

WOMEN AND ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: SOME EMPIRICAL
EVIDENCE
FROM THE DECEMBER 1991 ELECTIONS IN ENUGU STATE

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Introduction

Long before "modern" (Western) feminism became fashionable, the "woman question" had occupied the minds of social thinkers. In fact, this question dates as far back as the Judeo-Christian (Biblical) notion that the subordinate position of women in society is divinely ordained.* Since then, there have also been a number of biological and pseudo-scientific explanations that attribute the socio-economic and, therefore, political subordination of women to the menfolk, to women's physiological and spiritual inferiority to men. Writing in the 19th century, well over 1,800 years A. D., both Marx and Engels situate the differential social and political positions occupied by the two sexes in the relations of production. These relations find their highest expression of inequality in the capitalist society (Engels, 1978). The subordination of women is an integral part of more general unequal social (class) relations. For Marx, "the degree of emancipation of women is the natural measure of general emancipation" (Vogel, 1979: 42).

Most writings on the "woman problematique" have generically been influenced by the above perspectives. However, more recent works commonly emphasized culture and socialization in explaining the social position of women. The general idea is that most cultures discriminate against women by socializing them into subordinate roles (Baldrige, 1975). The patriarchal character of power and opportunity structures in most cultures set the basis for the social, political and economic subordination of women. In consequence, many societies socialize their members into believing that public life is not for the female gender. The traditional belief is that women make the best homes (Appleton, 1978), they must be obedient to their parents and husbands and their permanent and sacred place of work is the kitchen (Ikeano, 1981). Some of these notions, for instance the public/domestic dichotomy, have been challenged in recent times (Amadiume, 1987). Other critics argue that pure discrimination against women arising out of just the biological gender difference is unlikely (Chiplin and Sloane,

*Both in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible this notion is discernible. From the account of the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis to Pauline teachings in the New Testament, women are generally portrayed as subordinates or auxiliaries to men.

1976). Still, on the whole, the general view of the subordination of women through socialization is widely held (Onyema, 1988). In terms of their politics, all we usually find is the idea that because women are socialized into roles which confine them to the home, they hardly aspire to political careers.

It is not our intention to join the extensive and rich debate on the gender question. But a few remarks seem appropriate. While not discounting the impact of socialization on the level of political participation of women, we think that it is too general an explanation to help us in making sense of empirical data. Hypotheses derived from such an explanation would be very difficult to prove or disprove. Women do not vote because they are socialized not to vote. There are few female politicians because women are socialized not to be politicians. Moreover, there is a hint of a circuitous argument here. Women do not participate in politics because they are socialized not to participate, and they are not socialized to participate because they are women. Above all, it must be recognized that there are various levels of political participation. It is not necessarily true that the participation of women at all levels is low.

Although a number of writers have addressed the political role of women in Nigeria (Okonjo, 1981; Hafkin and Bay, 1976); Ifecka-Moller, 1977), much more empirical research on female political behavior needs to be done. This paper seeks to make some contribution in this direction by analyzing empirical data collected during the gubernatorial and state assembly elections in Enugu State, Nigeria. The elections were part of the military regime's program for handing over power to a democratically elected civilian government in 1993.

Our aim in this paper is not to come up with an explanatory framework on women's participation in politics. It seems to us that what is most needed is a descriptive system that would help us make some sense of the empirical data at hand. Milbrath's (1965) taxonomy of political participation is quite useful in this regard. According to Milbrath, this classification constitutes a "hierarchy of political participation" in which persons on one level also participate in all lower activities (1965: 18). The lowest level of participation is that of "spectator," while the highest is that of "gladiator." The middle level constitutes a transitional stage between the two levels.

