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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBALISED WORLD: THE NIGERIAN CASE

E. Chijioke Ogbonna¹ & Daniel Ekechukwu Kanu²

Abstract

Governance towards economic development has proven to be one of the greatest challenges of the countries of the global south. This is more apt when one appraises such countries like Nigeria with enormous advantages in terms of population, and abundance of resources endearing it to benefit from the undercurrents of globalization, especially, in terms of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), through various Multinational Corporations (MNCs), e-commerce, social media resources and so on. Globalization infuses countries into the whirlwind of interconnectivity with its opportunities and challenges. To maximise the opportunities, governance remains the fulcrum and needs to be intentional and purpose-bound. Methodologically, employing a systematic content analysis of secondary data, pitched on the analytical ideation of institutional discourse, the paper interrogated the opportunities and challenges of governance and economic development in a globalizing world using the Nigerian case. The study found the opportunities of globalization to Nigeria as one that is of manifold import. From the cultural/creative exports, globalization of public space and state-society relations, as well as exposure to global best practices, including management of diaspora remittances in terms of the entire traffic of cultural imports and exports. This study employed the options of domesticating the debates about the gains of globalization from relatable variables that are replete within the society. Drawing from the Nigerian case, the study concluded that from business to public space management, and improved welfare of the citizens, globalization promises a better life that is only predicated on the ability of the government to harness. The study therefore recommended the duo of institutional adjustment and critical citizenry as the inevitable drivers in processing the globalization fuel to achieve economic development.

Keywords: Governance, Economic Development, Globalisation, Social Media, Institution

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Introduction

Development is pitched on the proper management of resources - governance - to achieve the betterment of mankind within a set collectivity otherwise referred to as the state in this instance. Globalization is said to be one of the intractable challenges for the African continent in the 21st century (Ojo, 2004). First, it comes with the yet-to-be-sorted challenges of state building, while it compounds the debris of the debates surrounding the colonization dilemma. This is for the African states who are yet to find a sustainable path in statecraft. Whatever might be the case, some opportunities abound when properly situated to play within the globalized community. However, these opportunities are pitched on overcoming existing crucial challenges, including how to process the gains towards national prosperity as well as how to avoid subconscious conscription in values that are detrimental to national values. First, Africa has yet to overcome, or at best, manage its forceful conscription into the global capital market that its role is a supplier of unprocessed minerals and other produce as raw materials (Ogbonna et al 2023). This colonial experience has continued to influence the path of socio-economic life in Africa to date. It is however needless to mention that it was in itself a veritable phase in the globalisation surge, though not negotiated in terms favorable to Africa, nor were many states of the continent party to the determination of its colonial affairs.

Whatever the experience for Africa and Nigeria in particular could be, the opportunities of globalization lie in the intersection of governance and economic development. This draws from a complex mix of global engagement by government, drawing from the enormous resources that the global economic chain brings. According to Obaseki (2000. p. 24), "the positive effects or benefits are numerous, but the most important include, increased specialisation and efficiency, better quality products at reduced prices, economies of scale in production, competitiveness and increased output, technological improvement and increased managerial capabilities."

This is, however, predicated on the quality of governance provided by the government. Globalisation while being propelled by liberal mercantilist tradition, science, and technology gave it the farthest boost. Within the Nigerian space, the resources of globalization are inherent in many foci; global

interconnections have material visibility in the areas of aviation, commerce, telecommunications, social media/social networks – mostly powered by internet space – and many more. When the specific material drivers of globalization are appraised, one cannot discount the opportunities. First, it is a progressive phase of human civilization and predicated on multifaceted and ever-evolving advancements in science and technology. The greatest strength of globalization lies in the conquering of space and time, as well as bountiful gains in the improved well-being of humans through task performance, entertainment vistas, e-commerce, and the rest. At once, the entertainment industry including music and movies, sports, fashion, and other cultural contents, like those exported through academic interchange aiming at having a taste of the African spice are all made possible through the dynamics of globalisation. This also includes lots of exports in terms of food, culture, fashion, language, and others exported to service diaspora needs. The diaspora-home-country connection is itself an offspring of cultural globalization. Foreign Direct Investments through Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and their many gains are all products of globalization.

Beyond the high-sounding economic theories about the gains of globalization, there are very simple matrix that the common man can relate to. For instance, within the social media space, there are commercial benefits typified in earnings from global platforms provided for specific purposes. This is either in terms of monetized social media engagements like earnings from Facebook, and Youtube, and/or utilizing the opportunities provided by giant e-commerce firms outside your shores to earn a living. This could be in terms of using platforms like Amazon to publish your work and sell products, as well as utilizing Amazon, Alibaba, and others for drop shipping. Not forgetting the primary commercial values provided by borderless e-commerce firms. Ease of business, transmission of ideas without the hindrances of borders as well globalization of domestic skills, services, and goods are the primary relatable undercurrents of globalization.

The gains of globalization can only be maximized through the functional roles of governments in steering its course. However, globalization in turn impacts governance. The inclusion that social media makes possible is one

that is rated as having the capacity to uproot the mass of citizens away from zones of social exclusion to active parties in negotiating how they are governed (Ogbonna, 2018). This is in terms of participatory platforms for social inclusion and information equity. By information equity, it is implied that globalization gives an individual the opportunity to connect to digital platforms irrespective of class, race, zone, and location and be able to express his/her views about any subject of interest. Invariably, the posture of globalization in state-society relations is predicated on the use of social media to connect and function in active roles in informing government, engaging government, holding government accountable as well as constantly checkmating governance through multiple globalized routes made possible by internet provisions and mobile gadgets.

Literature Review

Governance

Governance can be defined as “the overall manner in which public officials and institutions acquire and exercise their authority to shape public policy and provide public goods and services” (de Ferranti et al., 2009, p. 8). It encompasses the mechanisms and processes of government, as well as how authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development. Governance is the executive, economic, and political authority to regulate the affairs of a country at every level (UNDP, 1997). It is the combination of traditions and institutions practiced by governments within any nation (Kaufmann et al., 1999). These include all the processes, systems, and controls used to safeguard and grow assets (UNDP, 1997). According to Ali (2015), governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. It involves the structures and processes through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences. Effiong et al. (2023) identified three pillars of governance: economic, political, and administrative. “Economic governance is the decision-making procedures impacting a nation’s economic activities and interactions with other economies. It significantly affects equity, poverty, and quality of life. Making decisions to create policy is the process of political control. Implementing policies is done

through a system of administrative governance” (p. 2011). Good governance is widely associated with democracy as the democratic tenets have conterminous ingredients with good governance. On the other hand, UNECA, UNDP, and World Bank’s definitions of good governance are ideally provided as principles of democracy. Ogbonna (2020) identifies these democratic canons as responsiveness, accountability, plurality, time-bound and periodic elections as well as fundamental human rights and rule of law. These values are replicated in UNECA’s offspring of democracy as, consensus-oriented, participatory, accountable, rule of law, transparency, efficient and effective, responsive, equitable, and inclusive (UNECA, 2009), which is readily affiliated with good governance.

Good governance is crucial for fostering economic development in any country (Mahran, 2022). Good governance is the capacity of a government “to meet basic needs like food and shelter as well as welfare-improving infrastructure like good roads, healthcare, quality education, and electricity” (Adejumo-Ayibiowu, 2023, p. 129). It ensures that resources are used efficiently and effectively, reduces the risk of corruption, and promotes transparency and accountability in decision-making processes. According to the United Nations, “good governance has 8 major characteristics; it is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law” (UNESCAP, 2009, p. 1, Sharma, 2007, p. 31). Good governance promotes the rule of law, human rights, and democracy, which are essential for sustainable economic development (Olabiya & Olowookere, 2021). So many developing nations face challenges in developing systems of governance that foster, support, and sustain human development, particularly for the most marginalized and poor (Effiong et al., 2023). The economic growth of any country is highly influenced by its government’s practices and the way it governs both directly and indirectly (AlBassam, 2013). This includes institutional structures and designs, as they impact economic and political outcomes (North, 1990).

According to Azoro et al. (2021), good governance and development have largely been elusive in Nigeria, rather, “poor governance has dominated the Nigerian society, resulting from leadership problems, pervasive corruption, the

existence of multiple centers of loyalty base regime, ethnic and religious interest among others, all indicative of weak, underperforming or non-performing institutions of government” (p. 61). Nigeria, with the largest economy in Africa, has since its return to democracy in 1999, implemented a wide range of good governance reforms aimed at curbing corruption and spurring growth and development. These reforms include public financial management, tax reform, public procurement, civil service reforms, transparency, and anti-corruption. “These nonetheless did not reduce economic hardship in Nigeria” (Adejumo-Ayibiowu, 2023, p. 121). Some of the identified challenges hindering development in Nigeria include “lack of equity, high rate of corruption and indiscriminate use of public funds, high level of insecurity, and religious crises, to mention a few” (Olabiya & Olowookere, 2021, p. 295). The country continues to grapple with various social and economic challenges, including insecurity in the form of banditry and kidnappings, particularly in the northwest region, ongoing insurgency by terrorist groups in the north-east, and separatist movements in the south-east (World Bank, 2023). Additionally, there are issues with transparency and accountability, as well as weak institutional capacity and low levels of public participation in decision-making processes. These challenges are attributed to bad governance and have significant impacts on the country’s ability to achieve sustainable development and economic growth (World Bank, 1989).

Economic Development

Economic development can be defined as the improvement of people’s health, education, and general well-being and the presence of positive economic indicators, such as economic growth and low unemployment rates (AlBassam, 2013). Economic development includes creating opportunities for economic growth within a globalized economic space (Effiong et al., 2023). Between 2000 and 2014, Nigeria’s economy experienced consistent and broad-based growth, averaging over 7% annually, thanks to favorable global conditions and economic reforms. However, from 2015 to 2022, growth rates slowed, and GDP per capita stagnated due to monetary and exchange rate distortions, rising fiscal deficits from lower oil production and costly fuel subsidies, increased

trade protectionism, and external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. These weakened economic fundamentals have led to a 17-year highest in inflation, reaching 25.8% in August 2023, and combined with slow growth, are pushing millions of Nigerians into poverty (World Bank, 2023).

Nigeria, as of 2022, ranked 163rd on the Human Development Index (HDI) with a value of 0.535 (UNDP, 2022). This placed Nigeria in the category of countries with medium human development. This ranking is below the average for countries in sub-Saharan Africa and below the global average. The Nigerian economy has also been characterized by low savings and even lower investment (Marcus & Vale, 2022). Despite being a major oil producer, there is significant income inequality and many people still live in poverty. Following a change in administration in May 2023, Nigeria has the opportunity to return to sustainable growth by implementing key reforms such as the removal of Petroleum subsidies and liberalizing the exchange rate. The economy is projected to grow at an average of 3.4% between 2023 and 2025, with the potential for increased development spending and productivity. However, challenges persist, including limited opportunities for citizens, high poverty rates, and regional inequalities (World Bank, 2023). Sustainable development, which implies the presence of long time economic growth is only feasible when the government provides an enabling environment where standard policies and practices are implemented.

Globalization

Globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of the world's economies, societies, and cultures. It has been facilitated by advances in technology, transportation, and communication, and has led to an increase in the flow of goods, services, people, and information across borders (International Monetary Fund, 2021). Globalization was defined by Giddens (1990) as the intensification of worldwide social relations that link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa. According to Ezeanya and Azubuike (2023), globalization is the integration of markets, economies, and societies through the cross-border flow of goods, services, capital, technology, and

people. Globalization is the process of increasing interconnectedness and interdependence among countries and societies worldwide through the exchange of goods, services, information, ideas, and technology. This process is driven by advancements in communication, transportation, and international trade, leading to the integration of economies, cultures, and governance systems on a global scale (Orga, 2012).

Globalization has so many benefits. One advantage is that it can lead to increased economic growth and job creation, as countries can specialize in producing goods and services in which they have a comparative advantage (International Monetary Fund, 2021). Additionally, globalization can lead to the spread of new technologies and ideas, which can benefit people around the world (World Bank, 2021). “The transmutations of technology and capital, work together to create a new globalized and interconnected world...Without moving from one location to another, a foreign investor could deploy funds across the globe with the aid of telecommunication facilities” (Orga, 2012, p. 123-124). The benefits of globalization also include increased specialization and efficiency, better quality products at reduced prices, economies of scale in production, competitiveness and increased output, technological improvement, and increased managerial capabilities (Orga, 2012). In Nigeria, globalization has led to rapid economic growth, and has benefited both the private and public sectors of the economy, as it has provided access to new markets, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), diverse talents, different cultures, and the spread of technology and innovation (Oruma & Amah, 2021).

However, globalization can also have negative effects, particularly for developing countries. Concerns have grown over the impact of globalization, resulting in consequences of economic growth, poverty, inequality, regional differences, cultural dominance, and environmental or economic integration (Heshmati & Lee, 2010). Globalization exacerbates income inequality (Stiglitz, 2002), and also leads to the erosion of cultural diversity, as global brands and media dominate local markets (Appadurai, 1996). According to Oruma and Amah (2021), globalization has led to issues of environmental problems, particularly global warming resulting from excessive greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity through mining and excessive

industrial development. It is also a major contributor to dissatisfaction from unfavorable trade and exploitation, which has led to the election of protectionist governments in parts of the world. Globalization is also the cause of the recent increase in racism and xenophobia, an example is the September 2020 South Africa xenophobic attacks against Nigerians, Zimbabweans, and other black Africans (Oruma & Amah, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The ideation of institutional quality remains fitting in this discourse. The concept of Institutional quality refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions within a country, including the government, legal system, and regulatory framework (Rodrik, 2000). According to Ogbonna (2020, p. 45), “institutions are structural embodiments of different sets of a functional and normative order that guides, constrains or empowers social and political order and also defines what the relations of individuals ought to be”. The concept is fundamental to understanding the relationship between governance, economic development, and globalization. Good governance practices, such as transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, can create a conducive environment for economic development and attract foreign investment. A strong institutional framework can create an environment conducive to sustainable growth and attract foreign investments, while weak institutions create barriers to development and can hinder a country’s ability to take advantage of global opportunities (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Institutions, while pivoting and establishing systems of social rules and structure of social interactions play the following roles as identified by Ogbonna (2020):

- i. Provides the fulcrum to help overcome and integrate diverse and competing interests.
- ii. Define and construct what roles actors and individuals are permitted to play, while empowering and constraining their behavior.
- iii. Allow shared norms to be assimilated by individuals which in turn forms the basis for their actions.

- iv. Promotion of coherency and stability.
- v. Helping to maintain consistency and predictability in the behavior of political actors to the extent that even if performance fails to meet expectations, institutions would provide a natural basis in the search for new solutions (p. 45).

Drawing from the following, by improving institutional quality, Nigeria can foster a more stable and predictable business environment, which can in turn spur economic growth and development. This can lead to increased job creation, higher living standards, and a more diversified economy. By focusing on improving governance practices, promoting economic development, and embracing globalization, Nigeria can create opportunities for sustainable growth and development in the long term.

The Dilemma of Governance, Globalization, and Economic Development in Nigeria

Governance, globalization, and economic development in Nigeria are complex and multifaceted issues that have far-reaching implications for the future of the country and its people. Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa and one of the largest economies on the continent, faces significant challenges in managing the tensions and conflicts that arise from the intersection of governance, globalization, and economic development. First and foremost, governance in Nigeria has been characterized by a long history of political instability, corruption, and weak institutions. These factors have contributed to a lack of transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the governance of the country, leading to widespread dissatisfaction and mistrust among the population. As a result, the government faces challenges in implementing and enforcing policies that are essential for economic development and social progress.

Furthermore, globalization has had a profound impact on Nigeria's economy and society. On one hand, globalization has opened up new opportunities for trade, investment, and technological advancement, leading to increased economic growth and advancement in some sectors. On the other hand,

globalization has also exposed Nigeria to vulnerabilities such as economic shocks, environmental degradation, and social dislocation. The government is faced with the challenge of managing these complex and often contradictory impacts of globalization in a way that benefits the country and its people. Moreover, economic development in Nigeria has been hampered by a range of factors, including inadequate infrastructure, underinvestment in human capital, and a reliance on natural resource extraction. This has resulted in high levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, particularly in rural areas and among marginalized communities. The other major challenge in the governance-globalisation intersection includes as follows:

Terrorism funding: The interconnectedness of the global financial system, while enabling global ease of doing business has also opened the gateway for funding terrorists and terrorism globally. There is now a globalization of terrorist activities connected in a strong bond of information sharing, terror planning and execution as well as the use of social media to engage in terrorist activities. The Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorist groups operating mainly in Northeast Nigeria have been utilizing social media platforms to announce and lay claims to various terrorist attacks (Alao et al. 2023). They are also deeply connected and funded by terrorist groups elsewhere like the ISIL. They also have rich supplies of vehicles, and armory as well as huge funding to sustain their acts. These are possible through intercontinental sources.

Agenda-Setting and recruitments: According to Oluwasanya and Ogbonna (2023), such terrorist groups like the “Islamic State of Iran and Syria (ISIS) also took advantage of social media platforms, especially Twitter, to recruit new members and spread their extremist ideologies”. Social media has been widely used to set agendas either regionally or globally. For instance, the Arab Spring, stretching from the Middle East to North Africa where a local action that was globalized and ignited the agenda through the use of social media. Globalization could easily snatch a domestic situation out of the hands of the local politicians and actors.

Intercontinental financial crimes and money laundering: The global financial highway provided and made possible by globalization makes financial crimes very possible.

Brain drains: The global fusion of labor, specialization, and skilled requirements, when matched with wage earnings disparity, especially in third-world countries like Nigeria, leads to brain drain. Within the last decade, many Nigerians have fled the country in search of greener pastures (Anetoh & Onwudinjo, 2020). From medical doctors to nurses, lecturers, and other skilled and unskilled workers. There is no end in sight to brain drain as more and more Nigerians want to exit the country in search of greener pastures.

Knowledge gap: Normally, globalisation brings to bear the realities of global knowledge and skill differentials. The African countries seem to be behind the radar in science and technology, making them consumers of finished products from the technologically advanced countries including being subconscious mass consumers of unjustifiable alien values.

MNCs and Capital flight: Through the economic liberalization that comes with globalization, many third-world countries are host to MNCs. The MNCs have been severally accused of being agents of capital flights. They exit host countries when the situation is no longer favorable to them

In the globalizing world, the government must confront these issues head-on to create a more inclusive and sustainable development path for the country. In as much as these challenges exist, they are mere flips of the coin. Governance makes the difference. The current economic challenges in Nigeria manifested in high inflation as well as high energy costs to power domestic life and industrial usage are also suffocating MNCs. In August 2023, GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Plc, the second biggest drug producer in Nigeria ceased operation in the country by terminating its marketing and distribution agreement and appointed third-party distributors to sell their medications and vaccines (Ileyemi, 2024).

Exploring the Opportunities: Implications of Globalization on Governance and Economic Development in Nigeria

Globalization has undoubtedly had a profound impact on the way countries across the globe engage in economic activities and governance. Nigeria, as an emerging economy, has not been an exception to this trend. There are key opportunities that have arisen as a result of globalization for Nigeria. A few will be discussed below.

Cultural/Creative Exports

The terms “cultural industry” and “creative industry” have over time been used interchangeably in numerous literatures (Offiah, 2017). The United Kingdom Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 1998, defined the creative industries as “those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent, and which have the potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” (Flew, 2002). Cultural/creative exports encompass a wide range of products and services, including music, comedy, content creation, and movies, that are representative of the unique cultural heritage of Nigeria. Nigerian cultural/creative products are highly valued globally and command foreign patronage and sales (Dandaura, 2014). These exports have the potential to generate substantial revenue for the country, as they cater to the growing demand for cultural diversity in the globalized market.

The Nigerian creative industry, encompassing sectors like film, music, and fashion, is experiencing a renaissance driven by a new generation of talented and ambitious individuals. In 2023, Nollywood achieved significant milestones with record-breaking box office earnings and international recognition. The year 2024 got off to an impressive start with the release of Funke Akindele’s “A Tribe Called Judah,” which broke box office records and propelled the industry to exceed a billion naira in earnings (Nwabogor, 2024). Also, the music industry witnessed global success, with Nigerian artists dominating the Grammy nominations and cementing Afrobeats’ position on the international music stage. Nigerian fashion designers also gained recognition for their bold and innovative designs, positioning Nigerian couture on the global fashion radar. In addition, there has been a growing trend in the monetization of social media content, particularly among Nigerian influencers and content creators (Agbawe, 2018).

The cultural/creative sector’s growth will contribute to Nigeria’s GDP and employment opportunities. With a burgeoning youth population and increasing digital penetration, Nigeria is poised to become one of the world’s fastest-growing entertainment and media markets. The industry’s ability to export Nigerian culture to the world through art, films, music, and

fashion holds the potential to change perceptions, build bridges, and foster a deeper understanding of Nigerian life. As the industry continues to evolve and grow, the future looks bright for Nigerian content to be celebrated and embraced globally. This has opened up new avenues for revenue generation, further amplifying the economic importance of cultural/creative exports in Nigeria. The economic opportunities presented by cultural/creative exports are undeniable and should not be underestimated. As such, individuals and entrepreneurs should not solely rely on the government for support but should take advantage of these opportunities to contribute to economic development and growth in Nigeria.

Globalized Public Space and State-Society Relations

In a globalized world, the significance of social inclusion cannot be overstated. Social inclusion involves an active and valued participation in the process of human development and borders on obliterating deprivation (Mitchell & Shillington, 2002). Social inclusion is the ability of all citizens to have equal resources, opportunities, and capabilities needed to learn, work, engage, and have a voice (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). As the interconnectedness of societies intensifies, the exclusion of certain social groups can result in heightened social tensions, hampered development, and reduced economic productivity. Currently, in Nigeria, there is a deliberate social exclusion of women, ethnic minorities, the elderly, and the disabled, among others, who have limited access to welfare-improving amenities and productive resources (Abdulkareem et al, 2022).

In the context of Nigeria, social inclusion takes on added significance due to the country's diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious landscape. Thus, the need for inclusive governance becomes imperative to ensure that all segments of society have a voice in decision-making processes and have access to opportunities for socioeconomic advancement. State-society relations in Nigeria have historically been marked by a complex interplay of power dynamics, often characterized by a sense of alienation and disenfranchisement among various societal groups. This has had far-reaching implications for economic development, as it has affected the equitable distribution of resources, the implementation of effective

policies, and the fostering of social cohesion. Therefore, the changing landscape of state-society relations in the era of globalization offers an opportunity to reorient the governance structures in Nigeria towards greater inclusivity and responsiveness to the needs of the populace.

Exposure to Global Best Practices

The benefits of adopting global best practices in governance and economic development are manifold. Firstly, it allows Nigeria to tap into the collective knowledge and expertise of the global community, enabling the country to learn from the successful strategies implemented by other nations. This can potentially lead to more efficient and effective governance, as well as promote sustainable economic development. Furthermore, the adoption of global best practices can enhance Nigeria's international reputation and competitiveness, attracting foreign investment and fostering economic growth. However, the implementation of global best practices is not without its challenges. Nigeria faces numerous obstacles in effectively adopting and adapting these practices to its context. These challenges may include domestic political and institutional barriers, as well as socio-economic and cultural factors that may hinder the successful implementation of global best practices. Furthermore, the lack of resources and capacity constraints may also pose significant hurdles to leveraging the opportunities presented by globalization.

Conclusion

Globalisation has a lot of opportunities for Nigeria as well as challenges. Nigeria is saddled with the challenges of finding a stable post-colonial path, it is at the same time confronted with the challenges of the surge of globalization. Whether in business, public space management, and improved welfare of the citizens, globalization promises are of enormous import when and if the local government plays an active role in first, being conscious of the integrative efforts of good governance in harnessing the benefits of globalization. Second, is setting out the right regulatory regime to benefit from the surge in its different spheres.

The research recommends the duo of invocation of critical citizenry and institutionalization of good governance as factors that will lead to the harnessing of the positive dynamics of globalization. Critical citizenry in the sense, that globalization itself has provided the citizens enormous opportunities for increased participation in governance. Through the use of social media, the citizens find themselves with direct access to both government officials as well as access to unhindered information dissemination platforms. The citizens now have strong tools to improve the quality of governance they receive. Social media sets the agenda, by revealing to the citizens what obtains elsewhere in terms of governance, as well as how to react in concert to fundamental deviation by those who govern them.

With vision and direction-inclined governance, the gains of globalization can easily be channeled to the general development of the citizens through improved welfare, and provisions of required services. At the same time, the government has a peculiar assignment of providing a democratic regulatory regime in the globalization surge. More specifically, the following is recommended:

1. More deep interaction, collaboration, and engagement in curtailing terrorism funding, money laundering, and other financial frauds made possible by globalisation.
2. Expansion of the scope of the educational curriculum in Nigeria to embrace contents and capacity in tech-inclined courses for global competitiveness. The fusion into the global market can only be gainful to Nigerians when one plays from the standpoint of competence and capacity.
3. Well-mapped national information policy to tackle the misappropriation of information services amid globalization (Ogbonna et al, 2022).

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BEYOND THE BALLOT: NIGERIA'S POLITICAL ECONOMY IN THE WAKE OF THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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Abstract

The outcome of Nigeria's general elections in 2023 was a watershed moment in the country's democratic journey. This feat is even more remarkable given that this is the Fourth Republic's seventh consecutive successful general election, which is uncommon in Nigeria's history. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the candidate for the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), won the presidential election on February 25, 2023. Tinubu's victory solidified his position as a political powerhouse in the South West. His main rivals, Atiku Abubakar of the major opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Peter Obi of the less popular Labour Party (LP), were both defeated. Despite widespread support on social media, particularly among Nigerian youth, Peter Obi was unable to demolish the rooted two-party system. The world placed high hopes in Nigeria because of its abundant natural resources, which include crude oil, natural gas, and agricultural prospects. However, structural obstacles such as insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, corruption, investment barriers, and leadership shortcomings impede the country's economic progress. The purpose of this research is to examine Nigeria's political economy in the new political era under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The study relies on secondary sources and employs a descriptive analysis methodology to provide insights and recommendations for Nigeria's post-2023 general election political economy. It emphasises the importance of an integrated strategy involving both monetary and fiscal policies for navigating the economy toward growth and stability, especially in the face of external and internal forces.

Keywords: Post-elections, political economy, Policies, Expectations, Nigeria.

