

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 2015 AND 2019 ELECTION VOTING STRENGTH IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study compares the voting strength of Plateau State, Nigeria, during the 2015 and 2019 general elections. The study utilized secondary data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), National Population Commission (NPC) and supplemented it with spatial data integrated through Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The dataset provided estimates and projections of the population for each ward spanning the years 2015 and 2019. To ensure compatibility with GIS software, the population data were organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and saved as a CSV file, streamlining integration into the analytical workflow. The findings reveal significant demographic changes in Plateau State, with an overall increase of 13.3% from 2015(4,265,999) to 2019(4,832,437), correlating with a rise in registered voters from 2,021,046 to 2,480,455, a 22.7% growth. This highlights the importance of monitoring population dynamics for electoral management. Mikang (29.02%) and Riyom (26.77%) LGAs exhibited more pronounced growth, this uneven population growth necessitates that electoral management bodies, particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission, adjust polling unit allocations accordingly to ensure equitable access to voting opportunities. Notably, disparities in voter engagement were observed across LGAs, with Jos South and Shendam showing substantial increases in turnout, while Jos North experienced declines. The analysis highlights the impact of demographic changes, local political dynamics, and voter mobilization efforts on electoral participation. The study recommends targeted campaigns to educate voters about civic engagement, a review of polling unit allocations to improve accessibility and the adoption of electronic voter registration to enhance transparency. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can create a more inclusive and transparent electoral environment in Plateau State, thereby, strengthening democracy in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Voting Strength, Geographic Information Systems, Population growth, Voter turnout, Comparative Analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

Elections are a cornerstone of democratic governance, serving as a mechanism for citizens to express their political preferences and hold leaders accountable. In Nigeria, the electoral process has undergone significant transformations since the return to democratic rule in 1999, with each election cycle reflecting shifts in voting behaviors and political dynamics (Ibeanu, 2015). According to Ojukwu *et al.* (2019), the 2015 and 2019 general elections are particularly noteworthy, as they not only highlighted the evolving nature of electoral participation in Nigeria,

but also underscored the impact of sociopolitical factors on voter turnout and preferences, especially in key states like Plateau State.

Election voting strength refers to the collective influence of registered voters in a given electoral area, significantly impacting election outcomes. It is determined by various factors, including the number of registered voters, voter turnout, and demographic characteristics of the electorate. Understanding voting strength is crucial for evaluating the health of a democracy and ensuring fair representation in the electoral process.

Election voting strength is the capacity of a specific group of voters to influence the results of an election (Karp & Banducci, 2008). This concept encompasses not only the sheer number of voters but also their engagement level, which is reflected in turnout rates. High voter turnout is often associated with robust democratic practices and can lead to more representative outcomes. Conversely, low turnout can indicate disenfranchisement or dissatisfaction with the electoral process (Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). Several factors influence voting strength, including demographic trends, socio-economic conditions, and the accessibility of the voting process. Studies have shown that younger voters and marginalized communities often face barriers to registration and participation, which can diminish their voting strength (Pew Research Center, 2018). Additionally, the distribution of polling places and the efficiency of voter registration processes can affect overall turnout and, consequently, voting strength in different regions (Bentele and O'Brien, 2013).

The implications of voting strength are profound. Areas with higher voting strength can sway election results, particularly in closely contested races. For instance, urban centers with dense populations tend to have higher voting strength compared to rural areas, which can lead to disparities in representation (Liu & McKenzie, 2018). This imbalance can perpetuate systemic inequalities, making it essential for electoral management bodies to ensure that all communities have equitable access to the voting process. To enhance voting strength, initiatives aimed at increasing voter registration and turnout are vital. Strategies may include targeted outreach to underrepresented groups, simplifying the registration process, and improving the accessibility of polling stations. This is because civic education and community engagement efforts can significantly boost voter participation (Dahl, 1989).

