



**POLITICAL INCLUSION IN THE
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE SELECTION
PROCESS OF THE ALL-PROGRESSIVES
CONGRESS (APC) IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF
AWORI SETTLERS IN LAGOS STATE**

A Research Paper Design

by:

AFOLASHADE JOY JUBRILLA

ERNA NUMBER: 571674

NIGERIA

MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Major:
GDP

Supervisor:
MARIJN FALING

Second Reader:
GEORGINA M. GÓMEZ

The Hague, The Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Historically, the Awori are among the earliest settlers in Lagos State, with ancestral roots that anciently span across the northern, eastern, and southern regions of the state. Despite the Awori's dominance across the Local Government Areas (LGAs) and regional divisions, they have never held the governorship position in Lagos State since Nigeria's independence in 1960. On this note, the study examines the political inclusion in the gubernatorial candidate selection process of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigeria with a specific focus on the Awori settlers in Lagos State. This includes investigating specific factors of political inclusion that contribute to the possible marginalization of the Awori's in the politics of Lagos State. A mixed-method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted for the study. Data were collected from 248 participants comprising of traditional rulers, Awori indigenes, APC party leaders, elected officials, political appointees, APC party members, and members of the civil society such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations. Both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were utilized for the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The findings discovered that APC party always conducts internal elections for the selection of governorship candidates in Lagos State, however, the APC party's decision is influenced by political godfathers without considering the culture that supports rotational governance in the selection process of governorship candidate among the regional divisions in Lagos State. Therefore, the APC's standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on educational qualifications, administrative experience and godfather influence. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in cooperation with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should prepare and pass a new bill to the Senate house of legislatures on political inclusion policies. This is to ensure that every individual Awori in Lagos State irrespective of their demographical characteristic has equal and fair opportunity for political participation and representation.

Chapter 1: Introduction

My research journey has been an eye-opening and invaluable learning experience for me. It has not only expanded my understanding and perspective of the political dynamics in Lagos State but has also challenged my previous assumptions and awakened my curiosity. I have come to understand political inclusion on a much deeper level beyond what I thought it was on a surface level. This research has made me realize that the lens through which I viewed the political dynamics in Lagos State based on my personal experience could be different from the broader reality.

Before leaving Nigeria, I held a mindset that the Awori people, to whom I belong, were marginalized from the gubernatorial candidate selection process of the All-Progressive's Congress party (APC) in Lagos State, based on my personal experience and those around me who had political ambitions but were not given the opportunity due to lack of fairness in the political system. Witnessing friends and family, including myself, struggle against these systemic barriers fueled my passion for advocating for equity in political representation. However, my observations and field responses from this study have laid much more clarity to understand the reality and a change of mindset based on the outcome of this research.

This conviction was what motivated me to embark on this research, driven by several outburst in newspapers, social media, televisions of political marginalization from the Awori community, with various groups, like the Awori Welfare Association of Nigeria and Awori Elites, being formed solely to address these issues. However, getting to the field, I saw a different reality and was surprised by the hesitation of some interviewees to discuss the political inclusion of the Awori's in the All-Progressive's Congress party (APC) gubernatorial selection process, which was quite shocking as concerns were voiced more openly before I left home. I began to ponder whether their reluctance was because of fear, despite being pre-informed of their anonymity or if it was motivated by the desire to protect the APC party based on personal interests. These observations have made me realize that politics often extends beyond what can be easily understood or judged at first glance. I expected openness from the Awori by expressing their concerns, however, the reverse was the case which completely changed my mindset based on the conclusions drawn from the outcome of the study.

The marginalization of the Awori settlers in Lagos State is not only the primary concern of my study but its relevance to social and economic impacts across Awori communities. Adagun (2021) claimed Awori has been deprived of the growth and development of its population. Every emerging governor from other district areas and divisions has made a remarkable contribution to the

infrastructural development of their communities (Agunbiade and Olajide, 2016). Therefore, the marginalization of Awori from a wider perspective is quite broader across other areas which rendered the political inclusion a conditional element for development.

Therefore, studying these issues is crucial to addressing the challenges faced by indigenous communities in urban settings. The political inclusion of the Awori settlers in Lagos State has been a long-standing issue that has led to widespread discontent and protests, especially during the last election in 2023, when the organized youths called “Egun-Awori” supported by the Awori Welfare Association of Nigeria (AWAN) in Lagos State, formed a movement against poor leadership and lack of political inclusion. Investigating the roles played by key stakeholders and their effectiveness in responding to the grievances of the Awori people is crucial for informing policies and initiatives aimed at improving their situation.

This study incorporates concepts studied in M.A. Development Studies, such as political inclusion, policymaking, governance, power, and politics, by analyzing the various roles played by state and non-state stakeholders in addressing these challenges. The study aims to examine the political processes, recruitment and representation for the marginalization of the Awori settlers in Lagos State, Nigeria. This includes investigating specific factors of political inclusion, such as political processes, recruitment, and representation, that contribute to the marginalization of the Awori settlers in the politics of Lagos State.

Therefore, the specific objective is to examine the factors that contribute to possible marginalization of the Awori settlers in the politics of Lagos State. This includes an investigation of the political processes, recruitment and representation. The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are delimited to include the traditional rulers, Awori indigenes, APC party leaders, elected officials, political appointees, APC party members, and members of civil society such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations. The study location covers the divisional areas where the Awori people reside in Lagos State, such as Ikeja and Badagry.

This will enable the study to gather opinions and perceptions on political inclusion, based on generalizations and social interactions during the investigation process, as well as on political influence. The findings from this study will be representative of the coverage areas discussed in the scope emphasized above.

1.1 Contextual Background

Nigeria's post-colonial constitutions have been designed and revised to promote unity, with policies intended to reform a flawed political system characterized by ineffective structures and processes. The improved structural processes in the Nigerian political system aim to implement federal governance through democratic principles and political inclusion. The definition of democracy practically differs from various countries around the world (Nnani, 2022). For instance, the definition of democracy in America differs from that in Britain, Ireland, Canada and Nigeria. In the Nigerian context, the official state interpretation of democracy is defined as the “government of the few, by the few, and for the socio-economic benefit for the few” (Ajayi and Ojo, 2014).

Despite this official state interpretation of democracy, the Awori have been deprived of the equitable opportunity to represent the State for the position of governor under the APC party. However, governors have emerged from other regional areas in Lagos State such as Eko, Ikorodu and Ijebu (Adedire, 2017). Therefore, the power interchange between Ikorodu, Epe and Lagos Island for the governorship position over the last 25 years reveals that the system of governance in Lagos State is not rotationally representative across its five divisions (Aliu, 2024). Although, the major reason for the exclusion is quite unclear at this stage, the influence of godfatherism and political leaders cannot be overemphasized (Ezeh, 2024).

However, the dominance of the APC party in Lagos State does not give any other party a close privilege or advantage to win the governorship election. In other words, a possible chance of any Awori to run for a governorship position under APC will end the long-term exclusion. According to Oladejo (2019), the majority among the APC political godfathers and political leaders in Lagos State are traceably non-indigenes whilst they fear that allowing Awori in top political positions may end their reign and political power control in Lagos State. Akinyele (2015) also posited that the marginalization of the Awori in governorship positions was a deliberate move to avoid and eliminate boundary and power battles between indigenes and non-indigenes in Lagos State. The failure to address this issue could jeopardize the values of inclusiveness and development in the Nigerian political system. In the long run, this political practice could also hinder the State's ability to achieve sustainable development that promotes fairness, equality and growth across Lagos communities, which span across the five divisions of the State.

1.2 Research Problem Statement

Lagos State in Nigeria constitutionally comprises twenty local government areas (LGAs) across five regional divisions. The Awori settlers in Lagos State are geographically dispersed across seventeen LGAs under two regional divisions (Aradeon, Aina, and Umo, 2019). In contrast, other groups, such as Ikorodu, Epe, and Lagos Island, occupy one LGA and one regional division each. According to the 2006 population census held in Nigeria, the Awori comprise a population of 15,680,414 on a land mass of 1,951.52 square kilometers (Lagos Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Similarly, Ikorodu has a population of 934,614 on a land mass of 200 square kilometers, Epe has a population of 323,634 on a land mass of 641 square kilometers, and Lagos Island has a population of 859,849 on a land mass of 5.20 square kilometers. This indicates that the Awori constitute 89.33% of the total population and occupy 69.75% of the total land mass in Lagos State. Despite the Awori dominance across the LGAs and regional divisions, they have never held the governorship position in Lagos State since Nigeria's independence in 1960. However, other regional divisions, such as Ikorodu, Epe, and Lagos Island, have predominantly produced and occupied the governorship position in Lagos State, with notable figures including Captain Gbolahan Mudasiru, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, and Mr. Bola Tinubu, respectively.

Historically, the Awori are among the earliest settlers in Lagos State, with ancestral roots that anciently span across the northern, eastern, and southern regions of the state. However, the inability of the Awori across political parties in Lagos State to influence the decision on governorship representation has posed a serious concern for political inclusion. As of the last election held on March 18, 2023, three political parties emerged as the most relevant and competitive out of the total of eighteen registered political parties in Nigeria (Mustapha, Oluwatukasi, and Ayegbusi, 2024). These three political parties are the All-Progressive Congress (henceforth, APC), the People's Democratic Party (henceforth, PDP), and the Labour Party (henceforth, LP). Among these three political parties, an Awori man, Mr. Olajide Adediran, popularly known as Jandor, was the flag bearer of the PDP in the race for the governorship position in Lagos State, while the remaining two parties (i.e., APC and LP) were represented by indigenous members from Lagos Island. The current governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwoolu of the APC party, won that election with wide margins over others such as Jandor of the PDP party and Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour of the LP party. Surprisingly, the APC party won 82.67% of votes from Awori territory, while Jandor, who represented the Awori from the PDP party, won 8.51% of votes from Awori territory (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2024).

Despite Jandor losing the election to the APC party, the election marked the first time in the history of Lagos State that a person from Awori was allowed to represent an active and competitive party in the race for a gubernatorial position. This was a result of Jandor's inter-party transition, which led to his defection from the APC as the ruling party to the PDP party in 2022 (Aluko and Titus, 2023). The reason behind this transition is yet unknown; however, Aluko and Titus (2023) perceived it as the inequality and bias in the candidate selection process for governorship candidates in the APC party that prompted Jandor to defect to the PDP party.