Introduction

Presidential polls were held in Nigeria on February 25, 2023, with the ruling party's candidate, the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Ahmed Tinubu, winning with 36% of the vote after defeating two of his closest opponents in what was the most closely contested election in decades. Despite criticising inadequate planning and a lack of transparency, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which utilised over 240 poll observers, deemed the elections to be mainly peaceful (Kohnert, 2023). The Nigerian 2023 election is over, and the winners have been announced; what does this imply for its economy?

Nigeria has one of the top ten established oil reserves in the world and is Africa's second-highest oil producer (Otusanya & Lauwo, 2019). Agriculture dominated the Nigerian economy for quite a while, but since the 1970s, crude oil exports have contributed to about ninety-five percent of Nigeria's foreign revenue, making the country's economy highly dependent on one source (Udeh, Onwuka, & Agbaze, 2015). Nigeria is presently the world's sixth-largest crude oil producer (Nwilo & Badejo, 2006). Nigeria has an immense potential for excelling as an economic and political superpower. Nigeria is an important economic centre for the West African region, endowed with abundant natural resources and a large population.

Nigeria is presently experiencing the most devastating financial crisis in decades. Due to the current economic situation, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has been under immense pressure to manage monetary and exchange rate policies since 2014 (Kolawole, 2021). Given the global price of oil falling from its peak in July 2014 and decreasing capital inflows, Nigeria has seen an alarming slowing of economic growth, an increase in inflation, high rates of interest, unemployment, decreasing external reserves, and a growing disparity between the parallel and official exchange rates owing to a lack of foreign exchange and the CBN's inability to step in with substantial amounts of foreign exchange (Agbarakwe, 2017).

Consequently, the Nigerian economy, similar to that of other African countries, has experienced several recessions. As a result, the current government's

dimensions of reactions to the events will probably end up resulting in the formation of a broad consensus seeking to do their best to reduce the negative consequences associated with such recessions, while generating suitable policy options to prevent a recurrence, stabilize, and boost economies to the path of sustainable development and growth. These are founded on the notion that a predictable and stable financial system improves social and economic well-being significantly (Ahrens, 2009).

Nigeria is going through both an economic recession and inflation. If the economy is to recover, excessive government borrowing must be reduced. Individual and corporate income taxes must be reduced to boost domestic production, trade, and employment. These will boost disposable income, industrial and consumer spending, overall economic activity, and macroeconomic indicators. As a result, this study offers an invaluable collection of the outcome of the Nigerian general elections in 2023, with the primary goal of interrogating the current government's political economy policies and plans. Therefore, the primary objectives of this article are as follows:

- a. Assess the state of political and economic relationships in Nigeria.
- b. Examine the macroeconomic policies of the current political regime in Nigeria.
- c. Analyse suitable policy coordination for positive macroeconomic outcomes in Nigeria.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach is used in the study. This study relied strongly on secondary sources. It based its findings on election observers' reports, opinion articles, and economic news analyses published in newspapers, media statements, and press releases, as well as data sheets from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Upon an in-depth examination of secondary source data, the study uses descriptive data analysis to articulate the present government's macroeconomic policies as they align with enhancing the economy and the general welfare of the citizenry.

State of Politics in Nigeria - Pre-2023 General Elections

Nigeria is engrossed in an internal political instability that undermines its territorial integrity as a country. As a result of political unrest fueled by unjust and unfair treatment of citizens, and bolstered by ethnic and religious differences, the centripetal forces that have traditionally held Nigeria's fragile union of different ethnic groups together are crumbling (Anejionu & Ahiaramunnah, 2021). As a result of perceived injustice, disparities in treatment, and marginalization, Nigeria is seeing a surge in ethno-nationalist and separatist movements, as well as a stronger call for self-determination. Politics in Nigeria is a game of zero-sum whereby those who win keep everything while the losers lose everything. The election process has turned into a vigorous fight and competition for power through all means possible (Sule, Adamu, & Sambo, 2020). Being in power is thought to be the most effective way to protect and promote a particular ethnic agenda. The 2023 General Election was similar to previous elections. In 2003, former President Olusegun Obasanjo was reported as saying that elections are a form of warfare (Sule et al., 2020). The ruling APC noticed how determined opposition parties were to seize power at all cost, it became even more determined to keep power at any cost. As a result of the intense political competition, there was violence, vote buying, money politics, slanderous remarks, violent campaigns, political brutality, intra and inter-party conflicts, and party cross-carpeting. Political tensions were heightened significantly by the 2023 presidential election, which sparked fears of disastrous outcomes.

Many Nigerians are opposed to All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This is because the election in 2023 was to determine the fate and future of the country. It's complicated further by the reality that it's a Muslim-Muslim ticket (Kohnert, 2023); Kashim Shettima, his preferred vice president, is a Muslim. Some believe it should be Muslim-Christian. As a result, Tinubu, the flag bearer of the ruling party and the substantive winner of the presidential election, was the most talked about person. Tinubu's selfless nature is believed to have created the way for President Muhammadu Buhari and his vice, Yemi Osinbajo, to emerge in the 2015 and 2019 general elections. Many Nigerians believed that Tinubu, the section leader of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) that amalgamated with the Congress for

Progressive Change (CPC) and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) at the time, should be compensated with the party's presidential ticket in 2023 (Igboin, 2023). It should be mentioned that Nigerian politics is characterized by the phrase "You scratch my back, I pat your shoulder." Many in the party believed Tinubu should be declared the party's champion in the 2023 general election, but some disagreed. Many people believe Tinubu should have remained the "kingmaker of Nigerian politics" rather than seeking to make himself the king. The reasoning is based on the fact that no one, regardless of race, tribe, or gender, can run for any important office in the APC without first involving and obtaining Tinubu's approval (Ganiyu, 2023). Many people believed that this was enough to keep the admired and highly respected "Jagaban" of Nigerian politics alive rather than pursuing the presidency.

It is also worth noting that the Electoral Act 2022, among other things, allows for the electronic transfer of election results from polling stations to a public portal that citizens can visit (Idowu, 2022). Like other electoral reforms, the Electoral Act is the result of collaboration between civil society, INEC, the national legislature, political parties, and other electoral stakeholders. The INEC, in particular, proposed electronic results transmission and the use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), which was supported by civil society (Idowu, 2022). While the legislature initially opposed the bill, protests from civil society and the public increased pressure on the legislature to support and pass the bill. However, given Nigeria's contemporary electoral and democratic context, the intricacies of the electoral process, as well as the electoral benignity that accompanied the general elections of 2023, require some examination and adjustment.

Brief Overview of Investors' Expectations in Nigeria

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has long been acknowledged as an important source of growth in emerging economies. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has grown in importance over time and is now the largest source of foreign resource flows to countries that are developing, as well as an essential element of capital creation (Falki, 2009). The general economic trend of a country is the most important determinant of its business climate, and a developing economy

with a robust GDP growth rate over an extended period fosters corporate confidence and attracts FDI (Bermejo Carbonell & Werner, 2018). Inviting investment in infrastructure sectors will address the two issues of insufficient foreign exchange supply and infrastructure deterioration, while also making the Nigerian economy more competitive by filling infrastructure gaps. The global economy's outlook for commodity prices, exports, and real economic growth is bleak, but the outlook for continued liquidity excess is bright (Teriba, 2016).

Considering the present bleak prospects for global economic growth and Nigeria's low export competitiveness as a result of poor infrastructure, the Nigerian government considers it far simpler and quicker to encourage foreign investment inflows than it does to encourage exports (Kunle, Olowe, & Oluwafolakemi, 2014). On a global scale, Nigeria can attract a large pool of money into its large network infrastructure sectors. Developing countries with clear economic goals have used the global liquidity glut to lure record levels of foreign direct investment stocks (Kunle et al., 2014). If the new government can persuade the world to come and invest in infrastructure sectors such as rail transport, gas pipelines, and electricity transmission, the current global liquidity climate will provide every amount required.

FDI is currently the most common and advantageous type of investment for Nigeria to attract. They have the potential to attract enough investment to stabilise the nation's foreign exchange predicament and are expected to look beyond short-term macroeconomic pitfalls, instead focusing on medium to long-term returns, which are more than enough to compensate for short-term macroeconomic challenges for network infrastructure projects in Nigeria (Teriba, 2016). Without any uncertainty, Nigeria can attract and retain considerable amounts of foreign direct investment in large infrastructure sectors such as rail transport, gas pipelines, and electricity transmission, as it has done effectively in telecoms. Nigeria's portfolio of foreign direct investment (FDI) is currently focused on two industries: telecommunications and oil & gas. These are the key industries in which the government has liberalized foreign direct investment participation (Teriba, 2016). Government monopolies in key infrastructure sectors obstruct beneficial FDI inflows. If Nigeria liberalizes investment in

these sectors, foreign investors who identify Nigeria's allure as the world's last underutilized huge market should have a similar reaction. To attract needed foreign investment, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's government must take immediate steps to strip the government's dominance in essential infrastructure sectors.

Picturing Macroeconomic Policies through Conceptualization

Monetary policy: Monetary policy is a branch of economic policy that monitors the quantity of currency in the economy to accomplish critical policy objectives such as controlling inflation. It refers to policies that govern and regulate the quantity, cost, accessibility, as well as direction of money and credit to accomplish certain macroeconomic policy goals (Ayodele, 2014). It employs specific tools such as the Open Market Operation (OMO), interest rates, special bank reserve ratios, special directives, and moral suasion. Monetary policy is primarily concerned with two economic variables: the total supply of money in circulation and the level of interest rates (Abdulrahman, 2010). The presence of highly organised, economically interdependent, and efficiently functioning money and credit markets allows developed economies to expand and contract their money supply, as well as raise and lower borrowing costs in the private sector via direct and indirect interest rate manipulation (Ayodele, 2014).

Fiscal policy: It is the aspect of government policy that includes increasing revenue via taxation and other means, as well as deciding the extent and pattern of expenditure to regulate economic activity or achieve some desirable macroeconomic objectives (Shah, 2006). It is the deliberate implementation of government spending (Expenditure) and taxes (Revenue) to achieve macroeconomic growth. In other words, it refers to the combination of government revenue and expenditure measures used to achieve a country's overall economic goals. Fiscal policy is implemented through a mix of aggregate demand and aggregate supply channels, including revenue and expenditure, deficit financing, and determining fiscal transfers from higher to lower levels of government (Hagedorn, Manovskii, & Mitman, 2019).

Hughes Hallett (2008) defines fiscal policy instruments as changes in government spending and taxation. When the economy is in a slump, he claims, the government increases spending while decreasing taxation to stimulate aggregate demand.

A Glimpse into the Proposed Macroeconomic Strategies of the Current Political Regime

On May 29, 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari's civilian regime took office for the first time, inheriting a "fragile state with a failing economy." (Samuel, 2021). Sadly, the economics of the Buhari regime were unable to save Nigeria's economy. An administration that began with a lot of promises was quickly met with a storm of economic disaster. Nigeria's economy, which had high rates of inflation and stagflation, went into its first recession under Buhari's regime in 2016 (Samuel, 2021). Since the second quarter of 2017, Nigeria's economy appears to have recovered and has shown a three-year pattern of positive, but modest, real GDP growth. However, the country's economy entered a new slump in the third quarter of 2020. While the coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on the economic and social circumstances that precipitated the recession (Barua, 2020), it is also widely acknowledged that economic growth before the pandemic was sluggish.

Since the commercial discovery of oil in Nigeria, the country has relied largely on oil revenue (UDEH et al., 2015). Whatever influences oil prices in the international oil market affects the country's social and economic life. Oil price drops caused by the COVID-19 lockdown in January 2020 reduced Nigeria's economy (Obayelu, Edewor, & Ogbe, 2021). Additionally, the Federal Government of Nigeria's closure of borders raised the cost of food in the country because local farmers were unable to produce sufficient food for the country's more than 200 million people. Existing government policies, such as increases in VAT, fuel prices, and electricity tariffs, among others, have resulted in inflation (Samuel, 2021). Nigerian households are experiencing severe financial strain as a result of rising living costs. This affected family spending, with many families spending more than half of their earnings on food and services, leading to near-zero local investment and inactive economic stimulation (Samuel, 2021).

Therefore, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's regime is charged with pulling the economy out of a slump and preventing inflation. The need for fiscal stability should direct the regime's attention to Nigeria's debt profile and macroeconomic imbalances. In addition, the circumstance raises specific concerns about interest payments, which could consume a significant amount of revenue and make job creation and economic growth difficult (Kolawole, 2021). As a result, despite rising deficits, Nigeria's total debt becomes excessive as global debt rises. Although the country's public debt is considered sustainable at 25% of GDP, total public debt-to-revenue and total debt service-to-revenue ratios are rising and appear susceptible to revenue shocks caused by low revenue collections (*Outlook*, 2019).

Before his victory in the February 25, 2023, Presidential elections, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu had reaffirmed his economic plans during the January 2023 Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) presidential dialogue, emphasizing that his administration would implement monetary and trade reforms promptly to effectively boost domestic production, hence reducing imported inflation and ensuring improved macroeconomic performance (*Vanguard*, 2023). Combating inflation, the petrol subsidy, which he claims has outlived its usefulness, and monetary policy are among the principles that guide his economic plans and policies. Subsidy funds will be redirected into the development of public infrastructure, affordable housing, transportation, education, and health, as well as enhancing the social protection system for the most impoverished, thereby avoiding insecurity, as no nation can thrive with terrorists and kidnappers among them (*Vanguard*, 2023).

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration would have to reason with several analysts who have recently expressed concern about the interaction of monetary and fiscal policies, and how their dependence, independence, and interdependence could lead the economy towards or away from defined goals and targets. Economists all over the world have been advocating for a balance of monetary and fiscal policies (Makin & Layton, 2021). Adopting both monetary and fiscal policies to regulate and modify the country's economic affairs will be critical if the regime is to achieve accelerated economic growth and sustainable development.

Hence, the regime should be concerned that the country's exchange policy preserves the value of the naira, maintains a favourable external reserves position, and ensures external balance without jeopardizing internal balance and the overall goal of economic stability. This regime will be critical in establishing a more comprehensive fiscal framework and more effective policy coordination, including reducing quasi-fiscal activities and creating a fiscal and monetary coordination council (Adedeji, 2022). International financial institutions must be ready to provide additional financing, strategic technical assistance, and a return to considering equity in fiscal policy recommendations to Nigeria.

Macro-economic Policies of the Current Political Regime: The Reality

From the difficult subject of petrol subsidy to the choice of how to unify the country's multiple foreign exchange rates, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu made it explicit that he was on a mission to lead the economy towards a growth trajectory and cut it off from recurrent obstacles. Indeed, there was widespread agreement that Nigeria's controversial fuel subsidy policy was a revenue drain, leading to its removal. As of the first half of 2023, the payment for the fuel subsidy was around N3.3 trillion (Agbaitoro, 2023). Previous governments' continued retention of the fuel subsidy was a tremendous strain on Nigeria's ability to repay its debts, creating a situation in which the federal government had to borrow for consumption.

It is worth noting that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu issued an order suspending the 5% Excise Tax on telecommunication services along with the escalation of Excise Duties on locally manufactured goods (Malerba, 2023). Malerba (2023) also noted that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu additionally authorized the halting of the recently adopted Green Tax, which comes in the form of an Excise Tax on Single-Use Plastics such as containers made of plastic and bottles, as well as the removal of the Import Tax Adjustment levy on specific cars. In the same vein, the current administration has pledged to support former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo's fiscal reform programme (VAIDS). The implementation of the Voluntary and Income Declaration Scheme will result in some cash deliverables, as the scheme provides taxpayers with a limited timeframe in

which to regularise their tax status for previous tax periods and pay taxes due while receiving certain benefits (*Vanguard*, 2023).

Taiwo Oloyede, the chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms stated that in collaboration with sub-national government through the National Executive Council, they are mandated to redefine and redesign a new fiscal policy framework that is optimal for a nation to thrive, while also taking into consideration global dimensions of forces with the emergence of BRICS and current geopolitics (*Vanguard*, 2023). These fiscal policies include optimum taxes, harmonized revenue collection functions, revenue optimization, the development of a model template for sub-nationals, and the implementation of a federal tax amnesty scheme.

The administration additionally touched on monetary policy reforms that led to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) abandoning the multiple foreign exchange rates it had previously maintained in favour of a unified exchange rate (Kohnert, 2023). The official exchange rate from naira to dollars was mostly fixed under former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, rather than determined by market forces. The CBN, on the other hand, was unable to meet the demand for dollars at that rate, leading to a thriving forex black market and undermining investor confidence (Malerba, 2023). Therefore, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's regime has made it possible for the naira to float. The goal is to redirect funds away from arbitrage and towards meaningful investment in the plant, equipment, and jobs that power the real economy. Hence, to raise dollar inflows into the country, the regime must ensure that both the fiscal and monetary authorities take steps to improve dollar liquidity in the country, as well as intentional attempts to solve huge crude oil theft and encourage non-oil exports.

While some of the current political regime's policies have been welcomed, they have also been met with challenges, such as spiralling inflation. The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is used to gauge inflation, increased marginally from 22.22 percent in April to 22.41 percent; inflation is expected to accelerate further as the policy's impact is felt (*Vanguard*, 2023). Even though the World Bank has already predicted that Nigeria's inflation will reach 25% in the coming months as a result of the removal of fuel subsidies, analysts at KPMG predict 30%, with

more Nigerians projected to fall into poverty (*Punch*, 2023). According to the World Bank, four million Nigerians fell into economic hardship in the first half of this year, with another 7.1 million predicted to follow if appropriate steps to mitigate the impact of fuel subsidy removal are not implemented (*Punch*, 2023).

So far, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's economic policies appear to be sending a positive signal to domestic financial markets and foreign investors. Economists agree that the various economic policies are critical steps toward addressing long-standing macroeconomic imbalances and have the potential to lay the groundwork for long-term, inclusive growth. They stated that Nigeria can take advantage of this window of opportunity to further implement a comprehensive reform that includes a variety of complementary fiscal, monetary, trade, and structural policy measures to maximize growth, job creation, and poverty reduction. Nigerians, on the other hand, are waiting and hoping for the much-anticipated economic turnaround that will signal a higher standard of living for all along with sustainable growth.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

Fiscal and monetary policies have been recognized as important macroeconomic tools for economic stabilization and growth. Monetary policy is frequently intended to achieve low inflation while avoiding unfavourable fluctuations or impacts in output and prices. Several governments and fiscal institutions have favoured fiscal policies that encourage rapid growth and job creation (Iyoboyi, Okereke, & Musa-Pedro, 2018). As a result, the macroeconomic objectives of fiscal and monetary policies are economic stability, which includes price stability, growth, full employment, and a sustainable balance of payments. The policy blend is decided by two major factors: a country's phase of development, and also the structure of its institutions (Kolawole, 2021).

Economic stability is a prerequisite for long-term growth and development in any economy, which is why several economists around the world push for more coordination and balance between monetary and fiscal policies. The government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu must encourage close integration of monetary and fiscal policy objectives and goals among decision-

makers. Given Nigeria's history of fiscal dominance, decision-makers at the federal, state, and local levels must work together. The efficient pursuit of the authorities' overall macroeconomic policy framework's objectives necessitates a high level of financial policy balance (Obayelu et al., 2021).

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu faces enormous challenges, and his position is not to be admired. He will have to combat widespread corruption, reduce reliance on the oil export sector, revitalise the energy, agricultural, and mining sectors, improve education, particularly for the poor and lower-middle classes, strengthen the fight against insecurity, particularly Boko Haram and other armed groups, and push for regional integration. This is the time to make the most of the limited resources available by preventing system failures. The time is ripe to cut the cost of governance and red tape in the executive, legislative, and judicial arms of government. It is time to reclaim all stolen or mismanaged treasury resources. It is also time to implement a suitable combination of macroeconomic policies to keep the economy out of recession, maximize growth potential, and put the economy back on a path of sustainable growth. To respond to the difficulties of the moment, Nigeria's current problems necessitate action, re-strategizing, and restructuring of the Nigerian economy and polity.

Recommendations

The regime of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is tasked with formulating policies and plans to address the current economic crisis. As a result, the following recommendations are made by this study:

1. Priority must be given to the manufacturing sector, with deliberate policies aimed at increasing local production capacity. This could be achieved through effective trade policies that revitalized dormant industries and discouraged the importation of specific goods, thereby promoting the Nigerian brand. Such trade policies would encourage investment in industries where Nigeria has a comparative advantage.
2. Infrastructure, such as roads and electricity, ought to be improved to lower production costs and allow manufacturers to profit more. The

private sector is the engine of the economy because it pays more tax when it makes more profit.

3. It is obvious that former President Muhammadu Buhari's regime, which came into office on a pledge to fight corruption, did not do so. As a result, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration should prioritise it. Corruption must be entirely eradicated because it is at the root of all identified economic problems in Nigeria.
4. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's guiding principle should be competence. Political party affiliations and religious and ethnic sentiments should all be jettisoned in favour of those capable of managing the economy.

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AN APPRAISAL OF THE ROLES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN ENSURING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

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Abstract

This research work is an assessment of the role of the United Nations Organization in international peace and security. The theoretical framework was leveraged to Neo-liberalism, Neo-realism and Constructivism. The paper adopted a secondary method of data collection information sources through relevant textbooks, journal articles, and internet materials that were qualitatively analysed. This study found that the world has no more witnessed such magnitude of the two great world wars since the formation of the UN on 24 October 1945 in San Francisco, USA. That does not mean the organization has eliminated conflicts across the world. Nevertheless, the international system is generally peaceful and secure due to the UN's efforts. Undoubtedly, more needs to be done and the UN must be put in the right position for enhanced capacity, to continue to entrench international peace and security. Hence the study concluded that Despite the myriad of challenges confronting the United Nations, the organization, along with its agencies, has made the world much more hospitable and liveable for billions of people. The recommended actions, such as democratization of the Security Council, and improved funding, among others, if implemented, will ensure a better UN, a more efficient and effective UN and a better world.

Keywords: *International Organization, International Security, Peacekeeping, UN Resolution and Sustainable Development*

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Introduction

Peace and security are salient ingredients of human and physical development. Unfortunately, the international system has not been as peaceful as expected. The world's anarchic nature therefore continued to constitute lingering impediments to global peace and sustainable development, where human life is made short and acts of terrorism and misery continue unabated. The world experienced devastating destruction and barbarism during the First World War, which was perpetrated by European countries, exercising their newfound sovereignties granted by the instrumentality of the Westphalian treaty, which ended the war between Spain and the Dutch, then Germany. It took the 1919 Treaty of Versailles to end WW1, an end which led to the formation of the League of Nations, to avert a second world war.

Failure of the League of Nations to achieve its set objectives led to the formation of the United Nations Organization (UNO), simply known as the United Nations (UN), with the sole aim of ensuring global peace, security and development. However, over time, the continued existence, relevance and role of the United Nations in the contemporary world has come under several scrutiny and debates. This work is an assessment of the responsibilities of the United Nations in international peace and security.

Theoretical Framework

Several theories provide an explanation and understanding of the role of international organizations in the maintenance of peace and security. The work of Neo-liberalism, Constructivism and Neo-realism are applied in assessing the United Nations' role in international peace and security, to argue for the relevant position of the United Nations as an international organization. In the submission of the neo-liberalists, international organizations are crucial to global peace and cooperation, whereas, to the neo-realists, international organizations are simply the means through which powerful states achieve their selfish interests, thus contributing nothing to peace and security. On the contrary, the United Nations, arguably the sole supranational organization has continued to strive to archive its global peace and security maintenance.

In this connection, (Boehmer and Nordstrom, 2004) argue that in a condition where states focus more on obtaining absolute gain, cooperation and collective security are more feasible. Accordingly, the constructivists argue in favour of international organizations. They argue that international organizations, like the UN, have the role of not only regulating state behaviour but also modifying the identity and interest of states, which, in turn, directs states' actions (Mitchell, 2006). Furthermore, Hobson (2003, p.154) believes that states are "normative-adaptive entities", meaning that, through international organizations, states adopt international norms of appropriate state behaviour to inform their policies and domestic structures. Constructivists underestimate the relevance of relative gain, unlike the neo-realists, and propagate the likelihood of cooperation among states (Nugroho, 2008). Moreover, international organizations, by constraining the self-interest of states and infusing new appropriate norms into states, control states not to deviate from international cooperation. This optimistic view on the role of international organizations makes constructivists embrace neo-liberals. Above all, international organizations have the role of promoting the democratisation of member states and encouraging them to adopt peaceful strategies of conflict resolution (Mitchell, 2006).

Neo-Realism according to (Bayeh, 2014). organizations are the products of state interest, that is they cannot function independently, therefore it is state interests that determine decision-making whether states cooperate or compete among themselves. United Nations, European Union, and International Monetary Fund are international organizations through which states safeguard their interest.

Methodology

The paper adopted an ex-post-facto design and it relied majorly on anecdotal materials aside from the personal observation of the author. Data were collected qualitatively using secondary data sources from books, journals, and the internet to examine the subject matter. Specifically, reports from the United Nations, textbooks on the UN, and other international organizations found in physical and electronic libraries provided the needed information for this paper. Collected data were subjected to content analysis.

History of the United Nations

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945 after the Second World War to maintain peace and security in the international system. The Charter was signed in 1945 on 26th June by 50 countries; Poland signed the Charter on 15 October 1945. In all, there were 51 founding members in the UN in 1945. The founding members of the United Nations are the countries that were invited to participate in the 1945 San Francisco Conference in which the UN Charter and Statute of the ICJ was adopted. Participation was determined by having signed or adhered to the Declaration by the United Nations (1942) or as approved at the Conference.

By Article 110, the Charter entered into force on 24 October 1945, after ratification by the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5) and a majority of the other countries. Twenty-two countries subsequently deposited their instruments of ratification. Since 1945, some of the founding members have changed their names, others have been dissolved and new states have succeeded them (United Nations, 2023).

Composition and Membership of the United Nations

According to the (United Nations, 2022), The UN is composed of six principal organs:

General Assembly

The General Assembly is the main organ of the United Nations. It comprises representatives from all member states, each of which has one vote.

Security Council

Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 member states, in which each member has one vote. Under the UN Charter, all member states are obliged to comply and cooperate with the Council's decisions.

Secretariat

The UN Secretariat comprises staff representing all nationalities working in duty stations all over the world, carrying out the day-to-day work functions

of the Organization. The Secretariat services the other principal organs of the United Nations and administers the programmes and policies established by them.

Economic and Social Council

A founding UN Charter body established in 1946, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) discusses and decides on the world's economic, social, and environmental challenges are discussed and debated, and policy recommendations.

