CENSUS POLITICS IN NIGERIA: AN EXAMINATION OF 2006 POPULATION CENSUS

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Abstract
Ever since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, scholars as well as developmental experts have sought to divulge the reasons for the nation’s protracted underdevelopment. These efforts gained momentum, following the oil boom of the 1970s, in which the nation boasted of having lots of money at its disposal to the extent that its problem became what to use the money for, yet there was no visible development or its indicators in the country. Most of the studies averred that corruption, tribalism and nepotism, an established system of mediocrity cum general administrative ineptitude account so much for the nation’s developmental catastrophe. This research work, though not completely denying the fact that the above-mentioned issues in one way or the other contribute to the nation’s developmental crisis, contend that Nigeria’s developmental problems are inextricably intertwined with Census Politics as observed in the 2006 population census of the federation. Data generated from population census is amongst other things used in determining who gets what, when and why in the Nigerian federation. Consequently, there has been an unending drive towards inflation of census figures amongst Nigerian states, geared towards obtaining the advantages accruing from having higher population figures in the country. This scenario has created a situation of distributive imbalance and subsequently, injustice in the allocation of funds and other resources in the federation. It is observed from our study that the root cause of the jostle towards falsification of population census figures in Nigeria remains the inadequacies in the practices of revenue allocations in the country. The fact that considerable attention is being paid to generative capacity, as well as landmass amongst other principles has created and fortified the character of census that now obtains in the country and which was manifested in the 2006 population census. States with limited access to natural resources tend to see the population exercise as the only means available for them to bridge the gap created by absence and/ or inadequacy of natural resources. This accounts so much for the manipulation of the 2006 census figures in the country. As a result of high intrusion of politics in the 2006 population counts, there has been widespread discrepancy between revenue allocation to states and the call for its rejection.

Keywords: Population Census, Politics, Revenue Allocation, Nigeria, Politicization of Figures.
Introduction

The urgency of Nigeria’s development needs has generated concern not only in Nigeria itself but also throughout the world. Today, Nigeria ranks among the poorest countries in the world and efforts at self-reliant growth must proceed at a very rapid pace if the welfare of Nigerians is to be improved. Yet, the basic ingredients for planning for development, that is, population data, including the actual number of the population and its composition according age, sex and place of residence among others, remain largely unknown. Available estimates of the total population in the country, in each state and in each local government area are mere guesses. Planning for development without the most fundamental fact the number and characteristics of the people whose welfare is to be improved and those among this number who must work in all sectors of the economy to bring about the much needed development is tantamount to groping in the dark.

Successive Nigerian governments during both the colonial and post colonial periods understood the importance of an accurate census as the basic tool for development planning. Consequently, censuses of parts and the whole of Nigeria have been conducted since 1866. However, since Nigeria attained political independence (and became a sovereign state) in 1960, all efforts at conducting a national census have met with serious problems. Among the several reasons for unsuccessful attempts at census taking is inadequate education about the census and general ignorance regarding population issues in general and the use of census data in particular. Most Nigerians are ignorant of the nature of a census; its basic elements, its execution, and its position as the cornerstone for social and economic planning for the overall development of a country. The result of such general ignorance is that citizens who are to be counted in a census have been suspicious of enumerators and, in some cases, have been uncooperative or openly hostile. Wrong assumptions about the use to which census data are put is mainly responsible for some spurious information given to enumerators or attempts by some to be counted several times.

Census politics in Nigeria is coterminous to petty bourgeois politics. It refers to the struggle amongst states and/or ethnic nationalities towards the inflation of census figures to their selfish advantage. Put differently, no issue has generated controversy, intense debate and ethnic antagonism than that of manipulation of National census figures. This no doubt has cost the nation a great deal. Consequently, Nigerians have developed systemic apathy towards census and have the belief that no census can succeed in Nigeria, whether conducted by a civilian or military government. It is a realization of this basic lack of understanding and the great havoc that can be caused by little learning and the ‘half truths’ concerning the census and its use this paper seeks to address. To achieve this objective, following the introduction is the theoretical perspective which will cover the clarification of concept and framework of analysis. The segment explores the uses of census data and the reasons that give rise to the manipulations. The 2006 population figures we serve as our guide. The final section will offer recommendations and concludes the paper.
Theoretical Perspective

The word ‘Census’ has been so much in the news in the last two years that it may be assumed that every Nigerian citizen knows what the concept means. This may not necessarily be so. Therefore this section begins with a definition of ‘census’

A population census, in the words of the United Nations Organization, ‘is the total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analysing and publishing or otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified to all persons in a country or in a well-delimited part of a country’. This definition implies that a census exercise is purely a statistical exercise. In other words, a census is a count, an enumeration and the publication, after careful checks, of the results of that exercise.

Population census is a source of data required not only by the developing countries but also by the developed ones. The term ‘census’ refers to the process of retrieving, compiling and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining to all persons in a country at a particular time. It is a periodic and deliberate head-count of all residents in a country at a given time.

Odewumi (2000) while referring to the 1970 United Nations Draft recommendation on census defined the term ‘census’ as “the process of compiling and publishing or otherwise disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining at a specified time to all persons in a country”. Population census is a terminology restricted to complete enumeration of human population, legally conducted at regular intervals, often every ten (10) years.

The term ‘census politics’ is coined to illuminate the character of politics that undergirds the process of census in given countries. In Nigeria, it revolves around the tendency to manipulate and/or inflate demographic data by governments and/or ethnic nationalities in a bid to increase their share of National resources. It is based on this tendency to inflate census figures that the issue of “national development” comes in. While presenting the provisional result of the 1991 census to the Provisional Ruling Council of Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida’s administration, the Chairman, National Population Commission had this to say about the past census exercises in Nigeria: The acrimonious situation coupled with certain technical shortcomings have been responsible for the chronicle of failure which characterized the conduct of the public attitude to the post-independent censuses of 1963 and 1973 (Odenyi, 2005:8).

Indeed, this kind of reaction to population counts arose mainly from the realization that census results determine the relative political and economic strength/positions of ethnic groups in the country.

