

Party Politics and the Nigerian Electoral Process, 1923-2015

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DOI: [10.36347/sjahss.2019.v07i07.015](https://doi.org/10.36347/sjahss.2019.v07i07.015)

| Received: 18.07.2019 | Accepted: 25.07.2019 | Published: 30.07.2019

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Abstract

Review Article

This paper, "Party Politics and the Nigerian Electoral Process, 1923-2015" examines the Nigerian electoral process from 1923-2015. The 1922 Constitution among other things, promulgated the elective principles that provided the legal framework within which the electoral process would become operational in Nigeria. The study begins from 1923 when the first election was conducted and participation was on municipal basis- restricted to only Calabar and Lagos, and terminates in 2015, when the smart card readers and Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) were used. It is argued here that the Nigerian electoral process has grown in terms of the levels of participation, the utilization of technological innovations to drive electronic voting and the effectiveness of the social media in the electoral process. The paper relies on secondary sources and adopts the Structural Functionalism Theory popularized by Gabriel Almond. This is important because the theory is premised on the perception that politics is a system of interaction of societal structures in the performance of their functions within the electoral process. The study concludes that the sustainability of democratic values in Nigeria requires a legal framework, the political will by the government, a credible and independent electoral umpire and a patriotic electorate.

Key words: Electoral Process; PVCs; Smart Card Readers; Social media.

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INTRODUCTION

Predating colonial rule, the various people that later became Nigerians were configured in defined territories of varied sizes under rulers/leaders whose accession was through a process ossified in the psyche of the kingmakers and transmitted from generation to generation and free of the current prevalent convoluted political systems of parties. These sovereigns were mostly men of integrity and their reign was for life. The Nigerian electoral experience during the colonial era was that of a long and slow elaboration of concessions from municipal elections, through regional elections to the federal levels. Sati Fwatshak avers that:

These three types of elections naturally flowed from the constitutional and political development of the country as a colonial possession, occasioned by a combination of several factors including but mainly, nationalist agitations for participation in colonial administration, for reforms and for self-rule and independence (7).

The deliberate exclusion of the educated elite who formed the nucleus of the nationalist movement

triggered the agitation for inclusion. The response to this agitation for participation in governance was the constitutional provision for an elective principle in the 1922 Constitution. It was this principle that resulted in the restricted male-adult suffrage residents in Calabar and Lagos because of their most cosmopolitan status at the time.

The first elections involving political parties were held in 1923 to fill the four seats reserved for Nigerians based in the chosen municipalities- Calabar and Lagos at one and three seats respectively. The importance of this political development was the formation of political parties and associations which provided platforms for indigenous participation and representations; albeit, representation at this period was symbolic as the seats reserved for Africans were a paltry four out of the 19 unofficial seats. The intention of Hugh Clifford, the then Governor-General, was to secure fuller representation of local interests and to concede a larger share in the discussion and management of public affairs than was available to the educated and articulated sections of the public to promote constructive criticism [1]. It is instructive to note that this electoral arrangement was strictly for

Southern Nigeria, to “correct an injustice which was done to Southern Nigeria on amalgamation [2]”.

The first political parties created included, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) (1923), and the Union of Young Nigerians (UYN) (1923). The trend the elective principle set was that political parties formed were regional based and can be adjudged as the precursor to money politics due to the “qualified franchise” prerequisite. These regional parties included National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) for the East, Northern Peoples’ Congress (NPC) and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) for the North, the Action Group (AG) for the West. The condition was not only to be a municipal adult male resident but taxable with a minimum annual income of £100. The Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) continued its dominance of Lagos due to the politically effete and disorganized political parties at the time to pose any serious challenge from inception to 1933. The emergence of political parties and associations like the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) from 1936, led by Nnamdi Azikiwe and Ernest Ikoli changed the electoral tide of the country as it wrestled, won and replaced the NNDP in 1938. It is on record that the NYM was the first truly national party in Nigeria with branches across the existing regions [17]. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed in 1944; the Action Group in March 1951; and the Northern Peoples’ Congress in October 1951. The regionalization of Nigeria reflected on the political landscape as political parties were adorned in ethnic colours (Igbo controlled East- NCNC; Hausa/Fulani North- NPC; and Yoruba West- AG) and so also the outcome of the electoral process.

