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# 1

## **CITIZEN DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT: RE-EVALUATING NIGERIA'S AFROCENTRIC FOREIGN POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN WEST AFRICA**

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## **Abstract**

*Recent events on the African continent show that the Nigerian government has played significant hegemonic roles in the African region without really paying adequate attention to her internal domestic contradictions. To many observers, this kind of big brother gesture by the Nigerian government has fetched the Nigerian state almost nothing. The nation is therefore challenged by increasing poverty, unemployment, corruption and general economic problems. Of particular importance to this study is the poor international image some of these problems have created for the country and its people outside the shores of Africa generally. This study has therefore sought to unravel some of these challenges through deeper investigations to be able to frontally tackle the issues. This study is an exploratory research, and has essentially employed content analysis as sources of data collection and method of investigation. The paper discovered that the Nigerian problems rests squarely on her inability to vigorously confront her domestic economic and political maladies, which in turn impinges on the attempt at resolving her reputation and international image abroad. To this end, there are copious suggestions in the study, which forms credible aspects of the attempt to move the nation and her people forward, and restore her pride of place within the confines of the national polity and regain her international reputation overseas.*

**Keywords:** *Citizen, Diplomacy, Development, Foreign Policy, Peace, West Africa.*



## **Introduction**

For most of the scholarly writings that have been in the public domain, the arguments have been that a well-articulated international relations between Nigeria and the rest of the world is a function of how well the Nigerian state has been able to organize its citizens at home and elsewhere (Ujara & Ibietan, 2014). From the classic works of Odoh and David (2014) and corroborating the views of Ujara and Ibietan (2014), they maintain that states, and indeed the Nigerian nation-state is by the provision of extant laws of the land, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), supposed to share in an inseparable mutual relationships.

This kind of interface brings to the fore the indispensability of a common bond between a citizen or electorates and their rulers (in this sense, political power elites). It therefore implies that the Nigerian citizens deserve to enjoy specific constitutional rights, duties, privileges as well as obligations, either as individual members of society living within or outside the shores of their father land. From Odoh and David's (2014) assertion, citizens, and indeed Nigerian citizens, constitute the critical essence of why government exists, and it is the core responsibility of the state structure to cater for its citizens and ensure that their general wellbeing is adequately met. Furthermore, the protection of citizens by the state can be perceived as essential national interest which when logically pursued, leads to effective foreign policy intercourse at the global space.

The above therefore raises the following fundamental questions: Why has there been so much emphasis on citizen diplomacy with particular interest of peace initiatives that are hardly translated into development in the Nigerian state internally? Again, why would the government continue to dwell on resolving Africa-wide problems when there are myriads of socio-political and economic challenges confronting the nation? What ways, other than the old order, can the Nigerian government adopt to be able to resolve her internal challenges and ensure peace and development?

These questions become increasingly important in this work as they could

serve as useful tool towards the reconstruction of not only the nation's bid for effective citizen diplomacy, but essentially to help in filling existing literature gap and hence, contribute to knowledge within the confines of the broader research area in diplomacy.

In his studies on challenges of citizen diplomacy in Nigeria, Michael (2017) has argued that winning the war at the international global stage by Nigeria requires looking inward by the nation's leadership. Michael insists that the promotion of the general welfare of Nigerian citizens and the drive by the government to guarantee security, liberty and positive corporate image at whatever level is sacrosanct, and hence constitutes part of the objectives that oils and facilitates nation-building and the project of democratic sustenance.

This study seeks to investigate some of the achievements recorded by the Nigerian government in recent past. The study also appreciates some of the potential setbacks that have mitigated these ambitious steps towards the road to a sustained international, regional cum global relations and cooperation with other nations of the world. The paper is divided into sections comprising introduction, conceptual issues on citizen diplomacy and development as well as conclusion and recommendations.

## **Conceptual Issues**

**Understanding Citizen Diplomacy:** The concept of citizen, to Michael et al; (2017) entails the legitimate constitutional status and qualifications bequeathed on individual citizen of a nation who is deemed to have fulfilled all acceptable conditions to be so called. In other words, the concept describes all persons or groups of persons certified as *bonafide* indigenous members of a given state or society.

While this definition might be acceptable, it should however be noted that some persons might not legitimately be members of any given state and decide to do so by merely opting to be part of the society through other procedures such as naturalization, registration or otherwise. Conversely, we can again say that the relationship between one nation and another is literally summed up in the

way and manner her citizens are mobilized and organized, and this ultimately reflects on the state's international image globally (Chandler, 2011).

In most scholarly writings, citizen diplomacy which is the brainchild of the American system basically portends the protection of the overall interest and well-being of citizens of a nation. This means that the wellbeing of citizens is sacrosanct and finds expression on a nation's domestic policy in relation to her external relations. For us nation-state, it does appear that all domestic governments that have featured over time have, in one way or the other, charted a foreign policy course defined by its domestic peculiarities. According to Maduekwe (2009) and Akinteriwa (2010), citizen diplomacy conveys special distinctive domestic policy style of a nation and informs how well a nation's international image is perceived by the outside world.

According to Maduekwe (2009), citizen diplomacy is synonymous with the desperate desire for rebranding and change of domestic *raison d'être* or inter-state behaviors in all national domestic policy conducts. It takes care of charitable acts on citizens and treats citizens as real custodians of sovereignty, initiate policies that are essentially citizen-centric in outlook and device ways to achieve equitable outcomes.

## **Diplomacy Explained**

The concept of diplomacy is multifaceted, and depends largely on the intellectual bias of the scholar. In other words, there is no unanimous definition for the concept. However, most experts of international politics have attempted to conceptualize it differently. Satow (1966) cited in Dickson (2010) argue that diplomacy refers to all aspects of inter-state official conducts and relations between governments of independent states that find expression in the application of tact and intelligence to be able to achieve set goals between and amongst interested parties. The problem with Satow's (1966) definition is that the question of tact and credibility in diplomacy are tricky. The essence of diplomacy in international relations presupposes that there should be reasonable considerations in dealing with other parties in conflict or relationship without taking offence. Again, diplomatic credibility takes special caveat on the way

and manner certain prevailing situations are subtly or skillfully handled. In either of the two extremes, it is not clear how nation states and particularly, super powers have resorted to all kinds of threats, violation of peace accord and eventual declaration and execution of war on other neighboring entities with reckless abandon. The justification for outright war as is currently witnessed between, for example, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Ukraine is critical in this analysis (Scott, 2022).

To most realist scholars such as Hans Morgenthau, diplomacy is seen from the angle of resolution of conflicts. To this end, Morgenthau (1978) buttressing what Satow (1966) had earlier noted about adopting diplomatic tact and credibility to resolve skirmishes between factions averred that diplomacy is a process that accommodates conflict of divergent interests. Similarly, diplomacy is an international engagement practice that not only promotes national interest, but also enhances peaceful resolution of conflicts. The contention in Morgenthau's analysis is multi-pronged, and hence tied around other important variants.

Firstly, diplomacy must determine the extent to which power is expressed, pursued and realized in terms of objectives. Again, diplomatic relations must cross-examine the objective of power in actual sense, between one nation and its opponent and the available potentials required to achieve goals. There is also the dire need to assess the degree of compatibility or otherwise of the dispensation of power as well as the mobilization of the means that best apply in the pursuit of diplomatic relations.

In all of these definitions, quite a number of conceptual gaps have been pointed out by critics who contended that Scott, Morgenthau, Geoffery (1973) and a host of others appear simplistic in their analysis. Most of the definitions, it has been argued, do not cover the aspects of politics and peculiarities of the international environment. It is in this light that Plischke (1977) has given a more inclusive and comprehensive definition of diplomacy. According to Plischke, what constitutes diplomacy entails:

...all political processes that are established and nurtured by nation-states in their official interactions,

be it direct or indirect, in the pursuit of their respective goals, interests and other substantive national policies, couched around deliberate procedures and engagement practices in relation to other nation-states in the international environment (emphasis added) (1977, p.41).

The excerpts has become very apt, and hence, explains the diplomatic roles Nigeria has played over time in her quest to positively impact on either her regional environment or wield influence at the international political arena. Ogunbambi (1986) alluded that the diplomatic interest of the Nigerian state has been how to ensure its security and stability politically, engender equitable export promotion, protection of Nigerian citizens in the diaspora, guaranteeing effective cultural and moral expressions as well as mobilizing for a vigorous representation of the nation's point of views on regional as well as global issues at all levels.

### **Citizen Diplomacy and Nigeria's International Image: The Great Debate**

One of the prevailing scholarly debates raging among foreign relations experts and intelligentsia is the way and manner citizen diplomacy has been handled and how that affects the broader international image of the nation in her interaction with the rest of the world. The first shot at the contradictions of citizen diplomacy in relation to Nigeria's external image is the one posited by Egwemi (2010). Egwemi informed that Nigeria's external image has consistently oscillated between extreme positivism to extreme negativity. What this means is that from the outset of her political independence in 1960 and up to the era of military autocracy that followed afterwards in the late 1970s and late 1990s, the nation had witnessed increased positive vibes in her relations with the outside world. However, the problem started, with the growing diplomatic rifts between 1993 up to 2014, a period characterized by an admixture of military dictatorship and civil rule, respectively.

In his view, Uchem (2009) cited in Ujara and Ibietan (2014) argued about Nigeria's citizen diplomacy against the backdrop of decadence among Nigerian young

adolescents, and particularly the youths, that Nigeria's international image has been battered as it has also been progressively blighted by the pervasive activities of a wide array of unemployed youths. To him, what has stifled the nation's image outside the shores of Nigeria is the dramatic rise in scam activities, yahoo – yahoo internet fraud, drug peddling, unlawful behaviors in foreign countries as well as the tendency to ship-jump universally acceptable protocols. All of these uncanny attitudes and many others including, but not limited to drug peddling, trafficking in persons, hostage taking and the likes, have all congealed to smear the good international image of the Nigerian state and its people.

In another dimension, Akinteriwa (2007), and Ogunsanwo (2009) have noted that not only is Nigeria's citizen diplomacy undemocratic, the process is essentially characterized by exclusiveness and seclusion of a vast majority of citizens who are supposed to be at the centre of diplomatic ties. This notion of exclusivity as posited by Akinteriwa and Ogunsanwo informs the earlier position held by Abati (2009). According to Abati, Nigerian citizens are hardly placed at the centre of national policies or programmes. This is a major misgiving of government and the political leadership that has been in operation since inception of democracy in 1999. From the point of view of Abati's (2009), it has been pointed out that:

Leadership quality is a critical determinant of vast majority of followership. The placement of Nigerian citizens at the centre of national programme could effectively reinforce the original purpose of the government when the political class provides leadership. The leadership will without much efforts secure the trust of the general populace and hence, create centers of national solidarity and more agents for national progress (emphasis added) (2008, p.6).

The excerpts above capture the lackluster dispositions of the nation's power elites and how their undoing has literally eroded the nation's corporate image abroad. What Abati (2009) seem to be saying is that the Nigerian state is far

from realizing the obvious, and that the objective realities of citizen diplomacy is carried out in the breach than being observed. For most critics, it does appear that the Nigerian national government places little emphasis on the lives of her citizens. This is why Dickson (2010) has reiterated:

In Nigeria, we don't seem to get this. Our governments do not value our lives. One Nigerian was killed in Spain, another one was brutalized in Asia, routinely, and our people are beheaded in Saudi Arabia. At home and in diaspora, Nigerians are left to their own survival tactics, while many have learned not to expect anything from their government (emphasis added) (2010, p.6).

What Dickson (2010) seem to be claiming in the above argument is that the challenges of citizen diplomacy as it relates to Nigeria is two-fold. First, is the dynamics of internal domestic contradictions orchestrated by poor leadership styles within the nation's borders, and second, those of other happenings outside the shores of the nation's geo-politics.

There is however an agreement in the writings of Akinteriwa (2007) and Ogunsanwo (2009) cited in Odoh and Nwogbaga (2014) with those of Akinteriwa (2012) cited in Ujara and Ibietan (2014). Akinteriwa (2012) confirms that what has come to be known as the Nigerian image is couched with both domestic and global undertone, which is a reinforcement of his earlier notion on the internal and external contradictions inherent in the nation's diplomatic concerns. To him, what is worrisome is the general perception and graphic portrayal of the nation as a political entity where corruption towers over and above every other consideration, just as insecurity, poverty, and poor leadership, among others things, have increasingly become a defining characteristic.

On corruption, the reports of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) (n.d.) and those of Transparency International (TI) (2021) have observed that the global corruption index survey has indicted Nigeria. The survey reveals that out of 180 countries caught in the web of corruption, Nigeria ranks 154. The parameters adopted for the ranking attributed several predisposing

factors to corruption including, but not limited to poor compliance mechanisms and internal control in major Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs); corruption in the nation's security sector, illicit financial flows, the dearth of political will to tackle debilitating corruption cases and the Kangaroo nature of anti-graft agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in its drive against corruption in Nigeria. The multiplier effects of this are that major development projects have been badly affected and in most cases, stalled. In the same vein, competitiveness has been largely hampered. Table 1.1 shows the aforementioned.

**Table 1.1 showing Nigeria's business indicators for year 2019-2022**

S/N	Index	Updated	Actual	Previous
1	Business confidence	Dec/2020	- 15.2 in pt.	- 1.5
2	Ease of doing business	2019	131 place	146
3	Manufacturing (PMI)	Feb/2022	50.1 in. pt.	51.4
4	Manufacturing production	3Q/ 2021	4.3%	3.5
5	Competitiveness	2019	48.33 in. pt.	47.53

**Source:** *www.takeprofit.org*

Table 1.1 shows corruption index in Nigeria from 2019 fiscal year to 2022. From the table, 2022 recorded the highest incidence of corruption at about 50.1%, and with the dire consequences on the manufacturing sector. This is followed by 2019 with a total of 48.33 in. Again, in 2022, while the actual indicator peaked at 50.1, the previous was put at 51.4, representing a marginal decline in the following year. In terms of investors' confidence, the table indicates that December, 2020, witnessed an increase of -15.2 in the actual year and -1.5 in the previous. For ease of doing business, 2019 saw an exponential decline up to 131 in actual corruption ranking, which is far less than the previous of 146.

The above ranking in the case of Nigeria, however appears to be higher when compared to what obtains in other African countries. For example, Egypt, during the 2021 ranking peaked at 33 in.pt. and 33 the previous year. Kenya had 30 in.pt. for 2021 and 31 in 2020. Again, Madagascar had 26 in.pt. as at 2021, and 25 the previous year. In the case of Zimbabwe, the corruption index was put at 23 in.pt. for 2021 and 24 for 2020. In the same token, Tanzania got 39 in.pt



as against 38 the previous year.

On insecurity, Bunmi (2022) has observed that the number of people killed in Nigeria has skyrocketed to up to 47% and peaked at about 10,366 in 2021 alone. The SBM intelligence report, corroborating the position of Bunmi (2022) has insisted that of the over 10,000 fatalities recorded in 2021, the Q2 of that same year witnessed the highest, with over 1,000 deaths. This is followed by Q4 (1,771), Q3 (1,588) and Q1 (972) deaths. Again, the report indicated that in 2020, the highest number of deaths in Q2 alone was put at 3,133. This is closely followed by Q1 with a total of 2,861 and Q3 (2,287) and Q4 with not less than 2,085 deaths, respectively.

In the same vein, evidence from Bunmi (2022) has revealed that kidnapping for ransom has become common place in Nigeria. Accordingly, available data from studies conducted by ACLED shows that a total of about 1,200 persons were kidnapped in 2021 compared to about 45 individuals in 2010. Again, in one of the United Nations reports (n.d), nearly 900 students in secondary and tertiary institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture and Forestry, Polytechnics and University have been abducted by terrorists since 2020. In all of these, a ransom of about ₦10 billion (approximately \$19.96 million dollars have been demanded, and skill counting (SBM Intelligence, n.d).

On poverty, the Nigerian state has been described 'poverty capital of the world'. This is in spite of the enormous oil wealth and human capital endowed on the country by nature. Recent poverty headcount rates in Nigeria (2019) has indicated that virtually all states of the federation have been enmeshed in widespread poverty, a situation where Nigerian citizens live below the World Bank threshold of one American dollar per day.

From available data, the worst hit among the states in the nation's geo-political zones are Sokoto with a poverty landmark of 87.73%; Taraba (87.72%); Jigawa (87.02%); Ebonyi (79.76%); Adamawa (75.41%); Zamfara (73.98%); Yobe (72.34%); Niger (66.11%); Gombe (62.31%); Bauchi (61.53%); Enugu (58.13%); and Nasarawa state (57.3%). Others are Katsina (56.42%); Kano (55.1%); Plateau (55.1%); Kebbi (50.2%); Kaduna (43.5%); Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

(38.7%); Cross River (36.3%); Benue (32.9%); Abia (30.7%); Imo (28.9%); Kogi (28.5%); Ekiti (28%); Akwa Ibom (26.8%). In the same fashion many other states in the nation's South-South, South-East and South West geo-political zone tend to share the same fate in terms of poverty incidences. From the report, River state has about (23.9%) poverty rate; Bayelsa (22.6%); Kwara (20.4%); Anambra (14.8%); Ondo (12.5%); Edo (12%), Oyo (9.8%); Ogun (9.3%); Osun (8.5%); Delta (6%) and Lagos (4.5%) (Doris, 2022).

### **Citizen Diplomacy: How Far Nigeria Has Fared**

Nigeria's quest for diplomatic relation with the rest of the world began with the notion that Africa is the centre piece of her foreign policy thrust (Mbara & Gopal, 2021). This pronouncement followed the period marking Nigeria's independence era, precisely in 1960. Adeniji (2005), Akinterinwa (2004), Salisu (2006), Jega (2010), Folarin,(2013) and Danfulani (2014), contended that this policy option of the Nigerian government towards the outside world has since remained a constant epicenter in the nation's diplomatic interface spanning several decades.

As a brain child of the then Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, on October 1, 1960 conceived the notion as a political construct whereby the interest and welfare of African region was considered as sacrosanct to its overall interest and concern as a political entity (King, 1996) cited in Folarin (2013). To be sure, the initial hallmark of the policy was more or less seen as an existential mechanism that upholds the nation's magnanimity towards the immediate economic, political and cultural needs of African nations. As a corollary to this view, Mazrui (2006) has concurred that Nigeria's Africa-centered foreign policy thrust could be seen as synonymous with its Pan-Africanist world view that has continued to underscore its foreign policy right from its independence period.

Going by the nation's standpoint, it became clear that all critical issues affecting Africa, and indeed the Caribbean enclaves, became Nigeria's 'headache', where the country was in turn expected to take full responsibility at whatever level of commitment - economic, political, cultural, social, among others. To most

observers, this gesture led to the birth and formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the first instance around the 1960s, with its focus towards the resolution of the war in Congo. Again, Nigeria's mission to salvage the precarious economic and political predicaments of other African countries saw her expending well over \$60 billion dollars as aid to several African nations (Fawole, 2002).

As part of its agenda to ensure stability in the region, the government at the time became effectively committed and involved in peace initiative as well as redefining roadmaps to security in conjunction with the global umpire, the United Nations Organizations (UNO). The multiplier effect of this 'fatherly' role gave rise to the dispatch of Nigerian troops to quell uprisings in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire and many others (Mbera & Gopal, 2021).

Quite a number of research studies such as those of Warner (2017), Danfulani (2014), Folarin (2014) and Mbaru (2019) have argued that in spite of the manifest leadership roles exercised by the Nigerian government to chart a new and modest pathway for Africa, there is hardly any respite for Nigeria and her citizens in terms of benefits. The contention here is that rather than resolve its own internal contradictions, the Nigerian state has continued to expend unnecessary energies in solving African problems, while its citizens languish in penury. Evidence has further proved that successive administrations, whether military dictatorship or civilian systems, have continued to tow the same 'Big Brother' path with scarcely insignificant domestic achievements to reckon with in terms of development of its people.

In view of the seemingly obvious consequences of the nation's hegemonic roles in the affairs of Africa, the succeeding democratic structure manned by the first civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo and the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua opted for imminent rationalization of the process. The new government of Yar'Adua left no stone unturned towards repositioning the existing status quo, and that snowballed into "citizen-centered diplomacy" popularized by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chief Ojo Maduekwe in 2007.

To all intent and purposes, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, had the general well-being and interest of Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora as the centre of the nation's national interest. What this portends is that the nation's emerging international behavior, actions and inactions would largely be modeled in tandem with its peculiarities. Thus, one central focus was how best the Nigerian state can refocus its attention and work towards protecting and providing for her citizens.

### **Diplomacy, Development and the Travails of Nigeria's Hegemony in Africa**

As earlier pointed out in this study, the government of Nigeria has played enormous roles in the sustenance, development and security of Africa since her political independence in 1960. To Nuamah (2003), Nigeria considers itself as a formidable regional super power with greater economic and political influence that can drive the process of development, especially in West Africa. Thus, the tendency to demonstrate this sterling quality has continued to steer the nation's Pan-African drive from the 1960s to the early military rule in the 1990s.

For successive administration in the country, one clear thing is the motivation to aspire and venture further into the continental leadership roles and hegemony as pivotal characteristics of the Nigerian foreign policy objectives. To a large extent, the Afrocentric posture of her foreign policy goals centered on four critical concentric circles that have taken centre stage. Again, Mbara and Gopal (2021) have pointed out that the concentric circles take into consideration Nigeria's grand strategy from the "inner-most to the outermost". The former deals with all kinds of relationships having to do with Nigeria's immediate neighbours: They include all African countries sharing common territorial affinities and contiguity with the Nigerian state such as Niger Republic, Cameroon, the Republic of Chad, Benin Republic and other territories of interest namely, Sao Tome and Principe as well as Equatorial Guinea.

In one of their studies on Nigeria's increasing economic and political influence on the development of West Africa and elsewhere, Offu and Okechukwu (2015) examined Nigeria's hegemonic powers in the context of age-long historical trajectory. To these scholars, Nigeria's emergence as regional powers in Africa has come at a time where international relations and global politics have

witnessed dramatic shift in world order and global economic politics. This goes to explain what experts have said when they claimed that the eruption of international hegemonic crisis between and amongst world powers could be the beginning of another circle of development, expansion and growth for emerging global entities (Robert, 1987).

Offu and Okechukwu (2015) also revealed that as the world system keeps evolving, quite a number of countries have continued to transform. For instance, the decline of Japan's global reputation has placed China on the pedestal of economic growth and development around South-East Asia region. China, for example is now a global destination and the world "new bride" due to its increasing innovation in high-tech and industrial expansion. Other copious examples have also been given in relation to the ambitious steps most countries in South-West Asia such as India, and the Middle East states such as Iran and Israel have continued to take (Ikenbarry, 2001).

But we cannot lose sight of Nigeria's hegemonic influence in the West African sub region and on the continent of Africa in general. From the benefit of hindsight, several ambitious attempts have been made by successive governments of Nigeria to consolidate on the gains of its Afrocentric gestures. From the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 and the ratification of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), one can understand the steps that have been taken to mobilize the right kind of human and material resources for the development and upliftment of the West African sub-region.

Unarguably, however, ECOWAS has remained one of the viable platforms of a sub-regional mechanism for regional integration on the continent, and Nigeria has been demonstrating sufficient commitment to see it grow and fulfill the objectives for which it was established. According to Ipson (n.d) Nigeria is endowed with tremendous economic fortunes, military capabilities, strategic economic positions and population. All these qualities make the country a powerful force to reckon with in terms of the push for African development. Extant literature and the works of the African Development Bank Group (2015) have alluded that Nigeria's commitment to the development of Africa gave rise to the establishment of the Bank as well as the Nigerian Trust Fund (NTF)

around the late 1970s. The fund was established with an initial capital outlay of about US\$80 million dollars. This figure however, was later increased to US\$88 million dollars in 1981. Evidence from various sources have proved that the fund has successfully financed about 43 development projects in 27 African countries with a whopping cost of around US\$240,764,220. The projects, according to many analysts, include rural energy supply projects, irrigation farming, provision of dams for water storage and supply, construction of air and sea ports, roads network, and telecommunications, among others. To further demonstrate its commitment in the mission to rescue Africa, the Nigerian Government has, since 1964, facilitated its shareholding in the Bank, while leveraging on this to step up infrastructural expansion stretching several locations in Africa.

For instance, evidence has revealed that the Bank funded the construction of the Nigerian-Cameroon highways as part of its efforts to realize the objective of the trans-continental link from Nigeria to the rest of other West African countries. Some of the Trans African Highways connect Nigeria Cameroon, Central African Republic, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo as well as Kenya, totaling about 6,300 kilometers. The total cost for the construction, according to the African Development Bank is peaked at around US\$4234 million dollars.

In line with the sustained cravings for economic self-reliance posture of the Nigerian government at the time, conscious efforts were made by the county to encourage bilateral and multilateral joint ventures in the African sub-region. As a consequence, there emerged the Nigeria-Benin-Guinea joint ventures particularly designed to enhance the prospecting and mining of uranium, production of cement and sugar. Again, the economic engagements between Nigeria-Rwanda-Burundi brought about construction of telecommunications and roads network. Similarly, the Nigerian government in September 2010, awarded over US\$5 million dollars in support of the Lake Chad project (The Business Day, 2012).

On the other hand, evidence has also indicated that at the humanitarian level, the government of Nigeria had, on many occasions, intervened in troubled regions within Africa ranging from challenges of displacement, ethnic conflicts

and refugee problem. The CARA report reveals that the government of Nigeria, around the early 1980s had earmarked about US\$ 3 million dollars as financial assistance to refugees in Africa. Again, during the CARA conference, the Nigerian government, as part of her initiation to promote joint project financing through technical assistance programme with other African states, gave the sum of US\$ 53,000 to assist in project development in Malawi.

Besides, the sum of US\$ 64 million dollars was also given by the government as part of her refugees support fund (CARA Report, n.d). All of these laudable achievements are outside other initiatives ranging from regional peace-keeping missions, the dismantling of apartheid regime and colonialism in South Africa and many other administrative diplomatic relations around the African sub-region.

### **Factors Inhibiting Nigeria's Citizen Diplomacy and Hegemony in West Africa**

From the aforementioned analysis on citizen diplomacy and the quantum of development efforts that have been achieved by the Nigerian government as it problems in African foreign policy interests, critics and public analysts have maintained that the whole process is deficient in content and character.

According to Amao and Uzodike (2015) the evidence of Nigeria's Afrocentric policy thrust has continued to manifest in economic downturn and the increasing neglect of the nation's domestic needs, aspirations and responsibilities. To Amao and Uzidike (2015), most of the nation's social and economic obligations required of an independent state such as Nigeria are hardly provided. The social contract and bond between the leadership and the governed as recommended by the Constitution in terms of provision of basic human existential has not been achieved. Again, it has been widely reported that due to the enormous financial commitment of Nigeria in meeting with its hegemonic roles elsewhere, and coupled with market uncertainties that have continued to affect her oil revenue, the expectations of the country to deal with emerging economic circumstances have been crippled.

Aside from economic uncertainties, Mailafia (2010) had earlier averred that the nation's magnanimity has never been defined on the basis of her national interest. Mailafia (2010) claimed that whenever Nigeria intervenes to achieve the so-called peace, security as well as defend and protect African democratic institutions, the whole picture shows increasing desperation for regional investments. It is difficult however, to point at all of these gestures, be it the issue of offering of grants, protection of democracy or dishing out of other technical assistance, and to be able to tell which of these have yielded a noteworthy dividends to Nigeria in terms of investment opportunities (Mailafia, 2010, p.5).

The general Afrocentric posture of Nigeria's foreign policy, to scholars such as Gambari (1997) and Garba (1987) has been seen from the prism of realism and based on the socio-economic and political environment at the time. To this end, Garba (1987) and Gambari (1997) have alluded that quite a number of African countries at that point in time were either still under the yoke of colonization, or at best undergoing the agony of military dictatorship. In either of the two extremes, the reality and political imperative of these times calls for support.

Radical scholars, insist that Nigeria's regional interest amounts to diplomatic blunders. Their contention was premised on the fact that as a newly independent nation at the time, most of its power elite had little or no experiences to be able to drive such bogus and ambitious regional policies (Akinboye, 2010; Amao & Uzodike, 2015; Dan-Fulani, 2014; Fayomi, et al., 2015 & Mailafia, 2010).

Taking a cue from the argument submitted by Amao and Uzodike (2015), Marafa (2012) had earlier stated that Nigeria's deep interest in African politics and her incursion into the affairs of other countries has made her to miss out in several opportunities. The nation's decision to shoulder African collective yoke and hoping to achieve a just, equitable and peaceful regional geo-politics has been conceived as unrealistic and merely utopian. This is why Dan-Fulani (2014) critiquing the Nigerian Afrocentric foreign policy informed that the whole issue compares favorably with a nation running an international non-governmental organization. Just like Amao and Uzodike (2015), Dan-Fulani (2014) maintained that the nation's bid to accommodate regional politics is a drain pipe for scarce resources, and a diversion of attention from investment



in technological innovation as well as industrial expansion, development and sustainability as opposed to agrarian economic system.

In spite of all of these challenges, however, it does appear that Nigeria's influence is spiraling. To many political observers, the reasons for this state of affairs are not far-fetched. Nigeria is confronted by leadership failure, rising corruption, weak economic structures and political institutions, insecurity, decay in critical infrastructure, and of late, the challenge of global war (the Russian-Ukraine war) as well as the after-effect of the corona virus pandemic (Covid-19) that ravaged the world in 2020. The socio-economic and political conditions, no doubt, have continued to impact negatively on the nation's quest to sustaining her influence in Africa and beyond.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper has examined citizen diplomacy and some of the development trajectories that have come with Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policies, over time. The study is an attempt to reevaluate the dynamics of socio-economic and political developments in the context of inter-play of Nigeria's hegemonic leadership roles, not only in West Africa, but also in other parts of the world.

The study, among other things, analysis scholarly debates and arguments on the sustainability or otherwise of the nation's Afro-centric focus as her policy centerpiece. What is interesting about this study in terms of findings is that there appears to be a myriad of problems confronting the Nigerian state, while the country is busy trying to solve other regional problems. From the investigation, and what experts have argued, there is unanimity in the sequence of debates and counter-argument that point to the same direction. The scholars, some of whom argue from a realist point of view situated their perspectives around numerous internal contradictions that have become pervasive in the country. They include, but not limited to downward spiral of the nation's economic fortunes characterized by more or less monolithic oil economy; questions of excruciating poverty, unemployment, insecurity, infrastructural decay and poor leadership matrix, among others. What is clear in the debate is that, though Nigeria may be right in trying to salvage moribund economic conditions of

African/Diaspora nations, the onus is on her to first and foremost, commence her charity work from the domestic level.

In view of the aforementioned, this study proffers the following recommendations as panacea to resolving the challenges associated with citizen diplomacy and some of the ways the Nigerian state can go about African policies without let or hindrance.

One, there is need for government to now formulate policies and implement strategies that can tackle domestic challenges posed by poor economic reforms and macro-economic policies for several decades. The kind of economic policies in operation for an umpteenth time in the country are merely external in outlook. There is therefore the need for adequate legislation that encourages diversification, export promotion and self-reliance, where the country can reclaim its lost glory compared to what obtained in the early 1970s.

Two, there is also the need to begin citizen diplomacy from home. It goes beyond rhetoric. The kind of diplomacy required to move the nation and citizens forward should reflect a well-planned fiscal regulations that is capable of diffusing the ravaging levels of extreme poverty, skyrocketing inflation and unemployment, especially among the teeming youths. Thus, the government can effectively achieve when there is commitment on the part of the government as well as collaboration with the private sector.

Three, it is very important for the government to regulate its spending and financial commitments in trying to tackle the problems of other nations. While this gesture is laudable, there is need for strategic thinking where greater emphasis is placed on the revival of all moribund industries such as textiles, oil and gas, agriculture and mining. This way, more money will be harnessed for the development of not only the Nigerian economy, but also for assistance to Nigerian neighbors and beyond the shores of the continent of Africa in general.

Four, on the international image crisis, the Nigerian state and its leaderships can embark on self-cross examination and peer-review. What is common today is that the youth seem to be learning from the leadership, especially at the

top political echelon of government. The Nigerian society seemingly glorifies corruption and the inward behaviors. To this end, an average Nigerian therefore thinks and perceives corrupt attitude as a way of life. Again, when corrupt public officials are not reprimanded sufficiently after committing infractions, the tendency is for the younger generation of Nigerians to feel less worried about possible repercussions on corrupt practices. Therefore, the things we see in the country have been carefully hatched, packaged and delivered to the very psyche of the people who constitute the followership. Thus, the 'Nigerianess' in everyone plays out conspicuously and traverses the borders and shores of the nation and continent to the outside world. There is therefore the urgent need to re-introduce moral instruction at all levels of educational system where the younger ones are taught virtues and values on ethics and moral behaviour. This same treatment should also be meted out to the nation's power elites through seminars, symposia and periodic conferences. This is an assured way to reclaiming the nation's lost glory and pride in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

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# 2

## **GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A STRATEGIC PANACEA FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examined government by the people and national security in Nigeria: A strategic panacea for good governance. Government by the people is a function of the “will” of the people. This was practiced by people of early centuries who consequently had leaders of repute that led them both in peace and war times. Nigeria whose independence dates back to October 1, 1960 has had series of democratic governance up to the current fourth republic. These republics, less the current fourth republic, were truncated by military coup d’état, which also truncated itself at several points. These resulted in short lived regimes, unstable socio-economic development and growth, poor imagery in the international community as well as barrages of sanctions and denial of various assistance from world economic bodies such as WTO, IMF, World Bank and the UN. It indeed mutilated Nigeria’s national sanctity, integrity and sanity across the world’s view of the nation. With these, hardship and social insecurity ensued, governance was threatened and national security become ridiculed due to the emanation of strikes, riots, revolts, demonstrations, protests, breakdown of law and order and decay in judicial processes. The theory of direct democracy was brought to bear in this paper while the variables were conceptualized. The paper relied on observations, open interaction as well as in-depth secondary data for collection of facts. On the whole it was found that government by the people has direct impacts and implications to national security being that it is people driven. Therefore, the ways forward remains that the “will” expressed by the people must be respected and should be the determinant for governance.*

**Keywords:** *Governance, Democracy, People, National Security, Will*



## Introduction

Leadership of nations across the globe is often determined in different ways. Sometimes, they are determined by individuals who believe that they have the mettle to lead without recourse to how the people feel (authoritative, autocratic and dictatorship). At other times, they are determined by group of persons who live and propagate certain cultural heritage, especially in terms of monarchical transfer of leadership (traditional). In other parlance, leadership could be capitalist, socialist or communist in nature and practice as it exists in some blocs on the globe. In all of these, there are essential determinants that classify ways in which the people or the society are led or governed. These determinants could either be the person, belief system or culture and the environment. As controversial as this could be, Frank Herbert, an American author was quoted in a Premium Times publication of April 6, 2012 as stating that:

Good governance never depends upon laws, but upon the personal qualities of those who govern. Thus, it could be averred that the machinery of government is always subordinate to the will of those who administer that machinery. The most important element of government, therefore, is the method of choosing leaders.

Government by the people is a function of the “will” of the people. This have been practiced right from early centuries when the people wished and sought for leaders of repute that would lead them both in peace and war times. Their desires were often blessed by the Almighty and Supreme Being who helps them in actualizing their desire. According to the position of the Holy Book in 1 Samuel Chapter 9, Saul is chosen to be the first king over the Israelite people. The Israelites begged Samuel for the appointment of a king to rule over and lead them, and God rewarded them with Saul as a king. This pattern and desire by the people has continued in so many parts of Nigeria where leaders are sought for through the guidance of supernatural deities as it is in the south-west, south-east and south-south Nigeria. As was prescribed by Herbert, these leaders would often work with mechanisms that would either help to actualize the dreams and wills of the people or to help in achieving the leadership’s

nightmare against the people resulting in uproars, regrets and negative wishes by the people for an urgent change.

