2006 population census was manipulated to favor specific ethnic political agendas and ambitions. The competition among multiple ethnic groups in the country significantly contributes to the politicization of census activities. The utilization of population census data for revenue allocation has heightened the eagerness of states in the federation to engage in irregular practices. This increased awareness of the connection between population size, revenue distribution, and political representation in Nigeria poses significant challenges in achieving unbiased population counts.

Numerous challenges hinder the accuracy of population census outcomes, including the absence of a national framework for defining and identifying enumerated areas, inadequate training for census officials, a lack of census operation professionals, conflicting allegiances among census workers, financial constraints, logistical issues, topographic challenges, low levels of education, corruption, ineffective field operation supervision, and the unavailability of essential materials like maps for area identification. These obstacles have prevented the seamless achievement of census goals in Nigeria, resulting in unreliable and erroneous population data.

5.0 Recommendations

This paper haven highlighted the importance of accurate and reliable census data on socio-economic and political life of a nation and identified the implications of its falsification, recommends the following:

i. Post enumeration survey (PES) be conducted independently to assess the validity of the authenticity of the census result.

ii. The use of modern technology that will check multiple counts of individuals to control falsification e.g the use of biometric technology.

iii. Mandatory vital registration and updating where citizen will be registering all vital events of their life.

iv. Organizations, institutions (schools, hospitals and communities should be encouraging to keep records of their members

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