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LEGISLATIVE TURNOVER IN NIGERIA: A CROSS EXAMINATION OF STATES' HOUSES OF ASSEMBLY (2011-2015)

Bakare, Adebola Rafiu

Department of Political Science,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

Legislative turnover is one of the central issues in the legislative studies but little attention is given to it both in developed and developing democracies. Where the concept is studied, focus is usually on national at the expense of sub-national legislatures. Most of the works are also single-case study neglecting the novelty of comparative discourse. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to study the concept in Nigeria's sub-national level with a view to identifying the variations, causality and its implications on legislative effectiveness. In the wake of the multitude of calculative models, the author drew inspiration from the MLRI model to develop a model suitable to the specificity of the Nigerian case. The paper seeks to achieve four objectives, chiefly to find out how much turnover actually occurred in the Nigerian state legislatures in 2011-2015 and to state whether or not the turnover rate is proper or beneficial for the political system. Using quantitative method, the paper established that high turnover is recorded in almost all the 36 states. Houses of Assembly caused by lack of internal party democracy and god-fatherism, rotational candidacy, increased political consciousness among others. The paper concluded that the high turnover rate recorded is injurious to legislative effectiveness and recommended that a substantial number of experienced legislators needed to be retained not only to train the new ones but also for institutional memory retention.

Keywords: legislative effectiveness, assembly, democracy, rotational candidacy, legislative turnover.

Introduction

The concept of legislative turnover is a fundamental issue in the legislative studies and political science in general, yet little attention is given to it by scholars and politicians. While the apathetic attitude of scholars toward this concept is decried in developed democracies (Matland and Studlar, 2004; Putnam, 1976 and Norris, 1993), far little effort is given to it in developing democracies. Perhaps, this is premised on the fact that the study of legislature itself is just evolving in the developing democracies. However, where the concept is appreciated and studied, much of the work on it has been confined to the United States (Norris, 1993; Carey, 1996; Hibbing, 1999; Jackson, 1994; Somit, Wildenmann, Bell and Rommel, 1994; Swain, Borrelli, Reed and Evans, 2000 amongst others) with little effort on other developed democracies such as Canada, Britain, Denmark, Norway and France (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995; Eliassen and Pederson, 1978; Moncrief, 1998).

On the other hand, when it comes to the systematic and comparative study of the concept, little is known about how turnover rates vary from country to country (Putnam, 1976: 65). Norris (1993: 316) attested to this gap when he asserted that there is lack of recent comparative data in the comparative study of legislative turnover because much of the study is confined to a single polity i.e. the United States. Several years later, this gap is still considered disturbing in the study of the concept (Kerby and Blidook, 2011: 621). Heinsohn (2014: 473) opined that this gap is as a result of the technical, methodological, and financial difficulties involved in questioning former legislators about their reasons for exit. However, where there are scholarly works, most of them are usually single-country (Hayama, 1992; Chubb, 1982; Casstevens and Denham, 1970; Hibbing, 1988). The resultant effect is the dearth of cross-national studies that examine more than two countries (Eliassen and Pedersen, 1978: 20). Blondel (1973) argued that the few works on cross-national studies are often discursive rather than based on intense data analysis. Recent studies failed to fill these gaps that have been identified decades ago. Contemporary scholars are more preoccupied with patterns of turnover such as term limits, redistricting and majority-minority districts among others but give little consideration to how broader institutional arrangements- such as separation of power- affect it (Krupnikov and Shipan, 2013: 2-3).

The study of legislative turnover is important because it is central to the effectiveness and efficiency of the legislature as an institution. Whichever way turnover occurs (either 'high' or 'low'), there is resultant effect on the overall output or performance of the legislature. Although, high turnover is usually related to developing democracies while low turnover is related to advanced democracies. However, the reverse is the case as high turnover is observed in Canada and Italy despite the fact that they are advanced democracies (Matland and Studlar, 2004:91). The Canadian 1993 election became a watershed in the history of the country when the legislature recorded a 69 per cent turnover at the federal level (Laponee, 1994) with high turnover witnessed at the Provincial level as well (Moncrief, 1992). Studies have shown that this trajectory is attributed to voter volatility, lack of an integrated provincial/federal political career structure, weakness of parliament as a legislative body, 'cipher' role of the individual backbench member of parliament, long distances between home constituencies and the federal capital, and inducements of generous retirement pay and appointments to positions in the Canadian Senate and Crown Corporations (Franks, 1987; Atkinson and Docherty, 1992). In contrast, Matland and Studlar (2004) argued that the factors identified by Franks; Atkinson and Docherty did not give acceptable explanation to Canadian high turnover which makes it largely unexplored. On the other hand, the United States is battling in the euphoria of low turnover and scholars have since been clamouring for term a limit which as at 2000 has been enacted in 15 states (Kurtz, 2012).

Despite the fact that turnover is a popular topic among scholars, practitioners and politicians, little efforts has been exerted in making a cross-national comparison. Most studies are one-case based. The few ones that attempted a cross analysis are also western-based leaving out the developing countries. For example, while Moncrief *et*

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al. (2004) identified specific institutional and structural variables that affect turnover patterns in the US state legislatures. Heinsohn (2014) and Samuels (2000) studied the concept in German and Brazilian parliament respectively. The case of Nigeria is far understudied. Very little effort is made to study the concept in Nigeria's National Assembly over time especially since the advent of the Fourth Republic of seventeen years old with five general elections. The sub-national comparison is also lagging despite its auspiciousness. Premised on this, this paper attempts to contribute in bridging the gap in comparative turnover analysis, though within a system.