The electoral process entails the entire cycle of events culminating in the emergence of elected representatives for a fixed term. The electoral process is conceived as the entire cycle ranging from the provision of voter education to the dissolution of the National Assembly [3]. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in an attempt to rebuild its battered image provided the different phases involved in a credible, free and fair electoral process: Delimitation of electoral Constituencies, Registration of voters, Notice of elections, Nomination of candidates, Election campaigns, Elections, announcement of results and completing tribunal sittings, participation of other organizations, resolution of electoral conflicts from the participation and other organizations or groups.

The Nigerian electoral process has been affected by two major factors: colonialism and later military rule. The country was not launched into electoral politics at the same time. For instance, colonialism enfranchised the triumvirate regions first with the municipal participation of Calabar and Lagos; the entire country was incorporated in the general elections midwived by the McPherson Constitution of

1951 [4]. This delayed nationwide political development explains the ethnic colouration of the Nigeria’s electoral process as political parties were formed from the prevailing sentiments of the time. The second impact of colonialism on the electoral process was the regimental division and sectarian fixation in tandem with the colonial policy of ‘divide and rule,’ provided a leeway for religion in Nigerian politics [5]. The military factor, which has taken over 30 years of Nigeria’s political independence has redefined the electoral process with endless transition programme and restricted number of political parties through party registration. Thus, political parties failed to be an organization formed to propagate certain ideologies and contest power but one recognized by the state to contest elections [6].

As it became operational for elections to be held and the increase in participation in the electoral process from the initial 5,000 taxable adults in 1923 to about 90 million eligible voters of 18 years and above [13], there has been an upsurge in the electorates’ participation in the electoral process since the Fourth Republic. The political parties involved in the electoral process grew numerically from two in 1923 to over fifty during the 2003 elections and later reduced to twenty-nine in the 2015 elections with no ideological basis but the parochialism of the founding members pursuing an ethno-religious agenda with their winner-takes-all disposition.

There has been an Electoral Management Body (EMB) to oversee the electoral process and nomenclatures modified according to the whim and caprice of the incumbent sovereign. The Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) was the pioneer electoral umpire in Nigeria to conduct the 1959 general elections. Other names for the commission include; Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO); National Electoral Commission (NEC); National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON); and Independent Electoral Commission of Nigeria (INEC). INEC was established by Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution and Section 1 of the Electoral Act 2010 and the functions are contained in Section 2 of the same Act. The Nigerian electoral process has been managed by a number chairmen (see Appendix I for the list of the electoral commission, chairmen and their year(s) of office).

The summary of the list of chairmen of the electoral commissions shows that apart from Eyo Esua who was appointed on the eve of independence, Michael Ani, Eme Awa, Humphrey Nwosu, Okon Uya, Dagogo-Jack, and Ephraim Akpata were appointed under military regimes; while Abel Goubadia, Maurice Iwu, Attahiru Jega, and Mahmood Yakubu were appointed during the Fourth Republic.

The electoral process since the first republic has been plagued by undue interference from the

appointing authority of the chairmen of the commission who becomes everything but independent. The partisan nature of the commission constitutionally meant to be an impartial electoral umpire has caused the electorates to lose confidence in the ability of the commission to conduct credible, free and fair elections. The ethno-religious composition of the country reflected in the registered political parties was a contravention of Sections 222(e) and 82(4) of the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2010 respectively. Subsequent units of this paper will examine how the electoral process has fared under the military and civilian administrations in Nigeria.