We must note the weaknesses of using this system. For one thing, it is only a descriptive framework. As such, its explanatory value is quite limited. Related to this, we cannot demonstrate why certain persons are "spectators" and others "gladiators." Although Milbrath argues that this is a function of exposure to political stimuli, still that does not tell us very much. For instance, why are certain people more exposed to such stimuli than others. For another thing, we must be circumspect about the generalizations possible on the basis of this

framework. While it may be helpful in drawing limited conclusions from the data at hand, more general conclusions about gender and political participation could be profoundly untenable. Moreover, Milbrath's empirical indicators of the various levels of participation are definitely not exhaustive. In addition, some of them may be less or more applicable to specific countries. For instance, wearing a button tends to be more common in Western countries. In countries like Nigeria where those classifiable as spectators would hardly "risk" an open identification with a party, that indicator may be impertinent. Bearing all these in mind we have slightly modified Milbrath's schema by adding a few more indicators, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: A Taxonomy of Political Participation

<u>Level</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Activities involved</u>
Level I	Spectator	Exposing oneself to political stimuli via radio, TV, news-papers, posters, friends, family, etc. Voting Initiating a political discussion Attempting to talk another into voting in a particular way Wearing a button, pasting a sticker
Level II	Transitional	Contacting a political leader, party or public official Making monetary contribution to a party or candidate Attending a political meeting or rally Knowledge of the candidates Knowledge of election results
Level III	Gladiatorial	Contributing time in a political campaign Sponsoring a candidate

Becoming an active member of a
political party

Holding a public or party office

Adapted from Milbrath, 1965.

Some Methodological Issues

This paper is part of a study of the December 1991 gubernatorial and state assembly elections in Enugu State conducted under the auspices of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) (Ibeanu, 1992). The study covered three groups: voters; candidates; and party officials. In this paper, we focus only on the electorate. Enugu State is in the south-eastern part of Nigeria. It lies approximately between longitudes 6° N and 7° 15' N, and between latitudes 7° 2' E and 8° 35' E. The state is one of two created out of the old Anambra State in the latest changes in the political/administrative structure of the country. The changes saw a new 30-state structure as against the former 21. Enugu State is populated by Igbos, one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, in the State, different dialects of the Igbo language are spoken reflecting the existence of many cultural/sub-ethnic differences.

Provisional figures from the 1991 national census put the population of Enugu State at 3.16 million distributed in 19 local government areas (LGAs) (Table 2).

Table 2: Local Government Areas in Enugu State
By Population (Provisional Census Figures)

Abakaliki	225,752	Ishielu	132,552
Awgu	222,638	Isi-uzo	209,725
Enugu North	465,072*	Izzi	166,239
Enugu South		Nkanu	208,118
Ezeagu	108,129	Nsukka	218,180
Ezza	188,535	Ohaukwu	180,932
Igbo-etiti	131,669	Oji-River	82,105
Igbo-eze N.	226,442 (420)**	Udi	146,910
Igbo-eze S.		Uzo-uwani	82,028
Ikwo	166,269		

*Refers to both Enugu North and South

**Refers to both Igbo-eze North and South

It is widely contended in the State that based on cultural affinity, these local government areas may be grouped into three zones as shown in Table 3. Incidentally, the zones also correspond to three of the five senatorial zones of the old Anambra State during the Second Republic which are now in Enugu State.

Table 3: Local Government Areas in the Cultural/Political Zones of Enugu State

<u>Abakaliki</u>	<u>Enugu</u>	<u>Nsukka</u>
Abakaliki	Awgu	Igbo-etiti*
Ezza	Enugu North*	Igbo-eze North
Ikwo	Anugu South*	Igbo-eze South
Ishielu*	Ezeagu	Isi-uzo
Izzi	Nkanu	Nsukka
Ohaukwu	Oji-River*	Uzo-uwani
	Udi*	

*LGAs used in this study

It is not clear whether the zones did not arise out of political expediency rather than cultural affinity. But some indigenes of the State argue that the political division only recognized what was already in existence: the cultural unity of these areas. That notwithstanding, it is also true that some local government areas (or at least parts of them) reject the claims of cultural affinity with other local government areas in their group. Such feeling is particularly strong in Oji-River, Awgu, and Uzo-Uwani. For instance, some communities in Oji-River and Uzo-uwani are still agitating to be transferred to the new Anambra State.