International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The Court is charged with settling legal disputes between States and giving advisory opinions to the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

Trusteeship Council

This Council was established to provide international supervision for 11 trust or mandate territories and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare those territories for self-government or independence. It's been inactive since 1994, following the independence of such states.

Objectives of the United Nations

In the opinion of Sachi (2020), UN objectives in ensuring peaceful coexistence and security globally, as well as international cooperation are the most significant. However, the following are other objectives of the world's umpire organization such as:

- i. Maintaining international peace and security;
- ii. Developing friendly relations among the nations;
- iii. Achieving international cooperation to solve international issues of a social, economic, cultural, or humanitarian nature; and
- iv. Harmonizing the actions of the state to fulfill these common goals.

As a result of these objectives, the United Nations has engaged in several international interventions, in attempts to ensure peace and security.

United Nations Interventions/Achievements

The UN Peacekeeping effort started in 1948 when the Security Council gave an order to deploy the UN Military Observers to the Middle East to maintain the cease-fire during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. Since then, more than 70 peacekeeping operations have been deployed to the United Nations and thousands of military officers as well as thousands of the UN police and civilians from more than 120 countries have participated in the UN peacekeeping operations over the years and other interventions are ongoing. (United Nations, 2019).

Some of the major achievements as listed and highlighted below were based on the strategic roles that the UN played in restoring peace. It expended a lot of human and material resources in a bid to stop the bloodshed:

United Nations Operations in the Congo (ONUC), 1960-1964

UN deployed peacekeeping force was established in 1960 by the Security Council Resolution 143 in response to the Congo Crisis. It was the first UN peacekeeping mission with great military capabilities. The initial mandate of the ONUC was to gain independence from Belgium forces in the Congo, to assist the Government of Congo in maintaining law and order, and to provide technical assistance, Congo descended into chaos prompting Belgium to invade her under the pretext of restoring law and order and protecting Belgian nationals. On 12 July 1960, the Congolese Government appealed to the UN for assistance, two days later the United Nations Security Council established ONUC to ensure the withdrawal of Belgian troops and to provide internal stability in Congo.

Following the instructions of the Security Council this force was strengthened early in 1961 after the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba in Katanga, the collapse of the central government, and the intervention of foreign mercenaries, ONUC's initial mandate increased its growth which

included protecting the territorial integrity and political independence of the Congo, preventing an impending civil war, and securing the removal of all unauthorized foreign armed forces. At its peak, strengthened the UN forces numbered nearly 20,000 military officers from different countries like India, Sweden, and others. In September 1961 and December 1962, ONUC transitioned from a peacekeeping to a military force, engaging in several clashes and offensives against secessionist and mercenary forces. Following the reintegration of Katanga in February 1963, ONUC was gradually phased out, civilian aid increased, and UN personnel were withdrawn entirely. (United Nations 1960-1964) ONUC was one of the first UN peacekeeping missions to deploy swiftly, demonstrating the UN's capability to respond to crises promptly. ONUC received contributions from various countries, enabling a diverse range of expertise and resources to be deployed. ONUC engaged in diplomatic negotiations to resolve conflicts peacefully, promoting dialogue among the Congolese factions and regional stakeholders.

The Congo Crisis was marked by complex political dynamics, including ethnic rivalries, secessionist movements, and Cold War influences, making it challenging to achieve consensus and stability. ONUC faced constraints due to its limited mandate, which initially focused on maintaining law and order and gradually expanded to include broader peacekeeping and nation-building activities. ONUC experienced logistical and resource challenges, including inadequate troop levels, insufficient funding, and logistical difficulties in a vast and diverse country with limited infrastructure.

ONUC's presence helped prevent the escalation of violence into a full-scale civil war, stabilizing the situation and facilitating the withdrawal of foreign forces. ONUC played a role in facilitating the decolonization process in the Congo by supporting the government's efforts to establish control over its territory and resources. ONUC contributed to the organization of elections and peaceful transitions of power, supporting democratic processes and governance reforms in the Congo. ONUC's legacy is mixed, with some critics highlighting its limitations and failures, such as the inability to prevent the secession of Katanga and other provinces, and the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. Nonetheless, ONUC is also remembered for its efforts to stabilize

the Congo during a tumultuous period and lay the groundwork for future UN peacekeeping missions, providing valuable lessons for subsequent operations.

United Nations Observation Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) 2004-2017

UNOCI was established on 27 February 2004 through Security Council resolution 1528 (2004) to succeed a small political UN Mission in Cote d'Ivoire (MINUCI). MINUCI and ECOWAS authorities were transferred to UNOCI whose main goal was to expedite the implementation by the Ivorian alliances of the peace agreement they both signed in January 2003 which was aimed to end the Ivorian civil war. Its mandate was subsequently extended and adjusted on several occasions to meet new requirements and reflect the evolving situation in the country. First was the 2010-2011 elections and the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. Alassane Ouattara was declared winner of the November 2010 UN-backed presidential election which was hoped, would advance the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. However, the country stumbled back into civil war when the incumbent leader, Laurent Gbagbo declined to step down, he used military forces, paramilitaries, and mercenaries to deepen his position and suppress disagreement. After Five months Mr Gbagbo was arrested and the inauguration of the legitimate President on May 2011 which ended the civil war. However, UNOCI remained on the ground to support the new Ivorian Government with national dialogue, peacebuilding, and political reconciliation; disarming and reintegrating former combatants on both sides of the political divide; increasing sub-regional security threats, including transnational crime, terrorism, and piracy; reform of the security sector; preserving stability along the border with Liberia; and bringing to justice alleged perpetrators of serious crimes regardless of their political alliances to break the brutal cycle of impunity.

Adjustments were made to UNOCI's structure, strength, and priorities to meet the evolving situation on the ground, thereby leading to the global reduction of its military to one battalion on 31 July 2013. Gradual military reductions continued to be made depending on peace progress till 30 June 2016 when the priority of the operation was hinged on the protection of civilians, demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of ex-combatants and security-sector reform, to transition security responsibilities to the Government, then downsizing and

subsequent termination of the mandate. (United Nations, 2016).

UNOCI effectively mitigated conflict and violence, particularly during the post-election crisis in 2010-2011. Its presence helped prevent widespread violence and facilitated negotiations between opposing parties. UNOCI played a crucial role in organizing and overseeing several key elections, including the 2010 presidential elections. Its involvement helped ensure transparency and fairness in the electoral process. UNOCI actively monitored and reported on human rights violations, contributing to accountability and justice mechanisms. Its efforts helped protect civilians and promote respect for human rights. UNOCI supported disarmament and demobilization efforts, contributing to the reintegration of former combatants into society and reducing the risk of renewed violence.

UNOCI operated in a politically volatile environment, characterized by deep-seated divisions and power struggles. This instability posed challenges to its efforts to promote reconciliation and stability. UNOCI faced resource constraints, including limited funding and personnel, which sometimes hampered its ability to effectively implement its mandate across the country. UNOCI personnel faced security threats, including attacks by armed groups and political militias. These threats posed risks to the safety and security of UNOCI staff and hindered its operations in certain areas. UNOCI's legacy in Côte d'Ivoire is mixed. While it made significant contributions to peace and stability, its departure in 2017 marked the end of a crucial chapter in the country's history. UNOCI's efforts helped lay the groundwork for reconciliation and reconstruction, but challenges remain in addressing underlying political and social issues (UNSCR, 2011).

UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), 1992-1993

UNTAC was established by Security Council resolution 745 (1992) of 28 February 1992 for the implementation of the agreements on a comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict. Under the agreements, the Supreme National Council of Cambodia (SNC) was "the unique legitimate body and source of authority in which, throughout the transitional period, the sovereignty, independence, and unity of Cambodia are enshrined".

SNC, which was made up of the four Cambodian factions, delegated to the United Nations “all powers necessary” to ensure the implementation of the Agreements. The mandate given to UNTAC included aspects relating to human rights, the organization and conduct of free and fair general elections, military arrangements, civil administration, the maintenance of law and order, the repatriation and resettlement of the Cambodian refugees and displaced persons, and the rehabilitation of essential Cambodian infrastructure during the transitional period.

Upon becoming operational on 15 March 1992, UNTAC absorbed the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC), which had been established immediately after the signing of the Agreements in October 1991. UNTAC’s mandate ended in September 1993 with the promulgation of the constitution for the Kingdom of Cambodia and the formation of the new government (United Nations, 1992). UNTAC was a significant multinational effort, involving contributions from many countries, demonstrating international cooperation and commitment to resolving conflicts and promoting peace. UNTAC successfully organized and supervised the first free and fair elections in Cambodia in 1993. This was a significant achievement, providing the Cambodian people with a voice in shaping their future. UNTAC made progress in disarming and demobilizing combatants from various factions, though challenges persisted, including the reluctance of some groups to give up arms. UNTAC made efforts to promote and protect human rights in Cambodia, though there were criticisms regarding its effectiveness in addressing human rights abuses, especially those committed by the Khmer Rouge.

UNTAC established civil administration structures and institutions to facilitate the transition to a democratic society, laying the groundwork for future governance in Cambodia. UNTAC faced challenges and criticisms, including logistical difficulties, tensions with the Khmer Rouge, and limitations in its mandate and resources. Some critics argue that UNTAC did not adequately address the root causes of conflict in Cambodia or prevent the resurgence of violence in subsequent years.

Challenges Facing the United Nations

The United Nations is bedeviled with challenges that tend to bring about drawbacks in its maximum functionality. Ongoing conflicts in regions such as Israel, Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan pose significant challenges to the UN's peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts. The rise of terrorist groups like ISIS and Boko Haram presents complex security threats that require international cooperation and coordination. The displacement of millions of people due to conflicts, persecution, and climate change strains resources and challenges the capacity of the UN and its agencies to provide humanitarian assistance. The increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters exacerbate humanitarian crises and displacement, requiring a coordinated international response. Widening income inequality within and among countries hinders progress towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas such as poverty eradication, education, and healthcare. Events like the COVID-19 pandemic highlight the interconnectedness of global health and development and underscore the need for robust health systems and international cooperation.

Persistent human rights violations, including discrimination, violence against women, and restrictions on freedom of expression, challenge the UN's efforts to promote and protect human rights globally. The calls for reform to make the UN more efficient, transparent, and responsive to emerging global challenges require consensus among member states and face resistance from entrenched interests. Growing geopolitical tensions between major powers, such as the United States, China, and Russia, can impede the UN's ability to address global issues and reach consensus on key resolutions.

Conclusion

Despite the myriad of challenges confronting the United Nations, the organization, along with its agencies, has made the world much more hospitable and livable for billions of people. The reality is that, since the end of the Cold War in 1991, the UN has played a significant role in resolving intrastate and interstate violence, as well as boundary conflicts either with the permission of

the states or based on the power of the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Since the emergence of the United Nations, the world has never witnessed global conflicts on the scale of the First and Second World Wars, which claimed millions of lives of people. UN peacekeeping missions have continued to protect human lives, actively prevent conflict, reduce violence, strengthen security, and empower national and regional authorities to assume these responsibilities. This requires a coherent security and peace-building strategy that supports the political, economic, and cultural strategies and coordination of the United Nations, to continue to mitigate crisis and prevent escalation into global catastrophes.

Recommendations

Our recommendations draw inspiration from the rationalist views regarding the role of the United Nations in ensuring international peace and security. Some of the recommendations include:

1. Democratization and expansion reforms of the UN Security Council
2. The independence of the UN General Assembly should be ensured to shield it from unnecessary control and negative influence from the world powers.
3. Adequate funding for the organization should be ensured to prevent it from going cap-in-hand seeking resources for its administration and missions, thereby exposing itself to vulnerabilities from the superpowers.
4. All member nations should live up to their financial commitments to the organization.
5. Decisions from all UN agencies, particularly the International Court of Justice, on issues judgments on international disputes, should be respected but not discountenanced, especially by world powers, even when such judgments are not favourable to them.

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STATE POLICING AND NIGERIA'S SECURITY

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Abstract

Nigeria is mired with an overbearing insecurity situation ranging from insurgency, secession agitation, serial bombings, hostage taking, kidnapping, armed robbery, cold-blooded murders, ethnic militia, armed banditry, resource conflict, and ethno-religious conflicts. The phenomenon of insecurity in Nigeria is worrisome and therefore calls for question into the efficiency of federally controlled police and to contrive ways to devolve policing powers to other federating components; especially the states. This will ensure that states establish, maintain, and control their police formations. The study employs secondary data; therefore, content analysis was used. The study adopts Community/ Problem Oriented Policing as the underlying theory. It concludes that police or policing is a political activity geared toward maintaining social order in society. A federal system favours the devolution of police power to the federating units or regions to make them meet the needs of the various sub-units within the federating units. In the case of Nigeria, this is acutely lacking and is at the root of the police not being able to perform their duties efficiently. To change the status quo, restructuring and repositioning the Nigerian police on the path of efficiency in security service delivery is a sine qua non. It recommends decentralizing the police force by creating state police, urgent recruitment of more police officers to augment the abysmal current staff strength, and investing in high-tech to facilitate intelligence gathering.

Keywords: Nigeria, Policing, Security, State, Community.

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Introduction

Nigeria is replete with inundated insecurity of various sorts (insurgency, secession agitation, serial bombings, hostage taking, kidnapping, armed robbery, cold-blooded murders, ethnic militia, armed banditry, resource conflict, and ethno-religious conflicts, etc). The phenomenon of insecurity in Nigeria is worrisome and therefore calls for question into the efficiency of federally controlled police and to contrive ways to devolve policing powers to other federating components; especially the states. This will ensure that states establish, maintain, and control their police formations. This notion was borne out of the fact that the police will be at the community level where operatives are drawn within the community because it is their precincts. By this, the chains of command inherent in the federal police would have been waded off and prompt response is secured within a short time. Central to the idea is the neighbourhood principle that presupposes that everyone in the vicinity knows each other, thereby making it easy to monitor deviants in the community.

Ethnic tensions, religious differences, limited economic opportunities, and numerous socio-political grievances are all fuelling the unrest in Nigeria and contributing to flashpoints of violence. Indeed, many political analysts think that Nigeria is fast degenerating into the Hobbesian state of nature where life is short, nasty, and brutish and living has become an issue of survival of the fittest (Adebakin & Raimi, 2012). Anarchy is closing in while law and order are losing their sting. Hoodlums, criminals, and terrorists have virtually taken over the nation. According to Okechukwu and Anyadike (2013), most Nigerians now sleep with one eye open as those who are lucky to escape burglars are kept awake all night by booming sounds of gunshots or dins of bomb explosions by those too powerful to be stopped.

This current state of crime and insecurity has given rise to Nigeria being on the security watch list of many industrialized countries and has sternly warned their citizens about doing business in Nigeria. The Nigerian Police Force is better pictured as being overwhelmed and so cannot render adequate safeguard of the internal security of Nigeria. In the context of the present policing scenario in Nigeria, it is estimated by Inter Pol (2012) that the Nigeria Police Force comprises about 350,000 (Three Hundred and Fifty) men and women. This size

of Nigeria's national police force demonstrates a low approximate means score of (UN 2012) minimum international rating of 300 police officers per 100,000 citizens for UN member states. Despite the United Nation's recommendation, it is observed that Nigeria's police force's national rating is only 205 police officers for 100,000 Nigerians for the year 2012. With these statistics, efficiency cannot be achieved as well as meeting national coverage.

The rise in crime, criminality, and violence in Nigeria gives way to the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch, Vigilante, Hunter Groups, etc in Nigeria. The South Western States have jointly formed *Amotekun*, South East *Eastern Security Network*, Plateau state has *Operation Rainbow*, and Kaduna State *Operation Yaki* all in a bid to complement the efforts of statutory police. The Nigerian Police Force, constitutionally is saddled with the responsibility of safeguarding lives and property in Nigeria. According to John (1985), measuring productivity and efficiency in policing is a daunting task, given the difficulties in defining police roles and how they are organized to achieve their goals. However, ascertaining whether the Nigerian police is efficient or not will depend on knowing what has happened to crime. Is it increasing or reducing? How secure are peoples' lives? How secure are peoples' property? Are citizens living in fear of crime and criminals? Are the police preventing or controlling crime? The police may answer these by citing the number of cases cleared and their response to distress calls within a particular period.

The study would attempt to achieve some objectives: evaluating the capacity of the federal police, identifying the necessity of state police, and weighing the debate for and against state police in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

State Police/Policing

State police refers to policing in a federal system in which the state government employs police officers to police the state. Aremu (2014, p.33) describes state policing as "territorial policing. It is a subnational form of policing in which there is devolution of security operations in the hands of the federating states of regions. State policing operationally is when policing and all its operations

and logistics are controlled by governments other than the national or federal government.” Police and policing in contemporary political systems have undergone remarkable changes. Advanced democracies have evolved a police system that cuts across the federal, state, and local units. The state form of police and policing is regarded as an indispensable feature of a federal system of governance. It allows its constituent units the constitutional right to provide security for the lives and property of people within the state. A state form of police and policing differs remarkably from the current centralized Nigeria police force in its creation, funding, and control. Unlike the present reality, the state police force would be created, funded, and controlled by the state government within a federal system.

National Security (Nigeria’s Security)

Security is critical to the survival of any nation to forestall lawlessness, chaos, and the eventual disintegration of the system. Security is considered a dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests (Omede, 2011). According to McGrew (1988), the security of a nation is predicated on two central pillars viz; the maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in the face of internal and external threats on one hand and the promotion of a preferred international order, which minimizes the threat to core values and interests, as well as to the domestic order on the other hand. Similarly, Nwolise (2006) states that security is an all-encompassing holistic concept that implies that the territory must be secured by a network of armed forces; that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, protected by the military, police and the people themselves. The people must not only be secure from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals, unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation pollution, and socio-economic injustices. Krahmman (2003) on his part, defined security as activities that ensure the protection of a country, persons, and properties of the community against future threats, danger, mishaps, and all other forms of perils. Here security is viewed only as a futuristic phenomenon. In all places and countries, security

is a multidimensional subject of numerous debates and is considered a 'first-order value' worth preserving.

Theoretical Framework

Community Oriented Policing/Problem-Oriented Policing

This theory has as its core elements, the reduction of crime and disorder. The list of applications is endless and there are a variety of names. Community-Oriented Policing (COP) tends to be the one most popularly used, which seems to be a composite of community and problem-oriented policing.

Community policing focuses on crime and social disorder through the delivery of police services that include aspects of traditional law enforcement, as well as prevention, problem-solving, community engagement, and partnerships. The community policing model balances reactive responses to calls for service with proactive problem-solving centred on the causes of crime and disorder. Community policing requires police and citizens to join together as partners in the course of providing security.

Goldstein argues that a significant portion of police departments that claimed to have been implementing community policing programmes lack authentic commitment due to their ignorance of the strategy (Langworthy & Travis, 2003). This is so because the federal police are distant from the people especially those in the rural communities and ungoverned spaces. Community policing attempts to rebuild neighbourhood order by including resident partnerships fits into the policing style of the good old days. If the movement is a renaissance of old-fashioned policing, its crime-fighting orientation is beyond doubt a prominent factor.

The clamour for state police came at the heels of high cases of crimes and criminality in Nigeria. Its establishment is meant not to work far away from the national police. This is also not a distant deviation from the known neighbourhood watch where the community members are involved in the security coverage of their communities.

Constitutional Debate on State Police

The clamour for a state police service by many people in Nigeria is based on a “near”-constitutional provision in the Nigerian constitution. Section 214, sub-section (1) of CFRN (1999) states that: There shall be police for Nigeria, which is known as the Nigeria police force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the federation, or any part thereof. Section (2) The Nigeria Police Force shall be under the command of the Inspector-General of Police and any contingent of the Nigeria police force stationed in a state shall, subject to the authority of the Inspector-General of police be under the command of the commissioner of police of that state.

Furthermore, the Constitution states that: The governor of a state may | give the commissioner of police of that state, such lawful directions concerning the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order within the state as he may consider necessary, and the commissioner of police shall comply with those directions or cause them to be carried out

Also, Section 176 (2) of the constitution states that “the governor of a state shall be the chief executive of the state.” Gleaning from the various constitutional provisions, the onerous task of maintaining law and others is the sole responsibility of the state governor as the chief security officer of the state. However, despite these provisions, evidence abounds on how state Governors in Nigeria, who are elected by their people and dubbed the Chief Security Officers of their state, have been reduced to ceremonial chief security officers. This is due to the presence of the state commission of police. The commissioner of police, a political appointee from “above” becomes the one in charge of maintaining law and order in the state, rendering state governors helpless.

The Catalysts for Insecurity and Need for a State Police in Nigeria

It is no longer a tale that the security situation in Nigeria is very pathetic. Nigeria is presently in the grip of violent and non-violent crimes, perpetrated against innocent and defenseless citizens. The indiscriminate violence the country has experienced in recent times has resulted in terrible loss of lives and property and foisting of the atmosphere of fear, anxiety, uncertainty, gloom insecurity,

and vulnerability among the populace. Also, the diminishing prospects for political stability, social cohesion, and economic development have further worsened the security situation in the country (Emeh, 2011).

Mono Economy-Dependence on Oil

The high dependence on oil as the most vibrant sector of the Nigerian economy since independence and the misappropriation of its petro-dollar, have been blamed for the widespread poverty and burgeoning level of crime in the country. Poverty, unemployment, and underemployment breed discontent. These socially and economically disadvantaged groups in society have in most cases, the option of fighting back at the society that created the condition for their deprivation through crime and criminality.

The Collapse of the Family Value System

The breakdown of the families through other social forces and the collapse of the family value system help explain youth restiveness and community in Nigeria. Muazu (2004) avers that “the breakdown of our moral values consequent upon the present family structure where parents break up relations at will has made parental care of their children and wards relegated to the background. This means children and wards are now left to the dominant influence of peer groups. What we have next, therefore, is a large collection of lawless and disgruntled youth too much for effective policing by the federal police”. Those who are making life difficult and unbearable through their criminal activities, come from one family or the other. So, at the family stage, the children are expected to be equipped with moral values that will check their inclination to commit crimes.

Crime problems are very pervasive and breeds fear and insecurity. In almost all the communities, towns, and cities in Nigeria, crime and criminality have become a daily occurrence, with people losing their loved ones and their property in most cases. The Nigerian Police whose constitutional duty it is to protect lives and prevent crimes have failed in their statutory duties, leaving the masses at the mercy of criminals.

Over-centralization of the Police Force in Nigeria

Central to the inability of the Nigerian police to efficiently perform their statutory duties of maintaining law and order and securing the lives and property of Nigerians could be said to revolve around the over-centralization of the police force in Nigeria. This has given rise to a situation where a police officer who may be from the North, being posted to the Eastern part of Nigeria, where he/she does not have a grounded knowledge of geographic, cultural, economic, and 'criminologically'. The policeman/woman posted to this "foreign land" would not be able to understand the people they are to serve. This has made effective policing extremely difficult in Nigeria.

The State Police and the Arguments

The end of Military rule in 1999, has witnessed several agitations for the restructuring of Federalism in Nigeria. These agitations, among other times, have been centered on the need for fiscal federalism, and decentralization of Police Power (State Police) among others. Since then, there has been a nuanced opinion as to whether or not there should be state police in Nigeria. These debates or dissenting views are examined here.

The Argument for State Police

In Nigeria, the 1999 constitution is clear on the role of the police as specifically to fight crime, protect the lives and property of citizens, and maintain law and order in society. However, it is regrettable to note that despite the noble roles assigned to them; the police have failed to perform above the board. This situation has necessitated calls for the establishment of the State Police.

Community-based Police

One argument for the establishment of state police is based on the need to reduce crime to its barest. Crime occurs in every "community" and is perpetrated by those who in most cases, come from that community or locality. To deal with crime therefore, there is an urgent need to ensure that "locals are absorbed and

posted to their various localities to fish out the criminals. Yomi in an interview with *Tell* (2011) avers that “a place would be better policed by people from that area because they speak the language. This helps in getting information and gathering intelligence and by extension, the prevention of crime”. Yomi, citing a personal experience continues “When I was a commissioner of police in Abia State and the language was Igbo and I was Yoruba, I always needed an interpreter if I was going to deal with an illiterate who don’t understand English”.

Symbolic Role of State Governors as the Chief Security Officer of their States

Also, the call for the establishment of state police is due to the nominal role state governors play as the Chief Security Officers of their states. The constitution stipulates that the state governors are the chief security officers of their states. In reality, state governors are nothing but glorified chief security officers, who lack the legal capacity to function as such. Instead, the state commissioners of police are the real chief security officers of the state where they are serving. The commissioners of police are appointed by the inspector-general of police to protect lives and property and to maintain social order in their respective state of assignment. The CP takes instruction from the IG and not from the governor of the state where they are serving.

Reacting to this situation, the Chairman of the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF), Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi, reading a communiqué issued at the end of their meeting on June 25, 2012, called for the amendment of the 1999 constitution to include the provision for the creation of state police. Specifically, the Governors sought the amendment of Section 214 of the constitution that would prohibit State Commissioners of Police from taking orders from the Inspector-General of Police and instead, receive instructions from the state governors (*ThisDay*, Monday 6 August 2012).

Federal Structure of the Nigerian State

Another argument of the proponents of state police is hinged on the federal nature of the Nigerian state. Nigeria operates a federal system of government

that allows the devolution of power among the federating states. In other federal democracies like the United States of America, police and security powers are shared among the federating units and not centralized as in Nigeria. The US has over 140 security agencies in charge of security and the maintenance of law and order. The issue of effective policing is a constitutional one which due to its centralization, successive administrations have failed to properly address. Therefore, the argument is that for Nigeria to tackle the present level of crime and insecurity being faced, the police must be de-centralized (*The Moment Editorial*, 2011/15/12).

Furthermore, the proponent of state policing in Nigeria posits that the creation of a state form of policing would help reduce the prevailing level of youth unemployment. This, they say is because more youths would be employed by the state to police their state. Awolaja posits that “approving state police would lead to the creation of jobs for the unemployed youths since the force must be made up of people from the state, and would give the governors good reason to invest in their police” (*The Compass*, 2011). Following this line of thought, the Oba of Lagos, Rilwan Akiolu avers that “most of the requirements of the police are not provided by the federal government, they are being provided by the state governments. As the saying goes, the one that pays the piper calls the tune” (*Compass*, 2011).