Electoral Process under Military Rule

The military has a strong link with politics since the pre-colonial era. The various societies; be they kingdoms or empires relied on the strength of their military for expansion and internal security. Colonial administrations depended on the military to secure indigenous acceptance, compliance, and protection of their strategic economic interests. These functions were transmitted to the post-independent military. It is instructive to state that as long as democracy remains a people-centred government, the military and democracy, are in “dialectical opposition” [3]; this is because of the antithetical posturing of the military in terms of democratic values, norms, and structure. The Nigerian military abdicated its constitutional function when it ventured into politics on January 15, 1966, as a corrective mechanism to the powerful corrupt politicians. Olusegun Obasanjo in a broadcast as military ruler enunciated the reason for military intervention thus: “Circumstances of unbridled defiance of the accepted norms and practices of democracy on the part of the political elite, their negative disposition towards the unity, and consequent peace and stability of the nation and their culpable tendency towards tribal polarization” [7]. Satisfied that the military had corrected the ills in governance, Obasanjo continues:

This military administration drew up, without any pressure from any quarters, a programme to return the country to civilian rule, and we have religiously adhered to the programme... This administration is committed to bringing about an elected government in 1979 through a peaceful process of free and fair elections... We all, as members of this administration have no particular or special interest in who succeeds us. We are not interested in partisan politics and we have absolute confidence in the sense of judgement of our people... (194).

This pro-democratic speech of Olusegun Obasanjo, the then military leader who became a beneficiary of it twenty-two years later, sums the reasons for the failed first republic, justified military intervention and the non-partisanship of the military,

the people-centeredness of democracy, and the credibility of an electoral process when the government does not interfere with the process. Recall that military rule by decrees, thus, to reinstate democratic rule, Decree No. 25 promulgated the 1979 Constitution on October 1, 1979. The steps to civilian rule started on July 14, 1978, when General Olusegun Obasanjo, then military Head of State, announced the replacement of military governors with civilian administrators for the 19 States as well as military commissioners relinquishing their responsibilities to civilians and redeployed to military functions [7]. The electoral process of 1976-1979 was activated with the creation of a 24-man FEDECO headed by Chief Michael Ani and inaugurated in November 1976 with the backing of Decree No. 41 of 1977. This was a grand strategy to disengage the military from politics which climaxed on October 1, 1979 with the inauguration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The FEDECO was not independent as issues of election dates were exclusive to the military regime (Section 16(1)). Fifty-two political associations were formed, 35 collected registration forms, while 19 returned their duly completed forms, and 5 political parties were recognized. These parties included: Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP); National Party of Nigeria (NPN); Nigerian Peoples' Party (NPP); Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP); Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

The ban on the electoral process was lifted on September 21, 1978 preparatory to the Second Republic. The general elections of 1979 saw the NPN won with its presidential candidate, Shehu Shagari and running mate, Alex Ekwueme winning at least two-third votes of all the states in the federation. The emergence of Shagari's NPN led civilian administration marked the beginning of the Second Republic. As observed the electoral processes midwived by the military are relatively peaceful probably because of the exclusive control on the use of force. The results of the 1979 election was contested by the UPN candidate, Awolowo in the court on the grounds of non-compliance to extant laws insisting that Shagari had less than one quarter of the votes cast at the election in each of at least two thirds of all the states in the Federation [7]. There were also allegations of rigging and disenfranchising some voters in UPN strongholds of Bendel, Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, and Ondo States; voting in private houses and shops a day before the presidential election in the northern states (210).

There is no doubt that the prolonged military rule, contributed significantly to the failure of Nigerian federalism. Military rule promoted patrimonialism and parochialism on a very high scale at the same time that it accelerated the conversion of the rentier-state into the service of expanded private accumulation [8]. The abrogation of the constitution, centralizing the command structure akin to its hierarchical structure, incongruent to Nigerian federalism, and flagrant human

right abuses among others, adversely affected the electoral process. Since military rulers are not elected, chief executives were simply appointed at the state level and the appointed chief executives were accountable to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, a coterie of narrow-minded individuals at the apex of the clientele pyramid. The electoral process was a paradox as perceived or real opponents of the junta were chastised with the stick while praise-singers were rewarded with the carrot. The ability of the military to either persuade or force political parties to adopt its members as presidential candidates calls for concern at least within democratic circles [1].

