

## **Political Resilience of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Nigerian Politics**

**Asanebi, Daupamowei Henry**

*Department of History and International Studies,  
Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State*

**Article DOI:** 10.48028/ijprds/ijormsse.v9.i2.17

---

### **Abstract**

---

The study examined Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu political resilience in Nigerian politics. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu is one-of-a-kind, impeccable, and eminent politician who governed Lagos State from May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1999, to May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The study employed secondary source of data and revealed that in 1992, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was elected senator, representing Lagos West Senatorial District, which was aborted by the Nigerian Military. He and others founded the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), which for several years engaged the military for the soul of Nigeria. NADECO campaigned peacefully for the total restoration of democracy, good governance, and the rule of law in Nigeria until 1999, when the country returned to democratic government. Furthermore, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was a driving force behind the formation of several political parties, including the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the now-defunct Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), and the All-Progressive Congress (APC). He is currently the APC presidential flag bearer for the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. The study concludes that Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu contribution to the restoration, sustainability, and growth of democracy, good governance, and the rule of law in Nigeria has earned him a place in Nigerian politics.

**Keywords:** *Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Lagos, Nigeria, AD, APC*

---

*Corresponding Author:* **Asanebi, Daupamowei Henry**

### **Background to the Study**

The name Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu needs no introduction in Nigerian Politics. He was born in Lagos State on March 29th, 1952, to the prominent Tinubu family. Little is known about his father; Abibatu Mogaji his mother, was the Iyaloja of Lagos State till her passing on June 15th, 2013. After finishing his elementary and secondary education in Nigeria, young Bola Tinubu went to Chicago State University, Illinois, where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration (Accounting and Management Option) degree. At the completion of his higher studies abroad, he came back to Nigeria and started working for Mobil Producing Nigeria as a senior auditor before leaving the firm as treasurer. In addendum, he worked for a number of organizations to develop his managerial and accounting abilities.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a devout member of the populace, saw volunteerism to be a real tool for societal advancement. He demonstrated over the year's remarkable zeal for the service of Lagos State and Nigeria by leading countless financial contributions and fundraising for community development activities in Lagos and Nigeria. He never shied away from serving his community, state, and country. Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, who won the 1993 Nigerian presidential election on the platform of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), had Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as a personal friend and disciple. His enthusiasm for politics grew greatly as a Chief M. K. O. Abiola disciple, and he entered active politics prior to 1993. The fulcrum of this study is to examine the political resilience of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Nigerian politics.

### **Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu Political Participation**

A unique political figure from Lagos State and the South-West of Nigeria, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu first gained notoriety in the Third Republic of Nigeria, which was ultimately aborted by the Nigerian Military. He was elected in 1992 to serve the good people of Lagos West Senatorial District as a senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He served on a number of committees in the National Assembly and chaired the Senate Committee on Banking, Finance, Appropriations, and Currency.

As a result of the June 12, 1993, presidential election annulment and the ensuing new militarization of Nigerian politics, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and other prominent Nigerians formed the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). This renowned pro-democracy organization for many years fought the military for the country survival. Up until 1999, when Nigeria government reverted to democracy, NADECO waged a nonviolent struggle for the complete restoration of democracy, responsible leadership, and the rule of law in Nigeria. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu later endured numerous arrests, detentions, harassment, and persistent threats to his life as a result of his involvement with NADECO, which compelled him to flee Nigeria for his safety.

He persisted in his fight to save Nigeria democracy against military forces. He joined the NADECO international chapter and continued the restoration of Nigerian democratic system of government and leadership. Bola Tinubu described his experience in exile in an

interview, saying:

*I disguised myself with a massive turban and babanriga and escaped into the Benin Republic on a motorcycle. My old Hausa friend gave me the clothes. When I appeared before Mrs. Kudirat Abiola, she didn't know I was the one. I gave her some information and a briefing. I left at 1:00 am, while in the Benin Republic, I was still coming to Badagry to ferry people, organise and coordinate the struggle with others on the ground. We put a group together to transport NADECO people across. It was a very challenging time. I cannot forget people like Mr. Segun Maiyegun and other young guys in the struggle. I would come from the Benin Republic to hold meetings with them and sneak back".<sup>1</sup>*