Plateau State, located in the north-central region of Nigeria, has been characterized by a diverse demographic composition and a rich political history. The state's voting strength in the 2015 and 2019 elections provides valuable insights into the changing landscape of Nigerian politics. The 2015 elections were marked by a historic shift in political power, with the emergence of the All Progressive Congress (APC) as a formidable opposition to the then-ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). This election witnessed an unprecedented level of voter engagement, fueled by widespread discontent with the PDP's governance and a growing desire for change (Nwankwo, 2016). In Plateau State, the APC's victory in the gubernatorial elections reflected a broader national trend of shifting political allegiances, as voters sought to express their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

In contrast, the 2019 elections were conducted against a backdrop of heightened political tension and insecurity. Issues such as violence, ethnic tensions, and the influence of local politics played a significant role in shaping voter turnout and preferences (Osaghae & Suberu, 2019). The reelection of President Muhammadu Buhari and the retention of key gubernatorial positions by the APC in several states indicated a consolidation of the party's power, yet it also revealed a complex interplay of factors influencing electoral outcomes (Ojukwu *et al.*, 2019). This comparative analysis of voting strength in Plateau State during the 2015 and 2019 elections aims

to explore these dynamics, assessing how changes in political affiliation, voter turnout, and electoral engagement reflect broader trends in Nigerian democracy.

The significance of this study extends beyond Plateau State, as it contributes to the understanding of electoral behavior in Nigeria. By examining the factors that influenced voter turnout and preferences in both election cycles, the study will provide insights into the implications of these trends for future elections and democratic governance in Plateau State and Nigeria in general. Understanding the voting patterns in Plateau State can also inform policymakers and political stakeholders about the evolving needs and priorities of the electorate, thereby enhancing the responsiveness of political parties and governance structures (Akanji, 2019). Thus, this study seeks to conduct a comparative analysis of the voting strength in Plateau State during the 2015 and 2019 elections. It is hoped that the analysis will extract meaningful insights from the available data to make informed observations and predictions for future elections in the state.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Plateau State is located in the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria and lies between latitude 8° 30' and 10° 30' north, longitude 7° 30' and 8° 37' east. It has common boundaries with Bauchi State to the north, Taraba State in the east, Nasarawa and Kaduna States in the south and west, respectively. The state has a landmass area of 28, 011 square kilometers and a population of 3,206,531 according to the 2006 national census. The state has seventeen local government areas (Figure 1). The Jos Plateau, because of its relief, has moderated the climate to a temperate-like climate. The mean maximum temperature is about 22°C and the mean minimum temperature is 18°C. The state is a miniature Nigeria, where almost all the tribes or ethnic linguistic groups in Nigeria are found especially in Jos North and some parts of Bassa and Jos South Local Government Areas. The state has about fifty indigenous ethnic groups spread over the 17 local government areas (Ministry of Information, Plateau State, 2014). Agriculture is the predominant economic activity in the state and is the economic mainstay of the rural communities.

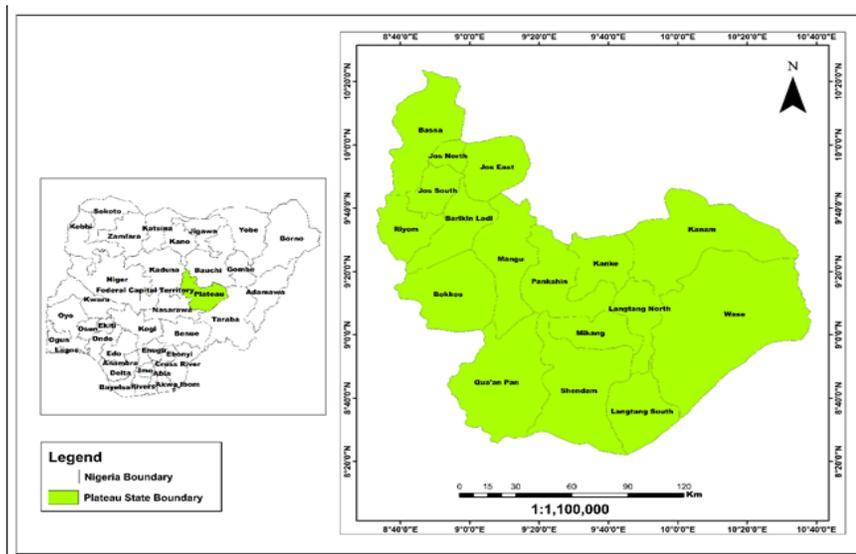


Figure 1: Plateau State Showing the 17 Local Government Areas

Source: National Centre for Remote Sensing, Jos (2024)

Secondary data was obtained from the National Population Commission (NPC), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and electoral reports for the study. The information collected were: data on existing electoral wards, the administrative map of Plateau State and population data of the state. Also, coordinates of existing electoral wards were collected from field surveys. An inventory of electoral ward names, codes, locations, and the number of eligible voters was obtained from the Independent National Electoral Commission while population data of all wards within Plateau State were sourced from the National Population Commission. The dataset provided estimates and projections of the population for each ward spanning the years 2015 and 2019. To ensure compatibility with GIS software, the population data were meticulously organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and saved as a CSV file, streamlining integration into the analytical workflow.