Census has been noted by Okeibunor (1997) to be one of the major sources of demographic data. In simple terms, Census means a periodic head-count of residents of a particular area. Kuczynky (1980) has also defined it as the process of collecting, compiling and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining to all individuals in a country or delineated area at a particular time. According to Arowo (1982:27) the conduct of census involves the obtaining of information on every inhabitant of a particular area at a particular time. The basic information obtained in census include; age, and sex, residential status, birth place, employment, educational status, tribe, religion and marital status etc. The population of a country has continued to generate interest, not only among scholars and administrators but also among
foreign nations as regards how such data is generated, its authenticity and reliability. Okeibunor (1997) has noted that Nigeria is the most populous nation-state in the Africa continent. In reaction to this however, Ekanem (1972) has argued that the population of a country is not a genuine yardstick for labeling it the giant of Africa. He adduced reasons that there are no reliable census figures as to actually arrive at genuine population of the country. Ogbuagu (2004) and Ekanem (1972) have noted that it has not been easy at any given time to count the number of people in Nigeria. According to Ogbuagu, people refuse to be counted for fear of taxation being imposed on them, and that the modality for conducting census has appeared to vary, hence, there should be modifications and improvement in the procedures which have been observed over the time. His argument is that more scientifically trained census personnel should be made use of, whereas sophisticated technological equipment’s should be made available and made use of, so as to reduce the problems of census inflation, double counting and such other related census vices.

According to Omaba (1969), government’s role in population census is of paramount importance. It was observed in 1962 that supervisors were not recruited on merit, as they could not cope with specific training under the shortest period (National Population Commission, 2005). Also, Okogie (2006) has commented that there exists limited information as regards the population census exercise. This position of Okogie however contrasts with the National population commission (NPC) assertion that it embarked on intensive and sustained public enlightenment programmers and campaign via the various media such as the electronic media, newspapers, posters and adverts, both at the federal, state and local government levels. In terms of logistics although the commission is of the opinion that adequate preparations were carried out but was mismanaged by the disgruntled staff of the commission, it was also observed that the issues of religion and states of origin were omitted on the questionnaire for the 2006 population census exercise. On this note, Onah (2006) observed that any census exercise which does not as a matter of fact include religious background and affiliation of the individual citizen will not be adequate for planning, since the religious background of citizens affects their choices and preference.

In his own contribution, Brass (1991) has seriously criticized the inflation of census figure when he asserted that the last census exercise was a shock, not only to individuals but also to organizations, locally and internationally at the moment it was released because of widespread gap between population estimate for the country and the actual census result by a wide difference of about 30million people. What Brass was trying to emphasize is that the 1991 population exercise was subjected to gross irregularities. Agunlade (2000) had queried the reliability of census figure positing that the true population of Lagos should be between 10 to 12million because Lagos is densely populated.

Based on census planning, organization and its administration, Makiwa (1998) has maintained that “a census is a huge complex exercise consisting of closely interrelated steps that must be carefully planned in advance to ensure uninterrupted sequence”. Little shortcomings in planning might lead to defect and inefficiencies, which could have negative impact on the quality of the statistical data. The census exercise thus requires effective combination of good organization, administration, competence and exercise. Adewuyi (1983:87) and Duru (1968:77) while
commenting on the relationship of the field workers and the leaders of the communities noted that there exists strong and deep relationship between them. Enumerators and supervisors were well taken care of by the communities, thus enabling them to inflate the census data thereby not producing credible results.

Enumeration of people is not of recent origin. It dates back to antiquity, and stands as the most important source of demographic data. Records have shown that census started as far back as 3,000 B.C. Ancient civilizations was not exempted from population census. This was why ancient empires like Egypt, Persia, Babylon, Greece, Rome, Japan, and China among others found it expedient to embark on population census. Some of these ancient civilizations conducted census of their people for the purpose of military recruitment, collection of taxes or other tributes and for manual labour. However, with the growth in population and human civilization, the importance of population grows bigger than it was in the time past. Unlike before, information on population is needed to deal with decisions which attempt to:

(i) Establish how much will be required for food, education, health, housing and welfare, settlement, industry, technology and others in the light of material resources.
(ii) Identify population problems created as a result of trends and levels in living conditions to develop appropriate population policies.
(iii) Estimate targets in respect to manpower development and utilization, conducive to the stage of the economy (Adamu, 1989).

In spite of the fact that population figure represents an important substance of any country as it relates to planning, most of the Third World Countries are faced with the problems that have been affecting accurate population data. Such problems include lack of technically qualified staff, lack of permanent organization charged with the collection of data, non-familiarity with socio-economic enquiries, poor transportation and communication facilities. Though most of these factors mentioned above have been reduced to the barest minimum, Ebigbola (1981) has concluded that while Nigeria can now boast of a large number of capable technical staff that can handle enumeration effectively, these staff have equally become torn in the flesh of population census in Nigeria, for they have been responsible for the falsification of population figures.

As technical exercise, therefore, census taking is best left to professionals with competence in one or more of the pertinent scientific disciplines of demography, statistics, mathematics, computer science, geography, sociology, economics, mass communications and administration.

A population census has the following characteristics:

i) Government responsibility
ii) Individual enumeration
iii) Universality
iv) Simultaneity
v) Periodicity (PAN, 1990:7-8).

Theoretical Framework of Analysis
For the purpose of this work, we shall adopt the Game theory of politics. Schelling (1980) defines games theory as “the formal study of the rational, consistent expectations that participants can have about each other’s choices. According to Shubik, () game theory is a
A mathematical model for the study of some aspects of conscious decision making in situations involving the possibilities of conflict or cooperation, as well as processes in which the individual’s decision unit has only partial control over the strategic factors affecting its environment. It is intended that it is applicable in all situations, where a decision involving others has to be taken, and also in a competitive political milieu, in which participants struggle to maximize their interests and minimize that of others. For instance, the game theory could be applied by generals engaged in battles, diplomats involved in bargaining and negotiations, politicians trying to influence the voters, legislators making efforts to organize groups or coalitions, and in the case of Nigeria; by ethnic nationalities and states trying to gain more resource control.

Palms and Riggs in their book: *Dictionary of political Analysis* (1957) defines game theory as a body of thought dealing with rational decision strategies in situations of conflict and competition when each participant or player seeks to maximize gains and minimize losses. Originally, the theory was developed by Emil Boral in the 1920s as an intellectual exercise. John Von Neumann, a mathematician in collaboration with Oskar Morgenstern developed it in an attempt to deal with the classic problem of defining the behavior of the economic man or the rational actor in their book: *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* (1944), Brascan R. Luce and Howard Raffia in their in their book(*Games and Decision: Introduction and critical survey*, 1957), Martin Shubic in *Games Theory and Related Approaches to social behavior* (1964) and Anatole Rappaport, in *Two Person Game Theory: The Essential Ideas*(1966), introduced game theory to political science. Morton A. Kaplan, Willem H. Riker and Thomas Schelling applied the theory to the study of conflict situations in international politics, coalition behaviour and judicial behaviour.