All the military rulers canvass for time through their propaganda machineries who are often civilian politicians who hang around their uniformed counterparts boisterously. The General Ibrahim Babangida's junta reiterated during a graduation ceremony of the National War College in May 1993 that his administration is unwavering in its resolve to disengage from politics in August 1993; a transition programme started in 1986 (Amuwo 1). Decree No. 19 of 1987 originally outlined the Babangida's transition programme ventilated by the Directorate of Social Mobilization (DSM), and the establishment of a 9-member electoral commission, NEC to replace the defunct FEDECO by Decree No. 23 of September 30, 1987 [9]. The promise by successive juntas has been brazenly breached, consigning Nigeria to the debilitating status of a pariah state. It can be adduced that the culture of failed transition and electoral process in Nigeria under the military as the well lubricated propaganda machinery would want the citizens to believe that the "boundary between civil and military society is not clear cut" (Amuwo 1). Thus, it was easy for General Abacha for example to attempt decorating his military uniform with a *dachiki*.

The recommended two-party electoral system by the Babangida administration's 17-member Political Bureau led to the emergence of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) with insignificant difference in political views. The *raison d'être* was to forestall the demon of ethnic bigotry that plagued the electoral process preparatory to the First Republic. There was a major setback to the function of NEC; the inability to register political parties, a responsibility exclusive to the junta's apex decision making body, the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC). Candidates of these political parties for the presidential and national assembly elections were approved cronies of the government through the military president's grand strategy of patronage. Those schemed out of the race by 'foul' means especially Adamu Ciroma, Umaru Shinkafi, and Bamaga Tukur in a press conference in Kaduna tagged the military as the "greatest obstacle to democracy in Nigeria" (*The Citizen* in www.dawodu.com). To actualize the operation of a diarchy, there were local government

elections on a zero-party basis in December 1987 under the backings of Local Government Elections Decree No. 37 of 1987 [9]. Nigerian electoral process under the military will be incomplete without the June 12, 1993 general elections; the widely acclaimed freest and fairest in Nigeria. The annulment led to Babangida stepping aside for an Interim National Government (ING); a novelty in Nigerian history ensconced in illegality and headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan for 92 days (August 27, 1993-November 17, 1993) before General Sani Abacha took over power for another five years (November 17, 1993-June 8, 1998) marked with a "ferocious battle of political credibility and legitimacy" (Amuwo 1). The annulment of the June 12, 1993 election results popularly known as "June 12" signalled the failure of the transitional programme (1986-1993) of the Third Republic.

Electoral fraud and violence have dented the Nigerian electoral process since the first general elections. Albeit, the electoral process under the military regimes: 1979, 1993, and 1999 were conducted almost free of electoral violence. It could be argued that an almost violence-free election during military administration is possible because the military had exclusive control of the instrument of force at its disposal and the political space was not as free and democratic as characteristic of civilian rule. A case of an absence of a free and democratic space was the self-succession charade of General Sani Abacha and the government approved political parties roundly described as five fingers of a leprous hand [5]. Furthering the limited political space, only friends and sympathizers of the Abacha's junta were licensed, both as individuals and as members of political parties. After a rather cumbersome process, *à la* Babangida, in which 18 political associations applied for registration, the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) approved only five [2]. These parties included: Congress of National Consensus (CNC), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), and United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP). These political parties unanimously adopted the candidacy of Sani Abacha to become civilian president in a transition programme under the watch of the military ruler.

There were also internal wrangling by some dissatisfied politicians over the undemocratic adoption of Abacha as sole candidate in the general election of 1998; notable of these politicians were GDM Muhammed Yusuf and Tunji Braithwaite. Due to the undemocratic circumstances that characterized the political space, these parties ceased to exist with sudden death of their principal and sole benefactor. Also, there were calls from pro-democracy activists and statesmen for the immediate dissolution of NECON and all transition agencies set up by the Abacha-led regime and a reconstitution of an independent electoral umpire to

reposition the country democratically. The delusion of transition to civilian democratic rule since the administration of General Yakubu Gowon has shown that the Nigerian experience of military rule is neither “corrective,” nor “redemptive” [10] bearing in mind the conspiratorial plots by military officers to disrupt the existing balance of social forces, to abort the “normal” political process, with a view of confiscating state power and using (104) it to perpetrate themselves in power.

