

SWOT ANALYSIS ON 2023 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *Electioneering is at the very heart of democracy and its sustenance in all climes where it is in practice. This being a statement of fact, it would therefore be apt to posit that there can be no viable and vibrant democracy without elections, as it is through election(s) that gives the people the rare opportunity to have a say in how and who governs them. Elections are thus at the core of the operationalization and consolidation of democracy. Accordingly, this paper examines the just concluded general elections in Nigeria with a view to profiling the level of preparedness of the four front-line candidates of Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Mr. Peter Obi, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Engr Rabiul Musa Kwankwaso. The study adopted the SWOT analysis, which implies the use of Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats to analyze the candidates' level of preparedness for the elections. The paper found that, of the four major candidates, the candidate of the All Peoples' Congress (APC), Bola Ahmed Tinubu, appears to stand a better chance not just to win the election but also to govern, this is because of his track records of mentorship which spread across the length and breadth of the country and his track records as a one-time governor. The paper suggested among other things that human capacity development and viable political mentorship are very potent and important investment in political leadership.*

Keywords: *SWOT analysis, Presidential, Candidates, Elections, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Election, the world over, is a major ingredient in the promotion of democracy; just as democracy is the only system of government that is built on the consent of the people. Democracy thrives in an atmosphere where the rule of law has primacy over and above the rule of men, (Efebeh, 2015). In the Nigeria democracy space, electioneering system is designed for a four year political life span, this is aptly captured in the Nigerian 1999 Constitution as amended and also the Electoral Act 2022 as amended. The current electoral cycle would elapse on May 29, 2023, thereby creating the needed vacancies for new elected politicians to assume offices after undergoing all the processes and declared winner by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the body saddled with the responsibility of conducting elections in Nigeria. The 2023 General Elections is scheduled for February 25 and 11 March 2023 respectively, later postponed to 18 March 2023. All the political aspirants for the elective offices are already canvassing for votes into various offices in line with the INEC guidelines as enshrined in the Electoral Acts. Election is defined as the formal process of selecting a person for public office or of accepting or rejecting a political proposition by voting. In some cases, electoral forms are

present but the substance of an election is missing, as when voters do not have a free and genuine choice between at least two alternatives. (Gibbins 2023).

This paper is discussing some of the attributes and weaknesses of four frontline presidential flag bearers namely Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu of All Progressive Congress (APC) Mr Peter Obi of the Labour Party(LP), Atiku Abubakar of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Engr Rabiul Musa Kwankwaso of the New Nigerian Peoples Party (NNPP). There are strategic techniques developed by scholars meant to guide in the shaping of thoughts and identifying the qualities of businesses and stakeholders in the political arena. Some of these strategies include scenario planning; portray five force frameworks, PESTEL, SWOT analysis among others. However, SWOT analysis is distinct and appeals more to researchers and other scholars as a tool of analysis due to its tremendous advantages over others. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning and strategic management technique used in identifying a person or an organizational strength, weakness, opportunities and threats related to business competition, governance or project planning. It is sometimes called assessment situational analysis. The acronym SWOT stands for Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats. SWOT analysis is one of the most effective strategic techniques for analyzing an institution or leaders. The strategy is historically credited to Albert Humphrey in the 1960s though this claim is being contested in some academic quarters. However, the SWOT model remains a veritable technique deployed in identifying the competence and weakness of a leader or an institution.

The 2023 General Election in Nigeria was scheduled for 25 February and 11 (and later postponed to 18) March 2023 in which a new president and other political office holders to emerged preparatory for swearing in May 2023. There are numbers of presidential candidates cleared by Independent Electoral Commission (INEC 2022) to contest for the election. However, four of the presidential candidates stand out and one of them is likely to emerge victorious in the election. Nonetheless, some parameters such as the size of the party, resources at their disposal, membership, disposition or choice of the electorates, spread across the country, the popularity of candidates in Nigeria political space among other factors would go a long way to determine the winner. Some of these frontline presidential candidates include the following in no particular order:

- a. Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu - All progressive Congress (APC).
- b. Engr Dr Rabiul Musa Kwankwaso - New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP).
- c. Mr Peter Obi - Labour Party (LP).
- d. Mr. Atiku Abubakar - People Democratic Party (PDP).

These candidates have large followership and any of them has what it takes to win an election. INEC cleared 18 Political parties to contest for the 2023 General Elections. The name of the candidates and their political parties is at Annex A. However, this paper would therefore narrow on the candidature of Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu of APC. The paper would cover Review of literature on General Elections in Nigeria and SWOT analysis of the APC candidate. The paper is divided into three parts which are:

- a. An Overview of General Elections in Nigeria since 1999.
- b. SWOT Analysis of 2023 General Elections, Case Study of candidates of APC, LP, PDP and NNPP.
- c. Conclusion.