In contemporary times, nations experience governance either through a democratic process of election or through an abrupt dislodge of government by coup d'état. These coup d'état which are often conducted by the military of the state, normally advance an autocratic or dictatorial front in leadership. As much as this is abhorred by international communities as well as the UN, it presents itself as a solution following a failure in a state's democratic process or leadership. Ordinarily, it is expected that the dictatorial government would last for a very short while to realign governance, after which it relinquishes governance to a democratic government. However, what is obtained is that the juntas tend to last longer than expected or necessary, advancing several reasons. This makes the affected nation fall out of favour with the world committee of nations and it further suffers sanctions which create hardship for the people. Thus, national security becomes impeded, fragile and of concern as national hardship gives rise to various crimes both against the people and the state.

A democratic setting reflects government that emanates from a credible electoral process. However, skirmishes often ensue due to lack of electoral integrity. Corruption arises, issues of maladministration, embezzlement and misappropriation of funds become the order of the day. At most, there is lack of accountability of governance to the people. This is contrary to the position of Benjamin (1826) who stated that "...all power is a trust and we are accountable for its exercise". Consequently, strikes, riots, revolts, demonstrations, protests, breakdown of law and order as well as toothlessness and decay in judicial processes give rise to ill situations. With these, governance is not only threatened, national security is exposed to ridicule. This has occurred in several countries across the globe such as Pakistan in Asia, Sudan in North Africa, Mali and currently, Burkina Faso both in West Africa in the African continent.

Nigeria whose independence dates back to October 1, 1960 has had series of democratic governance up to the current fourth republic. These republics, except the current fourth republic, were truncated by military coup d'état, some of which lasted for a short while and others lasted a long time. At some point,

coup d'état truncated each other resulting in short lived regimes, unstable socio-economic development and growth, poor imagery in the international community as well as barrages of sanctions and denial of assistance from world economic bodies such as WTO, IMF, World Bank and the UN. It indeed mutilated Nigeria's national sanctity, integrity and sanity across the world's view of the nation.

Be that as it may, the fourth republic which commenced in 1999 and has continued till date has witnessed a total of six democratic elections that led to six uninterrupted democratic governments to which citizens built and had their hopes of national survival, socio-economic tranquility, development and economic growth. It is obvious that the democratic dispensations have yielded much less than expected and this has been made evident by high poverty rates, increase in inflation and unemployment, dwindling national economy, recurring recessions as well as loss of value in the national currency. This has consequently resulted in abject poverty, massive suffering, economic hardship and serious loss of confidence in the government. These situations occur when incompetence which is a by-product of corrupt electoral processes with possible practice of vote buying and deception of the people (citizens) who sell their consciences and vote for it, prevails. At the end, the people suffer the aforementioned consequences in addition to increase in crime rate due to want for survival, social decadence and the replacement of national security with national insecurity.

### **Conceptualisation**

Conceptualisation of variables actuates open knowledge, sagacity and application. It is based on this that the two variables of *government by the people* and *national security* will be viewed from the light of other scholars.

**Government by the people:** Literally speaking, this concept could be described as the existence of a government elected, permitted and installed by not just the people but a true reflection of the people's will. Accordingly, John Wycliffe, an English Theologian, was pointed to be the originator of this quote and concept which he cited in the prologue

of his early translation of one of the holy books (the Holy Bible) in 1384 wherein he posited that “this Bible is for the government of the people, by the people and for the people.”

This was further eulogized by a politician, Daniel Webster in 1830 who during a sitting of the US Senate made a presentation concerning his perception of the US constitution. He posited that the US constitution is the people’s constitution, the people’s Government, made for the people, made by the people and answerable to the people. He reiterated and made it clear that the people of the US have declared that this constitution shall be the supreme law “.....we must either admit the proposition or dispute their authority”. This simply means that government by the people from the position of Webster represents and remains a declaration by the people, not just by words but by act which speaks to their position.

Theodore Parker manifested this during his speech in 1850 to a New England Anti-Slavery Convention where he posited and declared that:

...There is what I call the American idea... This idea demands, as the proximate organization thereof, a democracy, that is, a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people, of course, a government after the principles of eternal justice, the unchanging law of God; for shortness’ sake, I will call it the idea of freedom...

Abraham Lincoln in 1863 during his address at Gettysburg was unforgiving at remembering the sacrifices of their heroes past while elaborating on what the US government must depict. In his words:

.. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember

what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

As concise as these definitions could be, the concept remains definite in describing its sole make up. Government by the people is descriptive in its function. It designates that there is an action behind a collective will of a people, a representation of an answer focused towards an agreed direction. It is a targeted wish or answer gotten in unison by a people. Therefore, the government by the people is a pattern of leadership decided upon and chosen by the people for the collective good of all (the state).

**National Security:** National security seems a wholesome wide umbrella under which lie various forms of security like human security, economic security, financial security, institutional security, educational security, food (agricultural) security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, political security and the security of all aspects of human living and endeavour. These and many more are all points of interest that affects the people, thus they are a consideration by the people especially in times and terms of governance. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of daily life in homes, offices or communities. It further defines it as the state of being or making safe, secure from danger. Wehmeier and Ashby (2002) however define security as protection against something that might happen in the future or as the activities involved in protecting a country, a building

or persons against threats or danger. Essentially, security must be related to the presence of peace, safety and happiness; and the protection of human and physical resources as well as the absence of crisis, threats or human injury amongst others as the presence of peace could facilitate progress.

Imobighe (1990, p.224) however opines that security is the freedom from threats to a nation's capability to defend and develop itself, promote its values and lawful interest. Zabadi (2005, p.3) on the other hand posits that "Security is a state in which people or things are not exposed to danger of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or decline. This view is associated with the survival of the state and the preservation of its citizens."

The term "national security" does not appear to lend itself to any precise definition. This is partly because; the nature and concept of national security may vary from one state to the other. Like other contested concepts, the term contains ideological element that renders empirical evidence irrelevant as a means of resolving the debate. It is a very complex issue that is all encompassing and means different things to different people but fundamentally it has to do with the survival and safety of the nation state including but not limited to the exercise of military, economic, political and diplomatic powers in the society. To achieve national security, deliberate policies are enacted by the government to ensure the continued survival of the state to enable the citizens to carry out their daily legitimate activities.

However, two main tendencies in defining national security are identifiable. The first is the state-centered concept which views national security in terms of defence and survival of the state. The conception equates "defence" with "security" and bestows its protection to the military as the custodians of national security, and equates national security with the security of the state (conventional security).

The problem of this conception is that it is based on the erroneous belief that in all circumstances "nation" equates to a "state" and therefore the object of national security is the nation. But, this is not always the case in many countries. Giving the definition of a nation as a large community of people sharing a common

history, culture and language and living in a particular territory under one government, a nation may not always coincide with the state. For instance, the Nigerian state is made up of many ethnic nationalities with different cultural, religious and social backgrounds. Where they coincide, the object and purpose of the state will be to protect the sacred attributes of the nation. But where they do not, the state becomes an instrument in the hands of the dominating nationality to pursue and protect its survival. In this connection, it would appear that a state without nationality crisis might have the capacity to view its national security in terms of protecting its internal values from outside threat and interference. The 1999 constitution however, attempts to close the gap in this nation and state dichotomy perhaps, by describing Nigeria as a nation in its preamble and declaring it as a state in Section 2 (1) which says “we the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Having firmly and solemnly resolved: To live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign Nation...”.

The second tendency in the definition of national security involves the factoring of the state and the individual into the constituents of the definition. According to this definition, security involves freedom from danger or threat to a nation’s ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and well-being of its people. It refers to the security of a nation-state, its institutions including the general well-being of its citizens. This takes into account the significance of human well-being in the security considerations of a country. According to Al-Mashal, (2010) national security should address “the physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society and its members both in domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system (non-conventional security).

Therefore, national security is viewed as the ability to ensure that the nation’s citizens, resources, territorial integrity, economy as well as socio-cultural entities which are all subject to policy determination through governance are secure by the people. The availability of security by the people defines ownership of the nation by the people who also determine how the nation and its content are governed.

## **Theoretical Framework**

According to the theory of direct democracy, people (citizens) should vote directly and not through their representatives. Proponents of this theory is of the view that as much as political activity can be valuable, it require that the people (citizens) who remain participants, be educated so that they can check powerful elites put in position of rulership and leadership by them. This point is important owing to the fact that the people (citizens) do not rule themselves, but select through votes those who should rule them and remain accountable to the people.

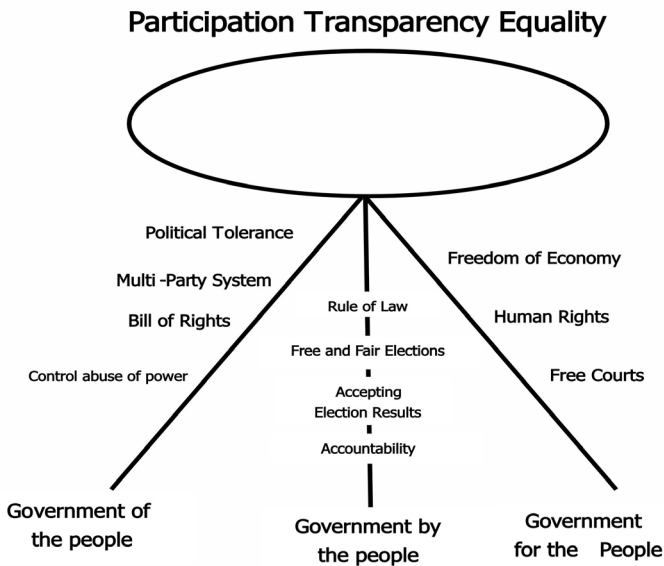
Downs (1957) and Dahl (1989) which are proponents of this theory were of the view that the fundamental democratic principle is that, when it comes to binding collective decisions, each person in a political community is entitled to have his/her interests and be given equal consideration (not necessarily that all people are equally satisfied by the collective decision). They used the term polyarchy to refer to societies in which there exists a certain set of institutions and procedures which are perceived as leading to such democracy. Most sacred to these institutions is the regular occurrence of free and open elections which are used to select representatives who then manage all or most of the public policies of the society.

## **The Tripod Stands of Democracy**

The concept of democracy connotes the free and fair chances of citizens of nations to choose and elect their leaders to govern over them. It is a practice in which the choice is of the people, for the people and by the people thus forming the tripod upon which democracy sits. For the purposes of determining "freeness" and "fairness", certain principles guide the process. These principles are participation of citizens, transparency, equality, political tolerance, multi-party system, bill of rights, control the abuse of power, rule of law, free and fair elections, accepting election results, freedom of economy, accountability, human rights, and free courts.



**Fig 1.3**      **Diagram showing the Tripod Stand of Democracy**



**Source: Author’s compilation**

Democracy which rests on a tripod as shown in the diagram above is made formidable by the aforementioned principles. They are the grease which lubricates the value within which democracy exists. Better put, they are the legitimate succor for governance of a nation (or the people). The tripods of democracy are not just statements or representations, they are descriptive actions expected from citizens. This means that the government that is to exist would exist based on the will and choice of the people (government of the people), the government would be meant to serve the people (government for the people) as well as that the government would exist based on the total agreement and acceptance of the people. However, where the government comes short of the people’s expectations, it can be repealed or impeached out of existence through appropriate processes by the people (government by the people). This descriptive definitions of the various pods elaborates how much and the extent to which democracy relies on and owes its existence to the people. The various attached principles reflect the wishes of the people and also describes the extent to which the people expect their well-being, socio-

economic welfare and security to be handled and managed by government instituted by them through democratic processes.

Government by the people which is one of the tripods of democracy connotes that governance would remain accountable to the people just as the people would, as a result of their accountability, determine their continuity in leadership. Thus, governance on this democratic tripod remains a people-centric mechanism.

### **Historical Approach of “Government by the People”**

In ancient times, societies were ruled by individuals with wealth, physical strength or power but even in those times, these persons had to work for the well-being of those they ruled. Also, these rulers most of the time, governed within the paradigms of their traditions, societal norms and laws. They also consulted the powerful members of society on some matters. Gradually, those with whom consultation became customary evolved into councils, estates and parliaments. The idea of consensus-seeking then broadened to include the masses, and this is how democracy came into being.

The birthplace of democracy was ancient Greece, particularly Athens. In the Greek city-state, democratic self-government was direct, the people in assembly discussed and voted on major public issues. There were no parliaments, no cabinets and no civil servants. Officials were selected by lot, but slaves and women were excluded from the vote. Not all the Greek city-states were democratic. Plato condemned democracy. He was of the view that people had neither the moral nor the intellectual capacity to participate in governance. Plato proposed that government be entrusted to a small elite of highly trained men, the philosopher-kings, who were of superior moral fiber and intellectual capacities. Aristotle, though he was more sympathetic towards Democracy than Plato, believed it to be a corrupt form of government. Although he felt that persons of education and wealth should have considerable influence in public affairs, he also held the view that the principle of numbers must be recognized if government was to be based on consent. Moreover, Aristotle stressed the rule of law, as opposed to the rule of men, which is why he is considered one of the

founders of the western tradition of constitutional government, basic to both autocratic and democratic societies.

Despite the great achievements of the Athenian city-state, the idea of democracy was not widely praised in the Ancient World. Athens (which was head of the Delian League of democratic city-states) was defeated by an oligarchic league, led by Sparta in 404 BC and after some time all the city-states whether democracies or oligarchies were incorporated into the new empire of Rome. The Romans, drawing inspiration from the Greek civilization, set up their first assembly named *Comitia Curiata*. It was the first step towards a democratic polity. Different tribes were represented in the assembly and they elected the magistrates. As Rome expanded and became more populous, the Romans reorganized their assembly and named it *Comitia Centuriata*. This assembly was larger and included representatives from the Army, and it decided how the city/country should be run. However, the assembly was restricted only to free male citizens, the wealthy and soldiers. The senate was the legislative body which approved laws and later on, also selected the people who would be members of the assembly. This made the senate a very powerful body. The men in the assembly elected the consuls. There was no real system of checks and balances between the three different bodies; the consuls, the senate and the assembly. The clientele system distorted the rudimentary democracy in Rome. It worked like a mafia. The members of the senate had faithful followers called clients, who were given full protection in exchange for unquestioning loyalty, including voting for them.

The early Roman republic began as a democracy, but the influence of the Patricians (the wealthy aristocratic families) and the system of clientalism weakened the democratic element and the majority of the citizens did not have a say in government matters. Julius Caesar gave the final blow to the Republic when he became Emperor. Here we can say that Europe was the birthplace of democracy, since it originated in the Greek city-states of 5 B.C. But before Aristotle's Latin version of *Politics* began to be circulated in the mid-thirteenth century, little was known in Europe of the government of Athens and Aristotle's strictures on democracy, which he found to be a corrupt form

of governance. This did not offer good grounds for emulating its achievements in mediaeval Europe. The Renaissance or Enlightenment became catalysts of change in Europe. Renaissance began with the revival of the learning of ancient Greece and Rome. Educated people started reading ancient texts, rediscovering knowledge that had been lost or forgotten during the Middle Ages also called the Dark Ages, when feudalism, the tyranny of the Christian church and wars kept the masses in Europe poor, downtrodden and illiterate.

The revival of ancient texts and their wider circulation, enticed the people of the Age of Enlightenment to write books on philosophy, and forms of government. In this regard, the invention of the printing press gave the literate people access to the works of philosophers and intellectuals. Thus the seeds had been planted which blossomed, bringing about major changes in European societies. The Protestant Movement in the fifteenth century which created a schism in the Christian church also contributed to the rise of modern democracy both directly or indirectly, though Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Movement, was a firm believer in the authority of princes and had no use for democracy. The Protestants and the Catholics, after fighting many long drawn-out and bloody wars, had to learn to coexist peacefully despite their religious differences. This new spirit of tolerance became an accepted practice in politics too. Also, the practice of self-government in some Protestant churches promoted the idea of self-government in politics as well. In 1689, the English Parliament passed the Bill of Rights, the ancestor of similar charters in other countries later on. The Bill of Rights emphasized the importance of the individual's freedom in many aspects of life, including government, law and religion. It also laid down the principle that political authority rests with parliament. Though it was a great step towards democracy, its immediate result was government dominated by the aristocrats rather than the common man.

The American Revolution which began as a movement against British rule of the American colonies also had a strong element of democratic idealism. The British kingdom had established colonies on American soil. As these expanded, the British government decided to impose taxes on the colonists. The colonists evoking the democratic principle argued that the British parliament

could not tax them because they did not have representation in it. The slogan “no taxation without representation” challenged British rule over the American colonies. In April 1775, British troops at Lexington exchanged fire with armed colonists. A month later the second continental congress wrote the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson, one of the leaders of the revolution drafted the declaration which pointed out that a ruler has power only if given by the people he governs. In 1783, the Treaty of Paris between the colonies and Britain was ratified and American independence became a reality. John Locke and Montesquieu undertook the task of writing the American constitution. Both Locke and Montesquieu were inspired by democracy in ancient Greece. The main objective of the authors of the American constitution was to establish a balance of power between the three branches of government – the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.

The Congress, the legislative branch, would make laws. The members of the Congress would be elected to represent the citizens. The Congress would have two houses – the House of Representatives (lower house) and the Senate (the upper house). The President would head the executive branch, assisted by a cabinet, advisors and other officials. Strong powers were given to the President, but not enough to make him a tyrant. The French revolution of 1789, radically transformed the social order in France and recast ancient democracy into a new mould. The French revolution was the first successful attempt by a European nation to establish a government by the people. French revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity not only affected France but also the whole of Europe, for the Napoleonic wars that followed the French revolution, spread these ideas throughout the continent. The mediaeval institutions of monarchy and feudalism got a severe blow from the revolution and while monarchy endured in a diluted form, feudalism could not survive in Europe. The French revolution promoted the idea of democracy and popular sovereignty in Europe. The idea of popular sovereignty is a predominantly modern doctrine, designed to grant legitimacy to political institutions that did not exist in the Grecian polity. Again the system of representation of the masses in modern states, had no place at all in the politics of ancient Athens.

As already pointed out, democratic ideas spread throughout Europe in the Napoleonic era (1799-1815). Napoleon transformed the conquered areas by abolishing feudalism, and class privilege. The Congress of Vienna (1815) was convened by the Great Powers of Europe after the defeat of the 'parvenu' emperor Napoleon. Its aim was to restore the ancient regime and to stop the consolidation of French revolutionary ideals which had begun to transform societal norms in Europe. The Congress restored and legitimized the monarchies of Europe, and the aristocrats and the privileged classes were given back the privileges that they had lost. The so-called 'Holy Alliance' formed between Great Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria, protected the outcomes of the Vienna Congress. Though the Holy Alliance was mainly a military partnership to quell any future revolutions in Europe, it also expressed the determination of these great powers to thwart the resurgence of liberal and democratic trends in Europe. The July Revolution of 1830 and the February Revolution of 1848 in France triggered revolts and revolutions in other parts of Europe and paved the way for constitutional government. These revolutions revived the idea of democracy introduced by the French Revolution of 1789, albeit in a rudimentary form. The Industrial Revolution also contributed to the evolution of democracy. In Europe, the Industrial Revolution created a middle class, which as it became stronger, struggled for the right to vote and eventually achieved it. This middle class organized itself in the form of interest groups and labour unions and put pressure on their governments to grant them political participation.

Democracy progressed slowly and gradually and in most parts of Europe universal suffrage was given first only to the propertied male population, then extended to large sections of the working class in the cities and the countryside and ultimately to women. European women launched a prolonged and brave struggle called the suffragette movement to gain equality and the right to vote. Slavery was abolished first in theory and much later in practice. The freeing of the Afro-American slaves by Abraham Lincoln after the American civil war in the mid-nineteenth century dealt the final blow to this abhorrent practice of enslaving human beings. However, the blacks in the US had to struggle for another hundred years by waging the civil rights movement, before they were fully recognized as equal to the whites before the law. Democracies were

working well, though slowly when the First World War broke out. The war ended with the defeat and collapse of the German, the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman empires. In 1919, the Weimar Republic replaced Germany's Kaiser and his supporters – the Junkers (the land owning aristocratic military class). Several new states emerged in Eastern Europe and the Baltic region. All of these were committed to democracy, but in different degrees. Women were enfranchised in most of the old and new states. Political parties emerged in the European democracies, which represented the industrial working class. They adopted names such as the Social Democratic Party, the Socialist Party or the Labour Party. Their aim was to eventually change the economic system, from capitalism to socialism, but not through revolution. In this way they differed from the Marxist school of thought.

The socialists argued that political democracy was meaningless unless accompanied by economic democracy that would provide a reasonable standard of living, adequate education, security and leisure for all. The communist revolution in Russia during the First World War overthrew the Russian monarchy and the privileged aristocracy, bringing into power the Bolsheviks, led by V. I. Lenin. In the inter-war years in Italy, the Fascist party led by Benito Mussolini, seized power. Similar movements arose in some other European countries, including Germany and fascism became a scourge. Fascism was ultra-nationalistic, racist and militaristic, and after the Great Depression hit Europe in 1929, fascism became more widespread. In 1933, Adolf Hitler led the Nazi party to power in Germany and within a few years fascist regimes took over in Spain and Japan.

The aggressiveness and expansionism of the fascist regimes led to the Second World War, in which the democratic western states along with the Soviet Union confronted the fascist-ruled countries. Though the fascist era lasted less than 25 years, it wrought immense damage to the socio-political and economic structure of Europe. Fascism could only be dislodged through an all-out war against the three main fascist powers – Germany, Italy and Japan. After the war, the parliamentary system was adopted by the West European countries, which had been under fascist regimes or Nazi occupation. Democracy became

well-entrenched in Western and Nordic Europe. The Soviet Union, breaking the promises it had made to the allied powers in the war time conferences imposed 'people's democracies' on East and Central Europe which it had liberated from fascism. It then became the Soviet Union's aim to spread communism throughout the world. World affairs were now dominated by two opposing power blocs one led by the Soviet Union and the other by the US. For nearly 45 years, the liberal democratic West and the communist East confronted each other in what is known as the cold war. The cold war ended in 1989-1991 with the collapse of the communist regimes in Central and East Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Soviet-style communism enforced one-party rule, strengthened by the KGB, the secret police and made it possible for an individual and his clique to exercise dictatorial powers.

Unlike fascism, Soviet communism lasted for more than seven decades, but ultimately collapsed in 1991. The former communist countries adopted the western multi-party political model. Though the change was difficult, the Eastern European states successfully completed their transitional phase and several of them have now become part and parcel of the European Union and members of NATO. The failure of communism discredited the totalitarian system and encouraged democratic movements in different parts of the world. Here, the best example is that of South Africa, where the white minority racist regime crumbled between 1990 and 1994, buckling under international pressure and the prolonged and persistent anti-apartheid movement spearheaded by the African National Congress. The country's first elections were held based on universal suffrage and Nelson Mandela the hero of the anti-apartheid movement became the first black President of the country. He pursued a policy of reconciliation with the white minority, instead of unleashing revenge and reprisals against the former elites. Coming back to the post Second World War period, the defeated states - apart from the countries occupied by the Soviet army, adopted democratic constitutions and accepted the verdict of the electorate. Thus, West Germany and Italy in Europe and Japan in Asia became democratic states. After the Second World War, circumstances forced Britain, France and other European powers to give independence to their colonies in Asia and Africa. Parliamentary regimes were set up in the colonies by the



departing colonial powers, but few of these thrived. Here one can point to so many reasons for the failure of democracy in the developing world. Among the most prominent causes was dictatorship by charismatic leaders or army commanders, mass poverty, illiteracy, political inexperience, ethnic and regional conflicts and the selfish agendas of the former colonial masters and the two superpowers, which emerged after the Second World War.

There is an ongoing struggle to establish democracy in many developing countries. Until recently, an exception was the Middle East and North Africa, where dictatorships, emirates and monarchies are common. With the recent wave of democratic movements in the Arab world, beginning with Tunisia, where mass protests dislodged Ben Ali's government, the Middle East seems to be going through an awakening. Although one-party rule, dictatorships and absolute monarchies still exist, a semblance of multi-party democracy has been introduced in some countries.

### **Implications of Government by the People to National Security**

Implications of government by the people to national security are enormous. They range from the positive lights to negative lights.

**Positive Light:** When a government is chosen and instituted by the people, the nation has the likelihood of experiencing good governance, accountability to the people, open audit by the people on the achievements of the instituted government and open defence by the people in favour of government actions. The defence by the people would be due to the fact that the people are being carried along in government programmes. There will also be plans for the nation as well as periodically seeking the views of the people on issues through deliberations, debates and public opinion. In these ways, amongst others, national security will be enhanced as there will hardly be the existence of public protests, agitations, riots, and insurgency and so on, however, it does not exclude the fact that rifts and skirmishes, which may though be manageable, may exist. This is in tandem with the position of Oprah (2007) who in her speech during the opening of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy stated that:

It can be said that there are four basic and primary things that the mass of people in a society wish for: to live in a safe environment, to be able to work and provide for themselves, to have access to good public health and to have sound educational opportunities for their children.”  
“It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.

**Negative Light:** Instituted government may exist or come to fruition due to an agreement by the people. As much as the desire of the people would be that their chosen and instituted government is to represent their interests as a people and nation, the possibility of the government to veer off this expectation exists. The government, instead of meeting the aspiration of the people and nation, which it stood for prior to being chosen, may decide to act on its will against the will of the people. This will not encourage peaceful coexistence, good governance and a united nation. Instead, it would engender political instability, constant protests, and loss of confidence in the instituted government, riots and chaos, amongst other skirmishes. This in turn threatens the achievement of national security and coercion in the nation as the instituted government will no longer have a stronghold on the affairs of the state.

### **Challenges Militating against the Achievement of Government by the People**

As much as government by the people is comely, adorable and a reputable approach to governance, actualizing it has some challenges to contend with. These challenges would often militate against its actualization from people whose laid down intents are geared towards unscrupulous and nefarious activities while in governance. These militating challenges include corruption, lack of proper political education, high cost of governance, coup d'états, weak democratic institutions, poverty, socio-economic downturn and ethnic differences. Others include absence of self will, propagation of money politics by politicians, electoral malpractice, judicial misrepresentations and malpractice,

values, tradition and religion as well as greed for taxation. However, personality and party politics including willful disregard to promises made to the people prior to being elected, loss of attention and disregard to manifestoes made to the people and sentimentalism as an approach in making appointees instead of the use and application of technocracy, are major challenges militating against the achievement of government by the people. By this, leadership remains faulty, incoherent and directionless resulting in economy downturns, redundancy, national development and possible uproar by the people against the government of the day.

### **Way Forward**

The need to have a government by the people cannot be overemphasized. This is because a government by the people does not require the sale of consciences or votes but a deployment of support to a governance that would enhance competence in terms of national growth and development, socio-economic development, national security and the well-being of citizens through good governance. It is imperative to note therefore, that respect for the “will” of the people is a pedestal upon which government by the people rides. It is with this awareness in the mind of a people-oriented government that good governance rides. It gives birth to dividends which are enjoyed by the people as a fruit of true democracy. On the whole, national security is preserved and protected while insecurity is relegated and abased.

### **Conclusion**

Government by the people is not a new phenomenon or practice but has existed over time and centuries. It is a postulation that has been clarified to be the basement for good governance and democracy. It has been actuated as the root source of both good governance and dividends of governance if only the will of this concept is respected. Its virtues lie in the fact that it gives birth to national security instead of insecurity. Therefore, the need to embrace this concept cannot be overemphasised but embraced for better and realistic governance and democracy.

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# 3

## **THE TRAVAILS OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA SINCE THE 1990s**

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## **Abstract**

*The 1990s marked a watershed in the transition to democracy in West Africa. However, after three decades, democracy is yet to be rooted in the region due to frequent military interventions (coup d'états) and the subsequent suspension of constitution and democratic structures that characterize military regime. While there are scholarly studies on the challenges of democratic transition and development in individual African states, much has not been written on West African sub region as a whole. This paper intends to fill that gap. It identifies some challenges of democracy in West Africa. It utilizes secondary source of data and employs the concept of 'Fragile State' as its framework for analysis. Fragile State refers to a situation whereby government cannot deliver its statutory core functions which include securing lives and property and ensuring political stability. It concludes that disregard for the rule of law and 'do or die' politics are some of the challenges creating impediments to the entrenchment of democracy in West Africa. To democratize and strengthen democracy in West Africa, it recommends that politics should be seen as selfless and patriotic endeavour guided by the rule of law.*

**Keywords:** *Democracy, Fragile State, Good Governance, Rule of Law, West Africa.*

## **Introduction**

West Africa, like other African regions, witnessed an ugly past and nothing is nostalgic about it. The region witnessed the reality of slave trade and colonialism; and suffered the consequences. These two historical facts derailed the region from its trajectory to greatness, economic development and political stability. Colonialism and its agents (the colonialists) distorted its history, disrupted its geography, exploited its resources, misappropriated its wealth and emasculated its people by pitching them against each other. However, due to the contradictions inherent in colonialism and its capitalist ideology, agitations for self-rule – independence – soon took over the political atmosphere. This is mainly credited to nationalist movements within the region.

West Africa is a sub-region within the African Continent. It has many features which are unique to it in terms of politics in both historical and contemporary senses. The sub-region has been the heartbeat of politics in Sub Saharan Africa for many years. Before the dawn of armed struggle against colonialism in Africa, West African intelligentsias had constituted themselves into enlightened opposition to foreign domination. In Anglophone West Africa where colonial policy relegated the educated elites in the day-to-day administration of the colonies, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society was formed in the then Gold Coast to articulate the interest of the indigenous people. The National Council of British West Africa also emerged in the early 19th Century to agitate for autonomy or indigenous participation in the administration of Anglophone West Africa.

Most states in the West African region got their independence beginning with Ghana in 1957 – with the exception of Liberia which got its independence since 1847 as the oldest independent state in Africa. After independence, none of these West African states was able to manage the weak political structures handed over to them by their previous colonial masters. This led to chaotic situations upon which the military in these states capitalized to justify their seizure of powers.

The first military coup occurred in West Africa when the Togolese army toppled and murdered Sylvanus Olympio, the state's Prime Minister, in January 1963. Since then, West Africa had become the hub of military incursions into politics or military adventurism. This is why Olukoshi (2001, p. 1) refers to West Africa as "the coup d'état belt of the African continent". In that sense, the region is unique. Military rule became the order of the day in the sub region. This went on for about three decades into the 1990s when incessant urge for transition to democracy became intensified.

Aside the introduction, this paper is divided into six sections. Section one discusses its methods and is followed by framework for analysis in section two under which it discusses the concept of Fragile State. Next to it is section three wherein relevant concepts like "democracy," "democratic transition," "civil society," etc. are clarified. Section four foregrounds the specificities of West African Sub Region. The fifth section identifies and discusses some of the major challenges to democratic transition and development in West Africa. The concluding section summarizes the work, concludes, and gives some recommendations.

## **Methods**

This study basically utilizes secondary data which was sourced from books, documents, and online materials. It surveys all the States in the West Africa sub-region with emphasis on their years of independence, number of elections held since 1990s, number of military take over, and next date of presidential elections. Data are analysed using percentage and table for presentation. This, in turn, helps to understand how far the region has gone on its trajectory to democratic transition. Though, the paper surveys West Africa as a whole, emphasis is laid on Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone for the Anglophone Africa; Togo and Benin for Francophone Africa; while Cape Verde represents one of the two Lusophone countries.

## **The Fragile State Concept: A Framework for Analysis**

This paper utilizes the concept of Fragile States as its framework for analysis. This concept refers to a situation whereby "the government cannot or will not



deliver core functions to majority of its people, including the poor, where core functions include service entitlements, justice and security” (DFID 2005, p. 7). To USAID, “fragile states refer generally to a broad range of failed, failing and recovering states...the strategy distinguishes between fragile states that are vulnerable from those that are already in crisis.” It further defines vulnerable states as those which are:

unable or unwilling to adequately assure the provision of security and basic services to significant portions of their populations and where the legitimacy of the government is in question’; while states in ‘crisis’ are defined as ones where the ‘central government does not exert significant control over its own territory or is unable or unwilling to assure the provision of vital services to significant parts of its territory where legitimacy of the government is weak or non-existent, and where violent conflict is a reality or a great risk (USAID 2005, p. 1).

The World Bank identifies fragile states with ‘Low-Income Countries Under Stress’ (LICUS). What characterizes these states, according to World Bank (2006, p. 2) are “debilitating combination of weak governance, policies, and institutions, indicated by ranking among the lowest on the Country Policies and Institutional Performance Assessment (CPIA).” Such states have two particular fragilities in common: fragile state programs/policies and institutions which in turn undermine the countries’ capability to be responsive to citizens’ need services, checkmate corruption, ensure accountability; and they are also at risk of socio-political conflict and instability (World Bank, 2005).

Stewart and Brown (2009, p. 3) define fragile states as “states that are failing, or at risk of failing, with respect to authority, comprehensive service entitlements, or legitimacy.” Many states in the West African sub region fit into the category of fragile states. We can conclude from Stewart and Brown’s analysis that a fragile state would not be able to achieve the core objectives of MDGs, especially the first goal which is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. It would also not respect human rights in all ramifications; and would ultimately be exclusionary.

It is to be noted that the political independence granted to states in the West Africa sub region by colonialists did not include economic independence. As Ake (1981, p. 92) rightly argues

that the nationalist movement which arose from the contradictions of the colonial economy achieved political independence and not economic independence. The change in the locus of political power was of course bound to have consequences for the locus and the distribution of economic power.

This made the states fragile at independence and could not make any serious headway. These states either collapsed into authoritarian one party system or hijacked by military juntas. However, in the 1990s, states in the region started experiencing pressures from Civil Society Organizations and international organizations to democratize. This democratization process has been ongoing since the 1990s till present – a lengthy span of three decades. In the subsequent sections of this paper, travails of democratic transitions in the contemporary West Africa are reviewed and assessed.

Having discussed how West African states fit into the fragile state framework, what follows is the conceptualization of “democracy”, “third wave of democracy”, “democratic transition”, “civil society”, and “civil society organizations.” The Concept of Democracy According to Doorenspleet (2005, p. 92), democracy applies to a political system in which the most important political office holders (usually organized in political parties), are selected through regularly scheduled free and fair elections in which the adult population is eligible to vote. This practical definition underlines what Dahl (1971) refers to as the two most important features of democracy: *Public contestation*, and the *right to participate* in elections. Definitely, a political system that meets the prerequisites of fair competition and general inclusiveness is thought to guarantee the existence of an opposition “that has some chance of winning office as a consequence of elections” (Doorenspleet, 2005, p. 23).

According to Schumpeter (2003, p. 269), democracy is “that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.”

To Boutros Ghali (2003, p. 7), democracy simply means “a political system whereby the whole of society can participate at every level in the decision-making process and keep control of it.” After discussing different definitions of democracy, Ochefu (2007) identifies some building blocks of democracy without which democracy remains an abstraction. These are: political equality, free and fair political competition, rule of law, public freedom, and responsiveness of government.

In view of these definitions, can we actually say West Africa has democratized or is democratizing? It is very glaring that West Africa has not democratized. It is true that there is public contestation during election but citizens are hardly allowed the right to freely participate in elections and vote for candidates of their choice. In some cases it is either they are coerced to vote for candidates not of their choice, or elections were literally militarized such that the electorate who would have voted for candidates in the opposition were scared of participating in elections. The building blocks of democracy are indeed missing; this will be discussed under the challenges of democratic transition in West Africa.

### **The Third Wave of Democracy**

Three international waves of democratic development, according to Huntington (1991) have occurred in the world in the last two centuries. The first wave, identified with the American and French revolutions, bloomed from 1828-1926. There was a second wave, though short, between 1943 and 1962. It was in the third wave that the world took notice of a dramatic and global resurgence of democracy. This occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. Since then, the number of democracies throughout the world has increased greatly (Patrick, 1996).