The paper seeks to achieve four (4) objectives. One: to find out how much turnover actually occurred in the Nigerian state legislatures in 2011-2015. Two: to state whether or not the turnover rate is proper or beneficial for the political system. Three: to identify factors responsible for turnover rate in the sub-national legislatures and its implications on legislative effectiveness. Four: to contribute to bridging the existing research gap on the under-researched legislative studies especially at the sub-national level in Nigeria. To achieve these objectives, this paper is divided into sections. We first made a background analysis of the concept and proceeds to scholarship conceptualizations in the literature. The third section states the methodology. This is followed by analysis, findings and interpretation of result. The fifth section deals with factors responsible for the turnover rate, followed by the implications on legislative effectiveness. The paper ends with recommendations and conclusion.

Legislative Turnover: A Review of Existing Literature

There seems to be no consensus among scholars on the precise definition of legislative turnover. However, what is common among the earlier researches with regard to its definition is that the concept is defined as the proportion of legislative membership that changes from one election to the next (Heinsohn and Freitag, 2012; Matland and Studlar, 2004; Moncrief *et al.*, 2004; Rosenthal, 1974). For this paper, we defined 'legislative turnover' as the aggregate level of newly elected members in comparison to the incumbency re-elected members of States Houses of Assemblies in Nigeria in a general election. Regardless of variations in definitions, Matland and Studlar (2004: 94) classified turnover into two basic types: involuntary exit and voluntary exit. Involuntary exits occur when a candidate is defeated at the ballot box, fails to be re-nominated by his/her party when he/she desires re-nomination, forced to resign the seat, for example due to scandal, or dies in office (Matland and Studlar, 2004: 94).

Voluntary exit occurs when a sitting legislator weighs the benefits and costs of running for re-election versus the benefits and costs of other career options and thus decided to voluntarily withdraw from seeking re-election. This can be attributed mostly to possibility of having more socio-economic and political profit of live outside the legislature. Some may voluntarily exit to contest for higher office in the executive or upper chamber of the legislature, while others may do so for age or attractive economic benefits of pension and severance pay. For instance, Jackson (1994) noted that there was an increase in voluntary retirements among elderly MPs

in New Zealand after the approval of a Superannuation Act in 1947. On the other hand, Schlesinger (1966) also noted that progressive ambition is another cause for voluntary legislative exit. In his work on the US House of Representatives from 1979-1992, he observed that an average of 3.2% of members of the House leave to pursue higher political aspirations by running for the Senate, for a governorship, a major mayoralty or to take administrative positions in a new presidential administration.

While we may not be disturbed by definitions and types (whether voluntary or involuntary), there are issues of turnover that are continuously generating more debates among scholars and practitioners. One of such issue is the effect of high or low turnover on legislative effectiveness. Hyneman (1938: 21) opined that parliaments with high turnover rates tend to have lower levels of average elite experience, expertise and effectiveness, and that 'a legislature will not function effectively unless a substantial number of its members have acquired several sessions of experience in the lawmaking process'. Kousser (2004) corroborated this position by arguing that high turnover can limit the ability of the legislature to fulfill its duties effectively and efficiently. This thought is supported by Reed (2012) that high turnover rate is detrimental to effective legislature because many veteran legislators with reputable experiences will be lost leading to a great deal of new Committee Chairs. This argument is premise on the notion that the appointment of new committee chairman may serve as setback for the legislature. This is because the new chairman may not work in line with accustomed pattern of the old and may not even have experience of the terrain.

However, some scholars are of the opinion that low turnover often leads to legislative tyranny as experienced in the United States sub-national legislature which led to the enactment of term limits in 1990 (Kurtz, 2012). One of the prominent proponents of this school of thought is Jensen (2013) who claimed that turnover brings new blood and new voices to the legislature thereby producing a house with young and vibrant members. However, he (Jensen) admitted that it can lead to institutional memory loss as new members will use their first term learning legislative customs and rules.

Aside the effect, causes of turnover is another issue worthy of note. Several causes have been identified in the literature. These include: recalls, redistricting, retirements of aging MPs, increasingly polarized atmosphere of today's politics (Stein, 2014), political parties, frequency of elections (Matland and Studlar, 2004), constituency service to groups and individuals (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1987), voter volatility, political career structure, inducements of generous retirement pay; and appointments or election to higher executive positions (Franks, 1987; Atkinson and Docherty, 1992). In addition to these factors identified in the literature, we opine that turnover rate can also be determined by the nature of parliament as a legislative body whether weak or strong, age of democratic project whether old or new, and individual legislative effectiveness status. Out of these variables, many scholars considered political parties to be the major mechanism in the process of legislative turnover especially in advanced industrial democracies (Matland and Studlar, 2004; Hibbing, 1999; Brady, 2004; Wolbrecht, 2004). This is premised on the fact that

changes in ruling political parties usually bring about circulation of elite and offers opportunities for new set of people to take over government. Once a political party is voted out of power, such party suffers defeat at both executive and legislative level. Developing democracies are not exempted from this trajectory. In fact, it seems more prominent because since political parties are not formed on ideologies, cross-carpeting in the parliament and decamping among executive elites becomes very easy and admirable.

Regardless of the causes of turnover, Krupnikov and Shipan (2013) probed into variations among sub-national legislatures. These scholars attempted to compare several sub-national legislatures in order to identify the differences and conditions under which some states experience more electoral turnover than others. Krupnikov and Shipan (2013) argued that the type of institutional arrangement adopted by a particular state often create ambiguous decision contexts for voters. The submission is that one need not only focus on the rate of turnover alone but should also be concerned about the broader institutional structure of government and economic conditions that directly affect the turnover rate.