An Overview of General Elections in Nigeria Since 1999

The present democratic dispensation started in 1999, since then however, Nigeria have conducted five general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. Of the five general elections, **four of them were conducted by democratically elected governments.** Election is an important component of democratic governance; in fact, a major determinant of how democratically-compliant a state is, the more a state adheres to, and incorporates the core principles of elections, which are freeness, fairness, and credibility, the more acceptances it would receive from the international community, (Nwankwo, 2006; Efebeh, 2018). This is so because, the acceptance of a state in the comity of nations is seen as a boost to the local economy and the acceptance is largely tied to the credibility of the elections that produced the leadership, (Efebeh & Okereka, 2020). Such acceptance also enhances the chances of cooperation among states in times of global emergencies such that the COVID-19 presented before the global community a few years ago, (Efebeh, 2020). The 1999 General Election had a total of 30, 280, 052 voters turnout for the election. The eventual winner, the PDP Presidential candidate, General Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd.) polled a total of 18, 738, 154 (62. 78%) to defeat his closest rival Chief Olu Falae of the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and All Peoples Party ticket (APP) with 11, 110, 287. The election to a large extent has some degree of credibility and the contention and post-election violence were minimal, (INEC, 2022). The 2003 Presidential elections were held in Nigeria on 19 April 2003. The result was another victory for incumbent Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP, who defeated his closest opponent Muhammadu Buhari by over 11 million votes. (INEC, 2022). It was alleged that the elections were marred with malpractices by election observers, opposition parties and some civil society organizations. International observers, including the European Union, confirmed irregularities in 11 of the 36 States. Thus in many cases votes were pre-filled or results were later amended. Nearly all opposition parties refused to recognize the result. Election Observers reported, however, that up to the Saturday afternoon no elections and only some polling stations had opened. (EU, 2003). The 2007 General elections were held in Nigeria on 21 April 2007 to elect the President and National Assembly members while Governorship and State Assembly elections were held on 14 April. Alhaji Musa Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP won the highly controversial presidential election, and was sworn in on 29 May 2007. Election observers from the European Union described the elections as "the worst they had ever seen anywhere in the world", with "rampant vote rigging, violence, theft of ballot boxes and intimidation, (EU, 2007). Election monitoring groups gave it a dismal assessment. Chief European Union observer Max van den Berg reported that the handling of the polls had "fallen far short" of basic international standards, and that "the process cannot be considered to be credible. He cited poor election organization, lack of transparency, significant evidence of fraud, voters' disenfranchisement, violence and bias. One group of observers said that at one polling station in Yenagoa, in the oil-rich south, where 500 people were registered to vote, more than 2, 000 votes were counted. Despite the widespread rigging and call for cancellation, on April 23, Musa Yar'Adua of the PDP was declared the winner by INEC with the highest votes of 24, 638, 063. Muhammadu Buhari of the All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP) was second 6, 605, of 299 votes while Atiku Abubakar of Action Congress was placed third with 2, 637, 848 votes (INEC Website), both Buhari and Abubakar rejected the results. The opposition candidates believed the election was rigged in

Yar'Adua's favor as announced by the then INEC Chairman Prof. Maurice Iwu. According to Late Musa Yar'Adua the winner of the election, he stated that "The election that brought him to the office was marred with irregularities and promised a far reaching electoral reform to be implemented before the next election. This informed the composition of Justice Uwais Electoral Reforms by late President Musa Yardua. Unfortunately, despite the good recommendations of Uwais report, it was not implemented. The 2011 General Election was originally scheduled for 2 April, however it was later postponed to 4 April 2011. According to Attahiru Jega, the then INEC Chairman stated that "The commission weighed all the options and considered the wide-ranging counsel of Nigerians and decided to rescheduled all the elections for Saturday, April 9, senate and house of representatives elections; Saturday, April 16, presidential elections; Tuesday, April 26, state houses of assembly and governorship elections. (Jega 2011). Some parties refused to partake in the election as a protest.

The election was held eventually and was reported in the international media as having run smoothly with relatively little violence or voter fraud in contrast to previous elections, in particular the widely disputed 2007 election. Indeed, at least one observer pronounced them the most smoothly run elections held since the restoration of democracy 12 years earlier (Nossiter, 2011). The United States State Department said the election was successful and a substantial improvement over 2007, although it added that vote rigging and fraud also took place. Johnnie (2011) also noted that irregularities, such as underage voting and snatching of ballot boxes were reported, Buhari claimed that his supporters in the south were not allowed to vote. The final result as declared by INEC, Good luck Jonathan was declared winner with a total vote of 22, 445, 187, while Muhammed Buhari of Congress of Progressive Change (CPC) came second with a total of 12, 214, 853. The Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM), Alojz Peterle, during the presentation of the Mission's Final Report remarked that on the overall, the 2011 elections marked an important improvement compared to all polls observed previously by the European Union in Nigeria. However, short comings were noticed and elements identified which need to be enhanced (Peterle 2011). In total the EU EOM has presented 50 recommendations to further improve the Legal Framework, Election Administration, Voter Registration, Political Parties, Voter Education, the Media, Human Rights, Women Participation in the Electoral Process, Petition and Appeals, Polling and Collation and Follow-up and Public Support. The Nigeria's 2015 presidential election was the fifth in a row since the military left the political scene in 1999. PDP which has been the ruling party since 1999 faced its toughest opposition in APC which was formed on February 6, 2013 with the merger of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) and a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) (The Nation, 2015).

The March 28 presidential election was quite successful although, there were hitches in some polling units across the country due to late arrival of electoral materials and the ineffectiveness of the Smart Card Readers. Former military ruler, General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd) emerged the winner of the presidential election. The election was the fourth time running that Buhari will be contesting as a presidential aspirant. Buhari won with a total number of 15, 424, 921 votes as against Goodluck Jonathan's 12, 853, 162 votes (INEC website). Buhari's historic victory marked the triumph of democracy as it was the first time that an opposition party will upstage the incumbent government in Nigeria

through legitimate means. All the six general elections conducted during the Fourth Republic in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 are known to have exhibited different levels of violent related cases (Nwolise, 2007). While the 1999 and 2003 general elections were criticized by election observer groups on grounds of non-transparency, lack of accountability, intimidation of voters and conflict of different kinds; more violent related cases were recorded in the general elections that brought President Yar'Adua into office in 2007 more than previous elections in the Fourth Republic. The post-election violence that followed the 2011 General Elections was widely condemned for its widespread destruction of lives and property, especially in the Northern region. The 2015 General Elections appear to be relatively more peaceful and credible; they were non-the-less totally devoid of violent related cases. Needless to reiterate here, the effects of electoral violence on Nigeria's political image has been most damaging to the country's path to democratic consolidation (Adebisi and Loremikan, 2013).