Arguments Against State Police

Police Reforms rather than Creation of State Police

The call for the establishment of state police has received unprecedented criticism as part of the call for the restructuring of Nigerian federalism. The agitation against the creation of state police in Nigeria is championed by eminent people such as the President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, Major-General Buhari (Rtd), Sunday Ehindero former inspector-general of police, Mohammed Abubakar, current Inspector-General of police, the Northern Governors Forum and other eminent citizen. Former President Goodluck Jonathan avers that “state police may be theoretically good, but looking at our political environment, it could be abused to the detriment of the country. The consensus of the council is that we

should get to the point where we will be sure that whosoever is in power will not turn it against the people". Also, Pat Utomi in an interview with *TheNews Magazine* (2012) describes the Nigerian state as a criminal state where political power is used against those in opposition.

The propensity of the ruling elites to use and abuse police powers, particularly against their opponents, underscores the president's vehement opposition to its creation in contemporary Nigeria. Major General Buhari (Rtd) is another vehement critic of state police. According to him, the agitation for state police is misplaced, and what is rather expected from well-meaning Nigerians is the clamour for effective reform in the Nigeria Police. A well-armed reform will be virile and competent enough to tackle both the existing and emerging security challenges threatening the country (*ThisDay*, 2012). For the former military ruler, effective policing does not lie solely in restructuring the police system through the establishment of state police, but rather through well-thought-out reforms that will enable the police to grapple with the contemporary security challenges in the country.

Corroborating the above, The Northern Governors' Forum (NGF), a splinter group from the Nigerians' Governors' Forum, submits that "the forum is not in support of the creation of state police, but resolved to prevail on the Federal Government to embark on police reform that will assist. Besides the argument for police reform, another argument against the creation of state police resolves around the multiplicity of police formation in all the states of the federation. This, it is said, would make it difficult for the effective control and management of all the police formations. Njoku, cited in Ogunnade (2012, p.21) notes that "if we have 36 police formations, 36 different Laws from state to state, it becomes too complex to manage state police system."

Funding

Another strong reason why the establishment of state police in Nigeria is likely to suffer setbacks is based on funding. At the moment almost all the state governors have been crying about the paucity of funds at the disposal of the state government to meet the development needs of their people. Under this

unpalatable situation, who will pay the state police force? Where will the fund come from? Currently, some state governors have not been able to deliver on their promise in the provision of physical infrastructure, social welfare services such as forced education, employment opportunities, and free medical among others. An additional financial burden of this magnitude could make the state governor fail in delivering their electoral promises (Muazu, 2004).

Corruption in Recruitment-Party Members

In the same vein, some have argued that the institution of state police would jeopardize the sustenance of the nation's nascent democracy. According to Yakasai (2014) "creating state police will undermine democracy in Nigeria. Governors will make sure that only their party members are recruited into the police. When a state police is made up of party thugs and supporters, then you can be sure that opposition will not be allowed to have a level playing field during campaigns."

Police Efficiency in Nigeria National Security: The State Police Option

The Nigerian Police is operating in a derailing political system that has been described as a failed state or a failing state which breeds insecurity; such as crime, terrorism, and environmental catastrophe (Agwanwo, 2014; Michael, 2014). Indeed, Nigeria is undergoing very serious security and crime problems that seem to dampen the institutional capacity of the criminal justice system, thereby questioning the role and ability of the police to protect the lives and property of citizens.

In the contemporary globalized world, nations; institutions, and corporations whether at the national or international level, are appraised based on efficiency or competitiveness in a highly competitive world. The concept of efficiency, as Reuben (2008) notes, has acquired a special significance in the assessment of country performance, institutions, and systems in a world that is increasingly competitive. It relates to the values of accountability, processes, and quality of service delivery, the competence of personnel as well as stakeholder attitudes towards a system or institution." Organizational efficiency revolves around

its values that are considered very important by the various units within its operational environment. These values leave an imprint on the organization all the time. According to Jike (2009, p.2), corporate entities or organization set their goals/objectives with a view to enhancing their competitive ascendancy and stimulating internal efficiency and external effectiveness among similar organizations in the same profession or sector.

The important elements which go to make up an efficient police service may not be measurable, at least not in a manner that is objective and comparable. The efficiency of the police in crime prevention and control rests less on what the police do but on the general perception of those being policed (Alan, 1980; John, 1985). There exists public ambivalence about the efficiency of the Nigerian Police. As noted by Agwanwo and Worlu (2010), the Nigerian Police has been ranked as one of the best police forces in foreign missions. This is because, in these foreign missions, they are properly motivated and equipped for the task before them. Back home, its capacity for effective maintenance of law and order has been grossly endangered by internal complications which have prompted the outcry for the high level of insecurity in the country." Underscoring this further, a pioneer police scholar in Nigeria, Tamuno (1999), quipped, I most heartily wish the Inspector-General of Police, his officers and other ranks of the Nigeria police force well at this critical time in their service to Nigeria and the wider world... Since 1960, their officers and men have brought honour to Nigeria; and demonstrated excellence in the service of humanity worldwide. Their successes in the international arena amply demonstrated that they can do likewise at home despite well-known formidable odds of a wide-ranging character, (cited from Nwolise, 2004). However, at home, the Nigerian police have been lampooned and boo-hoed by the masses for their failure to secure the lives and property of the citizenry. This situation has pitted the people against the police. This is worsened by police corruption and their high-handedness when dealing with the poor and defenseless in society.

One of the major problems besetting the Nigerian Police is due to its origin. As a force, it emerged as an occupation force at the beck and call of the plunderous colonial system (Agwanwo, 2009). At the end of formal colonialism in Nigeria, the force was not divested of its "coloniality" but was adopted and adapted

on the Nigeria Police Force after Independence. Since then, the Police have not performed efficiently. Another glaring factor against police efficiency in Nigeria is the control of the police power centrally. Nigeria operates a Federal System that is anchored on the devolution between the Federal, State, and Local Governments. Yet the structure of police power is still highly centralized. The police commissioner in a state is not answerable to the state governor but to the president of the Inspector-General of Police. This vertical authority structure, despite the delimitation of the force into zonal commands, has been cited as a perpetration of a unitary system rather than a federalist arrangement and accounts for police inefficiency in Nigeria (Reuben, 2008). For the Nigerian police to properly discharge its constitutional responsibilities in such a way that will endear them to those they are policing, they have to function in a de-centralized police system. This would be a pathway to efficient policing in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Gleaning from the foregoing, police or policing is a political activity geared toward maintaining social order in society. Even though that is the case, various forms of political arrangement stipulate the form of police system it runs. A federal system favours the devolution of police power to the federating units or regions to make them meet the needs of the various sub-units within the federating units. In the case of Nigeria, this is acutely lacking and is at the root of the police not being able to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. To change the status quo, and to restructure and reposition the Nigerian police on the path of efficiency in service delivery, with implications for crime reduction, the creation of state policing is a necessity.

Recommendations

- i. The training and retraining of police officers to enhance their performance and ensure effective policing which will result in drastic crime reduction.
- ii. The improvement of the conditions of police officers.

- iii. Urgent recruitment of more police officers to ensure to argument of the abysmal current staff strength.
- iv. Investing in high-tech to facilitate intelligence gathering.
- v. The establishment of joint federal, state, and local criminal investigation bureaus that will ensure effective collaboration in crime control.
- vi. The citizens should be aware of the need to give the police maximum support to effectively get rid of the criminals in the new policing regime.
- vii. Decentralizing the police force by creating state police.
- viii. The Federal Government of Nigeria should establish the American-styled police structure and oversight offices in the 36 states to maintain Federal laws and complement the activities and functions of the state police. There should also be a Federal Criminal Investigation Branch (FCIB) established at the federal, state, and local government levels. They are to be responsible for national/international criminal investigations. Their presence will ensure that ethnic sentiments do not come into play in the dispensation of justice, especially where non-indigenes are concerned in the states.
- ix. To avoid the abuse of State Police Forces (SPF), the document backing the state police should provide for the establishment of ad-hoc committees at state and local government levels. These should be constituted of eminent citizens such as retired judges, religious leaders, respected opinion leaders, journalists, and representatives of labour unions. Their duties should include the recommendation of police chiefs at the state level, as well as monitoring the general activities of the SPF. The state legislatures should also be given the oversight functions to ratify the committee's recommendations and regulate the security votes for the governors.
- x. Structures of checks, balances, and clear-cut disciplinary measures that insulate the state police officers from partisan politics and control by political officeholders should be put in place to encourage efficiency and effectiveness.

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THE MENACE OF ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE: A THREAT TO THE SUSTENANCE OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Electoral malpractice in Nigeria has remained a pervasive and concerning issue that poses a significant threat to the sustenance of democracy in the country. The multifaceted dimensions of electoral malpractice and its detrimental impact on the stability and credibility of Nigeria's democracy. Nigeria being the most populous country in Africa and a significant regional player has struggled with electoral malpractice for decades. This included but was not limited to voter suppression, ballot box stuffing, rigging, violence, bribery, and voter intimidation. These irregularities have marred the fairness and transparency of elections, understanding the principle of democracy and eroding public trust in the electoral processes. The study utilized academic journals and also established that democracy and good governance are not a one-size-fits-all solution and should be adapted exclusively to each nation's unique context. Further, the research work hinges on structural functionalism as its theoretical framework. The paper found that electoral malpractice perpetuates a cycle of bad governance, political instability, and economic underdevelopment. By compromising the legitimacy of elected leaders and their mandates, electoral malpractice hinders the effective functioning of government institutions and impedes progress toward social and economic development. The paper also found that the root causes of electoral malpractice in Nigeria include weak electoral institutions, inadequate legal frameworks, poverty, and ethno-religious divisions. It recommends the need for comprehensive electoral reforms to address these systemic issues and enhance the integrity of the electoral process.

Keywords: Election, Democracy, Electoral Malpractice, Electoral Process and Good Governance

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Introduction

Electoral malpractice, a pervasive and insidious threat to Nigeria's democracy, stands as a formidable barrier to the nation's progress and the aspirations of its citizens. Being a nation endowed with buoyant and diverse elegance coupled with political ideas, Nigeria's democratic journey has been marred by both promise and peril. Yet, at the heart of its complex landscape lies the specter of electoral malpractice, a multifaceted menace that undermines the very foundation of democratic governance. Nigeria, often hailed as the giant of Africa, has grappled with the consequences of electoral malpractice since the advent of multi-party democracy in 1999. While the nation's electoral processes have seen significant improvements over the years, instances of voter suppression, ballot manipulation, voter intimidation, and corruption persist, eroding the credibility of elections and diminishing the faith of its citizens in the democratic system. This paper delves into multifarious dimensions of electoral malpractice in Nigeria, exploring the causes, consequences, and the urgent need for comprehensive reforms. It also underscores the critical role that free and fair elections play in sustaining democracy, fostering social cohesion, and promoting economic development in this vibrant African nation.

The paper further scrutinizes the various forms of electoral malpractice that have plagued Nigeria, from rigging to violence, and the systemic challenges that allow them to persist. Furthermore, we examined the ripple effects of such malpractice on political stability, social harmony, and the country's ability to harness its vast potential for the betterment of its citizens.

Conceptual Clarifications

Election

Schumpeter (1942) described an election as a democratic process through which citizens choose their representatives to hold public office. According to Dahl (1971), election refers to the formal and periodic selection of government officials by eligible voters within a democratic system. Heywood (2017) posits that an election is the mechanism in a representative democracy by which citizens express their political preferences and select individuals or parties to govern

on their behalf. In the words of Bartels (2008) election signifies the competitive process by which political candidates or parties compete for the support and votes of the electorate to gain political power. Lipset (1959) asserts that election is the fundamental aspect of modern democracies, involving the selection of leaders or policies through a system of voting by eligible citizens. Based on the above submission election is a formal process by which individuals, often referred to as voters, choose or select representatives, leaders, or candidates for public office or other positions of authority. It is a fundamental component of democratic systems and serves as a mechanism for people to express their preferences and make collective decisions in government and various organizations.

Electoral Malpractice

Huntigton, (1991) describes electoral malpractice as any action or behaviour on the part of government officials, candidates, or voters that compromises the integrity of the electoral process, either intentionally or unemotionally. Norris (2014), describes electoral malpractice as a set of activities or behaviours, whether by state or non-state actors, which intentionally or unintentionally violate electoral rules and standards undermining the fairness and legitimacy of elections. According to Barany (2005), election malpractice encompasses various illicit activities such as voter suppression, ballot stuffing, gerrymandering, and vote-buying that subvert the democratic electoral process. The former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Kofi Annan defines electoral malpractice as actions that impair the fairness and credibility of an election, including fraud, intimidation, violence, and other irregularities that distort the will of the voters (Annan, 2006). Rose (2009) characterizes electoral malpractice as a broad category of activities that range from minor violations of electoral laws and regulations to more serious offenses, all of which undermine the fairness and legitimacy of elections.

Democracy

Dahl (1971) posits that democracy is a system of government in which the people have the ultimate authority to make decisions through free and fair elections. Dewey (1916) stresses that democracy is not just a form of government; it is principally an approach of related habitation of affiliated transferred encounters. Diamond (2008), opines that “democracy is a system of governance in which the rule of law, protection of individual right and the active participation of citizens in decision-making are paramount” Democracy in the words of Giovanni (1987), is a regime where governmental power stems from where the people’s will is exercised by elected representatives, and is subject to constitutional limits and the protection of minority rights. Dahl (1989), refers to democracy as a process of political competition and cooperation through which collective decisions are made by periodic, free, and fair elections.

Electoral Process

The electoral process refers to the whole sequence stretching from the availability of voter education to the end of a National Assembly period (Elekwa 2008). Additionally, INEC (2006), in Elekwa (2008), further states the diverse stages of the electoral process which are as follows: Demarcation of electoral borders, Voter registration, Announcement of elections, Nomination of Aspirants, Campaigns for Election, Voting, Declaration of Election results, Conclusion of Election tribunal hearings, Involvement of other organizations and Settlement of electoral issues arising from the involvement of other organizations, etc. According to Muhammad, Egye & Etim, (2023), the electoral process is consequently a compound process that incorporates the good intentions and unpleasant outcomes of election administration, especially in developing democracies where elections are usually influenced by ethno-religious electoral irregularities. Again, an electoral process is different from an electoral system (Reynolds et al 2005). This paper is of the view that the electoral process begins with the declaration of purpose to conduct elections, till the results of the elections have been announced and aspirants have won and lost.

Good Governance

The term governance is a fundamental principle that is very essential and indispensable to any system or establishment, be it public, private, local, or international. From a historical perspective, the word “governance” is recorded to be an initiative of the ancient Greeks (Adegbami & Adepaju, 2017). The term has been directly attributed to Plato who is acknowledged to have introduced the word ‘governance’ to explain order in the society (Campbell & Carayannis, 2013). According to the World Bank (1993), governance is referred to as a framework through which authority is enforced in the administration of a nation’s socio-political and economic assets for development. From this definition, it could be noted that the focus is on the utilization of authority to control the political and economic assets of the country. Therefore, governance is the act of consolidating political power to control economic resources for sustainable development. The notion of ‘good governance’ came to the limelight after the Cold War in 1990, during a donor interaction that prompted the World Bank being the pioneer leading donor institution to accept ‘good governance’ as a pre-requisite for giving loans to developing countries (Udo, 2004). Kofi Annan, an erstwhile United Nations Secretary-General, opines that ‘good governance’ is the most fundamental element in eliminating poverty and enhancing development (Annan, cited in UN 1998). From Annan’s perspective, deficiency of good governance will further increase poverty and underdevelopment. According to the UNDP (2002), ‘good governance’ entails upholding the rule of law, accountability, justice, potency/skillfulness, responsibility, and visionary leadership in the enforcement of power.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on structural functionalism, a sociological theory that views society as a complex system composed of various interrelated parts that work together to maintain stability and equilibrium. The theory was propounded by Gabriel Almond among others including Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons. Almond’s work, “The Division of Labour in Society” (1883) and “The Role of Sociological Method” laid the foundation for this theory. Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) further developed structural functionalism in the

mid-20th century, emphasizing the interrelated functions of different parts of society. From a functionalist perspective, society is made up of various institutions, including the political system. Electoral processes are a critical part of this system. When electoral malpractice occurs, it disrupts the functioning of democratic institutions and undermines the role of representing the will of the people.

Structural functionalism emphasizes the importance of different roles in society. In the context of elections, individuals play distinct roles, such as voters, candidates, electoral officials, and observers. When electoral malpractice takes place, it distorts these roles, eroding trust in the electoral process. Furthermore, the theory emphasizes the need for societal integration and stability. Electoral malpractice can lead to social and political instability by causing public dissatisfaction, protests, and even violence. In a well-advanced democracy, there is a balance between various elements, including the government, civil society, and citizens. Electoral malpractice disrupts this equilibrium by allowing a few to manipulate the electoral process, leading to an imbalance of power. In functionalism, societies adapt to changes to maintain stability. When electoral malpractice becomes widespread and threatens democracy, there is a need for adaptation through legal reform, transparency, and citizen engagement to address these issues and restore the democratic balance.

A Brief Historical Context of Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria

Olu Ojedokun in an interview on Channels Television, stressed that electoral malpractice has a long-standing history and is not a recent phenomenon but has deep historical roots. Nigeria's journey from colonial rule to independence in 1960 was marked by a series of undemocratic transitions, which set the stage for instituting electoral malpractices, creating a culture of impunity that continues to affect elections at all levels in the country. The key actors involved in electoral malpractice include the judiciary, political parties, candidates, electoral officials, security forces, and political thugs (Channels TV, 2023).

Firstly, Nigeria's multiparty system has seen numerous political parties vying for power. political parties engage in electoral malpractice to win elections by

making use of thugs whose methods of operation include; voter intimidation, snatching of ballot boxes, vote buying, etc. Secondly, political candidates often play a significant role in electoral malpractice, either by directly participating or turning a blind eye to misconduct within their campaigns. Further, corrupt electoral officers disrupt the process by tampering with voter registration, vote counting, and result transmission. Their actions can undermine the integrity of the election. Furthermore, the involvement of security forces like the Nigeria Police Force, military, Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC), Department of State Security (DSS), and others, in electoral malpractice is a recurring issue. They may intimidate voters, disrupt polling stations, or fail to maintain order, leading to chaotic and unfair elections. Judicial officers are compromised by receiving huge sums of money from politicians to deny the electorate fair court judgment.

Forms of Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria

Electoral malpractice encompasses a wide range of activities that undermine the integrity of the electoral process. These include voter suppression, rigging, vote-buying, voter intimidation, and various forms of fraud. In Nigeria electoral malpractice has become deeply entrenched in the political landscape, compromising the essence of free and fair elections.

Voter Suppression

Firstly, one of the most blatant forms of electoral malpractice in Nigeria is voter suppression. This involves the deliberate disenfranchisement of eligible voters to manipulate election outcomes. Tactics such as voter intimidation, violence, and the manipulation of voter registration processes have been used to suppress votes. In some cases, voters from opposition strongholds are deliberately denied access to polling stations. It is on this background that Professor Jerry Gana, former Minister of Information and National Orientation, posits that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was unfair to Nigerians in conducting national elections as a result of the horrific election, many election results were being challenged in the court for alleged electoral manipulations

of the 2023 Nigerians general election (PM News Nigeria, 2023).

In line with Gana's statement, Kabiru Yusuf stated that in the recent election in Nigeria, out of 93.4 million registered voters, 87.2 million voters collected their permanent voter's card and 24.9 million participated in the voter exercises. Before the 2023 general election in Nigeria, previous elections witness a decline. For example, the 2019 election recorded the lowest voter turnout of 34.7 percent. In 2019 only a meager 28.6 million eligible voters participated in the voting process despite 82 million eligible voters. In another development Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an inter-governmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide, revealed that the turnout of voters in the 2023 general election in Nigeria was the second lowest in the history of elections held in the African continent. (*Premium Times*, 2023).

Ballot Box Stuffing and Vote Rigging

Vote rigging is another prevalent form of electoral malpractice in Nigeria. This involves the manipulation of ballot boxes, results sheets and vote count to favour a particular candidate or political party. Ballot box stuffing refers to where fraudulent votes are added to the count, and is a common method used to alter election outcomes. In line with this development, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report on Nigeria's general election revealed that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) manipulated election results in favour of the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) during the presidential election results collation. BBC reported that returning officers instead of announcing 273 votes as written on the result sheet, read out 16,630 votes in favour of APC. They also found evidence of the February 2023 presidential election result manipulation, for instance, Peter Obi's Labour Party (LP) figure was changed, instead of the 22,289 as seen on the result sheet INEC announced 10,784, more than half of the candidates' vote was reduced (BBC Election Report, 2023). In line with the BBC report, Aluaigba (2009) suggests that electoral malpractice during the elections included deliberate manipulation of election results, ballot box stuffing, violence, misdeeds by security agents, collusion among polling officials and party agents to rig elections, voter intimidation and vote buying

Vote-Buying and Manipulations of Election Results

Vote-buying is a practice where politicians offer monetary or material incentives to voters in exchange for their votes. This unethical practice has become alarmingly widespread in Nigeria elections within the political system. On the other hand, electoral results can be manipulated at various stages, from vote counting to result transmission. During the last elections in Nigeria, there were allegations and reports of vote-buying and manipulation of electoral results. In Kano state, there were reports of alleged vote-buying during the presidential and National Assembly elections. Videos circulated the social media showing individuals handing out money to voters in exchange for their votes.

In the previous election in Ekiti state gubernatorial election, there were allegations of vote-buying. Some politicians were accused of distributing cash and other incentives to voters in a bid to influence their choices. The situation was not different in Rivers and Kogi states where there were allegations of violence and intimidation at polling stations, which can influence the electoral process. These acts of violence were seen as efforts to certain conditions. In Lagos state, there were claims of electoral irregularities, including vote-buying and ballot snatching, violence, preventing opposition supporters from voting, and intimidation at polling stations. These actions were seen as attempts to manipulate the election result. In favour of the ruling All Progress Congress (APC). Furthermore, in Port Harcourt, voter attacks were attributed to former Rivers State governor Nyeson Wike, who supported Bola Tinubu and the APC. Wike was later rewarded with a ministerial position for his involvement in Tinubu's election campaign. Instances of ballot box and paper destruction occurred in various parts of the country. Fasakin (2023). the elections were married by poor management, with violence escalating in Lagos, Rivers, and Taraba, as political figures turned the elections into battlegrounds, risking bloodshed (Abati 2023, Fasakin, 2023).

Voter Intimidation

Security apparatus for voters in most of the voting centres across Nigeria were highly porous and grossly inadequate to ensure and ascertain the protection

of voters and election materials. In situations where security officials are on the ground, they turn a blind eye to political thugs as they plunder the voting centres and destroy sensitive election materials. In some polling zones, security officials provided support to the perpetrators of electoral malpractices (Caritas Nigeria General Elections Observation Report, 2023). In the course of the election, voters were assaulted, and there appeared to be manipulation of the election results. In Lagos, cases of intimidation, violence, and voter suppression were widespread. Thugs attacked voters like Efidi Bina Jennifer, leaving her face bruised (Folorunso Francis et al., 2023; Fasakin 2023).

Table 1: Top Ten (10) Leading African Democracies in the Democracy Index, 2022

Rank	Country	Score
1	Mauritius	8.14
2	Botswana	7.81
3	Cape Verde	7.67
4	Namibia	7.20
5	Ghana	6.95
6	Senegal	6.88
7	South Africa	6.83
8	Tunisia	6.67
9	Kenya	6.55
10	Madagascar	5.70

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), 2023

Root Causes of Electoral Malpractice

Electoral malpractice in Nigeria is a complex issue with deep-rooted causes. It undermines the integrity of the electoral process and erodes public trust in the democratic system. Ofoeze, 2018, Omotola, 2018, Uchendu & Nwokolo, 2019, and Adepoju & Olaiya, 2017 attributed several factors contributing to the prevalence of electoral malpractice in Nigeria which include the following:

Poverty and Socioeconomic Factors: High levels of endemic and multi-dimensional poverty inflicted by the leaders on the masses make voters susceptible to financial inducements thereby increasing the prevalence of vote buying and giving rise to weak institutions. Nigeria's electoral management

bodies (EMB) and law enforcement agencies often lack the capacity and independence to conduct free and fair elections. Poverty and unemployment have led individuals to engage in electoral malpractice in exchange for financial incentives. Many people are willing to sell their votes or engage in other malpractices out of economic desperation.

Political Corruption: One of the primary drivers of electoral malpractice in Nigeria is political corruption. Many politicians and parties engage in corrupt practices such as vote-buying, bribery, and embezzlement of public funds, which they then use to influence voters and rig elections (Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

Weak Electoral Institutions: Nigeria's electoral institutions, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), have faced challenges in terms of capacity, independence, and transparency. Weak institutional structures make it easier for electoral malpractice to occur. (Uchendu & Nwokolo, 2019).

Ethnic and Religious Tensions: Nigeria's diverse population is divided along ethnic and religious lines, which politicians often exploit to manipulate voters. They use these divisions to foster animosity, manipulate electoral outcomes, and secure votes along these faulty lines leading to violence and malpractice.

Lack of Voter Education: Many Nigerians lack adequate voter education, which makes them vulnerable to manipulation due to misinformation. Voters who are unaware of their rights and the electoral process are more likely to fall victim to electoral malpractice.

Impunity and Lack of Accountability: Perpetrators of electoral malpractice often go unpunished. The lack of accountability for electoral offenses creates a culture of impunity, where individuals believe they can engage in malpractice without consequences.

Inadequate Security: Electoral violence is a significant concern in Nigeria, and the inadequacy of security forces to maintain law and order during elections contributes to malpractices. Threats of violence can deter voters from participating freely in the electoral process.

Partisan Law Enforcement: The selective application of the law-by-law enforcement agencies, which can be influenced by political interest, allows malpractice to thrive. Well-connected politicians may escape scrutiny while their opponents face harassment and intimidation.

Inadequate Electoral Laws: Nigeria's electoral laws have been criticized for being outdated and insufficient in addressing contemporary challenges. Reforms are required to strengthen the electoral legal frameworks and close loopholes that allow malpractice to occur.

Media Influence: Some media outlets in Nigeria are owned or controlled by politicians, which can lead to biased reporting and the dissemination of misinformation. This can shape public opinion and influence electoral outcomes unfairly. Addressing these root causes of electoral malpractice in Nigeria requires a multi-pronged approach, including electoral reforms, strengthening of institutions, voter education, and efforts to combat corruption. Without addressing these underlying issues, the country will continue to struggle with the challenge of electoral malpractice, which hinders the progress of its democracy.

Consequences of Electoral Malpractice

Okafor (2011) posits that electoral malpractice in Nigeria, like in many other countries, has significant consequences that can undermine the democratic process, erode trust in institutions, and have far-reaching impacts on society. Here are some extensive insights into the consequences of electoral malpractice in Nigeria:

Erosion of Democracy: One of the most significant consequences of electoral malpractice is the erosion of democratic values and principles. When elections are not free and fair, the will of the people is not accurately represented; which undermines the fundamental tenets of democracy.