On this note, it is evident that the non-ruling parties are not the real problems behind Awori's marginalization in Lagos State. This, however, is the major reason for concentrating only on the APC party for this study and the justification for excluding the investigation of other parties for this study. The facts, processes, and reasons behind the decisions of candidate selection within the APC party for the governorship position in Lagos State deserves to be studied. Therefore, this study is established to examine why the Awori settlers have been marginalized from the governorship position in Lagos State.

1.3 Rationale/Purpose of the Study

The study aims to examine the political inclusion in the gubernatorial candidate selection process of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigeria with specific focus on the Awori settlers in Lagos State. This includes investigating specific factors of political inclusion such as political processes, recruitment and representation that contribute to possible marginalization of the Awori settlers in the politics of Lagos State. Therefore, the specific objective is to examine the factors contributing to the marginalization of the Awori settlers in the politics of Lagos State.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve this, my study will seek to provide answers to the following questions:

Main (preliminary): What are the factors that contribute to the marginalization of the Awori settlers in representing APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State?

Sub-questions (preliminary):

- i. Why have the Awori settlers failed to represent the APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State?
- ii. What is the standard political recruitment process in existence within the APC party for selecting the right candidate?

- iii. Who are the individuals within the APC political party who determine who qualifies and who does not qualify for political representation?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is also significant for researchers studying political inclusion from the global south, as it can help them understand how to design and implement effective policies and programs that foster inclusive governance practices and empower marginalized groups. The findings of this study will provide insights to existing literature on political inclusion for policymakers and community leaders on how to promote political participation and representation of indigenous groups.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter two presents a comprehensive literature review, guided by the research questions, which will synthesize existing knowledge and identify research gaps. Chapter three spells out the research methodology, including data collection and analysis, participant selection procedures, ethical considerations, and study limitations. The fourth chapter presents and analyzes the study results, aligning the findings with the research objectives. Finally, the paper concludes with a chapter that summarizes the research findings, draws conclusions, and provides recommendations for practice and future research. This chapter also identifies the area for further studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature chapter entails a review of existing knowledge from conceptual, theoretical, and empirical perspectives. The conceptual review focuses on concepts such as political processes, recruitment and representation whilst discussing their fundamental and contemporary positions based on existing knowledge. The theoretical review explores elite theory to explain and apply the stance of the theory on political inclusion to the study context. The empirical review leverages the strengths of past studies, considering their contextual measurements, methodologies, and findings to identify gaps that the current study aims to cover.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Evolution of Awori Settlers in Lagos State

The Awori settlers in Lagos State are one of the major and significant groups of Yoruba, among other tribes originating from the south-west geo-political zone in Nigeria (Olukoju, 2018). The Awori speak a distinct tribal dialect of the Yoruba language in Nigeria (Ayodele, 2015). In the historical review of the Awori's settlement in Lagos State, it is important to explain who the Awori's are, why and when they settled in Lagos.

Who are the Awori?

The Awori are Nigerians whose ancestors can be traced to Oduduwa, who originated from Ile-Ife, now known as Osun State. Oduduwa is regarded as the king and founding father of the Yoruba people, primarily originating from the south-west areas of Nigeria (Adeuyan, 2011). During his reign, Oduduwa was a highly respected king with wives who gave birth to seven children, namely, Oranmiyan, Olowu, Obalufon, Benin, Onisabe, Olupopo and Alaketo (Macaulay, 2015). In various Yoruba traditions, Olowu is known for its rituals that involve Egungun, Osun, Ogun, Obatala, Iyemoja and others, with influence-based practices that passed these traditions down to Olowu's descendants. Notably, among these descendants are Osoba Ayato and his brother Odofin Ayoka, who left the Oduduwa kingdom following the message of the Ifa divine oracle (i.e. the god of divinity) for settlement in the southland (Omotosho et al., 2020).

The Ifa divine oracle instructed that all Oduduwa's children must leave their father's kingdom to the southland. Although the story has it that some children went northward for settlement by choice and preference, however, the likes of Oranmiyan, Obalufon, Benin, and Olowu left with their families on a journey for settlement in the southland (Barnes, 2004).

Olowu, one of the eldest sons of Oduduwa, found their settlement in the Owu Kingdom, now known as Abeokuta, the constitutional capital of Ogun State in Nigeria. However, the children of Olowu, Ayato and his brother Ayoka, continued their journey with a mud-plate, also known as ‘Awo’ in Yoruba, in search of a perfect place ordained for settlement (Ayodele, 2015). After several years of journeying, Ayato and his family finally found their place in the Isheri and Iddo areas of Lagos State, representing the Awori.

Awori Settlement in Lagos State

The stories of Yoruba’s stem from Ile-Ife, traceable to Oduduwa, the father of Yoruba’s (Macaulay, 2015). Oduduwa consulted the Ifa divine oracle, which directed them to disperse southward to earn their kingship (Louahala, 2016). Ayato and Ayoka, children of Olowu, embarked on their journey along the river with mud-plate, seeking a perfect place ordained by the Ifa Oracle for settlement. The philosophy behind the mud-plate is the belief that it will pave way for direction to know the appropriate place for them to settle (Ayodele, 2015). This is performed through a natural experiment where the mud-plate is placed on top of a flowing river, which flows through the direction leading them. The essence of this experiment is to observe where the mud-plate will sink, signaling the perfect place for them to settle. According to the source provided by Olukoju (2018), the mud-plate experiment in the settlement journey of Ayato and Ayoka stopped three times before finally sinking at its destination. The first place where the mud-plate stopped was at Olokemeji, a place designated after Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun State (Olukoju, 2018).

The duos and their family spent numerous days at this location before observing the movement of the mud-plate to the second stoppage location, known as Oke-Ata in Ogun State. They spent seventeen days at Oke-Ata before proceeding with their movement until they observed their third stoppage at Isheri, in the western part of Lagos State (Dansu and Oladipupo-Okorie, 2007). This period marked the first arrival of Ayato and Ayoka in Lagos State.

According to the source provided by Adagun (2021), Ayato and Ayoka came and settled at Isheri, a free, deserted and unoccupied land with no king or community members. They discovered the area was peaceful, with fertile soil, suitable for farming and harvesting fresh crops for food (Nwankwo, 2017). However, it was observed during this time that the mud-plate, which was directing them, only stopped but did not sink, indicating that they had not yet arrived at their final destination. Therefore, Ayato and Ayoka requested their followers to proceed with their journey after spending 289 days (17×17) at Isheri (Olukoju, 2018). At this point, it was revealed that some of the followers

led by Ogunfunminire, refused to continue with the journey, claiming that the soil fertility and friendly weather environment of Isheri were sufficient for them to establish their settlement (Duerksen, 2018).

Ayato and Ayoka refused to be distracted, proceeding with their journey by placing the mud-plate on the river to observe the breeze flowing in the direction of another location. Just two days into their journey, the mud-plate not only stopped but also sank at Iddo the southern part of Lagos State, after whirling on the river (McKenzie, 2023). Ayato, Ayoka and their loyal followers rejoiced and chanted with full celebration and happiness saying "Awo Ti Ri" in AWO-RI meaning "the mud-plate has sunk" (McKenzie, 2023). The people of "Awo Ti Ri" are today known as Awori settlers in Lagos State. History has it that some Awori followers stopped behind at every stoppage of the mud-plate on the river throughout this journey (Falola, 2004). This means the Awori settlers are not limited to Lagos State but also found in Olokemeji and Oke Ata areas of Ogun State, led by Osho Aro-bi-ologbo-egan, before their extension to Isheri, the western area of Lagos State.

When did the Awori Settle in Lagos?

According to Adagun (2021), the Awori's are the first settlers in Lagos State, that failed to establish their kingship in the area before the arrival of others. Ayodele (2015) posited that the land of Lagos was empty when the Awori settlers arrived. It is claimed that the king of the Lagoon (Lagos), was Addo, and his people were already present on the island, which is the southern endpoint of Lagos, which was covered with an unsettled river and sea (Adeaga et al., 2021).

In the work of Kafaru (2014), the first arrival of the Awori in the Isheri part of Lagos State, dates to the 16th century A.D., and their major occupation was hunting and farming. However, Aromire, who was one of the sons of Addo, the then-king of Lagos, was the first to cross from Lagos Island to Lagos Mainland and over the years reigned as the regional king in Lagos Mainland, including a broader reach that covers the Awori members living at Isheri.

Affiliation of Awori Settlers with All Progressives Congress Party in Lagos State

The All-Progressive Congress (APC) party in Lagos State has dominated the governorship position in Lagos State since 1999 till date (i.e. 25 years) (Bamgbose and Babalola, 2024). This is under the leadership of Mr Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu who after being elected as the executive governor of Lagos State has continued to dominate the governance through his godfatherism and succession planning approaches saddled with loyalties from different members across the five divisions of Lagos State. These loyalists as members of APC are situated under the five divisions of Lagos State (Akinyele, 2015).

These include Ikorodu, Badagry, Ikeja, Lagos Island and Epe. According to the source provided by Olatunji (2022), Mr Tinubu's political strategy corroborates that of Albert Macaulay as inherited by Mr Obafemi Awolowo which was based on the inclusiveness of strategic people to fulfil their political goals and objectives. This included the inclusion of the people across different political zones, the kings and royal leaders across local communities and the judicial system particularly under the western region in Nigeria to form the Lagos colony.

Although, there are claims that political disparity exists among the groups of tribes in Lagos including the Awori's which served as the gap for Mr Tinubu and his political cohort to leverage (The Republic, 2023). This strategic plan was established to achieve three basic objectives which include economic, historical and political objectives (EGWIM, 2023). This was a strategy to ensure that everyone regardless of their tribes or professions incorporated into the political plan of Lagos State to achieve its goals and objectives.

At this time, Lagos State became the economic capital of Nigeria with several urbanized areas including the Ilupeju industrial estate, and Ikeja industrial estate, among other development. It was at this period the five divisions of Lagos State were first established to ensure the inclusiveness of the Ijebu, Eko, Awori, Egun and other tribes such as Igbo, Hausa, Fulani, Tapa among others that settled in Lagos State. Mr Tinubu in his political party ensured conformity with the ideology by creating pseudo-loyalty among the Lagosians including the Awori to avoid conflicts and distortions. According to This Day (2018), the Awori group believed that they had been marginalized from the opportunity of representing the APC party for the gubernatorial position in Lagos State.

The Awori were treated the same way as other tribes from and outside Lagos State without any special preference for them as an indigene. The Awori also went as far as to threaten Lagos APC to disrupt the party's political process if their demand is not considered (This Day, 2018), while others threatened to withdraw their support for the APC party in Lagos State (Daily Post, 2019). An example of this is the king of the Ota kingdom of Awori who condemned the act of marginalization by the Lagos APC and further threatened to mobilize the Awori against the party leaders (The Punch, 2019). Meanwhile, the later attack on the APC party chairman, following persistent threats from some Awori party members, were denied by Lagos APC youths (Premium Times, 2024). This claim was published in the newspaper for the public as a strategy to uphold the party's unity, especially among the members and their leaders.