After the former Head of State General Sani Abacha passed away in 1998, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu returned to Nigeria from exile in response to a request from Nigerians to take part in national healing and development. When Nigeria restored to democratic rule in 1999, the NADECO struggle was declared a success. In 1999, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu joined the Alliance for Democracy (AD) as a protégé, working with leaders like Abraham Adesanya and Ayo Adebajo. He then declared his intention to run for the top position and office in Lagos State on the Alliance for Democracy political platform and went on to win the party primary and the gubernatorial elections in Lagos State that same year. However, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was the only governor elected in Nigeria in 1999 on the Alliance for Democracy platform, making him an outlier among his fellow governors.<sup>2</sup>

He had difficulties as a sole governor in the Nigerian governor's forum and the South-West governor's forum, but he overcame them amicably thanks to his determination and thorough understanding of Lagos, the South-West, and Nigeria political history, which he demonstrated in every circumstance. The relationship between Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the former president of Nigeria, and Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the former governor of Lagos State, was afterwards dictated by the political quandary and dilemma in Nigeria politics. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his party members in Lagos and the south-west came together more after this incident and other similar ones to form a stronger and better Alliance for Democracy (AD) in the next gubernatorial election, which the party won. In the south-west region, membership in A D increased when Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu won the 2003 governorship race.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://newswirengr.com/2022/05/29/bola-ahmed-tinubu-biography-age-education-political-career-net-worth-and-controversy/>, Retrieved on the 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

<sup>2</sup> <http://en.m.wikipedia.com> Tinubu Profile, Retrieved on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu received several honours for his outstanding work as the Executive Governor of Lagos State of Nigeria from May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1999, to May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007, including Best Governor in Nigeria 2000 by the Nigeria-Belgian Chambers of Commerce, Best Computerised Governor in Nigeria by the Computer Association of Nigeria, and Best Practices Prize in Improving the Living Environment from the Federal Ministry of Works and the United Nations Habitat Group, a non-governmental organization.

In addendum, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu received an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree in Law from the Abia State University, Uturu, Abia State, in recognition of his significant contributions to democracy, sound administration, the rule of law, and development in Nigeria. He has the chieftaincy titles of Jagaban of the Borgu Kingdom in Niger State and Asiwaju of Lagos State, which he proudly holds. He also serves as the patron of numerous social and professional organizations in Nigeria.<sup>4</sup>

Since he oversaw the state budget and exchequer, Lagos State had significant growth in all areas throughout his tenure as governor. All of the significant advances by the ruling party the People Democratic Party (PDP) in the center were repelled by Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Bola Ahmed Tinubu fought the federal government over whether Lagos State had the jurisdiction to establish 37 new Local Council Development Areas (LCDAS) to accommodate its sizable population in an amendment. The Federal Government, confiscated cash intended for the local councils in Lagos State.<sup>5</sup>

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a sui generis leader, created other ways of funding the LCDAS, which he started to elasticize the frontiers of development in Lagos State without funds from the federal government. This event worsens Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu's relationship with President Olusegun Obasanjo. Bola Tinubu was able to resolve the political quagmire and was resilient again. The Federal Government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo should release the confiscated statutory allotment of the Lagos State Local administration Funds, according to a Supreme Court decision in Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's favour<sup>6</sup>. As if that weren't enough, the Federal Government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo is still at odds with Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu over issues like funding for the deteriorating federal infrastructure in Lagos State, independent electricity generation, and the onshore/offshore divide. Bola Tinubu was resilient, kept the same battling spirit of the pro-democracy years, and triumphed in all the battles despite the fact that the federal government and PDP made sure Lagos State under his leadership was penalised for it by withholding the much required federal appropriations.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The Sun. New Councils for Lagos State, the 16th of December, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Bamidele Razaq. Lagos Government Wasted Eight Years Fighting FG. Daily Sun, the 16th of February 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Kayode Oladele, Tinubu Three Decades of Democratic Struggle. This Day. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/08/05/tinubus-three-decades-of-democratic-struggle/> on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, 2022.