Game theory is modeled after the various forms of pallor games such as chess, poker, bridge, etc. These games involve conflict, decision making and cooperation. The game can be played by two or more players. The decision of each player is usually contingent upon the decision of others. The central point here is the interdependence among the decisions of different players participating in the game. Professor J. Bernard (1957) articulated six (6) fundamental features of Game theory, which include:

1. Rational behaviour
2. Strategy
3. Pay-off
4. Rules of the game
5. Alliances

First, there are the decision-makers or players that may be individuals, institutions, nation-states or ethnic nationalities as the case may be. The players are rational entities with well-defined objectives and, having at their disposal some resources with which to engage their opponents in competition or conflict. To be rational means to be efficient in the pursuit of objectives. Strategy according to Goldman is “an overall programme of action which a player adopts in order to achieve a desired outcome or series of outcomes under adverse or conflict condition. In the theory of Games, there is the assumption of rationality on the part of the players as well as
expectations of perfect knowledge about the strategies open to them in pursuit of their aims and their ability to design a strategy that covers all consistencies.

Pay-off on the other hand is the relationship between the players and the prizes or the objectives they aim at. The pay-off may be a win, a loss or a draw. In the theory of games, the analyst focuses on the strategies by which players could maximize their outcomes. The prospects are usually small in range and therefore it requires a careful study of the alternative causes of action. Rules of the game can be defined as the distribution of resources and the strategic possibilities open to each player in the employment of these resources. According to Varma, (1) rules are to be specified in terms of resources that the players are willing to use. For instance, in the case of international politics, countries with nuclear weapons may have a tacit understanding that they will not use them, in which case, they are not a part of the ‘rules’ of the international game/politics. Rules of the game usually indicate some established understanding or verbal statements prescribing the acceptable conduct on the part of the players. However, in game theory rules of the game are laid down by those who are powerful enough to apply them, hence, greater attention is paid to the resource implication of rules than its prescriptive requirements.

Alliances when applied in the context of game theory refer to the combination of resources for the best advantage of the players. This assertion presupposes that the players are many and so those who have common objectives pool their resources together in order to achieve them.

Solution on its own refers to the final outcome or eventual pay-off in which the two or more parties in a game (politics) happen to end up with exactly the same pay-off called the saddle-point.

According to the exponents of Game theory, there are several game models in terms of their possible application to politics. The models can be classified according to how many players the game has and what kind of pay-off the game provides. These models could be broadly categorized into:

Two persons zero-sum game
Two persons non-zero-sum game
N-person non-zero-sum game.

In the first model, there are only two players, and N the gains of one are always equal to the losses of the other, the sum of outcomes for the two players being zero. That is, the winning and losses cancel each other out. Thus, in a game where the prize is #50m for the winner, this can be represented in terms of the pay-offs for the two players A and B as (#50m=#50m=0) since A wins N50m while B losses#50m.

In the second model, the gains and losses of the players do not cancel each other out, allowing for a situation in which they both gain or loss. In the third model, there are many players, and in this case the gains and losses do not cancel out. The game theory however is usually played according to what is called the minimatrix strategy. The emphasis here is that players try to minimize their maximum possible losses. The diagram below stands to explain the minimatrix strategy in particular and the Games theory in general.
Table 1: A Diagram showing the Minimatrix Strategy of the Games Theory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTOR A</th>
<th>ACTOR B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(choice 1)</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(choice 2)</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this model, the pluses refer to the gains of A and the losses of B. The minuses refer to the gains of B and the losses of A. If actor A makes choice 1 he could gain 5 if B also makes choice 1. The implication of choice 1 is that A will lose 6. If actor A decides to make choice 2, he loses 4 and gains 4, taken that B makes choice 2. The implication of choice 2 is that both actor A and B will make minimum loses in making choice 2 since they will both lose 4. With the assumption of perfect information and rationality, A must assume that B will take the choice that yields the best outcome for B. This would be choice 2, since B could only lose a maximum of 4 while choice 2 could cost him 5. Thus, A must assume he would lose 6 if he took choice 1. This explains why the minimax strategy is adopted by the actors as the most rational. Since both players are rational and they possess full information about one another’s strategy and about all the possible outcomes, players A and B will all make choice 2 and the outcome will be quadrant 4. This outcome which represents the rational minimal outcome for both players is called the saddle point in Game theory. As an intellectual construct, Games theory is a kind of game involving the manipulation of numbers. Thus, its analytical utility lies in the ability of the analyst to assign the numbers empirical content to correspond with social reality. Not until this is done, Game theory remains a political calculus which exacerbates the problem of measurement both in local and international political relations.

Game theory also serves an ideological purpose in the sense that it leads to de-politicization of political life. It simultaneously simplifies and demystifies the realities of political life and thereby elevating political apathy to political sagacity for the masses. Thus, as an ideological weapon on the hands of the dominant classes, it is used to perpetuate and to sustain the exclusion of the masses from the political process. However, when used in terms of struggle for scarce resources and the associated maneuverability involved in such struggle, Game theory tries to bring into focus the fact that man is a rational-self-interest seeking being that seek to gratify his selfish and egoistic interest before bringing into focus the interest of others, and this is indeed what obtains in Nigerian politics.

When viewing the Game theory in terms of its application in the political terrain, the implication then is that the stronger ones would always have their way against the weaker ones. Thus, in Nigerian, it is a truism that the three major ethnic groups of the East, North and West maintain absolute dominance over hundreds of ethnic nationalities that make up the country, and this gives them the tools with which to inflate census figures to their own betterment and to the detriment of these minority ethnic nationalities. Politics has been widely accepted as a dirty game. This being the case then, the various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria is poised towards swimming this ocean called “census politics”, with virtually none of them willing to compromise anything in the struggle. Thus, what we now see is a ‘survival of the fittest’ defined in terms of the scramble for higher population figures necessitated by the fact that the figures so obtained are used for planning in almost every facet of the nation’s economy.
The game theory of politics has substantially proved itself to be a good analytical tool for this study, since it brought into focus the fact that politics is a game of number, and that man is a rational-self-interested actor that tends to consider first his interest before considering that of any other actor in a game. Nigerian politics in general and census politics in particular has indeed been characterized by the notion of ‘winner take it all’. This is why the major ethnic nationalities inflate and hyper-inflate census figures in order to have or be said to have higher population figure which exists as a precondition for determining who ‘wins’ greater revenue cum other resources in the country. All the above-mentioned reasons exist to portray the fact that the Game theory is indeed but an appropriate analytical instrument for the study.

**Uses of Census Data and the Manipulation/Politicization of 2006 Census Figures**

Adepoju (1960) had summarized the reasons for the politicization of census in Nigeria in the following words: “The census would form the basis for revenue allocation, provision of amenities and more importantly, representation in the forthcoming elections into the regional and federal legislatures” (Odenyi, 2005)

Population issues precipitated the Constitutional Crisis in the country in 1962. They played a major role in the crisis of the old Western Region of 1965, and were largely responsible for the military take-over in 1966. They also contributed greatly to the fall of Gowon’s regime in 1975 and still loom large in the minds of many Nigerians with the incessant demand for the creation of more states soon after the return to civilian rule.