Loss of Legitimacy: Elections are meant to confer legitimacy on a government. When elections are marred by malpractice, the government that emerges from such a process lacks the moral authority and legitimacy to govern.

Ways out of Electoral Malpractice

First and foremost is to strengthen electoral institutions. Nigeria must invest in building robust, independent electoral institutions that can oversee free and fair elections. This includes ensuring that the electoral commissions are free from political influence. Secondly, strong anti-corruption measures, including transparency in campaign financing and stricter enforcement of campaign finance laws, can help reduce the influence of money in politics. Thirdly, civil-education programs can raise awareness about the importance of voting, the electoral process, and citizen's rights. Educated voters are less likely to be swayed by bribes. Fourthly, Nigeria can benefit from electoral reforms that make it harder to manipulate results, such as the introduction of electronic voting systems and result transmission. Fifthly, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the media can play a crucial role in monitoring elections and exposing irregularities. They should be encouraged and protected in their efforts. Also, promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and people with disabilities, in the electoral policies to increase representation of these groups. Sixthly, ensuring transparency in the collation and announcement of election results publishes details of election results and allows for independent verification. Sixthly, the Nigerian government should also establish fast-track courts for handling election-related disputes. Expedite the resolution of election petitions to maintain public confidence in the judiciary. Lastly, international and domestic election observers can help ensure transparency in the electoral process by providing impartial assessments and reporting irregularities.

Conclusion

Addressing the issues of vote buying and result manipulation in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach involving political, institutional, and societal changes. These practices not only undermine the democratic process but also hinder Nigeria's progress and development. The government, civil society, and citizens must work together to create a more transparent and accountable electoral system to prevent a reversal of the popular definition of democracy by Abraham Lincoln to an unpopular definition: Government of the elites, by the elites, for the elites, and against the masses.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: AN ASSESSMENT OF INSECURITY DURING THE 2021 ANAMBRA STATE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS

Felix Ayeni¹

Abstract

The insecurity of lives and properties as a major socio-economic challenge preceded the 2021 gubernatorial election in Anambra state of Nigeria; hence, the activities of non-state actors became unabated. The kinetic approach employed to curb the insecurity situation by the Nigerian state in the South-East region of the country has not been able to deal with the agitation of succession being echoed almost daily. Research and other extant studies have shown that there has never been a resolution over agitation globally by employing a more kinetic approach and less political approach, and Nigeria cannot be an exception. Over the years, Nigeria has used a more kinetic approach and less political approach in her attempt to resolve the agitation in the southeast region of the country. This is a gap in the literature that this study seeks to close. The Anambra state 2021 gubernatorial election is off-seasoned in Nigeria. The major parties that contested the election were APGA, APC, PDP, and YPP. The study is focused on identifying the activities that took place before, during, and after the conduct of the Anambra state 2021 Governorship Election vis-a-vis the obstacles and the gains associated with the election. The data used for this work were obtained from secondary sources. Decision-Making theory as propounded by Simon was adopted for this study. The findings of the study revealed that vote-buying characterized the election in many local government areas of the state. Secondly, there was malfunctioning of the Bimodal Verification Accreditation System (BVAS) machines that were deployed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the election. The paper concluded that a moderate level of peace was recorded amid tension vis-à-vis pockets of violence in the state. The paper recommended that INEC should seek the vigilance of officers and men of security agencies to prevent unpatriotic acts capable of scuttling the electoral process.

Keywords: Electoral, Manipulation, Accreditation, Security, Legislation.

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Introduction

This paper is meant to identify the gains associated with the 2021 Anambra state Gubernatorial Election amid insecurity; as a major socio-economic challenge amongst other challenges that are prevalent in the South-East Region of Nigeria. The insecurity in the South-East Region of the country has been a recurring decimal and a thing of concern to well-meaning Nigerians, especially the peace-loving people of the South-East region. In recent times, the insecurity situation in the region has worsened due to severe agitation linked to marginalization of the region. For instance, there was no representation of an indigene of the South-East Region amongst the service chiefs between 2015 and 2021. Aside from this, no South-Easterner headed any juicy federal government ministry in the country, to mention; but, two.

This study is significant in different ways, particularly in both theoretical and practical dimensions. For instance, by identifying the blending of kinetic approach and political approach to curb the insecurity situation, about the agitation in the region; towards having a peaceful election. Another way is by building synergy amongst the political parties in the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election. Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States of America (USA) who served from 1861 until his assassination in 1865 defined Democracy as government of the people, by the people, and for the people. This has been the globally accepted definition over the years to this present day and we do know that democratic government comprises representatives of the people. To get these representatives on board, there has to be an election in line with democracy or democratic norms as it were.

Democracy can be classified into two, direct democracy and indirect democracy respectively. The 2021 Anambra State governorship election falls under indirect democracy. This is different from the type that was practised in Greek City State in which the small population of male adults within the territory were considered as citizens of the state. These citizens gather in a hall to deliberate on issues, make decisions, and get them implemented for the betterment of the city-state. This is a clear example of direct democracy. But such practice could no longer be sustained in countries of the world as the population grew at an alarming rate owing to improved medical facilities in this modern age. This

development has thrown up indirect democracy or representative democracy built on the premise of popular political participation.

Here, aspirants vying for public offices are subjected to primary elections to emerge as candidates of their respective political parties. Thereafter, they are involved in inter-party contests to return elected by popular votes amongst other criteria that might be put in place by the electoral umpire. In the same vein, representation has been described as the process by which candidates are elected by the electorates for the utmost purpose of serving the people's interest. Furthermore, representation can be attained when a candidate is elected as either a governor for a state, a senator for a district, or a councilor for award. The 2021 Anambra State Governorship election is one of the many ways to secure representation. The reason for that election was to guide against a vacuum at the government house, Awka; at the expiration of the two terms served by the then-incumbent governor, Willie Obiano. Concerning the provision of the 1999 Nigerian constitution as amended, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is bestowed with the power to organize elections in Nigeria. To this end, before the 2021 Anambra State governorship election, INEC rolled out modalities of the election to the public, particularly to the 18 registered political parties that filled candidates for the election; to enable them to start their preparation for the electoral race. One of such modalities was the release of the election timetable. The commission scheduled the election for the 6th of November, 2021 in line with the Electoral Act, 2020.

To achieve legitimacy for a democracy either direct or indirect, the doctrine of the rule of law takes precedence. It is held in social circles that there can be no democracy without the rule of law vis-à-vis the security of lives and properties of the citizenry. In other words, the rule of law holds sway in a peaceful election. The point here is that before the 2021 Anambra State Gubernatorial election, there was tension in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria as a result of violent activities being perpetrated by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Consequent upon this, there was panic in Anambra State in particular and by extension, the entire region of the Southeast Geopolitical Zone on the rate of insecurity; and on whether the governorship election would hold or not given the magnitude of uncertainty prevalent in the State then; and most importantly,

the obvious threat to the electoral process.

The sit-at-home order issued by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) before the Anambra state Governorship election cannot be forgotten so soon because of its uniqueness within the Nigerian political space. Consequently, to neutralize a possible upheaval being envisaged to be perpetrated by IPOB as a result of its order; there was deployment of 34,587 officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) as well as a skeletal military standby placed at strategic flashpoints in the state by the Nigerian federal authority; to curb anticipated violence during the election (Premium Times, October, 2021). This situation was described as over-militarization of the electoral process in certain quarters of Nigerian society. Nevertheless, the order was lifted by IPOB after due consultation with the group by men of goodwill; amongst them were traditional rulers of repute including members of the National Peace Committee, headed by former Nigerian head of state, retired General Abdulsalami Abubakar.

This paper is subdivided into an introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, INEC and 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election, INEC and the verdict for the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election, 2021 gubernatorial election: The obstacles, 2021 gubernatorial election: The gains, findings and discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

Literature Review

This section is to review related literature concerning socio-economic challenges and the conduct of elections in Nigeria particularly in the 21st century. As much as possible, it is meant to contain critical flavour that defines a typical review as follows:

According to Stiftung (2022) corruption as a socio-economic challenge at all levels of Nigerian society particularly at the government level, makes it impossible to transparently formulate policies under a secured environment that would create avenues for exiting from poverty for the majority of the Nigerian citizens vis-à-vis exiting from vote-buying menace. Achen and Bartel (2018) state that voters are often relatively motivated by non-rational forces and this changes their decision-making process. Moore (2018) posits that information platforms

have made it easier for hostile political gladiators to manipulate democracies and in some cases, such gladiators try to sway public opinion to their advantage. In other cases, a democratically elected government becomes bedeviled with the activities of commercial organizations, thereby, shifting attention to these organizations at the expense of the people.

According to the spokesman for the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra, Powerful (2021) Ebubeagu Security Outfit can be described as an imaginary outfit that will not work adding that the governors of the south-east who established it should not be trusted because the outfit is an extension of the conventional security agencies such as the Nigerian Army or the Nigeria Police Force; who are meant to spy on the Eastern Security Network and other Pro-Biafran groups like the Movement for Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). Stiftung (2022) states that increased insecurity across the country ranging from kidnapping and demanding for ransom, armed robbery, banditry, insurgency, and thuggery is a major impediment to both political and economic growth because the citizens are unable to go about their lawful duties under such hostile environment and it is either the government lacks the Political Will to address the ugly trend or the authorities cannot deal with the situation.

Suskind (2018) asserts that when the election is open to manipulation, it suggests that no one would have a conscious choice while electing future leaders. In the same vein, a government in power could be voted for through the data that are generated by electoral devices but they may not determine whether the policies likely to be rolled out by such government would be beneficial to the people or not. Neuman (2016) posits that there is a solid line between truth and manipulation, deceit and lies as most electorates are asymmetric in their beliefs about the effects of the media concerning the conduct of elections. Neil (2017) states that the poor electorates are defenseless to a large extent, hence, they are made to carry the burden of election manipulation to the detriment of the electoral process. This leads to disenchantment with the political system.

Stiftung (2022) posits that the spate of insecurity in Nigeria which includes Boko Haram insurgency/terrorism in the North-East, banditry in the North-West, unknown gunmen in the South-East and South-South and tribal xenophobia in the South-West has immensely intensified poverty in the country. The former

governor of the old Anambra state, Ezeife as reported by Punch newspaper (2021) asserts that the discourse on the security of lives and properties before, during, and after the 2021 off-season Anambra state gubernatorial election in the Southeast Region of Nigeria should not be left to any group; be it, the government established Ebubeagu Security Outfit (ESO) or the Eastern Security Network (ESN) set up by the leaders of IPOB; but, should be left to the elders of the South-East region who needed to work hard and very hard to resolve the insecurity crises bedeviling the region. To this end, there has to be the formation of a Central Eastern Regional Security System (CERSS) where every stakeholder would be accorded a sense of belonging. Consequently, the elders would invite and assemble the five state governors of the region and the IPOB leaders without offending any of them; and work out an arrangement whereby the ESN and ESO co-habit under the same canopy of CERSS which is geared aggressively towards achieving a common goal at ending or curbing insecurity to the barest minimum in the South-East region of the Nigerian state.

Elklit and Svensson (1997) posit that elections must be free before being assessed to be fair. However, people have different levels of political understanding concerning this assertion. More so, the pre-election period is the stage that observers must assess whether the Electoral Act vis-à-vis the constitution guarantees the freedom of voters as well as verifies the uneven distribution of resources amongst the political elites. Schmitter and Karl (1991) state that what distinguishes democratic leaders from non-democratic leaders are electoral norms that condition how the former came to power and the practices that hold them accountable for their actions. Stiftung (2022) asserts that unless the structure of the Nigerian economy is fundamentally altered in a self-reliant manner, with a strong emphasis on the creation of jobs through the development of the agricultural and industrial sectors, the issue of poverty will continue to plague the Nigerian state which does not provide a future for Nigerian citizens; hence, democracy cannot be built firmly on such foundation.

Achen and Bertels (2018) state that most citizens do not have the time to make intelligent decisions in elections about whether policies proposed by candidates are in their favour. Susskind (2018) states that the pattern employed by the media to gather, store, analyze, and disseminate information to the electorates

is closely related to how the political system vis-à-vis the electioneering process operates. The information commissioner's office argues that it does not matter whether the use of data in electioneering changes the result of elections or not; what matters is that the use of data has violated citizens' privacy. Frischman and Selinger (2018) posit that the electorates should not allow being mechanized rather they should embrace critical parts of personhood; like creativity, relationships, and free will in a digital world. Berney and Miller (2005) opine that political elites depend on propaganda before, during, and after elections to convey a coherent vision of the world to the electorates to encourage a stable and United Society. This does not point to an egalitarian democracy where the electorates are expected to communicate their concerns to the political elites so that such democracy could be reflected in election outcomes.

Stiftung (2022) states that the extremely high rate of unemployment in Nigeria; in other words, the lack of jobs at all levels is a fundamental source of poverty in the country and unless this is effectively addressed, the issue of poverty alleviation cannot be properly remedied and the standard of living of the Nigerian citizens will be further impoverished; thereby, paving way for vote-buying. Williams (2018) states that the electorates are being convinced by electoral technology; hence, their inability to achieve long-term goals because of constant distraction by short-term convenience. Neuman (2016) asserts that the electorates do not have enough evidence to understand how the mass media affects the information environment, especially during the electioneering period. Hence, the electorates should look at the various messages and most of the arguments about information overload.

The researcher submits that the inability of the Nigerian state to initiate the process of blending the kinetic approach and political approach towards confronting insecurity in the south-east region has led to the non-achievement of a permanent solution vis-à-vis the uneasy conduct of the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election. This stands as a gap in extant literature which this paper seeks to close.

Theoretical Framework

Voting behaviour in a democracy is an aspect of political participation vis-à-vis political behaviour by the citizens/electorates within a constituent following certain activities that are expected to be exhibited by the gladiators vying for political positions in the polity. These activities include the expression of opinions through conversations, issue-based debates on matters of the moment especially those that dwell on the welfare of the people as well as electioneering campaigns across the nooks and crannies of a given constituency; but, should be under a rancour-free political atmosphere. These days, the act of voting in an election has transcended manual operation to electronic or it is in the process of transcending manually to electronically in many countries around the globe and Nigeria is not an exception. This was ascertained through the presidential assent to the 2022 Electoral Act as passed by the 9th Nigerian National Assembly. Voting can occur in different ways; for instance, an alternative power-based system known as ballot letters was put into use in Israel. Other ways of such practice are online voting, postal voting, open ballot, open-secret ballot, pocket-book voting, etc.

This brings the study to the adoption of decision-making theory as propounded by Simon (1948). The theory states that as a process of administration, the decision-maker is bound to make compromises to fulfill an objective of an organization or a nation-state. The theory points to the fact that merely making a decision is not enough; but, its implementation, should be properly and timely done or else it could spoil the objective(s). Accordingly, several alternatives will be suitable to serve a purpose while pursuing a policy of compromise. Therefore, the policy maker(s) must see that the policy made is not divorced from the real situation; and the real situation should chiefly relate to the organisation and in this case, the state. Therefore, the policymaker should make compromises because a policy will likely be realistic. Similarly, while a decision is being made, the decision maker must demonstrate utmost rationality.

In the context of this study, the decision-making theory fits in because it supports the central argument of the paper. The central argument is the decision to blend a kinetic approach and political approach into arriving at a target which is nothing other than the attainment of a permanent solution that

points to putting a stop to the prevailing insecurity situation in the south-east region of the country; which is tied to agitation for succession by non-state actors such as the Indigenous People Of Biafra (IPOB) or the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB); thereby, attempting to disrupt the electoral process. This is with particular reference to the conduct of the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election.

According to the theory, the Nigerian state, standing as a sovereign entity, has the prerogative to make decisions with recourse to compromise(s) to fulfill the objective of the state. However, a delay could have a ripple effect on the entire country considering the prevailing bleeding economy; in the sense that the nation's treasury would most likely be affected drastically as more funds that ordinarily should have been deployed to other sectors of the Nigerian economy, finds its way to the south-east region through bogus budgetary allocation and eventual release of funds to curtail the excesses of insecurity; to the detriment of the economy, even though, there is the argument that the extra funding is meant to have a free, fair, credible and more importantly, peacefully 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election. On the other hand, based on the decision-making theory, there is the argument that the extra funding as it were, should have been avoided and the funds saved, if vital and sufficient compromises were made by the state.

With specific respect to the 2021 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election, the decision-making theory which entails the principle of considering the well-being and happiness of the people in the electoral process; played a significant role in the maintenance of law and order in the bid to give peace a chance before, during and after the election. However, peace would not be well achieved because of inadequate consultations with stakeholders. The probability of attaining the required peace during the electioneering process was extremely low owing to the threat by the leadership of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Nevertheless, there was the thought that if there was a breakthrough in negotiations about the attainment of peace, a vote would be accorded an opportunity to perform his or her franchise without any form of hindrance, as a civic responsibility, in the overall determination of the eventual outcome of the election; which will most likely be in line with the decision-making theory vis-

a-vis the total benefits that the people will derive from the preferred policy of a political party of choice. However, a 2008 study of voters' behaviour in Sweden revealed that there is evidence of self-interested 'pocketbook voting' whereby voters respond to direct promises of politicians for personal economic benefits.

Socio-Economic Challenges and the Nigerian State

Socio-economic challenges in Nigeria have reached an alarming proportion in recent times especially concerning the disturbing economic quagmire in the country, begging for answers. In Nigeria, the socio-economic challenges revolve around several factors that have a negative influence on the survival of the Nigerian state vis-a-vis its people. This points to poor economic activities, lack of voter education through sensitization, cultural and religious discrimination, overpopulation, unemployment, underemployment, corruption, high rate of illiteracy, poor economic growth, and low digitalization of the public sector. Others are poor social and economic relations, ethnicity, poverty, insecurity of lives and properties, nepotism, election manipulation, and violence.

It might interest us to know that all the above-mentioned factors are interwoven in many insecure developing countries of the world and Nigeria is not an exception. Insecurity negates every development of human endeavour; be it political or economic because development can only take place under a secured political environment. For instance, an election at any level cannot be conducted in an environment of insecurity. This can be attested to with the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election in which over 30,000 men and officers of the Nigeria Police Force were deployed to the state to maintain law and order aside the militarization of the state and the entire Southeast region of the country.

The Electoral Act frowns at the violence connected to elections and it is punishable with up to four years imprisonment or a fine of N500,000.00 or both. However, the violence witnessed before and during the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election shows a lack of respect for the law. Nigeria's electoral umpire, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and the Nigerian people have expressed concern over the wave of insecurity in Anambra state ahead of the November 2021 gubernatorial election. To this end,

in the bid to navigate this socio-economic challenge known as insecurity, every stakeholder in Anambra state was expected to be conscious of this monster called 'insecurity' and find ways how to reverse the trend to achieve a peaceful election in Anambra state. This can be replicated in other off-season elections in Edo, Kogi, Imo, Bayelsa, Ekiti and Osun states.

However, at the countdown to the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election amid the security challenge that crippled economic activities, posed a threat to life and properties as well as altered the peaceful co-existence in the south-east region of Nigeria; the governors of the region, in an emergency meeting at Imo state government house set up a regional security outfit codenamed Ebubeagu with the desire and objective to curtail the lingering security crises in the region. After the meeting, a communique was issued by Engineer David Umahi, the then governor of Ebonyi state; directing the Attorney Generals and Commissioners of justice for the five south-east states in the region to work with the joint security committee that has been established during the meeting. Accordingly, they were saddled with the responsibility to come out with an amendment of the existing laws of the five federated units; to reflect the new Ebubeagu security outfit with its headquarters at Enugu. Furthermore, the communique states that the security outfit shall collaborate with the Nigerian Police Force and other security agencies in her operation to protect lives and properties in the southeast region of Nigeria.

Meanwhile, before the creation of the Ebubeagu security outfit, the leaders of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) had founded the Eastern Security Network to tackle the pervasive attacks by armed herdsmen in the region and to proffer solutions to the unsafe surroundings; hence, Ebubeagu security outfit was rejected by Pro-Biafran Group on the ground that the security outfit is an extension of the conventional security agencies such as the Nigeria Police Force of which in recent time, there has been loggerheads amongst the group and the Police including other government security agencies like the Department of State Security (DSS) in the South-East region of the country.

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and 2021 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election

Since the then incumbent governor of Anambra state, Willie Obiano of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) was time-bound in line with the 1999 Nigerian constitution as amended; not to seek re-election for a third consecutive term; paved the way for another governorship election to be held; to vote a candidate as a prospective occupier of the State House when Willie Obiano eventually vacates office. This was meant to guide against creating a political vacuum in the Anambra state government house. According to the INEC's national commissioner and chairman, information and voter education, Festus Okoye; the timetable for the 2021 governorship election was released based on INEC's regulations and guidelines. To this end, section 4.5 (1) and (2) stand as legal frameworks for the conduct of political party primaries. Hence, the political parties are to make a list of their members available for inspection by monitors from the commission.

Similarly, sections 9(1) and (2) of the same regulations and guidelines require political parties to make available to the commission the list of aspirants seeking nomination to contest for elective offices as well as the list of members of the elective committee for each party that intends to conduct primary election. For the political parties that opt for direct primaries, the list of delegates must be made available to the commission as well as the list of aspirants at least 7 days before the conduct of the primary election.

Table 1: Time Table for 2021 Anambra State Governorship Poll

S/No	Schedule	Period
1.	Submission of names for direct primary election by political parties.	Seven days before the primary election.
2.	The conduct of political party primaries for nomination of candidates for election.	Between 10th June and 10th July 2021.
3.	Governorship election	6th November, 2021.

Source: INEC (2021).

The data in Table 1 indicates that seven days before the primary election; political parties are expected to submit names of their candidates for election as scheduled by INEC. Secondly, political parties are scheduled to conduct primaries for the nomination of their candidates between 10th June and 10th July

2021. Finally, the 2021 governorship election was scheduled for 6th November, 2021. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) released the final list of candidates for the 2021 Anambra gubernatorial election. According to the electoral body, all the candidates for the election are males and include no persons with disability. Also, the election was to be decided by 2,525,471 registered voters according to INEC. Below is Table 2 revealing the data for party candidates and their running mates for the 2021 Anambra state Gubernatorial election.

Table 2: Party Candidates and Running Mates for the 2021 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election

S/No	Party	Candidate	Running Mate
1.	A	Maduka Godwin	Obi Ifeatu
2.	A A	Etiaba Chukwu	Uchebo Nwao
3.	A A C	Nwankwo Chidozie	Nwaebili Clare
4.	A D C	Akachukwu Nwankwo	Lawrence Ughamada
5	A D P	Ume-Ezeoke Douglas	Maxwell Chukwujama
6	A P C	Andy Uba	Chukwuemeka Okafor
7	A P G A	Charles Soludo	Ibezim Gilbert
8	A P M	Onyejegbu Okwudili	Onuora Letitia
9	A P P	Azubuike Echetebe	Ogbonna Nnabike
10	B P	Chika Okere	Chika Adibe
11	L P	Agbasimalo Emmanuel	Muokwue Peter
12	N N P P	Ohajimkpo Emeka	Nwude Ebelechukwu
13	N R M	Ezenwafor Victor	Ojukwu Chuwuma
14	P D P	Valentine Ozigbo	Lilian Enemo
15	P R P	Nnamdi Nwawuo	Igbo Gozie
16	S D P	Uzoh Godwin	Chira Obiora
17	Y P P	Ifeanyi Ubah	Okechukwu Eze
18	Z L P	Okonkwo Francis	Jessie Uka

Source: INEC (2021).

The data in Table 2 shows that candidates and their running mates for the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election are arranged side by side in corresponding positions to their respective party, numbering 18. Also, the parties are arranged alphabetically.

Table 3: Major Results of the 2021 Anambra State Gubernatorial Election

S/No	Party	Candidate	Running Mate	Popular Vote	Percentage
1.	APGA	Charles Soludo	Onyekachukwu Ibezim	112,229	46.47%
2.	PDP	Valentine Ozigbo	Lilian Enemo	53,807	22.28%
3.	APC	Andy Uba	Emeka Okafor	43,285	17.92%
4.	YPP	Ifeanyi Ubah	Okechukwu Eze	21,261	8.80%

Source: INEC (2021).

The data in Table 3 reveals that Charles Soludo of APGA and his running mate, Onyekachukwu Ibezim scored 112,229 votes which amounted to 46.47% to emerge No. 1 while Valentine Ozigbo of PDP and his running mate, Lillian Enemo received 53,807 votes equivalent to 22.28% to become No. 2. Andy Uba of APC and his running mate, Emeka Okafor obtained 43,285 votes which is equal to 17.92% to place No. 3 and Ifeanyi Ubah of YPP and his running mate, Okechukwu Eze scored 21,261 votes with 8.80% as No. 4.

INEC and the Verdict for the 2021 Anambra State Governorship Election

INEC returning officer for the 2021 gubernatorial election in Anambra State, Professor Florence Banku Obi, Vice Chancellor, University of Calabar declared from form EC8E at about 1.50 am on Wednesday, 10th November 2021; APGA candidate, former Nigerian central bank governor, Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo as the winner of the election having certified the requirement of the law by scoring the highest vote of 112,229 equivalent to 46.47% of total vote cast and obtained the required 25% in 2/3 of the 21 local government areas of the state. This was by the 1999 Nigerian constitution as amended. Prof. Florence Obi announced that the total number of valid votes for the election stood at 241,525; the total number of rejected votes was 8,108 and the total vote cast for the election was 249, 631 respectively. Above all, APGA won in 19 local government areas of the state which include Agwuata, Orumba North, Orumba South, Ihiala, Onitsha South, Onitsha North, Anaocha, Awka South, Awka North, Anambra East, Anambra West, Ayamelum, Dunukofia, Ekwusisgo, Idimili North, Idimili South, Njikoka, Nnewi South and Oyi. PDP

won in Agbaru local government area and YPP won in Nnewi local government area respectively.

