INSECURITY AND VOTERS REGISTRATION IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT: Getting registered to vote is a necessary step in the democratic process that allows a person to cast a ballot and be elected to office. It is a must-have for any election to be taken seriously. A list of registered voters is created from this information and is referred to as the voter list. The voter list is a useful instrument for election officials as well as the political system, but it cannot be used effectively unless voters' protection and safety are guaranteed. One of Nigeria's most distinctive democratic features has been the prevalence of election violence. The situation has only worsened, undermining the Fourth Republic's efforts toward democratization. Violence against political opponents, citizens, and the system as a whole is rising, as evidenced by an increase in physical, psychological, and structural manifestations of the problem. This has almost always resulted in a sense of unease, indifference toward elections, and a crisis of legitimacy in the political system. There are very few systematic academic studies on the importance of election security in maintaining Nigeria's democratic culture, despite the devastation caused by prolonged electoral violence. This study, then, aims to investigate the link between election security and Nigeria's democratic consolidation via secondary data collection sources. It has been discovered that the danger to electoral security comes from several interconnected variables that emerge at various points during the voting process. Because of this, the dominant coercive approach to electoral security, which is based on the erroneous notion that undesired actions on Election Day are the primary danger to electoral security, is completely inadequate to address electoral insecurity. To provide a conducive atmosphere for "good politics" and participatory democracy in the country's 4th republic, the research suggests democracy-friendly policies that extend across the three stages of the electoral process for electoral security administration.

Keywords: Voter Registration, Electoral Violence, Insecurity, Electoral Security, Democratic Consolidation, Political System

INTRODUCTION

Democracy's ideas and practices continue to be more widely accepted than any other form of governance in the modern world. Massive political, social and political intellectuals have shifted to democratic principles in the post-Cold War era, as well as formerly autocratic or totalitarian governments that never before embraced democratic culture. This is unquestionable proof. Prodemocracy and democratization efforts are on the rise because democracy is now universally recognized as a positive force for social transformation, effective governance, political stability, and long-term development. Democracies in the Western Hemisphere, particularly, have the highest living standards in the world as well as the most stable social and political systems. They also represent a political and

socioeconomic bloc where the highest level of public accountability is evident. This is supported by the evidence.

Africa has not been excluded from the post-Cold War era's spread of democratic principles and aspirations. Therefore, recent developments in the literature hold the view that Africa would no longer see the generalized chaos manifested by perpetual political instability, bloody civil wars and brutal armed conflicts that were the defining features of Africa throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (Hutchful & Bathily, 1998; Adedeji, 1999; Anyaoku, 1999; Adedeji & Ayo, 2000; Akindele, 2003). If no coordinated efforts are taken to overcome the numerous issues set to hinder the holding of legitimate elections in various African independent nations, this optimistic optimism may remain wishful. This is because of the inherent benefits of democratic principles and practices. This is because the quality of an election process is always a good indicator of the durability of a democratic system in a particular community.

Leaders in Nigeria are adamant in sabotaging the electoral process to further their own interests at the expense of the people (Okeke, Ejiofor, Asor, & Okeke, 2010). This is accomplished through swaying voters in favour of their own political parties. Because the appropriate remedy was not utilized, an attempt to reverse the troubling trend was unnoticed. There is a lack of trust, standards, dependability, and efficiency in the way that voters are registered to vote in public office elections. This prepared the way for the installation of bad leaders who corrupt the system by manipulating elections, clinging to positions of power, and spreading lies, among other things. Furthermore, the registration of Nigerian voters is a time-consuming and expensive procedure. Nigeria's voter registration system has several flaws, and information technology might help address them. However, the current method is slightly more than a computerization of voter registration (Mondell, 1989). Multiple registrations, alien and nonindigene registrations, and other concerns that are intentionally introduced into the nation to tamper with the process will remain unaddressed. It has also failed to address the high costs and inefficiencies of voter registration.

Computers perform tasks quickly, accurately, efficiently, portively, on schedule, adequately, and securely. Bills HF1053 and SF660, which mandated that residents with a state ID or a driver's licence be automatically registered to vote in 2009, were passed by the Minnesota legislature in an effort to combat issues such as low voter participation, inaccurate voter lists, voting discrimination, the improper purging of eligible voters, and the potential for fraud (Groove, 2008). Fair elections in Nigeria necessitate the implementation of a new voter registration system that corrects the current system's flaws. However, voters are extremely important. However, the system has been mangled by overly concerned politicians, causing the public to lose faith in it.