The resurgence of democracy in the 80s through the 90s which was tagged the third Wave of democratization by Huntington reached the African shores late. Between 1989 and 1994, as a result of external and internal yearnings for democratic system of government, 41 out of 47 countries in Africa embarked on major political reforms, including, in many cases, the first elections keenly contested in a generation (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994).

This is also true of West Africa. The sub region, in the years preceding the 1990s, was notorious for one party authoritarian system and military dictatorship (with the exemption of Cape Verde and Senegal). These two countries are said to be among the most stable democracies in Africa (World Bank, 2021; Kamer, 2022). Though they also briefly witnessed one party rule, they never witnessed military dictatorship or military coup. Rather, Senegalese army has contributed to restoring democracy in other member countries of the ECOWAS (Diagne, 2018). After its experience of one party rule immediately after independence in 1960, election became competitive since 1976 in Senegal. Though Cape Verde and Senegal have their own share of democratic shortcomings; they stand out as the only countries in West Africa which were coup-free—no military intervention. This shows how they are able to manage their politics and make it stable.

### **Democratic Transition.**

Transition to democracy should not be confused with consolidation of democracy. These are two concepts that are misleadingly used interchangeably. For clarity, transition and consolidation are stages in the democratization process. Transition comes before consolidation. Democratization can be understood as a process which is further divided into three stages: (i) the liberalization stage, when the previous dictatorial regimes is brought down; (ii) a transition stage, often occurs when the first competitive elections are held; and (iii) the consolidation phase, when democracy and its practices have become firmly established and accepted by most important stakeholders (O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Linz & Stepan, 1996).

The final stage is indispensable for establishing long-lasting democratic regimes; and it is the most taxing for emerging democracies in the developing world. In West African sub region, sadly, no state seems to have made a successful transition to democracy—except perhaps, Cape Verde. Hence, discourse on consolidation of democracy in relation to West Africa can only be made for academic sake with the prospect that it would be hopefully realized.

Having made the above clarification, we then turn our attention to transition to

democracy – a stage of democratization process into which many West African states are, and are struggling to exit. Donald (1987, p. 528) is of the opinion that “the transition to democracy may be viewed as completed when democratic procedures, rights, and rules of the game have been clearly delineated and widely accepted by a majority of elites and citizens”. Similarly, Przeworski, (1995) explains that transition to democracy has been completed the moment a new constitution is drafted and ratified. This explanation, or rather definition, is too simplistic. For how can a mere drafting and ratification of a new constitution illustrate a regime change toward democracy? The subtle difference between Przeworski’s and Donald’s positions on transition to democracy is that the latter went further to add ‘wider acceptability’ by elites and citizens of the drafted constitution.

Yet the point is that transition cannot be said to have been completed by a widely accepted drafted rules embodied in a constitution until the constitution is practically operationalized. There is no state in West Africa that does not have a drafted constitution—though with varied degree of acceptability. The challenge has always been implementation. It is this challenge that makes the region unripe for democratic consolidation. All that can be said is that the West African region is in the process of transition in its overall democratization process. In this process of transition, civil society (to which I shall now turn) played and is playing a very important role.

**Table 1 Presidential Elections in West African States (1990-2021)**

S/N	State	Year of Independence	Years of Elections Since 1990	Military Take Over	Next Presidential Election Date
	Benin	1960	1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.		2026
	Burkina Faso	1960	1991, 1998, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020.	2022	2025
	Cape Verde	1975	1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.		2026
	Côte d’Ivoire	1960	1990, 1995, 2000, 2010, 2015, 2020.	1999	2025

	The Gambia	1965	1992, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021.	1994.	2026
	Ghana	1957	1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020.		2024
	Guinea	1958	1993, 1998, 2003, 2010, 2015, 2020.	2008, 2021	2025
	Guinea Bissau	1974	1994, 2000, 2005, 2009, 2014, 2019.	2003, 2008, 2012	2024
	Liberia	1847	1997, 2005, 2011, 2017.		2023
	Mali	1960	1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2013, 2018, 2022.	2012, 2020, 2021.	2026
	Mauritania	1960	1992, 1997, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2014, 2019.	2005, 2008	2024
	Niger	1960	1993, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2011, 2016, 2021.	1996, 1999, 2010	2026
	Nigeria	1960	1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019.	1993	2023
	Senegal	1960	1993, 2000, 2007, 2012, 2019.		2024
	Sierra Leone	1961	1996, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2018.	1992, 1997	2023
	Togo	1960	1993, 1998, 2003, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020.	*2005	2025

**Source:** *Compiled by authors*

\*Togo's army installed a civilian president, Faure Gnassingbe, into power (without election) after the death of his father, President Gnassingbe Eyadema, Africa's longest ruler who served for 38 years in power.

### **The Concept of Civil Society**

Civil society, in one way or the other, has been instrumental in the later phases of democracy's third wave, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, but also in Southern Europe, Latin America, and parts of Africa. Though a debatable

concept, it has been used variously by political theorists and practitioners during the past 300 years (Patrick, 1996). Patrick (1996, p.3) further asserts that civil society is the complex network of freely formed voluntary associations, distinct from the formal governmental institutions of the state, acting independently or in partnership with state agencies. Apart from the state, but subject to the rule of law, civil society is a public domain that private individuals create and operate.

In the words of Dryzek (1996, p. 481), civil society is that “social interaction not encompassed by the state or the economy.” Bratton, (1994, p. 2) defines it as “a sphere of social interaction between the household and the state which is manifest in norms of community cooperation, structures of voluntary association, and networks of public communication”. One primary and indispensable aspect of civil society is autonomy from the state (Schmitter, 1995). Civil society stands apart from the state. It can be said that the state is the realm of the politics of coercion by which the ruling elites exert their supremacy over society. In contradistinction, civil society is the realm of consent through which citizens may choose to accept or to reject the use of force by state officials. When citizens consent, they perform a hegemonic role, helping to reproduce the prevailing social order (Salamini, 1981).

Civil society which Patrick (1996) considered as public guardians, empower citizens to take responsibility for their rights and hold public officials accountable to their constituents. Through participation in organizational activities, members acquire knowledge, skills, and virtues of democratic citizenship. So they are public laboratories in which citizens learn democracy by doing it, which contributes greatly to democratic governance of both the state and the civil society that it serves. It should be noted that civil society is not invariably anti-government; it could, at times, be an ally of any state governed strictly by the rule of law or constitutional democracy. Such government would, of course, make the common goal of securing rights to life, liberty, and property its cardinal objectives. This is hardly the case in West Africa where elected leaders abuse power.

In addition, there is the assumption that Africa (more specifically the Western

region) cannot build or consolidate democracy because it lacks a strong and active civil society that can engage the state to demand transparency and accountability. As a corollary to the above, Tar (2009) narrates, is the fact that civil society, democracy, the state, are considered 'Western' in origin and therefore new to Africa. Tar vehemently disagrees, as he mentions elsewhere (2009, p. 89), with the tendency to credit 'civil society' to Nigeria's (and by extension, Africa's) externalities. Hence, he puts *Western* in the inverted comma. The fact is that civil society could be instrumental in bringing down or strengthening a democratic government.

### **Civil Society Organizations and Democratic Transition in West Africa**

The renewal of interest in democracy in the 1990s has thrown the concept of civil society into a prominent position in both theory and practice. The end of Cold War has contributed, in no small way, to the pressures for political reform. In the international sphere of politics, the superpowers gradually withdrew or decreased support to client states, thereby posing a serious threat to dictatorial regimes. Client state is a state that is economically, politically, and militarily subordinate to another more powerful state in international relations (Fry, Goldstein & Langhorne 2002).

Also at the domestic level, citizens mobilized themselves to get rid of the military and one-party structures that had buttressed illegitimate power; and demanded for political change (Bratton, 1994). This went to the extent that the activities of civil society led to the formation of several civil society organizations (CSOs) with popular voices that were so echoed that political elites were compelled to acknowledge their importance.

CSOs, otherwise called non-governmental organizations (NGOs), that constitute civil society are free labor unions, professional groups, religious associations, human-rights advocacy groups, environmental advocates, support groups providing social welfare services to needy people, independent newspapers, among others.

It should be noted that trade unions, student movements and other forms of



civil society have been waging struggles in Africa for over half a century. The Aba women riot in 1929 during colonial rule in Nigeria and the activities of other CSOs such as Nigeria Civil Service Union (NCSU), founded in 1912; the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NTC), formed in 1931; and the Railway Workers' Union (RWU), founded in 1931, justified the existence of civil society in Africa before the third wave of democracy. In fact "Civil society cannot be said to be a new phenomenon in Nigeria or indeed any other part of Africa" (International IDEA1 2000, p. 199–201).

Three major elements were identified by Bratton (1994) in the discourse of civil society. These are: a critique of state domination of public life, a preference for reform over revolution, and a strategy for political change based upon negotiations and elections. These elements distinguish CSOs from militant, secessionist, and revolutionary groups whose objective is to crumble the state. CSOs only call for socio-political reforms, free and fair elections, transparency, accountability, justice, and good governance. In West Africa, their activities had helped to bring an end to one party autocratic rule and military regimes.

In postcolonial Nigeria, Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) emerged as the key labor organization. There exist some other affiliate trade unions, but the NLC's ability to sensitize the citizens to some government policies that were ill conceived and to engender their reversals is outstanding. Though recently there are misgivings about the activities of NLC vis-a-vis checkmating government excesses.

In the early 1990s, given Nigeria's mono-cultural economy which relies on oil, oil sector unions were more assertive and stronger than non-oil sector unions. This became apparent in the aftermath of the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential elections, when the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) championed anti-military and pro-democratic struggles. Then, the NLC national executive was alleged to have been infiltrated by state influence. These oil-sector unions coordinated a series of industrial actions which successively brought the Nigerian economy to a standstill, demanding that the military withdraw from power and restore a

democratic system (Ihonvbere, 1997 & Tar, 2009).

Opong, Oduro & Awal (2013) highlighted four major activities of CSOs in West Africa to include service delivery, advocating for and representing the interests of their constituencies, partnering with government in development planning, and monitoring the activities of governments. They further explained that in the area of empowering citizens, CSOs have played an impressive role in promoting what they called 'vertical accountability'. They have helped to amplify the voice of the public in demanding for accountability in government decision-making.

Opong, Oduro & Awal (2013, p.13) further said "convinced that effective checks on government would prevent the re-emergence of authoritarian rule, CSOs have built grassroots capacity to scrutinize the exercise of power by local office holders, and have monitored the performance of individual government bodies as well as the executive and legislature."

Ghana, for instance, owes its democratic success in the West African region partly because of progressive civil society activities. Since its transition to democracy in 1992, CSOs have emerged in Ghana as important actors participating in the democratic and development processes. As evident from Table 1, Ghana has never witnessed military coup since its transition to democracy in 1992. In the last three decades, Ghana has organized six relatively successful competitive elections, and has twice (2001 and 2009) transferred power peacefully from one party to another. Hence, it is widely regarded as an example of democratic success in the West African region. It is estimated that there are over 50,000 registered CSOs playing diverse and important roles in the areas of advocacy, service delivery, policy and government oversight, although not all of them are active (Opong, Oduro & Awal, 2013).

Sierra Leone, though not as successful as Ghana in its democratic gains, has also made significant steps in the development of a stable political system. It has organized successful democratic elections and put in place structures that have enabled a shift from tit-for-tat politics to political reconciliation after its emergence from a protracted civil war which lasted for 11 years (1991-2002).

Since the end of Sierra Leone civil war in 2002 and the election that followed, there had been no military intervention in its democratic experience. Military take over as shown in Table 1 above occurred in the 1990s during the civil war. To a great extent, democracy has come to stay in the state. This has spurred the activities of civil society organizations in important areas of the economy like the service sector, education, health, and human rights (CIVICUS, 2007).

Togo's transition to democracy is both thorny and misguided. The state, explains Kohnert (2011, p. 1), "became a test case for indigenous democratization efforts of African states when the longest-serving African dictator, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, died unexpectedly in February 2005 after 38 years of autocratic rule." It is stipulated in Togo's Constitution that the speaker of parliament should manage the state in such a case until elections are held with 60 days.

However, and to the amazement of onlookers, an extraordinary session of the 81-member national assembly which has in dominance members of Eyadema's ruling party, RPT (*Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais*; Rally of the Togolese People), met and overwhelmingly voted in support of Mr. Gnassingbe to be speaker of the parliament with the help of the army. Prior to his father's death, he had served as the Minister of Mines. This unconstitutional transfer of power was widely condemned as a 'military coup d'etat' by the African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), other international organizations, and civil society organizations (Meldrum, 2005).

Consequently, the state witnessed widespread political conflicts which degenerated into chaos. Domestic violent protests along with diplomatic pressure, withdrawal of aid from major donors, and African peers forced Gnassingbé to hold presidential elections in April 2005. The elections were glaringly rigged right in order to ensure the continuity of the Gnassingbé-clan in power. It did not come as a surprise to many when Gnassingbe was declared winner of the election – as if he was an heir to the throne of his father (Kohnert, 2011).

Cape Verde is often commended as a model of African state for its stability and development despite its lack of natural resources. Obama called it "a real success

story". At a time when most West African states were contending with orgies of violence due to sit tight syndrome and winner-takes-all mentality, Cape Verde was erecting a strong democratic edifice which drew global attention to it. Since independence in 1975, its respect for democratic values had enabled it to have smooth transfer of power through free and fair election. The state is famous for its clean sheet of military foray into its politics. It has neither experienced military takeover nor any attempted coup (Koigi, 2017).

Freedom in the World 2020 index gave the state a 92 per cent for its track record in political rights and civil liberties. This placed it ahead of all other countries in the continent. Its strong democratic foundation is indeed worthy of emulation by other political crises-ridden states on the continent and even across the globe. In Cape Verde, also known as Cabo Verde, civil liberties are generally protected, elections are invariably free and fair, the electoral laws and framework are fair and impartially implemented; and every citizen freely expresses their political rights (during elections) and other rights. However, Cabo Verde is still not a perfect democracy, the state has its own share of corruption and graft; this is relatively low as it does not affect the overall performances of the state in discharging its primary responsibilities (Freedom House, 2020). What follow is the specificities of West African sub region.

### **Specificities of West African Sub Region**

West Africa is one of the five regions on the African Continent. It has 16 countries (excluding Saint Helena). There are nine Francophone (French speaking countries): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo; five Anglophone (English speaking countries): Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone; and two Lusophone – Portuguese speaking countries: Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau.

West Africa has been more turbulent in its democratization process than any other region in Africa. There is no contesting the fact that over the last three decades, this region has witnessed "the longest and bloodiest conflicts" (Bathily, 2005, p. 25). In countries like Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberia, the democratization process has been unfolding but not

without civil wars. This has had a serious debilitating effect on all aspects of peoples' lives. Since 1982 in a state like Senegal, there is an ongoing conflict between Casamance and the Government of Senegal which the latter has had to handle cautiously to this day. While Niger and Mali might have successfully put an end to the Tuareg insurgencies, the whole of the Sahel belt, from Niger to Mauritania, to quote Bathily (2005, p. 25) remains "a circle of fire around the sub-region."

Côte d'Ivoire is a very bad example of democratic transition in West Africa. The state is always enmeshed in political crisis. Liberia and Sierra Leone are unrelenting in their effort to create stable political atmospheres following the landmark elections in 2002 and 2005, respectively. These landmark elections marked the end of years of rolling over of civil wars. It is true that Liberia was also submerged in a civil war which began in 1989 and lasted for almost a decade. However, the state in 1997 had a likelihood of an election which was won by Charles Taylor; that election ended the civil war. Yet, the instability in Libya which was engineered by Charles Taylor himself continued until he was exiled forcefully into Nigeria in 2003 (Boafo-Arthur, 2008). He was later put on trial at The Hague and now imprisoned for 50 years in May 2012 at HM Prison Frankland for crimes against humanity (CNN, 2012). In a nutshell, West Africa is a region in chaos.

Nigeria's longest transition to democracy programme of General Ibrahim Babangida's regime only landed the state into a serious political turmoil, assassination, and bloodshed. The June 12 election which was apparently won by the SDP's candidate, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, was annulled in what was thought to be a self-succession bid of General Babangida through a deliberate process of transformation from military to civilian president (Akinboye & Anifowose, 2000).

It is crystal clear that the renaissance of democracy in West Africa was a reaction to authoritarian military regimes and single party rule. Renaissance, in this context, signifies the transition of a state from an authoritarian to democratic rule. "That the sub-region had become a hotbed of authoritarianism before the early 1990s," in the words of Boafo-Arthur (2008, p. 10), "is an understatement".

Coups and counter-coups (successful and aborted) became the defining features of politics in the sub-region. The statistics are very conspicuous.

From 1960 to 1990, West Africa was extremely unstable and combustible; it had a higher percentage of military coup d'état on the continent. Leaving out unsuccessful coups, Nigeria, the giant of Africa, topped the military coups with six successful interferences, followed by Ghana with five successful interventions. The contiguous states to Ghana by the north, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria's neighbor from its west, Benin, have had four successful coups each.

From early 1990s, with the beginning of the third wave of democracy, many observers of the political scene in West Africa were imbued with optimism that it is now the time for the countries in the region to strengthen their democracies and ensure a stable political atmosphere. However, as Boafo-Arthur (2008, p.9) explains "the expectations for dividend of democracy in the form of a stable political atmosphere in the region are yet to materialize."

### **Challenges of Development in West Africa**

One of the demons that have contributed in holding development at bay is political instability. No part of the West African region can be said to be stable – stability is the scarcest commodity. As Boafo-Arthur (2008, p. 8) rightly puts it; "stability being a scarce commodity for decades, it is not surprising that most states in the West African sub-region are always at the lower rungs of the international pecking order, even within Africa, with regard to low levels of economic development." It should be noted that even those countries in the region that could be said not to have experienced any civil war recently, none can guarantee or lay claim to have had absolute and enduring political stability over any reasonable period of time.

However, an enduring political stability is a pre-requisite to building of various institutions and structures that would lead to an overall development. Put differently, all the countries in West Africa have had unpleasant experiences vis-à-vis national stability. It is true that a state like Nigeria does not belong to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) which Boafo-Arthur (2008, p.

8) refers to as “exclusive regional poor man’s HIPC club,” yet it is still battling with the challenge of political instability.

In a World Bank report (2004) cited in Boafo-Arthur (2008), the West African HIPC countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Since then nothing has changed even after 15 years. As at December 2018, the number of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) is 36 out of which 30 are in Africa and 13 are in the West Africa sub region. This is unfortunate; the 13 states listed above out of 16 (81 percent) states in West Africa still maintain their status quo as HIPC (IMF Policy Paper, 2019).

The third wave of democracy which overwhelmingly caught up with West African sub region amplified the echo of democracy such that some avowed autocrats started shedding off their togas of autocracy and replacing them with the garbs of democracy. This is a situation where military heads of state attempted transforming themselves to democratically elected presidents. Many were successful in their attempts while few others were not.

It should be noted, though sadly, that transition to democracy since the 1990s had been very herculean. Some of the states in West Africa still relapsed to military after transition as shown in Table 1 above. Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Togo have all had, at least, one military incursion since 1990 (the scope of this study). Though that of Togo is not a very clear case of military takeover, it has been so called by many international organizations and opinion leaders across the globe. Also, Togo is notorious for being the first state to witness military coup in West Africa in 1963 and was ruled autocratically by President Gnassingbe Eyadema for 38 years.

Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Liberia, Senegal, which represent 31.3% are the few countries that have not experienced successful military coup since their transition to democracy in the 1990s. This does not imply there had been no attempts. In fact, there had been attempted but failed coups. The failed coup of 2014 in Gambia is a good example. Cape Verde seems to be the only state with

stable democracy as there was no coup (failed or successful). States in the West African sub region encountered—and continue to encounter—these challenges due to the fragile structure handed over to them by their former colonizers.

It is thus argued that “several West African States are still under the enormous influence of former colonial powers, whose global strategic agendas are foisted on member States, and who, at times, obstruct the democratic process by supporting undemocratic leaders against the choice of the populations” (Gbeho, 2011, p. 9). This plunged them into a situation whereby they cannot (even if they desired) deliver core functions to majority of their people, including the poor; these core functions include service entitlements, justice, and security.

Money politics as well as its corrupting influences often stimulated and instigated by external partners, are worrisome. The stagnant economies in the region and the high level of unemployment have created a large group of the discontented. Some unpatriotic and corrupt leaders who habitually commit various forms of atrocities against the masses are always willing and ready to use violence and intimidation to retain themselves in power. It has also been observed that the hopeless and hapless poverty stricken electorate is susceptible to vote-buying (Gbeho, 2011).

Thus, ECOWAS itself admits that the security situation in the region continues to be characterized by fragility and unpredictability, and susceptible to reversals. Governance institutions also remain weak and greater efforts need to be applied, in collaboration with civil society and other partners, to deal with the structural factors of instability. Bathily (2005, p. 27) further explains that “the ruling elite has developed exclusionary policies that have pushed several groups and communities to the periphery of the national arena, thereby excluding them from any significant participation in managing their country’s affairs.”

However, the recent turn of events in which incumbent presidents were boxed out of power in some West African countries [Nigeria (2015), Gambia (2016), Ghana (2016)] through the ballot box gives a glimmer of hope that democracy has come to stay in the region. In particular reference to the 2015 Presidential



election in Nigeria where the incumbent president was defeated and accepted defeat, Jega (2017) thinks that democracy has come to stay in Nigeria—the giant of Africa. It is right to think it has also come to stay in the West African sub region considering the regional role Nigeria has been playing. In addition, electoral management bodies which saw the ouster of these incumbents in the three countries were generally adjudged to be impartial, truly independent and respected by electorates, the media and civil societies.

Yet, in another sad turn of event, military coup is beginning to rear its ugly head in the sub region. Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso seem to have reverted or return to the verge of reversing the recorded success of democratization with the coups experienced in them in the last two years. Burkina Faso, which had escaped military takeover since the 1990s, joined the ugly league of states with such experience. It is the latest state in West Africa which recorded successful military take-over due to political instability. Aina and Nyei (2022, para. 2) opined that military intervention came as no surprise in all the three states and was welcomed by the civilians because of “long-ignored systemic failures and growing societal discontent.”

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper reviews and assesses the travails of democratic transitions in West Africa in the contemporary era (i.e. since the 1990s). What can be gleaned from the discourse is that transition to democracy in West Africa has been a thorny path and the trajectory is laced with unpredictability. In most cases, leaders do not come to power through free and fair elections. Elections are often rigged and the court is traditionally becoming the real determiners of who wins election, not electoral management bodies. Though military takeover has reduced considerably compared to the pre-1990s’ era, it is unfortunate that out of the 16 countries in West Africa 11 (68.8 percent) still experienced military intervention since 1990.

However, one great success is a recent development whereby opposition candidates were able to dislodge incumbents from power through the ballot box. This is commendable; and it heralds good news for democracy in the

region. It happened in Nigeria in 2015 when an incumbent president, Goodluck Jonathan, was voted out; it was repeated in Ghana in 2016 where President John Dramani Mahama was denied second term by Ghanaians, and in The Gambia when voters unthinkably brought to an end the two decades rule of President Yahya Jammeh.

But is the region still at the stage of transition or consolidation in its democratization process? It is safer to say it is at the stage of transition due to its fragile democratic structure and the volatility of its politics. The recent coup in those three states, especially Burkina Faso which has never witnessed military ouster of democratically elected government since the 1990s, informs our conclusion that West Africa is yet to consolidate its democracy. Nevertheless, with Cape Verde becoming a specimen for the feasibility of democracy in the region, hopes are not lost.

This paper recommends, among others, that leaders and the citizens should eschew all practices that may jeopardize the entrenchment of democracy and thus reverse the few gains that have been made. Rule of law should be strictly adhered to by those in the position of leadership; by doing so, they would be setting good examples. Leaders should be patriotic and desirous to provide basic necessities to the majority of their citizens. These basic necessities include creation of jobs through massive investment in agricultural and manufacturing sectors; provision of social amenities and infrastructures to ensure sustained levels of economic development and prosperity.

They should ensure credible elections and smooth periodic transfer of powers. Politics in West Africa should be patriotically seen as a call to selfless service; not as an opportunity to amass wealth. There should be equal educational and economic opportunities for all citizens regardless of their ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, or region. The electorate should be better informed. As Paswan (2019) rightly explained, if the electorate is better informed, that can improve the sensitivity of elected representatives in public service delivery. This will stabilize the polity and makes the levers of power unattractive to the men in uniform (the military). Also attention should be paid to social justice, security of life and property. These recommendations, if implemented, will

hopefully transit the region from the stage of transition to democracy to that of consolidation.

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# 4

## **ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 2016 AND 2020 GUBERNATORIAL CONTESTS IN EDO STATE**

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## **Abstract**

*Election is one of the vital pillars of democracy and in many African states democracy has become the most sought after. Unfortunately consolidating democracy through elections in Nigeria has been a herculean task. This is because successive elections in the country have been fraught with irregularities and unethical practices in the political process. It is made manifest by the behavior of political actors, whose stakes are high in the political, and in particular, electoral process. Past studies on elections and democratic consolidation however did not capture comparative analysis of the 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial contests in Edo State. The focus of this paper therefore is to investigate the gap created with a view to determining the place of elections in democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The objective was to comparatively review the 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial elections in Edo State, identify observed challenges and their implications for democratic consolidation. The discourse was also extended to identifying particular lessons from the 2020 gubernatorial elections in Edo State. This paper is descriptive and the methodology adopted was the use of secondary source of data such as textbooks, journals, magazine, newspapers and the internet to gather data for analysis. The finding is that the elections have not necessarily engendered democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Conclusively, since the human element in Nigerian politics had significantly contributed to the aberrations and absurdities that had characterized democratic practice and consolidation in the country, it only requires the enforcement of the rule of law to reinforce democratic consolidation.*

**Keywords:** *Election, Democratic consolidation, Comparative Analysis, Gubernatorial Contests, Campaign, Strategy*



## **Introduction**

One of the foundations of democracy is free, fair and regular election. The history of elections in Nigeria is traceable to the Clifford constitution of 1922 that introduced the elective principle which laid the foundation for subsequent elections in the country. In recognition of the significance of election as an essential component in any democratic process and as an instrument for change, nations have strived to improve the quality of their electoral process through constant reforms and evaluation of same. Unfortunately, as a major index for measuring democratic compliance and soundness, periodic election has presented an insurmountable challenge in the democratic process. Bratton and Posner (1999) had argued that periodic elections provide the best criterion for orderly leadership succession, entailing popular participation. Unlike the practice in advanced democracies, electoral activities in Nigeria, as the Edo State experience had shown, assumed an unprecedented level of brinkmanship, particularly as the contest and content of the election and campaigns respectively, were not based on issues. In assessing elections in Nigeria, Eleagu (2019) had argued that attempts at democracy through elections have only succeeded in providing battlegrounds for hooliganism, ballot snatching, theft of election materials, kidnapping and assassination of political opponents/rivals, arson, assault and physical destruction of election materials, intimidation, outright molestation or killing of election officials.

Free, fair and credible elections accord value and legitimacy to the government, its actions and policies while electoral malpractices constitutes a form of political corruption which devalues/destroys the legitimacy of government structures, escalates problem of national integration and democratic consolidation. Therefore, at the heart of the structures and functioning of any modern democratic society or state is election. Despite the fact that there were institutions to ensure free, fair and credible election in Nigeria such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Directorate of State Services (DSS), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Police etc, unfortunately, they have failed in their responsibility of conducting free and fair election as well as sanitizing the polity. While their failure can be traceable to corruption, pressure from politicians, manpower shortage etc, the incidences

and preponderance of commercialization of the electoral process (in terms of vote buying and selling and huge monetization of the process of leadership recruitment within the political parties) is a further/practical confirmation of their failure to deliver on free and fair election.

Election and electioneering campaigns in Nigeria, as the Edo State experience showed, have proven to be ineffective in mobilizing the citizenry for democratic stability and consolidation. Invariably, winning or losing elections are not dependent on how hard the candidates campaign on ideological basis, but more on other variables. The question to interrogate therefore is, can election as the Edo State experience with 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial elections had shown, engender democratic stability and consolidation? This question is germane because arguably election does not suffice to ensure democracy and democratic consolidation though there is a nexus between good election and democratic consolidation. However, the reason for this investigation is because democratic process which includes the conduct of election such as that held in Edo State is relevant in an overall attempt to understand democratization and election in Nigeria.

The objectives of this paper therefore is to comparatively analyze the 2016 and 2020 Edo State gubernatorial elections, identify the implications of observed challenges for democratic consolidation and ascertain the lessons from the 2020 election in Edo State. Arising from the above, the questions to ask are: What are the differences and similarities in the 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial elections in Edo State? What were the implications of the observed challenges for democratic consolidation? What were the lessons from the 2020 election?

To actualize the above objectives, this paper was divided into seven sections. While section one is the introduction, the focus of section two is on methodology. Section three is concerned with conceptual discourse while section four is devoted to analyzing the character of 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial contests in Edo State and implications for democratic consolidation. Lessons from 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State were identified and discussed in section five while section six was devoted to conclusion and recommendations.

## **Methodology**

This paper adopted the descriptive method and gathered data from secondary sources. These sources included textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers, and internet materials. The materials sourced were mostly on issues of elections, politics and democracy in Nigeria. Specifically, data gathered related to issues before, during and after the elections. Some of the newspapers sampled because of their wide coverage and availability included Daily Trust, Leadership, The Guardian, and The Nation. However, personal observation also played a fundamental role in strengthening the analysis.

## **Conceptual Discourse**

**Elections** in any democracy are means of choosing and determining representatives into government. They provide a medium by which the different interest groups within a nation state stake and resolve their claims to power through peaceful means (Iyayi, 2005). Election involves the participation of the people in the act of electing their leaders and their own participation in governance. It therefore refers to a method of selection of persons to fill certain offices through choices made by an electorate; those citizens who are qualified to vote under the rule and procedures of the electoral system (Omotola, 2007). It also encompasses activities before, during and after elections, such as legal and constitutional frameworks of elections, the registration of political parties, conduct of party campaigns, the activities of the media, campaign financing, the activities of security agencies, the authenticity and genuineness of the voters register, electoral agencies, among others. Though elections are very fundamental in any democracy, elections in Nigeria since independence had been hotly contested and crisis-ridden because the stakes were usually high (Ojo, 2018). Among the political elites, personality, pride, greed and winner-take-all tendencies are usually at stake in every election. Other stakes are pathway it creates for primitive acquisition of wealth, opportunity it creates for elevation in status, huge capital investment (political entrepreneurship) in the electoral process that needed to be recouped; hence it assumes a do-or-die affair.

The importance of elections is based on the fact that it is the technical means

of ensuring popular participation in government and the democratic process by the citizenry. They are useful in building support and selection of leaders and policies. It enables the electorate to realize government of, by, and, for the people. It makes government accountable, responsible and responsive to the needs and yearnings of the people, since a bad government can be voted out of power during elections. It therefore represents the only way to ensure/establish majority rule and legitimacy of government. To actualize the above, voting becomes the mechanism, because it enables the citizen to express their interests and confidence as they freely elect people into government.

Elections, as argued by Mackenzie (1968) cited in Egwemi (2014), were the rituals of choice; and their binding character were derived from the participation of the individual as a chooser in a social act which confers legitimacy on the person chosen. They were also important in a democracy because it is through it that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the people who are to rule them. As had been argued elsewhere, elections provide opportunity for political parties to perform their major role of presenting candidates for public office (Egwemi, 2014). Therefore, the hallmarks of *genuine* representative democracy are regular, free, fair and transparent election. The deliberate use of the term 'genuine democracy' is because all over the world, regimes exist which mount the term democracy but whose practices are at variance with the tenets of democracy (Egwemi, 2014). Such polities present attempts to create a semblance of elections and political parties.

**Democracy** is a popular concept in contemporary discourse. Its remote origin is from the Greek word *demokratia* (*demos* plus *kratia*) which means the rule by the people. While the democratic practice of the Greek city state may present the practice of direct democracy (where every citizen in a political community actively participate in the political process especially in decision making), the modern political system rather presents representative governments or indirect democracy (a system of government under which the people exercise governing powers indirectly or through representatives that were periodically elected). In its ordinary meaning, it is conceived as a system that allows the involvement of the citizenry in decision making. It refers to government of the people,

by the people and for the people. Democracy has the basic symbols, values common and defining features of free and competitive politics, toleration of opposition and right to dissent, regular periodic elections, multi party system, universal franchise, popular sovereignty, responsible government, political accountability, informed electorate, exercise of mandated power and indirect political participation, fundamental human rights, the idea of equality, justice and rule of law, freedom of choice, rule of popular consent, electoral credibility, constitutionalism, equality of opportunity, respect for the rule of the game, and supremacy of the people (Ojo, 2003; Oke, 2005). The irony in the Nigerian situation has been that the above tenets of democracy were celebrated in breach and violations than observance.

Democracy as an ideology is the philosophy of governance which sets a high premium on the basic freedom or fundamental human rights of the citizens, rule of law, the right to property, the free flow of information and the right of choice between alternative political positions (Obasanjo and Mabogunje, 1992 cited in Abdullahi, 2017). Thus, sovereignty in a democracy is vested on the people rather than a small clique as it is in Nigeria. However, calling a political system a democracy does not mean that it is good, foolproof or admirable. On the contrary is the argument that democracy has a link with development in a number of ways. It could be an instrument of development of society, if it guarantees popular participation in the affairs of the state, social justice and good governance. Through elected representatives, brought about by free, transparent and fair election, legitimacy is achieved and consequently, the dream of development is fulfilled (Ojo, 1997; Mato, Jacob, and Akintola, 2011). The irony of democracy in the Nigerian context is that, the above principles are honored more in their disregards, disobedience and violations than observance and adherence. Besides, the crises of democracy as the Nigerian experience had shown, is the manipulation of the above basic principles by the elites to suit selfish ends as exemplified in prevalence of political godfathers in contemporary Nigerian politics. In the light of the above, Ojo (2018) argued that what has been operated thus far in Nigeria is an *abbreviated* form of democracy as the ideals of democracy which includes political competitiveness, inclusiveness, and accountability have been subverted.

**Democratic Consolidation** on the other hand relates to the challenge of making new democracies secured, avoiding democratic breakdown and disruptions, extending their life expectancy beyond the short term, and ensuring their immunity against the threat of authoritarian regression (Schedler, 1988). In identifying features that can help in consolidating democracies, Ojo (2003) argued that they include democratic citizenship, democratic attitude, electoral credibility, cohesiveness, established political culture, and flourishing political parties. Other often neglected but important requirement for democratic consolidation, as argued by Karl (1998) and Jonas (1989) cited in Ojo (2003), were the predominance of institutions that faithfully translate individual preferences into public policy through majoritarian rule; the incorporation of an ever-increasing proportion of the population into the process of decision making; and the continuous improvement of economic equity through actions of governing institutions. Baker (2004) also corroborated the above when he argued that consolidation of democracy reflects the ability of political institutions to “transform societal demands into effective policy options that serve as channels of realizing political aspirations for the majority of citizens”. It therefore means that a country that has not gone beyond electoral democracy or one that exists at a level of mere presentability cannot talk of consolidation.

Unfortunately, elections in themselves do not suffice to ensure democracy and democratic consolidation as the Nigerian experience has shown. This is because the electoral process has been manipulated often times in the past to aid, abet and enthrone autocracy, tyranny and unpopular governments. In a democracy, elections are free when the legal barriers to entry into the political arena were low, when competing candidates, parties and their supporters were free to campaign and when people could vote for whom they want without fear and intimidation (Diamond, 2009). It is only free and fair elections that can lend legitimacy to democracy by preventing one person or a small group in the society from imposing certain vested interests on the general population (Panyarachun, 2010). Since elections represent the expression of the collective will and consolidates democracy only when the voting and all that surrounds it are free and fair (Kornblith, 2005), it therefore means that elections that deviate significantly from such standards can serve different ends

- including the consolidation of an autocracy that disdains the very democratic mechanism it loosely and instrumentally claims to follow. Therefore, calling a political system a democracy does not mean it is good or an admirable system or that it does not need improvement. Features of previous elections in Nigeria that made democratic consolidation impossible included massive fraud, vote rigging, malpractices, political violence, falsification of results, imposition of candidates, institutional collaboration, structural impediments, godfatherism, individualistic tendencies, intense post election contestations, lack of ideologically driven political competition particularly among political parties and candidates, zoning, absence of issue-based campaigns, repression and intimidation of political opponents and absence of reliable opinion poll had already been documented in Odion and Anegbode (2015).