Consequently, there were serious doubts from several quarters including the international community, on the ability of the country to conduct a free and fair election devoid of electoral malpractices, security lapses, and sustained by independent electoral body and judiciary. The suspiciousness that usually accompany the administration of a free and fair election by the electoral body in Nigeria, coupled with an aged long history of bias and manipulation of elections outcome by successive governments necessitated the introduction of an interventionist measure in form of election observation group, (Loremikan 2013). The passing of the amended electoral act 2022, has further strengthen the credibility of forthcoming election particularly the use of electronic devices such as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) among other measures as captured in Section 47 of the Electoral Act as amended which gives legislative backing for smart card readers and any other voter accreditation technology that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) deploy (Electoral Act 2022). The BVAS was used during the Osun election and adjudged to be the game changer and it would also reduce rigging to the barest minimum in the 2023 Elections.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR FRONTLINE CANDIDATES

The SWOT analysis is a credible technique used to identify the quality of potentials of existing political office holders or aspiring politician. It could also be used to examine the strength and integrity of an institution. The focus of this SWOT Analysis is on the front line candidates in the 2023 General elections.

Mr. Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the APC

Strength Bola Ahmed Tinubu was born on 29 March 1952. Senator Tinubu is a veteran politician who has been in the political arena for over three decades. He has held key political offices which included but not limited to Governor of Lagos State, Senator of Federal Republic of Nigeria, and party leader among others. His track record in the Nigeria politics is a confirmation of his unrivaled capacity to lead at all levels. Senator Tinubu demonstrated measurable executive capacities based on his eight years as the Chief Executive of Lagos States. (Oke, 2023). His strength in the political landscape is highly impressive, positively contagious and cut across different strata. Ahmed Tinubu has a huge followership in western Nigeria and northern part of the country. He is unarguably a

political tsunami that has emerged and sweeping the west, south and northern Nigeria. He is the most influential Nigeria politician today and the most influential in the western Nigeria after the demise of Chief Obafemi Awolowo (Faleke 2023). This assertion was further resounded with Muhamadu Buhari's emergence as president of Nigeria as it was unarguably Tinubu's magic wand that gave Buhari the much needed victory after several futile attempts to the exalted office. The alliance of Buhari's party CPC and majorly with AC in 2013 changed the tide against the ruling PDP (Alake 2022). Tinubu is a very courageous, detribalized, rational and firm politician. He is versatile and so endowed in political economy dynamics of not only Nigeria and Africa but also in the global space. Tinubu's grasp of international politics, conflict resolution and diplomacy is quenching and reassuring. (Gbajabiamila 2023).

Bola Tinubu is a mentor in chief. Mentorship is one of his major attributes as evident in the subsequent appointment held both at states and national levels by most of the aides who served as his appointee when he was the Governor of Lagos state. Tinubu's human capital development is highly exceptional and worthy of emulation (Adamu 2023). He has over the years scouts, build, mentor, nurtured and guided some of his former aids to strategic positions in Nigeria and these include the sitting vice president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Yemi Osibanjo, Raji Fashola, Rauf Aregeshola, Lai Mohammed, Femi Gbajabiamila and Akinwumi Ambode. Others are the current Governor of Lagos State Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor, Ogun State Dapo Abiodun, Babatunde Fowler, Hon Abiodun Faleke and a host of others. It is convenient to remark that, no individual in this current generation of Nigerian Politicians can equal his political credentials. There is no contestation or any iota of doubt whatsoever that Tinubu's scouting and mentorship abilities are transformational and mirroring. (Sanwo-Olu, 2022). Senator Tinubu's strength is all encompassing and he is a master strategist. He designed a master plan for Lagos state during his tenure as governor and it is being maintained by his successors. He created and enabling environment for businesses to thrive. He made deliberate efforts towards ensuring that Lagos state commands all the prerequisite of ease of doing business in Lagos and by extension Nigeria. One of the major steps he took was the establishment of the Rapid Response squad (RRS) which is a section of the Nigerian police that is well equipped and funded through the Lagos State Security Trust Funds (LSSTF). The LSSTF is funded by players in the private sectors, well-meaning individuals and the Lagos state government. The RRS was saddled with the responsibility of curbing crimes in Lagos State and its environs. This security outfit helped in no small measures in reducing crime rate in Lagos state to the barest minimum. The outfit is so successful so much that other states have adopted same in their various states.