The Awori leaders leveraged this opportunity to appease the APC led-administrative government for top political positions and appointments (The Nation, 2019). They also pledged their

loyalty and support for Mr Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the incumbent governor Mr Olusola Sanwo-Olu and the APC party members in Lagos State (Kitigbe, 2023). However, the political positions, particularly the gubernatorial positions, have remained competitive for everyone to participate, including indigenes and non-indigenes, of which the Awori's have not been afforded the opportunity to be considered for selection. Although the political influence of the godfather cannot be overemphasized, the APC party leaders in their efforts to ensure fairness and equity organized a committee called the Governor's Advisory Council (GAC) comprising of individuals selected from different Local Government Areas (LGAs) to determine the most suitable candidate to represent the party as the flag bearer for the gubernatorial position.

2.1.2 Overview of the Political System in Nigeria

The political system in Nigeria can be traced back to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. The pre-colonial era, feudalism was established as a form of socio-economic and political system, where kings were directly in charge of the land, with territories varying from region to region (Adilieje et al., 2009). Various empires were dominated by different representatives, according to the regions. For example, the caliphate represented the northern empire, while the king's chieftain represented the south, west and east empire with their village republics (Mofidi, 2021). A few of the most popular empires during this period were the Sokoto, Yoruba and Benin empires.

However, the colonial era in Nigeria was characterized by Britain's dominance, establishing full control over the existing territories and their empires, particularly in the structure of governance (Inyang and Bassey, 2014). All kings, caliphates, chieftain and village republics in the social class had no control or power over their state-systems.

Finally, the post-colonial era began when Nigeria gained its independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963 (Ebegbulem, 2019). This period marked the first era of political system in Nigeria, with democratic notions that combined leaders from different regions of the country. However, there is a claim that while other African countries were focusing on developing political structures as a practicable culture to moderate and guide political activities for political inclusion, Nigeria was struggling with the challenges of unity from divergent ethnic groups on socio-economic institutional development (Lenshie, 2014). The situation further worsened when the military took over the government through a coup, leading to a 29- year period of military rule between 1966 to 1979, and again from 1983 to 1999 (Ziankahn, 2011). However, despite the military dominance, the civilians

have managed to occupy the position for 35 years, from 1960 to 1966, 1979 to 1983, and 1999 till date (Krebs, 2015).

2.1.3 Overview of the Political System in Lagos State

The Nigerian political system has continued to serve as a yardstick for every state to follow in accordance with federal character (Nnamani et al., 2022). In other words, the process in the national political system in Nigeria has also extended to states, particularly Lagos State, with a different administrative system that encompasses military representatives and elected civilians selected from Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Lagos State.

However, there are 20 LGAs in Lagos State, which are embedded under five divisions, namely: Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos Island and Epe. The Awori settlers are found within the full sketch of 17 LGAs under Ikeja and Badagry divisions in Lagos State (Duerksen, 2018). Data also reveals that the combined military administrative government ruled Lagos State for 25 years, while civilian rule lasted for 29 years (Muse, 2014).

During the tenure of the military government in Lagos State, a total of nine governors emerged, and only two of these governors were indigenes of Lagos State, such as Commander Adekunle Lawal and Commander Gbolahan Mudasiru both representing Lagos Island and Ikorodu divisions respectively (Ogunmupe, 2011). The primary concern in this study's context is the civilian administration which had a total of six governors. Most of which were elected under the umbrella of different parties and non-rotational positions. Mr Lateef Jakande (Lagos Island) was the first civilian governor of Lagos State in 1979 under Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) (Sanni and Boge, 2021). Mr Lateef Jakande was succeeded by Sir Micheal Otedola (Epe) in 1992 under National Republican Convention (NRC).

Mr Bola Tinubu (Lagos Island) became the third civilian governor of Lagos State in 1999 under Alliance for Democracy (AD). Tinubu expanded the reach of politics in Lagos State to other states in the south-west geo-political zone, becoming one of the most respected governors in Lagos State (Luqman. and Busari, 2023). He (Tinubu) passed the baton to Mr Babatunde Fashola (Lagos Island) under the same party movement (i.e. Action Congress of Nigeria) to become the fourth civilian governor of Lagos State in 2007. Mr Akinwunmi Ambode (Epe) succeeded Fashola to become the fifth civilian governor of Lagos State in 2015 under All Progressives Congress (APC).

Currently, Mr Babajide Sanwo-Olu (Lagos Island) emerged as the winner of the 2019 election under All Progressives Congress (APC) to become the sixth civilian governor of Lagos State. Mr Sanwo-Olu is currently serving his second term, marking his eight years as the executive governor of Lagos State.

However, it is important to note that the inter-party transitions from AD in 1999, to ACN in 2007, and APC in 2015, which elected Mr. Bola Tinubu, Mr. Raji Fashola, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode and Mr. Babajide Sanwo-olu, have been under the same political group. Based on this trend, it is important to note that, Mr. Lateef Jakande and Sir Micheal Otedola were the independent governors who won the election into the position when political parties were at the edge of competition. The arrival of Mr Bola Tinubu in 1999 marked the beginning of godfatherism in Lagos politics, which saw a single party movement dominate the governorship position for 25 years (Ojo, 2022).

To date, there has not been a single governorship representative from Ikeja and Badagry, which represents the Awori settlers in Lagos State (Ayodele, 2015). The political system in Lagos State still lacks internal party democracy in determining the candidate who represents the parties in the post-colonial era (Odigbo and Udalla, 2022). For instance, a rotational selection of candidates within the parties across the divisions would match the turn for other divisions after Epe, Ikorodu and Lagos Island such as Ikeja and Badagry. From the past record of governorship candidates in Lagos State, it is obvious that Ikeja and Badagry divisions, which represents the Awori's settlers, are the only divisions marginalized from political inclusion and representation in Lagos State (Akinyele, 2015). Also, the tenure of the current sitting governor will soon come to an end; however, the fate and decision on who will represent the All-Progressives Congress to become the next governor are yet unknown. Therefore, a perceived internal party democracy in Lagos politics will possibly provide a glimpse into who the next governorship candidate will be. According to Samuels and Shugart (2014), the structural process in politics can be determined by executive presidency, federalism and democracy, political representation and political recruitment factors.

Meanwhile, the political system in Lagos State does not fall under any of the factorial categories except for a perceived system of godfatherism (Majekodunmi and Awosika, 2013). It is indeed ascertained that a possible recommendation for the governorship election in Lagos State by the party leader (i.e. Mr Bola Tinubu) will serve as a standing mandate for the members of the party to follow and adhere to (Ahmad, Uddin and Shah, 2022). Dawam and Arin (2023) posited that, the All-Progressives Congress in Lagos State ideologically tags party decisions to Mr Bola Tinubu with their regular anthem which quotes "On your (i.e. Bola Tinubu) mandate we shall stand".

The decision on who qualifies or is suitable by choice to represent the party is decided within the party system (Bone, 2011). Although there exists in the party a system of inclusion that crosses through diverse divisions in Lagos State, including the Awori, the decision on representation in top political positions like governorship position is being decided by party members subject to the primary choice of Mr Bola Tinubu, who remains today the leader of the party in Lagos State (Ononogbu and Okoroiwu, 2019).

The former Awori representative in the All-Progressive Congress (APC), Mr Abdul-Azeez Olajide Adediran, popularly known as Jandor, reportedly left the party for the opposition party due to perceived inequality and biasedness in the selection of governorship candidate (Aluko and Titus, 2023). In the last governorship election held on March 18th, 2023, in Lagos State, Jandor contested for the governorship position in Lagos State under People's Democratic Party (PDP) to represent the Awori. Despite losing the election to the incumbent governor, Jandor became the first governorship candidate to represent the Awori settlers in Lagos State.

2.1.4 Concept of Political Inclusion

The concept of political inclusion has become a global phenomenon with approaches that apply to sustainable development. According to Nissen (2021), political inclusion is a form of entitlement that allows the voice and opinion of an individual in a political circle. This could occur between the in-group or out-group members to ensure a diplomatic midpoint in a political discussion. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2016) defines political inclusion as the active involvement and representation of various people and groups in political processes, decision-making, and governance structures within a society. It includes the just and equitable participation of vulnerable or marginalized groups in the creation of institutions, laws, and policies that impact their lives (Kitchin et al., 2015). Allport (1958) proposed five factors as optimal conditions for meeting political inclusion in the social realm. These include “equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and authoritative support” (Allport, 1958).

However, Kitchin et al. (2015) posited that the implementation of these conditions in real time has been quite unpredictable. This is because most political party systems are bound beyond control in distrust and cooperation towards averting political menace. The in-group shared a common goal, strategy, and authority different from that of the out-group (Efeoğlu Özcan, 2022). According to Pouliot and Thérien (2015), the most efficient approach under which political inclusion works is a

stipulation aligned to principles chained by laws. For instance, a political person or group would abide by laws to act only in a lawful way that supports peace, unity, and inclusion.

However, Dovidio et al. (2016) posited that individuals who share common opinions and group identity are liable to reduce prejudice and improve cooperation and sense of belongingness. This could encourage the people in the outgroup to voice their opinions to the police or regulatory authority through social interactions (Voelkel et al., 2021). Therefore, political inclusion has gained wide contexts of views across the literature, however, the implementation varies depending on its guiding principles and the cooperation of the players in the global north and south. In this study context, political inclusion is measured based on specific factors such as political process, recruitment and representation that contributes to the marginalization of the Awori settlers in the politics of Lagos State. The choice of adoption of these factors for measurement is based on its coherent with the study context to investigate the study phenomenon. Also, these three factors have been widely adopted for the measurement of political inclusion in literature.

However, several studies have been conducted by past researchers on political inclusion from different contexts and theories in contributions to the body of knowledge. In the review of these existing studies, it was discovered that the concept of political inclusion does not have a specific or standardized measurement (see Epstein, 2008; Stolle and Hooghe, 2011; Thompson, 2017; Paraschiv et al, 2021; Cordier and Martin, 2022; Scheer et al., 2023). However, in the review of many objectivity approach line studies, the political process, representation, and recruitment appeared as the most frequent variables adopted and adapted for study by many past researchers (see Schwartz, D.C., 1969; Best, H., 2007; Ryfe, D.M., and Stalsburg, B., 2012; Bjarnegård, E. and Kenny, M., 2015; Lawong et al., 2019). These three elements equally occurred as the most relevant elements for this context of study to measure political inclusion as the basis for the objectivity approach to envisioning the possibility of achieving the goal of the subjectivity approach in a thematic synthesis. Other variables spiced up with theoretical approaches in a discourses, cross-sectional, and longitudinal methodology were also adopted by past studies to achieve the objectives of political inclusion from different study contexts.