Though past elections in Nigeria have been contentious, it is against this background that one will begin to analyze the 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial elections in Edo State. This exercise is meant to determine if there were similarities and differences; and if elections as conducted in Nigeria could help in the course of democratic consolidation.

### **Character of 2016 and 2020 Gubernatorial Contests in Edo State and Implications for Democratic Consolidation**

The 2016 and 2020 Edo State gubernatorial election presented features that were more of similarities than differences as identified in the discussions below. Electioneering campaign is one of the features used for comparative analysis in this paper. It is a period whereby the aspirants/political parties present their manifestoes to the voting public. Political campaigns often precede elections. The import was to enable the voting public assess the plans of the political party, and thereafter make choice. It is one of the foundations of democracy. Tukur and Awosanya (2004) cited in Surajudeen (2008), had argued that national campaigns as directed by the political party was to simplify as much as possible few issues which were regarded as vote winners. As the Nigerian experience had shown, and in particular, the build up to 2016 and 2020 Edo gubernatorial elections, electioneering campaigns had little to do with issues, policy and programmes. The campaign strategies adopted

by the political parties were similar in both elections. Organized rallies for purpose of character assassination, name calling, personality bashing, and distribution of face caps, blackmail strengthened by the use of social media, political debate, music, dance and local entertainment through songs and costumes mostly characterized the process. The implication was devaluation or diminished quality of campaigns in Nigeria, and ineffectiveness in mobilizing the citizenry for democratic stability and consolidation. On the other hand, while the content of the campaigns remained the same, the difference between the environments of the two campaigns was that the 2020 election, held in the midst of government imposed Covid-19 regulation that placed restrictions on organized mass rallies and physical convergence of citizen. This created an atmosphere where campaigns were done mostly on social and electronic media as well as posters. Hence, the campaigns were devoid of the usual face-to-face contact with candidates.

In 2016, government infrastructures were monopolized by the incumbent. Pavements, electric poles, major bill boards and buses, were adorned with posters of candidates of the ruling political parties. Access to utilize school premises were only granted to the ruling party, while opposition parties were disallowed. Intimidation, personality bashing, intolerance of opposition, and violence characterized the campaigns that preceded the election. The above were replicated in the 2020 elections in what has become a norm. Political tolerance, which has to do with the acceptance of political diversity in the society and a requirement for sustainable democracy was not reinforced by political actors before, during and after elections. The nature of pre-election campaigns, which was characterized by personalization of campaign, rallies turned into avenues for settling old scores, and projection of personal preferences/idiosyncrasies confirmed the above assertion. Attacks and counter attacks on real and perceived political opponent assumed the center stage while political clashes, kidnappings, shootings, bombings and assassinations represented expressions of political intolerance during the campaign period. Whereas denial of the use of government facilities by the opposition led to loss of revenue for the state government, and unlevelled playing field for aspirants, it further created sentiment and popularity for the opposition, even as grass root campaign were



strengthened in both elections.

Another noticeable feature of the 2020 election which impacted democratic consolidation was the over bloated National Campaign Council for the State gubernatorial election, for both political parties. While the Rivers State Governor - Nyesom Wike, led 77 Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) stalwarts, the Kano State Governor - Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, led 49 All Progressive Congress (APC) stalwarts. The large membership, which were drawn from 'high impact personalities', within the political parties was part of the strategy packaged by the political parties to intimidate each other. The membership however, overshadowed the candidates, and consequently, made the candidates to be less visible in the respective cases, such that even the electorates were confused and intimidated. The difference between the elections was that the campaign councils in the 2016 election was not over bloated as found in the 2020 composition.

One of the primary responsibilities of any political party is to mobilize the citizenry through their campaign and manifestoes. Unfortunately, the political parties in both 2016 and 2020 elections never had clear cut manifestoes, neither were they ideologically distinct. The above shortcoming coupled with previous failed promises, strengthened the argument that elections in Nigeria were not won on the basis of vigorous campaigns, political party manifestoes and ideological differentiations, but on other interlocking features such as a candidates' personality and integrity, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) manipulations, electoral malpractice, power of incumbency, and influence of money, captured in the 'stomach infrastructure' theory of Ayo Fayose (Odion, Anegbode, and Onakalu, 2017). The fact that political parties failed in their bid to capture the votes of the electorates through genuine conviction/campaign, based on their manifestoes, coupled with credibility crisis of the political leaders, manifested in the sale and purchase of votes by voters and contestants/parties, respectively in both elections. Thus, there was strong monetary influence which diminished the quality of the primaries, selection and election of candidates (JDPC, 2021). It could be explained as having been due to poverty and the inability of INEC to check the excesses of politicians. The lack of ideological distinction among the political parties however created confusion for the

electorate and consequently, impacted democratic consolidation.

Elections in Nigeria are arguably very contentious and often involved political violence. Political violence is a form of deliberate and politically motivated behavior by citizens or functionaries of state intended to disrupt social processes or visit serious harm on persons, valuable properties or public property. In very tense periods, disagreements among the major contending political parties had reinforced political violence before, during and after electoral politics in Nigeria. Often times, it was done to ward off political competition and control lever of power. The high stakes in politics sustains this phenomenon, and the consequence had been reinforcement of apathy, destruction of lives and properties as evidenced in past elections. In 2016, the convoy of Comrade Adams Oshiomhole was attacked in Owan during the campaigns while Mrs Ize-Iyamu experienced same in Auchi. Reminiscent of the violence that usually characterize Nigeria electioneering process, in 2020, the residence of the then Commissioner for Youth, Edo State –Mr. Damian Lawani in Udaba, Etsako Central Local Government Area, was attacked; Governor Godwin Obaseki and the PDP Campaign Council were attacked outside the Oba of Benin’s palace; and his (Governor Godwin Obaseki’s) convoy was also attacked in Apana (Ward 10), Etsako West Local Government Area, during the campaigns. On August 14, 2020, at Ikhin, Owan East Local Government Area, five APC youth were shot due to disagreement over sharing of party largesse. Political violence and intolerance are known to impart political participation and democratic consolidation negatively, reinforced political apathy and consequently political underdevelopment.

Furthermore, the practice during the 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial electioneering campaign was for major contending candidates to visit the traditional institutions in the communities. This cultural observance, besides connoting respect for tradition, also projects a belief that such acceptance and royal blessing were sanctioned by the ancestors, hence the confidence of going through the electoral process successfully. However, as the Nigerian experience had shown, protection, endorsement, royal blessing or pledge of loyalty, were the reasons for such visit to traditional institutions. Others were known to visit

the grave site of past political icons in the community and pledge loyalty with the assurance of replicating the ideals of the dead.

Odion (2019) had argued that cultural appeal has played a very fundamental role in electioneering campaigns and citizens mobilization in Nigeria. Embedded in culture were songs, language, dressing code, music, town hall and dance. They all represent the traditional methods, values and ideals which captures the life of the citizenry. The use of these features and symbols during the 2016 and 2020 Edo State gubernatorial electioneering campaigns may have enlivened the political process and reintroduced life into it, even in the face of contending challenges. Arguably, attempts may have been made by globalization to erode these basic cultural values and symbols and super impose foreign culture and values. As the Nigerian political experience had shown, the traditional features have played a cardinal role in the mobilization of the citizenry for participation in the political process, and Edo State is not an exception. For example, the entertainment of supporters with local cultural troupe, dance, and local/tribal songs and music, were to capture the attention of the voting public and mobilize them in order to secure electoral victory. In a multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural society such as Edo State, language serves as a medium for expression, mobilization and political communication. It is one thing that identifies the uniqueness of a given people. As a cultural behavior, it plays an inevitable role in framing and formulation of cultural patterns. Therefore, dancing, musical patterns, socio-political behavior, development, religion, among others were offshoots of language (Arheghan, 2009). Contemporary use of local language and dance by political aspirants and contestants during the 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State, conveyed meaning directly or indirectly to the citizenry and were meant to arouse the people as well as their attention and curiosity. Though it is arguably a tool for mobilization of the citizenry for participation in the political process, unfortunately, the threat posed by the use of music and other cultural appeals to democratic consolidation was that, they were often used to cover up the inadequacies of the aspirants/ political party as they ended up only entertaining the people without actually presenting their ideology and manifestoes. This threatened the course and practice of democracy, as it rendered the purpose of electioneering campaigns

irrelevant. Consequently, as campaign grounds were turned into jamboree, the right to be informed through questions and answers was compromised and manipulatively denied the electorate and over ridden, while the concept of accountability which is the hallmark of good governance was thrown to the winds.

Lack of internal democracy in the process of the emergence of candidates for elections, was another major challenge that confronted all the political parties and made consolidation of democracy in Nigeria difficult. Internal democracy is the conduct of free and fair elections among members of a political party in an open and transparent manner, and at regular intervals with a ban on establishment of factions. In a nutshell, internal democracy also known as intra-party democracy refers to the level and methods of including party members in decision making and deliberations within the party structure. The lack of it is a major characteristic of Nigeria's political parties. In very many cases, the anointing of candidates by party elders and chieftains had not gone down well with other aspirants and political party members who felt shortchanged in the process. In the build up to the 2016 and 2020 Edo gubernatorial elections, similar scenario played out. It created easy passage for politicians to change platforms with ease and heat up the polity. Aggrieved party members took advantage of clogged channel to exit to other political parties, and sought the actualization of their relevance and aspirations. This was evidenced by the spate of defection, decamping or cross carpeting across the state, prior to the elections. While the candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in 2016 gubernatorial election – Mr. Godwin Obaseki, defected to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and became the party's candidate in 2020, the erstwhile candidate of the PDP in the 2016 gubernatorial election – Pastor Osagie Ize-Iyamu, also defected to the APC and became the party's candidate in 2020. As the Nigerian experience had shown, decamping/defections were done basically close to election periods, after primaries, during intra party feuds, when a political party experiences declining fortunes, response to lack of internal democracy, and at the emergence of a new political party. In the same vein, as the Nigerian experience has further shown, the purpose for decamping/defection was to secure relevance, accommodation, security (mostly within the ruling political party), and gain

access to power and expropriation of public resources. The implication was that political elites and parties without ideological leaning flooded the political landscape; and the political parties were weakened to the extent that they were unable to mobilize the citizenry for democratic consolidation and political development.

Again, the failure of the Nigeria political elites or leaders of political parties to obey the rule of law of their respective parties and the country had made democratic consolidation impossible. This remains a paradox that has posed fundamental problems for the growth of democracy in Nigeria. The Nigerian political elites had only shown minimal and superficial commitment to the symbols and principles of democracy as reflected in their political behavior (Ojo, 2003). Thus, the basic tenets of democracy which would have created prospects for democratic durability such as toleration of diversity, freedom of choice, right to dissent, rule by popular consent, electoral credibility, political accountability, rule of law, equality of opportunity, respect for the rule of the game and supremacy of the people are subverted and compromised. Recklessness was taken to the point of perpetrating illegality, violating rights, disobeying court orders and circumventing due process by political elites as exhibited in their desperation to capture power. On the whole, if Lucian Pye (1966) cited in Agbeba's (2003) argument that political development must be measured by a system's ability to resolve the crisis of development viz identity, participation, penetration, legitimacy, integration and distribution, as it move from traditionality to modernity, then it is obvious that the political elites, as the Edo State experience had shown, have not been able to resolve these problems.

In terms of security during elections in Nigeria, security agencies were often assigned critical roles. The idea is to police for a fraud and violence free elections. Within the context of elections and electoral process, the role of security agencies were to ensure that all stakeholders adhere to electoral guidelines; that all law abiding citizens were allowed to exercise their civic responsibility unhindered; and ensure that electoral personnel and materials were protected. However, partisanship of security agencies, which is supported by the fact that the occupants of highest echelon of the security outfits were appointees

of the President had been identified by Robert-Nyemetu and Obioha (2005) in past studies. In addition, though, former INEC Chairman – Professor Attahiru Jega, had argued that the heavy/massive deployment of security personnel during elections was to help ensure the successful conduct of elections (Agbese, 2014), unfortunately, the build up to the Edo elections were more of Police intimidation and lack of pro-activeness in curtailing violence, mostly during campaigns. The increase in the spate of pre-election attacks and counter attacks, that prefaced the election, indicated that the security agencies were not proactive. The deployment of 13,311 Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) personnel and 31,000 Police personnel under the headship of Deputy Inspector General Adeleye Oyebode to Edo State in the 2020 election as against 25,000 Police personnel deployed for the same purpose in 2016 (an increase of 6,000), was an indication that the stakes were high. The increase in the number of security personnel represents a marked difference between the two elections (2016 and 2020) that held in Edo State.

Prior to the election, there were breaches manifested in clandestine interventions and intimidation. The show of strength by the law enforcement agents scared many voters which resulted in voter apathy. These were occasioned by security reports. For example, the hotel where the PDP National Campaign Chairman for Edo State in 2020 – Nyesom Wike, lodged was placed under siege by policemen. Though, there were still recorded incidents of violence during the election, massive security presence as experienced in the 2020 edition deterred escalation of occurrences.

On the part of INEC which represents the body that was saddled with the sole responsibility of supervising the conduct of elections, it was expected to play a fundamental role in the democratization process. Operationally, INEC was expected to provide a level playing field for all contesting political parties and ensure the confidence of the people in the electoral process, by making their votes count. In the build up to the 2016 election, INEC was challenged by a number of factors among which, litigations featured prominently. In the case of 2020 election, new and different challenges emerged prior to the election. In particular, the challenges in 2020 included litigations that arose from

deregistration of political parties by INEC before the scheduled date; conflicting Appeal Court judgments on deregistration of political parties by INEC; the nullification of the Bayelsa State Governorship election by the Bayelsa State Gubernatorial Petitions Tribunal, due to the deregistration and exclusion of the Advanced Nigeria Democratic Party (ANDP), from participating in the election; as well as political violence and other undemocratic practices. INEC could not also update its voters register prior to 2020 Edo State gubernatorial, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This excluded a large segment of the voting public who attained the voting age from being captured, as well as those that changed their residences/locations. Similarly, low performance of the card readers posed a major challenge during accreditation.

As part of INEC innovation, voters were made to be accredited and vote immediately, thus reducing the time spent on voting. In the same vein, a technology - Z-pad was introduced in the 2020 election and deployed for transmitting election results from the polling unit to the agency's website where citizens could log into and immediately access results. This technology was absent during the 2016 election. Unfortunately, the inability of INEC to monitor campaign and election financing had resulted in commercialization of elections.

The context within which the elections took place also differs. Whereas in 2016, the environment was congenial for elections to hold, in 2020 the elections were held in the midst of the raging and life threatening Covid-19 pandemic which came with its disruptions and constraints. New pandemic election guidelines were introduced just as the update of voters register meant for a credible election could not take place.

Other agencies that are instrumental in the consolidation process include Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). While the CSOs failed to expose undemocratic acts, the NBC has not been able to purge itself of partisanship, monitor campaign broadcasting and campaign of calumny with a view to sanctioning offenders.

## **Lessons from the 2020 Gubernatorial Election in Edo State**

There are however, vital lessons to be learnt from the conduct of 2020 Edo gubernatorial election. This experience spans through pre-election, election and post elections. The argument here is that if these lessons are taken seriously, they are likely to contribute to democratic consolidation. The first major lesson was that a free, fair and credible election can be conducted in Nigeria. In an environment where elections were largely contentious, violent, conducted as war and characterized by gory carnage, the 2020 Edo Gubernatorial election arguably demonstrated that the electoral reform and innovations introduced were working.

Secondly, the issue of personality was still very important in determining who wins in an election. To this extent two perspectives can be considered. The first is the person directly contesting, while the second perspective is the person(s) behind the contestants (Egwemi, 2014). The person of Governor Obaseki was easier to market during the electioneering than by/for the PDP due to a number of reasons that ranged from his records of achievement during his first tenure then as a Governor prior to the election, closeness to the people and acceptability, support by PDP hierarchy, as well as the humiliating build ups that culminated in his defection. Arguably on the other hand, it was difficult to elicit the support of voters for Pastor Ize-Iyamu of the APC, given his previously damaged reputation by his political adversary turned arch supporter – Adam Oshiomole in 2020, when he first aspired to be governor under the PDP ticket. This was an albatross with damaging consequences. The difficulty experienced by the party could be traceable to lack of concrete evidence of performance to rival his opponent (even though the APC claimed credit for the achievements of Governor Obaseki in his first tenure), and dissatisfaction of the citizenry occasioned by failed promise of change by the APC at the national level.

A further lesson for Nigerian politics was that the outcome of the election indicated the relevance of emotional appeal and concretized the argument that godfathers in politics can be defeated by a mobilized electorate. The alleged dictatorial tendencies of the APC National Leader, Bola Tinubu (Jaji, 2014), who visited Edo State to canvass and direct Edo voters to vote out



Obaseki, notwithstanding, it was clear after the election that Tinubu could be demystified and his electoral structure dismantled/defeated. The electoral result was a clear confirmation of the slogan “*Edo no be Lagos*”. In addition, while the ruling National APC seemed to be the party to beat in the election with its structure, size, strength, finance and personalities, unfortunately the personalities associated with the party never had the appeal to win the election, such as the personalities in the other less popular parties and opposition PDP. Thus, this supports the argument that winning an election in Nigeria was not about the size of a political party but other interlocking variables such as the resolve of the electorate to vote their choice, past and present records in public office and power of incumbency. Obviously, democracy was about the people.

Arising from the above, a final lesson to learn is that democracy is about the people. The outcome of the election was a confirmation that sovereignty truly belongs to the people, and that the people’s power held in trust by the elected officers of any polity can be withdrawn (*or renewed*) by them during periodic elections (Sanusi, 2014). It has also been argued by scholars that democracy is about free choice (Ojo, 2003; Omotola, 2007; Diamond, 2009; Egwemi, 2010; Ojo, 2018).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this paper, the importance of election in democracies was brought to the fore. Emphasis was placed on comparative analysis of the 2016 and 2020 gubernatorial contest in Edo State with a view to ascertaining if the elections could necessarily engender democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The character the elections assumed were not fundamentally different from previous elections. With the history of chequered elections and ‘abbreviated democracy’, consolidation is difficult. Though some lesson were learnt from the 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State as shown in this paper, the human element in Nigerian politics had contributed significantly to the aberrations and absurdities that had characterized democratic practice in the country, hence made democratic consolidation in Nigeria a mirage. Thus, the drawbacks in the actualization of democratic consolidation and good governance are made realizable by human factor.

Arising from the above, we recommend the strengthening of institutions through capacity building. This requires that political parties be monitored by INEC and civil society organizations in order to ensure that actual voters' education using the instrumentality of electoral campaign periods was done. This is very germane as an informed electorate stands a better chance of making informed choices and decisions required for democratic and societal development. The effort of political parties should not be concentrated on capturing power at all cost and forming government alone.

The electoral regulating agency - Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has a duty to monitor the activities of political parties and candidates such that campaigns can be issues-based and not on attacks or criticism of one another. INEC has a duty to make absence at organized debate (without cogent reason and clearance from INEC), an offence in the Electoral Act that should attract sanction for the political party/candidate. When sanctions are imposed, quality campaigns will be engendered.

While not condemning the use of traditional symbols, effort must be made by INEC too to ensure that the inadequacies of political parties are not hidden while using these symbols. Therefore, INEC officials must monitor all campaigns to ascertain that political parties and their aspirants conform to the requirement to politically educate and present their manifestoes to the electorate. The additional value of this recommendation is quality campaigns.

Enforcement of the rule of law is very important. Where electoral offenders are not prosecuted, impunity will reign supreme. According to Kimpact Development Initiative (an election monitoring group), 1542 suspects arrested for aiding violence and attempting to disrupt the 2019 general election were released. The implication is that such act was capable of institutionalizing violence and disenfranchising genuine voters in future elections, as they know they would not be punished (Olorok, 2020). The rule of law has the capacity to sanitize the system. The action taken by the former Akwa Ibom State Resident Electoral Officer - Barrister Mike Igin, in prosecuting some *ad hoc* staff who compromised their role in the 2019 election is commendable. This served as a deterrent to those that had the intention to indulge in rigging the 2020 election

in Edo State, and a morale booster for the voters in the face of past unfulfilled promises from INEC and the security agencies, that the electoral process will be free and fair.

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# 5

## THE ROLE OF DELEGATES AND EMERGENCE OF CREDIBLE LEADERS FROM PARTY PRIMARIES IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*The delegates system in any democratic setting always helps to nurture good ethics and democratic values that produce credible leadership in the country. The practice however, in Nigeria, has not brought about the emergence of credible leaders and the attendant unwholesome practices and corruption witnessed during the 2023 presidential primaries raised grave concern for the future of leadership in the country. The position of extant studies established the misdemeanor of delegates and its corrosive effects on the selection of credible leaders into public elective offices in Nigeria. The study sought to fill the gap in literature by putting forward measures that can curtail the fraudulent excesses of party delegates and ensure the emergence of only credible leaders from party primaries in Nigeria. The objective of the study was to investigate how the observed lapses in the delegates system in Nigeria can be reduced significantly and thereby improve the system to produce only credible candidates for the leadership of the country. It adopted the qualitative research approach and using ex-post facto design, established a cause-and-effect relationship between the party delegates (independent variable) and the emergence of credible leaders (dependent variable) from party primaries in Nigeria. The data was collected from secondary sources for the study. It found that malpractices and electoral bribery have attained a high magnitude as both digital and foreign currencies were used in bribing delegates so the winners in the primaries were actually the highest paymasters. Their elections had nothing to do with credibility, integrity and competence. The study recommended that the Nigerian Constitution should be amended to recognize and permit independent candidates as well as reform political party rules for primaries to be conducted using electronic means without recourse to convention or congresses.*

**Keywords:** Delegate, Democracy, Election, Flag-bearer, Party-primaries, Credible-leaders

## **Introduction**

The democratic institutions of any country include political parties that are well organized and seek to influence public policy by presenting candidates for election to public offices. They are composed of registered and fee paying members who participate in the processes leading to the selection of candidates for any election. Those nominated, selected or elected to select candidates to contest elective posts on the platform of the party are called delegates. Collins Advanced Learners Dictionary online defines a delegate as “a person who is chosen to vote or make decisions on behalf of a group of other people, especially at conference or a meeting.” One qualifies to be a delegate in a party’s convention if the individual has joined the party as a member, purchased the application form to be a delegate, and submitted the required documents for eligibility to the party secretariat. The delegates attend special conventions to elect their officials and standard bearers in the elections. They first contest elections from their individual wards to the national level to become eligible to vote for their representatives. This concept, borrowed from the United States, is to ensure that responsible candidates are elected for politics and governance. This is to strengthen and sustain the political institutions that undergird the electoral system internally within the parties (*Daily Trust*, 22 May 2022).

Credible leadership is critical to the development and survival of a country. However, to a large extent, the character, principles, antecedence and past achievements of the individuals are always the frame of reference when considering credibility for leadership positions. In Nigeria, elections are contested on the platforms of political parties and not political associations based on principles and ideological leanings. Therefore, the major challenge is to ensure that only the delegates select credible candidates for leadership from the political party primaries in the country.

The delegates are the select-few that act as the conscience of the general public. They use specific frame of reference to choose those to present for elective offices in the country. Their choices will have a resounding impact on the country because the consequences of their choice will affect governance if those selected become leaders because everything rises or falls on the head of leadership.



The recent activities of delegates in the political parties gained traction after the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) released the timetable for the 2023 general elections. The activities of the delegates heightened when the numerous aspirants of the different parties began canvassing for votes from elected party delegates to be the standard flag bearers of their parties for the offices being contested in the elections. After the issue of “automatic delegates or super-delegates” had already been solved by the new electoral act, the delegates rose up to their responsibility to abide by the process and choose credible leaders through the primaries.

In the recently concluded 2023 presidential primaries, delegates’ selection was compromised by electoral bribes and massive corruption. This paper has therefore, set out to investigate the observed lapses in the delegate system and possibly suggest ways of improving the system to significantly reduce the flaws and produce credible candidates for leadership positions in the country. The study is organized into eight sections. The first section is the introduction; literature review is in section two. Theoretical framework and methodology are in sections three and four, respectively. The conduct of the 2023 primaries is treated in section five. The way forward comes up in section six. The conclusion and recommendations are in sections seven and eight, respectively.

## **Literature Review**

The delegate system was introduced into the political process but the results have been mixed. The delegate system involves voting for party officials and flag bearers at general elections. Some scholars have described the delegate system as similar to internal party democracy because all the positions and elective posts within the party are subjected to the elective process. But the delegates system has suffered gross abuse and corruption because the process is often hijacked by political heavy weights in the various political parties. Previously, the overwhelming majority of delegates at various congresses and conventions of political parties were often appointees of federal and state governments as well as other influential party officials. But, this practice has changed as delegates are handpicked rather than elected democratically (*Daily Trust*, 22 May 2022).

Handpicking delegates has led to the emergence of persons of dubious and questionable character as elected representatives. To streamline the process of emergence of elected representatives, section 84 of the Electoral Act 2022, dealt with party nominations to elective positions and the issue of the delegates system (*Daily Trust*, 22 May 2022). According to Onga'anya (2021), the process undertaken by a political party to elect or select candidates for an election is referred to as party primary because the political party is at liberty to elect or select a candidate to run for a particular public office. In Kenya, party primaries and nominations of party list are conducted in a manner that provides equal opportunities for all eligible candidates; not discriminate against any qualified candidate; inclusive and participatory; open, transparent and accountable; credible; and peaceful (Onga'anya, 2021).

Kenya's electoral system is governed by seven statute acts which include: The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Act, 2011; The Elections Campaign Financing Act, 2013; and The Leadership and Integrity Act, 2012 (TI-Kenya, ND). Kenya's Constitution grants four different kinds of rights to citizens to participate in an election. They include the right to register as a voter; vote by secret ballot; be a candidate in an election and if elected, the right to hold a public office; and lastly, the right to belong and take part in the activities of a political party.

In addition, the country's constitution requires that the citizens not only be given the freedom to exercise political rights; but members of elective public bodies shall not be more than two-thirds of the same gender (TI-Kenya, ND). This suggests a constitutional development that will ensure gender affirmative action in Kenya as public elective bodies cannot be more than two-thirds of either male or female. Kenya's Political Parties Act, 2011 regulates the formation and operation of political parties, their registration, funding, accounting and the resolution of disputes within political parties. It created the office of the political parties' registrar independent of any direct or remote control by any person or authority.

The Act also established the political parties fund to be administered by the registrar of the political parties. The fund promotes accountability,

transparency and fair competition among parties. Another legislative provision that strengthens the political parties is the Election Campaign Financing Act, 2013 passed by parliament to provide for the regulation, management, expenditure and accountability of campaign funds during national elections and referendums. It equally set spending limits and enforces compliance amongst others (TI-Kenya, ND).

Similarly, in Nigeria, the electoral system is governed by the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act, 2022 whereas there are two different but complementary statutes' provisions for the electoral system in Kenya for the financing of political parties. Oji, Eme, and Nwoba (2014) assert that in Nigeria, the statutes include: the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria; Electoral Act 2010; Political Parties' Constitutions; Political Finance Manual and Handbook; Companies and Allied Matters Act and the Code of Conduct for political parties aimed at regulating political finance in Nigeria (Oji, Eme, & Nwoba, 2014, p:14).

Section 84 of the Electoral Act, 2022 focuses on the nomination of candidates by political parties. The Act states that "a political party seeking to nominate candidates for elections under this Act shall hold primaries for aspirants to all elective positions which shall be monitored by the Commission. The procedure for the nomination of candidates by political parties for the various elective positions shall be by direct, indirect primaries or consensus" (FGN, 2022). In the qualifications of aspirants and candidates, the Act clearly specifies that a political party shall not impose any nomination qualification or disqualification criteria or conditions on any aspirant other than the provisions prescribed in the Law of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN, 2004) encapsulated in the 1999 Constitution. Also, the provisions and guidelines for a political party to conduct its nomination of aspirants either by direct, indirect primaries or consensus are explicitly stated in the Electoral Act, 2022.

In Kenya, election expenses and campaign financing are governed by two instruments: the Political Parties Act, 2011 and the Election Campaign Financing Act, 2013. But in Nigeria, the limitation on election expenses and election expenses are stated in Sections 88 and 89 of the Electoral Act, 2022. These sections are relevant to this study and therefore deserve to be quoted

extensively because it defines undue influence in Section 127 during primaries or election as a criminal act by stating that:

“(a) a person who corruptly by his or herself or by any other person at any time after the date of an election has been announced, directly or indirectly gives or provides or pays money to or for any person for the purpose of corruptly influencing that person or any other person to vote or refrain from voting at such election, or on account of such person or any other person having voted or refrained from voting at such election; or (b) being a voter, corruptly accepts or takes money or any other inducement during any of the period stated in paragraph (a), commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of N100,000 or imprisonment for a term of 12 months or both” (FGN, 2022)

In Kenya, the responsibility to enforce compliance with election financing is vested in the registrar of the political parties but it is vague on regarding the person to do enforcement in Nigeria. Section 145 of the Electoral Act, 2022 made provisions for the trial of offences committed under the Act by stating that: (1) “An offence committed under this Act shall be triable in a Magistrate Court or High Court of a State in which the offence is committed, or the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; (2) A prosecution under this Act shall be undertaken by legal officers of the Commission or any legal practitioner appointed by it” (FGN, 2022). In spite of the provisions attached to the offences committed during party primaries especially those bordering on undue influence, little, if any electoral offence committed by delegates has been prosecuted by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria. This may be because the tasks of election monitoring and actual conduct of elections are too onerous and overwhelming for INEC to combine it with prosecuting offenders as required by the Act.

In Nigeria, extant literature has established that there is a serious mix involving party primaries, financing of political parties and production of

credible leadership. Because there had been cases of money bags hijacking the nomination process to install their lackeys into political offices in the country. According to Oji, et al (2014), “The term ‘Political Finance’ has been defined by Ujo (2000), Walecki (2002); Ilo (2004) Obiorah (2004), Pinto-Duschinsky (2004), Emelonye (2004), and Ayoade (2006) as the use of money or the use of other material resources for political activities. It also embodies the sources or means through which political activities are sponsored in a given polity.” The concept of political finance has two broad connotations: money used for electioneering (campaign funds) and money used for political party expenses (party funds)” (Oji, et al, 2014, p:2). The concept of electioneering or campaign funds and its impact on the emergence of credible leaders from party primaries is the main focus of this study.

In Nigeria, political financing dates back to many decades: Historical accounts recorded that political spending became noticeable in the politics of nationalism in the 1950s. Money was used to leverage politics in the Second Republic (1979 – 1983) with the introduction of the combination of private and public funding of political parties. Political financing was sustained during the administration of President Ibrahim Babangida where two parties – National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) were funded by the government in the effort to dispense with private or group ownership of political parties (Oji, et al 2014). Unfortunately, the experiment with two political parties not only ended up in disaster it promoted corruption. As if there was a silent conspiratorial agreement, those who cobbled the constitution in the present democratic era have been silent on government funding of political parties. Therefore, no public funding of political parties has been sustained. But this did not solve the problem of political financing rather; it has encouraged godfatherism in politics. Scholars have considered Godfatherism as a major plague of party politics because it is responsible for factionalism, acrimony, and conflict in political parties (Oji,et al, 2014).

Ikejiani-Clark (2008), posit that most politicians finance their political activities through getting *ubanginda* (godfather) as one means of funding. The *ubangida* would supply campaign monies and even pocket monies for daily political

expenses because he believes it is an investment and once the election is won, the godfather would come for returns on his investment. This undemocratic arrangement places the godfather either as the *de facto* chairman, or governor once election is won or he uses carefully calculated tactics to siphon the resources of the local government or the state to himself or his cronies (Ikejiani-Clark, 2008).

This scenario happened after the 2003 elections in Anambra State, when Chief Chris Uba in an interview with *Sunday Champion* newspaper declared: "I am the greatest godfather in Nigeria because this is the first time an individual single-handedly put in position every politician in the State.... It is not just the Governor [that I sponsored]; there are also three senators, 10 members of the House of Representatives and 30 members of the House of Assembly... I sponsored them...and this is the first time in the history of Anambra State that one single individual would be putting every public officer in the state in power" (*Sunday Champion*, June 8, 2003).

This review has shown that party financing has a direct correlation to corruption and unwholesome practices by political parties in Nigeria. The experiments with either sole public sector financing of political parties, or full private sector funding or an admixture of both have not curtailed electoral bribery and corruption in political parties activities in the country. The legal framework to curtail political party financing beyond specified limits is fraught with a lot of lacuna and has impaired the administration of justice. There is need for a very critical look at how to take measures that can discourage if not eliminate moneybags from hijacking political parties financing and exerting unwholesome influence on elected candidates. This will stem the steady drift, into chaos and helplessness, of credible individuals that contest elective offices. Ensuring the emergence of credible leaders through delegates is the missing gap that this study seeks to fill.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Pareto's Circulation of Elites theory (1935); Mosca's theory of the Ruling Class (1939); and Michels' theory of the Iron Law of Oligarchy (1965 and 1966) are

the elite classic theories that best explain this study. Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels are Italian philosophers who worked extensively on the concept of elite theory. The works of the three scholars have striking similarities and some differences. Their contributions focused on social thoughts, understanding social life, social and political movements, and their direct and indirect effects on democracy.

According to Pareto, every society exists in classes and so, it is heterogeneous and the heterogeneity is accounted for on the basis of mental, moral, physical and cultural reasons that help to maintain social balance in the society. He uses elites as the parameter to classify society. The elites represent the higher stratum of the society whilst non-elites are the lower stratum. Amongst the higher stratum elites, Pareto further categorizes them into governing elites and non-governing elites. The governing elites are the individuals that directly or indirectly have a considerable role to play in the government or administration of the society. The non-governing elites comprise the rest individual elites not connected with administration but occupy such a place in society that they somehow influence the administration (Pareto, 1935; Pareto, 1968; Pareto, 1984).

Mosca (1939) propounded the Ruling Class Theory of Elites. He states that in any type of society, and at any point in history, there are two classes of people – a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The class that rules contains a few number of people and possesses all the political power and privileges whereas the class that is ruled consist of a huge number of people and is subjected to the class that rule but provides essential instruments for political organization. Just as Pareto's elite stratum consist of two strata: the higher stratum and lower stratum; Mosca's ruling class consist of the highest stratum and the second stratum. The highest stratum is the core of the ruling class but it could not sufficiently lead and direct the society unless the second stratum helps. The second stratum is larger than the highest stratum in number and has all the capacities of leadership in the country. So, the second stratum is needed not only in the political realm but also in any type of social organization for smooth administration (Mosca, 1939).

The Iron Law of Oligarchy propounded by Michels (1965 and 1966) explicitly

points out the indispensability of oligarchy from the organizations by stating that “it is organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over electors, of the mandatanes over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators, who says organization, says oligarchy” (Michels, 1966:365).

To Michels, regardless of any ideological concerns, all types of organizations have oligarchic tendencies. His major question in political parties was “how are oligarchic tendencies explained in socialist and democratic parties, which they declared war against?” (Michels, 1966: 50-51). He examines this question and observes the organization itself particularly bureaucracy, nature of human being and the phenomenon of leadership as being the major factors for oligarchical tendencies in organizations. However, to him, leadership itself is not compatible with most of the postulates of democracy, but leadership is a necessary phenomenon in every form of society. He argues that ideal democracy is impossible due to socio-economic conditions because democracy has inherent preference for authoritarian solution of the important questions. Therefore, he admits of his iron law of oligarchy, that there are elites in society but not elite circulation in terms of replacing one another. He does not redefine the concept of elite; rather, he took Pareto’s theory of circulation of elites and modified it. Michels states that there is a battle between the old and new elites, leaders, and the end of the war is not absolute replacement of the old elites by the new elites, but a reunion of elites, a perennial amalgamation and complete replacement of elites is rare in history (Michels, 1966; Michels, 1965).