The model has been understudied and replicated by Osun, kano and Delta states among others. The relative peace in Lagos State paved way for massive investment in conjunction with the liberalization of the Lagos economy environment that encourages private participation in businesses. These policies endeared Lagos to investor from different walks of life and hence became an investment destination for multinational, individuals and corporate organizations. The state was rated the fifth largest economy in Africa (ICIR 2016). This signifies the crucial role security plays in investment considerations. Therefore, Security and development are symbiotic. Security is development and without development there cannot be security, (Mcnamara 1995). Some of the Mega investment in Lagos state that makes its investment destination and that would multiply the IGR of Lagos

and Nigeria at large includes the recently Commissioned Lekki Deep Sea Port, the about to be commission Dangote Petrochemical Refinery, the multi-billion dollar Eko Atlantic and the mono rail. Others are the relocation of headquarters of international oil cooperation to Lagos and consistency in government policies among others. The aggregates of these would bring in massive foreign exchange to Lagos and Nigeria and would further expand the business net within Lagos and other contiguous states of Ogun and Oyo States respectively. Bola Tinubu master plan for Lagos is undoubtedly unfolding according to plan. Senator Tinubu leadership acumen need not be overemphasized. He also established a number of institutions that has continue to distinct Lagos from other states and they include, Lagos State Traffic Management Authority, (LASTMA), Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Lagos State Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) among others. He established a strong base for IGR which has helped in raising Lagos IGR from 600m to 50 Billion Naira monthly (Shettima 2023). He was the first to motivate Judges and Magistrates with higher salaries than Federal Government, first state to digitalize civil service, his dexterousness and prudence in creating and sustaining the Local Governments and Local Council Development Authorities despite attempts by the Obasanjo presidency, to undermine him for creating additional local government which is a constitutional provision. His ability to sustained Lagos State when the then President Obasanjo held the allocation of LGAs in Lagos State for years, thereby forcing him to think out of the box in order to keep the state afloat was ingenious and legendary. According to Obasanjo. *I am not a politician I am a decorated soldier, an army general. If you are looking for a thorough bred politician in Nigeria visit Bourdillon Lagos, there you find one. However, politics has no permanent friend or enemy. If you remind me of what Bola said about me four years ago, have you reminded yourself of what I did to him and his Lagos government about 20 years ago? I almost crashed his government and state. No governor or government from 1999 till date would have survived what I did to Bola and Lagos. He survived it because, he has the magic wand and i hope he get the chance to wave the wand over Nigerian state*, (Obasanjo, 2014).

Tinubu is a party man who believes in party philosophy. He is one of the founders of the AC and has kept faith with the party until the mega merger that transformed into APC for the purpose of wrestling power from the PDP at the Centre. He provided the AC platform for most politicians including, Muhammadu Buhari, Atiku Abubakar and Nuhu Ribadu in the pursuit of their political desires of becoming Nigerian President. It is pertinent to states that, the APC has a total of 21 states out of the 36 states under his control and going into the elections. This is a big advantage over all other contenders. Tinubu is just a political movement with solid structures across the country, the reason he was given the title of (Asiwaju), which in Yoruba culture, is reserved only for remarkable leaders. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Governor of Lagos State, earned this pre-eminent title following the leadership traits which he exhibited during his first term in office. He also bears the title of (Jagaban) which means a warrior sin Borgu Kingdom of Niger State. These achievements constitute a solid strength for Senator Bola Tinubu which stands him out among all other presidential candidates for the 2023 General election.

Weakness. Tinubu major weakness is the alleged failing health. Members of the opposition particularly the PDP believed that Tinubu has medical challenges and might not be mentally and physical dispose to lead a complex country like Nigerian. It was alleged

that he is suffering from dementia and other health complications (Dino 2023). Though, this has been debunked by Tinubu's handlers and Tinubu himself, one of which is the famous indoor bicycle exercise that went viral last year among others. Another weakness is the muslim muslim ticket of the APC. Tinubu is a muslim from the south west and Kashim Shettima his running mate is also a muslim from the north east. This could constitute a challenge for Tinubu aspirations in the forthcoming election as Nigeria is a secular state and also religiously sensitive. The allegation of his involvement in drugs is another challenge that needs to be addressed by his handlers. According to Atiku, as a custom officer, I blocked Tinubu from bringing drugs into Nigeria (Sahara 2023). However, these are still within the realm of speculations as he has not been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction, (Keyamo 2023). These weighty allegations need to be managed convincingly in order not to slim the chances of Senator Ahmed Tinubu in the 2023 General Elections.

Opportunity. Senator Ahmed Tinubu has some glaring opportunities provided by some key opposition parties. For instance, the role of the famous G-5 Governors from PDP withdrawing their support for Atiku Abubakar is a major blow for PDP. These governors are Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, Samuel Ortom of Benue State, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State and Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State. These governors continuous and collective protest would significantly slim the chances of PDP irrespective of who they would eventually support. Their stands are already an added advantage to Senator Ahmed Tinubu. Also, the Labour Party candidate Mr Peter Obi has also taken over the entire South East being his region of extraction and sadly abinitio was the strong catchment area of PDP. This is also an added advantage to the candidate of APC. The three major deciding states of Lagos, Kano and Rivers are 50 percent for Tinubu while Lagos is between 70% -80%. Rivers is likely going to be shared among PDP, LP and APC due to Governor Wike's posture with his party. It is also important to state that, most states Governors of northern extraction from both PDP and APC would prefer Senator Tinubu to win the coming election to enable them constitutionally and morally eligible to contest after Tinubu's tenure, than having Atiku. If this status quo remains into the election, the APC candidate would be the greatest beneficiary.

Threat. The major threat for Ahmed Bola Tinubu is the current score card of APC in the eyes of the electorate. Has the current APC government addressed the change mantra they promised Nigerians? What is the state of the social contract between the electorate and the current government? A lot of Nigerians are not happy with current state of the economy, security, education and general performance of the ruling party. Citizens are more impoverished, inflation has gone up, exchange rate has plummeted and students are more at home, skilled and unskilled labor are leaving the country for greener pastures. More worrisome and surprising is the continuous hike in prices of petroleum products and its unavailability.