Summing up the political climate and the general discontent from a pro-democratic citizenry during the period of military interregnum, the 2014 National Conference main report says:

During the military regimes, Nigerians agitated for a return to democratic rule, as the years of Military regimes also stirred controversy about military intervention. The reasons for military intervention may be varied but the agitations for constitutional conferences throughout the years of military rule was based on the fact that politics is and needs to be separated from the military, which is considered to be a professional, a-political institution. This view derives from the duties and roles of the professional soldier as subordinate to and subject to civil authority and control (*The National Conference 2014 Main Report 9*).

The final transition to civil rule was midwived by General Abdusallam Abubakar, who succeeded the late Abacha. The electoral process was reshaped with the setting up of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as an Electoral Management Body to drive the electoral process that will usher in a democratically elected civilian government. The three political parties that contested the general elections were the Alliance for Democracy (AD); All Peoples’ Party (APP); and the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP). There was an AD/APP alliance that produced Chief Olu Falae against the PDP Olusegun Obasanjo. Obasanjo was declared winner and subsequently inaugurated as President on May 29, 1999. This marked the commencement of the Fourth Republic.

Electoral Process under Civilian Rule

One of the results of the nationalist struggle in Nigeria was the granting of political independence on October 1, 1960. As plans for independence were consolidated, a general elections was held in 1959 which was contested by three political parties reflecting the major ethnic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba) with the then three regions (North, East, and West) as political fortresses respectively and the political parties were the NPC, NCNC, and AG. Ethnic bigotry continued unabated to trail the electoral process under civilian rule. The five political parties that

emerged in the Second Republic were logical offshoots of the First Republic parties. The UPN was led by Awolowo and controlled the Yoruba states of Western Nigeria; the NPP was led by Azikiwe and exercised control in the Igbo states of Eastern Nigeria; NPN led by Shagari controlled North Western Nigeria; PRP led by Aminu Kano controlled the North Central; and the GNPP led by Ibrahim Waziri controlled the North East.

There was a worrisome development in the electoral process under the Shagari Administration. The revised voters register revealed that the Nigerian electorate had almost doubled between 1979 and 1983. This was not alarming because it was possible for an increase to be experienced as a result of voters’ mobilization towards effective participation in the electoral process. The anomaly was that some prominent names were both missing altogether or wrong details documented and bloated figures assigned. For instance, Chief Bola Ige, Governor of Ogun State was registered as a woman [11]. Politics has always been described as a game of number and the tendency to exercise the power of incumbency by interfering in the electoral process was apparent. The bloated voters’ figures were significantly apparent in the incumbent NPN bastions. Dare Babarinsa capture the figures and the reactions of the opposition UPN to this FEDECO magical wand?

Sokoto had 5.12 million, a 38.38 per cent increase from the 1979 figure of 3.70 million. Other astounding increases included Kano, 49.02 per cent; Kaduna, 98.24 per cent; Rivers 115 per cent; and Benue, 128.57 per cent. But the population in the opposition states were not so lucky to have increased in such geometric proportion. Registered voters had increased by only 23.89 per cent in Lagos State; Ogun, 15.63 per cent; and Plateau by 3.75 per cent. The opposition parties, led by the UPN, openly condemned this FEDECO magic, but the NPN hailed it, praising Ovie-Whiskey for his competence. When the final list came out, FEDECO announced that it was for sale at N1.6 million for each party (185).