In Nigeria, the first census was conducted for Lagos in 1866. Another followed in 1871; census taking became a decennial exercise for Northern and Southern Provinces of Nigeria. It has been observed that out of several censuses conducted in Nigeria, the figures were irregular and controversial. It was only the 1963 and 1991 census figures that were accepted and used for general planning. The 2006 population census was to a reasonable degree accepted, despite the fact that the exercise witnessed some controversies. For instance, the Lagos State government declared to the public that their population was under-estimated by the National population commission.

Census exercise has been observed to be of great help not only to the Federal government, but also to the individual, local and state governments, especially as it is used for future forecast, financial allocation, and constituency delimitation. There seem to be obstacles in providing reliable census data of general reliability, and acceptability. The question then is why ethnic nationalities compel governments in Nigeria to falsify census results either by inflation of census figures or double counting or even inclusion of non-existing figures in the census results. Even with the introduction of computerized system of carrying out census exercise in Nigeria, the exercise has not been entrusted in the hands of sufficient adhoc staff and field workers of the National Population Commission, despite the huge sums of money from the Central government and international agencies such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth of Nations for the 2006 census exercise.

From the foregoing, census politics could therefore be said to be a resultant consequence of inter-ethnic struggle for national resources. This struggle has as a matter of fact engendered the following activities: the inflation of census figures, the demand for more states and local governments etc.
On the usefulness of population census, Yusufu (1969) had noted that the more one considers the economic importance attached to population census in developing countries, the more one would be able to discover the reasons for the inability of such countries to undertake an accurate population count. Orubuloye (1982) had opined that the uses of census are subsumed in the general data planning usage. He articulated some of the basic functions to include health planning, educational planning and economic development.

According to a publication by the National Population Commission, data from the population censuses are basically used for planning in the various economic sectors such as the health sector, industry, communication, transportation, education, housing, agriculture, and public utilities. It is also vital for development and governance, and plays a major part in determination of the supply of labour.

A report by the population Association of Nigeria has it that population figures to a great extent determine the sharing pattern for national income. In this stance, populous groups whether real or manipulated are often times being provided with more public utilities and social welfare benefits than the smaller ones.

Ogunlade (2000) has argued that among such things which population censuses are used for include the determination of the handicapped for the provision of basic social amenities and also for ascertaining the actual figure of the unemployed so as to make for adequate planning. He also stated that it indicates other things such as the number of school children, measurement of development, standard of living, delimitation of constituencies, population density and the determination of migration rate.

Cuktu (1986) had opined that a country that does not know its population cannot plan adequately for its people. Based on this note, the population Association of Nigeria (PAN) has stated that the population size between zero age and three (3) gives the impression of those within the infancy age, and in need of pre-school and day-care centers. Those within the age of six (6) to twelve (12) constitute the primary school population, and those between twelve (12) to seventeen (17) constitute the secondary school population, whereas those between eighteen (18) to twenty four (24) years of age represent those expected to attend tertiary institutions such as universities and polytechnics.

Ofeimi (1988) had on his own, observed that planning for education to a very large extent depends on the number of citizens that are still in the educational institutions. In his own contribution, Odenyi (2005:44-59) posited that census has been a sensitive and controversial issue, especially as it is used for shaping regional or geographical zones, states, ethnic relations and balance of power. It is the attitude towards the population question in terms of its absolute size as it affects states and sub-regions that constitute the background to the census controversies which the country has witnessed over the years. The analyses that will follow will add value to the discourse.

The 2006 Nigerian census is argued to be one of the most heated and politicized in the history of Nigerian census counts irrespective of the various preparations as well as huge sums of money that was provided for the exercise from the international communities such as the European Union and the World Bank (see Bamgbose, 2009).
President Obasanjo in November 2001 inaugurated the National Population Commission with the major mandate of conducting an accurate, reliable and credible census for the country. In pursuance of a reliable and credible census, the Commission designed methodology and incorporated new techniques and the most modern technology for conducting the census. Thus for the first time, 2006 census employed the use of Geographical Positioning System (GPS) and Satellite imageries to carve out Geo-referenced Enumeration Area maps, OMR/ICR/OCR machine readable forms to record information, Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) to read fingerprints and thereby detect multiple counting and as well as Geographic Information System (GIS) used to store the 2006 census result (Obasanjo, 2006). Presenting the result of the 2006 census to the President, the President of the National Population Commission Chairman, Alhaji Samaila Makama assured the nation that, the census was conducted with considerable transparency and confidentiality. Declaring the result, President Obasanjo stated on January 9, 2007 that Nigeria’s provisional population as at March 2006 stood at 140,003,542. However, hell was let loose with this announcement of the 2006 census with captions in Nigerian Dailies such as: ‘…It is tinted with political permutations’ (Onyeka-Ben, 2007), ‘Delay in release gave room for manipulation’ (Adim, 2007), ‘Census 2006: matters arising’ (Akerele, 2007) ‘Lagos’ and the fallacies in national census figures’ (Kolapo and Faloseyi, 2007). All the lamentations above pointed to the fact that the 2006 census was a ridiculous exercise. The former Lagos State Governor, Ahmed Tinubu expressed his displeasure at a book presentation entitled Errors, Miscalculations and Omissions: The Falsification of the Lagos census figures when he stated that:

we can afford a recount throughout the country. We want a recount in Lagos State. This is the height of corruption: falsifying census figures just to please some people. No amount of adjustment done to the figure can make it right. The figure is totally rejected. We have enough support and funding from the United Nations and the European Union. So let’s have a recount (see Tinubu, 2007).

Puzzled by the released population figures Ayodele (2007) had this to say: “If you take into consideration that between Kano and Jigawa that make up the old Kano which population is about the same as that of Lagos in 1991 now has a population of 13,732,331 against Lagos 9,013,534, it would be seen that the result of the 2006 Census leaves so much issues begging for answers” (Ayodele, 2007).