However, Heinsohn (2014) seems to agree with the position of Krupnikov and Shipan (2013) on institutional factor but quick to point that there is more to differences in causes of turnover beyond institutional arrangement. Using German state and central parliaments in comparative perspective as point of reference, Heinsohn (2014) assumed that two factors contribute to the differences in rate of turnover. One; that the central level is clearly more professionalized as well as prestigious and therefore provides central legislators with greater motivation to remain in office which consequently leads to lower turnover rate. Two; that the sub-national level is seen as a stepping stone to federal office as opined by Stolz (2003), which usually leads to multitude of contenders for sub-national parliament and consequently leads to higher turnover rate. Heinsohn disagree with Krupnikov and Shipan on the basis that institutional structure is not suffice to explain turnover rate rather, there are some institutional factors that might complement electoral volatility which leads to turnover variations. These factors include the length of the electoral term, incentives that accompany the professionalisation and institutionalisation of a parliament, kinds of framework condition motivating legislators to remain in office, and changes in the parliaments' size which take place frequently at the sub-central level in Germany. It is on these arguments that this paper attempts to examine the variations in turnover rate among the thirty six (36) sub-national legislatures in Nigeria given the similarity in there institutional arrangement to unravel the factors responsible for the rates and variations. This is premised on the observation of Matland and Studier (2004, p.106) that what affect turnover rate in one polity can relatively be used to explain turnover in other polities.

Research Methodology

An exploration of literatures shows that there are two major methods used in measuring legislative turnover in both advanced and developing democracies. The first method is to examine the proportion of membership that changes from one

election to the next (Matland and Studlar, 2004: 92) and the other is to normalize turnover on a yearly basis by calculating the number of election with the incumbency return rate (mean in percentage and standard deviation) to get the average re-election rates per election and turnover per year (Hibbing, 1988; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). This paper aligned with the Matland and Studlar's (2004) method which is the more common, simple, widely acceptable and applicable in different specificities. The wisdom behind our choice of methodology hinged on the argument of Monerief *et al.*, (2004: 361) that the most prominent approach to measure aggregate turnover rates is to compare the membership at the beginning of the session immediately after election with the membership immediately after the next election. Thus, we attempt to examine the rate of legislative turnover in the thirty six (36) State Houses of Assembly for the 2011- 2015 legislative period.

Adopting this method did not come without its challenges. It is noted in the study of comparative legislature that turnover is calculated in different ways by different organizations which makes comparison very difficult (Minnesota Legislative Reference Library [MLRL], 2012). Each researcher develops calculative strategy according to the prevailing scenario and specificities in the environment under investigation. In view of this, we developed a formula appropriate for the Nigerian case with inspiration from the one developed by MLRL. This is given below: For each State House of Assembly, turnover (*t*) is calculated by dividing the number of new legislators (*nL*) by the total number of legislators (*nS*), then multiplying by 100 to obtain the rate (in percentage):

$$t = \frac{nL}{nS} \times \frac{100}{1} \dots\dots\dots \text{equation 1}$$

Where:

t: is the turnover rate (for newly elected MPs)

nL: is the number of newly elected legislators

nS: is the number of seat available to be filled in the parliament

The rate of incumbency re-elected (*IR*) is calculated by dividing the number of re-elected incumbent legislators for sophomore term (*nIR*) by the total number of legislators (*nS*), then multiplying by 100 to obtain the rate (in percentage).

$$IR = \frac{nIR}{nS} \times \frac{100}{1} \dots\dots\dots \text{equation 2}$$

Where:

nIR: is the number of re-elected incumbent legislators

nS: is the number of seat available to be filled in the parliament

In verification, the figure for all legislators (*nS*) should be equal to the summation of incumbents re-elected and the newly elected legislators while the sum figure of *t* and *IR* should be equal to 100%:

$$\begin{aligned} nS &= nIR + nL \\ t + IR &= 100\% \end{aligned}$$

The logic of interpretation is:

- i. If the rate of t (i.e. newly elected legislators) is greater than the rate of IR (i.e. re-elected legislators), and is above the 20-30% optimal rate: then there is 'High Turnover (HT)':

$$HT = t > IR$$
- ii. If vice versa (i.e. if t is less than IR), and is below the 20-30% optimal rate: then there is 'Low Turnover (LT)':

$$LT = t < IR$$

For the geopolitical zones, turnover is calculated by dividing the aggregate total of new legislators in all states making up the zone ($\sum nL$) by the aggregate total number of seats available to be filled in the zone during election, then multiplying by 100 to obtain the rate (in percentage):

$$tnLZ = \frac{\sum nL}{\sum nS} \times \frac{100}{1} \dots \dots \dots \text{equation 3}$$

Where:

$tnLZ$: turnover rate for legislators in the entire zone

$\sum nL$: is the aggregate number of newly elected legislators for the zone

$\sum nS$: is the aggregate number of seats available to be filled in the zonal parliaments

The rate of incumbency re-elected for the entire zone ($tnIRZ$) is calculated by dividing the aggregate number of re-elected legislators for sophomore term in the zone ($\sum nIR$) by the aggregate total number of seats available to be filled in the zone during election, then multiplying by 100 to obtain the rate (in percentage):

$$tnIRZ = \frac{\sum nIR}{\sum nS} \times \frac{100}{1} \dots \dots \dots \text{equation 4}$$

Where:

$tnIRZ$: turnover rate for re-elected legislators in the entire zone

$\sum nIR$: is the aggregate number of re-elected incumbent legislators for the zone

$\sum nS$: is the aggregate number of seat available to be filled in the zonal parliaments.

In verification, the figure for all legislators ($\sum nS$) should be equal to the summation of incumbents re-elected and the newly elected legislators while the sum figure of $tnLZ$ and $tnIRZ$ should be equal to 100%:

$$\sum nS = \sum nL + \sum nIR$$

$$mLZ + mIRZ = 100\%$$

The logic of interpretation is:

- i. If the rate of mLZ (i.e. newly elected legislators) is greater than the rate of $mIRZ$ (i.e. re-elected legislators), and is above the 20-30% optimal rate: then there is 'High Turnover (HT)' in the geopolitical zone:

$$HT = mLZ > mIRZ$$
- ii. If vice versa (i.e. if mLZ is less than $mIRZ$), and is below the 20-30% optimal rate: then there is 'Low Turnover (LT)' in the geopolitical zone:

$$LT = mLZ < mIRZ$$

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The analysis is done in three stages. First, the turnover rate for all the States' Houses of Assembly in Nigeria (except Taraba State where data is unavailable) is analyzed to show the turnover rate in each state. In order to aid judicious and efficient time, space and data management, all the thirty six states were tabularized according to their geographical location in the six geopolitical zones. The states are alphabetically arranged in each zonal table. Second, the geopolitical-based analysis enables us to get the turnover rate for each geopolitical zone using the formula designed for it. This is graphically illustrated using bar charts to show the trend in the six zones in a comparative perspective. Lastly, the comparative and accumulative analysis of the geopolitical turnover will be illustrated in a single bar chart for easy identification, examination and analysis. This will enable us to empirically state the turnover rate for the entire sub-legislature of the country (i.e. the cumulative rate of the States' Houses of Assemblies). The rate will then be subjected to the Crowther and Matonyte (2007, p.291), Best (2006, p.101); Blondel (1973, p.85); Cotta and Best (2007, p.505)'s 'Turnover Optimum' for final result to be given on whether it is 'high' or 'low' turnover rate.

Analysis, Findings and Results

In line with the methodology, the turnover rates of all the States in Nigeria (except Taraba State) between 2011 and 2015 is given in table 1 -- 6 below. The regional analysis is done in table 7 on zonal (geopolitical) basis and illustrated in bar chart (figure 1) to give the turnover rate of the sub-national legislature in Nigeria.

Table 1: Turnover Rate for the Six States in North Central Zone

State	No. of Seat up for Election (nS)	No. of Newly Elected MPs (nL)	Turnover Rate (T)	No. of Incumbents Re-elected (nIR)	Rate of Incumbent Re-elected (IR)	Findings /Results
Benue	29	23	79.3%	6	20.7%	HT
Kogi	25	20	80%	5	20%	HT
Kwara	24	18	75%	6	25%	HT
Nasarawa	24	14	58.3%	10	41.7%	HT
Niger	27	16	59.3%	11	40.7%	HT
Plateau	24	13	54.2%	11	45.8%	HT
	$\Sigma nS = 153$	$\Sigma nL = 104$	$\text{tnLZ} = 68\%$	$\Sigma nIR = 49$	$\text{tnIRZ} = 32\%$	$\Sigma \text{tnHT} = 6$ $\Sigma \text{tnLT} = 0$

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NLS, 2012, p.67-68

Interpretation of Turnover Rate for the North Central Zone

From the available information on 153 legislators in the North-Central zone, it is discovered that 104 MPs accounting for 68% were newly elected while only 49 (32%) were re-elected. This shows that the turnover rate for the North-Central zone was high. It is noted that all the six states have the same pattern. There is high turnover in the 6 states with Kogi, Benue and Kwara having the highest percentage of fresh lawmakers and the least percentage of sophomore lawmakers. Out of the 25 lawmakers in Kogi State, only 5 (20%) were re-elected and 20 were newly elected.

This makes the turnover rate for the state to stand at 80% consequently becoming the state with the highest turnover rate in the North-Central zone for the 2011-2015 legislative assembly. Benue State which has the highest number of lawmakers (29) in the zone has 23 (79.3%) new lawmakers with only 6 re-elected. This same trend is observed in Kwara State with only 6 (25%) lawmakers re-elected out of the 24 available seats, thereby making the turnover rate to stand at whopping 75% (i.e. having 18 newly elected lawmakers).

The remaining 3 states follow the trend of high turnover rate but with appreciable rate in the sophomore MPs. Out of the 24 available seats in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly, 14 were newly elected to become parliamentarians accounting for the 58.3% turnover rate, while 10 (41.7%) lawmakers were re-elected. On the other hand, Niger State with 27 seats has 11 (40.7%) re-elected lawmakers putting the turnover rate at 59.3% with 16 fresh MPs. Despite the fact that Plateau State also has high turnover rate, it is the state with the highest percentage of sophomore MPs i.e. with 11 re-elected lawmakers accounting for 45.8% out of the 24 available seats. This invariably leaves the turnover rate to stand at 54.2% (with 13 new MPs) which is the least rate in the North-Central zone.

Table 2: Turnover Rate for the Six States in North East Zone

State	No. of Seat up for Election (nS)	No. of Newly Elected MPs (nL)	Turnover Rate (T)	No. of Incumbents Re-elected (nIR)	Rate of Incumbent Re-elected (IR)	Findings /Results
Adamawa	25	17	68%	8	32%	HT
Bauchi	31	20	64.5%	11	35.5%	HT
Borno	28	16	57.1%	12	42.9%	HT
Gombe	24	15	62.5%	9	37.5%	HT
Taraba	N/A	N/A	-	N/A	-	-
Yobe	24	7	29.2%	17	70.8%	LT
	$\Sigma nS=132$	$\Sigma nL=75$	$\text{tnLZ}=56.8\%$	$\Sigma nIR=57$	$\text{tnIRZ}=43.2\%$	$\Sigma nHT=4$ $\Sigma nLT=1$

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NLS, 2012, p.68-69

Interpretation of Turnover Rate for the North East Zone

Comprehensive turnover analysis for the North-East zone suffered a setback premised on the unavailability of data for Taraba State. However, this limitation does not invalidate our analysis because it is relatively insignificant to those available. Available data shows that there are 132 seats available in the zone (with the exception of Taraba). Out of this figure, 57 (43.2%) lawmakers were re-elected while 75 MPs were newly elected putting the turnover rate for the zone at 56.8%. This shows that there is high turnover rate in the zone but the difference between the rate and incumbents re-elected is not as wide as observed in the North-Central zone. In Adamawa State, the turnover rate was high standing at 68% when 17 of the 25 available seats in the assembly were occupied by fresh lawmakers. Only 8 accounting for 32% incumbents were re-elected. This made the state to have the highest turnover

rate in the zone. Bauchi State toed the path of Adamawa State as 20 out of the 31 lawmakers were newly elected putting the turnover rate at 64.5%. On the other hand, 11 MPs were re-elected for their sophomore term accounting for the remaining 35.5%.