For instance, O'Neill (2000) employed Jürgen Habermas's discourse theory of democracy to investigate the politics of inclusive agreements towards a critical discourse theory of democracy. O'Neill (2000) critically focused on its discourse account of legitimacy with the findings, which indicate that the main aim of discourse theory was to show how maximal democratic inclusion and politics grounded in reasoned agreements can coexist. Although this aim is recognized, however, the

argument suggests that a critical theory of democracy requires normative frameworks that emphasize substantive aspects of democratic practices in addition to Habermas's procedural approach. These additions are suggested to enhance critical theory and offer a more thorough comprehension of the motivational foundations of discursive democracy.

Similarly, Pajnik (2006) examines the need for an inclusive political theory from the feminist reflections on Habermas's communicative action. While it is essential to emphasize Jürge Habermas's works on communicative action, the theory was explored to analyze inclusive politics from a feminist standpoint systematically. After combining and analyzing feminist readings of Habermas's communicative action, it is noted that feminist researchers want to present communicative action as a more comprehensive and all-encompassing notion of citizen involvement.

However, empirical evidence once showed that social biases associated with political activities are like those associated with other types of participation. This discovery was supported by a representative sample of individuals living in medium-sized Spanish cities, who claim that three processes contribute to the uneven effective involvement among different socioeconomic categories (Navarro and Font, 2013). The first process is the allocation of social resources, which has become more salient in specific participation activities requiring more time or skill, like voting. The second group consists of those unhappy with local government, who are typically more incentivized to participate. At the same time, the third is the twofold effect of involvement highly concentrated among political association members, which is a crucial element contributing to skewed participation patterns.

On the contrary, the phrase, and its variants like "inclusive" and "inclusivity" are generally associated with positive things, which contributes to the perception as positive or progressive (Bunnell, 2019). The method in which it is studied will determine the variances in the outcomes based on existing trends of perception and ideology. For instance, Bunnell (2019) examines the degree of inclusiveness in urban theory and urban-centred international development policy. This is to affirm that exploratory study also proves the efforts to advance better urban theory, improve urban development strategies, and eventually imagine better urban futures have included inclusivity. That is, inclusiveness is not overemphasized as its natural existence crosses through the phenomenon that characterizes the process of leadership across major behavioural disciplines.

Also in the African context, both recognition theory and social justice theory are explored to establish that the voting process is primarily influenced by ethnicity, favouritism, godfatherism, and bribery, among other factors (Folami et al, 2021). In a more recent study, Adams et al. (2023) leverage situational crisis communication and social identity theories in the existing literature to discover that

public relations have great potential to heal societal divisions, notwithstanding challenges caused by unequal resource distribution and institutional shortcomings. This implies that effective crisis management, advocacy work, and strategic communication are valuable tools for promoting political inclusiveness and creating a strong national identity.

However, the introduction of sustainable development goals (SDG) with seventeen goals by the United Nations has created an ongoing platform for sensitization and multimillionaire campaigns to ensure sanity in the leadership system and embrace inclusions in political activities (Chin et al., 2017). This is particularly on SDG Goal #5, Goal #10, and Goal #16, which address gender equality, and how inequalities can be reduced across the global communities while embracing peace, justice and strong institutions respectively, most especially with a specific focus on emerging economic countries.

For example, Biermann et al. (2022) advocate scientific evidence on the political impact of the SDG goals to discover that political structures and policies at all levels of government from local to international are widely influenced. The primary way this effect has shown up is through changes in discourse, which have shaped how stakeholders view and talk about sustainable development. However, significant normative and institutional changes, such as new laws and adjustments to the allocation of resources in emerging economies, are still rare.

2.1.5 Conceptualizing the Structural Processes of Politics

The Nigerian 1979 constitution was created with full focus on strengthening democracy in the post-colonial era (Ogoma, 2018). This was based on the system of federalism, with a commitment to development and liberation (Fiseha, 2018). The second chapter of the constitution provided rigorous principles of state policy to guide political activities in Nigeria, particularly towards the philosophy of adhering to a united nation based on a solid foundation of democracy, political representation, social justice, peace, a balanced economy and development.

On this ground, a comprehensive plan was built to solidify the structural system in the political process towards achieving the national goals and objectives (Bryson, 2018). According to Oyovbaire (1983), the structural process in the Nigerian political system is broadly divided into four categories, namely, executive presidency, federalism and democracy, political representation and political recruitment. While the executive presidency, federalism and democracy have become structural landmarks, guiding the political system in Nigeria, the processes of political representation and recruitment have remained major aspects that demand a critical view for political inclusion.

2.1.6 Political Representation

Political representation in this context is a system of political parties bound by the principles of state policy as mandated by the constitution of the federation (Rehfeld, 2006). Therefore, the key elements in the process of political representation are political parties and elections. Liberalization, capitalism, and democracy are the major factors in the structural process that guide the implementation through conflict and force to achieve objectives that support unity and inclusiveness (Richmond, 2016).

According to Olowu (2003), this structural process is designed to ensure that politics becomes a part of every Nigerian's life. This is under the platform where every individual, as a citizen of the state, has an equal right to contest for or against a political party in a race to occupy a political position (Wonah, 2017). According to Oyovbaire (1983), the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC), which oversaw the process of leadership transition from military to civilian rule, agreed on the following terms, which were meant to serve as the structural process guiding political representation in Nigeria:

- Every citizen of a community has the right to join any political party of their choice, while political parties must play a diplomatic role in receiving members, regardless of their demographic differences, particularly on gender, religion, or tribe.
- Every sign, logo, or pattern of symbols that represents a party must not include any trace of violation against tribes and religion, while the activities of the political parties remain unlimited by geographical boundaries within the country.
- The headquarters of every party must not be situated in any of the 36 states of the country, rather, it must be in the federal capital territory, Abuja.
- The orientation and system of operation of every political party must be in line with the principles of state policy and federal character, in accordance with the constitution of the country.
- The governing body or members of the executives in a political party must fulfill the principles of state policy and federal character, except when a member belongs to a state different from the governing state, which must not exceed 67% of the states in the federation.
- No political party has the independent right to organize a forced group on their own, armed with weapons or any equipment, for the purpose of physical confrontation or coercion.
- Nobody is allowed to form any party system in Nigeria unless approved by the stipulated agency commissioned by the federal government.

- All responsibilities in the coordination of electoral activities for the offices of the President, Governor, House of Representatives, and House of Assembly must be carried out by the stipulated agency commissioned by the federal government, while local government offices must be carried out by the stipulated agency commissioned by the state government.

2.1.7 Political Recruitment

The political recruitment, on the other hand, has specifically drawn large attention to education and manpower development, which serves as leverage in which any political member aiming for a political position must meet (Mann, 2018). On this note, the Nigerian education industry has consistently been developed with different standards and regulations that cross through the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras (Maisule et al., 2023). This is to ensure that a certain quota of admission is stipulated to different levels of institutions, varying from primary, secondary, technical, and university education.

The purpose of this scrutiny in the procedure is to ensure quality in the output of graduates produced by these institutions and to understand their capacity and availability in occupying political roles or positions suitable for their level of education. In structural recruitment, the level of candidate education has become a prerequisite for political representation (Bjarnegård and Zetterberg, 2016).

The level of a candidate's highest education determines the suitable political position they qualify to compete for (Besley, 2005). However, it is in the constitution that any candidate representing top and sensitive political positions must have completed tertiary institution, subject to the compulsory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme under Section 11 of the NYSC Act, Cap N84, LFN 2004. The essence of education in this context is to unfold the procedure, enriching existing disparities while leveraging education to improve national cohesion.

2.2 Theoretical Review of Elite Theory on Political Inclusion

Elite theory was propounded by many scholars who are popularly known for their school of thought associated with classical, democratic, and new-age populism of elitism. These profound scholars include Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels, James Burnham, Floyd Hunter, Wright Mills, Thomas Dye, William Domhoff, and Robert Putnam (Higley, 2008). However, despite the remarkable and significant contributions of these scholars, Ekundayo (2017) posited that Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca were the first and major founders of elite theory between the late and early 19th and 20th centuries, respectively. The intervention of Robert Michels explicitly expanded the

theory from political science to other disciplines, such as the application of the theory to social and economic elitism in his book titled "Iron Law of Oligarchy".

The elite theory assumes that the opportunity for power and public influence could be controlled and dominated by individuals in top political positions. The elite theory addresses the power and control of political godfathers in their unfair selection of candidates for top political positions. According to Damele and Campos (2022), the control and dominance of power are a function of economic, political, and military influence. Elite theory exposed that human, in their primary nature, love to control and remain in power tenaciously. In other words, the political godfathers have the ultimate power under the shade of political influence to control the economic and military institutions of a country. The political godfathers in this context entail individuals with influential power who determine candidates and win elections using various and classified ruses or ploys with the expectation of loyalty in return (Ilori, 2021). The political godfathers are known to often influence the decision of the government to establish policies that best suit their interests. The political godfather has both direct and indirect influential power to instate and evict elected officials from seating positions (Thembe, 2022).

The elites in this context are political godfathers, while the non-elites are the people with the intention and actions to uphold the practice and guidelines of democracy. The elite theory serves as the academic theoretical lens for this study, while godfatherism is more of a popular notion. Therefore, the superiority and dominance of the elite over the non-elite is due to the godfather's easy access to resources, positions and opportunities that boost their psychological and intellectual properties.

The theory addresses the issues related to political inequality over equality in a sane society with longitudinal plans for development. Elite theory strategically categorized the people of society into two basic groups, which include the rulers and their relationship with the people they ruled. The rulers are the ones in the position to determine the elements of power subject to compliance by the ruled ones. To sustain this trend in power, the political elite always ensures the injection of strategies to retain power for the benefit of the majority, which is widely unorganized. These people are known for their ploy in using the shadow of democracy to explore marginalization and inequality and concentrated power in the hands of its elite circle.