In collecting data for this study, this situation was of primary consideration. Our sampling design was essentially, but not exclusively, non-probabilistic. It was based mainly on judgmental sampling. However, random sampling was employed at some stages in selecting the local government areas (LGAs) to be studied. We had judged that one quarter of the 19 local government areas (i. e., approximately five LGAs) would be adequate for a study like this. First, we selected the state capital, Enugu, which was until recently one LGA. We then extracted Awgu, Oji-River and Uzo-uwani from the groups. As has already been pointed out, opposition to the three-zone classification seems to be strongest there. We feared that these LGAs might be "lost" if sampled together with the others. Thereafter, we assigned numbers to the remaining LGAs and used the random table to select one LGA from each of the three zones. This yielded Ishielu, Udi and Igbo-etiti LGAs. Subsequently, we randomly selected an LGA (Oji-River) from the three we set aside to complete the five LGAs needed.

In each LGA used for the study, we administered questionnaires for the electorate in the capital of each LGA and in one rural community. Wherever practicable, the most remote rural community from the capital was selected. In distributing all the questionnaires, efforts were made to reflect all the categories of demographic variables (e.g., sex, age, occupation, etc.) contained in each questionnaire. Two questionnaires were distributed, one before (pre-election questionnaire) and the other after (post-election questionnaire) the elections.

One hundred and ten copies of each questionnaire were distributed equally in the selected LGAs. We set out to sample 50% male and 50% female respondents. The reason for this purely judgmental decision was to balance the high political activity of men with the preponderant numbers of women (the provisional census figures notwithstanding). As it is often the case with most questionnaire-based surveys, we reached 82 and 75 members of the electorate before and after the elections respectively. This means a response rate of 74.5% and 68.2% for the pre-election and post-election questionnaires respectively. For the pre-election survey, 44% of those who responded were female. This dropped by one per cent to 43% in the post election survey. Apart from the problem of non-response, we must be wary about what we make of the subjective responses to our questions. To be sure, "there are limits to the utility of such subjective data" (Nnoli, 1990: 141).

All this notwithstanding, the usefulness of this type of study must not be belittled. For one thing, it could throw out a lot of valuable empirical data. For another, in this particular case, this survey could give us a worthwhile overall feel of the elections. This would be invaluable in improving the conduct of future elections. Above all, an opinion survey on the elections would be very valuable in authenticating data, from other sources, on such specific issues as the open ballot system and the role of banned politicians.

Levels of Participation of Women in the December Elections: Spectators, Transitionals and Gladiators

During the elections, we found a high level of political consciousness among women in Enugu State. The support of women was widely canvassed by politicians. In both the rural and urban areas, the situation was the same. In some places, women were being asked to support only female candidates. To be sure, the massive growth in the numbers of women's associations in the last six years has contributed immensely to increasing the political consciousness of the women. But how does this translate into political participation? It is often assumed that politically, men participate at a higher level than women. However,

evidence from the December elections in Enugu State does not conclusively support this position. Indeed, it is not conclusive that men engage in gladiatorial activities more than women. It is true that in such roles as candidates and party officials, there is a preponderance of men, but our survey shows that there were more registered female party members than there were men. Thus, in our larger study of the elections, none of the candidates in our sample was female. On the other hand, out of a total of 64 party officials that completed our post-election questionnaire, less than 22% were female (Ibeanu, 1992). But judging by other gladiatorial activities like party membership, sponsorship of candidates and campaigning, the data neither show that women are not participating nor that men participate more as gladiators than women. Before the elections, we asked respondents whether they are registered members of any of the parties, whether they are campaigning for candidates and whether themselves or groups they belonged to sponsored candidates. The responses are given in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4 shows that there was a greater percentage of female registered party members than men. We can see from the Table that 23.17% out of the female sample of 43.90% were registered party members. Comparatively, only 18.29% out of a male sample of 53.66% were party members. Also while 17.07% of the sample who were not party members were female, more than double that figure were male.