Furthermore, longitude and latitude coordinates for each ward were meticulously recorded in the Excel spreadsheet, sourced from Google Earth. This spatial metadata was subsequently imported into ArcGIS, enabling the population data to be seamlessly linked to the respective ward locations. Through this process, a cohesive shapefile was generated, laying the foundation for in-depth spatial analysis and visualization of population dynamics within Plateau State.

Interpolation of point data in ArcGIS is pivotal for generating continuous surfaces that effectively represent population distribution across regions. This is crucial for visualizing, analyzing, and predicting electoral trends. By bridging the gaps between discrete population data points, interpolation ensures data completeness, facilitating informed decision-making in electoral planning and analysis. These interpolated surfaces provide a seamless depiction of population density, aiding in visualizing electoral demographics and conducting comparative analyses between different electoral districts or regions. Furthermore, they serve as the foundation for predictive modeling, enabling the anticipation of electoral patterns and trends over time. Finally, a map was composed for each subject based on the IDW interpolation, enabling comparative analysis and the identification of spatial patterns and trends in the electoral data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of Plateau State Population by Local Government Areas (2015 and 2019)

The population data in Table 1 reveals significant demographic changes in Plateau State, with an overall increase of 13.3% from 2015 to 2019. This highlights the importance of monitoring population dynamics for electoral management. That is perhaps why Hart (2022) emphasizes that population growth can impact the allocation of resources and electoral representation. Certain local government areas (LGAs) in the state exhibited more pronounced growth, such as Mikang (29.02%) and Riyom (26.77%). This uneven population growth necessitates that electoral management bodies, particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), adjust polling unit allocations accordingly to ensure equitable access to voting opportunities (Ogunnaike, 2018). Failure to address these demographic shifts can lead to underrepresentation of rapidly growing communities, compromising democratic principles (Umar, 2017).

Table 1: Plateau State Population by Local Government Areas (2015 and 2019)

Name	2015	2019	Increase	% Increase
Barkin Ladi	256331	300089	43758	17.07
Bassa	250922	284049	33127	13.20
Bokkos	266375	319372	52997	19.90
Jos East	117666	133681	16015	13.61
Jos North	467719	481993	14274	3.05
Jos South	408646	472619	63973	15.65
Kanam	214112	238720	24608	11.49
Kanke	185579	221555	35976	19.39
Langtang North	183764	205872	22108	12.03
Langtang South	168544	208898	40354	23.94
Mangu	412267	422346	10079	2.44
Mikang	171004	220628	49624	29.02
Pankshin	260505	299654	39149	15.03
Qu'anpan	243523	267418	23895	9.81
Riyom	224710	284866	60156	26.77
Shendam	223027	231480	8453	3.79
Wase	211305	239197	27892	13.20
Total	4,265,999	4,832,437	566,438	249

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Registered Voters in Plateau State (2015 and 2019)

The data on registered voters in Plateau State, as presented in Table 2, provides insights into the state's electoral landscape and voting strength. Between 2015 and 2019, the total number of registered voters increased by 22.7%, from 2,021,046 to 2,480,455. However, the rate of growth in registered voters varied significantly across the LGAs. While some LGAs experienced substantial increases, such as Jos South (37.16%), Wase (35.67%), and Shendam (32.40%), others witnessed more modest growth or even a decline, as in the case of Langtang South (-3.76%). These disparities in voter registration patterns suggest that factors such as accessibility and awareness of voter registration processes influence participation (Akinwunmi *et al.*, 2019). The guidelines set by INEC, which stipulate a minimum of 100 and a maximum of 750 registered voters per polling unit, must be applied judiciously to ensure optimal voter representation and avoid disenfranchisement (Ogunnaike *et al.*, 2020). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fostering inclusive electoral participation (Ezeani, 2019).