The case of Borno State is indifferent as only 12 lawmakers (42.9%) were re-elected while 16 lawmakers were freshly elected, consequently putting the turnover rate at 57.1%. The turnover rate in Gombe State is higher than that of Borno State with 15 out of the 24 lawmakers newly elected (62.5%), while those re-elected were only 9 (37.5%). A deviation from the seemingly normal trend is observed in Yobe State where low turnover was observed. Out of the 24 available seats, 17 incumbent lawmakers were returned (amounting to 70.8%) with only 7 newly elected MPs. This put the turnover rate at 29.2% which is not only the lowest in the North-East geopolitical zone but also the lowest rate in the entire country.

Table 3: Turnover Rate for the Seven States in North West Zone

State	No. of Seat up for Election (nS)	No. of Newly Elected MPs (nL)	Turnover Rate (T)	No. of Incumbents Re-elected (nIR)	Rate of Incumbent Re-elected (IR)	Findings/ Results
Jigawa	30	13	43.3%	17	56.7%	HT
Kaduna	34	16	47.1%	18	52.9%	HT
Kano	40	27	67.5%	13	32.5%	HT
Katsina	34	18	52.9%	16	47.1%	HT
Kebbi	24	11	45.8%	13	54.2%	HT
Sokoto	30	19	63.3%	11	36.7%	HT
Zamfara	24	18	75%	6	25%	HT
	$\sum nS = 216$	$\sum nL = 122$	$nLZ = 56.5\%$	$\sum nIR = 94$	$nIRZ = 43.5\%$	$\sum nHT = 7$ $\sum nLT = 0$

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NLS, 2012, p.69-70

Interpretation of Turnover Rate for the North West Zone

From the above analysis, it is observed that the turnover rate for the North-West zone echo the general trajectory depicted in previous zones. There is high turnover rate of 56.5% with 122 newly elected lawmakers to legislate with 94 (43.5%) re-elected incumbents. However, it should be noted that there is deviation in the distribution as witnessed in previous zones. Out of the 7 states, high turnover is observed in 4 states while there is low turnover in 3 states. Jigawa State witnessed the lowest turnover in the zone with 17 lawmakers returned for their sophomore term accounting for 56.7% while 13 lawmakers were elected for their first term putting the turnover rate at 43.3%. The same trend is observed in Kaduna and Kebbi State. In the former, 18 MPs accounting for 52.9% of the 34 parliamentarians were re-elected putting the turnover rate at 47.1%. This shows that 16 lawmakers were freshly elected. In the latter, there are 24 seats up for election, out of which the incumbent legislators won 13 (54.2%). The new legislators make up the remaining 11 putting the

turnover at the lower rate of 45.8%. However, the 'optimal rate' principle adopted for this study makes it to be considered as 'High' turnover.

On the other hand, Zamfara State led the 4 states with high turnover rates in the zone. Out of 24, there were 18 newly elected legislators which accounted for the high turnover rate of 75% against the only 6 (25%) incumbent lawmakers that made it to the house for their sophomore term. Kano State which has the highest number of seats available in the zone (40) replicates the general norm. Only 13 (32.5%) incumbent MPs made it to the house as against the 27 newly elected freshmen putting the turnover rate at 67.5%. This is followed by Sokoto State with turnover rate of 63.3% derived from the 19 newly elected legislators. Inversely, 11 experienced legislators were allowed to return to the chambers to continue their legislative duties which accounted for the just 36.7% 'IR' rate. The last state with high turnover rate in the zone is Katsina State. There were 16 (47.1%) incumbent lawmakers re-elected out of the 34-man legislators leaving the new MPs to have 18 seats which pegged the turnover rate at 52.9%.

Table 4: Turnover Rate for the Five States in South East Zone

State	No. of Seat up for Election (nS)	No. of Newly Elected MPs (nL)	Turnover Rate (T)	No. of Incumbents Re-elected (nIR)	Rate of Incumbent Re-elected (IR)	Findings/ Results
Abia	24	9	37.5%	15	62.5%	HT
Anambra	30	25	83.3%	5	16.7%	HT
Ebonyi	24	17	70.8%	7	29.2%	HT
Enugu	25	17	68%	8	32%	HT
Imo	27	21	77.8%	6	22.2%	HT
	$\Sigma nS = 130$	$\Sigma nL = 89$	$tnLZ = 68.5\%$	$\Sigma nIR = 41$	$tnIRZ = 31.5\%$	$\Sigma nHT = 5$ $\Sigma nLT = 0$

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NIS, 2012, p. 70-71

Interpretation of Turnover Rate for the South East Zone

The South-East zone mirrors the observed trajectory in the previous zones. There is high turnover in 4 out of 5 states located in the Ibo speaking zone. The exception is Abia State which has low turnover of 37.5% premised on the election of only 9 freshmen into the assembly as against 15 incumbent re-elected legislators. The incumbents accounted for 62.5% changing the tide of the wave. However, this deviation does not suffice to change the trend as the turnover rate in the zone is pegged at the high rate of 68.5%. Out of the 130 lawmakers in the zone, 89 were newly elected doubling the 41 incumbent re-elected (31.5%).

The high difference between the fresh and sophomore legislators in the zone was as a result of the overwhelming differences between the two groups in the remaining 4 states. For instance, Anambra State with 30 lawmakers had 25 newly elected and only 5 re-elected putting the turnover rate at 83.3% which is the highest in the zone. Out of the 24 seats in the Ebonyi State House of Assembly, there were only 7 (29.2%) re-elected occupants while freshmen occupy 17 seats making the turnover

rate of the state to stand at 70.8%. Enugu State has 17 newly elected MPs and 8 re-elected MPs to make up the 25-member House of Assembly. This places the turnover rate at 68%. Imo State is no exception to this trend as only 6 (22.2%) lawmakers were re-elected out of the 27 members. The freshmen accounted for the remaining 21 pushing the turnover rate to 77.8%.