The sudden and unfavorable manner of currency redesign and the way and manner the policy is being implemented few days to 2023 General Elections leaves much to be desired. (Keyamo 2023). These are critical issues that have grave consequences for APC and its presidential candidate going into the election. These developments compelled the APC flag bearer into raising an alarm over the lingering fuel scarcity and naira redesign but however pleaded for calm. The Naira redesigned is aimed at sliming Tinubu's chances in the February 25 Presidential Elections (El Rufai 2023). Tinubu's alarm and subsequent visit to

Mr President in Daura Katsina State with other critical stakeholders led to the extension of the deadline to 10 February. Tinubu however, seems to be aware of certain development which are detrimental to his aspirations and hence might be putting up some measures to mitigate it. This development however, has become blessing in disguise as a good number of Nigerian have come to the realization that the policy on naira redesigned and fuel scarcity are aimed at de marketing APC in the coming election. Hence, this has drawn more compassion to his quest for presidency and most likely would translate to more votes for Asiwaju on 25 February 2023.

Mr. Rabiul Musa Kwankwaso NNPP

Strength. Rabiul Musa Kwankwaso was born in October 1956. Engr Rabiul Musa Kwankwaso is one of the most experience politicians in Nigeria with huge experience. His strength in the political landscape is highly impressive and cut across different strata. Some of the political offices he held includes member of House of Representative, Governor of Kano State, Minister of Defence and later Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Engr Kwankwaso huge followership is in the North, particularly in Kano State where he established and entrenched a political movement known as Kwankwasiya. The name of the movement was derived from his name Kwankwaso. Their major physical identity is the wearing of a red cap. The movement is more pronounced in northern Nigeria with the Headquarters in Kano and also his strong hold. The major goal of the movement is to ensure that all political positions in Nigeria are capture by the members of the movement and across the country. In addition to his huge political experience which stands him out above other candidates, he also has great strength in the area of infrastructural development during his second tenure as governor of Kano State. He built quality roads across the LGAs of Kano State, built schools, open up the town which includes the Kwankwasiya Estate. He also electrifies the streets of Kano at night using alternative means of power generation. He invested so much in education at all levels. He built two states universities namely University of Science and Technology in Wudil and the North West University Kano. He is the first Governor since 1999 to introduced free school feeding in Kano State. He encouraged the children of the poor to achieve quality education within and outside the country via scholarship. In the area of security, he made a statement, particularly in the days of terrorist's activities in Kano State. A case in point, during his second tenure in 2012, the Boko-Haram terrorists struck in Kano killing hundreds of people. The invasion of Boko-Haram lasted from 2012 – 2015 totally about 3 years before they were rooted out. This was achieved because of his personal commitment, the massive support he gave the security forces to do their work and his will power. Dr Musa Kwankwaso is also young, healthy and agile when compares with other frontline candidates. Engr Rabiul Musa is also very strong in the areas of courage, decisiveness, fearless, firm and fair. He ensures that whatever he set out to do is accomplished no matter what it takes. Engr Kwankwaso is the most educated of the frontline candidates with a PhD in Water Engineering from Sharda University India.

Weakness. In the area of weakness, the Engr Rabiul Musa major support is the northern part of the country and Kano in particular. The South-West and South-East are under the control of Senator Tinubu Ahmed and Peter obi respectively. He might encounter huge challenges in gathering votes from other geo-political zones. This is a concern for Engr

Rabiu Kwankwaso in the forthcoming 2023 general Election. Also, another weakness of the candidate is the age of the NNPP, the party is less than 2 years since its formation and the spread is limited to the northern part of country. Additionally, the NNPP candidate does not have elective representatives in any elective offices. Furthermore, the NNPP candidate does not have the financial muscle when compare to the APC and PDP candidates for the prosecution of his election project. These are weaknesses that need to be bridge by the NNPP candidate if he intends to win the 2023 Election. The NNPP vice presidential candidate is also not popular compare to other vice presidential candidates; hence it could affect his ability to deliver votes from his region.

Opportunity. The NNPP has window of opportunity to catch on in the build up to the coming 2023 election. The NNPP candidate could leverage on the large population of the Hausa and northern community across the 36 states and FCT to make an in road into the voting population of the southern region. Another likely opportunity that might swings the way of Engr Rabiu Kwankwaso is the ongoing litigation against APC and PDP candidates from different fronts. Should these candidates or any of them get disqualified, more votes could accrue to Engr Rabiu Kwankwaso. In political calculation, 24 hours is a long time, thus any window of opportunity through action or inaction could change the dynamics of votes in favor of Engr Rabiu Musa depending on the circumstances.

Threats. Engr Rabiu Musa candidacy could be confronted with some significant threats. Firstly, the Atiku's candidacy and Kashim Shettima vice candidacy are threat to Engr Rabiu Kwankwaso presidential ambition because of the likely competing votes in the north. The votes in the north would be keenly contested for and would be shared among APC, NNPP and PDP. Also, the infighting in the party that led to the defection of his strong allied Ibrahim Shekaru to PDP with most of his followers would have negative consequences on his chances.