By closely examining the data on both population and registered voters, policymakers and electoral management bodies can gain a more comprehensive understanding of Plateau State's demographic and electoral realities. This knowledge can inform evidence-based decisions regarding the creation and distribution of polling units, ultimately promoting inclusive and representative democratic processes in the state.

Table 2: Registered Voters in Plateau State by Local Government Areas (2015 and 2019)

Name	2015	2019	Increase	% Increase
Barkin Ladi	96086	116400	20314	21.14
Bassa	118430	145904	27474	23.20
Bokkos	97359	116911	19552	20.08
Jos East	59892	66430	6538	10.92
Jos North	373175	453556	80381	21.54
Jos South	196547	269576	73029	37.16
Kanam	111737	142466	30729	27.50
Kanke	76112	91603	15491	20.35
Langtang North	95880	115327	19447	20.28
Langtang South	64638	62206	-2432	-3.76
Mangu	178747	203239	24492	13.70
Mikang	44382	54483	10101	22.76
Pankshin	111197	128663	17466	15.71
Qu'anpan	109129	138023	28894	26.48
Riyom	62770	74498	11728	18.68
Shendam	123456	163457	40001	32.40
Wase	101509	137713	36204	35.67
Total	2,021,046	2,480,455	459,409	364

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Distribution of Governorship Votes in Plateau State (2015 and 2019)

The number of voters that participated in the Gubernatorial elections in Plateau State according to Local Government Areas for the year 2015 and 2019 is presented in Table 3. The table shows that in 2019, there was a 43.62% increase in the number of persons who voted during the Gubernatorial elections in Shendam LGA as compared to 2015. It will also be seen from the Table that Riyom LGA, has the sharpest decrease in the number of voters in 2019. In Riyom LGA, there is a decrease of -17.31% in the number of voters in 2019 compared to 2015. On a general note, it will be seen from the Table that among the 17 LGAs, only Four (4) had a decrease while the remaining 13 significantly increased in the number of voters in the future election. The overall increase in votes across most LGAs suggests a growing interest in governance and democratic processes, which aligns with findings that active voter engagement can lead to more representative governance (Dahl, 2016). The finding of this study is in line with Okafor (2020) who observed that fluctuation in voter turnout can be attributed to various socio-political factors, including the effectiveness of campaign strategies and local governance. Nwogwugwu & Eze (2018) also, emphasized that voter mobilization efforts and community engagement are critical in influencing electoral participation.

Table 3: Distribution of Governorship Votes in Plateau State (2015 and 2019)

Name	2015	2019	Increase	% Increase
Barkin Ladi	70782	62419	-8363	-11.82
Bassa	64191	64210	19	0.03
Bokkos	52861	52970	109	0.21
Jos East	23688	27860	4172	17.61
Jos North	181460	183965	2505	1.38
Jos South	127156	128692	1536	1.21
Kanam	73498	77635	4137	5.63
Kanke	42299	47072	4773	11.28
Langtang North	49083	60845	11762	23.96
Langtang South	33118	32388	-730	-2.20
Mangu	105214	87647	-17567	-16.70
Mikang	24525	27331	2806	11.44
Pankshin	58435	62620	4185	7.16
Qu'anpan	48906	54574	5668	11.59
Riyom	45446	37579	-7867	-17.31
Shendam	56335	80906	24571	43.62
Wase	46904	65965	19061	40.64
Total	1,103,901	1,154,678	50,777	128

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Comparison of Gubernatorial Elections Votes Casted for 2015 and 2019 in Plateau State

The interpolation map of total votes cast in gubernatorial elections in Plateau State between 2015 and 2019 in figure 2 revealed a complex and evolving political landscape. While some areas maintained their voting patterns, others saw significant changes. The overall trend pointed towards increased political participation across the state, with notable surges in urban areas and some previously low-turnout regions. These changes likely reflected a combination of factors, including population growth, increased political awareness, and potentially shifts in local political dynamics.