With this in mind, it is hypothesized in this research project that democratic consolidation would provide a pattern for political stability and long-term development in post-Cold War Africa through an efficient election process that embodies electoral security holistically. In other words, Africa's "third wave of democracy" may come to a halt unless concerted efforts are made to establish a sustainable and virile democratic structure that ensures freedom from voting apathy before, during, and after election periods.

Electoral violence has constituted a unique security danger to Nigeria's embryonic democracy and democratic experimentation since the emergence of the 4th Republic, particularly in

Nigeria. Historically, political conflicts, particularly those linked to electoral fraud, have snowballed into a national tragedy of epic proportions in Nigeria. Young, 1976; Adedeji, 1999; Anyaoku, 1999; Osaghae, 2002; Zack-Williams et al., 2002; Green & Luehrmann, 2003; Agbaje et al., 2004; Albert, 2005; 2008; Anifowose, 2011) As a result, political opponents and citizens are increasingly being subjected to acts of physical, psychological, and structural violence, including intimidation, vandalism, kidnapping, and character assassination. This has almost always resulted in a general feeling of unease and indifference toward politics. However, despite these historical facts, Nigeria's democratic path is still laden with peril, given that previous elections have failed to satisfy the minimal prerequisites for holding democratic elections in accordance with international best practices. What issues endanger Nigeria's democratic elections, asks experts? How can the country's election security situation be improved? Is electoral security important for Nigeria's democratic consolidation?

By examining the relevance of election security for the consolidation of Nigeria's 4th republican democratic principles and practices, this study aims to answer these issues. According to the findings of this research, no democracy can improve its democratic process beyond the level of quality control provided by its election security systems. There is a strong argument in favour of this thesis that the development of an enabling environment for the continuation of peaceful, ideologically based elections always preceded democratic consolidation, providing a buffer for long-term economic growth as well as political stability and national integration in any modern society. The main goal of this research is to examine election security in Nigeria's fourth Republic in light of its consequences for democratic consolidation. The following are additional specific goals to keep in mind:

i.   To document the prevalence of electoral violence in Nigeria arising from electoral insecurity in the country's history of democratic experimentation, particularly since independence;
ii. To identify the determinants of electoral insecurity in the country;
iii. Make necessary recommendations towards ensuring electoral security in the interest of enduring democracy in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Voter Registration System

In a democratic system, voter registration is one of the most important electoral instruments; it is necessary for a credible, fair, and free election. It is the procedure of identifying individuals who are eligible to vote in an election through registration. Through voter registration, a country compiles information about franchised citizens to create a list of voters known as a register of voters (Igbani & Jumase, 2006). Election strength is determined by a system that instructs the body in charge of holding elections and political parties on how to organize for a successful election. Voter registration is required in the US for a citizen to be able to vote (Igbani & Jumase, 2006). Citizens and residents of various democracies are required to register with a central registry before they may vote in an election (Keysser, 2001). When a person registers to vote, it gives them the right to participate in any election and exercise their right to vote. That which affects our democratic process is at stake

(Keysser, 2001). According to Eneji (2015), voter registration should comprise the following items.

i.   Restrict access to voting
ii.   Ensuring that only those entitled to vote in a given jurisdiction can do so
iii. Ensuring that each voter votes only once
iv.   The voter registration list can be used to determine the best location for polling places and determine how many voting stations poll workers to be assigned to a given polling place, voter turnout, etc.
v.   For example, government agencies may use voter lists to help jury pools.
vi.   Political parties and candidates also use lists for campaign-related activities.

Every country has its own unique system for registering voters. To guarantee and enable all those legally entitled to vote to do so, it must ensure that only qualified voters are registered, restrict unqualified people from voting, and prevent voters from voting more than once in any one election to assure equitable treatment of all voters in voting (Igbani & Jumase, 2006). In a democratic society, the electoral act, which sets the rules for elections, is created by electoral legislation and appropriated by the electoral commission. This is in accordance with Eneji (2015). According to the Act, every citizen has the right to vote and be elected in every election. The main parameters taken into account are the residents' age limit, mental health, indigence, and legal disposition. If the voter registration procedure is suspect, the election results will also be suspect. Free and fair elections cannot be held without verifying that the voters have met all of the legal conditions, according to Alaguvel and Gnanavel (2013). Voter registration should be viewed as a database of eligible voters. Depending on the country, voter registration may fall under the purview of the government or may be mandated as part of a citizen's civic obligation. Citizens must register in most nations even if voting is not mandatory. Citizens are automatically registered to vote as a result (Oversea Vote Foundation, 2012).