Table 4: Membership in Political Party by Gender
% of Total

	Female	Male	No- response	All
Party member	23.17	18.29	0.00	41.46
Non-member	17.07	35.37	2.44	54.88
No Response	3.66	0.00	0.00	3.66
All	43.90	53.66	2.44	100.00

N of cases = 82

Table 5: Campaigning for Candidates by Gender
% of Total

	Female	Male	No- response	All
Campaigning	4.88	4.88	0.00	9.76
Not campaigning	34.15	41.46	1.22	76.83
No Response	4.88	7.32	1.22	13.41
All	43.90	53.66	2.44	100.00

N of cases = 82

Table 6: Sponsorship of Candidates by Gender
% of Total

	Female	Male	No- response	All
Sponsored	2.44	6.10	0.00	8.54
Didn't sponsor	29.27	31.71	1.22	62.20
No Response	12.20	15.85	1.22	29.27
All	43.90	53.66	2.44	100.00

N of cases = 82

We find the same inconclusive evidence about gender and participation when we consider Transitional and Spectator activities. Tables 7, 8, and 9 show that there is an insignificant difference between the sexes on knowledge of candidates and election results. After the elections, we asked respondents if they knew the candidates they voted for prior to the voting. The figures in Table 7 show that 40% of those who said they knew the candidates were male, while 32% were female. But even this 8% difference disappears when we remember that men constituted 56% of our population. We could develop a relative index for comparison:

$\frac{\%nw}{\%Nw}$ and $\frac{\%nm}{\%Nm}$

where $\%nw$ = percentage of women for each response category.
 $\%Nw$ = percentage of women in our sample.
 $\%nm$ = percentage of men for each response category.
 $\%Nm$ = percentage of men in our sample.

Table 7: Knowledge of Candidates by Gender
% of Total

	Female	Male	No- response	All
Knew Candidates	32.00	40.00	1.33	73.33
Did not know	6.67	6.67	0.00	13.33
No Response	4.00	9.33	0.00	13.33
All	42.67	56.00	1.33	100.00

N of cases = 75

On the basis of this index, if we compare the responses in Table 7, we see that the index for women is 0.74 as against 0.71 for men. Two conclusions could be drawn from this index. First, women were, in fact, more aware of the candidates they voted for than men. Second, the difference between the two is, however, insignificant. Applying the same procedure to the voters' knowledge of results, we find that for the

gubernatorial election, the index for women is 0.90 as against 0.84 for men (Table 8). For the State Assembly results, the figures are 0.87 and 0.79 respectively (Table 9).

Table 8: Knowledge of Gubernatorial Election Results
% of Total

	Female	Male	No- response	All
Knew Result	38.67	46.67	1.33	86.67
Did not Know	4.00	9.33	0.00	13.33
No Response	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
All	42.67	56.00	1.33	100.00

N of cases = 75

Table 9: Knowledge of House of Assembly Elections Results
% of Total

	Female	Male	No- response	All
Knew Result	37.33	44.00	1.33	82.67
Did not Know	5.33	12.00	0.00	17.33
No Response	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
All	42.67	56.00	1.33	100.00

N of cases = 75

Table 10 confirms the need for us to be wary about sweeping conclusions linking gender and level of participation. We asked respondents how they received information about the candidates they voted for. We have classified these reasons in terms of transitional and spectator activities. From the Table we see that while more men got information from the candidates themselves, more women got theirs from rallies. Still, both sources fall within the transitional category. Coming to the spectator sources like family members, friends, and posters, there is actually little to choose between the sexes. Furthermore, considering a more clearly spectator activity like voting, Table 11 reveals that 32% of our respondents who voted were female, while 38.67% were male. Again, if we apply our coefficient, we have 0.74 for women and 0.69 for men.