Mr. Atiku Abubakar of the PDP

Strength. Atiku Abubakar was born in Jada Adamawa State in November 1946. Atiku is the presidential candidate of PDP. He was a Custom officer before retiring into politics. Atiku is a veteran of the Nigerian politics and he has been in the presidential race before the return of democracy in 1999 when he indicated interest but later settled for the running mate to Gen Olusegun Obasanjo rtd with whom he later became his Vice President and ruled Nigeria from 1999 – 2007. Thereafter, Atiku contested for all elections till date. The highest and the only office he ever occupied was the Vice President of Federal Republic of Nigeria. He also had the best record of cross carpeting in Nigeria politics among other candidates. He has followership from the north but cannot ascertain if the followership would translate to vote on 25 February 2023. He is a successful business man; he established the popular American University Yola and a couple of businesses across the country.

Weakness. The PDP presidential candidate has some weaknesses that could affect his performance in the coming general election. The major weakness is the numerous corruption allegations against him though he has not been indicted by a court of competent jurisdiction. However, General Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd) in his book *My Watch* described him as his propensity to corruption, his tendency to disloyalty, his inability to say and stick to the truth all the time, a propensity for poor judgment, his belief and reliance on marabouts, his lack of transparency, his trust in money to buy his way out on all issues and

his readiness to sacrifice morality, integrity, propriety truth and national interest for self and selfish interest, (Obasanjo 31-32). He further alleged that the resources Atiku stole can feed over 300million Nigerians for 400 years. Atiku has not been able to substantiate his source of wealth convincingly as he claimed to have been in car business while serving as a custom officer which in itself violates the civil service rules.

Atiku Abubakar is an experience politician within the Nigeria political space. Despite his decades of exposure in the political arena, he has not been able to mentor and sustained credible individuals to elective or strategic appointments. Another major weakness for Atiku is the PDP disruption of the rotational presidency in the party constitution. It is a big setback for Atiku Abubakar aspiration as the southern part of the country could be hostile to Atiku Abubakar at the poll to express their anger over his emergence as PDP flag bearer as against a southern candidate. It is expected that after the 2 terms of APC northern candidate as president, PDP would have allowed a candidate from the southern extraction fly the party's flag in the 2023 Presidential Election. This would count against the party in the 25 February Election.

The 16 years of PDP from 1999-2015 was seen as a dismal performance, considering the resources at their disposal particularly from the oil windfalls. It was expected that resources from the oil boom would have been invested in critical infrastructure but were rather mismanaged. Atiku Abubakar within the same period as the head of the economic council supervised the fraudulent privatization of our critical national assets at a far below cost of those assets. Some of the assets sold include the ALSCON in Ikot Abasi, Akwa Ibom worth 3. 5B dollars but was sold for 130m dollars, DSC Delta State worth 1. 5b dollars, was sold for 30m dollars, NITEL, Nigerian Airways, Niger Dock and host of others were all sold at a very ridiculous rate inimical to our national development. According to Dr James Duru, the privatization exercise that was carried out from 1999, was a massive failure. (James 2011). This some economist asserted to be the foundation of Nigerian current economy woes. The weaknesses observed in respect of the candidate of Atiku Abubakar are overwhelming and could affect his chances negatively.

Opportunity. The incumbent government of APC at the centre performs below expectation and this could serve as an edge for the opposition parties in their campaign especially PDP. Also, the ongoing controversial naira redesign policy of CBN and the acute shortage of PMS in the country could be an advantage to Atiku aspirations.

Threats. There are 3 major threats to Atiku Abubakar's aspirations namely, the role of the G5 Governors led by Governor Nyesom Wike, the Peter Obi factor in the South East and the limited numbers of states governors. The role of G5 Governors of Rivers, Oyo, Benue, Enugu and Abia States should be of great concern to PDP presidential aspirant. The G5 Governors are aggrieved on so many issues particularly the choice of the party chairman Iyorchia Ayu from the north. The G5 they insists, that the party Chairman should come from south having lost the presidential slot to the north in line with the provisions of PDP constitution. Unfortunately, PDP refused to oblige the request of the G5 which is the only condition that would guarantee their support for the presidential candidate (Wike 2023). Again, the South East was the strong hold of the PDP but with the emergence of Peter Obi as LP flag bearer, the South East has completely transfers their support to LP. From the 14 PDP states, 10 states are not likely to support PDP presidential candidate in the 25 February Election. This would have a grave consequence on Atiku's aspiration. Already, PDP is disadvantage with only 14 Governors as against APC 21 Governors.

Again, the accusation against Atiku Abubakar by a whistle blower his former aid called Michael Achimugu, on the issue of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) company that was registered and used as conduit pipe for siphoning Nigerian money in collusion with the then President Obasanjo, could have a grave consequence on Atiku's political image and advantage to other major opposition parties (Keyamo 2023). He further claimed that these monies were used to build the Bell University and American University Yola respectively. This allegation was further echoed during a press conference by APC Media team led by Festus Keyamo. It was on the strength of this allegation that Keyamo approached the court of competent jurisdiction seeking for Atiku's disqualification and subsequent prosecution. Considering the threats highlighted, it would be extremely difficult for Atiku to win the 2023 Presidential Election.