Modern democracies are characterized by regular elections as one of their most salient traits. Although elections and voting are not regarded as adequate conditions for political representation, there is no question that they are a required prerequisite relevant to the establishment of democratic ideals and practices. Elections have been dubbed the "heart of democracy" because of their prominence in the democratic political arena (Heywood, 1997). Chukkol (2006) clearly argues that conducting elections on a regular basis is a precondition of any democracy.

According to one definition, a "election" is a "formal act of collective decision that happens in a stream of related antecedent and subsequent behaviour". According to Heywood (1997), an election is a tool for filling a position by allowing a defined group of individuals, referred to as "the electorate," to make selections. For the Nigerian Court of Appeal, this is the same as "the process of choosing by popular vote a candidate for public office under a democratic form of government." Erhagbe (2003) argues that one of the essential assumptions of democracy is that the governed should have a vote in who governs them. In light of this, elections are described as "one important way by which citizens concretize the intellectual fiction of their sovereignty and manifest their rights to political choice and participation". Elections are important because they allow citizens to express their preferences, participate in the political process, and hold elected officials accountable (Alemika, 2007:148, emphasis mine). Heywood (1997) claims that elections have distinct purposes in a democratic system.

For example, political recruiting and representation are important in helping reinforce the elite while also influencing policy and assisting in making decisions at all levels of government.

Given that elections play such an important role in contemporary democracies, it is reasonable to say that voting is more than just something you do on election day. Election, on the other hand, includes all of the political activities that take place before, during, and after the actual voting process. Hence, elections in modern democracies are regarded as an institution as opposed to a purely final composition of an electoral committee. As a result, democratization is viewed as a dynamic, ongoing process rather than a single accomplishment (Green & Luehrmann, 2003:305).

Security for the Election Process

Concern for a nation's security dates back millennia, making it as old as the nation itself. Security may be broadly described as a feeling of well-being and safety from harm, as well as an environment that provides that assurance (Nwolise, 2009). Security provides context for human existence by placing it in the proper historical context. The security of an individual, identity group, nation, or even the planet, according to Nwolise (2009), is not only holistic and strategic value but also the most important value. Because everything else is useless unless one has complete confidence in his or her bodily well-being.

The wide definition of security implies protection or safety from any hitch or hindrance that might alter the conduct of a legitimate election within the context of acceptable democratic tradition and culture, which is what electoral security implies. According to Fisher (2002), cited in Albert (2007: 134), electoral security is "the process of protecting electoral stakeholders such as voters and candidates, pool workers and media; electoral information such as vote results, registration data and campaign material; electoral facilities such as polling stations and counting centres; and electoral events such as anti-death, anti-damage and anti-destruction rallies". According to Albert (2007), among the organizations anticipated to carry out this duty are security services, political parties, the INEC, judicial officials, the media, electoral observers, and academics (emphasis mine). Election security therefore involves both coercive and no coercive aspects, encompassing the three stages of the election process, namely, the preelection period, election day, and the time following election. The peaceful holding of elections is a sacred part of the democratic process. The government therefore has the legislative duty in a democratic environment to provide for the sanctity of the electoral process at all three levels. To ensure a democratic election, institutional, legislative, statutory, and structural arrangements must meet the minimum requirements. This means that politicians and other key actors from all parties and ideologies must not see violence and manipulation of the available mechanisms as a way to secure favourable electoral results. Since elections are increasingly recognized as a crucial component of peace-building and a cornerstone for dynamic social engagement, ensuring the integrity of the whole electoral process is critical to ensuring their integrity. Election security must therefore address protection from physical, psychological, and structural threats against electorate members and the citizenry as a whole without regard to party allegiance or ethnic sentiment as well as historical precedent, religious differences, or any other form of social division. Conclusion: A political climate free of electoral security threats is determined by guaranteeing that political parties and their candidates prevail in the scheme of power without

endangering the safety of rivals and citizens, as well as without altering the integrity of election processes.

Uncertainty over the outcome of elections leads to electoral violence, which has three dimensions: physical, psychological, and institutional. "Thugery", or the use of hazardous weapons to frighten voters and other electoral stakeholders or to cause bodily harm or injury to any individual associated with electoral processes, according to Albert (2007), is a circumstance in which there is a physical assault (Ladan, 2005).