Earlier, announcing the result of the rescheduled supplementary election of Ihiala Local Government Area (LGA) of the state, the returning officer of the LGA, Dr German Anagbogu of the University of Calabar announced that Prof. Charles Soludo of APGA pooled 8,283 out of 148,000 total number of vote cast in the supplementary election to stand above other candidates in the gubernatorial race. Meanwhile, 12,798 stood as the total number of accredited voters for the supplementary election. The governorship election results have been adjudged legitimate by an election observer group, Yiaga Africa. However, the governorship candidate of APC, Andy Uba along with 10 minor candidates/parties challenged the result of the winner as announced by INEC at the Electoral Tribunal and the Appeal Court. Not satisfied with the verdict of the tribunal, Andy Uba and his associates proceeded to the Appeal Court; and the Court ruled that Uba’s nomination was void on the ground that the APC gubernatorial primary was illegally conducted; hence, confirmed Charles Soludo as Governor-elect of Anambra state. (en.m.wikipedia.org;)

Table 4: Major Results of Ihiala Local Government Area Rescheduled Supplementary 2021 Anambra State Governorship Election

S/No	Party	Candidate	Running Mate	Popular Vote
1.	APGA	Charles Soludo	Onyekachukwu Ibezim	8,283
2.	PDP	Valentine Ozigbo	Lilian Enemo	2,485
3.	APC	Andy Uba	Emeka Okafor	343
4.	YPP	Ifeanyi Ubah	Okechukwu Eze	344

Source: INEC (2021).

The data in Table 4 reveals that Charles Soludo of APGA polled 8,283 votes in the Ihiala local government area rescheduled supplementary 2021 Anambra state governorship election. Valentine Ozigbo of PDP scored 2,485 votes. Andy Uba of APC obtained 343 votes while Ifeanyi Uba of YPP got 344 votes.

2021 Anambra State Governorship Election: The Obstacles

It cannot be overemphasised that there were numerous obstacles to the 2021 Anambra State Governorship Election held on the 6th of November, 2021.

Against this background, Queen Esther Ivaonus of Premium Times reported on the day of the election that the governorship election was characterized by vote buying. To corroborate this report, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) stated that some unidentified party agents were seen giving money to voters in exchange for their votes in polling units across the 21 LGAs of the state. In a statement made available to Sunday Punch of 7-11-21, the CDD said it observed instances of vote buying across party lines in different parts of the state, while some officers and men of the Nigerian Police Force were feigning ignorance when vote buying was being observed during the governorship election at polling units 010 and 011, Umonachi II Ward, Dunu Kofa Local Government Area of the State. The three leading parties in the election, APGA, APC, and PDP had lured voters with between ₦6,000 and ₦10,000 to vote for their candidates (Sahara Reporters, November 6th, 2021). Sa'eed Usaini of CDD on 7th November 2021 reported that while vote buying was going on, securing operatives was looking the other way. In many reported cases, police personnel in particular have been alleged to have compromised to vote buying by looking the other way.

A coalition of over 70 civil society organizations under the aegis of Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room stated that the gubernatorial election in Anambra State had widespread vote buying to include the sale of votes for amounts ranging from ₦10,000.00 to ₦6,000.00 at various locations in the state. Furthermore, the organization noted that in some polling units vote buying was done discretely while in other polling units, vote buying was carried out in full glare without prevention by the security operatives. 14 political parties out of the 18 political parties in the Anambra State gubernatorial race had agents in less than 25% of polling booths visited (Ene Obi, Convener; Asma'u Joda and James Ugochukwu, Co-conveners, Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, 7th November 2021). Sa'eed Usani of the CDD on 7th November 2021 observed that there was malfunctioning of BVAS across many polling units in the state. For example, the BVAs failed to detect or recognize voters' faces and failed to authenticate their fingerprints; hence, those prospective voters affected by the malfunction were persuaded to exercise some patience until the challenge was fixed; but to no avail. So, INEC resorted to the use of manual methods of accreditation in polling units, particularly in Awka South, Awka North, Idemili

North, Idemili South, Ayamelu, and Anambra West Local Government Area of the State which is against the Electoral Act, 2021.

CDD reported that in polling units across the state, it took between 5 minutes to 10 minutes or more to accredit one voter. INEC ad-hoc officials were noticed to be experiencing some difficulty in operating the BVAS machines. In some polling booths, the machines were working slowly, and took a long time to accredit a single voter. This points to the delay in the accreditation process vis-à-vis the voting process; which paved the way for the extension of the terminal voting period of 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. The dysfunction of BVAS machines impaired the smooth conduct of the Anambra state gubernatorial elections; and hence, disenfranchised some intended voters. Moving on, the CDD reported that some polling units were not accessible to some categories of people with special needs, such as the blind, the lame, and the dumb. Again, the organization observed that security agents were absent in some polling units when accreditation started and this development heightened uncertainty amongst voters and officials. In the same vein, INEC officials were not on the ground in some polling units as of 8.00 am when accreditation was scheduled to commence. Many voters were frustrated as a result of the lateness of officials in commencing accreditation. Low voter turnout in some parts of the state was borne out of fear of attacks by IPOB the secessionist group (Premium Times Report, 6th November, 2021).

2021 Anambra State Governorship Election: The Gains

The Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room said that the gubernatorial election in Anambra State in 2021 was generally peaceful. The withdrawal of the sit-at-home order pronounced by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has contributed to the opening of the polls and the relatively peaceful atmosphere in the state before, during and after the election. The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) noted that the heavy deployment of security agents reduced the tendency to commit crimes but not without a few incidents of intimidation. However, this defied the context of fear and uncertainty that preceded the election day of 6th November 2021. Security agents present in polling booths across the state respected the rules of engagement and acted

with professionalism. Furthermore, the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room reported that voter turnout was good contrary to earlier apprehension. Also, INEC Ad-hoc officials in some instances gave priority to the elderly, the people living with disability and pregnant women in most of the polling units in the state. As the hours progressed, more voters began to show up at the polling units as information spread that accreditation and voting were largely peaceful.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that there were pockets of violence at some polling booths during the Anambra state gubernatorial election. Secondly, there was militarization and heavy policing in the State. Thirdly, there was relative peace during the election. Also, the findings show that poverty was largely responsible for vote buying. The findings also revealed that there was poor mastering of BVAS machines by INEC ad-hoc officials. Finally, there was the malfunctioning of BVAS machines as well as the late arrival of election materials. Discussing these findings one after the other; first, there is indeed no doubt that there were pockets of violence during the 2021 Anambra State election as reported by media houses such as Africa Independent Television (AIT) and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). However, the situation did not escalate as security agencies took control and respected the rules of engagement; while bringing the aspect of professionalism to bear. To corroborate this point, it was not violence-free particularly in Orsumughu and Lili communities in the Ihiala local government area of the state, especially in the afternoon of Tuesday, 9th November 2021; as reported by *ThisDay* Newspaper on 10th November 2021.

Accordingly, as the election was ongoing, gunmen suspected to be members of Eastern Security Network (ESN) the military wing of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) engaged in a gun battle with the national joint operatives; which comprises the personnel of Nigeria Mobile Police Force, Nigerian Army, Nigerian Air-Force and Nigerian Navy amongst other supporting security agencies. However, the situation was surmounted by the national joint operatives. In the same vein, armed thugs usually stroke violence at every election cycle in Southern Ijaw, Nembe, Brass and Ekeremor local government areas of Bayelsa state; thereby, giving the law enforcement agency a task to

contend with. Aside from this, the Election Security Threats Assessment (ESTA) Survey Report explores election risk factors in the November 2019 Kogi State governorship election. Data for the study were collected using the Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EMVAT) to elicit information from 929 respondents across the state. The data were analysed descriptively and interpretatively using tables, frequency distribution and simple percentages.

Meanwhile, the election in the Ihiala Local Government Area (LGA) of the state which took place on the 6th of November, 2021 was bedevilled with violence and irregularities in polling booths across the (LGA). The results in the affected polling booths were cancelled by their presiding officers based on the Electoral Act, 2020. Following the cancellation, INEC returning officer for Anambra State, Florence Obi declared the election inconclusive. Consequently, INEC rescheduled a supplementary election for the 9th of November, 2021 to enable it to determine the winner of the 2021 gubernatorial election. The militarization and huge policing of the 2021 Anambra State Governorship Election was possibly to neutralize the threat to peace as a result of the sit-at-home order that was issued by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) before the election which led eventually to low turnout of voters during the election; despite being lifted at a later date. Similarly, the activities of militants in the South-South region put Bayelsa state on a prevalent security threat especially in hotspots around the swamps during its off-season election.

According to *Premium Times*, November, 2021, the low turnout of voters reflects the climate of uncertainty leading to the election as well as the historically high level of voter apathy that has been recorded in the state in the past. Furthermore, in a publication titled, *Nigeria's 2023 state elections: Monitoring Hotspots States*, the Nextier Violent Conflict Database, listed Kogi state as one of the states with prosperity for electoral violence based on historical evidence and the existing security situation. However, the withdrawal of the sit-at-home order pronounced by IPOB was largely responsible for the relative peace witnessed during the 2021 Anambra State Governorship election held on the 6th of November, 2021. This was confirmed by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) that the pronouncement withdrawing the sit-at-home order by IPOB has contributed to the opening of the polls and the desired

relatively peaceful atmosphere being recorded during the election as more voters began to show up at the polling booths when information spread to the electorates that accreditation and voting were proceeding largely peaceful.

The researcher posits that there is no gainsaying the fact that poor standard of living might be one of the root causes of manipulation as witnessed in vote buying during the 2021 Anambra State Governorship election. What could have been responsible for this if not for poverty; that a voter surrenders his or her welfare for 4 years in exchange for ₦6,000.00 – ₦10,000.00, which is about 1 or 2 US dollars? Those who are into vote buying are likely to have identified a major weakness associated with vote selling and this is likely to be ‘poverty’ amongst other socio-economic factors.

With regards to the rate of poverty in Nigeria, the Federal Bureau of Statistics Nigeria Living Standards Survey covering 2019, indicates that 52.1% of rural dwellers are poor while 18.04% of urban dwellers are classified as poor. The same, according to the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, an estimated 4 out of 10 individuals in Nigeria have real capital expenditures below ₦137,430 per year which translates to ₦376.15 per day. Besides, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, 55% of the active population (15-34) years are either unemployed or underemployed; hence, 13.1 million are unemployed while 11.3 are underemployed. In other words, the youth unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 53% in the fourth quarter of 2020 from 40.80% in the fourth quarter of 2020 the year preceding the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial polls.

Lewis (1966) posits that poverty has become a way of life for a group of people as a result of the activities of other people. In the context of this conversation, ‘some other people’ as mentioned by Lewis could be the political gladiators who are bent on impoverishing ‘a group of people’ as stated in Lewis’ assertion; to gain power through the menace of vote buying. However, some women of the Ebenebe community in Awka North local government area of Anambra state were noticed to have refused to accept ₦5,000.00 each to vote against their conscience. The women were seen chanting songs against a political party and its agents (The Nation Newspaper, 7th, November, 2021). The poor mastering of the Bimodal Verification Accreditation System (BVAS) by INEC ad-hoc officials is most probably a result of the usual fire brigade approach which was adopted

in the training of these officials. At this junction, it would not be out of place to reiterate the fact that CDD lamented the persistent failure of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines across polling units in the state which had to some extent impaired the smooth conduct of the elections by way of disenfranchising some intended voters. The malfunctioning of the BVAS machines was tied to technical failure and lack of telecommunication service amongst other factors which had contributed to the drawback of the electoral process.

Late arrival of electoral materials in some polling booths during the 2021 Anambra state gubernatorial election cannot be over-emphasized. Generally, this has been a recurring decimal associated with the Nigerian electoral process over the years. More often than not, it has been linked to logistics challenges which have caused unnecessary delays in the commencement of elections at various political dispensations in Nigeria. For instance, in the past, the Presidential and National Assembly elections were scheduled by (INEC) for 16th February 2019 while state and local government elections were scheduled for 2nd March 2019. However, the elections were postponed by one week; in other words, the elections were rescheduled for 23rd February 2019 for the Presidential and National Assembly; and 9th March 2019 for state and local government. Against this background, INEC cited logistics challenges vis-à-vis the late arrival of electoral materials in the country as a reason for the postponement. In the same vein, Ihiala local government supplementary election which ordinarily should have been conducted on Monday 8th November 2021 was rescheduled for Tuesday 9th November 2021 by INEC owing to logistics challenges.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

The 2021 Anambra State gubernatorial election has come and gone but its memory lingers on. The tension that occupied the media space before the election speaks volumes. The sit-at-home order issued by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) towards the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra created the prevalent tension in the entire South East Geopolitical zone particularly Anambra State during the period under review. To this end, the personnel of the security agencies which includes the military, the police

and other sister agencies such as the Nigerian Civil Defence Corp, Nigerian Immigration Service etc were drafted to the state to forestall any breakdown of law and order before, during and after the election had been concluded and to restore peace in troubled areas in the state and environs.

According to Thomas Hobbes, the fear of violence and death leads people to seek peace especially when the people have been living in constant fear. Going by this, assertion, the majority of the residents of the Southeast Geo-Political Zone; particularly those that are residents in Anambra state where the gubernatorial election was scheduled for 6th November 2021 live in fear; and yawn for peace to be able to express their franchise at the election. To this end, leaders of goodwill intervened in the matter by reaching out to IPOB leaders. After due consultation, the sit-at-home order was lifted and this paved the way for peace amid pockets of violence in some polling booths across the state. However, vote buying flourished across party lines which negates the principle of free and fair election. The malfunctioning of some machines of the Biometric Verification Accreditation System (BVAS) was noticed during the election.

Nevertheless, the security personnel were observed to have displayed a level of professionalism in polling booths across the state which had led to minimal incidents of intimidation of voters. Besides, INEC personnel attended to persons with disabilities including pregnant women as well as the elderly in polling booths ahead of other voters. By and large, the uncertainty that preceded the election was a thing of concern to everyone as it was viewed as a threat to the electoral process in Nigeria. Consequently, the following recommendations are presented:

1. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) should sensitize the people about the negative implications of violence before, during and after elections and the need to stay away from violence completely.
2. The government should de-emphasize heavy militarization and policing of elections to allay the fear of the citizenry; thereby, reducing the high rate of underlying illnesses such as hypertension.
3. Relative peace during elections could be sustained through other means such as persuasion, appeal etc and not necessarily through intimidation

or coercion. Therefore, dialogue should be employed regularly to achieve conflict resolution and relative peace.

4. The welfare of citizens should be uppermost amongst the government's numerous agendas. For instance, poverty alleviation programmes should receive a boost if the stoppage of vote buying is anything to go by.
5. Training of INEC ad-hoc staff should be done in an atmosphere devoid of haste. Haste does not lead to good results; hence, the poor mastering of BVAS machines by INEC officials.
6. Managing telecommunication service should be prioritized by INEC during the election by employing the services of expertise to deal promptly with any hitch. It is high time INEC drew up a roadmap that will give it a direction in line with how time could be prioritized to put a stoppage to logistics challenges.

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CORRUPTION AND PAYROLL FRAUD IN FEDERAL MDAS IN NIGERIA: AN APPRAISAL OF IPPIS AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

The study examined the Impact of IPPIS on the Prevention of Payroll Fraud and Corruption in Federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. This paper therefore looks at the trend of corruption in federal ministries, why it is perpetrated, and its effect on governance. Using qualitative content analysis, the study adopts the Fraud Triangle theory to explain the factors that make employees engage in Payroll Fraud. The study finds out that there is an existence of ghost workers on the payroll of the federal ministries and the Implementation of IPPIS has minimized the lingering problem of payroll fraud. The paper therefore concludes that the country prepares itself for self-destruction with the general acceptance of the situation and a corresponding absence of will by the state and its institutions to do anything drastic about it giving rise to compromise in the area of development, growth progress, decency and stability in the country. The paper recommends that the federal government should look into the Federal ministries where the problems of ghost workers are prevalent and address the problem.

Keywords: *Corruption, Management Information System, IPPIS, Payroll Fraud, Ghost Worker.*

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Introduction

In Nigeria, the impact of governance is felt more at the grassroots level, that is, where the majority of the people of the country live. As a result, the local government level as the third tier of government in the country is charged with the responsibility of delivery of governmental services and making common-man feel the impact of the government that governs them. Hence, there are quite several duties and responsibilities that they discharge as functions either at the constitutional level or at the sub-constitutional (i.e., conventional) level. The essence is to make the grassroots or local government also witness development in their domain. Orewa and Adewumi (1983); Ibang (1999).

On the surface, the commonest challenge that easily comes to the mind of scholars, observers, and administrations alike is the problem of finance. Obikeze and Anthony (2004). Funds are just not usually available in quantity that can facilitate the easy transformation of the local government areas. It is common knowledge that in the Nigerian federal system, the revenue of the government is usually shared among the federal, state, and local governments, with the local government areas getting the least share of the statutory allocation. Various allocations of the federal government are evident here. Yet the responsibilities of the third tier of government are increasing by the day with a growing expectation to perform at a governmental level. Unfortunately, however, the local governments are equally coping and living with more serious challenges in their conduct as a tier of government and that is the hydra-headed challenge of crime and corruption. These challenges also contribute significantly to deterring or slowing down the local government effort as so much of resources are lost through these means.

Management information systems (MIS) have evolved as an answer to the complexity and increased communication needs in the public sector. As the public sector develops, the administrators hire assistants and subordinates to staff the various departments in the organization. As these various assistants grow in number and as the organization increases its specialization, a need for accurate and timely information becomes more prevalent. For effective management of Local Governments, therefore, the information system is very important because it provides information and supports the managerial

decision-making process. The information system processes data by way of recording, processing, and storing of such data. Also, it improves information flow and communication between departments and aids decision-making at all levels of management (Sydney, 1986).

Payroll Fraud has become the most viable threat to the global economy and requires the maximum attention of forensic accountants and traditional auditors, as well as anti-graft bodies worldwide despite the tremendous efforts to eradicate fraudulent activities, it is indeed discovered that payroll fraud in its various natures continue to grow in frequency and severity. Abdullahi and Mansor (2015). Payroll fraud is considered a global phenomenon since it has universally penetrated both the private and public sectors to the extent that no country is protected from its taint. Although developing countries suffer the most. To address the problems of payroll fraud, many countries in the world have introduced an integrated payroll system for public officers to foster accountability, enhance transparency, and promote good governance. However, the name given to the software differs from one country to another. For instance, in the United States of America, the software is called Payroll Personnel System (PPS), Integrated Personnel and Payroll System (IPPS) in Uganda, Integrated Personnel and Payroll Database (IPPD) in Ghana, the Personnel Control and Information Systems (PCIS) in Tanzania (Okoye and Gbegi, 2013; Abdulyakeen, 2020).

Nowadays, payroll fraud and other fraudulent activities have become the order of the day in the Nigerian ministries and it has become a normal way of life among civil servants (Adebisi, 2014). Payroll fraud can be found in almost all the Nigerian ministries, and local governments where the government officials use the power of their offices to defraud their organizations. This statement can be justified by the series of frauds perpetrated on the National Pension Commission and the Nigerian Police Force as well as the Federal High Court of Nigeria (Omoyefor, 2017).

In Nigeria, the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System was approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) in February (2006), and implemented in phases. The project implementation commenced at the Bureau of Public Service Reforms before its management was transferred to the Office

of Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF) in October 2008. The project indeed went live in April 2007 and was piloted in six (6) MDAs: Education; Foreign Affairs, Finance (including the Budget Office of the Federation), Works; Information and Communications (as it was then known), and the National Planning Commission as Phase 1. In 2009, it was expanded to cover another eleven (11) ministries, departments, and agencies, including Aviation; Health; Agriculture; Petroleum Resources; Transport; Office of the Accountant General of the Federation; Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation; and the Federal Civil Service Commission as the Phase 11.

Statement of the Problem

Before the introduction of an integrated payroll system in the Nigerian public sector, the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation discovered that Ministries Departments, and Agencies operated different bank accounts to the tune of 12, 622 scattered in various commercial banks (Abdullahi, and Mansor, 2015). This has led to the initiation of different number of Public Financial Management Reforms implemented by successive governments to strengthen and improve the financial capacity of the public sector, promote efficiency and effectiveness, prevent financial leakages, and improve the salary payment platform. Among the reforms are the Introduction of a Treasury Single Account (TSA), International Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), Government Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS), and International Public Sector Accounting Standard (IPSAS), but the aim of implementing the reforms has not been achieved. It is as a result of the failure of the old methods of salary payment that the Bureau of Public Service Reforms under the Economic Governance Reform recommended the implementation of IPPIS to replace the old method of salary payment. The manual, file-based personnel system operated by the public service meant that the government did not have accurate and reliable information about the size and nature of its workforce (Kaoje, Nabila, and Idris, 2020). The incidence of 'ghost workers' was prevalent, with fraudulent public servants claiming and collecting the salaries of non-existent workers.

Although, prior studies have identified the existence of payroll fraud in the Nigerian Public Sector, the studies by (Olaleye, 2008; Obaro, 2014; Gbegi, and Adebisi; 2015; Abdullahi, and Mansor, 2015; Abdulyakeen, A. (2021) argued that payroll fraud in the Nigerian Public Sector for over the years have accounted for billions of Naira lost to syndicate that has deprived the government in providing basic amenities to the people. However, none of these studies have tried to assess management Information Systems using IPPIS on the Prevention of Payroll Fraud in the Federal Ministries and local governments in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

- i. Examine the extent to which the implementation of IPPIS has prevented the existence of ghost workers on the payroll;
- ii. Assess the extent to which the implementation of IPPIS has reduced overcasting of personnel cost;
- iii. Examine the extent to which the implementation of IPPIS has reduced multiple salary payments to employees.

Clarification of Concepts

Management Information Systems

An information system refers to a set of procedures that collect (or retrieve), process, store, and disseminate information to support decision-making and control. The basic operations of an information system are to collect, process, store, and disseminate information in an organization. The information may be collected from outside the organization or from the external environment and may be distributed to insiders and outsiders. Information systems are part of organizations and they come out in the form of conflicts, compromises, and agreements (Ralph et al, 1986).

Management Information Systems refers to everything that deals with the computer-assisted flow and presentation of information and can be considered to support the data-processing function of data transmission, data handling, and

record keeping. Aron (1969, p. 213-367) defines MIS as an information system that provides the manager with the information, he needs to make decisions. It shows that public administrators can make use of information provided by computers in making decisions to solve problems. We may define a Management Information System (MIS) in this paper as a computer-based system that makes information available to users with similar needs. The users usually comprise a formal organization. The information describes the organization in terms of what has happened in the past, what is happening now, and what is likely to happen in the future. The information is made available in the form of periodic reports, special reports, and outputs. The information output is used by both public administrators and non-managers in organizations as key decisions to solve problems. To this end, a management information system consists of the following:

- i. Computer hardware consists of the central processing unit i.e., memory, disk drives, printers, etc; computer software consists of general computer operating systems and all programmes used to process data, generate reports, and manage the database.
- ii. A database is an integrated collection of stored files that contain data useful in the operation of the organization.
- iii. Operating Personal consists of employees' information such as their skills, rank, experience, etc, and statistical information such as labour turnover, absence rate of employees, etc. (Raymond, 1993).

We may conclude our definition of MIS as “an integrated, human/machine system providing information to support operations, management, and decision-making functions in an organization” (Dalton, 1979). Therefore, the general tasks that management information systems could perform in the local government include:

- i. Transaction processing;
- ii. Data file definition and maintenance;
- iii. Report generation;

- iv. Inquiry processing and;
- v. Decision-making.

Payroll Fraud

Fraud has become a global menace threatening the survival of organizations, governments, nations, and business communities. Any organization is prone to fraud (Ruankaew, 2013) and no nation is immune, although developing countries and their various states suffer the most pain (Okoye and Gbegi, 2013). According to Abdullahi and Mansor (2014), fraud is defined as a deceit that involves an intentional distortion of the truth or misrepresentation or concealment of a material fact to take advantage of another to enjoy some benefits at the expense of others. It is also seen as a generic term that embraces all the multifarious means that human ingenuity can devise and are resorted to by one individual to get any advantage over another (Osisoma, 2013). According to Osisoma (2013), fraud is a conscious premeditated action of a person or group of persons to alter the truth and or fact for selfish personal monetary gain.

Similarly, Adekanya (1986), Ojigbede (1986), and Sydney (1986) in their definitions agree that fraud involves the use of tricks to distort the truth to deprive an individual of what he/she is entitled to. Fraud in the Nigerian public sector could be attributed to low wages in civil service, lack of accountability among public servants, inequality in the distribution of resources, promotion of ethnicity lack of nationalism, and weakness of internal controls in governmental agencies among others (Bello, 2011; Okoye and Gbegi, 2013; Gbagi and Adebisi, 2015).

Payroll fraud involves the theft of cash from government establishments through the preparations of the establishment's payroll. Some prominent examples of payroll fraud are: Pay cheque diversions, Kickbacks, and Ghost workers. Like other forms of crimes, payroll fraud is a type of crime that is prevalent at all levels of government in Nigeria. Babalobi (2008) observes that as a type of corruption, it continues because the society and the environment we live in today support material accomplishment. Payroll fraud thrives because

of greed on the part of public officers to divert government funds to personal accounts to make quick money.

Corruption

The term “corruption” has been given many definitions; probably as a result of the widespread attention it has gotten in society and the fact that academic circles have overused the phrase. The broad definition of corruption is a perversion of a transformation for good or bad. Specifically, breaking the law for one’s benefit and financial gain is considered corruption or corrupt behavior Terlumun, (2015). Additionally, corruption is the illicit pursuit of riches, power, or personal advantage at the expense of the general public, as well as the abuse of governmental authority for personal gain (Lipset & Lenz, 2000; Abdulyakeen, 2021).

Additionally, corruption is a behavioral style in which a person deviates from the official obligations of a public role for personal (gains) related to (personal, close family, private clique, pecuniary, or status gains). It is a behavior that contravenes laws and prohibits the use of certain sorts of (duties) for personal gain in terms of influence (Nye, 1967). This term covers actions like bribery (using a reward to influence someone in a position of trust’s judgment), nepotism (granting favors based on personal connections rather than merit), and misappropriation (illegally using public resources for personal gain) Ijewereme and Dunmade (2014). According to Osoba (1996), corruption is an anti-social conduct that grants improper benefits to people in violation of legal and moral norms and hinders efforts to raise the standard of life for all people. Different people have different definitions of corruption. However, it is a “...abuse of authority and public trust and misuse of official positions and responsibilities for self-serving aims, whether for personal, private, or collective benefit” within the context of politics and government (Jega, 2005). It involves behaviour that transgresses and veers from formal guidelines and practices governing the conduct of public office holders for personal gain. Through the use or abuse of public institutions, it is enabled at the level of governance.

Corruption in the governance of a democratic society poses serious challenges to the society as a whole. There is no doubt that the depth of corruption in Nigeria

is very alarming, especially under the current fourth republic. Corruption in the budgeting process of the economy hampers the provision of infrastructure and generally stunts economic development. It also creates delays in the conception and execution of development projects that will improve the lives of citizens. Massive embezzlement, extortion, and looting of the public treasury endanger the culture of integrity, patriotism, and respect for national values. It undermines the cherished values of service and sacrifice. Indeed, it erodes the principle of leadership by example.