This study is anchored on Michels’ Iron Law of Oligarchy because it deals with political parties, the issues of delegates and the “delegators” as well as the emergence of leadership in a democratic society. It aligns with the position that there are oligarchic tendencies even in political parties and most of those who are elected as delegates to elect political parties standard-bearers are influenced if not determined by the group with the socio-economic means that acts as oligarchs or aristocrats according to Pareto. The study also concurs with the postulation that elites are not replaced in the sense of circulation as defined by Pareto but they are absorbed by the old elites into their union. This is amply demonstrated by Nigeria’s Council of State members that are made up of the



present and past ruling elites.

## **Methodology**

This study uses qualitative research method of the ex-post facto design. It attempted to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the party delegates (independent variable) and the emergence of credible leaders (dependent variable) from party primaries in Nigeria. The delegates present certain characteristic, trait and past occurrence that cannot be manipulated or altered and the study examines how they affect the emergence of credible standard bearers that stand for elections in Nigeria.

The study also uses content analysis approach to interrogate the data collected from secondary sources such as journals articles, textbooks, reliable web sources, newspapers, and policy documents which were sourced from the library, internet, online e-library resources in Baze University and newspapers obtained from the internet. The policy documents involving Kenya's Electoral Act, the 2022 Electoral Act and the Constitution of the FGN were equally sourced from open source online resources.

## **Conduct of 2023 Presidential Primaries**

Except for few instances, the primaries that were conducted for the 2023 elections were violence-free for most of the gubernatorial primaries across the parties but riddled with malpractices and irregularities (*Tribune*, 16 June 2022). In some cases, those who lost the primaries condemned and rejected the outcomes. In others, some delegates and aspirants held parallel primaries by their factions of the parties. After holding parallel primaries, two separate lists of elected representatives were forwarded to INEC which placed the electoral body in a dilemma of determining the authentic faction and the list to accept. There were widespread claims that moneybags hijacked the primaries in some states (*Tribune*, 16 June, 2022).

According to media reports, the presidential primaries of the major political parties were characterized by undisguised influencing of the delegates' choice through the use of money. Vote buying, intimidation, backstabbing, intrigues

and mudslinging were deployed at the occasion. It was alleged that delegates were bribed with as much as \$50,000 during the presidential primaries (*Tribune*, 16 June, 2022). However, unconfirmed reports alleged that the All Progressive Congress (APC) presidential primaries received different amounts of bribes from the top three presidential aspirants but the eventual winner gave each delegate \$25,000. The leader of each state's delegation was alleged to have received \$50,000. It was also stated that each presidential aspirant that agreed to step down for the most prominent candidate got \$4m in exchange whilst the northern governors that insisted that their presidential ticket must go to the southern part of the country received each \$10m.

It was also alleged that currencies of different denominations were used to induce the delegates. This confirms the perception that electoral bribery and malpractices of the delegates have attained a high dimension. The widely held belief is that the primaries were won not on the basis of credibility, integrity and competence but by those that paid the biggest amount to the delegates. According to Komolafe (2022), it was obvious before the presidential primaries that the elected delegates to the conventions had some powers. As a result, the aspirants tried to cultivate the elected party delegates that had been chosen to elect the flag bearers of the respective parties. The exclusion of the statutory delegates in the Electoral Act 2022 even made the elected delegates more "powerful," because they assumed all the powers to 'make and unmake' things at the convention. The decision of who would be the next president started with what the delegates did with their votes to elect the candidates. The situation in which a political party was highly favoured to win the real election is a combination of factors initiated by the delegates' process of victory for its candidate.

Joseph and Shehu (2022) affirm that Nigerians were keenly watching as the two major political parties prepared to hold their presidential primaries. According to both Joseph and Shehu, many people doubted the ability of the delegates to elect credible individuals as party flag bearers in the 2023 presidential and general elections. The delegates are few individuals compared to the majority they represent to select the flag bearer of the various political parties during

election. Some scholars have contended that it is not feasible to depend on the judgment of a few people (delegates) to determine the leaders of a country, state and a local government from their own choice of candidates. Thus, they argue that the outcome of the delegates does not reflect the larger mind of the people and citizens of the country (Joseph & Shehu, 2022). Other scholars have however, argued that since the delegates were chosen from the generality of the public to elect flag bearers the delegates have the mandate to determine the leader of the country.

The widely held opinion is that most of the delegates ended up in self-enrichment by selling their votes during the primaries rather than scrutinize the candidate that becomes the ultimate winner. Therefore, Joseph and Shehu (2022) suggested that measures be put in place to discourage bribing of delegates during party congresses, so that credible and honest flag bearers can be selected from the parties. Iniobong (2022) explained that the *ad-hoc* delegates from the two major political parties were selected through a process that involved electing individuals that would vote on their behalf in the party's governorship or presidential primaries.

According to the 2022 Electoral Act (as amended), for presidential primaries, the *ad-hoc* delegates are elected from across the local governments in the country according to the stated number in the party's constitution or guidelines by the local governments in each state. PDP in Lagos State, for example, has only one authorized delegate from each of the twenty local government areas, as well as one physically-challenged individual, to get a total of 21 elected delegates for the presidential primaries. Similarly, the APC's constitution permits three *ad-hoc* national delegates from each local government for the presidential primaries. So, for Lagos State, come a total of 60 delegates that would participate in their presidential primaries. Kano state with more local governments would have more delegates. Since there is no statutory number of delegates permitted, it means that the delegates' list will be small and manageable.

Some scholars have, however, argued that having fewer delegates means a reduced democratic space and increased chances for manipulation of the outcome. Osori (2022) observed that with statutory delegates excluded, it

would be very costly to attain good governance from those elected in 2023 since about 90% of the struggle for decent leadership may have been lost during the primaries. Osori also argued that even with the new electoral law, Nigeria is not certain that credible elections could be achieved. Beside the fact that INEC does not regulate the internal mechanisms of political parties; does not control the cost of campaigning; and the violence associated with elections, a black hole still existed in how votes are collated and the 2022 Electoral Act has not addressed this gap. This point of view appears anachronistic because the new electoral act has taken care of both the collation of election results at the polling booths and electronic transfer of the same to collation centers.

According to Aluko (2022), the PDP pegged the number of delegates to vote at the primaries and national convention at three *ad-hoc* delegates per ward, for the ward congresses and one national delegate per local government, for national congress. From the current demographic data, the northwestern and the southwestern parts of Nigeria have the highest number of delegates for both the PDP and APC primaries, respectively. The northwest, having 186 local government areas, presents 744 ward delegates while the south-west, with 137 local government areas, presents 548 ward delegates. The southeast having 95 council areas presents 380 ward delegates (Aluko, 2022).

Ahmed (2022) noted that the existential threats facing Nigerians are serious enough to challenge the most capable, competent and courageous leaders and as such the government would have to find solutions to the difficult task of governance. Therefore, if in 2023, the electorate is forced to choose between incompetent and corrupt leaders, the situation will become a catastrophe. Thus, delegates across all parties needed to understand their enormous moral responsibility to determine the quality of the candidates that Nigerians will have to elect. They are the ones that would determine the country's future. Hence, they have to determine if the 2023 elections would bring hope or orchestrate the final blow that would knock out the country (Ahmed, 2022).

Yusuff (2022) expressing views similar to Ahmed's (2022), asserted that for a long time, we were told that our voting power will decide who becomes what and when. But our country has been associated with lack of credible leaders

to manage the affairs of the country. The critical issue is why has leadership-deficit been a bane of this nation? Poor and non-scientific choices of leaders by delegates have been identified as one of the greatest challenges to our democratic process. Nigeria has enormous human capital but the poor choices of party delegates at successive primary elections have denied the nation of capable and credible leaders. Some delegates consider their position as a privilege and a unique opportunity to gain some financial reward for their political toil over the years (Yusuff, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

The delegates system plays a very important and strategic role in the selection of credible leadership in any nation. In Nigeria, the practice has not really brought out the best candidates for the general public to elect during elections because it is full of irregularities, malpractices and corruption. The lack of recognition of independent candidates by Nigeria's Constitution has limited the number of eligible candidates for leadership positions. That leaves the political spaces for godfathers or *ubangida* (Ikejiani-Clark, 2008) to dominate and manipulate. This study interrogated the conduct of the 2023 presidential primaries of the major political parties and found that malpractices and electoral bribery dwarfed the credibility, integrity and competence of leadership-selection. It is believed that if the current practice is left unchecked, election ethics and democratic values would be lost and the country will not be able to sustain its democracy.

This study suggested the recognition of independent candidates; reform of political party rules for voting from remote locations via electronic devices so as to eliminate conventions or congresses that give room to corruption and malpractices. Only if these suggestions are carried out can credible candidates present themselves for elective offices in the country.

## **Way Forward/Recommendations**

The practice of conducting primaries by political parties in the selection of standard flag bearers for the parties in elections in the country has not provided the emergence of credible leaders for the country. The primaries conducted for the 2023 elections were marred by malpractices, corruption, and vote buying.

The media described the scenario with the onomatopoeic phrase, “dollar rain.” Despite the efforts to check the malpractices through the provisions in the new Electoral Act 2022 as amended, the unwholesome practices persisted.

A major factor that has prevented credible candidates from presenting themselves for election is the need to belong to a political party and use its platform in vying for elective offices. The moneybags and godfathers that control political parties remain shadow parties in the political configuration during elections of delegates and choice of party flag bearers and ensure they prevent the emergence of individual candidates.

First, there is an urgent need for the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered) to recognize independent candidates for all elective offices in the country. If the law allows independent candidates to compete for elective offices in the country, the influence of moneybags and godfathers will reduce in politics, leadership and governance. As a result, the public and not a small group of delegates would be responsible for electing credible leaders.

Second, Nigeria practices the American model of presidential system of government but deviated from the American selection method. In the US, for instance, the aspirants present their manifesto to the general public from counties to the state level. Through this, the American voters interrogate them and make their choices. The most popular candidates always emerge to contest against the other popular candidates from other parties. Perhaps, if Nigeria adopts that practice, it might produce the best and most credible candidates for elections.

Lastly, the contemporary age is suffused with digital systems. Nigeria should key fully into this rather than use individual electronic machines such as Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) because they have limitations. INEC, which is Nigeria’s Electoral Management Body (EMB) should encourage a more robust digital voting that would eliminate the traditional practice of exposing voters to the elements of the sun, rain, hazardous environment, among others just to vote. Through digital system, individual party members can compete for elections, and be voted for by the electorate from their houses

or remote locations. This practice will emasculate vote buying, bribing of delegates and ensure the emergence of cradle candidates. The present form of organizing party primaries to select candidates for elective offices encourages corruption. The cost is prohibitive and excludes independent candidates just as it prevents well-meaning individuals from participating in leadership and governance in the country. The study therefore recommends the following:

1. Amendment of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered) to recognize and permit independent candidates to stand for elections in the country.
2. Practice the selection of candidates from the wards, to the states and then to national congresses as practiced in the US presidential system should be embraced in the Nigerian political system.
3. Reform of political party rules to conduct the selection of candidates for elective offices through electronic means without conventions or congresses.

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# 6

## **HUMAN INSECURITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF VOTER TURNOUT AT ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA, 1999-2019**

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### **Abstract**

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*Nigeria's Fourth Republic has successively witnessed decline in voter turnout at elections. This is in spite of the humongous amount of money expended on the conduct of elections in the country. Although authors have explored the situation, human insecurity as a causative factor of the phenomenon seems not to attract their attention. This paper therefore explores human insecurity in Nigeria and the seeming intractable challenges it poses to voter turnout at elections in the country. Analytical research method was employed for this study and the social contract theory espoused as a framework of analysis. The study found that human insecurity permeates Nigeria's landscape as people are constrained by lack of economic wherewithal to meet life's basic necessities and the fear of the avalanche of criminal elements in the country and even government security agents to turnout for elections. This, the paper found, has negatively impacted voter turnout as the percentages of voter turnout has declined from 52.26 percent in 1999 to 34.95 percent in the 2019 general elections. The paper concludes that voter turnout at elections in Nigeria may further decline if human insecurity in the country continues unabated. The paper recommends productive engagement of Nigeria's most active population and redistribution of state resources to tame the clamour for resource control which often results to conflicts and/or crises that snowballs into human insecurity and consequently scare people away from elections.*

**Keywords:** Elections, human insecurity, voter turnout, social contract, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

The global embrace of democracy as the most accepted form of government has led to periodic conduct of elections which is considered as the festival of democracy at various levels of governments in countries that have adopted this largest political participation ensured form of government. But recession of democracy across the globe, including the big democracies like the United States as witnessed in their declining voter turnouts is noticeable. According to Andza and Akuva (2019, p.264), “voter turnout is the total number of eligible voters that come out for an election versus the total number of eligible voters as registered in a country’s voter’s register or the estimated voting age population of a country which is fundamental in determining whether the turnout is low or high.”

The importance of high voter turnout is to the effect that it increases the strength of citizenship and quality of democratic civic life as high voter turnout is a reflection of the ideas and perspectives of the citizens which are transmitted to the political arena (Andza & Akuva, 2019). High voter turnout also reflects the legitimacy of the elected governments and the degree of acceptance of government decisions and programmes. It is against this background that electoral umpires, political parties, civil society organizations and even intergovernmental organizations, the world over, engage in voter education of countries’ voting population to encourage large turnout at elections. The huge amount of money spent on voter education has particularly swollen the budget of electoral umpires. In Nigeria, the electoral umpire’s budget, especially in general election years, have been higher than most subnational governments in the country. This is evident from Nigeria’s Independent National Electoral Commission’s (INEC) request of N305 billion to conduct the 2023 general election in addition to the N40 billion allocated to it annually (Ukpe, 2021).

In spite of the huge monies expended on elections, Nigeria’s voter turnout has been receding since the recommencement of democracy in the country in 1999. Akinpelu (2020) stated that Nigeria’s presidential elections voter turnouts have receded from 52.26 percent in 1999 to 34.95 percent in 2019. Other categories of elections in the country have witnessed lower voter turnouts; and as Nwozor (2017, p.7) averred that “what makes democratic governments more accountable

and, thus differentiates them from authoritarian, fascist or other forms of unacceptable regimes, including military regimes, is the “people factor”, that is, the active participation of the people in the emergence of leaders, through election.”

This explains why elections are still being periodically held in the country in spite of their expensiveness and the receding voter turnout. While the receding voter turnout in the country cannot be attributed to a single reason, human insecurity presents a holistic and persuasive elucidation of this unfortunate scenario. For Lonergan et al (2000), human insecurity has to do with military threats as well as resource scarcity, rapid population growth, human rights abuses, and outbreaks of infectious diseases, environmental degradation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity. Human insecurity is restraints by fear, restraints by want resulting in inability to live a dignified life. Human insecurity pervades Nigeria’s scenery as it is evident in the country’s Fragile State Index score of 98.5 percent in 2022 (World Population Review, 2022). Not only that, Nigeria also has a dismal score of 2.71 percent in the Global Peace Index. This ranks her as 146<sup>th</sup> out of 163 independent nations and territories measured of their peacefulness in 2021 (Statista, 2022). It is against this background that this paper seeks to explore the prevalence of human insecurity in Nigeria to bring to the fore, the challenge(s) it poses to voter turnout in the country.

This paper is divided into seven sections. Introduction is the first section, followed by conceptual discourse which is the second section. Section three is the theoretical framework while section four is an overview of human insecurity in Nigeria. Section five focuses on the challenges of human insecurity to voter turnout in Nigeria. Section six is the conclusion and the recommendations are in section seven.

### **Conceptual Discourse**

For a clearer understanding of the subject under investigation, key concepts such as election, human insecurity and voter turnout are highlighted and discussed in this section.

### ***Election:***

According to Dickerson et al as cited in Osinakachukwu and Jawan (2011, p. 130), election is defined as “a post mortem that investigate the record of office holders whose actual performance may have little to do with promises made when they were previously elected”. The import of this definition is found in its purpose of investigating the records of elected office holders to ensure that their performance is in tandem with their promises prior to seeking office. This investigation can only be properly done when there is large voter turnout. Anything short of this will just be a semblance of the investigation and the result may not even represent the true nature of reality. As it were, elected office holders may be allowed to continue in office in spite of their inability to keep to their promises prior to their elections. For Oni (2016, p. 229), election is a “popular means of attaining governmental power in modern political system by which people cast votes for their preferred candidates or parties in a competitive manner”. Though this definition is concise and apt, its soul which is the popularity of attaining governmental power and competitiveness is lost in an event of low voter turnout as experienced in Nigeria. Genuine popularity and competitiveness cannot be found in a situation where barely 30 percent of the registered voters turn out for elections. According to Okoye (2003, p. vii), election “involves the participation of the people in the act of electing their leaders and their participation in governance”. This is consistent with the Economist Intelligence Unit’s major indicators for measuring the index of democracy around the world. Political participation includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed, and tries to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives which culminates in their turnout for elections.

### ***Human Insecurity***

On human security, Jolly et al (2006) focused on the protection of fundamental freedoms that are the “essence of life” and also protecting people from critical and pervasive threats. Human insecurity is conceived as the absence of protection of the necessary liberties that are the soul of life and the vulnerability of the people to grave and prevalent threat. Nigeria’s inability to meet the United Nations requirement of one policeman to 400 people is just one indicator of the

severe shortage of protection of Nigerians from fundamental freedoms that are the soul of life amidst grave and prevalent threats. To Leaning, Arie and Stites (2004), human insecurity can be understood in the context of the absence and/or shortage of basic material needs necessary for survival such as shelter, food, water and safety and the psychological and social context in which issues of the sense of home, a link to community and a positive and hopeful sense of the future face grave threat. This notion of human insecurity is in sync with what is deduced from Jolly's *et al* (2006) concept of human security. Kumar (2021) avers that human insecurity entails deprivations, impeding rights and freedoms as well as the absence of policies and programmes that protect people from uncertainties and unpredictable events that could threaten their peaceful survival and dignity. According to Ogwumike and Ozughalu (2018), there is a pronounced deprivation in education, health, nutrition, protection, water and sanitation in Nigeria which lends credence to Kumar's definition of human insecurity. There are also serious issues of human rights violations as well as the absence and/or ineffective policies and programmes that protect people from uncertainties and unpredictable events which perhaps, explain why Nigerians fail to turnout *en masse* for elections hence the definition's importance and its adoption in this paper.

### ***Voter Turnout:***

The Cambridge Dictionary defines turnout as the number of people present at an event, especially the number who go out to vote at an election. This definition is vague to the extent that one cannot properly distinguish between legible and illegible number of the people that turnout to vote at an election. It is in a bid to bridge this gap that the International IDEA (2016, p. 17) defines voter turnout as "the extent to which eligible voters use their vote on Election Day". The total eligible voters are therefore the yardstick to measure the extent of voter turnout which could be low or high. Andza and Akuva (2019, p. 264) conceptualizes voter turnout more profoundly as "the total numbers of eligible voters that come out for an election versus the total number of eligible voters as registered in a country's voters' register or the estimated voting age population of a country which is fundamental in determining whether the turnout is low or high."

In other words, voter turnout measures the percentage of voters that have actually taken part in an election (the proportion of eligible voters who actually cast their vote). The significance of this definition is to the effect that it has not only explained who a voter is but it also set parameter for gauging the extent of voter turnout and/or political participation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopts Thomas Hobbes's Social Contract Theory in explaining the cause(s) of human insecurity and the challenges it poses to voter turnout at elections in Nigeria. The social contract theory is a product of inquiry founded on scientific reasoning as against the theological or religious based thinking of the pre-enlightenment period of which Hobbes was a principal proponent. Lloyd and Susanne (2020) aver that the social contract theory was first formulated by Hobbes in 1651 and the theory was later improved by John Locke and Jean Jacque Rousseau. The theory is an attempt to justify political principles or arrangements by appeal to the agreement that would be made among suitably situated rational, free, and equal persons.

The focus of the social contract theory is on how members of some society have reason to endorse and comply with the fundamental social rules, laws, institutions, and/or principles of that society (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2021). The major assumptions of the social contract theory as postulated by Thomas Hobbes are that "there was no social or political organization in the state of nature and it was a state of perfectly private judgment, in which there was no agency with recognized authority to arbitrate disputes and effective power to enforce its decisions" (Lloyd & Susanne, 2020, p. 3). He also contend that, such a "dissolute condition of masterless men, without subjugation to the laws and coercive power to tie their hands from rapine, and revenge would make impossible all of the basic security upon which comfortable, social, civilized life depends" (Lloyd & Susanne, 2020, p. 3). Life in the Hobbesian state of nature was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1965, p.97).

However, Hobbes as cited in Laskar (2013) contended that because of man's desire for security and order so as to secure self-protection and self-preservation



and to avoid misery and pain, man entered into a covenant. The entering into a covenant led to the voluntary surrendering of all their rights and freedoms to some authority by this contract who must command obedience. In return therefore, this mightiest authority is to protect and preserve their lives and property which led to the emergence of the ruler or monarch, who shall be the absolute head. Hobbes' absolutism is most precisely found in his assertion as cited in Laskar (2013, p. 2) that, "law is dependent upon the sanction of the sovereign and the Government without a sword are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all."

The prevailing human insecurity in contemporary Nigeria is similar to the Hobbesian state of nature where there was perfectly private judgment in which there was no agency with recognized authority to arbitrate disputes and effectively enforce its decisions. There abound perfectly private judges which have sent some people to their graves and have brought hardship to many. The raiding of villages by Bandits, Boko Haram terrorists, the Eastern Security Network, among other criminal gangs where fatalities are recorded are clear cases of private judgment and enforcement of decisions. In some parts of Nigeria, people are levied or taxed by bandits and/or militia gangs for allegedly committed offences and some people are more comfortable taking their cases to these "private judges". Though there are a good number of recognized security agencies in the country to arbitrate disputes with seemingly effective power to enforce their decisions, they have been overwhelmed by the rate of criminal activities in the country. Life, for some people in Nigeria, therefore has become solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. Some people live in places that are deserted with few possessions in unpleasant conditions without a clear thought of what the future holds for them because of frequent invasions by bandits. This explains the short life expectancy in the country which the World Bank (2022) indicated was 54.68 years in 2019, the least in West Africa. Nigerians are now more concerned with meeting their physiological needs and the fulfillment of safety and security needs. Turning out for elections therefore occupies the lowest rung on the hierarchy of their needs hence the ebbing of voter turnout in the country.

It must be noted that man's desire for security and order so as to secure self-protection and self-preservation and to avoid misery and pain which led him to enter into a covenant has been ostensibly defeated in Nigeria. Despite surrendering all their rights and freedoms to some authority who command obedience by Nigerians, the authority has not lived up to its responsibilities of protecting and preserving their lives and property. There are palpable restraints by wants and restraints by threats of which turning out for election is inclusive and inability of Nigerians to live dignified lives. Because of the profound grief, continuous fear, insecurity and danger of death in the country, Nigerians have opted to stay away from elections hence the declining voter turnout in the country. The implication of this is aptly captured by Andza and Akuva (2019, p.274) when they stated "the attempt to minimize the influence of political parties on elected political office holders and/or check their excesses by initiating the recall process cannot even be contemplated when turning up for secondary elections is not a priority for the people. This implies that no matter the excesses of the elected representatives, they cannot be held to account for such by way of recall.

This means that these government officials have become or are heading to become absolute rulers as conceived by Hobbes without responsibility. This perhaps, explains non-recall of even one elected representative irrespective of dozens of *prima facie* cases of wrong doings established against some of them since the Fourth Republic began in 1999. Rather, some have, several times found themselves back in their elected positions and in some instances, gone into higher offices.

### **An Overview of Human Insecurity in Nigeria**

As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1994, pp. 24-25) noted, "the list of threats to human security is long but most can be considered under seven main categories: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security". It is therefore on this categorisation that human insecurity in the country is analysed. All the categories of human insecurity have continued to deteriorate since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999. Economic insecurity

which entails “lack of an assured basic income, usually from productive and remunerative work, or in the last resort from a publicly financed safety net” (UNDP, 1994, p. 24) is pervasive in Nigeria. This is reflected in the level of unemployment and underemployment in the country which are indicative threats of economic insecurity. One cannot glowingly talk about achieving a minimum standard of living without being gainfully employed and/or secured by some kind of social security. The National Bureau of Statistics as cited in Iyatse (2021) indicates that in the fourth quarter of 2020, unemployment in the country was 33.3 percent while underemployment was 22.8 percent. This shows that, a very reasonable percentage of the population of the country is threatened by lack of purchasing power which translates into deprivation of the basic necessities of life. This is inconsistent with the spirit of human security.

Food insecurity, as one of the categories of human insecurity, is also prevalent in Nigeria. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (2002, p. 27) defines food security as a situation where “all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life”. This situation is far from being met in Nigeria which means, there is food insecurity in the country and people are more concerned with achieving their food needs than voting during elections. The Bi-annual Cadre Harmonized Framework as cited in the Guardian Newspaper of November 8, 2021 more profoundly noted the pervasiveness of food insecurity in Nigeria when it projected that 16.8 million people will either be at crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity in Nigeria between June and August, 2022. This projection is even conservative because most households’ food security is achieved at great expense to their resources thereby exposing these households to risk of being food insecure. Besides, physical access to food is also threatened by a number of challenges which include but not limited to armed banditry, high cost of transportation, multiple taxation during harvest and post-harvest losses, and the deplorable state of Nigerian roads.

Nigerians also face health threats as a category of human insecurity. Health insecurity to Werthes et al (2011) is the threat from major causes of death,

including mainly infectious and parasitic diseases. Prominent among the infectious and parasitic diseases that are prevalent in Nigeria are tuberculosis and malaria. Ugwu and Agbo (2021) aver that Nigeria is first in Africa with the highest tuberculosis burden. Data obtained from the World Bank (2022) also supports this as it reveals that there is a prevalence rate of 219 per 100, 000 people in 2020 in Nigeria. No other country is in that range in Africa. Malaria incidences in Nigeria per 1, 000 populations at risk in 2018 as stated by the World Bank (2022) were 291.9. This implies that the country has 25 percent of malaria cases worldwide. Kolawole, as cited in the Vanguard Newspaper of January 24, 2020, averred that 85, 690 people died as a result of malaria related illnesses in Nigeria in 2017 and over N300 billion is spent in the country annually on malaria treatment.

Another category of human insecurity faced by Nigerians is environmental insecurity. Werthes, et al (2011) aver that environmental security is operationalized by the percentage of population that is affected by disasters and the mean of percentage of population with access to clean water and the percentage with access to improved water sanitation. Nigeria is not prone to being affected by disasters in comparison to some other countries; frequent massive floods have hit the country in recent times. Usigbe (2021) contends that between 2012 and 2020, Nigeria lost 627 people to flood; 3, 921, 202 people were affected, \$17 billion was lost in damages in 2012 and 27 states in the country were projected to be affected by flood in 2021. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (2022, p. 1) also held that “the number of people affected by widespread flooding across Nigeria in 2022 has risen to over 3.2 million, with over 600 fatalities and over 1.4 million people are displaced”. Flood has also made nonsense of improved water sources which have made some people to contend with distances of more than 30 minutes to get potable water. This is inconsistent with the World Health Organization (WHO) standards. This has led to shortage of basic water services in the country which the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF, n.d.) contends that only 26. 5 percent of the country’s population use improved drinking water sources and sanitation facilities.

Nigerians also confront palpable threats from physical violence but these threats are actually carried out on some people. The sources of these threats and/or violence include but are not limited to Boko Haram terrorists, bandits, the Eastern Security Network/IPOB, criminal gangs, cultists, militias, and political thugs. The threats of and/or violence occasioned by these sources have led to the death of 39, 055 people between 2018 and 2020 (Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme, 2018, 2019, & 2020). Also, 8, 661 people were abducted in the country between 2015 and the first half of 2021 (Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) cited in Adebajo, 2021). As at November 30, 2021, all the threats and violence occasioned by these sources accounted for 3, 015, 619 IDPs while 303, 963 people have found refuge in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (United Nations High Commission for refugees (UNHCR), 2021).

Community insecurity is evident in Nigeria as some people face threats and/or have lost traditional practices and membership in certain groups such as the family, community, organization, ethnic group from which people derive cultural identity. Refugees and IDPs have become the largest victims of community insecurity that have pervaded Nigeria. The 3, 015, 619 IDPs and the 303, 963 Nigerians who have taken up refuge in contiguous countries face diverse threats. They have been denied basic human rights; they face more threats of physical violence; malnutrition, lack of access to clean water and sanitation.

Political insecurity is also pervasive in Nigeria. There is government repression, systematic violation of human rights, torture, ill treatment, disappearances, and threats from militarization in Nigeria. Protest, which is a democratic right, is repressed in the country. Nigerian highways are full of security check points where road users face harassment. The electorate is also scared to come out for political and social events for fear of being abducted by bandits and/or harassed by security personnel and/or political thugs.

### **The Challenges of Human Insecurity to Voter Turnout at Elections in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

The prevalence of economic insecurity in the country which manifest in lack

of assured basic income has made the exorbitant cost of nomination and expression of intent forms unaffordable by some intending aspirants within the parties. This, as Egobueze and Ojirika (2017) noted, shut these aspirants out of the process and made some of the intending aspirants, their supporters and sympathizers complacent about participating in the democratic process including turning out for elections. This has led to low voter turnout at elections in the country. The prevalence of economic insecurity in the country has deprived eligible voters from travelling to their registration centres to obtain their voters' cards to vote at elections. The percentage of unemployment and underemployment is between 33.3 percent and 22.8 percent, respectively and this constitutes the most active voting age population in the country. But the issue is compounded because they have dependents.

Postponement of elections at short notifications affect voter turnout negatively. Many voters see the postponement as double expenses to commute to voting centers and therefore refrain from going to vote. Most scholars have explained that voters often prioritize their resources to achieve physiological needs (given the fact that food insecurity is also prevalent in the country) than saving money to travel to vote at elections as many times as it may be rescheduled. In Nigeria, the instances of rescheduling elections began in 2011. In that year, voting had actually started in some parts of the country but the electoral umpire announced the postponement of the election by two days. This affected the conduct of all the other elections in the country. Again in 2015, elections were postponed by six weeks and in 2019, just a few hours to the commencement of the February 16 election, the electoral body shifted the election by one week and this affected the dates of the conduct of state elections in the country. The postponement of elections made the electorate lose confidence in the electoral system. So, the electorates often divert their time and resources to other personal venture on their farms, workshops and stores rather than go to polling booths to cast their votes on election days. Illnesses such as malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDs, among others have incapacitated some people and prevented them from going out for elections in the country. Other voters simply avoid the voting centers because of contagious diseases. They deliberately stay away from voting centers for fear of contracting these infectious diseases. The outbreak of the Corona

Virus (Covid-19) disease impacted negatively on voter turnout in the country. In spite of the control galvanized at the medical and governmental levels to contain the spread of corona virus many people stayed away from elections centres to protect their lives from the dreaded virus because the virus kept changing variants and no drug has yet been developed to cure it. Therefore, health insecurity as a category of human insecurity poses a serious challenge to voter turnout in the country.

Environmental insecurity, a component of human insecurity, also poses a grave challenge to voter turnout in Nigeria. Elections are for the living and as such, the lives claimed by natural disasters such as flood, for instance, and even the bereaved, prevent massive turnout for elections. This is because they may not be in the right frame of mind to engage in other things but grieving about their losses. It is also imperative to note that Nigerians displaced by either natural disasters or violent conflicts and have been confined to IDP camps may have lost their voters' cards; have not been able replace them; and therefore unable to turnout for elections. Though Section 26 subsection (a) (i) of the Electoral (Amendment) Act 2015 provides for IDPs to vote at elections, the challenges associated with political perception and distrust over transmission of results across state borders and constituency boundaries, interstate IDPs franchise is only limited to presidential elections (Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (2018). Some registered voters have become refugees in other countries and cannot afford to return to Nigeria to vote on election days. This problem has also contributed to the declining voter turnout in the country.

The incidences of threats and physical violence by Boko Haram terrorists, bandits, the Eastern Security Network/IPOB, criminal gangs, cultists, local militias, and political thugs discourage many voters from coming out for elections in Nigeria. In Nigeria, election periods have recorded extreme cases of violence such as the burning to death of the Kogi State People Democratic Party (PDP) woman leader, Mrs. Salome Abuh in her home at Ochadamu, Ofu Local Government during the November 16, 2019, Kogi State Governorship elections. Unfortunately, perpetrators of the horrible act have not faced the full wrath of the law.

Political insecurity is prevalent and poses a grave challenge to voter turnout at elections in the country. The fear of government repression, systematic violation of human rights, torture, ill treatment, disappearances, and threats from militarization have jointly made many people stay away from elections in the country. The deployment of fearsome-looking and intimidating security personnel to election centers have scared Nigerians from participating in elections in the country. In the November 6, 2021, Anambra State Governorship election, the Vanguard Newspaper of October, 29, 2021 reported that the police was going to deploy 34, 587 personnel including two DIGs, five AIGs, 92 other top officers and three helicopters. This is in addition to the 20, 000 Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) and unspecified number of soldiers deployed for the same election (Olorok, Adepegba, Adedipe, Okafor, and Ede, 2021). Available records showed that only 253, 388 voters which represents 10. 27 percent out of the 2, 466, 638 registered voters in Anambra State turned out for the election. It is not unlikely that the heavy presence of security personnel scared the people from coming out to vote (Vanguard Newspaper November 10, 2021).

Media reports have revealed that most people stay away from election centers on election days to avoid losing their lives, abduction, and/or sustaining debilitating injuries that may impact negatively on household income and family welfare. This has affected Nigeria's electoral process and pluralism which seeks to determine whether elections are competitive in that, electors are free to vote. The Economist Intelligent Unit (2008, 2012, 2016, & 2020) indicates that Nigeria's score of electoral process and pluralism for 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 which are election years in the country were 3.08, 5.67, 6.08, and 5.17 on the scale of 0 to 10, respectively. Though from 2011, the country has maintained a more than 50 percent score in its electoral process and pluralism, it must be noted that there are 12 questions on the Economist Intelligent Unit's questionnaire that jointly determine the electoral process and pluralism of a country. Nigeria has performed fairly in some but citizens cannot freely vote because of significant threats to their security from state or non-state actors.



Human insecurity is also implicated in the effort at achieving a parallel proportion of the population of voter turnout to registered voters in Nigeria's national, local and off-session elections. For the presidential elections, Akinpelu (2020) indicated that out of the 57, 938, 945 registered voters in the country in 1999, only 30, 280, 052 turned out for the election which represents 52.26 percent. This shows a 47.74 percent gap shortfall to achieve parallel proportion of the registered voters. The 2003 presidential elections left a 30.92 percent gap to be covered to achieve equilibrium with registered voters in the country as it was 42, 018, 735 out of the 60, 826, 022 registered voters that turned out for the election. The gap to achieve equilibrium between voter turnout and registered voters further widened to 42.48 percent in the 2007 presidential elections as 35, 419, 262 voters out of the 61, 566, 648 registered voters turned out for the election. In the 2011 presidential election, 46.33 percent gap was left to be filled to achieve evenness between voter turnout and the number of registered voters in the country as 39, 469, 484 of the 73, 528, 040 registered voters turned out for election which represents 53.67 percent. The gap between voter turnout and registered voters in the country further widened in the 2015 presidential election as only 29, 432, 083 of the registered 67, 422, 005 voters turned out for the election which represent 43.65 percent. This left a wide gap of 56.35 percent. For the 2019 general elections, INEC registered 84, 004, 084 voters in the country but only 29, 364, 209 voters turned out for the election which represents 34.95 percent. This left a gap of 65.05 percent to achieve parallel proportion of voter turnout and registered voters in the country.