Table 10: Source of Knowledge of Candidates
% of Total

	Female	Male	No-response	All
Candidates (Trans)	4.00	10.67	0.00	14.67
Family member (Spec)	1.33	2.67	0.00	4.00
Friend (Spec)	4.00	4.00	0.00	8.00
Mass Media (Spec)	5.33	8.00	1.33	14.67
Posters (Spec)	12.00	9.33	0.00	21.33
Rally (Trans)	6.67	6.66	0.00	13.33
No Response	9.33	14.67	0.00	24.00
All	42.67	56.00	1.33	100.00

N of cases = 75

Table 11: Gender and Voting
% of Total

	Female	Male	No Response	All
Voted	32.00	38.67	1.33	72.00
Did not Vote	9.33	14.67	0.00	24.00
No Response	1.33	2.67	0.00	4.00
All	42.67	56.00	1.33	100.00

N of cases = 75

All this notwithstanding, looking closely at these Tables, it seems clear that women are still predominantly political "spectators." Our data suggest that the participation of women diminishes as you move from spectator to gladiatorial activities. But the point is that the situation is identical for men. What these confirm is a pyramidal structure of participation. That is to say that Milbrath is correct in his conception that the number of people participating diminishes as we move towards gladiatorial activities. It has little to do with gender.

The View of Women Voters on Some Important Aspects of the Elections

Approximately, nine in every ten women we sampled in the pre-election survey were registered voters. Precisely, only 3 out of 36 women in our study, representing 8.3%, were not registered for the elections. Of the 33 that registered, only three said that they would not vote. In all, about 72% of the women said they were registered and intended to vote (Table 12). After the elections, we asked if they knew the candidates they voted for. 75% said they did while only about 15%

did not. These are indications that women were well mobilized for the elections. We found a participant female electorate in many parts of the State. Indeed, it seemed that political apathy among women was everywhere on the decline, even in the rural areas. The rapid growth in women organizations, including the Better Life Programme, in recent times must have contributed immensely to this state of affairs.

Table 12: Intention to Vote (Women) %

	Yes	No	No Resp.	All
Are you a registered voter?	91.67	8.33	0.00	100.00
<u>Do you intend to vote?</u>	<u>72.20</u>	<u>8.30</u>	<u>19.50</u>	<u>100.00</u>
N of cases = 36				

Our data suggest an increase in the participation of women at the transitional and gladiatorial levels. In fact, there was an indication that there were more female registered members of political parties than men. However, we have to be cautious about party membership. It may well be that people were made to register as members of the parties by politicians and community leaders in order to make political capital out of it. It may also be that "prebendal" calculations were involved (Joseph, 1987).

Women in Enugu State agreed that personality was the most important factor in the success of candidates (Table 13). 31.20% of them rated personality the most important factor. But money and promises made by candidates about what they would do were also identified as important factors (21.10% and 15.60% respectively). That promises made by candidates were rated only third was a bit surprising. We think that this derives from past experiences characterized by the gross inability of candidates to deliver on their electoral promises. However, of all the promises made by candidates, provision of employment was the most important to the women. Water supply and provision of schools came next, in that order.

Table 13: Women's views on why candidates won the elections

	Freq.	Rel. Freq.
Money spent	7	21.90
Promises made	5	15.60
Personality and reputation	10	31.20
Ethnic affiliation	4	12.50
Religious affiliation	3	9.40
No response	3	9.4
<u>All</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>100.00</u>

For those whose candidates lost the elections (Table 14), rigging was the most important explanation (18.70%). Intra-party conflicts, ethnic considerations, and banned politicians were rated of equal importance. Ignorance of the electorate, influence of money, and religion were the least important factors in explaining the failure of their candidates.

Table 14: Women's views on why candidates lost the elections

	Freq.	Rel. Freq.
Intra-party conflict	2	6.20
Ignorance of the electorate	1	3.10
The election was rigged	6	18.70
Influence of money	1	3.10
Religion	1	3.10
Ethnic consideration	2	6.20
<u>Influence of banned politicians</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6.20</u>

N of cases for each row is 32.

More than half (53.10%) of our post-election sample of the electorate said that on the whole, the elections were free and fair. For this group, a number of factors made this so. Among them are the open ballot system (12.50%), orderliness of the election (9.40%), efficiency of NEC (9.40%), role of security agents (9.40%), and honesty of electoral officials (3.10%). On the other hand, 37.5% of the respondents disputed the fairness of the elections. If we add to these the 9.4% who did not give any response, considering them as having some reservations about the elections, it means that about 47% of the respondents were not convinced that the elections were free and fair. This is, indeed, a very significant proportion.