Additionally, society suffers due to the diversion of the funds intended for certain useful projects like roads, as the funds are diverted into private pockets, resulting in bad roads becoming death traps. Corruption has seriously aggravated the level of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in February 2014 put the number of Nigerians living in poverty at 112.5 million or 62.6 percent. The figures are scandalous for a country that is flowing in milk and honey. This, therefore, translates into suffering amid plenty. Corruption causes a reduction in the quality of goods and services available to the public, as some companies could cut corners to increase profit margins. Corruption affects investment, economic growth, and government expenditure choices; it also reduces private investment (Mauro, 1997).

Again, corruption has predicated the culture of violence and the heightened level of insurgency, whereby armed robbery, assassinations, and kidnappings hold sway. It has led to what Egwemi (2007, p.78) referred to as increasing the Accumulation of Terror (AOT) under the Fourth Republic. Corruption in democratic governance has succeeded in the pauperization of the average Nigerian and eroded the politics of principles, ideology, service, and sacrifice. Governance in Nigeria has turned into praise-singing, boo-licking, and political rhetoric because of which people hardly derive the benefits of governance. Corruption upsets ethnic balance and exacerbates problems of national integration in developing countries. For instance, if a corrupt but popular ethnic leader is replaced in his or her position, it 'may upset ethnic arithmetic' and the cohorts may revolt.

Theoretical Framework

Fraud Triangle Theory

The Fraud Triangle theory was developed by Donald Cressey (1950), a renowned criminologist, educator, and writer whose work has provided the framework for understanding the motives for fraud and the characteristics of fraudsters (Jaja, 2012). The model was developed based on observations Cressey made about the behaviors of 250 criminals who were serving their jail sentences in a United States cell. Cressey observed common characteristics among the inmates and concluded that:

- a) The inmates committed the crimes as a result of non-sharable financial problems they faced.
- b) Took advantage of opportunities to defraud due to internal control weaknesses in organizations they served before their incarnations.
- c) They are capable of defending their criminal actions after committing the crime (Abdullahi and Mansor, 2015).

Based on these observations, Cressey hypothesized that for individuals to commit fraud, three factors must be present (Gbegi and Okoye, 2013). These factors are “pressure”, opportunity”, and ‘rationalization”. According to Albrecht (2008), whether the fraud benefited the perpetrator directly or benefited a perpetrator’s organization, the three conditions for fraud are always present for fraud to occur. Consequently, these three factors became the pillars of the fraud triangle theory. The top element of the diagram represents the pressure or motive to commit the fraudulent act while the two elements at the bottom are perceived opportunity and rationalization.

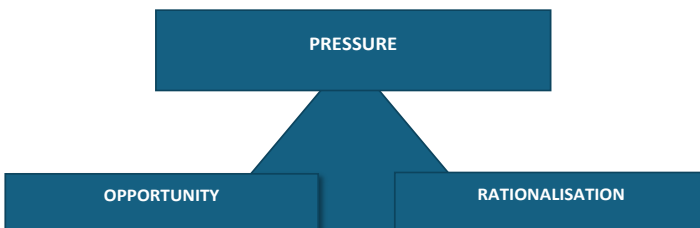


Figure 1: Fraud Triangle showing the three factors responsible for fraud Pressure

Perceived pressure or incentive relates to the motivation that leads to unethical behaviors. Every fraud perpetrator faces some type of pressure to commit unethical behavior. Albrecht (2006) points out that, the word perceived is important because pressure does not have to be real; if the perpetrators believe that they are pressurized, this belief can lead to fraud.

Opportunity

The second necessary element for fraud to occur is perceived opportunity. Opportunity is created by ineffective control or governance systems that allow an individual to commit organizational fraud. In the field of accounting, this is termed an internal control weakness. Perceived opportunity is similar to perceived pressure in that the opportunity does not have to be real. The perpetrator must simply believe or perceive that the opportunity exists.

Rationalization

The third element of the Fraud Triangle Theory is rationalization. This concept suggests that the perpetrator must formulate some type of morally acceptable rationalization before engaging in unethical behavior. Rationalization refers to the justification that an unethical behavior is something other than criminal activity. If an individual cannot justify unethical actions, it is unlikely that he or she will engage in fraud. The assumption of this theory is a clear picture of happenings in the Nigerian Public Sector because of the pressure mounted from the family and relatives of a public servant. This has made public servants violate the trust given to them by their organization which is motivated by the cultural forces that make perpetrators engage in payroll fraud.

Therefore, the implementation of IPPIS by the federal government will serve as a mechanism for addressing the perceived pressure and opportunity that gives public servants the ability to engage in payroll fraud. Additionally, some Nigerian public servants are involved in fraud in terms of inflating salaries and allowances of civil servants through the inclusion of ghost workers, multiple salary payments, and the cost of salaries, allowances, and budgetary allocations. The scenario continued until the government decided to adopt the

IPPIS platform for payment which has succeeded in minimizing the level of fraud in the payment system as narrated by the government.

Methodology

The study relied on content Analysis. This is because the paper is a theoretical review of existing literature on the impact of IPPIS on the Prevention of Payroll Fraud in Federal Ministries and MDAs. This means that the data for the study was generated from secondary sources. However, a Multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting the ministries. The first stage involved selecting the ministries through a purposive sampling technique. This is informed by the fact that only ministries used for pilot implementation of IPPIS in both Phase 1 and Phase 11 were selected. In the second stage of the selection of ministries, a simple random sampling technique through balloting was used to select four (4) ministries from Phase 1 (Aviation, Education, Finance and Foreign Affairs) and four (4) ministries from Phase 11 (Agric, Health, Transport, and work). The third stage involved selecting the custodian of IPPIS (Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, Office of the Auditor General of the Federation, and Office of the Head of Service of the Federation) through a purposive sampling technique.

Financial Information Systems and Nominal Roll before and after the implementation of IPPIS

The effect of IPPIS on the prevention of Ghost workers on the Payroll taking into cognizance the nominal roll of the MDA's before and after the IPPIS implementation.

Table 1. IPPIS and the Prevention of Ghost Workers on the Payroll

MDA/Code	MDA Nominal Roll		Number of Ghost Workers
	Before IPPS	After IPPIS	
Fed. Of Agric	114	90	24
Aviation	62	53	9
Fed. of Education	120	101	19
Fed. of Finance	123	105	18
Foreign Affairs	50	43	7
Health	118	96	22
Transport	98	74	24
Works	125	84	41
Office of the Accountant General of the Federation	253	240	13
Office of the Auditor General of the Federation	133	128	5
Office of the Head of Service of the Federation	105	86	19
TOTAL	1, 301	1100	201

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2019.

The table above depicts the staff strength of the ministries before and after their enrolment into the IPPIS platform, it has shown that about 201 ghost workers were identified from 2009 to 2019. This situation corroborated the statement made by Bright Okogu (2010), the Director-General (Budget Office of the Federation), that the war against ghost workers in the Federal Service was a committed one engaged by the Federal Government. Okogu said that the electronic data capturing system is part of the present administration’s strategy to stop wastages, particularly through leakages in the system as a result of significant losses in salaries and pension payments to ghost workers and retired employees in the Federal Civil Service. He further maintained that the implementation of the IPPIS in the country in December 2010 helped reduce the number of ghost workers on the government payroll by over 7,000 (Government saves N12b with IPPIS, 2010).

Table 2: IPPIS and the Prevention of Multiple Salary Payments among the Employees

MDA/Code	MDA's Nominal	Number of Employees Receiving Multiple Salaries
Agric	114	8
Aviation	62	3
Education	120	4
Finance	123	12
Foreign Affairs	50	0
Health	118	6
Transport	98	11
Works	125	3
Office of the Accountant General of the Federation	253	19
Office of the Auditor General of the Federation	133	13
Office of the Head of Service of the Federation	105	5

Source: Office of the Head of the Accountant General of the Federation (2019).

The table above indicates that the implementation of IPPIS has exposed those employees receiving salaries from multiple sources. This is supported by Olugbemi (2016), the Federal Government probed not fewer than 23, 306 federal civil servants, who have been accused by a panel of defrauding the government of millions of naira every month through an organized salary fraud. Olugbemi (2016) maintained that the preliminary report of an investigative committee, set up to probe the alleged fraudulent payment of salaries to either 'ghost' workers or payments to multiple accounts, indicated that some banks would also be called to answer questions on the huge scam. He added that, in a branch of one of the banks, over 300 accounts were said to have been opened in one day and all the accounts have become inactive. Similarly, the report from the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF) stated that, out of 312,000 civil servants, whose bank accounts had been checked so far in the exercise through the Bank Verification Number platform, the accounts of 23, 306 workers had questionable transactions.

Table 3: IPPIS and the Prevention of Overcasting of Personnel Cost

MDAs	Total Personnel Cost		Amount Saved	Total Salary		Amount Saved
	Before IPPIS	After IPPIS		Before IPPIS	After IPPIS	
	Agric	3,365,910,863	2,598,626,657	767,284,20	1,812,627,620	1,426,806,805
Aviation	143,505,709	120, 152, 838	23,352, 871	114,227,297	102,811,072	11,416,225
Education	94,749,103	76,548,054	18,201,049	79,443,965	72,648,992	6,794,973
Finance	381,330,699	300,421,976	80,908,723	338, 960,621	290, 545, 34	38, 415, 487
Foreign Affairs	245,345,245	241,100,246	4,222,999	123,231,233	120, 569, 396	2, 661, 837
Health	496,564,500	489,900,798	6,666, 702	389,789, 212	376, 223, 999	13, 565, 212
Transport	483,966,214	482,444,235	1,522,006	359,453,001	349, 111, 253	10, 341, 748
Office of the Accountant General of the Federation	256,549,134	251,999,258	4,549,876	254,579,146	253, 172, 479	1, 406, 667
Office of the Auditor General of the Federation	255,476,302	254,589,364	886, 938	243,459,745	243, 300, 466	159, 279
Office of the Head of the Federation	241,589,369	240,999,471	589,898	243,645,231	239, 999, 369	3, 645, 862

Source: Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (2019).

Based on the above table, has shown that the implementation of IPPIS has reduced the inflating of personnel costs of almost all the ministries’ departments and agencies. This happens as a result of automating all centralized payroll systems. For instance, the total salary of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs was N123, 231, 233 before the implementation of IPPIS, but after the implementation, it was N120, 569, 396. This means that there is a difference of N2,661,837 between what they have been paying as salary and the actual money.

Summary of Major Findings

The study revealed MIS on the flow of revenue will help the federal MDAs to know in advance of cash surpluses and deficits so that they can plan how to handle them. The control sub-system guides local government managers in

preparing the annual budget and provide feedback information so that they can monitor their actual expenses compared with the budget.

From this study, it was realised that financial data provides management with information on payroll, compensation, retirement benefits, and other claims by officers. The MIS on financial data helps directors in the federal MDAs to forecast salary increases, bonus incentives, and government legislation on employment and pay. The study noted that a management information system (MIS) is seen as a tool for the coordination of information from different departments. By and large, MIS can be used to achieve total quality management in Nigeria's local government administration in the following ways; inventory control, annual budgeting, project investment analysis, payroll management, auditing, personnel planning and administration, tax reporting, training and development; and employee record keeping.

The study revealed there is an existence of ghost workers in the federal ministries, based on the scope of this study, 201 ghost workers were identified in the respective ministries. From this study, it was also realised that about 187 staff collected salaries from different government agencies which invariably led to an increase in the cost of governance as detailed in Table 2. This finding corroborates with the study conducted by Okoye et al (2016) which revealed that there is a significant reduction in Government recurrent expenditure after the implementation of the IPPIS by some selected Federal Agencies in Nigeria.

Finally, the paper also finds out that the implementation of IPPIS has drastically reduced government personnel costs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The issue of corruption is not a situation exclusive to local governments in Nigeria. It is a matter that has plagued the entire fabric of the country with its perpetrators getting traditional titles, recognitions, and national honours as rewards for their actions. The consequence is the self-destruction properly planned and executed through the general acceptance of the situation. In this situation, development, growth, decency, and stability are being compromised. This means that all the woes of the country can be blamed on corruption and the

lack of will to do anything about it. This study argues that MIS is very important in the management of the local government. The MIS contributes to problem-solving in two basic ways. First, through the human resource information system, it helps in strategic personnel planning and administration. It provides the organization with wide information resources and this helps in problem identification and understanding. The MIS provides local government with a wide effort to provide problem-solving information. The study finds out that there is an existence of ghost workers on the payroll of the federal ministries and the Implementation of IPPIS has minimized the lingering problem of payroll fraud. Based on the findings and conclusions reached, the following recommendations are made:

1. To win the war on corruption, adherence to ethical standards in decision-making must be the foundation of the nation's policies. Without ethics (a set of moral principles or values or principles of conduct governing an individual or a group in the conduct of the affairs of the nation (public and business), the apparent wars on corruption in Nigeria will not be successful). In other words, without ethics, any money budgeted toward fighting corruption in Nigeria is a thing cast to the wild cat. Nigeria has to make laws and implement them in the letters. As Aristotle insists, ethical philosophy aims to make us better men (The Philosophy of Aristotle).
2. Additionally, the nation has to make sure that those entrusted to execute the war on corruption are men and women of virtue who recognize and always do what is right. The federal government should look into the Federal ministries where the problems of ghost workers are prevalent and find a lasting solution to the problem.
3. Employees traced to be engaged in receiving multiple salaries within the government MDA should be dealt with appropriately, the government needs to move beyond rhetoric to concerted efforts in the way against corruption. One way of doing this is by punishing corrupt persons according to the law. The law needs to be applied no matter who is involved in corrupt practices. At the risk of repetition moving beyond rhetoric would require political will on the part of Nigeria's leaders at

all levels.

4. Finally, since the implementation of IPPIS has drastically reduced government personnel costs, the government should strengthen the platforms so that agencies cannot have the opportunity to manipulate them.

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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL CHOICES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTHS DURING NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The influx of social media has caused drastic changes in virtually all facets of human life, including its deployment by politicians, election management bodies and civil societies for electioneering activities. This paper examined the effect of social media on the political choices and political participation in national elections among youths in Osun State, Nigeria, taking undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and Redeemer's University, Nigeria (RUN) as case studies. It adopted the descriptive survey research design and the quantitative method, using primary data. A self-designed structured questionnaire was administered to a total of 381 respondents who were selected using the simple random sampling technique. The descriptive and inferential statistical techniques of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were utilised for data analysis. Findings show that social media has significant effects on the political candidates undergraduate students in OAU and RUN choose to support and vote for during national elections. It also found that while social media significantly increases the level of political participation among OAU students, it does the opposite for students in RUN. The study concluded that social media has a significant effect on electoral choices among youths in OAU and RUN; whereas, the effect on political participation is different, showing both positive and negative trends, often depending on the social media content youths are exposed to. There is therefore, the need for all political actors (politicians, political parties, election management bodies, and CSOs, among others) to strategically deploy social media during elections in such a manner that it does not negatively affect youths' political behaviour.

Keywords: Social media, political choice, Obafemi Awolowo University, Redeemer's University, Osun State, Nigeria

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Introduction

Indeed, the world has entered an age of unprecedented convenience and connectivity, a real global community facilitated by technology. This paper examined how the influx of social media affects political choices and political participation among youths in Osun State, Nigeria during national elections, taking undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and Redeemer's University, Nigeria (RUN) as case studies. The debate for or against the impact of social media on societal improvement is no longer a bone of contention. Evidence also abounds on how social media plays an active role in influencing political activities. Hence, social media is now a very important and influential tool in politics as evidenced by the political upheavals in North Africa which took off in social media, and the Obama campaign in 2011 (Lotan et al. 2011).

Over the years, there has been much optimism about the potential of new technologies to strengthen democracies across the globe and enhance political participation. As early as the 1920s and 1980s, Brecht and Barber have respectively foreseen the important role of new technologies in democracies (Brecht, 1973; Barber, 1984, p. 274) Today, due to advancements in technology, a lot of things have changed, including the manner of social media deployment. The Internet has played a big role in this transformation. Political parties, including their supporters and candidates, create social media profiles on various social media platforms to mobilise support. A 2014 study showed that most web users use the Internet to find political news and that social media has become the most used media for disseminating information rather than the other forms of media (Pew Research 2014). This is, to a large extent, owing to the increasing number of social media users. The report also showed that most voters make decisions on their choice of political candidates, judging from their impression of such candidates, and their activities over social media, religion and ethnicity rather than on political ideology (Pew Research, 2014).

The advent of the Internet has made new means of political mobilisation and recruitment possible, hence, the assertion that the deployment of new media (social media) has the tendencies to improve democratic performance (Anduiza et al. 2009; Chatora, 2012). With the growing importance of the Internet, social

media plays an important role in contemporary political communication, campaigns and elections. It has completely reshaped the aspect of politics. This has, therefore, led to the position that aside from the voter's personality, voter choices are now largely influenced by the voter's exposure to the media (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944). The media plays a far-reaching and incredible role during elections. Given this, there is the quite correct assertion that by way of equipping people with the necessary information, the media serves as a neutral and unbiased guide to enable citizens to vote for the most qualified and right politicians (Ogwezzy-Ndisika et al. 2015). It suffices to state that the explosion of social media has not only influenced politics, it has also ensured tremendous changes in patterns of socialisation. People involved in making political choices are also enabled to interpret political meanings to their understanding, decide what and what not to pay attention to, weigh options, reach decisions, form their preferences and how judge the value of messages.

What is gleaned from the literature is a debate on the potential of the Internet and social media to influence political participation (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Bimber, 1999; di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006; Gibson et al. 2005; Shah et al. 2001; Vitak et al. 2011). The specific influence of social media on political choices and political participation of youths during national elections in Osun State, Nigeria has not been given adequate empirical attention. Hence, the need for this intervention, using youthful undergraduate students' population from two Nigerian universities in Osun State. The paper therefore, seeks to: ascertain the various social media platforms deployed by politicians, political parties and INEC during national elections; identify the social media platforms which undergraduate students in OAU and RUN are conversant with; examine the effect of social media on the electoral choices of undergraduate students in OAU and RUN during national elections; and assess the effect of social media on the political participation of undergraduate students in OAU and RUN during national elections.

While Obafemi Awolowo University is a federal government-owned institution, Redeemer's University is a privately owned institution, both in Osun State, Nigeria. The universities are chosen because they are based in cities, Ile-Ife and Ede respectively, which boast the highest number of higher institutions in the

state, thereby commanding the highest number of students' population. Also, the two institutions are the most prominent federal government and privately owned institutions in the state. With the exemption of the state capital, Oshogbo, the towns of Ede and Ile-Ife have the most youthful population in Osun State. Whereas OAU has been in operation since 1981, RUN was only established in 2005. At the time of conducting this research, OAU has a total student population of 35,000 who are more diverse in terms of ethnic, tribal and religious components, than the more homogenous 1,777 student population in RUN. These dynamics in the selection of research sites were to enable a comparison of impact in different settings of the youth population.

The subsequent section provides a conceptual clarification on social media, political choice and political participation. Section three is on the theoretical framework upon which the paper is built, while section four reviews relevant literature on the general effect of social media and political participation, mobilisation and choices. The next section presents the research methods, while section six is on data presentation and analysis. The last three sections discuss the findings, test the hypotheses, and provide a conclusion respectively.

Conceptualising Social Media, Political Choice and Political Participation

Social media has been able to create important online platforms which Abubakar refers to as a new 'political capital' that gives people the opportunity to take part in contemporary political issues and discourse (Abubakar, 2011). Hence, the reality is that social media has transformed into a community on its own, where diverse opinions are anonymously brought into critical political issues and discourses.

As averred by Bernard, Kari and Dag (2011), contemporary democracy is an embodiment of civic and political participation. The assumption is that within such a democratic system, citizens should have the freedom to decide who rules over them and make decisions on their behalf. This opportunity to communicate preferences is a political choice. Political choices are made by participants and at each stage of making a choice, several things come into play like emotions, mood, family, political background and institutional arrangement. The political

choices individuals make can be explained by individual preferences (Arrow, 1951; Downs, 1957); institutional arrangements (Hacker, 2004); political partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960); or emotions (Brader & Marcus, 2013).

The term political participation is a broad concept. Cohen and Kahne (2012, p.3) refer to participatory politics as those “acts that are interactive, peer-based, not guided by deference to elites or formal institutions, and meant to address issues of public concern.” In effect, political participation is the action of citizens geared towards determining and deciding patterns of political outcomes, to influence them (Rosenstone & Hansen, 2003, p. 4.). Some of the various forms of political participation include voting, public consultations, protest, and jury duty. In the digital age, political participation is broadly divided into offline and online participation. While online political behaviour/participation qualifies as an extension of offline participation, the two are nonetheless, different, and they take place in separate spheres.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the agenda-setting theory as its framework of analysis. The theory was formally developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw. It depicts the intense impact of the media; it is “the process whereby the media lead the public in assigning relative importance to various public issues” (Zhu & Blood, 1997, p. 89-90). The media thus, influences people’s perception of what is worthy, acceptable and necessary. It also influences the type of issues people treat seriously and the ones to pay less attention to in society.

According to Folarin (2006), agenda setting refers to the act whereby the mass media is capable of dictating or determining those issues that should be regarded as important or otherwise, at different periods and epochs among diverse societies. This suggests that during elections, the media serves to bring to public notice, all there is to know about the electoral process and the political candidates. Such information is expected to guide the choices of candidates people make and influence how they choose to participate in the process. This is because the mass media can build and paint a public image of politicians, as it helps to reinforce what the public should think or know about political

figures in society (Rolle, 2017).

As such, during elections, politicians, election management bodies and civil society organisations (CSOs), among others, often deploy the media (traditional and new) to mobilise for successful elections (Aleyomi & Ajakaiye, 2014). The agenda-setting theory, therefore, posits that, depending on how they are deployed, social media has the force to influence the audience's perception of the topic. Applied to elections and political participation-related topics, this implies that the information the electorate gets via social media concerning the elections, political parties and their candidates, can influence their perception of the election, political parties and political candidates. This will, in turn, determine both the electorate's choice of political parties and candidates; and participation in the elections.

The agenda-setting theory is relevant to the present study, as it succinctly captures the role of the media (in this case, social media) in influencing public decisions, especially during critical events like national elections. The theory also provides a lucid understanding of how social media shapes citizens' perceptions, opinions and positions in the face of burning national issues like elections. Today, the trends in global politics show how politicians deploy various social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, among others to mobilise citizens' support and sell their policy and governance agenda to the public during electioneering periods. In the long run, this has a way of influencing the people's choices and their desire to participate in the electoral process, or otherwise. This theory is thus, relevant to the understanding of how social media influences the political choices and political participation of youths in Osun State, Nigeria during national elections.

Social Media and Political Choices, Mobilisation, and Political Participation

The influence of the Internet and social media on political participation has been generally established and categorised into the schools of sceptics and utopians (Burford, 2012). The sceptics aver that social media does not influence political participation, rather, it reinforces existing political behaviours (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Bimber, 1999; Shah et al. 2001). Utopians posit a major role of the

Internet and social media is to cause an improvement in political participation (Di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006; Gibson et al. 2005; Vitak et al. 2011).

In a comparative study of Greece, Spain, and the United States on the influence of social media on political participation by García-Albacete (2013), findings show that social media played an important role in political mobilisation and organisation in all three cases studied. The authors averred that this brought to light and garnered a lot of debate and assumptions about the democratising effect of the Internet as well as its ability to boost political effectiveness. Their findings show that the dissemination of information, and the expression of political statements were two critical areas in which social media has been prominently deployed, followed by its deployment for political coordination and organisation. The authors conclude that through the provision of a reliable source of information, Twitter has become very relevant in the study of international political and social movements, while also paying attention to the features and intentions of participants, the reason for political movements, and the consequences of the participant's online and offline actions/behaviours.

Taking the 2011 elections in the Netherlands as a case study, Effing et al. (2011) studied social media and political participation. They established that prior attempts to shape public opinion before the advent of social media were not so successful. However, evidence shows that the advent of social media could change this trend and participation was the distinguishing feature of the old web and the new social media. Analysis showed that even though social media had a minute influence on voting behaviour, it was evident that politicians who deployed social media more had higher votes than their counterparts who deployed social media less. This finding was evident across all political parties, which further gives credence to its validity. Effing et al. (2011) concluded that political parties should increase their reliance on and deployment of social media, to improve operations and interactions with their critical stakeholders such as followers, volunteers, members, etc.

Zaheer (2016) studied the influence of social media on political participation among students in Pakistani universities. The study attempted to interrogate the influence of social media on political participation by measuring the rate of Facebook use and students' participation in politics, online and offline. Zaheer's

(2016) result showed that the amount of time students spend on Facebook influences their level of political participation, whether online or in real-time participation. Furthermore, age and gender were revealed to influence online citizen engagement and political participation offline. Younger students tend to participate more offline, while based on gender, male students were more actively engaging online and female students were less politically active both online and offline. Zaheer (2016) concludes that there is higher credibility of content in social media than the traditional media; albeit, traditional media is more aggressive in influencing political opinions.

In another study by Kamau (2017), he examined how social networking sites impact on political engagements among Kenyan youths. The study sampled 600 students from selected Kenyan universities to assess how much social networking sites influence the acceptance and consumption of political information, behaviour, knowledge, and political interests among Kenyan youths. Findings from the study revealed that even though the use of social networking sites among Kenyan youths significantly influenced their participation in political issues, this was not generalizable, and did not always translate to political engagement. These findings imply that social networking sites have limited influence on political engagements, nonetheless, political participation is significantly influenced by Internet-based political activities such as online political campaigns, online information consumption, etc.

Methodology

The paper relied on the survey descriptive research design, using the quantitative method aimed at evaluating the effect of social media on political choices and political participation among undergraduate students of OAU and RUN. The study areas were the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and the Redeemer's University of Nigeria, Ede. Both institutions are in Osun State, Southwestern Nigeria. The population for the study was drawn from OAU and RUN with a student population of 35,000 and 1,777 respectively which sums up to 36,777. The sample size for the study was determined using the Research Advisors Sample Size Table (2006), with a confidence level of 95% and a margin error of 5.0%. The corresponding sample size for the study population was 381.