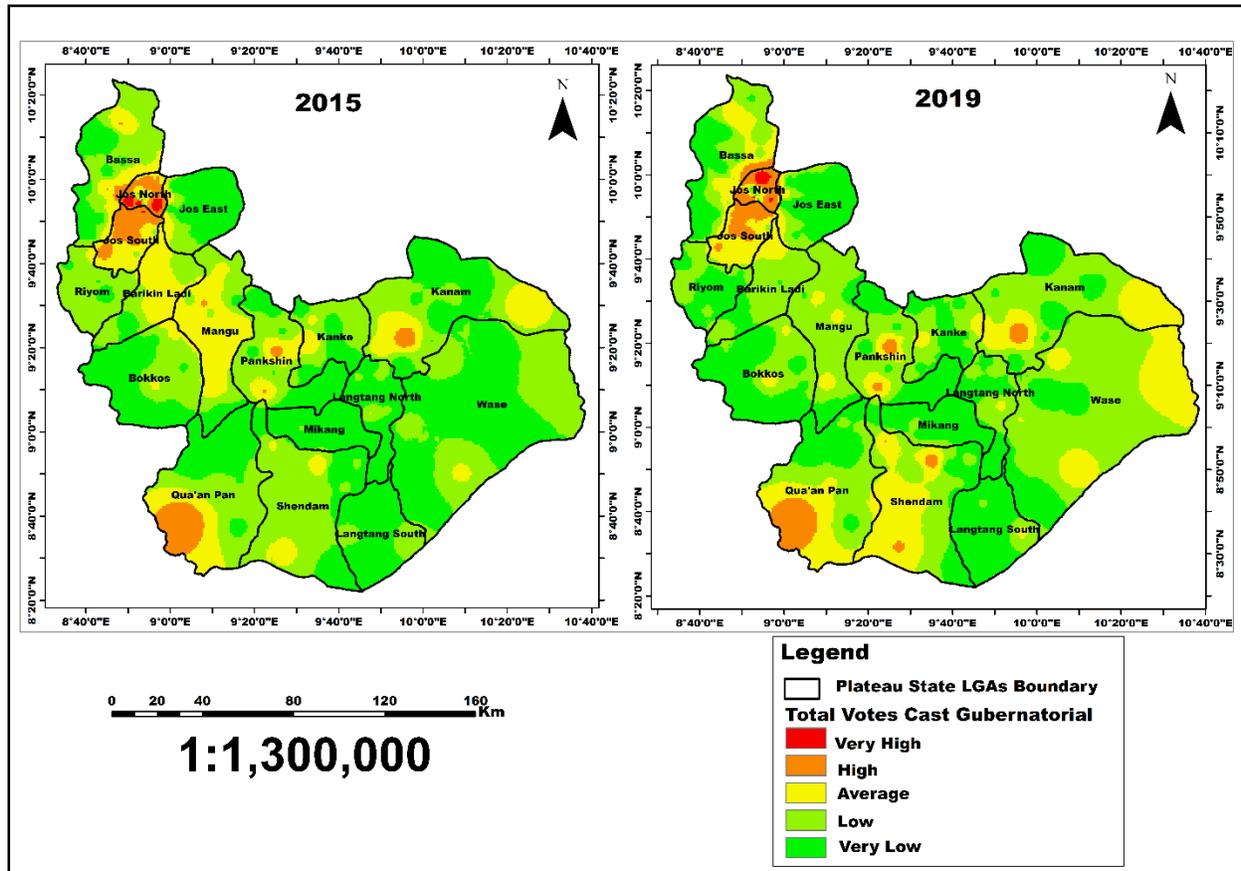


Figure 2. Interpolated Gubernatorial Map of Total Votes Casted of Plateau State for 2015 and 2019

Source: Author’s Analysis (2023)

The map in figure 2 showed a diverse distribution of voting intensity across Plateau State in 2015. Jos North LGA stood out with a very high concentration of votes cast, indicated by the deep orange coloration. This aligned with the data, which showed Jos North with 181,460 total votes cast in the 2015 gubernatorial election - the highest among all LGAs. The high voter turnout in Jos North could be attributed to its status as the state capital and its large urban population. The figure shows several other LGAs exhibited high to average voting intensity in 2015, as depicted by the orange and yellow colorations. These included Jos South (127,156 votes), Mangu (105,214 votes), and Qua'an Pan (48,906 votes). The southern part of the state, particularly Shendam LGA, also showed relatively high voter participation with 56,335 votes cast. In contrast, many LGAs in the eastern and central parts of Plateau State displayed lower voting intensity in 2015, represented by green shades on the map. These included Kanke (42,299 votes), Pankshin (58,435 votes), and Wase (46,904 votes). The lowest voter turnout was observed in Mikang LGA, with only 24,525 votes cast in the 2015 gubernatorial election.