Mr. Peter Obi of Labour Party

Strength. Peter Obi was born in Onitsha Anambra State in July 1961. Peter Obi political experience was the office of the Anambra State Governor under the platform of APGA. However, he defected to PDP sometimes in his political Journey and in the year 2022 defected to LP and emerged the presidential flag bearer. The party only gained momentum when Peter Obi defected from PDP. His support base is huge and majorly from the South East and other southern part of the country. He is competent and his major followership is from the south east. He is also a successful business man and prudent in spending. His only political experience was the office of the Anambra State Governor which he held from 2006 – 2014. Peter Obi's achievement as the Governor of Anambra state includes the first state in Nigeria to have a savings in Sub – Sovereign wealth Fund. He invested over 500 million dollars for the state at a time when most states were indebted and borrowing money while 156 dollars was invested in bonds in the education sector; he handed over missionary schools to their owners and continued to pay salaries and other support needed. The state performed creditably by emerging first in NECO and WAEC during his tenure. He also created an enabling environment for foreign investors while also establishing some industries such as the SAB miller, which is the second largest brewery in the world. He encouraged and supported local industries like the Innoson Motors among other achievement.

Weakness. Peter Obi major weaknesses include his refusal to criticize the activities of the IPOB and his promise to release Namdi Kanu if he wins the election. This translates to a tacit support for the IPOB; also, the lack of spread in followership across the country. His major support base is the South East though; he might make some inroads in some Christian dominated enclave and few PDP states outside the South East but would not be significant enough to give him victory. The Labour Party has no elective representatives particularly states governors that would mobilise resources for the party logistics requirement as election in Nigeria is capital intensive.

Opportunity. The incumbent government of APC has so far performed below expectation and this could serve as an edge for the opposition parties in their campaign including LP. Also, the ongoing controversial naira redesign policy of CBN and the acute shortage of PMS in the country could be an advantage to Obi's aspirations.

Threats. The major threat against Peter Obi's aspirations is the activities of the indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in the South East. The IPOB have been terrorizing the entire south east. These include the Monday sit at home, kidnapping, indiscriminate killings,

particularly politicians and security operatives, burning of government facilities particularly INEC offices and materials such as PVCs, BVAS among others. These unnecessary negative developments have already created fears in the mind of the electorates which coincidentally is the base of Peter Obi. Also, the threats from Mr Simon Ekpa an IPOB leader has directed a sit at home in all states in the South East and part of south south, could lead to low voters turnout and would have a devastating effect on the candidate of LP in the overall performance in the election.

General Deductions

The four instruments of the SWOT ANALYSIS namely Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats have been adequately examined for all the frontline candidates. All the candidates have their areas of strength and weakness. However, some of the candidates are better positioned than others as we shall analyzed in the succeeding paragraphs.

Strength. All the frontline candidates have their areas of strengths. Atiku Abubakr's strength is largely on his experience and popularity in the Nigerian political terrain. However, his popularity and experience has not been impactful, based on the facts that it has not translated to human capital development and structural growth in his home state of Adamawa and at the national level. His rating therefore is **below average** in strength. Engr Kwankwaso during his tenure as Governor of Kano State was able to develop the state in both human and physical development. He built 2 Universities, roads, bridges and also sponsored children of less privileged to universities within and outside Nigeria. More importantly, he established a formidable political movement in kano known as Kwankwasiya. He is rated **above average** in strength. Peter Obi's strength lies in his integrity and prudence. As the Governor of Anambra State, he ensured the judicious use of state resources by cutting down on most of the unnecessary expenses. He also saved a lot of money for his successor to enable him function properly. Obi is very popular in the South East, part of South South and among the youths that are active on social media and could get a block vote from the SE. He also addressed the issue of insecurity during his tenure among others. He is however rated **average** in terms of strength.

The Candidate of APC Bola Tinubu is very strong in terms of strength. He is very popular across the country and particularly in the SW. He is the most influential politician in Nigeria today considering the role he played in the emergence of President Muhammadu Buhari. He also mentors a lot of people who are occupying sensitive appointment at states and national levels among which is the sitting Vice Present of Nigeria Yemi Osinbajo among others. He transformed the future of Lagos with the 40 years master planned that is successively sustained by his successors. He transformed Lagos State economy to become one of the biggest economies in Africa. He did very well in security and the template is replicated among some states. His achievements are tangible and highly impactful. Senator Asiwaju's strength is rated **Excellent**.

Weakness. The frontline candidate suffers one form of weakness or the other. The APC Presidential candidate has been accused of nursing some health challenges, drugs deals and some corruption allegations. He has however not been indicted by any court of the land. His weakness status is rated **below average**. The LP Candidate Mr Peter Obi's major weakness is the despicable role of IPOB in the SE which he has refused to criticize and

rather promised to release Nnamdi Kanu if he wins the election. This translates to a tacit support for the IPOB and would constitute a drawback for him in the coming election. He is rated **average**. The PDP Candidate Atiku Abubakar weakness centres on his role in the privatization of Nigerian assets which was described as massive failure also constitute a setback. His propensity for corruption as captured by his former boss Olusegun Obasanjo speaks volume. Overall, his performance during his tenure as Vice President was abysmal and his inability to mentor any of his aids or loyalist also exposes his weakness as a leader. He is rated **average**. Engr Rabiuna Musa Kwankwaso of the NNPP weakness include the infancy of his party ,lack of spread particularly in the south and inadequate resources to embark on Presidential elections in Nigeria. He is rated **average**.