A majority of those who said that the elections were not free and fair said that the most important reason for this was that electoral officials were influenced (28.10%). This is quite interesting if we recall that the "honesty of electoral officials" was seen as the least important factor by even those who said that the elections were free and fair. Other factors which made the elections unfree and unfair, in their order of importance to female voters, were bribing of voters (25.0%), intimidation of voters (9.4%), and disruption of voting (3.1%).

The Open Ballot, Banned Politicians and Role of Money

Although the controversy over the open ballot system continues to rage in academic circles, the results of our survey in Enugu State suggest that the matter is to a large extent settled for the general public,

including women. As we have already pointed out, women voters in the State who told us that the December elections were free and fair considered the open ballot system the most important factor making for this. Before the elections, it was widely feared by analysts that the open ballot would lead to people not coming out to vote. A majority of women voters in Enugu State did not think so. Prior to December 14, we asked them if they thought people would abstain from voting because of the open ballot. About 40% recognized this possibility while 58% did not. Under 30% of the men believed the same (Table 15). Asked if they liked the open ballot system, 66% of women and 28% of men said they did (Table 16). In the same vein, 68% of our male respondents said they would support the open ballot for subsequent elections. Comparatively, 58% of women said they would (Table 17). These findings are noteworthy because from our general experience during this study, there were very strong indications that on the whole, women were more analytic of the crucial issues of the elections than men.

Table 15: View of the Electorate on Open Ballot and Voter Turnout (Pre-election)

Question: Do you think people will not vote because of the open ballot?

	Female	Male	No response
Yes	38.90 (14)	29.50 (13)	50.00 (1)
No	58.30 (21)	65.90 (29)	0.00 (0)
No response	2.80 (1)	4.60 (2)	50.00 (1)
All	100.00 (36)	100.00 (44)	100.00 (2)

Frequencies in parentheses

Table 16: Crosstab of Gender and Preference for the Open Ballot (Pre-election)

Question: Do you like the open ballot system?

	Female	Male	No response
Yes	66.60 (24)	81.80 (36)	100.00 (2)
No	30.60	13.60	0.00

No response	(11) 2.80	(6) 4.60	(0) 0.00
All	(1) 100.00	(2) 100.00	(0) 100.00
	(36)	(44)	(2)

Frequencies in parentheses

Table 17: Crosstab of Gender and Future Support of the Open Ballot (Pre-election)

Question: Would you support the open ballot in subsequent elections?

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>No response</u>
Yes	58.30 (21)	68.20 (30)	50.00 (1)
No	27.80 (10)	22.70 (10)	0.00 (0)
No response	13.90 (5)	9.10 (4)	50.00 (1)
All	100.00 (36)	100.00 (44)	100.00 (2)

Frequencies in parentheses

Even though there appears to be majority support for the open ballot, we do not think that our data provide a firm basis for patrons of open ballot to beat their chests in victory. Leaving apart the methodological issue concerning dependability of opinion survey data, we have to point out that our post-election questionnaire did not include questions on the open ballot. Such questions would have been very useful in comparing the attitude of the electorate after they had seen the ballot system at work. A more important point, however, is an observable trend in the electorate's attitude towards the open ballot even before the elections. A closer look at Tables 15, 16, and 17 shows that when asked simply if they liked the open ballot, a very high percentage gave a positive response. However, when questioned about the impact of the open ballot on voter turn out and the future use of the system, more people began to express reservations about the system.

Prior to the elections, it was widely speculated that some banned politicians in Enugu State were politically active. This culminated in the arrest of a number of them just before December 14. Two ex-governors of the former Anambra State were among those arrested and detained in Lagos.

Women voters in Enugu State appear to have been quite conscious of the activities of these banned politicians. Prior to the elections, we asked them if they thought that these politicians were still active. 64% of them said they were active as against 28% who said they were not. 53% of the respondents also said that banned politicians were giving money to support the candidates. Other ways in which banned politicians were taking part in politics included selecting candidates (22.20%) and campaigning quietly for the candidates (14%). Only 5.5% of the women said that old politicians were involved in open campaigns (Table 18).