Adeseye Ogunlewe, a former senator and minister of works, Chief Bode George, a southwest PDP national leader and former PDP southwest chairman, and Senator Musiliu Obanikoro, a PDP governorship candidate in the 2003 election and a former minister of Nigeria, were among the PDP members with whom Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was involved in a political scuffle in Lagos State. Due to Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his party's substantial groundwork in Lagos State, these PDP supporters were unable to win the state for their party. Additionally, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu had to deal with a feud with his deputy, Mr Femi Pedro. He and Femi Pedro had to come to an agreement because their relationship had become strained. Mr. Femi Pedro dissented from the party stance, abstained, and joined the Labour Party (LP), where he ran for governor of the state in 2007 but failed.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a man destined for greatness underwent a political paradigm change and actively participated in the formation of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) as a replacement for the shattered Alliance for Democracy (AD), bringing together like-minded individuals throughout the nation. Within a few months, he persuaded people to support good course and political initiatives on this platform, making the ACN a genuine rival to the PDP, the nation's then-ruling party.<sup>8</sup>

From 2007 to 2014, ACN won five gubernatorial elections in the southwest, including Lagos State, all thanks to the visionary leadership and resilient spirit of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.<sup>9</sup> His successors, Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN), who served as governor of Lagos State from May 29, 2007, to May 29, 2015; Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, who served as governor of Lagos from May 29, 2015, to May 29, 2019; and Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-lu, who serves as governor of Lagos State at the moment, continue Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's great legacy. The current Lagos State government is awfully the top government in Nigeria since it has continued Bola Tinubu's excellent policies.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was actively involved in negotiations to unite the dispersed opposition parties into a mega-party capable of confronting the PDP, following the victory of the PDP in the presidential election in Nigeria in 2007 and 2011.<sup>10</sup> His appeal for the implementation of the Uwais report to guarantee that the 2011 general elections would be as free and fair as the election of 1993 was motivated by his care for the welfare and development of his people and Nigeria as a whole. He was a pragmatic leader, and this was the reason for it.

However, challenges and opposition were present during Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu's rise to power in Lagos State. He was summoned before the conduct tribunal trial in 2007

---

<sup>8</sup> Bamidele Razaq. The making of Lagos ACN. Daily Sun, the 13th of October 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Balogun, O. 2011, South West Politician to Watch. Daily Sun, the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Robert, E. J. et al. Mega Party, Mega Confusion. Daily Sun, the 11th of April 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Age, O. FG Drags Tinubu to Conduct Tribunal. Vanguard, the 25th of April 2007.

by the PDP-led federal government because sixteen different overseas accounts were allegedly operated illegally.<sup>11</sup> In January 2009, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) cleared Bola Ahmed Tinubu, former governor of Lagos State; James Ibori, former governor of Delta State; and Obong Victor Attah, former governor of Akwa Ibom State of conspiracy, money laundering, abuse of office, and official corruption in relation to the sale of V-Mobile network shares in 2004.

In September 2009, there was a report that the British metropolitan police were investigating a transaction in which the Lagos State government invested in Econet, later V-Mobile, and now Airtel. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu stated that the transaction was straightforward and profitable for Lagos State, with no intermediaries.<sup>12</sup> He didn't give in or yield to these unfounded and false accusations made against him by the federal government and British Metropolitan Police; in the end, he prevailed with a resilient spirit. The federal government of Nigeria exonerated Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and his two colleagues of charges of corruption, abuse of office, and money laundering.<sup>13</sup>

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu can be credited as a political kingmaker in Nigeria and Lagos State, as well as the new political leader in the South-West. Willing to take the center from the PDP, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu formed a new political party called the All Progressive Congress (APC) with Chief Ogbonnaya Onu of the defunct All Nigeria People Party (ANPP), General Muhammadu Buhari of the defunct Congress of Progressives (CPC), a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) led by former governor of Imo State, Mr. Rochas Okorochoa, and also a faction of the New PDP led by Alhaji Abubakar Kawu Bareje, a former PDP national chairman. In Nigeria 2015 general election, these political heavyweights won 27 out of 36 states, culminating in their victory for the presidency. Currently, APC is the party in power in Nigeria, with PDP serving as the country main opposition. There is no denying that these improbable triumphs were the result of extensive planning by these political titans. Asiwaju Bola Tinubu is a trusted ally of President Muhammadu Buhari and the party national head, earning the admiration of APC supporters all over Nigeria.

Furthermore, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu received a lot of affection and admiration from indigenes of Lagos State, which helped his wife win the elections on several occasion for the Lagos central senatorial seat. When Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu ran in the APC presidential primary on June 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the same affection and appreciation were shown to him starting with Senator Godswill Akpabio, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, Rt. Hon. Dimeji Bankole, Senator Ayaji Borofice, Former Governor, Kayode Fayemi, Governor Mohammed Badaru Abubakar, and Mrs. Uju Ohanenye all withdraw their candidacies for president before voting begins on June 7, 2022, strongly endorsing Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu. In order to secure the presidential nomination, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu outperformed 13 other candidates.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ige, I. O. FG, the UK at Loggerhead over Tinubu, Ibori and Attah. Vanguard, the 10th of September, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Atiku, B. V-Mobile Sale, Ibori, Tinubu and Attah Cleared of Money Laundering. Daily Trust, the 11th of September 2009.