The bloated voters’ registered in the Second Republic may be a dangerous precedence for subsequent electoral process as the figures above has shown. The nation rose from the ashes from military rule after a long spell. The electoral process from 1999, the beginning of the Fourth Republic had high expectations for Nigeria and Nigerians alike. Of spectacular mention is that our democracy has survived since 1999 however the debilitating bruises which has left us with a version at variance from the Euro-American model. Nigeria has had elections managed by INEC in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 with significant increase in the number of political parties

participating to fulfil their constitutional description. Irrespective of the number of political parties, the major parties are still fastened to the ethno-religious strings of their regional stronghold. For instance, the South West has the Alliance for Democracy (AD) which had metamorphosed into Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) before the current mega merger with the All Progressive Congress (APC) with a leader covertly flying an ethnic banner; the All Nigerian Peoples' Party (ANPP) has the North as its stronghold before the APC merger; while the All Peoples' Grand Alliance (APGA), wears the Igbo flag with the South East as its stronghold. The elections so far conducted, had Olusegun Obasanjo as president (1999-2007), Umaru Yaradua (2007-2010), Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), Muhammadu Buhari (2015- to date), in line with the 1999 Constitution provision for a two-term of eight year (four years per tenure).

INEC in a bid to address the structural imbalance in electoral constituencies set up a 17-man committee to review the existing constituencies in line with extant law (Section 73 of the 1999 Constitution (as Amended) which stipulates a 10 year period. The former INEC National Chairman, Attahiru Jega, notes:

We are obligated by the constitution to periodically review these constituencies so that we can bring equity in the weight of representations and votes in the constituencies. It is very important in deepening democracy and fairness in representations. We are required to do it either every population census or in at least 10 years. In the kind of democratic system that we operate, where constituencies are based on single-member representatives, it is necessary, as provided by the constitution, and in line with international best practices, that the various districts and constituencies should be reviewed periodically. This ensures that representations based on constituencies keep pace with demographic changes in the country, thereby ensuring that the process is equitable [15].

The last demarcation was in 1996 which brought the number of constituencies to 388 (1). The country has 109 senatorial districts, 360 federal constituencies and several state constituencies. The attempt to delimitate constituencies and create polling units preparatory to the 2015 elections was shelved due to alleged plans to disenfranchise a particular section of the country given the ethno-religious undercurrent in the electoral process and the security implication at the time.

In the 2007 elections only 25 out of the 50 political parties fielded candidates. Electoral litigations-pre and post-elections have soared as Nigerian democratic experience ages. There are both inter and

intra party rivalries expressed in the short-changing of aspirants/candidates (lack of internal party democracy), defections of incumbent in both the executive and legislative arms of government, causing the initial party to lose its representation; the use of state institutions, like the EFCC and ICPC to harass political rivals, lack of independence of the electoral umpire, widespread electoral fraud which has eroded the credibility of the electoral process, and violence resulting from failed expectations from the candidates and parties. For instance, 601 cases were filed from 16 states protesting the outcome of the 2007 general elections as shown in Appendix II.

Given the prevailing challenges, the electoral process tried to walk abreast time with some innovations by the electoral management body for the 2015 general elections. Some of these innovations included the use of Permanent Voters' Card (PVC), Smart Card Reader, the Social Media [12], Advanced Automated Finger Identification System (AAFIS), and the Peace Accord. The resolve of the INEC to introduce the PVC and SCRs was to curtail electoral fraud resulting from multiple registrations and voting. The PVC, with a life span of 10 years, has the size and shape of an identification card with a micro-chip containing biometric details of the owner; other features include passport, base substrate, and security printing, personalized identification number. This means that every duly registered card holder has a non-transferable card. A total of 68,833,476 PVCs for registered voters for the 2015 elections and beyond were produced by INEC [16]. The SCR was introduced to verify voters' registration status on Election Day. It is wired with a cryptographic technology and ultra-low power consumption, single core frequency of 1.2 Ghz and an Android 4.2.2 Operating System ("Fact Sheet on Permanent Voter Cards (PVC...)"). The 232,000 direct data capturing machines deployed was anticipated to complement the national civil registration data base [8]. The AAFIS technology was introduced to rid the voters' register of sharp practices especially multiple registrations. In 10 states alone, 3,600,397 names of ghost voters (as a result of multiple registrations) were deleted and 504,818 from Anambra, Ekiti, and Osun States totaling 4,105,215 from all 13 States [14].