However, the application of this theory to this study is relatively applied to the focus on political inclusion of Awori settlers in Lagos State based on the political dominance of the All-Progressive Party (APC) in Nigeria. The elite theory does not fully capture the political processes found in this research. This is because the opportunity for power and public influence in a diplomatic

setting does not determine the components of political inclusion, which is the major reason why the component of political inclusion is most relevant to extend the notions of elite theory. This will enable the political godfathers to understand the yardstick for the measurement of political inclusion such as the depth of the political process, candidate recruitment and representation with optimum fairness and equality. The long-term governance of a reigning party enhances the dominance of a party system, which defies the order of democracy in political inclusion while the candidates approved by the godfathers gain easy access to power and other political opportunities.

2.3 Gaps Identified in the Literature

The review of past studies in the literature has exposed this study to a wide range of techniques, methodologies, and contextual findings related to political inclusion. It was discovered in the review that most studies conducted on political inclusion largely rely on exploratory techniques, which utilize secondary data to achieve an outcome. However, the use of primary data, particularly the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, is seriously lacking. An attempt to fill this gap would help to collect individuals' opinions and perceptions on the matter. Also, empirical research based on primary data could enrich existing literature by testing contextual knowledge against reality through preliminary investigations with data drawn from mixed-method.

For instance, a need for a preliminary investigation was discovered in this study to examine why the Awori settlers in Lagos State are marginalized in representing active and reigning political parties for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State. Therefore, collecting mixed data from quantitative and qualitative perspectives will help engage a large population and the most relevant individuals for this study. A study on primary data in this regard will also utilize a multi-stage sampling technique, which allows data collection from different classes of people, either top, middle, or lower, to provide systematic and fact-based answers to the research questions.

Moreover, most previous studies have primarily focused on political inclusion in Nigeria at the national level, overlooking the specific case at the state level, such as the political marginalization of Awori settlers in Lagos State. This creates limitations in understanding why and how the inclusion of Awori in Lagos politics affects a specific outcome. The inability of Awori across the political parties in Lagos State to influence the decision on governorship representation has raised serious concerns about political inclusion. For instance, the reason behind Jandor's transition remains unknown, suggesting a possible violation of standardized political inclusion and compliance. Therefore, the facts,

processes and reasons behind the decisions for candidate selection within the APC party for the governorship position in Lagos State deserve to be studied.

On this note, this study employs a contextual approach to specifically investigate the internal party democracy in the gubernatorial candidate selection of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigeria, with a focus on the Awori Settlers in Lagos State. This approach also includes the adoption of specific factors of political inclusion stemming from the historical and contemporary contexts, such as political processes, recruitment and representation, which contribute to the marginalization of Awori settlers in the politics of Lagos State.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Rationale and Justification

The methodology employed a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The combination of qualitative and quantitative strategy for this study helped to leverage on the strengths of qualitative research to inform a quantitative study (Turner, Cardinal and Burton, 2017). The study adopts a combination of interpretivist and positivist research philosophies under an abductive research approach, which supports both inductive and deductive research approaches. Both interviews and questionnaires served as the major instruments adopted for data collection in the study. These are basically primary data collected from study participants.

The philosophy that guides the beliefs and assumptions of this study is knowledge based, which distinguishes the researchers' stance and reality. The existing knowledge on political inclusion in the gubernatorial candidate selection process of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigeria has influenced the choice of techniques that are most appropriate for discovering the reality for the study. However, the qualitative method in this study context dominated the data component, while the quantitative data was utilized to support a convergence outcome. The justification for this decision on the mixed-method was to gain in-depth knowledge of political inclusion from diverse communities with the participation of both the leaders and the members of the community. While the qualitative data focuses on the leaders, the quantitative data engages the members of the communities from a broader context. This also allowed the results from both data angles to be integrated while drawing out the differences and similarities in convergence strategy.

3.2 Research Design

The research design employed for this study explains the process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation in line with the applicable method. However, both qualitative and quantitative data for this study were collected based on cross-sectional time horizons. This enables the researcher to collect data from both perspectives within a short and specific timeframe (Spector, 2019). The qualitative data was planned on a phenomenological design while the quantitative data was planned on a descriptive design. Where the phenomenological design addressed the critical issues emphasized in the problem of the study, which coined out the actual variables of the study in the qualitative research (Pringle, Hendry and McLafferty, 2011). The descriptive design provides a definitive path for those variables to be operationalized and tested through a survey exercise that covers the broader sample of

the participants in quantitative research (Rea and Parker, 2014). This includes the description of what, when, where, and how on the existing phenomenon without questioning “why” on the cause-and-effect hindrances. The justification for the selection of these research designs was to address the critical aspect of the study as the major research problem that warranted the research intent while also ensuring that the identified problems were addressed based on the stance of the majority that participated in the study.

3.3 Site and Sample Selections

The study population comprised of 4,370,023 people from the five (5) regional divisions in Lagos State, Nigeria (Lagos Bureau of Statistics, 2021). These regional divisions include Badagry with 572,927 populations, Epe with 487,405 populations, Ikeja with 976,997 populations, Ikorodu with 1,037,728 populations and Lagos Island with 1,294,966 populations. The traditional rulers, Awori indigenes, APC party leaders, elected officials, political appointees, APC party members, and members of civil society such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations are the major targets of the study as the finite population under which the sample size was drawn for data collection. Having determined the population, this section employed the standardized sample size determination formula for finite population developed by Taro Yamane (1967) to calculate the sample size for the survey excluding the interviews. The composition of this formula was highlighted below:

Figure 3.1: Sample Size Determination

$$\text{Sample Size (n)} = N/1 + N (\epsilon)^2$$

Where: n denotes overall sample size

N denotes the total population, i.e. 4,370,023

ϵ denotes margin of sampling errors, i.e. 0.05 (5%) of 95% confidence interval

Based on this composition, the sample size is thus calculated as:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Sample Size (n)} &= 4,370,023/1 + 4,370,023(0.05)^2 \\ &= 4,370,023/1 + 4,370,023(0.0025) \\ &= 4,370,023/1 + 10,925.0575 \\ &= 4,370,023/10,926.0575 \\ &= 399 \end{aligned}$$

Source: Taro Yamane (1967) *Statistics: An Introductory Analysis*

Therefore, the above illustration revealed that the total sample size drawn from the population of the study using the Yamane sample size determination formula was 399. This sample size shall guide the field exercise for the collection of quantitative data. However, the sample size for the collection of qualitative data was determined using data saturation from the targeted participants.

A simple random sampling technique was adopted for the collection of quantitative data to ensure each target members have equal chances of being selected, while a quota sampling technique was employed for the collection of qualitative data. The e-questionnaire link was shared through the platforms across the local communities where the target audience is found. This includes the platform of the Awori community, the APC group, public service group, civil societies, among others. The individuals across these platforms were also selected at random for the interview. This enables the study to select at random the participants for the questionnaire and interview. The justification for these choice of sampling techniques was based on the geographical dispersal of the population across the five (5) regional divisions of Lagos State. The participants were engaged under fair selection to avoid biasedness. Out of the 399 targeted respondents for the collection of quantitative data, 248 responses (i.e., 62% response rate) were recovered. The qualitative data recorded 5 participants upon data saturation. A total of 330 themes were discovered, which were further reduced to 3 thematic syntheses.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

The study participants consist of traditional rulers, Awori indigenes, APC party leaders, elected officials, political appointees, APC party members, and members of civil society such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations. The scales of measurement adopted from the work of Abramson and Claggett (2001) on political inclusion, recruitment, and participation were adapted into the study context with simplicity and clarity that best suit the environment. However, to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the instrument, the reliability and validity tests were conducted respectfully. The details were further explained differently in the subsections below:

Validity

To ensure the accuracy of the instrument, experts with political background and academia as senior colleagues in the university environment were engaged for the validity test. This includes detailing attentions to face, content, construct and criterion forms of validity. The justification for adopting

these validity instruments for test was to ensure that the instruments such as interview and questionnaire are designed to measure what it was supposed to measure.

Reliability

To ensure the consistency of the instrument, a mini-pilot survey of twenty (20) was conducted on the first draft questionnaire. The data collected through this pilot survey was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha statistical coefficient in the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The results of this analysis are highlighted in the table below:

Table 3.1: Result of the Reliability Test

S/N	Variables	Number of Respondents	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
1	Political Processes	20	6	.978
2	Political Recruitment	20	8	.982
3	Political Representation	20	7	.983
	Total		21	

Source: Pilot Survey, 2024

The results of the above reliability test revealed a Cronbach Alpha statistical coefficient value of the scales. However, the past scholars (see Na-Nan and Saribut, 2020; Unver and Nesrin Turan, 2021; Zhang, Chen and Xu, 2024) on reliability consistency tests have posited that every Cronbach Alpha statistical coefficient value of 0.700 and above shows that the intended scales are reliable and accepted to have passed the consistency test, which also fits for distribution on data collection. Therefore, the result of the Cronbach Alpha statistical coefficient values for this study ranges around 0.900, which shows that the scales are reliable and accepted to have passed the consistency test, which also fits for distribution on data collection.

Managing and Recording Data

Quantitative

A questionnaire with structured and closed-ended questions was designed and transformed into electronic form for data collection. Google Forms were utilized to transform the questionnaire into an accessible web link for the participants. The questionnaire was categorized into sections. The first section of the questionnaire introduced the focus areas, intention of the study, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation of the respondents. The second section of the questionnaire

comprises of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, which include gender, age group, regional division, and political group the respondents represented in Lagos State. The third section of the questionnaire entailed the research questions, which covered the elements of political inclusion such as political processes, political recruitment, and political representation. Five-Likert scale response variables were adopted for measurements, which include Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). In between, some questions were open-ended aimed at collecting the opinions of the respondents.

Qualitative

An in-depth interview with semi-structured and open-ended questions was designed for data collection. The interview was divided into three sections. The first section introduced the focus areas, intention of the study, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation of the participants. The second section consisted of open questions with warm questions designed to prepare the participants for the interview. While the third section provided research questions that covered the elements of political inclusion such as political processes, political recruitment, and political representation.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The data retrieved from the back end of the Google Forms upon the completion of the survey exercise was translated into numerical codes readable for the analysis in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, mean, and standard deviations were used for the analysis. Where the frequency distribution was utilized for the analysis of the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics, the mean and standard deviations were used for the analysis of the research questions.