Table 5: Turnover Rate for the Six States in South-South Zone

State	No. of Seat up for Election (nS)	No. of Newly Elected MPs (nL)	Turnover Rate (T)	No. of Incumbents Re-elected (nIR)	Rate of Incumbent Re-elected (IR)	Findings /Results
Akwa Ibom	26	16	61.5%	10	38.5%	HT
Bayelsa	24	12	50%	12	50%	HT
Cross River	25	14	56%	11	44%	HT
Delta	20	13	44.8%	16	55.2%	HT
Edo	24	13	54.2%	11	45.8%	HT
Rivers	32	20	62.5%	12	37.5%	HT
	$\Sigma nS = 160$	$\Sigma nL = 88$	$\text{tnLZ} = 55\%$	$\Sigma nIR = 72$	$\text{tnIRZ} = 45\%$	$\Sigma nHT = 6$ $\Sigma nLT = 0$

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NLS, 2012, p.71-72

Interpretation of Turnover Rate for the South-South Zone

The South-South has the lowest turnover rate among the six geopolitical zones. This notwithstanding does not change the pattern of event. Out of 160 available seats, the newly elected MPs got 88 which is a little higher than half and consequently left the incumbents with 72 amounting to 55% turnover rate for the zone. Bayelsa State stands out in the entire country by having the same number (12) of newly elected and incumbent re-elected legislators bringing the ordinary comparative turnover rate to a tie. Though, the 'optimal principle' put it at 'high' turnover rate. Delta State on the other hand swims against the tide by having low turnover in the zone in respect to ordinary comparison; though with high turnover by the research benchmark. 16 incumbents were re-elected while 13 were newly elected pegging the turnover at 44.8%. The gaps between the two groups of legislators in the remaining 4 states were relatively close though with high turnover. For instance, in Edo State, the newly elected parliamentarians were 13, which are only 2 more than their experienced colleagues which put the turnover rate at 54.2%. In Cross Rivers, there were 11 (44%) re-elected and 14 (56%) freshly voted into the assembly. Rivers State has the highest turnover rate in the zone at 62.5% and closely followed by Akwa Ibom with 61.5%.

Table 6: Turnover Rate for the Six States in South West Zone

State	No. of Seat up for Election (nS)	No. of Newly Elected MPs (nL)	Turnover Rate (T)	No. of Incumbents Re-elected (nIR)	Rate of Incumbent Re-elected (IR)	Findings/ Results
Ekiti	26	21	92.3%	5	7.7%	HT
Lagos	40	19	47.5%	21	52.5%	HT

Ondo	26	15	57.7%	11	42.3%	HT
Ogun	26	20	76.9%	6	23.1%	HT
Osun	26	15	57.7%	11	42.3%	HT
Oyo	32	29	90.6%	3	9.4%	HT
	$\Sigma nS=176$	$\Sigma nL=122$	$\text{nl}Z=69.3\%$	$\Sigma nR=54$	$\text{nl}RZ=30.7\%$	$\Sigma nH=6$ $\Sigma nL=0$

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NLS, 2012, p.72-73

Interpretation of Turnover Rate for the South West Zone

The observed scenario in the South-West give credence to what one may perhaps expect. Given the political consciousness and exposure of the constituents, there is no doubt that the incumbents will be given a tough fight for the occupation of the legislative seats in their various constituencies. The fact that the zone produces the highest turnover rate of 69.3% among the six zones validates the assumption. There were 176 available seats out of which the incumbents were able to retained only 54 (30.7%) while new entrants claimed a whopping 122 (69.3%).

The zone not only has the highest turnover rate amongst its equals but also produce the state with the highest turnover rate in the country (i.e. Ekiti). Out of the 26 lawmakers in Ekiti State, only 2 incumbents managed to survive the freshmen onslaught. The new MPs garnered 24 seats putting the turnover rate at 92.3%. This is closely followed by Oyo State with turnover rate of 90.6% which the second in the zone as well as the entire country. Only 3 lawmakers were returned among the 32 lawmakers allowing 29 new lawmakers entrant into the assembly. The States of Ondo, Ogun and Osun were not exempted from the general pattern with the turnover rate of 57.7%, 76.9% and 57.7% respectively. Surprisingly, only Lagos State, in the zone, deviates from the assumption and general pattern with 21 out of the 40 lawmakers re-elected for their sophomore term. The turnover rate for the state is put at the rate of 47.5% while the rate of incumbency re-elected stands at 52.5% (high turnover).

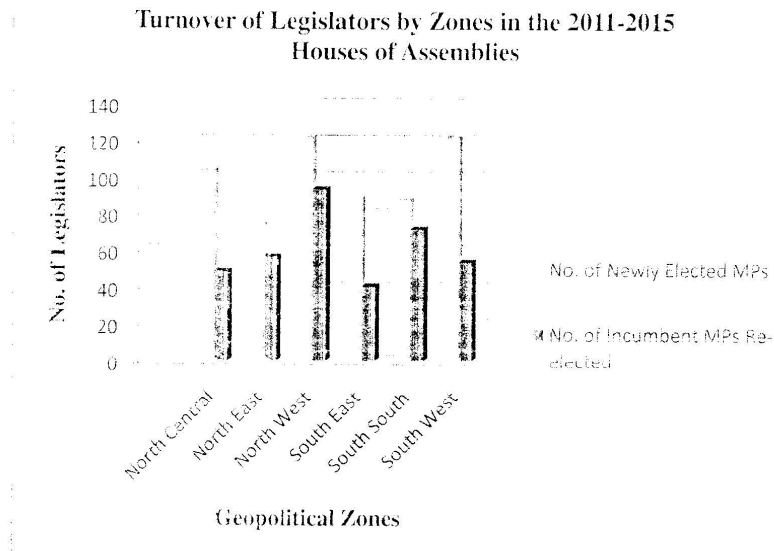
National Turnover Rate (based on the Six Geopolitical Zones)

Table 7: Turnover of Legislators by Zone

Zones	No. of Seat up for Election (ΣnS)	No. of Newly Elected MPs (ΣnL)	Turnover Rate ($\text{nl}Z$)	No. of Incumbents Re-elected (ΣnR)	Rate of Incumbent Re-elected ($\text{nl}RZ$)
North Central	153	104	68%	49	32%
North East	132	75	56.8%	57	43.2%
North West	216	122	56.5%	94	43.5%
South East	130	89	68.5%	41	31.5%
South South	160	88	55%	72	45%
South West	176	122	69.3%	54	30.7%
National Total	967	600	62%	367	38%

NB: This analysis excludes Taraba State (in the North East) where data is not available.