The 2015 electoral process adopted the use of the social media to enlighten and mobilize the electorates and even those in the Diaspora. Several social media accounts were opened on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, among others. This innovation which gained currency from the Arab Spring and the Barak Obama campaign attracted many Nigerian and non-Nigerians owing to the American pessimism on Nigeria's continued existence following the spate of electoral violence especially the 2011. The 2015 election was predicted to be the last in a united Nigeria. More so, the loss of confidence in the legendary media mostly state-owned or protégés of the

incumbent drove many to the cyberspace due to its speed, convenience, accessibility. For the first time in the nation's electoral history, there was a Peace Accord that extracted commitment from contenders to peace in the 2015 general elections. It involved 14 of the presidential candidates including the major contenders-Muhammadu Buhari of the APC and Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP. The political maturity and statesmanship of Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP, who conceded defeat by putting a congratulatory call across to his main contender, Buhari even before the final result was announced did not scuttle the electoral process and Nigeria did not disintegrate as predicted by her international allies.

CONCLUSION

The Nigerian electoral process was midwife by the British colonial administrators in the 1920s. However, this imported Western political process was municipal because of the restrictions on participation based on location [5], socio-economic standing (possession of a minimum of £100), and age/gender (adult-male suffrage) at the time. There has been enormous development in the electoral process after colonial rule. Both the civilian and military dispensations made improved efforts in sustaining this colonial legacy. Nevertheless, the Nigerian electoral process in the post-colonial era was hampered by electoral malfeasance orchestrated by the political elite, the government in power with the complicity of the Electoral Management Body (EMB), leading to violence and cancellation. The greatest threat to the institutionalization of democracy was the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election.

The challenges of a preceding electoral process call for improvement in the next. This results in some innovations, like the introduction of the Smart card reader and permanent voters Cards (PVCs) (to check multiple voting), the peace accord, to extract commitment from candidates and their parties for a peaceful, credible, free and fair elections, and the use of the social media to provide voters' education on the electoral process. It is instructive to note that these innovations require a legal framework, the political will on the part of the government, independence of a credible electoral umpire and the patriotic disposition of the electorates for the sustainability of democratic values in Nigeria.

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APPENDIX I

Chairmen of nigeria's electoral commissions and their period in office

S/N	Name	Name of Commission	Period of Office
1	Chief Eyo E. Esua	Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN)	1959-1966
2	Chief Michael Ani	Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)	1976-1979
3	Justice Victor Ovie-Whiskey	Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)	1980-1983
4	Professor Eme Awa	Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)	1987-1989
5	Professor Humphrey Nwosu	National Electoral Commission (NEC)	1989-1993
6	Professor Okon Edet Uya	National Electoral Commission (NEC)	June 20-Nov, 1993
7	Chief Sumner Dagogo-Jack	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON)	1994-1998
8	Justice Ephraim Akpata	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	1998-2000
9	Dr. Abel Goubadia	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	2000-2005
10	Professor Maurice Iwu	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	2005-2010
11	Professor Attahiru M. Jega	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	2010-2015
12	Professor Mahmood Yakubu	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	2015-

APPENDIX II

Showing preliminary statistics of cases filed in various election tribunals in 2007

S/N	State	No. Of Cases in Tribunal
1	Anambra	99
2	Borno	08
3	Edo	32
4	Ebonyi	17
5	Imo	13
6	Gombe	12
7	Kaduna	21
8	Kano	43
9	Katsina	44
10	Kogi	46
11	Ogun	80
12	Oyo	19
13	Kwara	21
14	Plateau	28
15	Rivers	68
16	Yobe	06
17	Total	601

Source: IDASA, Conflict Tracking Dossier: A Quarterly Review, Issue 7, June 2007, p. 2 Culled from Jibrin and Dauda 70.