## **Conclusion**

The foregoing shows that human insecurity is prevalent in Nigeria. This is evident from economic insecurity, food insecurity, health insecurity, environmental insecurity, personal insecurity, community insecurity, and political insecurity. The paper established that human insecurity poses a serious challenge to voter turnout at elections in the country as people are constrained by lack of economic wherewithal and the fear of violence by criminal elements. They are also scared to turnout for elections by the dreadful appearances of government security agents. Attaining a parallel population of voter turnout with the number of registered voters in this country is still a far cry because the factors responsible

for it are prevalent and are on the increase in the country. In other words, voter turnout in Nigeria may further decline if the menace of human insecurity in the country is not urgently addressed. To that extent, the challenges of human insecurity to voter turnout in the country are real and visible.

## **Recommendations**

1. Nigerian government should create jobs and provide the enabling environment for people to engage in profitable productive ventures to reduce soaring unemployment and underemployment in the country. This will free Nigerians from lack of money for taking care of their basic needs because the traps that have prevented many voters from turning out for elections in the country. It will also reduce the demand for resource control which is a recipe for youth restiveness and related crimes.
2. Nigerians should be sensitized to relocate from disaster prone areas. They should also be educated to desist from activities that promote flood disasters in the country.
3. The Nigerian security architecture should be overhauled and repositioned to be accountable for their operations so that impunity can be eliminated its ranks. This will address the issues of human rights violations, torture, ill treatment, disappearances, and threats from militarization that has kept some Nigerians away from elections.

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# 7

## PERVASIVE INSECURITY AND THE CHALLENGES FACING THE 2023 ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*As Nigerians look forward to the general elections in 2023, there is growing concern that the nation's pervasive insecurity condition could offer a significant barrier, if not an obstruction, to those elections. This is the crux of this study. This paper examines Pervasive Insecurity and the Challenges facing the 2023 Elections in Nigeria. The study mapped out the issues and events that have been causing tensions prior the elections in 2023; the steps taken to reduce them nationally as well as the instances when no significant action was made to de-escalate the likelihood of conflicts and violence. 61FGD sessions and 46 KII interviews were used were utilized to qualitatively collect data. Six States: Sokoto, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Niger, and Imo are among those adversely affected by violence and were chosen as case studies. They were content-analyzed to highlight the study's key findings. According to the survey, there is a huge arms market for weapons in Nigeria. Violent non-state actors get arms from both government and non-government sources. The paper concludes that if the spread of weapons is not stopped, the security issues caused by terrorism, banditry, and violent extremism will become worse, and government's efforts to restore order will be fruitless. The study recommends the need to ensure border security, strengthening of national intelligence and security institutions, and committing to the execution of a national, regional, and international framework against arms proliferation.*

**Keywords:** *Arms Proliferation, Banditry, Election, Extremism, Security,*

## **Introduction**

In the 90s, many African states held elections and successfully transitioned from military control and a one-party system to “multiparty democracies.” Unfortunately, majority of them have not been transformed to good governance because autocracy and its effects are still entrenched in many regions of the continent mostly because citizens’ basic rights are infringed; the rule of law is misapplied; and corruption is rampant. Other challenges to democratic consolidation include widespread insecurity, electoral fraud, electoral violence, poor governance, poverty, and underdevelopment.

Africa recorded 28 of the overall 39 democracies in the third wave of democracy in 1974 (Freedom House, 2006) but the number had grown thrice by the early 1990s (Huntington, 1991; Diamond & Plattner, 1994; Diamond, 2006). If Schumpeter’s (1947) definition of democracy as a form of governance in which major political officeholders are chosen in routine, fair elections, then about three out of every five independent governments worldwide are democracies (Freedom House, 2006). At the end of 2006, there were more than 140 democracies in the world, with half of the 48 African governments being classified as democratic regimes in which citizens may choose their leaders and replace them through elections that are relatively free and fair (Freedom House, 2006).

Between 1989 and 2003, 44 of the 48 sub-Saharan countries held *de jure* elections (Lindberg, 2006). Many nations had adopted electoral democracy, especially after Huntington’s “third wave,” and many, including African governments, had made incredible progress toward democratic rule (Huntington, 1991; Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Hyslop, 1999; Ake, 1996, 2000; UNDP, 2002; Luckham et al. 2003). Former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan (Global Commission 2012, p.9) revealed that all but 11 nations in the globe had held national elections since 2000. He further stated that these elections “have never been more universal and essential, their benefits are, by no means, assured” (Global Commission 2012, p.9). Thus, if we consider democracies in this manner, electoral democracy is currently the most common form of governance in the world (Diamond, 1999; Freedom House, 2006).



“Elections remain the lifeblood of democracy because it is the constant confirmation of legitimacy for its leaders, and the bond that connects the leaders with the people,” said Princeton (2005, p. 2). There is no doubt that other factors also make democracy successful and sustainable. Some of the elements that contributed to the transition of these autocratic and authoritarian regimes to democratic ones in Africa have been documented by Sandbrook and Oelbaum (1991), Adejumbi (1998), Handley and Mills (2001), and Bofo-Arthur (2008). They contend that the fall of the Berlin Wall and the cessation of the East-West rivalry led to a decline in economic fortunes and created acute material destitution among the populace. This change seems to have damaged the attractiveness and political legitimacy of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships, and created the prospects for competitive multiparty elections and democratic politics in Africa.

Scholars have asserted that liberal democracy paradigm constituted a significant obstacle to bilateral and multilateral development cooperation between Africa and the West. They affirm that elections were included in the liberal democratic principles that multilateral institutions and other donor nations adopted as a condition for receiving help (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Bofo-Arthur, 2008). The pro-democratic movements that began after the Cold War started to spread over the African continent on the international front (Ninsin, 1998; Handley, 2008; Bofo-Arthur, 2008). In Zambia, as domestic and international pressure on the one-party system grew, the then-President Kenneth Kaunda permitted a discussion on the reintroduction of multiparty elections to take place at his United National Independence Party’s (UNIP) Fifth National Convention, held in March 1990. As a result, the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) won a resounding victory in the successful and largely free and fair election held in October 1991, and its chairman, Frederick Chiluba, was elected president (Matlosa, 2003).

A similar event occurred in Malawi in the early 1990s. At that time, Malawi appeared to be an unlikely candidate for democratization because Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda had ruled the nation for almost 30 years. In 1991, foreign aid funders pressured Banda to become more political and so Malawi held a

referendum in 1993 on whether the nation should embrace a multiparty system due to intense domestic and external pressure. Bakili Muluzi was elected as president in the first multiparty elections held in Malawi under Banda in 1994 (Chunga, 2014). In September, 1981, when Ghana transitioned to a fourth republican status, advancement on the political front was necessary to maintain Western backing and, in particular, the continued flow of IMF and WB monies (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Bofo-Arthur, 2008; Handley, 2008). There was also increased and widespread appeal to tyrannical governments to adopt liberal democratic principles due to internal civic actions by quasi-political and civil society groups (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004; Bofo-Arthur, 2008) because, according to Ademojubi (1998), even if elections were permitted, their results were predetermined by the political elites since they aimed to disrupt the foundations of African leaders' dominance (Adejumobi, 1998).

But Luckham (1994), Bratton, and Van de Walle (1997) argued on the unlikelihood of elections in Africa by stating that since colonialism ended, majority of independent countries having elections have had one-party systems and military governments and described it as "garrison socialism" which accords little weight to the subject of elections and the political process as it is practiced across the continent. He reiterated that largely due to Cold War politics, "massaged" elections have become the standard in Africa. Adejobi (1998) also remarked that in Africa, dictatorships had been maintained and aspirations for multiparty elections have been ruthlessly suppressed with the active backing of the two power blocs (Adejumobi, 1998).

However, Diamond and Plattner (1994) challenged Luckham's claim and stated that democracy actually ended the Cold War. They argued that the democratic uprisings of 1989-1991 were responsible for the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of communism in Eastern Europe. As a result, "rapid changes in Eastern Europe and serving as a stimulant to Africa's drive to democratic government" were the results of the democratic transition in nations like Turkey, Greece, and Portugal in the 1970s and Argentina and Chile in the 1980s (Georg, 1993, p.36). In Africa, democracy confronted the daunting task of maintaining constitutional rule and election processes in the face of

violence, poor administration, and tyrants. These unconstitutional issues have posed major challenges to expanding human freedoms; fostering true political competition; increasing the accountability of leaders; de-escalating conflict; establishing the rule of law; and developing effective public institutions.

Election is a key component in overcoming obstacles. It is also a major pillar of democratic government which establishes regular avenues for political rivalry and provides opportunities for citizens to assess and replace leaders. Indeed, the ability to discern between democracies and other forms of governments, many of which would like to claim the moniker of democracy without upholding its requirements has grown to depend on the ability to hold open, fair, and competitive elections because according to Ibrahim(2008) it is difficult to speak of a functional democracy without honest elections (Ibrahim, 2008). Since Nigeria attained independence in 1960, the country's elections and governance have been keenly followed by both the domestic and global public. Nigeria's elections had largely been flawed because of systemic problems. The flaws in Nigeria's electoral process has been attributed to lack of political will by the leadership; lack of durable legacies; and dislocations of numerous institutions tasked with holding free and fair elections. Ujo (2002) and Abdulyakeen (2021) observe that in contrast to Nigeria's flawed electoral system, the international community has been exploring faster, smooth and acceptable techniques of electing representatives. Structural-flaws in election-conduct has become a major gap that this study seeks to correct in order to strengthen the future of democracy in Nigeria.

## **Background**

In the 2015 and 2019 elections, respectively, the most serious concerns were security, the economy, and corruption. Although there had been series of agitation by different socio-cultural groups for resource-control and self-governance, none of them conflated like the Boko Haram conflict in Bauchi, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states because elections had to be postponed. In the events leading up to the 2015 and 2019 elections, insecurity became a major campaign issue because government efforts at mitigating insecurity had been unsuccessful and the situation had become bleak (Abdulyakeen, 2022).

Prior the 2023 presidential and general elections, the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, through press conferences, consistently remarked that insecurity was one of the main obstacles to the success of the 2023 general elections. According to him, it is crucial to ensure the security and safety of voters, election workers, materials, candidates, party agents, election observers and monitors, the media, and transporters. Insecurity had become so pervasive that Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), Prof Francis Chukwuemeka Ezeonu of Imo State said that elections may not hold in three Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Orlu, Osu, and Njaaba due to security while Prof Saidu Ahmed of Zamfara expressed similar concerns on the actions of bandits. Other notable leaders of political parties; civil society organizations; and faith leaders also expressed worries about insecurity.

### **Insecurity of Election in some Localities**

According to Gboyega, (2022), INEC may be compelled by security challenges emanating from armed non-state actors throughout the federation to hold elections in more than 686 towns in 2023. The affected wards and localities are spread across 90 local government areas (LGAs) and 18 federating states with 618 of the 686 affected localities found in just the north. According to the report of *Thisday Newspaper* (2022) the northern region “accounts for 90.1% of the dangerous localities.” (*Thisdays Newspaper*, 2022). Media reports also revealed that candidates will not be able to campaign in 69 localities just as INEC will not be able to hold elections in those places. The neighborhoods make up roughly 9.09 percent (*Thisdays Newspaper*, 2022).

336 of these 680 communities were in the Northwest. 200 of the 336 in the Northwest are located in Zamfara State. The report also identified about 168 other communities in the North-east. Gombe is the only state where neither a community nor a ward was identified as dangerous. In Borno State, elections were prohibited in approximately 79 wards (Audu, 2022). 114 wards in the North-central found to be prone to insecurity were located in the axis of Plateau, Niger, Kwara, and Nasarawa (Idayat, 2022). 55 communities in the Southeast (Abia, Anambra and Imo) have been classified as red zones. According to

research-findings, Ondo State, particularly Owo and Ose Local Government Areas as well as ten communities were prone to volatility because of “its proximity to Kogi State, where ISWAP insurgents had infiltrated” (Sunday & Ityokura, 2022).

According to the former INEC Chairman, Attahiru Jega (2022), “Election integrity and even the legality of the outcome will be questioned unless they are held in a setting that is calm and secure. Election integrity is threatened by security concerns. If election preparation and administration are hampered or disrupted, the results will be partially or completely invalid. As we anticipate the general elections in 2023, there is growing concern that the nation’s pervasive insecurity condition could offer a significant barrier, if not an obstruction, to those elections. “Security concerns would represent the most serious hazard to the integrity of the election process if they were not appropriately and effectively handled.”

This paper will attempt to answer the following questions: What are the security issues? How will presidential candidates tackle them in the country? What contextual factors must they take into account when addressing insecurity in Nigeria? The electorate, public and media must critically analyze the presidential candidates’ strategies and plans to determine their effectiveness, even if they only exist on paper.

## **Conceptual Clarification**

### **Election**

Elections, according to Ninsin (2006), are a process of choosing leaders that take into account, the standards of behavior that emerged from the democratic ideal and call for widespread participation. Although Aderibigbe (2006) slightly concurs with Ninsin, Aderibigbe’s position is limited because he did not state that elections may not always yield national leaders because there are also students’ leadership or other organizational roles.

Scholars like Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1989), Sandbrook (1998, 2000), and Sorensen (1993) have identified elections as the center of democracy. According

to them a liberal democracy is a form of government that permits nearly all adult people with the right to vote to participate in free and regular elections while also ensuring a number of civil and political rights. They argue that the fundamental characteristics or components of liberal democracy include citizen political participation, political party competition, and the granting of civil and political liberties, such as freedom of expression, association, and the press, which are essential for fostering the integrity of political competition and participation. These three traits undoubtedly have some connection to the idea of elections in one way or another.

According to Rose (1978), authorities are better able to control resources to compel obedience from the populace the more consent authority has obtained through elections. Additionally, electoral alternation significantly boosts popular confidence in and support for democracy (Bratton, 2004). Elections have been given a significant attention by Lindberg (2006) as he asserts that even without relying so heavily on fairness in elections; it appears that repeated competitive elections have improved civil rights through fostering citizens' awareness of democracy.

Lindberg (2006) further noted that one of the crucial elements in the growth of democracy is the repetition of elections, including those that are "imported." Elections are a typical feature of contemporary democracies, despite the fact that there are many disagreements over what exactly defines a democracy. Therefore, the holding of elections and the quality of such elections are institutionalized attempts to realize democracy's core principle rule of the people, by the people. No other mechanism comes before inclusive, competitive, and legitimate elections as a crucial component of self-government, despite the claims of other academics that elections alone do not constitute democracy (Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997). While democracy involves more than just holding competitive elections on a regular basis, Dumor (1998) emphasizes that it is more or less required for stakeholders to engage in a way that strengthens democratic culture and practice. It is debatable whether an election is not the most significant component of modern democracy.

In their 2009 critique of elections as a tool for democratization, Rakner and Van

de Walle (2009) drew attention to the situation in Africa, where they asserted that opposition parties are generally unable to effectively compete with ruling governments. They said that despite the regularization of elections in regions like Africa since the late 1980s, democratization was still seriously threatened by the weakness of opposition parties. The emphasis on election processes as the requirement for democratic deepening has also drawn criticisms from an increasing number of scholars, including Santiso (2001), Carothers (2002), and Fawole (2005).

According to Fawole (2005), elections do not necessarily encourage greater public participation. Fawole claims that vote buying and electoral cheating are rampant in African elections and that they have thus devolved into mere formalities of politics. However, it is still true that “conducting a continuous series of *de jure* participatory, competitive, and legitimate elections not only strengthens the democratic quality of a system but has favorable impacts on the growth and development of civil freedoms in society” (Lindberg, 2006; p.18). There can be elections without democracy, but there cannot be democracy without elections, affirmed by Levitsky and Way (2002).

Election critics like Marxists have often questioned the democratic nature of elections, contending that they serve as a tool for the ruling class (Adejumobi, 1998). Despite these concerns, Marxists, nonetheless, view elections as a step in the right direction in the fight for popular democracy. Karl Marx, a German philosopher, contended that liberal democracy’s institutions and levels, which include regular elections, must be treated seriously since they represent the process of political emancipation required to bring about human emancipation and liberty. According to Marx, those procedures and institutions represent the greatest conceivable step toward emancipation within the framework of the capitalist social order (Marx, 1975 quoted in Adejumobi, 1998, p.4).

## **Security**

Robert McNamara (1968) asserts that security and development go hand in hand and that security is impossible without progress. Security is development rather than military power, hardware, or conventional military activity; however these

things can still be included. Security is also not conventional military activity. He said that any society that strives for adequate national security in the face of food shortages, population growth, low levels of productivity and income, slow technological advancement, insufficient and ineffective public utilities, and ongoing unemployment issues has a false sense of security. He further stated that national security is a sense of self-assurance that the tragedy of conflicts and the issues of international politics can be avoided by good management. This is done to ensure that the state and its institutions can continue to exist in a largely undamaged manner (McNamara, 1968).

Undoubtedly, the most topical issue in Nigeria and throughout Africa is insecurity. Eme and Onyishi (2011) describe insecurity as activities that represent a breach of peace and serenity that result in the loss of human lives and property in society as caused by historical conflict, sociopolitical, ethno-religious, and economic reasons. Otto and Ukpere (2012) view insecurity as the absence of security, which they defined as the presence of peace, safety, happiness, and the protection of human and natural resources, among other things. Insecurity can be captured at micro and macro levels. In Nigeria, for example, insecurity at the macro-level can be subsumed in four different ways: ethno-religious conflict; politically motivated violence; organized violent groups; and violence based on the economy (Eme and Onyishi, 2011; Raimi, Akhuemonkhan, and Ogunjirin, 2015).

Insecurity includes seven components such as economic security; food security; health security; environmental security; personal security; community security; and political security when analyzed at the micro-level (Tadjbakhsh, 2008; Raimi, Akhuemonkhan, and Ogunjirin, 2015). In light of this, Adebakin and Raimi (2012) stated that absence of any of these components results in a state of insecurity that is marked by phobia, threat, and fear. Security therefore, is crucial to the nation's long-term economic and political development. According to Courson (2008), the federal government provides 150 million Naira (\$1.3 million) monthly to military authorities for logistics to promote peace, security of people and property, including the protection of oil infrastructure in the Niger-Delta (Courson, 2008). The Nigerian government has consistently expended funds



on security but the threat to life and property has subsisted. Due to insecurity, some multinational companies in Nigeria have relocated their staff (Enterprise Resilience, 2008).

### **Post-Independence Party Politics and Elections in Nigeria**

This section examines Nigeria's political parties and elections prior and post independence. One of the essential components for choosing leaders into public offices in any democratic government is the platform of political party system.

Nigeria commenced its self rule by adopting the British Parliamentary System. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) won 134 seats (the highest votes) in 1959. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) won 89 seats. The Action Group (AG) won 73 seats. The NPC and NCNC later formed an alliance and it led to the election of their respective leaders as Prime Minister (Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa) and President (Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe), respectively. Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe of the NCNC served as president with only ceremonial authority and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of the NPC served as Head of Government but the government was divided and tumultuous until the elections in December 1964, which the NPC and the AG's Ladoke Akintola group jointly won. Due to a 1963 leadership dispute, AG split into two groups, each group was led by Ladoke Akintola and Obafemi Awolowo, respectively. The opposition was created by the latter faction working with the NCNC. Infractions and violence were reported during the 1964 elections (Ogenyi; 2015).

During the 1964-1965 elections, a serious violence occurred. It degenerated into fracas and loss of lives and consequently led to the first brutal military coup in Nigeria in 1966. During the coup, Prime Minister Balewa and several notable Northern politicians/elites were killed. The Nigerian Army got into power under Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi. The military abolished all political parties. Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi ruled from January 15, 1966, to July 29, 1966 and was toppled in a coup after six months (Tyana, 2018; Abagen and Tyana, 2020; Feinstein, 1973). Lt. Colonel (and later General) Yakubu Gowon, the highest ranking officer in the Nigerian Army became Nigeria's Head of State on July 29, 1966, following the second military coup. He ruled the country from July 29,

1966 to July 29, 1975. Gen. Yakubu Gowon was in power when the 30-month civil war occurred (1967-1970). On July 29, 1975, General Gowon was deposed in a military coup. General Murtala Ramat Mohammed came onto power. His administration was vibrant, radical but lasted for only six months (Abagen & Tyona, 2020). He was succeeded by General Olusegun Obasanjo who ruled from 1976 to 1979.

After a presidential and general elections organized in 1978, General Olusegun Obasanjo, in 1979, transferred control of the country's administration to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led President Shehu Shagari (Abagen & Tyona, 2020) after the latter had won the election. This marked the beginning of the second republic in Nigeria. According to Oenyi (2015), some of the prominent political parties and their leaders in the second republic include Alhaji Shehu Shagari of National Party of Nigeria (NPN); Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe of the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP); Mallam Aminu Kano of the People's Redemption Party (PRP); Mallam Ibrahim Waziri of the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP); and Dr. Tunji Braithwaite of the National Advanced Party (NAP).

Previous ethnic and religious attitudes followed the election with allegations of wrongdoing which drew in the mirth and merriment from the restoration of democracy. Tyona (2019) stated that Shagari's presidency was marked by widespread corruption. The government led by President Shehu Shagari was accused of corruption and incompetence because he did not develop the economy. So, he was toppled by a military coup. General Muhammadu Buhari was made the new Head of State on December 31, 1983. According to Tyona (2020), the military coup orchestrated by Major-General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, General Muhammadu Buhari's Chief of Army Staff, put an end to the military regime of President Buhari on August 27, 1985. On August 27, 1985, General Babangida succeeded General Buhari as Nigeria's sixth Military Head of State. He later declared himself "Military President" (Tyona and Abagen, 2019).

General Babangida created a "Transition Programme" to democratic governance. For this, he approved the creation of two political parties: the Social Democratic

Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) (Abagen & Tyona, 2020). Presidential and general elections were held and conducted but Babangida annulled the presidential election that was adjudged the fairest and freest in the history of the nation. The election was widely believed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola of the SDP. Babangida declared an Interim National Government (ING) which was led by Ernest Shonekan, a businessman. The ING lasted for nearly three months in order to stem the terrible tide. On November 17, 1993, General Sani Abacha overthrew the ING interim-president and became the new Head of State of Nigeria (Tyona & Abagen, 2019).

According to Ezonbi (2014), the Abacha administration was unable to put a democratic programme in place. He established the Congress for National Consensus (CNC), the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), the Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), the National Center Party of Nigeria (NCPN), and the United Nigerian Congress Party in order to transform from a military head of state to a civilian president (UNCP). But his death on June 8, 1998, put an end to all the plans. The Nigerian Armed Forces put its Commander-in-Chief, General Abdulsalami Abubakar in power. Abubakar restored democratic governance in the nation. For the restoration, three of the nine political organizations were officially registered as political parties. They include People's Democratic Party (PDP); All Peoples Party (APP); and Alliance for Democracy (AD). General Abubakar organized elections and after the results were announced he handed power over to the democratically elected civilian president, General Olusegun Obasanjo. The Fourth Republic was established on May 29, 1999. General Olusegun Obasanjo's (Rtd.) was elected on the PDP ticket and served two terms, totaling eight years, from 1999 to 2007.

Obasanjo handed power over to late Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the PDP's presidential candidate in 2007. It was alleged that PDP lost the 2007 election to the now-defunct All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). ANPP sought redress in court but was unsuccessful. Death shortened the life of late Yar'adua but his tenure was completed by his Vice-President, Goodluck Jonathan. Jonathan's tenure ended in 2011. Buhari contested the presidency and won in 2011. He defeated President Jonathan by garnering 12 States' or 12 million (22%) votes,

as opposed to 24 States' or 22 million (58%) votes (Ogenyi, 2015). Since 1999, the Nigerian state has maintained its commitment to democracy.

### **The 2015 Election and the Change Revolution**

In 2015, fourteen candidates ran for the office of president in the general elections. The prominent candidates include General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC and incumbent President Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the PDP. Oluremi Sanaiya, the only female contender in the KOWA party, competed among other contestants. Ogenyi (2015) noted that for the electorate, the election was premised on the need for continuity and change. In response to the current socioeconomic needs, continuity supporters thought the Jonathan's Presidency would be a better alternative.

Sekoni (2015) affirmed that the notion that a regime of emancipation of the oppressed was established on March 28, 2015, must have been conveyed to voters by the promise of change inherent in the Buhari/APC campaign. Observers have paid greater attention than in the past to how the APC presidential candidate was made. The general consensus has been that since 1959, the nation has not had a President who voluntarily elected to serve. They pointed out that former President Shehu Shagari publicly admitted in 1979 that all he wanted was to become a senator so that he could use his talent to serve Nigeria. General Olusegun Obasanjo was chosen in 1999 by a group of military dictators to run for president of a party founded by former military leaders and their civilian supporters with the intention of advancing military rule. General Obasanjo selected Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2007. The same powerful group that recruited Yar'Adua also attracted Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to the presidential ticket. But only General Buhari had independently and consistently sought the presidency for twelve (12) years. The merger of other political parties coalesced into APC and got Buhari elected on March 28, 2015.

It is important to note that in the 2015 Presidential elections, General Muhammadu Buhari of the APC won with 15, 424, 921 million votes cast across 21 states, defeating incumbent President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan with 12, 853, 162 million votes cast across 15 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT),

Abuja (*Channels Television News*, 2015). It was momentous for the APC to win both the presidential and national assembly elections. In addition to winning the presidential election by a margin of 2,571,759,000,000 votes, the APC also confirmed a majority in the Red Chambers of the National Assembly in the political period from May 29, 2015, to May 29, 2019, due to its over fifty-eight seats in the 109-member Senate. The results of the elections demonstrated that most Nigerians had become more open to issue-based politics than religious and ethnicity-based politics. And it mattered greatly that President Jonathan and his Peoples Democratic Party were seen to have performed poorly on the critical issues of eradicating corruption and containing insecurity in Nigeria.

### Methodology

The unit of analysis consists of forty-four (44) local government areas (LGAs) that were specifically chosen from communities at risk of banditry in Niger, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara States in North Western Nigeria; Niger in North-Central Nigeria; and Imo State in South-East Nigeria during the inquiry period (2015-2022). From Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara, seven (7) LGAs each, eight (8) from Kaduna State, five (5) from Imo, and eleven (11) from Sokoto were chosen. Table 1 below shows the lists of the selected LGAs from the states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara, Sokoto, Niger, and Imo.

**Table 1: Unit of Analysis**

S/No	State	LGAs
1.	Kaduna State	Chikun , Kajuru, Kachia, Zangon-Kataf,Kauru, Lere, Birnin-Gwari, Giwas
2.	Zamfara	Maru, Tsafe, Bakura, Anka, Maradun, Gusau, Bukkuyum
3.	Niger	Rafi, Munyan, Shiroro, Magama, Mashegu, Mariaga, Wushishi
4.	Sokoto	Illela, Rabbah, Sabon-birnin, Isa, Wurno, Gada, Goronyo, Tangaza, Gudu, Dengen-Shuni, Kebbe
5.	Imo	Orsu, Orlu, Oru East, Oru West, Njaba
6.	Katsina	Batssari, Danmusa, Faskari, Jibiya, Kankara, Sabuwa, Safana

**Source:** Field Research, 2022

The study collected data using qualitative methods. Focus Groups Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews were conducted to get detailed and individualized accounts from stakeholders in the study area. Given the security/access of the study settings, which were only available during the day, the interviews and FDGs were deemed appropriate to gather quality data in a timely manner. The qualitative technique generated different views to the knowledge, gave a fair stakeholder impression, and reduced bias responses.

In various states of Nigeria, no fewer than 40 local governments had experienced significant attacks and as a result, elections could not be conducted in those places. Kaduna, Zamfara, Imo, Niger, and Sokoto are some of the most affected states as terrorists, bandits, and unknown gunmen’s activities spiraled in many of the states’ LGAs. The study carefully selected participants for interviews and focus group discussions from security personnel, traditional leaders, youth and women associations for inclusiveness. The snowballing sampling technique was used to locate the key informants that could offer useful information regarding pervasive insecurity and the challenges facing the 2023 Elections in Nigeria.

**Table 2: Stakeholder groups and number of informants**

No	Stakeholder Type	Method-ological tool	Katsina	Zamfara	Kaduna	Niger	Imo	Sokoto
1.	Security Agencies	KII	24	21	19	15	9	18
2.	Traditional Leaders	KII	7	6	6	6	2	5
3.	Leaders of Youth Associations	FGD	7	6	7	6	4	7
4.	Leaders-Religious Associations	FGD	7	6	6	7	3	6
5.	Women Association	FGD	7	6	6	5	4	7
	Total		52	45	44	39	22	43

**Source:** Field research, 2022

107 qualitative interviews were conducted with members of the five stakeholder groups who took part in the research between January and August 2022. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the total number of stakeholders interviewed. Every FGD and interview was conducted in either Hausa or English. Responses were later translated from Hausa into English. The interview's ethical guidelines called for voluntary involvement, no damage to subjects, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, rewards and goodwill for subjects, candor with subjects, and ethical reporting.

### **Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

The researcher ensured the validity of the instruments by making sure that the contents of the instruments are consistent with both the objectives and assumption of the study. Also, efforts were made to ensure that all aspects considered relevant to the study are adequately covered. Therefore, for high validity, external criterion method was adopted and was achieved by checking how correct the findings of a particular instrument is by comparing the results with existing knowledge as well as the findings of the research got from interview. The above methods were carefully employed so as to ensure that the study is highly reliable and valid.

In order to ensure that the instruments are reliable and provide accurate testing of assumption of study which would in turn, enable a dependable and objective deduction, inferences and conclusions, internal consistency method was adopted. This was achieved by crosschecking information with other sources of data collection and by ensuring that the facts and figures collected from other sources mentioned earlier are accurate and would remain the same if the collection is repeated over time. To ensure that the instruments have high reliability, the interview was structurally constructed in a simple, concise and unambiguous manner so as to allow easy understanding of the questions by the respondents and so as to ensure consistency in their answers.

## **Pervasive Insecurity and the Challenges Facing the 2023 Elections in Nigeria**

### **Poverty and Unemployment**

Since poverty and unemployment have consistently challenged Nigeria's population, especially the youth, some of them have become eager recruits to criminal groups. Sheikh Ahmed Gumi revealed that "in his endeavor to talk with bandits in Kaduna State, he identified a graduate of ABU Zaria among the bandits and one of their commanders spoke English fluently" (Gumi, 2021).. This confirms the statement describing Nigeria as the World Poverty Clock (*Sahara Reporters*, 2018 cited in Mashi and Katsina, 2019).

According to Dr. Yemi Kale, the Statistician General of the Federation, the Northwest and Northeast geopolitical zones have Nigeria's highest rates of poverty, with 77.7% and 76.3%, respectively. He also predicted that the rate of poverty in the regions would continue to rise (*Nigerian Tribune*, Tuesday 14 February, 2012). When compared to those in the southern part of the country and the average citizen, 80.9% of people in the Northwest of Nigeria live in squalor, according to 2015 estimates from the United Nations on the multi-dimensional poverty index (UN, 2015 cited in Abdullahi, 2019). The unemployment rate has increased significantly under the Buhari government, rising from 12.48 percent in 2016 to around 19.7 percent in 2020. African Development Bank (ADB) Chairman, Dr. Akinwumi Adeshina in a recent report by the Bank, claimed that 40% of Nigerian youth are jobless.

According to International Crisis Group (2020), Nigeria's Northwest has the country's highest rate of poverty. The poverty rate in all seven Northwestern states in 2019 was higher than the national average of 40.1 percent, with Sokoto (87.7 percent), Jigawa (87 percent), and Zamfara leading the way (74 percent). Currently, the zone has Nigeria's highest percentage of out-of-school children, including those who never attended school, which results in cohorts of young people without formal education (ICG, 2020). Many families lack access to decent healthcare, education, and basic security of life, and a sizable portion of young people in the Northwest lack prospects for meaningful employment. As a result of this, some of these unproductive adolescents have become cattle rustlers and rural bandits in the area (Abdullahi, 2019).



Nigeria's unemployment rate is 23.1%, while the youth unemployment rate is 55.4%, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019). There can be no security when unemployment and poverty are rising. As Liolio (2012) correctly noted, the structure of the local economy and degree of poverty will determine how successfully people are recruited into the organization. This shows that there is a direct correlation between increase of armed banditry, high rates of poverty and unemployment.

### **Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) Proliferation**

Armed bandits use Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) to inflict violence on their targets and confront government security. After President Ghadafi's dictatorship in Libya fell in 2011, the porous borders between Nigeria and the Niger Republic allowed inflow of weapons from the Sahel and the Maghreb into West African nations and down to Northwest Nigeria.

The porous border between Nigeria and the Niger Republic made the sale of guns exceedingly profitable, inexpensive, and accessible to criminals. President Buhari responded to the killing of 70 people in Zaroumaraye, a border town between the Niger Republic and Mali, by saying that "terrorists and other criminals now pose security challenges to other countries, like Cameroon, Chad, Niger Republic and Nigeria," as a result of the looting of Libyan arsenals in the wake of Gadhafi's overthrow (*Premium Times*, January 8, 2012). Nigeria is reported to have approximately 1,400 illegal border points but 84 approved land border control sites. However, due to the dry Sahel vegetation and open Savannah landscape, the entire stretch along the northern borders with Benin Republic, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon are all potential crossing points for illegal arms traffickers and other criminals. The success anticipated in the fight against banditry would, at best, remain an illusion, according to security experts.

In Nigeria, the availability and distribution of SALWs have been facilitated by armed banditry. For instance, in Zamfara State, bandits and rustlers surrendered over 100 weapons and ammunition in 2018 and over 500 weapons and ammunition in 2019 (Nwantoh, 2019). The State Government also recovered 216 AK-47 rifles from the bandits, including light machine gun rifles,

LAR rifles, and a number of ammunition hoards (Ahmed, 2019). Due to the amnesty programme in 2017, bandits in Katsina State handed in over 400 AK47 firearms (Adoyichie, 2019). Bandits in Sokoto State gave up 102 AK-47 rifles (Maruf, 2019). Recently, a gun runner caught in Katsina admitted to having sold more than 10,000 weapons and rounds to robbers (Ibrahim, 2021). Not only do the bandits utilize these weapons, they also sell them to other criminal groups operating in the nation.

As these guns travel around the nation, criminal activities spiral. Olamide (2018) stated that the escalation in conflict is evidence of how easy it is for criminals to obtain small arms and other weapons (Olamide, 2018 cited in Mashi, et al, 2018). According to the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), the spread of weapons increases the likelihood of bloodshed and violent conflicts and, as a result, poses a threat to slow down development. It can also result in massive physical and human devastation, violations of human rights, and a pervasive atmosphere of instability and insecurity (GIABA, 2013). Table 3 below shows some statistical data regarding SALWs proliferation in Nigeria over time.

**Table 3: SALWs proliferation**

S/N	DATA ON SALWS PROLIFERATION	YEAR	SOURCE	COMMENT
1	21, 407, 903	2010	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons.
2	3000	2012	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons
3	58,889	2013	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons
4	31, 285	2014	Nigeria Custom Service	This figure accounts for only seized weapons
5	350,000,000	2016	United Nations/ UNREC	Data backed by research
6	1,300, 000	2017	PRESCOM	Data backed by research
7	350,000,000	2018	Federal Government of Nigeria	Government provided data

**Source:** *Compiled by the author from data collected from Nigerian Tribune, June 13, 2018 and Vanguard, August 02, 2018*

According to Table 3 presented above, the increase in the flow of arms between 1999 and 2003 intensified militant activity, and the doubling of this inflow between 2003 and 2009 aided the emergence of the Boko Haram and fostered its operations. Armed bandits have emerged as a result of the ongoing supply and inflow of arms since 2009, and their activities pose a serious threat to the country's economy and educational system.