The interview was conducted through Google Meet and was fully recorded for data collection. Also, the data collected were translated from its audio content to words and further translated into readable codes that serially group the participants based on their responses to the interview questions for clarity. Also, the interview data were transcribed inductively using only the manual transcription method to discover new themes for the analysis. Thematic analysis was used for the interpretation of the qualitative data using critical analytical narrations based on the thematic synthesis drawn from the findings. The thematic analysis utilized the combined efforts of the literature, verbatim quotations of the participants' responses, and the researchers' voice for arguments, justifications and conclusions.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical compliance was adhered to for consideration to ensure due diligence in the research process. The study participants across the local authorities in Lagos State were appropriately consented to before the commencement of the research. The participants show a high level of cooperation to take part in the study voluntarily. The intention of the research was clearly communicated to the participants while assuring their anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided. For data safety and security, both quantitative and qualitative data collected were saved in Google Drive for the purpose of the analysis.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The limitations I encountered during this research include my observations on the poor attitude of the respondents to the questionnaire and the inconsistent meeting arrangement of the participants in the interview despite the initial consent sought and their voluntary acceptance to take part in the exercise. This challenge elongated the timeframe planned to start and complete the field exercise for data collection. However, the data collection through the e-questionnaire and online interview on Google Forms and Google Meets respectively may have excluded individuals with limited access to technology, particularly in rural or underserved areas.

Also, another major challenge I encountered during this study was the poor data bank in Nigeria and Lagos State. This makes it difficult for me to trace from the independence in 1960 up to date the numbers of the Awori that have been involved in top governmental positions such as elected officials and political appointees. In addition, I observed during the interview exercise that some of the participants held back information about their marginalization and they seized to lay allegations or complain about the political situation affecting them. So I sensed this could be out of their loyalties to their godfathers or fear of their leaders despite my guarantee to them that their information and identity would be kept anonymous, including some technical issues such as incessant internet network service and background noise. To curb these challenges, I engaged the participants in a brief sensitization session before their involvement to educate and prepare them for the data collection exercise.

Chapter 4: Results/Outcome of the Study

This chapter reveals the data analysis and interpretation of findings. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from the participants with a specific focus on the Awori settlers in Lagos State were analyzed for the purpose of the study.

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

The analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and research questions are analyzed in the subsequent sections below:

4.1.1 Analysis of Demographic Data

Table 4.1 Socio-Demographic Composition of Respondents

		Variables	(N)	(%)
1	Gender	Male	179	72.2
		Female	69	27.8
		Total	248	100.0
2	Age Group	18-29 years	52	21.0
		30-39 years	110	44.4
		40-49 years	56	22.6
		50-59 years	22	8.9
		60-69 years	6	2.4
		70 years and above	2	.8
		Total	248	100.0
3	Regional Divisions in Lagos State	Ikeja	114	46.0
		Badagry	46	18.5
		Ikorodu	26	10.5
		Lagos Island	45	18.1
		Epe	17	6.9
		Total	248	100.0
4	Group Representation	Traditional Ruler	5	2.0
		Awori Indigene	64	25.8
		APC Party Leader	8	3.2
		Elected Official	3	1.2
		Political Appointee	6	2.4
		APC Party Member	31	12.5
		Member of Civil Society	131	52.8
		Total	248	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024

Table 4.1 above shows the demographic distribution of sample respondents. In the sex category of the socio-demographic characteristic, the recorded percentage of males is 72.2% while the percentage of female is 27.8%. Although the rate of males was much higher than that of females, this finding shows that gender diversity was considered for this study.

In the age category of socio-demographic characteristics, the recorded percentage of respondents between the ages of 18 and 29 years are 21%, 30 and 39 years are 44.4%, 40 and 49 years are 22.6%, 50 and 59 years are 8.9%, 60 and 69 years are 2.4%, while the respondents from 70 years and above are 0.8%. This shows that majority of the ages covered in this study were between 30 and 49 years.

The regional divisions of the respondents in Lagos State also recorded the percentage of respondents from Ikeja division at 46%, Badagry division at 18.5%, Ikorodu division at 10.5%, Lagos Island division at 18.1% while the Epe division was recorded at 6.9%. This shows that majority of the respondents are from Ikeja division, which also signifies the major region where the Awori's in Lagos State are located.

In the group representation category of the socio-demographic characteristics, the recorded percentage of respondents that are traditional rulers are 2%, the Awori indigenes are 25.8%, the APC party leaders are 3.2%, the elected officials are 1.2%, the political appointees are 2.4%, the APC party members are 12.5%, while the members of the civil society are recorded at 52.8%. This shows that the majority of the respondent are members of civil society and the Awori indigenes.

4.1.2 Analysis of Research Questions

Section B of the questionnaire was analyzed using mean and standard deviations. The formulation of the questionnaire as earlier explained in section 3.4 above comprises of five response options. The neutral option represents the midpoint designed to balance the five Likert scales for flexibility and central tendency. This is a psychological measure with control decision in the hand of the researcher to determine based on the study context the appropriate interpretation of the neutrality (Pearse, 2011). Therefore, in this analysis, the neutral option is neither fully agreed nor fully disagreed but fairly agreed with the questionnaire statements. It is interpreted as a slight inclination to fully agree with the statements. Also, the mean in the interpretation provides central tendency which also indicates the state of response provided by the respondents whether it is agreed or disagreed (Zumrawi and Macfadyen, 2023). However, the complement of the standard deviation provides the dispersion and the degree of variation surrounding the mean (Zumrawi and Macfadyen, 2023). The standard deviation

is significant for understanding and validating that there is consistency in the responses surrounding the mean. The higher the mean the lesser the standard deviation (vice versa). That is, a high mean with low standard deviation shows there is strong agreement with little variation whilst a high mean with high standard deviation shows there is general trend toward agreement with significant variation. Therefore, the analysis of the means was interpreted as follows:

4.45 - 5.00	-	Strongly agree
3.45 – 4.44	-	Agree
2.45 – 3.44	-	Neutral (Fairly Agree)
1.45 – 2.44	-	Disagree
Below 1.45	-	Strongly Disagree

4.1.2.1 The Analysis of Respondent's View on Possible Marginalization of Awori Settlers in Representing APC Party for Gubernatorial Positions in Lagos State

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents According to Research Question One

S/N	VIEWS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The APC party conducts internal election for the selection of governorship candidate in Lagos State.	248	3.7097	1.24214
2	The composition of APC party leaders supports political inclusion when determining governorship candidate in Lagos State.	248	3.4798	1.26603
3	The APC party considers diverse tribes and religions in the selection process of governorship candidate in Lagos State.	248	2.9597	1.36408
4	The APC party embraces the culture that supports rotational governance in the selection process of governorship candidate among the regional divisions in Lagos State.	248	3.1089	1.32259
5	The APC party decision of governorship candidate is determined by political godfathers.	248	4.1492	1.13015
6	The political process within the APC party for selecting governorship candidate in Lagos State is equitable.	248	2.8024	1.26830

Source: Survey, 2024

Table 4.2 shows the distribution of respondents according to the research question which focuses on investigating why the Awori settlers have been marginalized in representing APC party for

gubernatorial positions in Lagos State. The table shows that the respondents agreed on the views that the APC party conducts internal election for the selection of governorship candidate in Lagos State; the composition of APC party leaders supports political inclusion when determining governorship candidate in Lagos State; and the APC party decision of governorship candidate is determined by political godfathers.

On a contrary, the respondents fairly agreed on the views that the APC party considers diverse tribes and religions in the selection process of governorship candidate in Lagos State; the APC party embraces the culture that supports rotational governance in the selection process of governorship candidate among the regional divisions in Lagos State; the political process within the APC party for selecting governorship candidate in Lagos State is equitable. The standard deviations are low, which shows that there are strong agreements with little variations.

4.1.2.2 The Analysis of Respondent's View on the Standard Political Recruitment Process in Existence Within the APC Party for Selecting the Right Candidate

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents According to Research Question Two

S/N	VIEWS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their level of education.	248	2.9556	1.26701
2	The APC standard choice of candidate for a gubernatorial position in Lagos State is based on their gender.	248	3.2903	1.30259
3	The APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their administrative experience and performance record.	248	3.3468	1.28236
4	The APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their political knowledge and influence.	248	3.4435	1.19244
5	The APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their family background.	248	2.9476	1.21115
6	The APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their income.	248	2.7903	1.21911
7	The APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their strength of party identification.	248	3.5565	1.15799
8	The APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their campaign strength to win election.	248	3.1895	1.30103

Source: Survey, 2024

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of respondents according to the research question which focuses on examining the standard political recruitment process in existence within the APC party for selecting the right candidate. The table shows that the respondents agreed on the views that the APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their strength of party identification.

On a contrary, the respondents fairly agreed on the views that the APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their level of education, gender, administrative experience and performance record, political knowledge and influence, family background, income and campaign strength to win election. The standard deviations are low, which shows that there are strong agreements with little variations.

4.1.2.3 The Analysis of Respondent's View on the Principles for Selection of Political Representation

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents According to Research Question Three

S/N	VIEWS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on equal opportunities.	248	2.8105	1.28222
2	The decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on the interest of its members.	248	3.1815	1.26112
3	The decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on trust and credibility.	248	3.2056	1.29857
4	The decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on divisional and proportional rotations.	248	2.9597	1.22985
5	The decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on diversity and inclusiveness.	248	3.0040	1.25817
6	The decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on the choice of its leaders.	248	3.8629	1.08605
7	The decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on transparency and accountability.	248	2.9435	1.38413

Source: Survey, 2024

Table 4.4 shows the distribution of respondents according to the research question which focuses on determining the individuals within the APC political party who determine who qualifies and who does

not qualify for political representation. The table shows that the respondents agreed on the view that the decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on the choice of its leaders.

On the contrary, the respondents fairly agreed on the view that the decision on governorship candidate that represents APC party in Lagos State is based on equal opportunities, interest of its members, trust and credibility, divisional and proportional rotations, diversity and inclusiveness, transparency and accountability. The standard deviations are low, which shows that there are strong agreements with little variations.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data recorded 5 participants upon data saturation. A total of 330 themes were discovered, which were further reduced to 3 thematic syntheses. However, it is important to note that the three variables of the primary objectives were operationalized to arrive at these new themes for theory building. These three new thematic syntheses are discussed in the subsequent sections below:

4.2.1 Thematic Analysis

Theme One: Dominant-Party Politics and Inclusive Governance

The long existence of a political party in power has created a strategic atmosphere of belongingness for the people to participate. This population dominance would strengthen one party and weaken the other. In the long run, this would pave the way for an even more dominant system of a political party saddled with godfathers that could pose a detrimental threat to democracy. This is because most political party systems are bound beyond control in distrust and cooperation towards averting political menace. According to the #Participant Three:

..... The Awori people might not have godfathers in the APC Party, just because you don't have a godfather in the party, should not automatically disqualify you for running for office or the highest office in the land, Lagos state. So yes, I would say the Aworis have been marginalized, and yes, that's what I would say. So, I don't think it's been fair.... P₂-Tagb-Q₁₂

According to Wehliye (2020), the menace of dominance-party politics could affect leadership quality in the absence of competition that characterized the scrutiny in the selection of candidates aligned with the choice of the people. However, the incessant economic trend of the country has an even bigger implication in increasing the rate of poverty which could compel the people to join the reigning party. The slogan which says “if you can’t beat them join them” is a big factor that affects the dominant-party politics and inclusive governance (Mac Giollabhui, 2020).