Opportunity. All the opposition parties candidates of LP,PDP and NNPP would inadvertently leverage on the APC lead government under performance and this could serve as an edge for the opposition parties in their campaign. Also, the ongoing controversial naira redesign policy of CBN and the acute shortage of PMS in the country could be an advantage to all the opposition parties. The PDP,LP and NNPP could be rated **average**. However, a good number of Nigerians have come to realized that the naira redesigned and sudden fuel scarcities as the game plan of the cabal in collusion with PDP to de markets the APC presidential candidate (Keyamo 2023). The APC would also leverage on the G5 protest within the PDP to garner votes. Also the role of Peter Obi would affect the PDP performance in the SE which is an added advantage to the APC. This instrument rates the APC **above average**.

Threats. All the frontline candidates are contending with one form of threats or the other. The labor Party candidate threats include the appalling activities of IPOB and the lack of spread, the role of G-5 and lack of support base of LP across the country particularly in the north. Also the lack of elective representatives particularly governors constitute a threat. He is rated **average**. The NNPP candidate's threats include the Atiku's candidacy and Kashim Shettima vice president candidacy which would have negative effect on Engr Rabiuna Kwankwaso presidential ambition because of the competing votes in the north. Also, the in fighting in NNPP which led to the defection of his strong allied Ibrahim Shekaru to PDP with most of his followers would also have negative consequences on his chances. He is rated **average**. The candidate of PDP has 3 major threats standing against his aspirations namely, the role of the G5 Governors, led by Governor Nyesom Wike, the Peter Obi factor in the South East and the limited numbers of states governors in PDP. The role of G5 Governors of Rivers, Oyo, Benue, Enugu and Abia States should be of great concern to PDP presidential aspirant and would certainly affect his performance in the general election. His threat is rated **above average**. The threats for Ahmed Bola Tinubu of APC are the current score card of APC in the eyes of the electorate. A lot of Nigerians are not happy with current state of the economy, security, education and general performance of the ruling party. More worrisome and surprising is the continuous hike in prices of petroleum products and its unavailability also the naira redesign policy of the ruling APC. These could affect the performance of the party in the coming election. Ahmed Tinubu is rated **average** in threats.

On the whole and barring unforeseen considerations, Bola Ahmed Tinubu stands out among other contestant in view of his overwhelming strength, and opportunities. The weakness and threats observed might not really affect his aspirations in the 25 February 2023 Elections. However, the presidential election might not be won in the first ballot and

thus could proceed to a rerun given the competitiveness of the contest. Consequently, the likely winner of the election could be Senator Ahmed Tinubu, Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi and Engr Rabiw Kwankaso in that order. Table 1 below is a SWOT Analysis Performance Table for 2023 Presidential Candidates. However, considering the importance of good governance to developing countries like Nigeria and its effects on electorates, politicians must make deliberate efforts to deliver true dividends of democracy. Also, the role of mentorship cannot be over emphasized. It is imperative for Nigerian politicians to always ensure that at any given opportunity to serve the people, good governance and quality mentorship should be their preoccupation.

SWOT ANALYSIS PERFORMANCE TABLE FOR 2023 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

Ser No	Tool	Performance Rate					Rmks
(a)	(b)	(c)					(d)
All Progressives Congress (APC) Bola Ahmed Tinubu		Weak (20%)	Below Average (40%)	Average (60%)	Above Average (80%)	Excellent (100%)	
1.	Strength			—		—	
2.	Weakness			—			
3.	Opportunity			—			
4.	Threats			—			
Labour Party (LP) Mr Peter Obi							
1.	Strength			—			
2.	Weakness			—			
3.	Opportunity			—			
4.	Threats						
New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) Mr Rabiw Musa Kwankaso							
1.	Strength			—	—		
2.	Weakness			—			
3.	Opportunity			—			
4.	Threats			—			
Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Alhaji Atiku Abubakar							
1.	Strength		—	—			
2.	Weakness			—			
3.	Opportunity			—			
4.	Threats				—		

Source: Table prepared by authors

Concluding remarks

The SWOT analysis is a strategy employ to identify the competence or otherwise of candidates and institutions. The SWOT analysis of the four frontline candidates for the forthcoming General Elections was based on their strength, weaknesses, opportunity and threats. Bola Tinubu stand out among the candidates based on his overwhelming

credentials. His strength is quite impressive particularly as the governor of Lagos state and his ability to mentor most of his former aides. These are people who currently occupy important offices across the country and they include the current Vice President Yemi Osibanjo, Raji Fashola, Ambode, Rauf Aregbesola and the current Governor of Lagos State, Sanwo-Olu among others. His weaknesses and threat could be overcome if well managed or better still; the effects could be reduced to the barest minimum. If the status quo in the opposition party PDP, particularly the protest of the G-5 Governors remains, it could be to his advantage.

The prerequisites for attracting electorates' votes are numerous. However, some key factors stand out and these include the importance of good governance to developing countries like Nigeria and its effects on electorates. Also, the importance of mentorship cannot be over emphasized. It is imperative for Nigerian politicians to always ensure that at any given opportunity to serve the people, good governance and mentorship should be their preoccupation.

The other major flag bearer in the 2023 Presidential race namely Mr Peter Obi of LP, Atiku Abubakar of PDP and Engr Musa Rabiul Kwankwaso of NNPP are all formidable forces and their individual and collective capacities would make the 2023 General Elections a historical event.

It recommends the need for political office holders to provide good governance that would enable the citizens the ultimate benefits of the dividend of democracy; such that can make life worth living. The era of expecting the electorates to vote based on such sentiments as religion and tribe are fast getting over and replaced with performance while in office.

Events leading to the 2023 General Elections have shown the importance of mentorship while public in office. This provides an army of loyal and reliable mentees who would be ever ready to defend the ideals of their mentor any time anywhere.

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