In the south-eastern and south-western regions of the country, the supply of weapons has also given gunmen and separatist organizations more confidence. Overall, the government has struggled to stem the tide of insecurity arising from weapons proliferation but has made insignificant success. People are more likely to engage in violent behavior as long as they have access to weapons, particularly in a nation where dreadful socioeconomic conditions serve as justifications for crime and aggressive behavior.

### **Internally Displaced Persons**

Millions of people get displaced after conflicts. This poses a serious problem to national security. Over 200,000 people have been internally displaced in the states of Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2019). Majority of them are women and children (Famine Early Warning System Network) (FEWS NET, 2019). According to the International Organization on Migration's rapid assessment, Katsina state has the next-highest number of internally displaced people (IDPs), with 16,257 and Zamfara has the most, 38,113 (IOM, 2019). Due to their lack of access to food, inadequate housing, and medical care, the people are faced with life-threatening conditions while in displacement.

In Zamfara alone, there are around 22,000 widows and 44,000 orphans (blueprint, 2019). Some of the IDP women engage in transactional sex and prostitution as a "negative coping mechanism." Others have been forced to join the bandits as food vendors, informants, weapons and drug suppliers/carriers, and provide other essential needs for the bandits. The Katsina State Police Command detained four (4) ladies in May 2019 who were cooking for and providing information to bandits about potential crimes (Oyelude, 2019).

## **Illicit Drug Intake**

Drug abuse is another factor cited as a major contributor to violence and conflict. The results of this study demonstrated that the intake of hard substances such as heroin, cocaine, marijuana, alcohol, and tramadol impact on the aggressive conduct displayed by some herders, bandits, and kidnappers. A respondent in Jibia LGA of Katsina State claimed that the area had recently seen a growth of subpar drug stores where criminals and kidnappers could buy alcohol. During the FGD in Batsari, another respondent affirmed that illegal drug trade is expanding in the communities near the state borders. Most of the hard drugs cross land boundaries. Respondents further acknowledged that some young people from towns and cities sold drugs to criminals who lived in the forest as a quick way to get money.

In a notice published on 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2018, former Defense Minister of Nigeria, Mansur Dan-Ali, a retired one-star general from Zamfara State, revealed that state failure brought on by corruption, the dissolution of institutions of governance, de-institutionalization, poverty and inequality, a lackluster security architecture, and a climate of impunity that pervaded the country led to growing insecurity. The establishment of a Presidential Advisory Committee on the eradication of Drug Abuse, led by Brig. Buba Marwa (rtd), in December 2018 is the best thing the present administration has accomplished (Cited in Odinkalu, 2018; Abdulkabir, 2017; Afolabi, 2013). The issue of ungoverned and ungovernable landmass also contributed to the emergence of unregulated areas as seen in the table below:

## **2023 Elections and the Challenges of Combating Insecurity in Nigeria**

The following factors made it difficult for Nigeria to address insecurity:

**Geographically ungoverned spaces:** Geographically ungoverned spaces are difficult for security personnel to govern and to seek out criminal hideouts since they lack the necessary equipment. A police officer said: “Throughout the entire course of these operations in Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina, not a single armored personnel carrier can be employed to get access to the hideout of some of these outlaws” (Interview, Birnin-Gwari, 15 June, 2022). It appears

that Nigeria's security services are not fully prepared to fight banditry: A police officer with a dated gun and just 10 rounds of bullets cannot take on a criminal with a sophisticated rifle and an unlimited supply of ammo. According to a police officer who was a respondent, majority of the bandits, "used brand-new rifles, more than the AK-47 that we frequently use, some of which I, as a police officer, have never seen in my life" (Interview, Munyan, 23 July, 2022).

**Lack of security personnel:** Another major problem to combating banditry and other types of crimes is the lack of trained and experienced workforce to undertake policing. Responding, another police officer said: "The security infrastructure we have in the nation cannot handle the current crisis. There are 500,000 police officers on the Force. How can they properly cover the entire 774 local government areas while addressing the nation's many security challenges? There is no doubt that we are underpoliced. Effective police intervention is not possible in this situation (Interview, Kankara, 29 August, 2022).

**Bribery and corruption in the legal system and security agencies:** In many of the cases, infamous bandits who had been apprehended were later released from police custody or pardoned by the court after their families or associates had paid a judge or police official a significant bribe.

The persistence of security concerns has also been exacerbated by the porous borders and the proliferation of SALWs. The security personnel interviewed revealed that the more bandits captured, the more the weapons received, and the more the bandits recruited.

### **Stakeholders' Views on Long-Term Security Mitigation Strategies for the 2023 Elections**

Nigeria's banditry and insecurity has spiraled out of control. It has become a serious national emergency with far-reaching geographical effects. According to the data collated, the stakeholders offer perspectives on how to mitigate banditry, insecurity and militancy in Nigeria:

Grassroots vigilantes and state security personnel working together in harmony.

The study showed that in order to combat banditry, there needs to be a tactical synergy between local vigilantes and state security personnel. This is required due to operational difficulties brought on by the army's incomplete understanding of the banditry area. As a result, neighborhood watch organizations and local vigilantes are needed, as they are more familiar with the area (KII, Maradun, 41, Anka 28 and Jibia 53, 2022). The vigilantes should be adequately taught, equipped, and supervised on defence tactics. Potential excesses and misuse should be prevented. The effectiveness of the collaboration between local vigilantes and state security personnel in decimating Boko Haram insurgency illustrates the potential significance of this kind of community policing in stopping banditry (KII, 25; Sabuwa, 2022).

### **Stationing Sufficient Security Troops in Banditry-Prone Areas and Deployment**

There is widespread skepticism about the ability of the Nigerian government to provide adequate security for its citizens and others living within its territorial boundaries in light of the recurrent incidents of these sources of insecurity and the ongoing assurances of the government to control the situation (KII. Maru, Orsu, Orlu, Oru West, and Njabe, 2022). It is therefore, necessary to put sufficient troops in banditry-prone areas.

### **Improving Community-Security Personnel Relations**

Security initiatives frequently ignore proactive participation and deeper linkages between security and the local populations. This practice is a successful strategy that enables local communities, authorities, and security providers to collaborate and identify regional solutions to the security issues they confront (KII, 45, Batsari, Zurmi and Tsafe 47, 2022). By connecting local level successes to national and regional reform processes and frameworks, the strategy can support more general peace building and state building. Usually, the emphasis is on selecting the best tactical strategy to eradicate banditry throughout the country and in the region. The report highlights that successful civilian-security partnerships should be the primary means of resolving complex crises (KII, 34, Sabuwa, 2022).

## **Construction of Infrastructure, Network of Rural Roads**

Communities experiencing violent conflict confront the most difficult road obstacles because their already meager infrastructure suffers from destruction or deterioration, which worsens their already precarious economic situation and the fault lines that initially sparked conflict (KII, 40, Maaradun & Kankara, 2020). In other words, roads can strengthen the sense of “togetherness” or social cohesiveness among the entire population through enhancing connectedness and accelerating state unification. Roads allow security officers to communicate more swiftly and easily with one another (KII, 52, Munyan & Magera, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

This study identified the issues and occurrences that raised significant tensions prior the 2023 elections. It also analyzed the national efforts to de-escalate them. It depicted the instances where no significant steps were taken to reduce the likelihood of disputes and violence.

In order to achieve this, the researchers looked at the numerous official and unofficial systems put in place at the state and federal levels, evaluating the degree to which stakeholders were mobilized to lower the likelihood of election violence. Given that it had supported and encouraged the actions of terrorists, bandits, and other extremists in the run-up to the 2023 elections, the proliferation of arms poses a serious threat to peace, security, and development. Although the conflicts and criminal activities for which they are used are not caused by the proliferation of arms, the widespread availability, accumulation, and illicit flows of such weapons have the tendency to escalate conflicts, undermine peace agreements, intensify violence, negatively impact on crime, impede economic and social development, and obstruct the growth of social stability, democracy, and good governance.

In Nigeria, the fight against terrorism, banditry, and all other types of organized violence can never be won as long as the threat of the proliferation of weapons exists. The security situation is deteriorating and the nation is heading towards the precipice. Containing the illegal inflow of weapons has to be treated as national emergency.

## **The Way Forward**

1. The security infrastructure needs to be urgently reorganized by the government for efficient intelligence gathering.
2. To reduce unemployment in the nation, programmes for eradicating poverty, opening up employment opportunities, and providing subsidized loans for small and medium-sized businesses should all be made available.
3. In order to eradicate the threat of banditry in the nation, both kinetic and non-kinetic methods should be used.
4. The fight against corruption needs to be comprehensive through reviewed curriculum for higher moral values and national loyalty in educational institutions, aggressive pursuit of national sensitization and moral rebirth campaign by the National Orientation Agency, strengthening of anti-corruption legislations and institutions for effective performance.
5. To stop the smuggling of weapons into the country, the land borders must be effectively policed. This can be achieved through the institution of community policing.
6. To ensure that children grow up with a culture of values that is ingrained in them, parents should teach their children respect for established authority, hard work, and tolerance for one another.
7. A calm climate encourages both foreign and local investors to invest in the region and the nation as a whole. Therefore, government should always be vigilant in preventing security issues from getting out of hand.



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# 8

## **INTERROGATING GOVERNMENT'S MULTI-LEVEL APPROACHES TO ENDING ARMED BANDITRY IN THE NORTHWEST REGION OF NIGERIA**

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## **Abstract**

*The phenomenon of armed banditry has been a general trend mostly in Northern Nigeria and one of the greatest security threats to the existence of human life in the country. Despite the efforts of both the federal and state governments to put an end to the menace, it has continued to escalate on a large scale. The federal government's strategy has been in the form of joint military-police internal security operations aimed at decimating the bandits, whereas, the North western states' government, to a large extent, preferred negotiation with the armed groups. These two approaches appeared contradictory in the anti-banditry operations of the government; hence winning the war has been a hard nut to crack. There is copious literature on armed banditry in the North western region of Nigeria which provides understanding to the rise, growth, activities and the menace of the armed gangs but there is little or no study on the approaches of government in tackling armed banditry. It is against this background that this paper seeks to interrogate the multi-level approaches to ending armed banditry ravaging the northwest region of Nigerian with a view to providing in-depth understanding to the lacuna in the approaches in the fight against the armed groups. The paper adopted analytical and interdisciplinary methodology using secondary sources. The paper argued that the approaches to end banditry in the region are not only contradictory but have further revealed lapses, huge monumental failure and incapacity to secure life and property. The paper concluded that both the federal and state governments must adopt the same methodology for peace building in the country.*

**Keywords:** *Banditry, Kidnapping, Military Operation, Negotiation, Amnesty*

## **Introduction**

The recent phenomenon of armed banditry has become a common act in every part of the country but is prominent in the Northwest region particularly the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi and Sokoto. Banditry has become a major menace to the people as thousands have become victims and hundreds of communities have also been sacked. According to the International Crisis Group (2020), Banditry in the Northwest Region has claimed many lives, caused desertion of many rural communities, loss of livelihoods particularly farming and pastoralism.

Since 2012, the activities of armed bandits have remained unabated in the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi, Sokoto and the neighbouring Niger state. Many communities, markets, schools, religious worship centres, transport routes, commuters and military base have been attacked. The incessant attacks and the attendant security threat have compelled government at both the federal and state levels to respond in diverse ways to end the menace.

The federal government, through the joint military-police internal security operations, has launched several ground attacks and air strikes against the bandits with the view to decimating the criminals. When this approach appeared not to be effective most state governments in the region especially the States of Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara opted for peace deal with the armed gangs by granting them amnesty, rehabilitation and reintegration into the society. Unfortunately, the peace only lasted for a few months and collapsed as the bandits returned to their enclaves and continued their criminal activities. Inability of both the federal and state governments to coalesce around methodology and approach to confront the bandits and to end banditry in the region has made the problem to linger.

The need to interrogate the multi-level-approaches in the anti-banditry war became imperative because banditry has not only wreaked havoc and destabilized the region, there is need to strengthen the anti-banditry war in order to ensure peace and stability. This paper is divided into six sections. Following the introduction, section two provides conceptual clarification of

banditry. Section three examines the rise of banditry in the region; mode of operation of the bandits is examined in section four. Section five analyzes both the federal and the states governments' approaches vis-a-vis inherent complexities and contradictions, and section six concludes the paper.

### **Conceptual Explanation of Banditry**

Bunker and Sullivan (1998) describe banditry as outlaw activities or criminals enterprises with insurgents or warlords who dominate social life and erode the bonds of effective security and the rule of law. Williams (1998) describes banditry as outlawry actions that endanger human lives. Bandits, in this case, are transnational gangs and criminals who extend their reach and influence by co-opting individuals and organisations through persuasion, coercion and intimidation; they do so in order to facilitate, enhance or protect their own interest. Sullivan (2012) sees banditry as criminality such as insurgency and conventional terrorists. He argues that these groups are a cog in the wheel of democratic governance and free market economy. According to Okwoli (2019), banditry is a term used to describe diverse variants of outlawry which includes kidnapping, cattle rustling, armed robbery and other forms of criminality.

In Nigeria, banditry comes with high degrees of violent and dreaded weapons hence the coinage, armed banditry. Historically, bandits had earlier been called armed gangs whose activities revolve around criminality in the rural areas, but since the commencement of globalization, they are no longer confined to rural areas but have become a sophisticated enterprise with the capacity to challenge the authorities of weak and failing states. Researches and reports have shown that banditry has transmuted into a network, wielding strong forces mostly on rural areas but gradually extending its tentacles to urban settings and the expansion has been accompanied by increasing level of violence making it a lucrative venture. The scope, dimension and operational pattern of banditry have been enlarged globally but have become more intense in Africa. For the purpose of this study, the term banditry would mean glut of armed gangs and criminal activities which constitute violent threat to life.

## **The Rise of Armed Banditry in the North-West Region**

The Northwest region of Nigeria comprises states like Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa, Zamfara, Katsina, Kebbi and Sokoto. Geographically, the region stretches across Sudan and Sahel savannah sharing borders with Niger Republic, Mali and Benin Republic. The region is inhabited by diverse ethnic groups and the Hausa and Fulani are the predominant groups. Due to the vegetation and other environmental factors of the region, majority of the population undertake farming and pastoralism with the Hausa being the dominant group in the former while the Fulani been the foremost in the latter. According to Shettima and Tar (2008), both the farmers and herders have enjoyed interdependent and mutual relationships which have lasted for centuries until the second half of the twentieth century that their relationship metamorphosed into a hostile one. According to Shettima and Tar, the history of armed banditry in northern Nigeria has also been linked to the unhealthy rivalry between the farmers and the herders arising from resource scarcity and competition between different occupational and ethno-cultural groups as both the farmers and the herders need land resources for survival (Shettima & Tar, 2008). Kuna and Ibrahim (2015) explained that their hostility and persistent clash and violence have been due to a long-running competition over grazing land and water resources. They maintain that farmers and pastoralists compete for land, water, fodder, and other resources. They also assert that in some instances, occupational identities of pastoralists and many sedentary cultivators are blurred, as many sedentary cultivators are also 'stock breeders', and vice versa. Therefore, scarcity of land arising from changes in agrarian relations, climatic change, and environmental decline raised excessive tension and it also became threats to the livelihood of peasant communities and, to a large extent, also responsible for the recurrent conflicts between crop growing farmers and Fulani herdsmen (International Crisis Group, 2017). The International Crisis Group (2017) reveals that the violence between the farmers and the herders in the Northwest region like any other regions in northern Nigeria has been compounded by climate change and explosion of other criminal activities like cattle rustling, kidnapping, armed robbery and all these have morphed into a complex vicious banditry.



In this circumstance, crops are eaten up or damaged during grazing. In retaliation, the farmers kill the cattle for damaging their crops. So, the relationship between the two dominant groups in the region has been altered from cooperation, mutual benefits, competition into hostility and violence. Corroborating the above assertion, Kuna and Ibrahim (2015) argue that armed banditry in the rural communities cannot be explained outside the context of multi-layered dimensions surrounding farmer-herder struggles for land resources, complicated by many factors which include environmental and climate change, weak government capacity in the provision of security, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) and weakening or, indeed, collapse of informal conflict resolution mechanisms.

In the course of struggle for land resources, there emerged armed gangs with sophisticated weapons who persistently engaged in animal rustling (mostly cattle) and this has resulted in the killing of many herders. The armed gangs were product of incessant clashes between the farmers and the herders, who exploited the age-long semi-cultural practice of cattle raids which was less ferocious. It is in this regard that Alemika (2013) maintain that rustlers' activities are now characterized by the use of modern weapons, and their operations are both trans-locational and transnational. The volatile environment, population explosion and high poverty rate as well as high prices of cows in every market were also identified by Olaniyan and Aliyu (2016) as motivations for cattle rustling. Therefore, cattle rustling have become an organized crime motivated by subsistence and commercial imperatives for sustenance of lives. Accordingly, victims of cattle rustling are mostly commercial livestock farmers and nomadic pastoralists who graze their cattle across the country. The International Crisis Group (2017) reveals that many herders have been completely stripped of their cattle which is the major source of their livelihood and some victims have been forced to migrate into neighbouring countries of Niger Republic and Mali while some went into criminality - kidnapping, armed gangs, etc and are taking refuge in the forests. Given the high number of bandits in Nigeria's ungoverned forests, Onwuzuruigbo (2020) noted that a larger number of those who lost their animals transformed into bandits and rustlers in the rural areas.

The International Crisis Group Report (2017) also identified non-existence or weak regulation of animal grazing in many northern states as one of the reasons which led to infiltration of livestock bandits, resulting to an increase in cattle rustling. In addition, weak state capacity in the provision of security and governance challenge particularly insensitivity to armed groups at the early stage, police incapability, increase in the rate of unemployment and poverty worsened the situation in the region.

While the farmer-herder clashes and animal rustling escalated, both the Hausa farmers and Fulani herders formed militia groups for protection. The Hausa communities increasingly organized themselves into vigilante groups called *yansa kai*, armed with locally made weapons like guns, machetes and clubs to protect their villages (International Crisis Group, 2017). In many instances, the vigilante groups were alleged to have been carrying out harsh punishments to real and perceived perpetrators of criminal acts, but mostly accused of targeting Fulani communities for complicity in criminal activity with sanctions such as indiscriminate arrests, torture, indiscriminate seizure of cattle and extrajudicial killings, with suspects sometimes hacked to death in markets and other public places. Sometimes, the vigilantes set ablaze Fulani villages and compell the victims to flee into the forests (International Crisis Group, 2017).

Indeed, the vigilantes' actions and carnages are perceived to have further heightened the tension between the Hausa farmers and the Fulani herders. In order to counter the Hausa vigilantes' actions, the Fulani formed militia groups referred to *yan-bindiga* meaning gun owners to protect themselves and their cattle and to also avenge vigilante atrocities (International Crisis Group, 2017). The Fulani militia groups were alleged to have acquired sophisticated firepower through funds raised from the community and proceeds from kidnapping and allegedly acquired sophisticated firepower largely from the weapons smuggled in from the Sahara and the Sahel via international routes, and some from the *Boko Haram* Insurgent groups in North-Eastern Nigeria (Conflict Armament Research, 2020). This has been linked to the *cache* of ammunitions in the hands of armed groups across the country. Besides, the porous nature of the Nigeria's

borders with her neighbouring countries allows smuggling of illegal weapons into the country.

The absorbency of Nigeria's borders with her contiguous countries like Republic of Niger, Mali and Republic of Benin has aggravated trans-border criminality. According to Musa (2013), many of the bandits arrested in Katsina, Zamfara and Kaduna States by the anti-banditry troops and the Police are Malians and Nigeriens. These criminal syndicates were alleged to have aided movement of illicit drugs and arms to Nigeria through the absorbent borders. The report also reveals that most of the illegal Small Arm and Light Weapons (SALWs) were largely acquired from post-Gadhafi Libya and other parts of the Maghreb and the Sahel region (Musa, 2013) Undoubtedly, the porous borders have allowed most of the illicit weapons to be smuggled to the Northwest region by the criminal syndicates.

Ladan (2014) and Onwuzuruigbo (2020) noted that the presence of large unfettered and poor government-controlled forest areas in the region also complicated the activities of the bandits. These unregulated forest areas are *Kumuku, Kuduru, Kwaimban* and *Kachia* in Kaduna, *Falgore* forest in Kano, *Dansadau* forest in Zamfara, *Davin Rugu* forest stretching through Kaduna, Niger, Katsina and Zamfara States and they are enclaves of the cattle rustlers and other criminals. In addition, the forest areas are the enclaves of bandits where kidnapped victims are kept for several days or months while their abductors are negotiating for ransom.

The presence of mining sites in some communities in Zamfara State has also precipitated and aggravated banditry. The sites were mined illegally with little or no government regulations. The bandits took advantage of government weak regulation of the mining activities and poor security system, and attacked many of the mining sites, murder the miners and carted away their precious stones, money and mining tools. Adepegba, (2016) reveals that almost 50 illegal gold miners were gruesomely murdered in November 2016 in Bindim community, Zamfara State as bandits numbering about fifty attacked the mining site in search of gold, other precious stones and money. Larger chunks of gold mined in the region were traded for money and arms at the neighbouring countries of

Mali and Republic of Niger (International Crisis Group, 2017).

These factors not only promoted banditry in the Northwest they have escalated to national security threats. Therefore, competition for land and water resources predominantly by Hausa farmers and Fulani herder has promoted tension, unhealthy relationship and armed conflict between the two occupational groups in the region. The conflict has been further aggravated by other factors such as high rate of poverty, porous borders, unrestrained easy access to arms by non-state actors, kidnapping for ransom, lack of government's presence in many forests and rural areas, availability of mining sites, and weak security system.

### ***Modus Operandi of the Bandits in the Northwest Region***

Bandits engage in dreadful activities in many of the rural communities and on the highway in the Northwest region. According to Rufai (2021), bandits in the region operate under different groups and under different leaders. Their activities are usually coordinated in the forests. They later attack their targets. Prominent and dreaded bandit leaders in the Northwest region include *Buharin-Daji BanderiIsiya, Dogo Gide, Kachalla Turji Gudde and Auwal Daudawa*. These groups have contingents of fighters and control a number of camps and territories (*Daily Trust, 2020*). The leaders emerge from among the growing criminal and volatile environment in different gangs. An essential feature of the different bandit groups is the frequent occurrence of intra and inter-group rivalries. Rufai (2021) identifies leadership tussle, supremacy for power, struggle for territorial control and recognition as the major reasons for inter and intra group rivalries. In 2018, for instance, it was alleged that *Buhari-Daji* was killed in a gun duel that ensued among the rival groups in Zamfara (*Daily Trust, 2018*).

Majority of the groups that are susceptible to armed banditry include the herders, the farmers, the villagers, the commuters, the vigilante groups, security forces and school children. In most cases, many of the attacks by bandits are usually well coordinated (both in broad day light and at night); the attacks are either on the roads or in the rural communities and sometimes

in the suburb of major cities. The bandits usually appear in military uniforms and wear masks to conceal their faces. All the time, they wield guns as they ride motorcycles and shoot indiscriminately to scare or instil fear into the people. Since they are heavily armed, their deeds mostly include cattle rustling, invasion and destruction of communities, carting away of food items from the barns, abduction of people for ransom, raping of women, invasion of police and military bases, among others. They have invaded many communities and this has resulted into desolation, death, burning of food barns, and kidnapping among other atrocities. Between 2013 and 2021, for instance, over 500 (five hundred) rural communities in the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi and Kaduna had been invaded by bandits leaving many people killed while thousands of people were kidnapped (International Crisis Group Report, 2020). Banditry also impacted farming negatively in some of these communities.

Since 2016, banditry had prevented many farmers from going to farm or harvesting their crops in some of these communities. Media reports have also revealed that bandits imposed levies running into millions of Naira on some farming communities mostly in Kaduna and Zamfara States. The levies had to be paid before the farmers were allowed to farm or harvest their farm produce (*Punch*, 2021 and *Thisday*, 2022). This has bigger negative implications within the context of food insecurity and hunger in the last few years. Farming and pastoralism, the two main sources of livelihood in the area of study, have virtually ceased to exist.

Also, many of the major inter-city routes and rural roads are constantly under attacks by bandits. The major roads where kidnapping has become rampant in the region include Kaduna-Abuja, Zaria-Kaduna, Zaria-Saminaka, Kaduna-Birni-Gwari, Birni- Gwari-Funtua, Malunfasi-Jibia, Kachia-Kachia-Zonkwa, and Gusau-Talata Marafa. Bandits often attack educational institutions (primary, secondary and tertiary) and have stopped all forms of educational pursuit. The schools have not only been attacked the students and workers are usually abducted for several weeks. Sometimes they are released after ransom has been paid or in certain cases they are killed.

**Table 1: Statistics of Persons Abducted in Selected Educational Institution in the Northwest**

S/No	Name of Institution	Location/State	Number of Person Abducted	Date and Year
1	Government Boys Science School, Kankara	Kankara, Katsina	340	December 11, 2020
2	Government Girls Science Secondary School, Jangebe	Jangebe, Zamfara	379	February 26, 2021
3	Federal College of Forestry Mechanization, Afaka	Afaka, Kaduna	39	March 12, 2021
4	Green Field University, Km 34, Kaduna-Abuja Expressway	Chikun, Kaduna	22	20 April 2021
5	Federal Government College, BirniYauri	BirniYauri, Kebbi	106	June 17, 2021
6	Bethel Baptist High School, Kujama, Chikun	Chikun, Kaduna	121	July 5, 2021
7	Government Secondary School, Kaya	Kaya, Zamfara	73	September 1, 2021
8	St Albert the Great Institute of Philosophy, Seminary School	Fayit-Kagoma, Kaduna	Unspecified Number	October 11, 2021

**Source:** Researchers' compilation

Table 1 shows that over 1000 persons made up of students and workers of educational institutions were abducted between October 2021 and December 2022 in Kaduna, Katsina, and Zamfara states, respectively. So, schools in rural areas had to shut down for several months till security around the schools were beef up.

Ransom for abducted people could be in cash, motorcycles and large amount of recharge cards of any telecommunication service providers. These items are paid as ransom after protracted negotiation by relations of victims. In a situation where such demand could not be met within the stipulated period, the abductors kill the victims. Sometimes, kidnapped victims suffer physical assault, rape and molestation, bruises, emotional torture and loss of valuable wealth.

## Federal and State Government's Strategies to Ending Armed Banditry

Since the upsurge of banditry in 2013 in the Northwest, the Federal Government has been using joint police-military operations to confront the bandits. Thus, there have been many joint police-military internal security operations to contain the armed groups in the region. The Police, the Nigeria Civil Defence and Security (NCDSC) and the Military have launched several joint anti-banditry ground and air operations. Some of the operations designed to end armed banditry and other criminality were named 'Operations Puff Adder', 'DiranMikiya', 'Sharan Daji', 'HadarinDaji', 'KaraminGoro''Thunder Strike' and 'Exercise Harbin Kunama I, II and III', and Sahel Sanity.

No fewer than 5,000 (five thousand) troops, drawn from the different Nigerian Military and the Police formations across the country are involved in the anti banditry operations. The military personnel are mostly drawn from 1 Division (Kaduna), 8 Division (Sokoto) and Army Brigade in Kano. The airpower personnel have been drawn from Nigerian Air Force Kaduna and Kano. The Nigerian Army specifically received special anti-banditry training for a minimum period of six months at the Nigerian Army School of Infantry (NASI), Jaji (*The Guardian*, 2020). The Nigerian Army acquired over 50 (fifty) Hilux Pick-Up vehicles and over 500 (five hundred) motorcycles for easier movement of troops and surveillance as well as armour tanks and other necessary gadgets to facilitate logistics. The troops have been using strategies like road block, stop and search, all-out-offensive and ground battle for their operations. The Nigerian Army has also banned the use of motorcycles within the hinterland and forests of Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Zamfara, Sokoto and Kebbi, States (Aluko, 2019). The police have complemented the fight against banditry by continuously working with community leaders on intelligence gathering, making arrests and prosecuting suspected bandits and their informants. The Nigerian Air Force has been engaging in aerial surveillance of the forest to displace the bandits using anti-tank aircrafts. There has been continuous surveillance over *Kumuku*, *Kuduru*, *KwaimbanaaFalgoreDansadau* and *Davin Rugu* forests. Many of the bandits' enclaves have been bombed and in that process some bandits were reportedly killed while others escaped with injuries.

To enhance the military-police joint operations, the federal government has established security cooperation with the contiguous countries like Mali and Republic of Niger for border patrol. In May 2019, for instance, a security team drafted from the 8th Division of the Nigerian Army, Sokoto had a meeting with Nigerien Army on border security strategies. The joint security cooperation recorded a remarkable success when the Nigerian Air Force aircraft bombed the armed groups in the Republic of Niger's border towns of Maradi and Dumbroun in a bid to release many Nigerians held hostage (International Crisis Group, 2020).

The police-military joint operations have recorded considerable success in the anti-banditry campaign in the region. Security report revealed that a considerable number of bandits have been killed while some have been arrested and handed to the police for interrogation and prosecution. Some of the bandits' enclaves have equally been destroyed and many ammunition recovered. Reports have also shown that a substantial number of rustled cattle have been recovered while hundreds of kidnapped persons have been rescued (International Crisis Group, 2020). In the early part of 2019, activities of the bandits reduced in the region when the joint military-police operations were intensified. But these gains could not be sustained as the military operations could not totally eradicate the vast array of armed groups.

The state governments in the region have responded to the threats of banditry with different strategies. One, the state governments gave financial and logistics supports to the security agencies mostly the police and the military deployed for internal security operations in the region. Governor Abdul-Aziz Yari of Zamfara state was alleged to have expended about N35 billion on logistics support and special allowances to the military and the police deployed to the state; relief materials for victims of attacks; and there was considerable respite between 2015 and 2019 (*Premium Times*, 2019). Katsina State Government said it spent over N19 billion on the purchase of vehicles and allowances to the joint police-military troops in the state between 2014 and 2019 (*Daily Trust*, 2020). Other state governments in the region also alleged that they had spent huge amount from their monthly security votes on logistics support and allowances



to the federal security personnel deployed to their states.

Besides logistics support and allowances to the federal troops, all the state governments in the region created ad-hoc security agencies such as Vigilante Groups and Civilian Joint Taskforce (CJTF) mostly in the rural areas to complement the efforts of the police and the military. Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Kebbi and Sokoto States government in particular encouraged the formation of Vigilante Groups and empowered them to protect communities from herder-allied armed groups. Between 2013 and 2014, Zamfara Government recruited about 12,500 vigilantes and paid them a monthly allowance of about N2,250 aside the logistics support provided for them (Rufai, 2018). In 2018, Zamfara State Governor Abdul-Aziz Yari recruited about 8,500 young men into the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to complement military efforts (Vanguard, 2018). But the efforts appeared to be counterproductive because there was no synergy between the security forces (military and police) and the CJTF one hand, and the Vigilante/CJTF had no weapons to match the armed bandits' superior fire power. Several members of the CJTF and Vigilante Groups were killed in many of the clashes between them and the armed bandits. The Vigilante and the CJTF, in many instances, had been accused of carrying out indiscriminate arrests and extra-judicial killings of suspected bandits and in Fulani herders' communities.

In view of the escalated violent attacks, Zamfara and Katsina State Governments opted for negotiation and peace agreements with the bandits. The governors of the aforementioned states offered the armed groups amnesty and other inducements to end attacks (*Daily Trust*, 2016). Katsina and Zamfara State Governments promised to rehabilitate and reintegrate bandits who willingly laid-down their arms, as well as establishing rural grazing areas including settlements with social amenities for Fulani herders and rehabilitate houses damaged during the attacks between herders and farmers.

But it was alleged that the Kaduna, Kebbi and Kano State Governments vehemently opposed negotiating peace agreement with the armed groups but preferred to use security forces and different approaches to subdue them. Governor Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna vowed not to negotiate with bandits. He

insisted that bandits were criminals that should be eliminated in the society using security forces because they can never repent of their criminal activities. He urged members of the public neither to negotiate nor pay ransom to them for kidnapped persons because they get more empowered by the ransom paid. (*Vanguard March*, 2020). Kebbi and Kano State Governments also shared the same view with Governor Nasir El-Rufai.

Indeed, the peace negotiation agreement yielded results temporarily in Katsina and Zamfara States as bandits' activities reduced drastically. In Katsina State, for instance, the amnesty programme led to the recovery of 110 AK-47 rifles, 361 Dane guns and about 28,000 rustled cattle were exchanged for cash (International Crisis Group, 2020). In 2019, Zamfara Police Command stated that 100 assorted guns were recovered from the repentant bandits. The weapons comprised Dane guns, AK-47, RPG, LMC and LAR rifles, ten rounds of live ammunition and military camouflage uniforms. (International Crisis Group, 2020). Since the peace negotiation agreement was a continuous exercise, one of the notorious bandit kingpins in Zamfara, *Auwalu Daudawa* surrendered one AK-49 and 19 AK-47 rifles with 72 rounds of live ammunition for anti-aircraft rifles. There was a similar surrender in Kaduna state even though, Governor Nasir El-Rufai did not negotiate with bandits, the Commissioner of Police, Austin Iwar announced that about 1,150 bandits voluntarily surrendered their arms and ammunition and vowed not to go into banditry again (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2018).

However, the peace deals and amnesty programme only lasted a few months before it broke down. It was followed by a renewal of violent attacks by the bandits on a large scale. There were allegations and counter-allegations by the state officials and the armed groups. Zamfara State government blamed the failure of the programme on the bad faith of the bandit leaders (*Daily Trust*, 2017). On the contrary, Zamfara State Government was alleged to have failed to fulfil its promise to the different armed groups particularly in the areas of rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant armed groups. This made *Buharin-Daji*, one of the notorious herder-allied armed group leaders, with some of his lieutenants to breach the conditions of the deal and resumed violent attacks

which extended to Katsina, Niger and Sokoto States (*Daily Trust*, 2017). *Buharin-Daji* was, however, killed as a result of intense competition among the various rival bandit groups. Following his death, government arrested some *Buharin-Daji's* close associates (*Daily Trust*, 2018). What appeared to have led to the resurgence of violent attacks was that Zamfara Government was alleged to have negotiated with some selected bandit leaders. Meanwhile leaders of other rival groups who had fled to other states as a result of military pressure returned with fury because they felt alienated in the peace building processes.

Governor Aminu Bello Masari of Katsina State blamed the bandits for renegeing on the peace deal or ceasefire agreement. He said government kept its own side of the agreement but the bandits renegeed and recommenced violent attacks (*Thisday*, 2020). Following the escalation of bandit attacks on communities in Katsina in 2020, Governor Masari reiterated that Katsina government would never negotiate with bandits as he urged the security agencies to be ruthless with bandits terrorizing the state as well as neighbouring Kaduna, Zamfara and Niger States.

Another factor which led to a resurgence of violence in the region was insincerity of Bandit leaders. It was alleged that some of the armed groups surrendered part of their arms and ammunition in compliance with the spirit of the peace deal but kept a large chunk of the weapons in the forest. Less than 1,200 arms were surrendered in Zamfara and Katsina as at January 2020 (International Crisis Group, 2020). It is not surprising therefore that in spite of governments' efforts to disarm the armed groups, bandits still bear arms openly, attack communities, cart away food and cattle and kidnap people for ransom. Following the collapse of the peace deals and resurgence of violence by the bandits, some of the state governments have either terminated the negotiation or called for a review. Katsina State House of Assembly called for a review of the peace deal following the escalation of violent and ruthless attacks of bandits in many communities in Katsina. The State Assembly urged the state to seek alternative methods of ending the violence (*Daily Trust*, 2020).

Almost all the state governments in the region had proposed cattle ranching as an alternative to open grazing in the belief that it would be a major solution to the

perennial farmer-herder conflict. Zamfara State Government commenced the building of three rural grazing areas - one for each senatorial district at a cost of N8.6 billion in 2018, the completion and effective utilization of the project could help in reducing farmer-herder clashes (*Daily Trust*, 2019). Similarly, Governor Ganduje of Kano state inaugurated a \$95 million agro-pastoral development project aimed at developing pastoral communities and addressing security challenges caused by herder migration (*Punch*, 2020). Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai further proposed cattle branding, certifying cattle merchants, monitoring cattle markets and regulating slaughter houses as mechanisms to prevent cattle rustling (*Leadership*, 2016 ).