The 2006 census indeed has remained one of the most debated exercises in the history of Nigerian censuses in terms of credibility. Falsification of figures was a do or die affair, in that states not only worked towards the inflation of their figures but also influenced enumerators and top census personnel towards deflation of figures of other states either through the publication of inaccurate figures or deliberative exclusion of some localities in the exercise (Bamgbos, 2009). Given the wide-spread cases of irregularities that characterized the 2006 census, the chairman of the National Population Commission, Chief Sama’ilia Makama announced on the conclusion of the exercise that the Nigerian population is 140, 003,542. A breakdown of the figures which were released to the National Assembly in January, 2007 shows the following:
### TABLE 2: Nigerian states and their population as found in the 2006 census official result.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abuja (FCT)</td>
<td>740,489</td>
<td>664,712</td>
<td>1,405,201</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abia</td>
<td>1,434,193</td>
<td>1,399,806</td>
<td>2,833,999</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>2,174,641</td>
<td>2,007,391</td>
<td>4,182,032</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebonyi</td>
<td>1,040,984</td>
<td>1,132,517</td>
<td>2,173,501</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>1,624,202</td>
<td>1,633,096</td>
<td>3,257,298</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>2,032,286</td>
<td>1,902,613</td>
<td>3,934,899</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akwa-ibom</td>
<td>2,044,510</td>
<td>1,875,698</td>
<td>3,920,208</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayelsa</td>
<td>902,648</td>
<td>800,710</td>
<td>1,703,358</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-River</td>
<td>1,492,485</td>
<td>1,396,501</td>
<td>2,888,966</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>2,074,306</td>
<td>2,024,085</td>
<td>4,098,391</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>1,640,461</td>
<td>1,577,871</td>
<td>3,218,332</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>2,710,665</td>
<td>2,474,735</td>
<td>5,185,400</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekiti</td>
<td>1,212,609</td>
<td>1,171,603</td>
<td>2,384,212</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogun</td>
<td>1,847,243</td>
<td>1,810,855</td>
<td>3,658,098</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ondo</td>
<td>1,761,263</td>
<td>1,679,761</td>
<td>3,441,024</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osun</td>
<td>1,740,619</td>
<td>1,682,916</td>
<td>3,423,535</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyo</td>
<td>2,809,840</td>
<td>2,781,749</td>
<td>5,591,589</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>4,678,020</td>
<td>4,335,514</td>
<td>9,013,534</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>2,164,058</td>
<td>2,055,186</td>
<td>5,219,244</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>1,691,737</td>
<td>1,566,750</td>
<td>3,258,487</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>1,220,581</td>
<td>1,150,508</td>
<td>2,371,089</td>
<td>2.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>945,556</td>
<td>919,719</td>
<td>1,863,275</td>
<td>1.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>2,032,725</td>
<td>1,917,719</td>
<td>3,950,434</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>1,593,033</td>
<td>1,585,679</td>
<td>3,178,712</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>1,606,123</td>
<td>1,561,978</td>
<td>3,168,101</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>2,426,215</td>
<td>2,250,250</td>
<td>4,676,465</td>
<td>2.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borno</td>
<td>2,161,157</td>
<td>1,990,036</td>
<td>4,151,193</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gombe</td>
<td>1,230,722</td>
<td>1,123,157</td>
<td>2,353,879</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taraba</td>
<td>1,199,849</td>
<td>1,100,887</td>
<td>2,300,736</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>1,206,003</td>
<td>1,115,588</td>
<td>2,321,591</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa</td>
<td>2,215,907</td>
<td>2,132,742</td>
<td>4,348,649</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>3,112,028</td>
<td>2,954,534</td>
<td>6,066,562</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>4,844,128</td>
<td>4,539,554</td>
<td>9,383,682</td>
<td>6.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>2,978,682</td>
<td>2,813,896</td>
<td>5,792,578</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kebbi</td>
<td>1,617,498</td>
<td>1,621,130</td>
<td>3,238,628</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sokoto</td>
<td>1,872,069</td>
<td>1,824,930</td>
<td>3,696,999</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamafara</td>
<td>1,630,344</td>
<td>1,629,502</td>
<td>3,259,846</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>71,709,859</strong></td>
<td><strong>68,293,683</strong></td>
<td><strong>140,003,542</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the expiration of the census exercise, some evidence of irregularities surfaced. In Kaduna, Kaduna state, the then National Population Commission (NPC) federal commissioner—Ufot Asibong-Ibe, narrowly escaped being lynched by some of the angry enumerators who laid ambush for him at the Government House. The enumerators alleged that some powerful politicians in the state hijacked the recruitment of census officials, replacing trained officials with names of their favourites (Suleiman, 2006).

The same scenario was found in Benin, Edo state. In Benin, the nonpayment of enumerators’ allowances and substitution of names of trained officials with names of favourites of political leaders almost stopped the census exercise there, especially as the move was protested against, leading to a clash between enumerators and policemen.

In Oyo state, the same situation replicated itself in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area, where politicians allegedly attempted to replace the names of those trained for the exercise with their loyalists. There, names were smuggled into the list to replace those who passed the training exercise and were found eligible to conduct the headcount from NPC headquarters in Abuja (Suleiman, 2006).

In Rivers state, some officials were intimidated by the state’s census monitoring committee in the distribution of census materials, whereas it was alleged that some loyal enumerators secretly double-counted some sections of the state in line with the clandestine agreement reached with the political elites. This led to the release of 5,185,400 as the population of the state which almost equaled the population of Imo and Abia state put together (Ubochi, 2007).

In Anambra state, the exercise was marred with protest by members of the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), who insisted that the Census exercise should not take place in Biafra land. It was purported that the act was being manipulated by other sections of the country to the detriment of the state and the entire Igbo nationhood. (See Ekong, 2006)

In Imo state, the group that identified themselves as “scorpion bombers”, in a bid to disrupt the exercise, planted a bomb at the Owerri Municipal Council where enumerators were gathered. However, it missed its target on explosion (Suleiman, 2006).

Despite this scenario that was found in the South-Eastern part of the country, it was gathered that most states worked to inflate their population. Multiple registrations and/or double counting of citizens were one of the major tools used by states to actualize the drive up to their population. It was also gathered that some states/ethnic leaders ventured into census inflation by unduly influencing census enumerators by promising them large sums of money if they cooperated with them (The Nation, 2006:26-28; 46)