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NLS, 2012, p.66-72

Figure 1: Graphical Illustration of the Distribution of Legislators in the Six Geopolitical Zones

Source: Author's computation with data obtained from NLS, 2012, p.66-73

The table 7 and figure 1 above show that the six geo-political zones witnessed high turnover rate. Comparatively, South-West zone recorded the highest rate and South-South recorded the lowest turnover rate.

Interpretation of Results

According to Crowther and Matonyte (2007: 291), a parliament's turnover rate is optimal (i.e. desirable and proper for the polity) if it meets the level of turnover observed in Western Europe, or around 20–30 per cent as posited by Best (2006: 101); Blondel (1973: 85); Cotta and Best (2007: 505). From table 1 - 6, the turnover rates of all States are 'High' except in Yobe State (Table 2) where there is 'Low' turnover with 70.8% incumbent legislators re-elected for another term. Table 7 shows that all geographical zones recorded 'High' turnover rates which put the national rate at 62% newly elected lawmakers against the 38% of incumbent re-elected. Premised on this, we can therefore state that the turnover rate of the sub national legislature in Nigeria (2011-2015) is 'High'; not only because of the gap between the newly elected and incumbency re-elected legislators, but also because the rate of turnover clearly exceeds the level that has been declared as 'turnover optimum'.

Factors Responsible For the High Turnover Rate

The high turnover rates witnessed in the sub-national legislature in Nigeria is attributed to the following factors:

i. Lack of Internal Party Democracy and god-fatherism

Most state chapters of political parties are run as an extension of the office of the state governor and other political overlords in the states. Re-election of the state legislators is seldom based on performance rather, on whether or not he/she is in the good book of the governor (who is mostly the chief among the political god-fathers). Opportunity to be given second term ticket is usually attached to performance in the House with regard to the extent at which the legislator do the biddings of the overlords and act as puppet rubber stamping the decisions of the governor. During the party primary, the Governor mostly determine who get nominated, who is voted out and who is voted in (Hamalal, 2014), thereby relegating internal democracy. Most of the legislators are not returned because they have had the cause to confront the Governor during legislative activities. Thus, paid back by not given the opportunity for sophomore term.

ii. Rotational Candidacy

Most constituencies in Nigeria especially at the rural area are pluralistic in nature. As a result, there is political consensus and arrangement among the communities making up the constituency to rotate candidacy. No matter the effectiveness of the legislators from these areas, they cannot be returned because it is the turn of another community to produce the candidates. This contributed immensely to high turnover rate in the States' Houses of Assembly.

iii. The Weak Nature of the Sub-national Legislature

Most (if not all) the States' Assemblies are very weak as a result of inadequate capacity of members. Despite the series of trainings given to the legislators, the responses from them are below expectation in terms of capacity to participate in legislative activities (Ogundiya and Baba, 2014: 532). This leads to dereliction of duty and relegates the institution to the extent that they become a mere rubber stamp institution under the whims and caprices of the Executive Governors and political godfathers (Aremu and Bakare, 2016; Fashagba, 2009; and Muhammad, 2014). This accounted for their ineffectiveness in terms of oversight, lawmaking, representation and even budgeting. As a result, the legislators are seen to be incapable of vibrant representation, thus, increased the chances of challengers who pick on these defects to campaign and eventually dislodged the incumbent.

iv. Increased Political Consciousness of the Voters and Electoral Volatility

Increased political consciousness of the voters and Electoral Volatility also contributed immensely to the high turnover rate. The weak nature of the State legislatures and the consequent low productivity usually become the topic of discuss among the electorates given the globalization of information through social media.

This increased people's consciousness on daily basis and makes the electorates to quick look for alternative replacement at next election as a result of the inability of the incumbent legislators to be responsive to their needs and aspirations. In doing this, the pattern of voting changes leading to electoral volatility which is seen as one of the most important factors of legislative turnover (Matland and Studlar, 2004; Heinsohn and Freitag, 2012; Moncrief, Niemi, and Powell, 2004).

v. **Relative Young Age of Nigeria's Democratic Project**

It is not out of place to argue that the relatively young age of Nigeria's democratic project has high impact on the turnover rate. The current democratic dispensation is seventeen years with only five elections witnessed. Many people are eager to participate in gladiatorial politics given the long years of military rule that denied them of that opportunity. Therefore, the States' Houses of Assembly become the most dearly avenue premised on the fact that the constitutional qualification and resources needed to compete is usually moderate and affordable. These increase the number of contenders and pretenders at every election; thus lead to high turnover rate.

vi. **High Unemployment Rate and the Harsh Business Environment**

The high unemployment rate in the country is forcing many people to join partisan politics. The unavailability of jobs makes most graduates to consider joining politics as a means of livelihood. In addition, the harsh business environment is also forcing many entrepreneurs to diversify and re-channel their capital to political investment given the high profit that will accrue once they make it to the legislature. In some cases, the moneybags do intentionally invest in politics for high yield returns in cash and influence. They may contest directly or sponsor candidates to dislodge the incumbents. These opened the contest and make the incumbent to have many challengers who in most cases successfully dislodged the incumbent at the election leading to high turnover rate.