The All-Progressive Party (APC) in Lagos State Nigeria is a typical example of power dominance in the last 25 years which has limited the chances of a common Nigerian to engage in political activities and express their interest in running for a political position. The inclusion of people regardless of their gender, tribes, religion, social class and other socio-demographic elements in politics could promote unity and improve good governance as posited by #Participant One:

And they also have a political policy in terms of religion. So, what divide us most in Nigeria, apart from tribe, is our religion. Our religiosity. And that was so obvious in the last election we did, that people were divided along religious lines, not only on tribal line, but also on religious line. So, they should have inclusive policy to eliminate such biases in the official election.... P₁-Beth-Q₁₀

However, Vohra, et al (2015) claims that inclusive governance in emerging economies in countries has suffered from diverse mentality attached to demographic factors, most particularly, gender, age and religion that are meant to serve as the main strength for inclusive development. Every individual irrespective of their gender, age, religion or tribe deserves a fair acceptance to explore their political aspiration while representing the people for the betterment and improvement of the community. For example, the primary election has been identified as one of the political processes APC exercises when scrutinizing the best candidate that will represent them for a political position. This includes the position of the governor with more scrutiny from party leaders and the committee of the Governor's Advisory Council (GAC). According to #Participant Five:

The GAC comprises of different leaders from different local governments in Lagos states. They didn't come from one local government. They spread across the board from the entire 20 local governments in Lagos states. So, we have former governors, among them, we have former deputy governors, among them, we have former senators, we have present senators, we have former local government chairman among them, we have former House of Representative and President House of Representative among them. So do start to keep people and stick with us.... P₅-Holm-Q₁₆

This participant claimed that GAC comprises 22 party leaders each from different local government areas (LGAs) in Lagos State. These individuals are one of the components of the determination of the governor of Lagos State. Among others include the party delegates, the internal assessment committee and of course the last decision of the godfather. According to Olatunji (2024), the process of candidate recruitment for a political position is through a competitive assessment that is majorly conducted by the party leaders with criteria mostly including education, leadership skills, resilience, and public influence, among others. Meanwhile, the APC party system in their political process has been quite unfair with their internal political process including how the primary elections are being conducted according to the statement made by #Participant Four:

.... So, it's not a case of the best people. It's a case of accidental prize of birth that qualifies you to be a candidate, which shouldn't be the case. I don't know what's called. It's not nepotism. There's a bias there, which is very unfair. So a huge sector of the citizens' antigens. So both some antigens of Lagos state were marginalized and also residents, and of Lagos State. But if someone like myself is on Lagos State, I can't contest because I don't fall under the categories of people that are the right areas of Lagos State that should run for the party, which I think is even fair.... P2-Tagh-Q10

Therefore, it is crystal clear that every potential candidate in the party must be a member for at least one year or more, however, compliance to party regulations does not guarantee an easy drive to winning a governorship ticket in Lagos State. See the assertion made by #Participant Four on this:

I think constitutionally, the party can either do a direct or indirect on primaries after they have decided to sell the nomination form within the qualified party members. Because what is very important is that before you can file for a post of governorship within any political space, you must be a member and there must be some criteria within the party that will have set to showcase who are the people that actually qualify.... P4-Regh-Q7

Although the nomination forms for political positions are usually thrown open, however, the cost of purchase was reported to be outrageous and deliberately high, as claimed by #Participant Four:

Part of the thing that they also use as criteria is that the nomination form, their prices are quite somehow very high, which also determine the capability of those that will be able to fight for those positions. But in all, by constitution, you must be a party member, a party member, and you must have stayed in that party for, I think, minimum of 12 months and above. You must be in Lagosian. By Lagosian means that you're the resident level... P4-Regh-Q11

This however is a strategy to automatically eliminate low-level candidates for the affluent individuals with strong back up by the political godfather among other party leaders (Abubakar and Shadrack, 2023). Therefore, for anyone to participate, contest and survive in the Nigerian political system, you must have a thorough understanding of the political ideology that supports the environment and its people. Also, the political interest must set in to endure the system with loyalty and leadership while awaiting opportunity.

Theme Two: Leadership Merit and Political Influence

Leadership and political influence are shaped by wider perspectives on the dynamic populace and political practices. However, APC has criteria a candidate must meet, before being handed the ticket to participate and represent the party for a political position. Among these are the qualification, administrative experience, leadership quality, integrity, transparency, and social connections, among others, as stipulated by #Participant Five:

There are a lot of criteria within the party. There are a lot. You must be a card-carrying member of APC. You must be a progressive-minded person. You must be flexible in nature. You must know in and out of the entire Lagos states.

You mustn't be a novice. You mustn't be a novice within the political party. You must know the rudiments and the constitution of the party as well. And also you must be well known within the Lagos takes. You must be an educated person, at least a university degree, and you must be an administrator, you know how to manage people, and you know how to manage a political member... P₅-Holm-Q₁₁

However, despite this standard of leadership merit in the APC party for candidate selection, the power of political influence cannot be overemphasized. The factors tagged to godfather influence have created a mind of unfairness to the internal process involved in candidate selection. The party, however, has long overridden genuine individuals as technocrats with strong principles, ambition, and ideology to provide a performance-driven vision in support of the party's goals and objectives.

Although marginalized people often encounter exclusion from party activities, the ability to win the people's voice could change the game. The ability to embrace the just and equitable participation of vulnerable or marginalized groups in the creation of institutions, laws and policies could impact lives and community development (Kitchin, Lauriault, and McArdle, 2015). This has been claimed by #Participant Four on the movement of the Labour Party in the last 2023 election that posed a serious rivalry to APC and other parties.

If Jandor was so lucky to have come under Labour Party in the last dispensation, I think the story would have changed because it would have even gained the movement emancipation of the Gen Z due to the fallout of the ensite that happened, that there must be a change in governance. But on in all, it's a good step in the right direction because he fought a good fight, and they could also realize that the indigents have already woken up.... P₄-Regb-Q₁₂

Therefore, leadership merit and political influence are the functional elements that comprise the component of inclusive development. For instance, inclusive development is nowhere defined without stating people under marginalization, and social, economic, and political actions toward improving the welfare of the masses (Gupta and Vegelin, 2016). In other words, the failure of a political region to provide suitable candidates for a political position should be a prominent concern to both the political and community leaders for swift development.

The needs of underprivileged and marginalized groups in sectors and regional areas, participation in politics and policy, diverse knowledge sources from comprehensive education processes, and social infrastructure (Bell, 2019). For example, the lacking community members with less education or political influence should become the major beneficiaries of government

empowerment that crosses through economic, educational and political activities. These individuals can equally characterize the behavior of a group with a full sense of belongingness for political inclusion and inclusive development (Randel et al, 2018). Such a community should be empowered to undergo political apprenticeship under the major and highly influential political players in a reigning party. This will foster inclusiveness in political activities across the demographics in the local government, state and national levels.

Theme Three: Power Dynamics and Succession in Political Leadership

Lagos State has long built a master plan with implementation spread through different governance, which is expected to take charge through succession planning for implementation and development. Among these plans are the Ehingbeti Summit, Lagos State Development Plan (LSDP), sustainability development plan, THEMES Agenda and THEMES Plus Agenda. The APC party, in compliance with the political law in Nigeria, has created a long-existing plan that allows different governors over the years to exercise absolute control. The party leaders are always ensuring that their choice of candidate can understand this developmental plan and can deliver. This has been claimed by #Participant One:

When you look at the succession plan in Lagos so far, one, Lagos will never give you a government that will be dancing around. Lagos will not give you a candidate that will not perform. Lagos will not feed a candidate that will recklessly embezzle. Lagos has always given feeding candidates that apart from educational, apart from exposure, apart from experience, they will get to the office and they will get the job done.... P₁-Beth-Q₁₆

However, the scrutiny in the process of this selection for the position of governor in Lagos State could render others marginalized under wasted efforts in the struggle for the position. Among this group are the Awori, who have reportedly failed to provide a single governor since the return of the nation to democracy. This is as posited by #Participant One:

After Tinubu, Fashola will take Lagos to the next level. Ambode did very well. After Ambode, we have Sanwoolu, who is also doing pretty okay, not too bad. When the national democracy started in Nigeria, compare the performance of Lagos State with any other state.... P₁-Beth-Q₁₆

Therefore, the ability of Awori settlers to coordinate themselves according to their demographic distributions could help develop succession planning that could help the generation to stay competitive with the goal and agenda best suitable for the position. Furthermore, quality and capability are other criteria in which standards are upheld to ensure sustainable development in leadership, growth and succession planning (Dimmock and Yong Tan, 2013). One master plan by the

party is liable to be projected for future political position occupants for implementation. The dominance in governance by the APC has allowed different districts of the state to take part in the governorship position in Lagos State. This has been claimed by #Participant Five.

If the leaders want to select the governorship candidates, they do rotate it from the three senatorial districts we have in Lagos states. So let me just name the three senatorial districts. We have Lagos senatorial district, and we have Lagos West, and we have Lagos East senatorial district. Those are the three senatorial districts we have in Lagos states. And among those senatorial districts, the leaders normally throw the governorship candidates to one of those areas, one of those three senatorial districts. And if, like example now, assuming now, Sanwoolu is the present governor of Lagos State, and it's from Lagos East. So, the next governorship candidates in 2027 might come from Lagos West or Lagos Central.... P₅-Holm-Q₇

The system of district rotation in the selection of governorship candidates in Lagos State has been confirmed by #Participant Five, however, it is important to emphasize the regional tribes under each district. For example, out of the three districts in Lagos State, Lagos Central District comprises of Eko people of Lagos Island and Awori of Lagos Mainland, the Lagos East District comprises of Ijebu people of Epe and Ikorodu, while the Lagos West District comprises of the Awori in both Ikeja and Badagry. Based on this evidence, two of the three districts have provided governors in the last 25 years under APC in Lagos State. Except for the Lagos West district which only comprises Awori people that are yet to provide governorship candidates for Lagos State.