Table 18: Women's views on Role of Banned Politicians
(Pre-election)

	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Rel. Freq.</u>
Giving money to support candidates	19	52.80
Selecting candidates	8	22.20
Campaigning quietly for candidates	5	13.90
<u>Campaigning openly for candidates</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5.50</u>

N of cases for each row is 36

Women voters in Enugu State believe that money played a role in the Gubernatorial and Assembly elections. Before the election, a majority of them, however, felt that the involvement of money was limited to the circles of candidates and old politicians (Table 19). Over half of the female respondents to our pre-election questionnaire (58.54%) said that candidates were receiving money from banned politicians. Comparatively, none of them said that monetary considerations would be the most important factor in the choice of candidates at the polls, while only 5.6% expressed dissatisfaction with the primaries because of the "undue influence of money."

Table 19: Women's assessment of the role of money in the elections (pre-election questionnaire for the electorate)

	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Rel. Freq.</u>
Dissatisfaction with primaries caused by "undue influence of money"	2	5.60
Monetary consideration was the most important factor in choice of candidates	0	0.00
<u>Old politicians gave money to candidates</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>52.80</u>

N of cases for each row is 36

However, after the elections, opinions shifted markedly. A quarter of the women insisted that the elections were not free and fair because voters were bribed. A still more dramatic switch occurred when we asked them if money was the most important factor in the success of candidates. While no respondent had answered in the affirmative before the elections, as much as 22% agreed after the elections that money was the most significant reason for the success of candidates (Table 20).

Table 20: Women's assessment of the role of money in the elections (post-election questionnaire for the electorate)

	Freq.	Rel. Freq.
Influence of money caused the defeat of my candidates	1	3.10
Election was not free and fair because voters were bribed	8	25.00
<u>Money was the most significant reason for success of candidates</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>21.90</u>

N of cases for each row is 32

All these point to one conclusion: money played a significant role in the Gubernatorial and Assembly elections in Enugu State. Our own observations support this. During both the primaries and the elections, a lot of money and other material inducements were freely used by candidates and parties to secure support. Apart from money, salt, bread, and meat were distributed by candidates especially during the primaries. One woman in Nsukka revealed to us that joining one of the political parties had been very beneficial to her. She informed us that as the primaries drew nearer, she was sometimes getting up to three "rations" of various commodities per week from candidates. Cases of party members "switching sides" at the eleventh hour because of material inducement were widely reported during the primaries.

Why Women Came Out to Vote and Strategies for Mobilizing Them

Why do people come out to vote? This is one question that politicians and psephoanalysts consistently face. There is no amount of effort that the politicians are able to put into pre-election mobilization that guarantees to bring out the votes. In fact, capricious conditions such as sudden change of weather can keep voters away. Sociological and statistical analysts of elections continue to look for trends and

regularities that explain why people come out to vote. But theorizing voter turn out remains difficult. Hazardous guesses, hits and misses characterize this very elusive issue. This is particularly so in the Third World where electoral experience is rudimentary and far between.

Concatenated theorizing continues to dominate this aspect of psephology. The approach is to identify many variables that, all things being equal, bring out the votes. One problem with this is that we are not sure in a given case which factors, objectively speaking, are the most crucial. Thus, while Post (1963) attributes the "high" turn-out in the 1959 Federal elections to pressures on the electorate by the Regional Governments and local authorities, Kurfi (1983) thinks that the rainy season and conscientious objection accounted for the "low" turn-out in 1979. Even statistical approaches using factor analysis, which in any case are seldom used, do not provide a final answer. To be sure, in making sense out of empirical data, the use of statistics is not an alternative to theory (Palumbo, 1969: 363). Given this state of affairs, studies continue to depend on asking the voters themselves questions like why they would vote in an election or why they voted for a particular candidate or party.