These efforts and proposals by State Governments' appeared laudable if faithfully implemented and devoid of politics. But there is continuous suspicion and animosity between the government and the armed groups. The persistence of the crises has thrown the State Governments in the region into confusion; In fact, Governor Masari Bello of Katsina, on several occasions, maintained that he regretted signing peace deal with the bandits.

### **Complexities and Contradictions in the Military and States' Government Approaches**

Despite concerted efforts by both the Federal and State Governments, the challenges of insecurity in the region have become compounded. This is because of the complexities and contradictions in both federal and state governments anti-banditry approaches. In the first place, the joint police-military anti-banditry operation is faced with enormous challenges. These challenges had been summarized by Tony Nyam, a retired military personnel and security expert, who said "there are huge logistics gaps which bother on insufficient equipment to respond swiftly to armed groups' attacks, inferior firearms, inadequate number of troops, inadequate intelligence gathering, political dimension to criminality among others" (Gabriel, 2020).

The challenges account for over 80 per cent failure of the joint police-military anti-banditry operations. Apart from that, the military has been overstretched in the internal security operations across the length and breadth of the country

given the number of ongoing internal security operations. There have also been alleged cases of politicians and traditional rulers' complicity with the bandits. In Zamfara State, for instance, the governor suspended some traditional rulers who were alleged to be working with the bandits (Uzoho, 2019). Some military personnel were also alleged to be supplying ammunitions and intelligence information to the bandits. Complicity, to a greater extent, has hampered effective operations of the troops in the region.

Many of the security personnel have been ambushed and killed in the course of anti-banditry operations in the region. In July 2020, bandits ambushed and killed over 20 soldiers in Katsina (*Africa News*, 2020). The killing of security personnel by bandits has persisted in Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina and Sokoto states. However, continuous escalation of banditry made the Minister of Defence, Major General I. Danbazu (Retd) to authorize citizens to defend themselves against insecurity. The Governors of Zamfara and Katsina States have also asked the people of their States to resort to self-help.

The inefficiency in the State Governments' approach was first noted in the unarmed Vigilante and CJTF who neither synergized with the police-military troops nor provided useful information to the troops. Therefore, both the local security apparatus and the police-military troops worked at variance instead of sharing intelligent information. In most cases, the bandits noted this huge gap in the security coordination. Also the peace deal and amnesty programme of the State Governments for the repentant bandits had not been implemented efficiently. The bandits accused states government of gross insincerity for partially fulfilling part of the peace deal while the larger part of the agreement remained on paper. The governments, on the other hand, blamed the bandit leaders for renegeing on the agreement.

Negotiation and granting of amnesty to bandits has been a controversial subject in the public domain. To Sheikh Ahmad Abubakar Gumi (a Muslim Cleric) and some, granting amnesty to bandits would end banditry. Sheikh Ahmad Abubakar Gumi after meeting with some bandit leaders and fighters in the forests emphasised that granting amnesty to the bandits remained the best option for peace in the region. After he had successfully negotiated ransom between

the bandits and the kidnapped students in Kaduna on one or two occasions, public perception about him changed as certain analysts began thinking that the Sheikh was working in connivance with the bandits. He therefore withdrew his services and urged both the federal and states governments to dialogue with the bandit leaders.

On the contrary, Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai, former Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Yusuf Buratai and other prominent Nigerians differed on the subject of amnesty to bandits. They strongly believed that bandits were criminals that should be crushed. In the words of Governor Nasir El-Rufai, there can never be genuine repentance for bandits because after deceiving government and people they will go back to their acts of criminality. After the failure of amnesty programme in Katsina and Zamfara States, Katsina State Governor Aminu Masari sees amnesty programme as a ploy to deceive government because bandits would renege on the peace agreement.

As a result of what transpired in Katsina and Zamfara, the public has lost confidence and trust in the amnesty programme just as it doubts the sincerity of the programme and the genuineness of bandits' repentance. The public is of the view that, government should continue to exert maximum police-military force and ensure that any arrested bandit faces the wrath of the law rather than granting them state pardon. The contradiction of government's approach arises from the use of maximum police-military exertion and granting of amnesty. These are two contradictory and bipolar approaches of government at different levels. It is not surprising therefore, that in spite of many years of anti-banditry war in the region, banditry has continued to be on increase. The end is not in sight.

Another area of contradiction stuck out when the National Assembly legislated against payment of ransom to bandits/kidnappers. Kaduna State Governor Nasir El-Rufai concurred with non-payment of ransom to bandits. The complexities, contradistinctions in the use of the military, National Assembly laws and negotiation have constituted a very serious impediment to successfully winning the war against banditry in the country.

## **Conclusion**

This paper provided in-depth understanding of the complexity and contradictions of government's approaches to armed banditry in the Northwest region of Nigeria. Government can overcome banditry through well-coordinated multi-layered and multi-dimensional approaches which can take the form of strong political will, instrumentality of laws, coercion and inclusive policies. Government, at all levels, must not play discordant tunes in security matters. The protracted nature of banditry in the region in the face of intense police-military operations on one hand and peace deal on the other hand made academics and analysts sceptical about government sincerity. Government can restore confidence in the citizenry by demonstrating the political will and protect human life and property.

## **Recommendations**

This paper makes the following recommendations:

1. There should be comprehensive programmes and policies to prevent or reduce farmers-herders clashes, particularly the enactment of ranching law instead of open grazing.
2. Government should create a mechanism to trace lost cattle. Such systems would involve cattle branding, certifying cattle merchants, monitoring cattle markets and regulating slaughter houses. Governor Nasir El-Rufai had earlier proposed a similar system as a way to reducing cattle rustling (Olaniyan and & Yahaya, 2016).
3. Communities should be fortified through the establishment of community policing arrangements across the country. There is the need for a strong intelligence gathering mechanism around border communities aiming at intercepting illegal movement of ammunitions into the region.
4. Government should also intensify efforts at checking illegal cross-border movements of persons and cattle, and restrain the influx of

ammunition. More modern weapons and military hardware should be acquired for the military troops because it would empower them to take the battle to the bandits' enclaves. In 2021, government acquired six (6) Tucano Aircrafts for aerial surveillance and bombing of the bandits' hideouts. There is a need to add more aircrafts for a more assured victory.

5. The police, the military and other security personnel should be trained on modern intelligence gathering using drones. Besides, there should be synergy among the security personnel, particularly on training and sharing of intelligence information.

Enactment of laws to try bandits within the shortest period of time should be prioritized.



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# 9

## **IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract:**

*Over the years, extant literature by various scholars has been in existence on the propelling forces of trafficking in persons, however, this study examines globalization as being the catalyst of the illicit trade of Human Trafficking in Nigeria. The paper is aimed at revealing the synergy that flourishes between globalization and Trafficking in persons with Nigeria in focus. This research work traces the history and dimensions of globalization as well as x-rays its relationship with Human Trafficking. Information for the study was gathered using the secondary source of data collection which include; journals, textbooks, and the internet. For further clarification, the Globalization theory was adopted as its theoretical framework. Further, the study explains that the quest for better living conditions resulting from poverty has lured citizens into the web of Human Traffickers. Finally, the paper proposes some possible recommendations to ameliorate the adverse effect of globalization which is the menace of human trafficking. They include; Industrialization, Nigerian borders should be effectively guarded to checkmate Human Trafficking, and globalization should not be utilized as a tool for neo-colonialism by the capitalists; among others.*

**Keywords:** *Globalization, Trafficking in Persons, Human Traffickers, Illicit Trade and Nigeria.*

## **Introduction**

The globe presently is faced with the impact of globalization owing to its outwardly advantageous impressions like seamless borders between sovereign states and promoting the consciousness of the various racial, religious, cultures as well as providing an enabling environment for economic development for developing countries of the world. These incentives have barred citizens from viewing the concept insightfully from a different angle, specifically, in terms of its adverse consequences. One such adverse impact of globalization is human trafficking. This criminality regarded as among the most abominable and inhumane illegitimate businesses on earth, distresses the existence of millions of citizens all over the globe and denies them the right to self-worth being that they have been relegated to items of transaction for the satisfaction of the desires of buyers all over the world through forced labour. Maybee (2016) states that 21 million citizens are distressed owing to this abominable transaction. In the fiscal year 2016, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) initiated 1,029 investigations into human trafficking cases and recorded 1,952 arrests, 1,176 indictments, and 631 convictions. 435 victims were identified and assisted (ICE, 2017). But unfortunately, the information on the scale of trafficking, how traffickers operate and the most effective means to stop it is very minimal. This situation has made people question the relationship between globalization and human trafficking. Consequently, it is pertinent to ask; what level of influence does globalization exercise over human trafficking? Secondly, why is it proving so difficult for the government to eradicate the practice? Some researchers seem to suggest that there is no link between the two phenomena but this study hypothesizes that there is a definite relationship between globalization and human trafficking and that globalization is the catalyst for the promotion of this illegitimate trade giving it the status of the quickest developing illegal business after narcotics. However, Nigeria has acquired a reputation for being one of the leading African countries in human trafficking with cross-border and internal trafficking (Osimen, Okor, Daudu and Adeniran, 2022).

This research work intends to demonstrate that the heightening consolidation of international transactions resulting from the quick succession of growing international circulation of concepts, information, goods, capital and services,

has polarized people (Keohane 2000), and has diverted the focus of many from the social negative effects affiliated with globalization. The economic and social divide has aroused an environment where the strong dominate and exploit the weak. The study seeks to expound how human traffickers exploit transparent international borders, secure communication, political and economic turmoil and high emigrations of citizens to victimize the weak in Nigeria. The paper encompasses practical and theoretical implications. From the theoretical perspective, the work offers a scientific approach by providing a theoretical framework in order to create a better appreciation of the implications of globalization on trafficking in persons. Again, this gives room for further studies by interested scholars in this field of research. On the practical significance, the paper speaks to actors in the international arena on the negative implications of globalization on human trafficking which needs to be addressed.

The research paper is subdivided into seven sections: section one is the Introduction, section two is the Conceptual Review, Section three is the Theoretical Framework, section four covers the History of Globalization, Section five captures the Perspectives of Globalization, section six discusses Nigeria and Trafficking in Persons and section seven is the conclusion.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Globalization**

Mir, Qadiri and Hassan (2014), expounded that the term globalization is a multifaceted phenomenon which encompasses economic, social, political, technological and cultural dimensions. Despite the fact that the term 'globalization' has been utilized by researchers since the late 1950s, the term, however, has a lengthier descent. Among English-speaking scholars, hundreds of years ago, when it was established that the earth is spherical, the word, 'globe', was introduced to describe the world (Scholte, 2002). Globalism and globalize surfaced in the 1940s, and in 1961, the term globalization was first introduced in the American English dictionary (Scholte, 2002). The term globalization could be defined as the progression of interrelation and assimilation between peoples, corporations and governments internationally. Albrow (1990), defined globalization as "every procedure through which people on earth are unified

into one world community”.

Cerny (1995), Jones (1995) and Bairoch and Kozul-Wright (1996) referred to the term as a progression of economic and financial incorporation. Also, Jones (1995) advocated that globalization is a strengthening of the course of worldwide synergy, resulting from the development of competition in a worldwide liberal trade network strengthened by the incursion of technology. Moreover, McGrew (1998) and Thomas, and Wilkin (1997) concentrated on the social part of globalization. Thomas (1997) opined that the concept refers generally to the practice in which power is situated in international societal structures and enforced through international links instead of through sovereign countries. Further, Hebron & Stack (2013) and Al-Rodhan, and Stoudmann (2006) presented a broader definition cutting across the various perspectives of globalization. In their opinion, globalization is a progression that incorporates the origins, progression, and impacts of international and intercultural incorporation of individual and non-individual actions.

Furthermore, Hebron and Stack (2013) referred to globalization as the advanced progression of the development introduced hundreds of years ago, mirrored in the business extension, discoveries, emigration, occupation, advanced technology, etc., that have occurred all through the existence of the world. Several researchers have explained this concept from various approaches; however, it is pertinent to note that globalization is not a new concept as long as human existence is concerned. It is an integral element of international relations which has trickled down from the time of the ancients to the present. The drive of globalization is to profit economies all over the globe, enhancing the efficiency of markets intensifying competition, reducing wars to the barest minimum and promoting equitable distribution of wealth.

### **Trafficking in Persons**

The United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime described this concept as the sourcing, conveyance, handover, accommodating, or acceptance of humans using means such as intimidation, kidnapping, tricks or coercion, or by making or accepting illegal monetary transactions or incentives



to reaching an agreement with the person enforcing domination over another person or group of persons for abusive purposes (Martin & Miller 2000). Trafficking in persons has also been described as the most intense method of human rights abuse for, servitude, commercial sex, debt bondage or harvesting of human parts, the methods enforced in trafficking are intimidation, kidnapping, tricks or coercion. Human trafficking is a misconduct that involves all the segments of trafficking which include sourcing, conveyance, handover, and accommodating, of humans for exploitation (UNODC, 2006). Human trafficking ranks second to narcotics in terms of revenue generation, in the world of illegitimate trade (Jones et al., 2007). The casualties of this illicit trade are usually children, women and peasants. Global Report on Trafficking in Persons by the UNODC, 2009, offers further information on the business of trafficking in persons. The report emphasizes that the main targets of human traffickers are women who amount to 66% of the overall victims. The report further elucidates that commercial sex is the major objective in trading in females which constitutes a total of 79% of all incidences. The second major objective for trafficking in persons is forced labour which constitutes 18% of all cases. It is pointed out in the report that the population of children cover more than one-fifth part of a trafficked person for labour exploitation. The network of this destructive business involves individuals who constitute syndicate groups. (UNESCO, 1994; Savona et al., 1996; Schloenhardt 1999; U.S. State Department, 2003). Traffickers recruit their victims from source countries and realize huge revenue by selling them to their target countries.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The Push and Pull Theory**

This study will adopt the Supply and demand or the push and pull theory propounded by Ernest George Ravenstein in 1885, to explicate the connection between globalization and trafficking in persons. Theories applied to describe the affiliation vis-à-vis globalization and trafficking in persons by various scholars include Neo-liberalism. Rational Choice, Conflict Perspective, and Constitutive Theories.

However, this paper would adopt the Push and Pull theory as its theoretical framework. Push and Pull are aspects which could compellingly push individuals to migrate or entice them. A push feature is coercive and is attributed to the country from which a person migrates. Majorly, an individual is moved by frustration away from his or her habitat. The pull aspect, on the contrary, is what lures the person to the location of migration.

Scholars have written expansively on Push and Pull theory to explain globalization and human trafficking inclusive is Lee Everett. For further clarification, Lee developed a migration model in 1966 to justify push and pull as the principal basis of emigration and immigration. He explained that the pull factor denotes something that is advantageous about a particular location that attracts the individual. He expounded that the pull factor is that aspect that lures an individual such as economic, environmental or cultural. Lee mentioned employment and academics as examples of pull characteristics while conflicts, food insecurity and unemployment are examples of push characteristics (Barman and Lumpkin 2015). The theory explicates the existence of two categories of people and countries in the world: developed and developing. The characteristics that characterize that fashion these two groups of people or countries are their politics and economies. The theory is significantly influenced by globalization, ethnicity, wars, and economic disparities.

Further, it is pertinent to note that technology, gender inequality and the growth of the market economy also enhance migration. These empower people or probable migrants from developing countries with awareness of improved standards of living in developed nations (Stanojoska, 2015). The Push and Pull theory advocated that demand is an essential aspect in the business of trafficking in persons, whereas unemployment, subjugation, hostilities, poor living standards, gender inequality and political unpredictability are rudiments that push persons to migrate and are culpable to be victimized by traffickers. Push elements are the factors that instigate migration in search of a better life. In West Africa, issues which include abject, poverty, gender discrimination and unemployment, particularly among rural dwellers (Salah 2001).

## **Nexus between Push, Pull, Demand and Supply**

Domestic hostilities and social strife within a territory, high rate of corruption, and food insecurity resulting from huge populations are among the Pull and Push factors that promote human trafficking (Bales 2005). An abusive home environment is also among the push factors that drive the trafficking of persons in Nigeria. The above-cited issues either push individuals to migrate or fall victim to traffickers. The demand for forced labour or persons to take up poor-wage jobs could be referred to as a “pull” factor since it is a demand that generates a market for trafficking in persons. For further explanation, Kerr (2014) opined that “push” cannot exist without “pull.”

The theory of Push and Pull has been adopted as the theoretical framework for this study because it is considered that globalization, economic predicaments, political instability, wars, ethnic rivalry, and social discrimination, are the primary motives for migration in order to seek better lives. Consequently, this provides enabling grounds for the venture of trafficking in persons to flourish in this modern world of seamless international networks, technology, poverty, sexual abuse, prostitution, and child and forced labour.

## **History of Globalization**

Given the recent publicity in regard to the impacts of globalization, it is general conduct in the press and among experts to view globalization as a recent development (Pieterse, 2012). The general period of globalization accentuated by experts is post-World War II or after the cold war. Active databank on globalization in the social sciences, humanities, media, and international relations could be from the 1970s or 1980s downwards (Pieterse, 2012), also this period has been regarded as the most important and also has increased international activities and impacts.

Historical globalization shows that societies around the globe have never existed in isolation instead there were strong indications of inter-cultural connections dating from the initial times of human life on earth (Bentley, 2004). Below are different historical eras advocated by Steger (2003) with some significant features.

### **Pre-History Era (10000 BC – 3500 BC)**

Early in human history, contact among thousands of hunters across the earth was restricted to terrestrial boundaries and was unpredictable. The level of communal communication transformed radically at the introduction of farming. Though, there was the practice of globalization but to a narrow extent. There was proof of centrally managed combat, farming, administration and religious beliefs as critical drivers of social interface which occasioned developing societies in distinct areas on the planet.

### **Pre-Contemporary Era (3500 BC – 1500 BC)**

The emergence of wheels caused a sharp transformation in globalization (3000BC) in South Asia and lettering in central China, Egypt and Mesopotamia. The creation of the wheel instigated the introduction of roads for carts drawn by animals for the movement of goods and humans. Irrigation system of agriculture was introduced which enhanced production and promoted trade extension.

### **Early Contemporary Era (1500-1750)**

The concept of modernism and illumination are affiliated with an 18<sup>th</sup>-century programme of freedom of ideas. The outstanding development during the 18th century enhanced globalization. Europe profited immensely courtesy of inventions from China and Islam. Industrialists from Europe positioned the groundwork of capitalism as an international practice. The quest for expansion drove the Europeans to search for lucrative marine paths, which instigated maritime technological inventions.

### **Contemporary Era (1750-1970)**

Globalization developed rapidly in this era. As a result of economic and political impacts, remarkable heights of interaction and incorporation were evident in technology and socio-cultural areas. There was a rapid increase in world commerce owing to the presence of international banks, world pricing mechanisms, rail networks, advanced maritime technology and aviation. More so, inventions like the internet, mobile phones, etc. intensified networking

across the globe.

### **Contemporary Era (1970 onward)**

The sharp extension and rapid development of globalization is an additional significant feat in its antecedents. Presently, the earth is communally interlocked via telecommunication, social media platforms, the internet and the media. Also, Multi-National Companies have contributed immensely to traditional incorporation. Worldwide interconnection appreciated dramatically owing to the surge in the progression of technology during this period.

### **Perspectives of Globalization**

Earlier explanations disclosed that globalization encapsulates various perspectives. These perspectives comprise the following: economic, political, cultural and social.

### **Economic Globalization**

Economic globalization captures the escalation and extension of economic networks in the international arena (Steger, 2003). Martin, Schumann & Camiller (1997) defined economic globalization as the increased interconnection of sovereign nations' trade economies into one strong network of international political economies whose amassing and circulation of resources are progressively administered by neoliberal philosophies accentuating functions of the market while reducing governmental participation in economic affairs. Modern economic globalization is an offshoot of a progressive advent of a global economic system which commenced from an economic symposium hosted at Bretton Woods, England in the twilight of the Second World War.

The Bretton Wood symposium positioned the groundwork for institutionalizing frontline international organizations like IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization (Steger, 2003). Consequently, economic globalization is demonstrated by intensified capital circulation, international circulation of goods and services, headed for the world market and shattering of national boundaries (Hebron & Stack, 2013).

### **Political Globalization**

Political globalization could be defined as the increase and extension of political integration all over the world (Steger, 2003). Over the past few centuries, people have established a tie of belonging with a specific country and political divides were created in these regions. This instigated divide has cultivated a perception of mutual “us” and alien “them” which polarizes the collective space into alien and local domains. Societies accept the supremacy of a country while other’s creation of a villain impression has provided the drive liable for full-blown warfare (Steger, 2003). The modern concept of globalization somewhat strived to unstiffen the philosophical divides and existing regional boundaries.

Conversely, globalization cynics consider the term incorrect and rash (Steger, 2003). This Pro-State movement maintains that nations are very much on the frontline of global integration (Wendt, 1999).

### **Socio-Cultural Globalization**

According to Giddens (1990), social globalization is a global communal interaction which connects faraway regions in a manner that domestic events are shaped by activities happening in distant regions many miles away and conversely. Correspondingly cultural globalization could be seen as “the increase and extension of cultural circulation all over the world (Steger, 2003). Social and cultural globalization is somewhat of a combined phenomenon. The two perspectives influence the advent and strengthening of one another. When people are socially networked, the tendency of cultural similarity will be heightened owing to the exchange of values. This philosophy is reinforced by reviewing the study of Dreher (2003) on assessing globalization. Dreher divided globalization into three major perspectives: economic, political and social. Social globalization involves three parts which are individual interaction, information dissemination and cultural similarity (Dreher, 2006). Individual contact enabled by emigration and travel, cultural interface, information circulation, technological upsurge and exchange of ideas via the media, telecommunication and the internet, from advanced to developing nations (De-Soysa & Vadlamannati, 2011).

## **Nigeria and Trafficking in Persons**

Trading in Nigerian womenfolk to Europe, most specifically Italy, commenced in the 1980s consequent to the need for unskilled labour in farming, mining, building, etc. The inhumane enterprise of human trade flourishes inside Nigeria, within neighbouring countries, and in numerous European nations. Women and children are transported illegally through an organized network to make profits. Kara (2009) revealed that traffickers in Nigeria have been able to transport a huge number of women as sex slaves into Italy, Netherlands and Spain. Research has revealed that Italy has the highest number of trafficked Nigerians. Well, over ten thousand (10,000) Nigerian females have been forced to serve as sex workers in Italy (Kara, 2009).

However, Nigeria maintains the status of the resource centre, shipment and also the terminal country for human trafficking. (Mashil, 2005 & Dodo, 2012). The forces that propel trafficking in humans, in Nigeria, are terrestrial which comprise domestic and external syndicates. Hence, the external part of trafficking in persons is enforced by a network that acquires transportation requirements, funds and lodging for their unsuspecting prey' who are anxious to leave the shores of the country in search of better lives in Europe, America and other developed worlds (IOM, 2002). These susceptible youthful females effortlessly run into the traps of these criminals, falling for their smooth and deceptive promises to secure lucrative jobs overseas and receiving fat salaries, to escape the harsh economic realities prevalent in Nigeria. The truth only dawns on these victims when they arrive in the countries they have been trafficked, that they realize the extent of the deceit and are forced into prostitution (Musikilu, 2008).

Over the past three decades, traffickers in Nigeria have always sourced their merchandise from the hinterlands with the majority of them young females, who are used as sex slaves, and the males in their custody are forced into domestic serfdom and begging for alms (Ajagun, 2012). The abducted victims are trafficked from Nigerian border societies to neighbouring African countries like Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo, the Gambia, Cameroon, Ghana, and Chad, among others. Persons trafficked from the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS) countries like Ghana, Benin, and Togo to Nigeria are forced into risky labours like mining (NAPTIP, 2009). Further, various Nigerian females are trafficked to different European nations. The highest population of trafficked victims are sent to Italy and Russia, the Arab world and Northern Africa, as forced commercial sex workers and domestic servants (Abiodun, Akinlade & Oladejo, 2021).

Hence, to ensure the success of any criminality, the existence of offer and acceptance is inevitable. Therefore, in the trafficking business, there must be a network of syndicate groups who would expedite the recruitment, and transportation recipient of victims (Bales, 1999).

Human trafficking is a systematized illegal business which involves a lot of people assigned various responsibilities, working together as a whole. In this illegal business, the responsibility of the recruiters is to go into the hinterlands and deceive young people and their families by giving them false promises of a better life. The unsuspecting families are under the impression, that their children would be given education or gainful employment oblivious to the fact that they are to be trafficked (Bales, 1999). These recruiters could include relatives, merchants, law enforcement agents, etc. Accordingly, the victims move from one phase to the next till they end up in the hands of the recipients who finally give them to their expectant customers as requested, for engagement of their services. From the foregoing, it is pertinent to note that the tactics applied by the traffickers to recruit their victims are lies and coercion. However, it could also be deduced that those who engage in the trafficking business are normally family members, friends, neighbours, kinsmen and kinswomen (Adepelumi, 2015). Trafficked victims are abused every day by their tax masters in terms of forcing them into jobs like home chores, farming activities, jobs at building sites, industrialization, and prostitution. Moreover, a huge population of victims are trafficked internationally whereas more than forty-two per cent (42%) are exploited inside their borders. Further, twenty-eight per cent (28%) of the recruits are minors while 71% are adult females (UNODC, 2016). Human Trafficking has been intensified due to wars, natural disasters, socio-economic complications, etc., thus forcing people into emigration to other climes in



search of better lives (Dodo, 2012). Additionally, there are some other factors at the macro level that fuel the engines of human trafficking. These factors may include Unemployment, severe poverty, economic instability, economic globalization, and international sex travel, among others. At the micro level, the factors involve child abuse and neglect, illiteracy and lack of exposure, family poverty, etc. (Dodo, 2012).

The abominable trade has persisted in Nigeria because the syndicate groups have infiltrated the national security outfits, immigration personnel and aviation officers. These officials have sold their conscience and have stooped so low as receiving bribes from the traffickers' syndicate groups in exchange for enabling the hitch-free movement of trafficked victims across international boundaries. The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR, 2015), discloses that hundreds of young females have been trafficked, raped, and traded as domestic slaves in the internally Displaced People (IDP) camps in Borno, Adamawa and Gombe States of northern Nigeria (Abiodun, Akinlade & Oladejo, 2021).

**Table 1: Frequency of Trafficking in Persons according to Geographical Area (For Every 1,000 residents) in 2012**

S/N	Region	Estimates
1	Europe (South-East and Central)	4.2
2.	Africa	4.0
3.	Middle East	3.4
4.	Asia and the Pacific	3.3
5.	South America and the Caribbeans	3.1
6.	Advanced Countries and European Union	1.5

Source: ILO, 2012 (Cited in Abiodun, Akinlade & Oladejo, 2021)

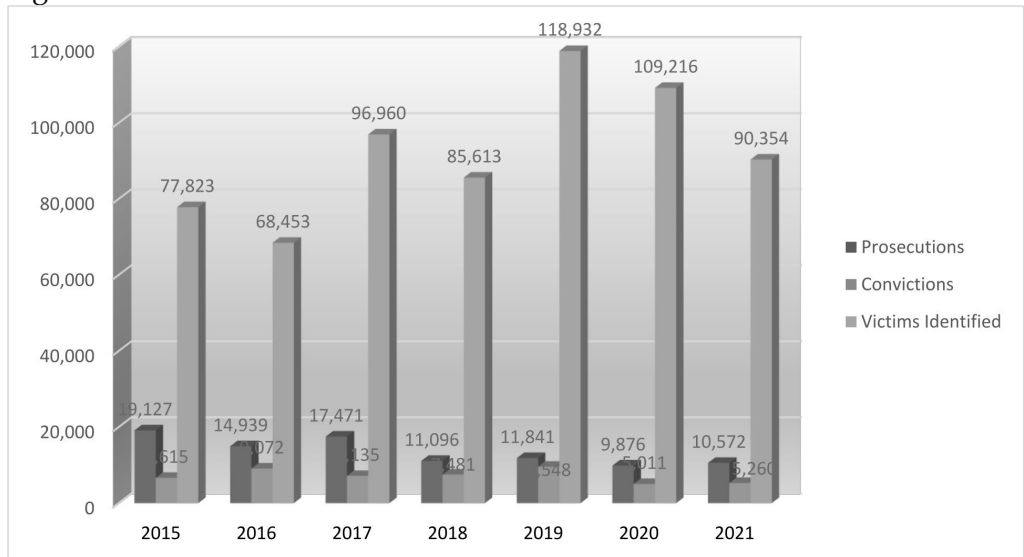
Table 1 indicates that frequency of trafficking persons in Europe is about 4.2, Africa .4.0, the Middle East 3.4, Asia and the Pacific 3.3, South America and the Caribbeans 3.1. In advanced countries and EU 1.5 for every 1,000 residents fall victim to trafficking with Europe the highest followed by Africa.

Table 2: Global Law Enforcement Data

Year	Prosecutions	Convictions	Victims identified	New/Amended Legislation
2015	19,127	6,615	77,823	30
2016	14,939	9,072	68,453	25
2017	17,471	7,135	96,960	5
2018	11,096	7,481	85,613	5
2019	11,841	9,548	118,932	7
2020	9,876	5,011	109,216	16
2021	10,572	5,260	90,354	15

Source: TIP Report, 2022

Figure 1: Global Law Enforcement Data



Source: TIP Report, 2022.

Table 2 and Figure 1 above illustrate the number of prosecutions, convictions, victims identified and new/amended legislation from 2015 to 2021.

### Trafficking in Persons and Economic Globalization

Owing to the seamless interconnection of world activities today, the earth has metamorphosed into a global village, thus movement of persons willingly

or by coercion is more widespread. Huges (1999), submitted that economic globalization has successfully converted womenfolk into commodities for sale which are sold, purchased and expanded. The female folk are handled by the syndicate groups as cargo for export. International networking expedites traffickers to sell persons from the point of recruitment to the point of exploitation. Bales (2007) offered an illustration of a woman marketed in Japan by the syndicate group. The trafficked person was compelled to serve in a tavern to make up for the payment of 4.8 million Yen which was the total expenditure for her conveyance to Japan.

The course of globalization is expressly prominent and embedded in the international economy. A rapidly incorporated international economy facilitates the progress of trafficking in persons. Similar to the slave trade, the contemporary era of human trafficking has become a money-spinning venture for dealers with the help of globalization. The trans-Atlantic slave trade practised long ago characterized economic globalization. Similarly, as the practice was in those days, modern-day slavery is still driven by offer and acceptance. Speaking, the ILO evaluates \a yearly international income spawned from human trafficking to about U.S. \$32 billion (ILO 2008). According to Polakoff (2007), economic globalization has brought about a kind of 'worldwide apartheid' as well as an equivalent appearance of a new 'fourth world' inhabited by millions of destitute, imprisoned, penurious, and other forms of social misfits. Accordingly, it is therefore from the inhabitants of this "fourth world" that victims of human trafficking are continuously recruited. Therefore discussed, economic globalization bears the blame for the success of trafficking in persons globally. In the U.S. Department of State's 2007 report, it is revealed that about six hundred thousand (600,000) to eight hundred thousand (800,000) persons especially women and children, are traded internationally. With the heightening command of globalization, an increase in these figures is only inevitable.

Globalization boosts interrelationships among countries for trade and expedites the movement of goods and services. The benefits of low-cost labour for world economies have been instigated largely by identifying and abusing humans for

economic reasons. In developing economies where agriculture is the mainstay, the masses most times are not opportune to acquire sufficient education or the appropriate proficiency to be employed in a developing workforce. Largely, the developing nations of the globe have become the source of raw materials and cheap labour for advanced countries. This has given rise to the abuse of hungry persons who are subjugated to serfdom.

### **Trafficking in Persons and Political Globalization**

Globalization adversely impacts the independence of national authorities and boundary security. Zhidkova (2015) contended that globalization has introduced weak borders and the diminishing of national sovereignty which is a catalyst for trafficking in persons. Igor (2003), explained that though interrelations among nations have intensified in various facets of existence, globalization facilitates the use of new political tactics in the international arena to create democratic and multidimensional structures to regulate the international community. Further, he opined that the various dimensions of globalization have generated various challenges confronting global international safety (Igor 2003). Accentuating security risks confronting the whole world courtesy of globalization, Cha (2000), maintained that the concept has introduced a form of proficiency insurrection. He further explicated that this form of insurrection facilitates terrorism, illegal syndicates such as narcotics cartels and traffickers in persons in carrying out their operations more effectively.

### **Trafficking in Persons and Socio-Cultural Globalization**

Social globalization enables traffickers to communicate with their victims through print and electronic media (Peerapeng and Chaitip, 2014). Huda (2006) contends that social globalization facilitates traffickers to interact with their victims via intensifying incorporation of individual links, information circulation and the print media. Correspondingly, Hawthorne (2004) stated that globalization via the Internet enables trading women as domestic and sex slaves. Cho (2011) systematically examined how social globalization impacts the rights of citizens in a country across hundred and fifty (150) countries. The outcome of this research tells that information diffusion has an affirmative and

substantial influence on trafficking in person incursion in a state, and social globalization intensifies the prospect.

Furthermore, Cho *et al.* (2013) emphasized that legalized sex business is a significant aspect that stimulates trading in women. They accentuated the height of the effect legalized sex business has on trading in women. The impact of legalized sex business escalates the request for sex workers thereby intensifying trafficking in persons. They made use of information gathered across one hundred and fifty (150) states starting from 1996 to 2003 and studied the connection between legalized sex businesses and trafficking in persons. It was realized that legalized sex business also promotes trafficking in persons and the impact of legalized sex business overrides the substitution impact.

On the impact of technology on trafficking in persons, Mandy (2017) asserted that technology facilitates traffickers to escape exposure from officers of the law. He further clarified that these criminals make use of effective and efficient electronic devices like laptop computers and smartphones to outsmart law enforcement agents. In addition, he stated that the majority of the recent models of smartphones possess GPS facilities and location applications which can enable traffickers to confirm the whereabouts of their victims who try to run away. He also pointed out that the application of technology has enabled traffickers to make and receive payments devoid of traces of the transaction. The reloadable prepaid card application enables traffickers to achieve this and also assists the traffickers to convey money from one point to another easily.

## **Conclusion**

Being a progression of interconnectivity, globalization influences all facets of human existence stretching from economic, cultural, and social to political. As an integral factor of society, people daily interface with globalization, its impacts on the people and the state, its capacity of altering social as well as cultural formations and its pros and cons. Globalization has evolved through various stages all through its existence and has experienced successes and failures. Globalization is a development which continuously intensifies; might reduce for a period but it never finishes and it cannot be terminated. People

can't exist in isolation as it is not a characteristic of the human race. They must interconnect with others, assist each other and exchange information and experiences with one another. The shrinking of the world to a village is credited to the practice of globalization. To a very large extent, it is as a result of globalization that trafficking in persons has attained such a profitable and rapidly developing illegal transaction status in the international arena and Nigeria in particular. It could be observed that there exists a symbiotic relationship between globalization and trafficking in persons, in the sense that the former functions as the booster that accelerates the intensification degree of the latter on the planet right now.

Since globalization has its prospects and challenges, the onus is on us to promote, enable and sensitize the progressive effects of globalization concurrently seeking means to decrease or oppose its negative impacts. Finally, industrialization should be given the necessary seriousness it deserves being that the primary reason for people falling victim to human traffickers is unemployment and +poverty. Globalization has induced a high importation rate of finished goods in Nigeria thereby crippling our local industries, heightening joblessness and lack of primary needs, forcing citizens to desperately seek better standards of living overseas and locally and lots of them fall into the net of human traffickers. Nigerian borders should be effectively guarded to checkmate trafficking in persons, and globalization should not be utilized as a tool for neo-colonialism in the hands of advanced nations.

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