In 2019, the map revealed notable changes in voting patterns across Plateau State. Jos North maintained its status as a high-intensity voting area, with the number of votes cast increasing to 183,965. However, the most striking change was observed in Jos South, which transitioned from high to very high voting intensity. This was reflected in the data, with Jos South seeing a significant increase from 127,156 votes in 2015 to 128,692 votes in 2019. The southern part of

the state, particularly Shendam LGA, experienced a substantial increase in voter participation. The total votes cast in Shendam rose from 56,335 in 2015 to 80,906 in 2019, a change clearly visible on the map as the area transitioned from yellow to orange. This surge in voter turnout could potentially be attributed to increased political awareness or successful voter mobilization efforts in the region. Interestingly, some LGAs that had shown low voting intensity in 2015 experienced notable increases in 2019. For instance, Wase LGA in the eastern part of the state total votes cast, rose from 46,904 in 2015 to 65,965 in 2019. This change was reflected on the map as the area shifted from dark green to light green, indicating a move from very low to low voting intensity.

However, not all areas of Plateau State saw increases in voter participation. Some LGAs, particularly in the central and northern parts of the state, maintained similar levels of voting intensity or even experienced slight decreases. For example, Mangu LGA saw a decrease from 105,214 votes in 2015 to 87,647 in 2019, while Bokkos LGA remained relatively stable with 52,861 votes in 2015 and 52,970 in 2019. The overall trend across Plateau State seemed to be one of increased voter participation, with the total votes cast for the entire state rising from 1,159,561 in 2015 to 1,212,079 in 2019. This increase of over 50,000 votes represented a significant growth in political engagement across the state. It is important to note that these changes in voting patterns occurred against a backdrop of population growth. This is because the total population of Plateau State increased from 4,260,534 in 2015 to 4,879,034 in 2019. This population growth may have contributed to the increased number of votes cast in many LGAs.

Distribution of Presidential Votes in Plateau State (2015 and 2019)

The presidential election data in Table 4 indicates an overall increase of 6.2% in voter participation from 2015 to 2019, with Shendam LGA again demonstrating a significant increase (34.85%), while Jos North LGA faced the most substantial decrease (-22.21%). This pattern reflects the complexities of electoral behavior, where local issues and the perceived effectiveness of candidates can significantly influence voter turnout (Karp and Banducci, 2007). The decline in Jos North may suggest voter disenchantment or dissatisfaction with the electoral process, which has been documented in other studies as a barrier to participation (Blais & Dobrzynska, 1998). The overall trends in the data underscore the need for continuous engagement initiatives to maintain and boost voter turnout in future elections. On a general note, it will be seen from the Table that among the 17 LGAs, only Five (5) had a decrease while the remaining 12 significantly increased in the number of voters in the 2019 election.

Table 4: Distribution of Presidential Votes in Plateau State (2015 and 2019)

Name	2015	2019	Increase	% Increase
Barkin Ladi	60463	59817	-646	-1.07
Bassa	56198	65618	9420	16.76
Bokkos	46912	54176	7264	15.48
Jos East	20998	22380	1382	6.58
Jos North	196620	152953	-43667	-22.21
Jos South	115260	139140	23880	20.72
Kanam	69122	70250	1128	1.63
Kanke	33622	42266	8644	25.71
Langtang North	39460	52864	13404	33.97
Langtang South	23997	30463	6466	26.95
Mangu	98235	96479	-1756	-1.79
Mikang	18324	22902	4578	24.98
Pankshin	45854	54992	9138	19.93
Qu'anpan	43641	39675	-3966	-9.09
Riyom	35323	31817	-3506	-9.93
Shendam	49690	67007	17317	34.85
Wase	46967	60063	13096	27.88
Total	1,000,686	1,062,862	62,176	211

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Comparison of 2015 and 2019 Presidential Election Votes in Plateau State

The interpolation maps of total votes cast in presidential elections in Plateau State between 2015 and 2019 revealed a complex and evolving political landscape across the 17 LGAs (Figure 3). While some areas maintained their voting patterns, others saw significant changes. These changes likely reflected a combination of factors, including population growth, increased political awareness, improvements in electoral processes, and potentially shifts in local political dynamics. The spatial patterns observed in the maps also highlighted the persistent influence of urbanization and population density on voting intensity across the state.