Before the elections, we sought to know from women what would be the most important factor in their choice of candidates (Table 21). No female respondent said that she would choose a candidate on the basis of ethnicity. A majority of respondents (58.5%) would support candidates either for their contribution to the community or for their personality. Interestingly, party affiliation (2.80%) and monetary consideration (0.00%) were underplayed.

Table 21: Factors that would influence women's choice of candidates (Pre-election)

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Relative Freq (%)</u>
Party affiliation	1	2.80
Party Organization	2	5.50
Religious affiliation	5	13.90
Effective campaign	4	11.00
Contribution to community	8	22.40
Personality of candidate	13	36.10
Ethnic affiliation	0	0.00
Monetary consideration	0	0.00
No response	3	8.30
<u>All</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>100.00</u>

To get a deeper insight into the choice of candidates in the December elections, we have cross-tabulated a number of factors with gender.

The result is given in relative frequencies in Table 22. Men, more than women, would vote for candidates because of party organization, personality, and money. On their part, women would support candidates because of religious considerations, effectiveness of campaign and community service more than would their male counterparts. It does seem that women in Enugu State are more dispassionate and rational in their reasons for voting for candidates than men.

Table 22: Gender by reason for choice of candidates

Rows: reasons for choice of candidates

Columns: Gender

% columns

	Female	Male	No Response	All
Party	2.86	2.50	0.00	2.60
Organization	5.71	17.50	0.00	11.69
Religion	14.29	7.50	0.00	10.39
Campaign	11.43	5.00	0.00	7.79
Community	22.86	22.50	0.00	22.08
Personality	34.29	37.50	100.00	37.66
Ethnicity	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Money	0.00	2.50	0.00	1.30
No response	8.57	5.00	0.00	6.49
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
N. of cases	36	44	2	82

A number of campaign strategies were employed by political parties and candidates to mobilize the support of the electorate. The mass media put out numerous jingles to advertise the parties, candidates and their platforms. Other strategies include public rallies, house to house campaigns, posters, etc. Table 23 shows that for women voters, the radio was the most useful source of information on the election. This was followed by posters, TV, Newspapers, and Town criers in that order of importance.

Table 23: Women's most useful sources of information on the election

Strategy	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
Radio	23	63.90
TV	3	8.30
Posters	6	16.70

Newspapers	1	2.80
Town criers	1	2.80
No response	2	5.50
All	36	100.00

At another level, asked why they joined the parties, about 19% of the electorate informed us that the programs of the parties were the most important factor that influenced their decision to join. This compares with 11% who joined because of community and traditional leaders and 8% who joined due to family influence. Another 5.5% joined for religious considerations, while 2.8% joined as a result of the influence of friends (Table 24).

Table 24: Reasons for party membership/sympathy (women)

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Sympathy</u>
Program	7 (19.30)	10 (27.70)
Family	3 (8.30)	1 (2.80)
Friends	1 (2.80)	2 (5.60)
Religion	2 (5.60)	4 (11.20)
Community Trad. leaders	4 (11.20)	2 (5.50)
Party symbol	0 (0.00)	3 (8.30)
No response	19 (52.80)	14 (38.90)
All	36 (100.00)	36 (100.00)

Relative frequencies in parentheses

The Table also shows that for those who only had sympathy for either of the two parties, the main influence was party program (37.7%), followed by religious considerations (11.2%). That religion was that important perhaps confirms widespread rumors that some religious leaders had admonished their flock to vote for certain candidates. But it seems that the "spectators" (non-party members) were more taken in by such religious injunctions than the "gladiators" (party members).

Concluding Remarks

We can only be modest about the conclusions we reach from the foregoing analysis. However, there is ample room for optimism. It does appear from the empirical evidence put forward that the level of political participation women in Enugu State shows a lot of promise for improvement. That apart, women seem to have been quite analytic and rational in making their decisions during the gubernatorial and assembly

elections. Thus, the personal qualities of candidates rather than factors like ethnicity and money were very important in their choice of candidates.

These notwithstanding, we feel that it is yet early in the day to conclude that fundamental changes in political behavior and level of political participation of women are underway. Indeed, it would require more time and more empirical studies before the silhouette becomes a solid picture.

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