In Ogun state, it was on the contrary gathered that the National Population Commission (NPC) deliberately failed to provide some localities such as Iperu Remo with the required registration forms. In the 1991 census data, Iperu Remo had the population of 6,527 inhabitants. The community is said to be the most populous town in Ikenne local government. However, it was
learnt that in the 2006 census, the locality was provided with 6,527 forms assuming that their population was kept constant. In another exercise carried out by a local committee set up by the community, the village’s population was placed at 100,410. The implication then is that a total of 93,883 people were not counted (see Adekeye, 2006). In Lagos state, many people were not counted as they were said not to have fallen within the census map. It was alleged that such an act was aimed at reducing the population of the state so as to favour some other ethnic interests. The released figure placed the population of Lagos state at 9,013,534. However, in a separate exercise embarked upon by the state constituted committee, Lagos state population stood at 17,552,942 (see Bamgbose, 2009). In Ebonyi state, the Census Tribunal sitting in Abuja voided the 2006 enumeration figures of seven Local Government Areas as declared by the National Population Commission (NPC). The affected Local Governments include Afikpo North, Afikpo South, Ezza South, Ikwo, Ishielu, Ivo, and Onicha Local Governments. This followed the report from many communities, stating that their households were not counted. It was alleged that the non-counting of these localities was among the political schemishes aimed at reducing the population of the state. In their own effort, the local governments had filed a petition to the Census Tribunal, pleading that a fresh exercise be organized for the localities since the non-inclusion of their figures had adversely affected the population of the state. In the released figures, Afikpo North and Afikpo South were said to be 156,649 and 157,542 respectively, Ezza South; 133,625, Ikwo; 214,969, Ishielu; 152,581, Ivo; 121,363 and Onicha; 236,609 (Premium Times, 2006). In cross River state, a similar scenario trailed the state in that some localities were allegedly not counted, whereas some other localities disputed the figures that were released against them. A case in mind is that of Nko community of Yakurr Local Government Area that had the population of 12,690 inhabitants during the 1991 population counts, but was amazed to find out that the released data after the 2006 exercise purportedly gave them the insignificant figure of 5,383. It took the intervention of the ‘A’ census tribunal that was headed by Yisah Abraham to organize a fresh census for the community (Premium Times, 2006). In Bornu state, certain localities were alleged to have counted their livestock as part of the human population. Bornu state is known to be sparsely population, hence, it is argued that there is no way the state could actually possess the population of 4,151,193 that was released as the population of the state. Some localities such as the people of Hawul, Askira/Uba and Chibok Local Government Areas all in the Southern part of Bornu state on the contrary, lamented that their population were being manipulated due to some ulterior motive. While the population of Hawul dropped from173, 602 in 1991 to 120,314 in 2006, that of Askira/Uba dropped from168,204 in 1991 to 137,000 in 2006 whereas that of Chibok fell from 91,000 in 1991 to 67,000 in 2006 (Bwala, 2010). While the above three Local Government Areas lamented over inaccurate data, certain areas known for their low population density had their population multiplied over five times. These areas include Gubio, Nganzai, Kaga and Magumeri in the Northern and central parts of the state (Bwala, 2010). The contention here is that the Northern Bornu unduly influenced the population of Southern Bornu to their own advantage. In Nasarawa state, it was gathered that the state’s legislators at the federal level rejected the figure of 1,863,275 which was purported to be the state’s population. They argued that since the
state boasts of widest land mass in the country, it should naturally have more people inhabiting
the state than the quoted figure ascribed to the state especially as the demolition exercise in the
Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja has contributed tremendously to the influx of people
from the council area to Nasarawa state which is bordering state to the FCT (see Marshall, 2006).
The Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on its own purported that their population was greatly
deflated, arguing that owing to the movement of the federal capital territory from Lagos to
Abuja, the city has witnessed increased influx of people and subsequent population growth such
that the figure published as its figure is morally questionable (Marshall, 2006).
In Taraba state, some localities were purported to have been deliberately left out in the exercise.
It was argued that as a result of some political schemishes, these areas were excluded in the
census map. This led to nullification of the exercise by the census tribunal as there was no
evidence by the NPC to show that the areas were enumerated (see Umar, 2006).
In Yobe state, more than 15 villages in Tarmuwa Local Government Area were identified not to
have been enumerated, whereas some areas in the same vein were said to have doubled up the
number of households in a bid to drive up their population (see also Umar, 2006).
The table below shows the various states with reported cases of irregularities in the Makama-
headed population counts of the Nigerian state in 2006.

Table 3: States with reported cases of irregularities in the 2006 population counts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>REPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bornu</td>
<td>Some localities were reported to have included the number of their livestock as part of their population, whereas some local governments in the state lamented bitterly on the contrary that their population were being manipulated to their disadvantage due to some ulterior motive (see Bwala, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogun</td>
<td>The National Population Commission failed to provide some localities such as Iperu Remo with their registration forms which was purported to have been deliberately instigated to reduce the population of the state, leading to a counter exercise by the areas affected, which however produced a result contrary to that published by the NPC (Adekeye, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>Deflation of figures led to a counter exercise by the state’s constituted Committee, which produced a different result compared to the original result released by the National Population Commission (Bamgbose, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>Powerful politicians hijacked the recruitment of census officials, replacing names of trained officials with names of their loyalists (Suleiman, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edo</td>
<td>Replacement of names of trained officials with names of loyalists, coupled with nonpayment of officially-registered enumerators’ allowances created a tense atmosphere, leading to a clash between enumerators and policemen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyo</td>
<td>Names of loyalists were smuggled into the list of trained enumerators, replacing those who passed the exercise with names of loyalist; hence, some individuals were alleged to have been registered more than once (Suleiman, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers</td>
<td>Enumerators were reported to have encountered abysmal shortage of materials owing to diversion of materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taraba</td>
<td>Political schemishes resulted in the exclusion of some localities in the census</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
map. This resulted in some areas being abandoned by enumerators (Umar, 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>The state’s legislators cum representatives in the federal assembly rejected the released figures, arguing that the state’s population figures were being deflated since the influx of people from Abuja metropolis to the neighboring towns of the state should have originally escalated the state’s population (Marshal, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCT</td>
<td>There was an alarm over deliberate deflation of the FCT population. The proponents posit that the influx of people in the FCT has recorded unprecedented increase especially since the last 30 years preceding the exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebonyi</td>
<td>Census Tribunal voided the figures of seven Local Government Areas as declared by the National Population Commission as a result of reported cases of non enumeration of some areas (Premium Times, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross River</td>
<td>Some localities were purportedly not counted whereas some localities disputed the figures that were released against them, citing that their population was manipulated so as to reduce the resources that accrue to them (Premium Times, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>MASSOB disrupted the exercise, stating that the population should not take place in Biafra land which some argue were deliberatively incited by some personalities with ill motive so as to curb the population of the state (Ekong, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imo</td>
<td>“Scorpion Bombers” deliberately planted a bomb at Owerri Municipal Council in a bid to disrupt the exercise (Suleiman, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>More than 15 villages in Tarmuwa Local Government Area were reportedly excluded from the exercise, whereas some areas in the same vein were said to have doubled their number in a bid to drive up their population (Umar, 2006).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is therefore argued here that the manipulation of population figures by states and/or ethnic nationalities which characterized the 2006 population counts derives from the following reasons:

**Distribution of Social amenities:**

Most intrusion of politics in the population census arose substantially from the need for the acquisition of social amenities. Census enumeration gives the government an insight into the number of people in any given area and the available social amenities like schools, hospitals, roads, pipe-borne water, electricity etc., that are found in such areas and as well as those social amenities that would be provided in line with the number of people within the specified zones. States and/or ethnic nationalities intentionally inflate their population figures in order to benefit more from such provisions by the government. This is because, it is assumed that the more the population of an area, region or state, the higher the level of social amenities that will be provided in such area (Ome, 2006)
Allocation of Fiscal Policies:

Another reason that has been adduced by scholars for the falsification of census figures in Nigeria is the fact that the figures obtained from population enumeration are used in the allocation of fiscal policies. Omaba (1969: 39-44) has argued that ‘census politics’ got heightened when it was observed that census figures were used in the sharing of the ‘national cake’. The jostling for census politics led to the setting up of Revenue Allocation Boards (commissions) of which virtually all of them had recommended population figure as a criterion for revenue sharing in the country.