He received 1,271 ballots. The votes each of the 13 candidates received are listed below: Rt. Hon. Chibuke Rotimi Amaechi received 316 votes, Vice President Yomi Osibanjo received 235 votes, Governor Dave Umahi received 38 votes, Governor Yahaya Bello received 47 votes, Chief Ogbonnaya Onu received 1 vote, Senator Ahmed Sani Yerima received 4 votes, Pastor Tunde Bakare received zero vote, Senator Rochas Okorochoa received zero vote, Senator Ahmed Lawan received 152 votes, Governor Ben Aya, Mr. Rufai Sani received 4 votes,; Mr. Emeka Nwajube received 1 vote; and Mr. Tein Jack-Rich received zero vote.

Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu was named the victor and presidential flag bearer of the ruling party in Nigeria in the upcoming 2023 presidential election by the national party chairman, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, who received the highest number of votes.

While reacting to Asiwaju Bola Tinubu presidential party victory Kayode Oladele,<sup>14</sup> noted that in our democracy, we have never witnessed a candidate without a public position win the presidential primaries of the dominant party with a convincing margin over an incumbent vice president, an incumbent governor, an incumbent member of the federal executive council, and a senator, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu set a new political record by doing so. As a pragmatic leader Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu have a high chance of winning the upcoming presidential election in Nigeria in 2023 because he is well-liked by Nigerians at all levels of society and has the credentials, executive, administrative, accounting, and legislative expertise needed to lead the country.

According to Kayode Oladele,<sup>15</sup> Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the APC's presidential nominee, stands out as the most qualified candidate to lead Nigeria in 2023 due to his democratic background. Therefore, the ability to face difficulties and find amicable solutions to them is another quality that distinguishes a great leader from others. During his time as governor of Lagos State in order to succeed him and give strong administration, he developed and groom young colleagues. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu accomplished this in Lagos State through the leadership of Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN), who served as the state governor from May 29, 2007, to May 29, 2015; Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode, who served as the state governor from May 29, 2015, to May 29, 2019; and Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-lu, who serves as the state current governor. Also, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu has also witnessed the emergence, development, and achievements of numerous politicians from his governorship era to the present, including Mr. Babatunde Fowler, former Lagos State Internal Revenue Service Chairman and Former Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service of Nigeria; Prof. Yemi Osinbajo (SAN), the current Vice President of Nigeria and Former Lagos State of Attorney

---

<sup>14</sup> Kayode Oladele, Tinubu Three Decades of Democratic Struggle. This Day. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/08/05/tinubus-three-decades-of-democratic-struggle/> on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, 2022

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

General and Commissioner of Justice Lagos State; Mr. Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN), Former Lagos State Chief of Staff, Successor and Minister of Energy, Power and Housing; Mr. Rauf Aregbesola, Former Lagos State Commissioner of Works, Former Governor of Osun State and Minister of Interior; Alhaji Lai Mohammed, Former Lagos State Chief of Staff and current Minister of Information, amongst others.

Numerous Tinubians (a term for Tinubu's disciples) has held elected seats in various State and National assembly in Nigeria from 1999 till date. Along with other politicians, he has campaigned to ensure the victory of numerous previous and current governors in Nigeria. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu persisted in his pursuit of democracy and his desire to honour the heroes of the June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993 until the federal government led by President Muhammadu Buhari officially proclaimed June 12<sup>th</sup> as Democracy Day and M. K. O. Abiola and Alhaji Babagana Kingibe, the winners of the June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1993 presidential election, were given the highest honour in Nigeria. This would not have happened without Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu.<sup>16</sup> He is a sui generis and impeccable politician who has exhibited great love for Nigeria, service, and political resilience for Nigerian democracy and politics.

### **Conclusion**

The study has examined the political resilience of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu in Nigerian Politics. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and other prominent politicians in the then opposition APC in Nigeria were able to solve the political quagmire and quandary of the party and restructure the party as a formidable force to defeat the ruling party PDP in the 2015 and 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. His contribution to the restoration, sustainability, and growth of democracy, good governance, and the rule of law in Nigeria has earned him a place in Nigerian politics.

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.