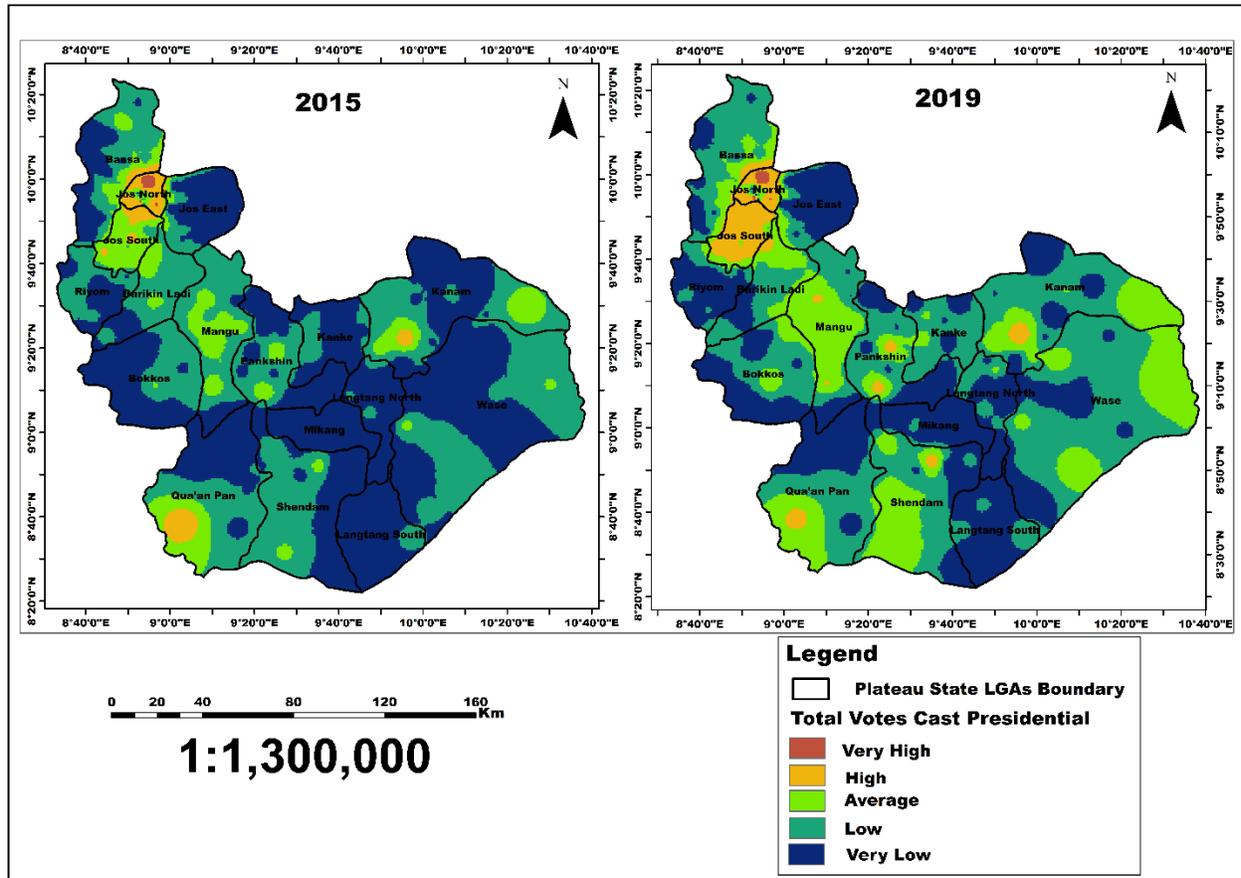


Figure 3: Interpolated Total Votes cast Presidential Map of Plateau State for 2015 and 2019
 Source: Author's Analysis, 2023

In 2015, the voting intensity map for Plateau State's presidential election highlighted a varied distribution across different LGAs. Notably, Jos North LGA displayed an exceptionally high voting concentration, marked by red. This was corroborated by data showing that Jos North had the highest number of votes, with a total of 196,620. This elevated voter turnout can be linked to Jos North being the state capital and having a large urban population. Other LGAs, such as Jos South (115,226 votes), Mangu (98,235 votes), and Shendam (49,690 votes), exhibited moderate to high voting intensity, represented by yellow and green on the map. Conversely, much of the state's eastern and southern regions showed low to very low voting intensity, indicated by dark green and blue shades on the map.