Some of the commissions that provided for such include Raisman commission (1958), which recommended for the creation of Distribution Pool Account (DPA) with fixed regional proportional shares, population and even development for revenue sharing, which allocated 40% to the North, 31% to the East, the West 25% and Southern Cameroon 5%. The Binns commission (1964) adopted Raisman’s Report Commission, but altered financial allocation to the regions; The Pious Okigbo Presidential Commission also recommended 40% equity, 40% population, internal revenue effort 5%. It allocated 53% of the total federal fund to the federal government, 30% to state governments 10% to local governments and 7% for special fund. This point appears to be the main reason for census politics in Nigeria.

Determination of the size of the population:

Population census constitutes the basis for determining Nigeria’s population, nay the population size of the various States/ethnic groups in the country. This aptly accounts for why states and/or ethnic groups resort to the inflation of population figures in order to give them numerical strength over other groups. According to Makama (2006:12), one of the most important aims for conducting population census is to determine how many people that inhabit a state, locality, town or ward and then, the country at large. Ethnic groups in order to enjoy the benefits that accrue from having high population figures in the country resort to the politicization of population census vis-à-vis the falsification of census data.

According to the population Association of Nigeria (PAN), the higher the population figures of a given region, the greater the number of seats allocated to it. Most Nigerians thus, have come to believe that unless their population figures are inflated, they may be unable to secure those socio-economic amenities that are disbursed by the government in line with the population size. Everybody’s guide to the Nigerian census, published by the population Association Of Nigeria stated that “usually from 1952 onwards, the people became aware that political power arising from the number of elected members of the parliament or local councils as well as the location of government amenities such as schools, hospitals, pipe-borne water and electricity, depended largely on the size of the population which brings about politicization of population counts”

Determination of the number of the unemployed:

As a determinant of the number of the unemployed, population census motivates and contributes to the inflation and politicization of census figures in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that, the number of individuals working in a country could be ascertained through population census. Ofojindu (2006) stated that available manpower is revealed by the population census figures. The available manpower revealed by the population census tells the government how much to spend
on those working in the country and provides the government insight into the quantity of goods and services that can be produced.

Okoroafor (2006) has argued that apart from the above advantage of manpower assessment, the reverse side of unemployment is also brought as an advantage. This revelation provided by the population census figures to the government, assists it in providing adequate plans at solving the problems of the unemployed, because the unemployed constitute social, economic and political nuisance to the country.

Commenting on the above Ibe (1965:36) declared that ethnic groups falsify population figures of the unemployed in an attempt to secure large portion of the provisions made for the unemployed in the country. This arises from the wide belief that the region, state or locality with a high number of the unemployed would benefit more from the provisions intended to be provided or provided by the government pertaining to the unemployed population.

**Determination of political strength and influence:**

Another reason offered so far is the fact that population figures in one way or the other are used to determine the political strength and influence of ethnic nationalities. According to Ofojindu (2006), since modern democratic government, politics has become a game of number. Larger groups usually get more representatives in the national legislature and other sectors of the economy than the rest. As Olusanya (1989:73) noted, as a result of the above fact, no group wants to run the risk of not being counted during any census exercise. Population figures like in most other countries determine the political status of the various ethnic groups, in terms of whether they belong to minority or majority ethnic group. In Nigeria, the three (3) numerically dominant ethnic groups include Igbo, the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba.

As one of the factors responsible for the politicization of census in Nigeria, political strength and influence is visible historically. During the preparations for the election into the federal House of Representatives, the data from the 1952/53 census were used as the basis for allocating 50% representation to the North. This to a great extent indicates fundamentally the relationship between population counts and political strength and influence.

According to the population Association of Nigeria, the recorded size of the population of each state according to census data is a crucial factor in determining the political importance of each state. It is therefore not surprising that even the more literate persons and political leaders have become very interested in and enthusiastic about the political and monetary values of a population census in the country. This allows for wide spread politicization of census among the various states in Nigeria.

**Ethnic Competition:**

Studies have proved that there is a positive relationship between ethnic competition and the politicisation of census in Nigeria. Odenyi (2005:30) has argued that Nigeria’s political experience has presented an image of fierce political struggle amongst contending ethnic nationalities as regards the sharing of national resources. Ethnic groups in an attempt to secure more social amenities than others, engage in inflation of census figures. These practices arise from the belief that such ethnic groups would be incapable of securing those social amenities distributed by the government to the various ethnic groups in the country. This is due to the fact that governmental decisions concerning the siting of industries, the building of roads and
bridges, award of scholarship, revenue allocation and the allocation of parliamentary seats to constituencies of these ethnic groups are guided by population figures of the regions involved. Ibe (1965) argues that, ethnic nationalities in order to maximize the benefits associated with high population figures engage themselves in falsification of population figures. This practice he further argued is mostly witnessed in Third World Countries, characterized by backwardness and traditionalism.

The politicization of census is worst especially in Nigeria that is comprised of various ethnic groups and which further is characterized by such problems associated with the national question, arising from the need to bring individuals with differentiated tribes together under one political system.

**Constituency Delimitation:**
Constituency delimitation simply put, is the equitable and balanced segmentation of communities into units for electoral representation in the body polity. For instance, for the local government chairman, the specific local government area is his/her constituency; for the governor, the state is the constituency, while for the president, the country as a whole is the constituency. For those in the legislature, there are also clearly defined boundaries of communities that are segmented to act as their constituencies. A constituency thus, defines the physical boundaries of the specific area for the purpose of electoral administration and possibly for political administration after the election (Right Monitoring Group, 2008). The Nigerian constitution of 1999, vested the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) with the power to review the constituencies in the country after every ten years or after any census conducted by the National Population Commission. The exercise started in 1922, and subsequently in 1954,1964,1979,1983, with the possibility of having another exercise for the 2015 election.

It is a truism that in constituency delimitation in Nigeria, population figure remains a yardstick used extensively in determining states and local Government that needed division. Thus, population figures are used not only for the creation of states but also local governments, wards and other political units. These to a very large extent account for the intense struggle amongst ethnic groups to inflate population figures. For instance, there has been continuous movement by the Nsukka people in Enugu State towards the creation of ADADA state. In order to arrive at their aim, there is the tendency of the political elites inflating their population figures come2016 population enumeration.