vii. **Unicameral Nature of the Sub-national Legislature**

Another factor that contributed to the high turnover rate is the unicameral nature of the sub-national legislators which reduces the number of seats to be vied for. Unlike the federal bicameralism that opens opportunities for more contenders, the single chamber legislature reduces the number of seats against the high number of contenders. It gives no options for interested politicians other than one seat which in most cases is allocated to each Local Government Area. This makes the contest to be more intense leading to high turnover rate.

viii. **Strong challenger**

Strong challenger is another reason for high turnover in Nigeria's sub-national legislature. In most cases, Local Government Chairmen having exhausted their term in office aim for state legislature as political progression/advancement. This is because; average politicians in Nigeria never like to go home after the expiration of their tenure. Rather, they will want to go for another higher office as

politics is no longer a curricular activities but a job in Nigeria. Also, defeated candidates at federal legislature's party primaries or federal candidates persuaded to step down for anointed candidates may be compensated with the ticket of State House of Assembly by the party Chiefs. This pitches stronger and formidable opponents/challengers against the incumbents who are unlikely to have the resource base and popularity to stand the challenge.

ix. **Proximity to the Grassroots**

The nearness of the sub-national legislators to the grassroots makes them feel more pressure from the citizens on the yearning for developmental projects. The expectations of the constituents are always very high and the inability of the legislators to provide them often leads to their tagging as irresponsible and unresponsive to the people. The same thing happens at the political party level where the grassroots political leaders and members expected more than what they can afford. The consequence is electoral mandate switch at poll by the people thereby leading to legislative turnover.

x. **Testing Ground for Future Governorship and Federal Legislature's Hopeful**

One of the reasons advanced for the creation of local government in Nigeria is to provide avenue for grooming politicians. The expectation is to provide needed experience for higher offices. The same trajectory is responsible for the high number of people contending for higher offices like the Governor, House of Representatives and the Senate among others. These set of people see the sub-national legislature as the perfect testing ground for popularity and experience gathering. In view of this, there is continuous increase in the number of challengers which often lead to high turnover.

Implications of the High Turnover on Legislative Effectiveness

The resultant effect of the high turnover rate can be categorized into: Positive and Negative implications on legislative effectiveness

Positive Implications

One: It maintains social stability by incorporating discontented groups and ambitious individuals into the legislature. The interests of the communities that make up the constituency are protected by the rotational candidacy arrangement thereby bringing cohesion and peaceful relationship among them. Two: the high turnover rate upholds the sovereignty theory of democracy that emphasizes government as the will of the people. The continuous political consciousness among the people leads to voting out of unpopular candidates anointed by the political overlords against the wish of the people. Three: it purges the legislature of possible legislative tyranny as unproductive or unresponsive legislators are voted out by the people during elections. Lastly, the threat of possible electoral firing serves as an effective brake on the temptation of legislators on corruption tendencies. Most of the legislators alleged to

engage in corrupt practices and those that are not effectiveness by the assessment of the people were voted out during the election.

Negative Implications

One: Studies have shown that most of the States' legislature are ineffective (see Ogundiya and Baba, 2014; Aremu and Bakare, 2016; Fashagba, 2009; and Muhammad, 2014; Okoosi-Simbine, 2010; Onoja, 2014; Uko, 2000 among others). One of the reasons advanced for this position is the high turnover rate. Parliaments with high turnover rates tend to have lower levels of average elite experience, expertise and effectiveness. Hyneman (1938, p.21) argued a legislature cannot function effectively unless a substantial number of its members have acquired several sessions of experience in the lawmaking process. To this end, the high turnover rate is antithetical to legislative effectiveness. Two: the need to train the newly elected legislators often leads to expensive governance and waste time thereby slowing down development. Hamalai (2014) argued that the resultant effect of the high turnover as witnessed in the legislature slows legislative process as the newly elected legislators will spend long period learning the legislative procedures. Another implication is that the process of teaching the newly elected legislators will cost a lot of resources (money, time and energy).

Conclusion

From our analysis so far, we discovered in the literature that legislative turnover is an important issue in the assessment of legislative effectiveness. We also observed that there is a gap in the literature as to its understudied especially in developing democracies and at sub-national level. This paper successfully contributes to bridging these gaps. In response to the objectives set out to be achieved, we found that there is high turnover in all the sub-national legislatures in the country during the period under review, except in Yobe State with 7 newly elected legislators against 17 re-elected legislators putting the turnover rate at 29.2% and Taraba State where we have no data. We identified a number of factors responsible for the high turnover rate. These include: lack of internal party democracy and god-fatherism, rotational candidacy, the weak nature of the sub-national legislature, increased political consciousness of the voters and electoral volatility, relative young age of Nigeria's democratic project, unicameral nature of the sub-national legislature, strong challenger, high unemployment rate and the harsh business environment which made many to shift attention to politics as a means of livelihood among others. The paper also identified the positive and negative implications of the high turnover rate. It is our argument that the high rate of turnover recorded in the sub-national legislature is not proper or beneficial for the political system as it is injurious to legislative effectiveness. This is premised on the fact that since Nigerian democracy is developing and still relatively young coupled with the socio-economic status of the country, the country cannot afford the financial and time cost of continuous training of new hands with the mechanics of legislative duties. There is need to allowed already trained legislators to develop the institution and institutionalized the sub-

national Assemblies. There is need to have legislative specialists (long time experienced legislators) who will train the newly elected legislators and perhaps serve as resource persons at the legislative workshop and also serve as lobbyists. Such experienced legislators will also aid institutional memory retention as they will become encyclopedia of legislative procedures of a sort who will advise the House on how a similar issue at hand was previously treated. At this period of economic recession, there is greater need for developmental legislation and monitoring oversight. This is because: the country is at the stage of developmental politics and governance where administrators are expected to provide infrastructural facilities and welfare package for the people which need the support of the legislators through effective legislation which can only be guaranteed through experienced legislative personnel.

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