In 2019, the voting pattern map for Plateau State's presidential election revealed notable changes. Jos North continued to be a high-intensity voting area. This is even though the total votes cast decreased slightly to 152,953. In contrast, Jos South experienced a significant increase in voter turnout, rising from 115,226 votes in 2015 to 139,140 in 2019. This shift was visually represented on the map, with Jos South changing from green to yellow, indicating a transition from average to high voting intensity. In the southern part of the state, Shendam LGA saw a substantial rise in voter participation, with total votes cast increasing from 49,690 in 2015 to 67,007 in 2019. This change was depicted on the map as the area shifted from dark green to light green, indicating an improvement from very low to low voting intensity. Additionally, some LGAs with very low voting intensity in 2015 saw increases in 2019. For instance, Wase LGA in

the eastern part of the state increased its total votes cast from 46,967 in 2015 to 60,063 in 2019. This was shown on the map as Wase transitioned from dark blue to light green, marking a shift from very low to average voting intensity.

However, not all areas of Plateau State saw increases in voter participation during the presidential election. Certain LGAs, especially in the central and northern regions, maintained similar levels of voting intensity or experienced slight decreases. For instance, Barkin Ladi LGA had a slight drop in votes from 60,463 in 2015 to 59,817 in 2019. The general trend in the state for the presidential election indicated increased voter participation in areas that previously had low turnout, while some traditionally high-turnout areas experienced slight decreases. The total number of votes cast across the state rose from 981,348 in 2015 to 1,058,373 in 2019, an increase of over 77,000 votes. This growth reflected a significant rise in political engagement across the state during the presidential election. These changes in voting patterns occurred alongside population growth. The maps also revealed intriguing spatial patterns in voting intensity. For example, in both 2015 and 2019, there was a clear concentration of high voting intensity in the northern part of the state, particularly around Jos North and Jos South. This could be attributed to higher population density, urbanization, and potentially greater levels of political engagement in these areas.

Conversely, the eastern and southern regions of the state generally exhibited lower voting intensity, although there were notable improvements in some areas by 2019. This spatial pattern might reflect differences in population density, accessibility to voting centers, or varying levels of political mobilization across the state. The changes observed between 2015 and 2019 could indicate several influencing factors. Increased voter education and mobilization efforts may have contributed to higher turnout in previously low-participation areas. Additionally, changes in local political dynamics, such as the emergence of new leaders or shifts in party allegiances, could have influenced voting patterns. Additionally, enhancements in electoral infrastructure and processes between 2015 and 2019 may have contributed to higher voter turnout in some areas. These improvements could encompass better distribution of polling units, more efficient voter registration processes, and enhanced security measures, all of which likely encouraged greater participation.

4. CONCLUSION

The electoral data in Plateau State for 2015 and 2019 reveals important trends in population growth, registered voters, and voting behavior. The state saw a 13.3% increase in population and a 22.7% rise in registered voters, indicating that more citizens are becoming engaged in the electoral process. However, this growth was not uniform across all LGAs. Some LGAs, like Mikang and Shendam, experienced significant increases in both population and voter registration, suggesting effective outreach efforts. On the other hand, LGAs like Mangu and Jos North witnessed declines in voter participation, which raises concerns about equitable representation. These findings highlight the need for electoral bodies, such as the INEC, to adapt strategies to ensure fair access to polling stations, especially as demographic shifts occur. The increase in voter turnout in certain regions reflects a growing political awareness, while the declines in others point to potential barriers that need to be addressed.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Targeted campaigns should be implemented to educate voters about civic engagement and the electoral process, particularly in areas with low turnout. Additionally, the Independent National

Electoral Commission (INEC) should review polling unit allocations to align with population dynamics, increasing units in rapidly growing areas to improve accessibility. Moreover, adopting electronic voter registration and biometric identification can streamline the electoral process, enhance transparency, and reduce fraud.

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