As we had noted earlier, this drive towards the inflation of population figures descends from the fact that the revenue sharing formula which obtains in Nigeria favours population figure as a mechanism for distribution of resources. The consideration of population as a formula for revenue and other resource sharing in Nigeria could be argued to be one of those crisis by some of the major ethnic groups that barely have any income-generating resource at their disposal, considering the fact that the use of such principles as derivation would only work to the advantage of the oil producing states in Nigeria. The jostle towards manipulation of population figures has impeded the development of the Nigerian state.

Having asserted that the Nigerian state is in her backward developmental state, we shall now proceed to find out whether or not manipulation of census figures has actually impeded the development of the country.
Conclusions
The 2006 Nigerian census exercise has come and gone, but the fall out is still hovering all over the Nigerian state. Despite the enormous resources that were devoted towards a hitch-free census, the exercise was replete with anomies. There were unprecedented cases of irregularities in most states of the federation. This subsequently drifted from state-based sentiments to that of ethno-religious based sentiments, with each ethnic group inventing and innovating every strategy available to it. It is unarguable that this struggle gained impetus from the knowledge of the advantages accruing from having higher population figures in the country.

Allocation of resources in the polity is determined by population census figures generated. Population census in Nigeria reveals the availability of manpower and determines who gets what, when and how. The 2006 census exercise was further inflated due to the knowledge of the fact that population exercises are used as mechanism for determining not only the size of the country but also the size of ethnic groups. Also, census exercises are used in the country to determine the political strength and/or influence of ethnic groups. The Nigerian case is that right from the 1914 amalgamation, ethnic groups have always wanted to be heard or wield greater power and influence over other groups. Consequently, the 2006 population census was manipulated to favour ethnic political interests and aspirations. Ethnic competition arising from multiplicity of ethnic groups in the country remains an outstanding factor responsible for the politicisation of the 2006 census. The fact that population census figures are used for revenue sharing in the country broadened the eagerness of the various states of the federation to indulge in irregularities. Thus, the growing awareness of the linkage between population size and the sharing of federal revenues and representative posts in Nigeria has posed tremendous constraint towards the achievement of a non-politicised population counts in the country. Other impediments include lack of national framework for proper delineation and identification of enumerated areas; absence of organised training for large number of census officials; lack of professionals in census operations; double allegiance on the part of workers employed for census enumeration; inadequate finance and budgeting; poor logistics and topographic problems; illiteracy and ignorance; corruption; ineffective supervision of field operations; the unavailability of essential materials such as maps for identification of enumeration areas. These and many more were the obstacles that accounted for the non-realisation of a hitch-free exercise during the 2006 population counts. These loopholes found in the 2006 census exercise have resulted in the haphazard realisation of census objectives in Nigeria, thereby leading to a worsening case in the country’s quest to fast track development.

Recommendations
Having established the need for proper population enumerations in the country, deriving from our observation of the gross irregularities that characterized the 2006 population census, which has consequently impeded the Nigeria’s developmental efforts, we have come up with the following recommendations, aimed towards proffering a permanent solution to the perennial cases of census manipulation in the country especially as such incidents negate developmental efforts.
After a thorough study of the 2006 population census and identification in Nigeria, a Biometric technology approach is proposed for carrying out the population census and national identification scheme. It is believed that every human being has unique physiological and behavioural characteristics, which cannot be forged or forgotten. Biometric technology is a science of measuring and compiling distinguishing physical characteristics of the people. It uses distinctive anatomical or physiological characteristics such as hand geometry, fingerprint recognition, iris recognition and facial recognition for automatically identifying or verifying people’s identity. Biometric technology can be used to collect details of each citizen’s physiological traits and other information. The collected information can then be stored in a centralised database. The stored information should include the name, date of birth, sex, family records, educational background, employment history, location, a unique identification number and the biometric data of each citizen.

It is obvious that census falsification in Nigeria as evident in the 2006 population census strongly derives from the inadequacies in the Nigeria’s fiscal federalism: especially as found in the use of population, derivation, need and landmass as the sharing criteria. We therefore posit here that in order to curtail the trend of census falsification in the country, it is imperative to reverse the revenue allocation criteria to reflect more of even development of the various states. This would afford the ‘weaker’ states some ample opportunity to consolidate their hold on fast tracking development. The principle of even development is a sine qua non for the development of the Nigerian states and the country as a whole.

**Adequate support and financing of census exercises in the country**

Adequate financing is required for population census if the country must realise the goals of population enumeration. Adequate financing is required to cover the heavy demand for diverse activities involving, expenditure. Budgeting adequately for the exercise would cover the cost of going through the entire country in order to ensure that individual is counted. A major pre-census activity is to prepare every realistic budget of needs, expenses and cost in order to determine how much money would be required for successful completion of the exercise. Generally, considerable sums of money, huge material and human resources, lots of time and efforts should be devoted towards a successful completion of census exercise.

It has been observed that another bottleneck towards the realisation of accuracy of census figures in Nigeria is mass ignorance amongst Nigerians with regard to the aims and objectives of a population census. Census education should inform the public on the need for a relatively accurate national census and the approach is to inform and not to indoctrinate them. Existing public enlightenment programmes of the government such as the Mass Mobilisation for Economic Recovery (MMER), Social Justice and self Reliance (SJSR) etc., should incorporate aspects of population education such that would address the importance of population data for national planning so as to enable them cultivate a positive attitude towards population census. Adequate preparations should be put in place to provide for structures, equipments, and payment of workers’ salaries as at when due. Planning ahead for the exercise is relevant to curtail possible hitches in the census exercise. In the same vein, adequate logistics and topographic provisions should be made ahead of time, so as to ensure the provision of human and material requirements needed for the census exercise. Technical and definitional issues should be decided upon and
decisions as well as standardisation provided for so as to clear technical and definitional issues so as to enhance the smooth operation of the population census and minimize the possibility of errors. Also, the last stage of census exercises should be well taken care of so as to avoid politicisation of census results in the country.

**Proper timing of population census exercises in the country**

Census exercises in the country should be well timed. The season should be conducive for the exercise. Rainy season could make the enumeration of some terrain extremely difficult. In the same way, harsh weather conditions could severely affect people’s participation in the exercise. Efforts should be made to ensure that the exercise is carried out simultaneously, which means that the exercise should be undertaken at the same time throughout the country by properly trained enumerators.

Also, completed census forms should be well stored for proper retrieval. This is a very important approach towards curbing the politicisation of population census in the country. Finally, census data should be critically evaluated at the end of enumerations in order to ascertain how successful the exercise has been in terms of the authenticity of the data so obtained.

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