According to Besley (2005), rotational governance in the political system is practically based on the components of demographics with various factors determined by the choice of the political party such as gender, religion, tribe and location. The ability to adhere to the demographic component in the rotational system must be comprehended with utmost decency, equality and fairness in the selection process (Wiredu, 2021). Therefore, the Awori people have appeared in both Lagos's central and western districts which should have served as an upper edge for the Awori to occupy the governorship position in Lagos State. The idea of marginalization could have surfaced because of one district area winning the interest of the party mogul over others, possibly with less interest, capability, and support. Therefore, the establishment and adherence to a politically inclusive policy would help the APC to look deeply and extensively towards ensuring the divisions and local government members are included.

Chapter 5: Discussion

I utilized the objectivity approach to adopt selective, yet unstandardized, elements of political inclusion that appeared most frequently in the past and existing studies. This includes investigating specific factors of political inclusion such as political processes, recruitment and representation that contribute to the possible marginalization of the Awori settlers in the politics of Lagos State. The study findings are presented as the systematic outcomes for extending and contextualizing the assumptions of elite theory adopted for the study.

However, the qualitative aspect of my study has developed a new thematic synthesis that has new measurable elements of political inclusion in contribution to knowledge under a subjectivity approach available for further testing by future researchers. This includes dominant-party politics and inclusive governance, leadership merit and political influence, power dynamics and succession in political leadership. Therefore, the combination of these elements from both quantitative and qualitative studies can answer the main (preliminary) research question which sought to determine the factors of political inclusion that contribute to the marginalization of the Awori settlers in representing the APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State. These factors from a broad point of view include political processes, political recruitment, political representation, dominant-party politics and inclusive governance, leadership merit and political influence, power dynamics and succession in political leadership. This finding is coherent with that of Yan (2022) which reveals that durable democracy is affected by political exclusion fueled by dominant party regimes in the contemporary world.

The specific perspectives of these factors were answered in the sub-questions (preliminary) research questions. However, the first research question was coined to investigate why the Awori settlers have failed to represent the APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State. The result of the quantitative data analysis reveals that the APC party always conducts internal elections for the selection of governorship candidates in Lagos State, while the composition of APC party leaders supports political inclusion when determining governorship candidates in Lagos State. However, further analysis of the quantitative data discovered that the APC party's decision on governorship candidate is determined by political godfathers without considering the diverse tribes and religions in the selection process nor embracing the culture that supports rotational governance in the selection process of governorship candidate among the regional divisions in Lagos State. These findings show that the political process within the APC party for selecting governorship candidates in Lagos State lacks equity and fairness. These results corroborate that of Araba (2021) which discovers that

candidate selection in the internal party democracy is the major influential factor that affects the performance of the governors in Nigeria.

On the other hand, the result of the qualitative data has provided new themes and evidence to discover that population dominance, APC dominance, unfair selection, godfatherism, wrong political ideology, poor leadership and district rotation are the major factors affecting the marginalization of Awori settlers in representing the APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State. However, the positive outcomes in support of the political inclusion from the gubernatorial candidate selection process of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State include the conduction of primary election, free membership registration and acceptance. This discovery is in line with the assertion of Adamu (2018) which posited that the dominance of one party in Nigerian politics has strengthened the political godfathers to impose candidates and deprived women of representing the party in top political positions.

Also, the second research question was designed to examine the standard of the political recruitment process in existence within the APC party for selecting the right candidate. The result of the quantitative data analysis reveals that the APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their strength of party identification. However, further analysis of the quantitative data discovered that APC's standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on the level of education, gender, administrative experience and performance record, political knowledge and influence, family background, income and campaign strength to win the election. These results corroborate those of Ihembe (2022) which envisages that the process of governorship candidate selection in Nigeria's fourth republic is compromised by power extended beyond the party system to other political stakeholders such as force and judiciary.

On the other hand, the result of the qualitative data has provided new themes and evidence to discover that qualifications, experience, leadership quality, social connections, party membership, affluent individuals, godfather influence and GAC nomination as the standard political recruitment process in existence within the APC party for selecting the right candidate. However, despite the themes that surfaced on the possible marginalization and unfair selection, the positive outcomes in support of the political inclusion from the gubernatorial candidate selection process of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State include the influence allied with the people's voice for candidates with integrity and transparency. This finding is coherent with that of Olatunji (2024) who found that the corrupt practices in the political party system have increased the rate at which people

defect from one party to another which has huge implications on the standard procedure of electoral outcomes in the south-western part of Nigeria.

In addition, the third research question was established to identify the individuals within the APC political party responsible for determining who qualifies and who does not qualify for political representation. The result of the quantitative data analysis reveals that the decision on the governorship candidate that represents the APC party in Lagos State is based on the choice of its leaders. However, further analysis of the quantitative data discovered that the decision on the governorship candidate that represents the APC party in Lagos State is not based on equal opportunities, interest of its members, trust and credibility, divisional and proportional rotations, diversity and inclusiveness, transparency and accountability. This discovery is in line with the assertion of Innocent (2019) which posited that democracy in its position is an institutionalized system with a prospective and influential capacity to improve the internal party system and its relationship with its members.

On the other hand, the result of the qualitative data has provided new themes and evidence to discover that demographic distribution, financial capability, godfather influence, GAC nomination, social connections, technocrat individuals and succession planning are the factors that determine who qualify and who does not qualify to be selected for the gubernatorial candidate of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos State. These results corroborate that of Lawal (2022) which states that APC's primary election is a significant political process that determines the choice of candidate of its members for the governorship representation during the state election.

Convergence of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The combined similarities in both quantitative and qualitative findings are highlighted below:

- APC party always conducts internal elections for the selection of governorship candidates in Lagos State.
- APC party's decision is influenced by political godfathers without considering the culture that supports rotational governance in the selection process of governorship candidate among the regional divisions in Lagos State.
- And lastly, the APC's standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on educational qualifications, administrative experience and godfather influence.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

In this study, I investigated the issue of political inclusion in the gubernatorial candidate selection process of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) in Nigeria with a specific focus on the Awori settlers in Lagos State. Specifically, the factors that contribute to the marginalization of the Awori settlers in representing the APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State. In the first chapter of the study, I explained the existence of the Awori from a historical perspective, while revealing their population and the landmass covered in Lagos State. Research questions in line with the problem statement were drafted and further leveraged to prepare a critical analytical review in the second chapter. In this chapter, the concept of political inclusion and its selected components (i.e. political process, recruitment and representation) are discussed. This includes past studies' perspectives from empirical and theoretical points of view.

In the third chapter, I employed a mixed-method approach under which all relevant approaches suitable in support of both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted for the study. In this regard, I ensured that the numerical and non-numerical data collected were thoroughly analyzed in the fourth chapter of the study. Having analyzed the data from the two methodological perspectives, I discovered that political processes, political recruitment, political representation, dominant-party politics and inclusive governance, leadership merit and political influence, power dynamics and succession in political leadership are the major factors of political inclusion that contribute to the marginalization of the Awori settlers in representing APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State.

Also, several illustrations were provided to show that the Awori settlers in Lagos State were indeed marginalized in the selection of the gubernatorial candidate for the position of governor in Lagos State. These results were complemented with the qualitative findings in a further in-depth analysis of a convergence strategy that APC population dominance, unfair selection, godfatherism, wrong political ideology, poor leadership and district rotation are the major factors affecting the marginalization of Awori settlers in representing the APC party for gubernatorial positions in Lagos State.

6.1 Implication for Policy

Based on the findings that the APC party's decision on governorship candidate is determined by political godfathers without considering diverse tribes and religions in the selection process nor embracing the culture that supports rotational governance in the selection process of governorship candidate among the regional divisions in Lagos State, I hereby recommend that the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA), Lagos State Office of Disability Affairs (LASODA), Lagos State Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Lagos State Ministry of Civic Engagement and Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission (LASIEC) in cooperation with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) prepare and pass a new bill to the Lagos State House of Assembly Committees on Political Inclusion, in collaboration with Senate house of legislatives, regarding political inclusion policy. This is to ensure that the Awori indigenes of Lagos State irrespective of their demographical background has equal and fair opportunity for political participation and representation. Stringent disciplinary procedures and actions should also be established for the defaulters, including the party members, party leaders and the party itself.

Also, based on the finding that the APC standard choice of governorship candidate in Lagos State is based on their strength of party identification, level of education, gender, administrative experience and performance record, political knowledge and influence, family background, income and campaign strength to win the election, I recommend that the heads of Awori communities should endeavor to identify the needs of Aworis for them to be empowered for the future. This majorly includes the provision of education support and scholarships for the Awori youths. Upon the completion of their studies, the Aworis should be employed in the Lagos State Civil Service to learn and understand the administrative service for public performance. This practice among the Aworis will enable the population to meet APC's standard elements or criteria for gubernatorial candidate representation in Lagos State.

In addition, the findings that the decision on the governorship candidate represents the APC party in Lagos State are not based on equal opportunities, interest of its members, trust and credibility, divisional and proportional rotations, diversity and inclusiveness, transparency and accountability rather by the choice of its leaders. Evidence also shows that some of these leaders are the indigenous members of Awori communities. On this note, I recommend that the Awori's should endeavor to support and empower one another while reflecting a high interest in politics and participation in top

management decisions. I also recommend that the APC party members and leaders ensure that the heritage of democracy is adhered to while maintaining fairness, equality and inclusive politics in Lagos State.

However, my policy implication is incomplete without extending and contextualizing the elite theory adopted for the study. The existence and cooperation of the elites with quality backgrounds and reputations capable of setting the pace for the future of democracy in Nigeria should consider their elitism incomplete, incompetent and biased if their process of political recruitment and representation does not align with the democracy we fight for in sustaining development in Nigeria. Also, the assumptions of elite theory are therefore expanded and contextualized based on the findings of this study which include the political process, candidate recruitment and representation as the basis for power and public influence which is controlled and dominated by political elites.

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

In this current study, I focused on the Awori and the APC party in Lagos State to understand the reasons behind their marginalization from representing the party for the gubernatorial position in Lagos State. Future studies are suggested to examine the APC party in other states in Nigeria and the involvement of its tribes respectively in representing the party for the gubernatorial position. This includes the investigation of the process, recruitment and representation. However, the new thematic syntheses identified in the course of this study could also be subjected to testing as the measurement of political inclusion in contemporary research. In addition, I suggest for future studies search and research beyond the APC party for other political parties ruling among other states in Nigeria. This would help to understand the depth of political culture in Nigeria and to predict the fate of democracy in the near future.

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