Respondents were selected to participate in the survey using a simple random sampling technique. To determine the percentage spread of respondents in the two schools to correspond with their student population, a formula was adopted as follows:

$$sss = \frac{UP}{TP} \times SS$$

Where SSS is the school sample size

UP is the university population

TP is the total population

SS is the sample size

Therefore, for OAU, the corresponding sample size is derived as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} OAU \text{ Sample size} &= \frac{35000}{36777} \times 381 \\ &= 0.95 \times 381 \\ &= 362.59 \end{aligned}$$

OAU Sample size= **363**

For RUN, the corresponding sample size was obtained as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} RUN \text{ Sample size} &= \frac{1777}{36777} \times 381 \\ &= 0.048 \times 381 \\ &= 18.4 \end{aligned}$$

RUN Sample size= **18**

A self-designed four-point Likert scale structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The objectives were achieved using a Likert scale of a total of 19 Items. Each item on the scale was assigned scores ranging from 1-4, with corresponding responses of 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree.' Using Cronbach's Alpha, an internal consistency reliability test was conducted on the research instrument to ascertain its reliability and was passed as acceptable at a level of 0.80 (see Bryman, 2012, p. 170). Content validity was conducted on the research instrument by asking for the inputs and scrutiny of experts on the subject matter (Lawshe, 1975). Also, a face validity using a pilot test on 6 percent (approximately 23) of the research sample size (see Roopa & Rani, 2012, p. 276) was conducted on the research instrument, after which relevant adjustments and changes were effected on the questionnaire (see Bryman, 2012, p. 263).

The research instrument titled 'Effect of Social Media on Political Choices among Undergraduate Students (ESMPCUS)', was self-designed and self-administered. The questionnaire consisted of six sections (A-E). Section A collected data on the demographic characteristics of respondents; while section B collected data on the social media platforms students in OAU and RUN are conversant with. Section C collected data on the various social media platforms deployed by political parties, politicians and INEC during elections; while section D collected data on the effect of social media on electoral choices among students in OAU and RUN. Section E collected data on the effect of social media on political participation among students in OAU and RUN. The various social media platforms deployed by political parties, politicians and INEC were ascertained using a Likert scale of 5 items, while the effect of social media on the electoral choices of students was examined by adopting a Likert scale of 7 items. Also, the effect of social media on political participation of students was assessed by a Likert scale of 5 items.

The descriptive (tables, frequencies and percentages) and inferential (Chi-Square) statistical techniques of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used for data analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

From the results in Tables 1a and 1b, it is evident that 15 and 16 years were the minimum ages of undergraduate students in OAU and RUN respectively. While 50 years was the maximum age in OAU, 20 years was the maximum age of the respondents in RUN. The result also showed that 21 and 17 years were the respective mean ages of the respondents in the two universities. Table 1c shows that there were a higher number of female respondents altogether.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age as at last birthday	363	15.00	50.00	21.1931	4.10336
Valid N (listwise)	363				

Source: Field Survey 2023

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age as at last birthday	18	16.00	20.00	17.8889	1.32349
Valid N (listwise)	18				

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 1c: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Parameters	OAU F (%)	RUN F (%)
Age Categorization		
≥ 18	286 (78.7)	11 (61.1)
< 18	35 (9.7)	7(38.9)
No Response	42 (11.6)	--
Total	363 (100)	18 (100)
Marital Status		
Married	13 (3.6)	1(5.6)
Single	343(94.5)	17(94.4)
Separated	1(0.3)	--
No response	6 (1.7)	--
Total	363(100)	18(100)
Level		
100level	107(29.5)	--
200level	76(20.9)	13(72.2)
300level	48(13.2)	4(22. 2)
400level	107(29.5)	--
500level	20(5.5)	1(5.6)
No response	5(1.4)	--
Total	363(100)	18(100)
Sex		
Male	152(41.87)	10(55.56)
Female	211(58.13)	8(44.44)
Total	363(100)	18(100)
Registered Voters		
Yes	113(31.1)	3(16.7)
No	240(66.1)	15(83.3)
No response	10(2.8)	--
Total	363(100)	18(100)

Source: Field Survey 2023

*Note

F= Frequency; (%) = Percentage

Social Media Platforms Youths are Familiar with

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Social Media Platforms Students in OAU and RUN are Conversant with

Social Media Platforms	OAU	RUN
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Facebook	327(90.1)	13(72. 2)
Instagram	288(79.3)	17(94.4)
Imo	50(13.8)	1(5.6)
LinkedIn	94(25.9)	1(5.6)
Twitter	213(58.7)	7(38.9)
YouTube	270(74.4)	17(94.4)
WhatsApp	354(97.5)	18(100)
Myspace	13(3.6)	--
Skype	61(16.8)	1(5.6)
Snapchat	139(38.3)	13(72. 2)
WeChat	24(6.6)	--
Badoo	21(5.8)	--
Tinder	15(4.1)	--
Tumblr	8(5.0)	--
Messenger	249(68.6)	12(66.7)
Others	17(4.7)	2(11.1)

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 2 shows that all the undergraduate students who participated in the research in OAU were conversant with all the 15 social media platforms identified, while a proportion of the students also used other platforms not listed. These other platforms include Nairaland, Telegram, Tik Tok and Hangout, among others. It also shows that majority of the students in OAU and RUN are familiar with WhatsApp and this accounted for 97.5 percent and 100 percent respectively. Next in magnitude to this proportion in OAU are those familiar with Facebook which constitutes 90.1 percent. Instagram, YouTube, and Messenger accounted for 79.3 percent, 74.4 percent, and 68.6 percent in OAU respectively. While the lowest proportion of students in the university is those who are familiar with Myspace, which accounted for 3.6 percent. In RUN, all the students who participated in the research used and were familiar with

WhatsApp, accounting for 100 percent familiarity, while 94.4 percent of the students are conversant with Instagram and YouTube. Next in magnitude are those who are also familiar with Facebook and Messenger, which accounted for 72.2 percent and 66.7 percent respectively. None of the students is familiar with Myspace, WeChat, Badoo, Tinder, and Tumblr.

Youths’ Perception Analysis on the Various Social Media Platforms Deployed by Political Parties, Politicians, and INEC During Elections

Table 3a: OAU Students’ Rating of Social Media Platforms Deployed by Politicians, Political parties and INEC during Election

S/N	Questions	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	$\sum WV$	WI	MD
1.	Twitter and Facebook were the most frequently used social media tools by politicians, political parties, and INEC during elections in Nigeria	148(592)	162(486)	14(28)	36(36)	360	1142	3.17	0.84
2.	I usually get to know about political parties and their candidates through WhatsApp social groups	35(140)	136(408)	63(126)	126(126)	360	800	2.22	-0.11
3.	I get information on the electoral process from INEC through Instagram	23(92)	103(309)	79(158)	150(150)	355	709	2.00	-0.33
4.	Politicians deploy YouTube videos to canvass for my votes during elections	46(184)	131(393)	67(134)	110(110)	354	821	2.32	-0.01
5.	Political parties, INEC, and politicians sent me direct messages on my Facebook messenger during the election.	28(112)	50(150)	159(318)	121(121)	358	701	1.96	-0.37

$WI=2.33$

Source: Field Survey 2023

To identify the various social media platforms deployed by political parties, politicians, and INEC during the election, students were provided with a list of variables and instructed to rate them as perceived. The rating was on four Likert scales Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The analysis of the responses evolved into an index called the Weighted Index (WI). To obtain WI, a weighted value of 4,3,2,1 was attached to each of the above ratings respectively. The index for each identified variable was arrived at by dividing the summation of weighted value ($\sum WV$) by the total number of the responses to each variable and the respective weighted value attached to rating.

The mean index of the identified social media platforms deployed by political parties, politicians, and INEC during the election as perceived by the respondents in OAU denoted by \bar{WI} was 2.33. One of the identified variables had its weighted index (WI) higher than the mean weighted index (\bar{WI}) and four of the identified variables had a negative deviation from the mean. Implicitly, the variables with negative deviation had their weighted index below the average weighted index (\bar{WI}) as there are differences in the ratings of the respondents on the various social media platforms perceived to be deployed by political parties, politicians, and INEC during the election. It further reveals that the students agreed on the identified variable with a positive deviation from the mean. The conclusion drawn here is that students in OAU all agreed that Twitter and Facebook were the most frequently used social media platforms by politicians, political parties, and INEC during the election.

Table 3b: RUN Students’ Rating of Social Media Platforms Deployed by Politicians, Political Parties and INEC During Election

S/N	Questions	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	ΣWV	WI	MD
1.	Twitter and Facebook were the most frequently used social media tools by politicians, political parties, and INEC during elections in Nigeria	5(20)	10(30)	1(2)	2(2)	18	54	3.0	0.76
2.	I usually get to know about political parties and their candidates through WhatsApp social groups	3(12)	4(12)	2(4)	9(9)	18	37	2.06	-0.18
3.	I get information on the electoral process from INEC through Instagram	4(16)	4(12)	2(4)	7(7)	17	39	2.29	0.05
4.	Politicians deploy YouTube videos to canvass for my votes during elections	1(4)	4(12)	3(6)	10(10)	18	32	1.78	-0.46
5.	Political parties, INEC, and politicians sent me direct messages on my Facebook messenger during the election.	3(12)	5(15)	--	10(10)	18	37	2.06	-0.18

$\overline{WI} = 2.24$

Source: Field Survey 2023

Also presented in Table 3b is the WI on the identified various social media platforms deployed by politicians, political parties, and INEC during the election as perceived by respondents in RUN. The mean of the weighted index of the various identified platforms as presented in Table 3b denoted by \overline{WI} was 2.24. Two of the identified social media platforms had their weighted index (WI) above the mean of the weighted index and three also had negative deviation about the mean. Thus, it was established that the students generally agreed on the social media platforms with positive deviation about the mean to be the platforms mostly deployed by political parties, politicians, and INEC during elections; which were Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Social Media Platforms through which Youths in OAU and RUN are engaged by Politicians, Political Parties, and Candidates during Elections

Table 3c: Social Media Platforms through which Youths are engaged by Politicians and Parties during Elections

	OAU	RUN
Social Media Platforms	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Facebook	274(75.5)	13(72. 2)
Instagram	149(41)	12(66.6)
Imo	8(2.2)	1(5.6)
LinkedIn	17(4.7)	1(5.6)
Twitter	162(44.6)	5(27.8)
YouTube	92(25.3)	1(5.6)
WhatsApp	149(41)	1(5.6)
Myspace	8(2.2)	1(5.6)
Skype	14(3.9)	1(5.6)
Snapchat	20(5.5)	1(5.6)
WeChat	6(1.7)	1(5.6)
Badoo	9(2.5)	1(5.6)
Tinder	8(2.2)	1(5.6)
Tumblr	7(1.9)	1(5.6)
Messenger	67(18.5)	1(5.6)
Others	19(5.2)	1(5.6)

Source: Field Survey 2023

Effect of Social Media on the Electoral Choices of Youths in OAU and RUN

Table 4a: Effects of Social Media on Electoral Choices among Youths in OAU

S/N	Questions	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	ΣWV	WI	MD
1.	I make my choice of political party during elections based on information I get on social media platforms.	48(192)	118(354)	85(170)	106(106)	357	822	2.30	0.16
2.	I usually vote for candidates because of what I see on social media platforms about such candidates.	25(100)	92(276)	115(230)	124(124)	356	730	2.05	-0.09
3.	I vote for the candidates who have convinced me better on social media.	29(116)	103(309)	92(184)	126(126)	350	735	2.1	-0.04
4.	If I do not see a political party or candidates' social media posts, I do not vote for them.	28(112)	54(162)	127(254)	145(145)	354	673	1.90	-0.24
5.	Through the social media posts of politicians, I am able to know the right choice of candidate.	30(120)	116(348)	86(172)	123(123)	355	763	2.15	0.01
6.	The political party that has the largest social media coverage usually gets my vote during elections.	24(96)	57(171)	129(258)	140(140)	350	665	1.9	-0.24
7.	I can change my mind about my choice of candidate because of what I see or hear about such a candidate on social media.	68(272)	145(435)	62(124)	79(79)	354	910	2.57	0.43

$\overline{WI} = 2.14$

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 4a shows the WI on the effects of social media on the electoral choices among undergraduate students in OAU. The mean of the weighted index of the various identified effects denoted by \overline{WI} was 2.14. Three of the identified effects had their weighted index (WI) above the mean of the weighted index and four also had a negative deviation from the mean (MD). Thus, it was established that the respondents generally agreed on the effects with positive deviation about the mean (MD) to be the consequences of social media on electoral choices among undergraduate students.

Table 4b: Effects of Social Media on Electoral Choice among Youths in RUN

S/N	Questions	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	ΣWV	WI	MD
1.	I make my choice of political party during elections based on information I get on social media platforms.	2(8)	4(12)	1(2)	11(11)	18	33	1.83	-0.28
2.	I usually vote for candidates because of what I see on social media platforms about such candidates.	2(8)	6(18)	2(4)	7(7)	17	37	2.18	0.07
3.	I vote for the candidates who have convinced me better on social media.	--	7(21)	3(6)	8(8)	18	35	1.94	-0.17
4.	If I do not see a political party or candidates' social media posts, I do not vote for them.	1(4)	7(21)	2(4)	8(8)	18	37	2.06	-0.05
5.	Through the social media posts of politicians, I am able to know the right choice of candidate.	2(8)	5(15)	3(6)	7(7)	17	36	2.12	0.01
6.	The political party that has the largest social media coverage usually gets my vote during elections.	2(8)	4(12)	1(2)	11(11)	18	33	1.83	-0.28
7.	I can change my mind about my choice of candidate because of what I see or hear about such a candidate on social media.	3(12)	11(33)	1(2)	3(3)	18	50	2.78	0.67

$\overline{WI} = 2.11$

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 4b presents the effects of social media on the electoral choices among undergraduate students in RUN. The average of the weighted index of the rating effects of social media on electoral choices of the students denoted by \bar{WI} was 2.11. It also reveals that three of the perceived effects had their WI above the average weighted index while four of the identified effects had negative deviations about the mean. Findings thus, revealed that all the students agreed on the effects with positive deviation about the mean effect of social media on the choice of candidate selection among undergraduate students in the university.

Effect of Social Media on Political Participation of Youths in OAU and RUN

Table 5a: The Impact of Social Media on Political Participation among Youths in OAU

S/N	Questions	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	$\sum WV$	WI	MD
1.	The uncensored video clips on rigging of elections I see on social media influences my political participation	101(404)	173(519)	23(46)	57(57)	354	1026	2.90	0.48
2.	The incessant election violence displayed on social media during elections scare me from voting.	91(364)	162(378)	26(52)	73(73)	352	867	2.46	0.04
3.	Social media jingles on the political process inspires me to vote	47(188)	154(462)	35(70)	112(112)	348	732	2.10	-0.32
4.	Because I can follow all the political events on social media, I no longer see the need to be physically involved in the political process.	39(156)	88(264)	77(154)	150(150)	354	724	2.05	-0.37
5.	The advent of social media has increased my participation in political events	59(236)	171(513)	41(82)	83(83)	354	914	2.58	0.16

$\bar{WI} = 2.42$

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 5b: The Impact of Social Media on Political Participation among Youths in RUN

S/N	Questions	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	ΣWV	WI	MD
1.	The uncensored video clips on rigging of elections I see on social media influences my political participation	5(20)	8(24)	--	5(5)	18	49	2.72	0.09
2.	The incessant election violence displayed on social media during elections scares me from voting.	4(16)	9(27)	1(2)	3(3)	17	48	2.82	0.19
3.	Social media jingles on the political process inspire me to vote	3(12)	7(21)	2(4)	6(6)	18	43	2.39	-0.24
4.	Because I can follow all the political events on social media, I no longer see the need to be physically involved in the political process.	3(12)	10(30)	2(4)	3(3)	18	49	2.72	0.09
5.	The advent of social media has increased my participation in political events	4(16)	6(18)	3(6)	5(5)	18	45	2.5	-0.13

$\bar{WI} = 2.63$

Source: Field Survey 2023

Tables 5a and 5b present the effect of social media on political participation among undergraduate students of the selected universities. The WI of the identified effects was computed in the two tables. Tables 5a and 5b with mean indices denoted by \bar{WI} s were 2.42 and 2.63 respectively. Three of the identified effects had their weighted index higher than the mean weighted index (\bar{WI}) in the two tables and two of the five identified effects of social media on political participation among undergraduates of both universities had a negative deviation about the mean. Implicitly, the effects with negative deviation had their weighted index below the average weighted index (\bar{WI}) as there are differences in the ratings of the respondents of both universities on the effects of social media on political participation among the students.

Table 6a: Chi-Square Analysis of the Impact of Social Media on Electoral Choices among Youths in OAU and RUN

Statements	OAU			RUN		
	Df	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig	df	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig
1. I make my choice of political party during elections based on information I get on social media platforms.	3	31.672 ^a	.000**	3	12.789 ^a	.005**
2. I usually vote for candidates because of what I see on social media platforms about such candidates.	3	67.483 ^b	.000**	3	6.000 ^b	.112
3. I vote for the candidates who have convinced me better on social media.	3	59.029 ^c	.000**	2	2.947 ^c	.229
4. If I do not see a political party or candidates' social media posts, I do not vote for them.	3	107.627 ^d	.000**	3	9.421 ^a	.024*
5. Through the social media posts of politicians, I can know the right choice of candidate.	3	60.561 ^e	.000**	3	4.667 ^b	.198
6. The political party that has the largest social media coverage usually gets my vote during elections.	3	107.897 ^c	.000**	3	15.737 ^a	.001**
7. I can change my mind about my choice of candidate because of what I see or hear about such a candidate on social media.	3	49.774 ^d	.000**	3	11.947 ^a	.008**

Source: Field Survey 2023

** Significant Level at 0.01

*Significant Level at 0.05

Table 6b: Chi-Square Analysis of the Impact of Social Media on Political Participation among Youths in OAU and RUN

Statements	OAU			RUN		
	Df	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig	df	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig
1. The uncensored video clips on the rigging of elections I see on social media influence my political participation	3	142.136 ^a	.000**	2	.737 ^a	.692
2. The incessant election violence displayed on social media during elections scares me from voting.	3	108.568 ^b	.000**	3	10.000 ^b	.019*
3. Social media jingles on the political process inspire me to vote	4	217.920 ^c	.000**	3	4.789 ^c	.188
4. Because I can follow all the political events on social media, I no longer see the need to be physically involved in the political process.	3	71.921 ^a	.000**	3	11.105 ^c	.011*
5. The advent of social media has increased my participation in political events.	3	112.576 ^a	.000**	3	1.842 ^c	.606

Source: Field Survey 2023

** Significant Level at 0.01

*Significant Level at 0.05

The Chi-Square analyses show the effects of social media on electoral choices and political participation among undergraduate students of the selected universities. The Chi-Square shows whether there is a significant effect of social media on political participation and electoral choices among the undergraduate students of the institutions. The results of the Chi-Square are presented in Tables 6a and 6b, showing the significant levels of each of the identified variables across the universities. In Table 6a, evidence suggests that all the variables identified had a significant effect on the students in OAU. Implicitly, social media has a significant effect on the choices of electoral candidates supported and voted for by OAU undergraduate students during elections, as all the identified

variables were found to be significant at 1 percent. In RUN, three out of the seven identified variables were significant at 1 percent and one out of the total variable is significant at 5 percent.

Also, presented in Table 6b is the results of Chi-Square on the effect of social media on political participation among students in OAU and RUN. It is established that social media has a significant effect on political participation among OAU students as all the identified variables examined were found to be significant at 1 percent, while in RUN, only two variables out of five identified variables were significant at 5 percent.

Discussion of Findings

The paper made some findings in line with the set-out objectives which include: ascertaining the various social media platforms deployed by politicians, political parties, and INEC during elections; identifying the social media platforms which undergraduate students in OAU and RUN are conversant with; examining the effect of social media on the electoral choices of undergraduate students in OAU and RUN; and assess the effect of social media on the political participation of undergraduate students in OAU and RUN. It finds that Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were the most frequently deployed social media platforms deployed by politicians, political parties, and INEC during elections. This aligns with previous findings where it has been established that social media platforms have proven to be important tools for political engagement and communication, political participation, and safeguarding election results in Nigeria (Olsson & Dahlgren, 2010).

The study also reveals that undergraduate students in OAU are conversant with all the 15 social media platforms identified, while in RUN, undergraduate students are conversant with all the identified social media platforms except Myspace, WeChat, Badoo, Tinder, and Tumbler. The paper further finds that social media has a significant effect on electoral choices among undergraduate students of OAU and RUN. Nevertheless, this effect was stronger among OAU students. This implies that social media has a considerable effect on the electoral choices of youths during national elections in Osun State, Nigeria. It reveals that

the effects of social media platforms on the political participation of students in the two institutions are different. As a result of the use of social media, there is a significant and positive effect on the political participation of undergraduate students in OAU, while at Redeemer's University, there is a negative effect, as there is a low level of political participation among undergraduate students due largely to the incidents of electoral violence students often came across on various social media platforms. This suggests that social media has the potential to both encourage and discourage political participation among the youths during national elections in Osun State, Nigeria, depending on the manner of deployment and content shared online before, during and after elections.

These findings concerning the influence of social media on political choices and political participation among undergraduate students in OAU and RUN, align with the main argument of the agenda-setting theory and the utopian school of thought on the influence of social media on political participation (Di Gannero & Dutton, 2006; Gibson et al. 2005; Vitak et al. 2011). The findings however, negate the assumptions of the sceptic school on the influence of social media on political participation, which claims that social media only reinforces existing political behaviour, rather than increase or reduce it (Baumgarner & Morris, 2010; Bimber, 1999; Shah et al. 2001).

The observed difference in social media influence on the political participation of OAU and RUN undergraduate students implies that social media can have both positive and negative impacts on youths (whether during national elections or other social events). This reinforces the agenda-setting theory as used in this study- which posits that the media influences the type of issues people treat seriously or important, and the ones they pay less serious attention to or importance (Folarin, 2006; Zhu & Blood, 1997, p. 89-90). In the same vein, while social media positively influences political participation among OAU undergraduate students, so that they pay serious attention to politics/elections by increasing participation, conversely, it negatively influences political participation among undergraduate students in RUN, so that they pay less attention to politics/elections, by way of political apathy. Owing to the foregoing, the observed difference in social media influence on youths in the two schools, could not be straightforwardly attributed to the school ownership

factor (that is, federal or privately owned universities), rather, it shows more explicitly, that depending on how they are deployed, social media can have both positive and negative impacts on youths' political participation in the political and electoral processes.

Implication of Findings

Generally, the findings made in this paper imply that social media has a massive influence (either positive or negative) on youth and politics in Nigeria, and Africa generally. African youths are conversant with, and are active on many social media platforms, from where they follow the conversations on politics and make their decisions on both the type of political candidate(s) to elect into various political offices; and whether to actively participate in the political process or not. African political parties and their candidates, and electoral management bodies also deploy social media for various political activities. Social media is thus, a strong weapon for youth political mobilisation in Africa.

The observed difference in social media influence on youths in the universities studied could be explained broadly by the nature of social media content the youths are exposed to during national elections. While elections are often relatively peaceful in Ile-Ife (the location of OAU), the same cannot be said of elections in Ede (the location of RUN), where elections are usually more hotly contested. The exposure of youths in both universities to these peaceful and violent dynamics of the electoral processes in their locations over the social media respectively, appears to account for the observed difference. Further, while youths in OAU could be said to be more politically inclined and radical, hence their participation regardless of social media content, those in RUN are less politically inclined and are more reserved.

Nevertheless, this paper has not interrogated whether this observed difference in public-owned schools (OAU) and private-owned schools (RUN), could be considered as strictly because of the school ownership factor or otherwise. Therefore, future research intervention in this area could be directed at unravelling whether social media influence on the political behaviour of university students could be affected by the school ownership factor.

Hypotheses Testing

From the general assumption gleaned from the literature on how social media influences political participation (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Bimber, 1999; Shah et al. 2001; di Gannero & Dutton, 2006; Gibson et al. 2005; Vitak et al. 2011) the following hypotheses were generated and tested for this paper:

H₀: Social media has no significant effect on the political choices among undergraduate students of the selected universities.

H₁: Social media has a significant effect on the political choices among undergraduate students of the selected universities.

H₀: Social media does not increase the level of political participation among students in OAU and RUN

H₁: Social media increases the level of political participation among students in OAU and RUN

The null and alternative hypotheses formulated for this study are tested using non-parametric Chi-Square to generalise the findings of this research. From Tables 6a and 6b, the significance of each variable was tested for inferences.

Hypotheses 1: Effect of social media on the choice of electoral candidates among students

H₀: Social media has no significant effect on the political choices among undergraduate students of the selected universities.

H₁: Social media has a significant effect on the political choices among undergraduate students of the selected universities.

It is evident from the Chi-Square results as presented in Table 6a, that in OAU and RUN, social media has a significant effect on the choice of electoral candidates to be supported and voted for during elections. Thus, it can be inferred that through the social media posts of politicians, youths can make their decision of candidates to support and vote for during election year, as this was found to be significant at 1 per cent. Hence, social media has a significant effect on the political choice among youths in the universities studied. The null

hypothesis is therefore dismissed and the alternative accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Effect of Social media on political participation among students.

H₀: Social media does not increase the level of political participation among students in OAU and RUN

H₁: Social media increases the level of political participation among students in OAU and RUN.

It is evident from the Chi-Square results as presented in Table 6b, that social media has a significant effect on the political participation of the students across the selected universities. Thus, it can be inferred that the advent of social media has increased political participation among the youths in OAU while hurting youths in RUN. This is because OAU students were able to increase their political participation through the influence of social media and this was found to be significant at 1 percent. Whereas, in RUN, evidence suggested that students' political participation has been drastically reduced through the influence of social media. Hence, social media has significantly decreased youths' political participation in RUN as a result of incessant displays of electoral violence and the ability of students to follow all political events on social media which thus, reduced their level of participation and these were found significant at 5 percent. Thus, while the null hypothesis is valid for youths in RUN, the alternative hypothesis is valid for youths in OAU.

Conclusion

The study unravelled with the quantitative method, that the political choices of undergraduate students (youths) in OAU and RUN, Osun State, Nigeria are affected by social media during national elections. The study was able to establish the level of effect which social media has on the political participation of students in the selected schools. The effect could either be positive or negative on students' level of political participation, which means there is either an increase or decrease in youths' level of political participation. While the effect is positive among youths in OAU students, it is negative among youths in RUN, often depending on the social media content they are exposed to. There is

therefore, the need for all political actors (politicians, political parties, election management bodies, and CSOs, among others) to strategically deploy social media during elections, in such a manner that it does not negatively affect youths' political behaviour.

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