Electoral psychological conflict is manifested in the past of campaign posters, chanting, intimidation of political opponents, biased media reporting and abuse of statutory responsibilities by the electoral institution, security agencies and the judiciary, unequal access to public media by political parties of different statuses, and the abuse of office by traditional rulers in terms of intimidating the masses to exercise their electoral rights (Alanamu, 2005; Ladan, 2005). This sort of violence, according to Albert (2007), explains democratic society's "political indifference." In other words, individuals are made anxious and afraid to run for public office or openly announce their support for a certain political party or its candidates. Armed security officers are also linked to psychological violence on election day, since eligible voters may be prevented from exercising their constitutionally protected right to vote owing to intimidation. A society whose political parties, election commissions, courts, media, and security operators cannot assure citizens' 'electoral security' has a problem with electoral psychological violence, argues Albert (2007).

Election conflict has three dimensions: structural violence, civil war, and ethnic conflict. It is generally hidden and ingrained in society's fabric. To keep things as they are for a select few inside a polity, structural electoral violence takes the shape of exclusionary or discriminatory measures targeting specific groups or political divides, according to Albert (2007).

Structural electoral violence, according to Albert (2007), emerges in Nigerian society in the form of discrimination against certain socioeconomic groups. People with certain ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, or gender identities are effectively shut out of political participation in some political parties or groups. As a result, individuals from opposing political ideologies view elections as a "we" vs. "them" dichotomy, and they do not mind that they play a spoiler role in the democratic process. A certain amount of electoral conflict is unavoidable in any democracy, particularly in its nonviolent and low-intensity condition. As a result, elections involve numerous contestants from many political parties and ideologies vying for a restricted number of public political seats. When Malu (2006) says that election conflicts are inherent in the political process and should not be seen as an opposition to liberal democracy but as confirmation of the system's strength, vigor, robustness, vitality and openness, he corroborates this.

We may conclude from the above that electoral security is more than simply something that has to be done on election day to ensure that voters follow the rules when casting their ballots. An election process that is secure calls for several variables working together to assure the long-term sustainability of a better democratic process.

For this reason, stakeholders must embrace "good politics" and maintain the security of the democratic process as an axiomatic proposition: Elections not only provide for political rivalry, participation and legitimacy but also allow for peaceful power changes for continuity

in governance. When the polity is free of factors that endanger electoral security and when provisions are established for due process in the conduct of democratic elections in an open, just, and competitive climate, a democratic society is said to operate in the framework of decent politics.

As a result, democratization is stumbling in some African countries because of the inability to ensure the integrity of the election process. In post-Cold War African culture, the absence of an enabling environment for election security has been one of the most important factors in igniting ethnic, political, religious, and other types of internal conflicts (Adekanye, 2007).

Since many nations in Africa are experiencing multiparty elections without concurrent constructive development in their electoral system and governance process, the third wave in African democracy may not deliver the expected 'democratic dividends.'

Democratic Consolidation

For various individuals, democracy implies different things. As a result, academics, political analysts, democratic theorists, and other interested parties have worked to explain democracy in terms of what they know and do not know about it. Democracy was described classically by Daniel Webster as a government of the people, by the people, and accountable to the people (see Danjibo, 2012). As ancient Greece and traditional Igbo culture demonstrated, democracy was initially based on the principle of equal involvement by all citizens in the decision-making process. Despite this, the conventional view of democracy has shifted to a modern interpretation of the term. The contemporary definition of democracy is a government in which people are represented by representatives elected by the people. Given that democracy may be defined as "government by the people and for the people," it is safe to say that popular representation holds a special place in American society. To summarize, republicanism may be defined as a kind of representative democracy that incorporates the involvement of the people through an election process that is genuinely free and equal. As a result, democracy in its current form is defined as the form of governance that, while requiring majority control, nevertheless protects the rights of minorities.

It is a process in which democracy becomes so well established and legitimated that it cannot be overthrown or destroyed, as Larry Diamond puts it (See Obi, 2003). According to Obi (2003), this stance is predicated on the growth of democratic institutions, the establishment of a democratic culture, and a shift away from authoritarian to democratic mindsets. This assumes that the democratic process is open, that the rule of law is supreme, and that citizens are involved in the democratic state. Juan Linz may have thought of democratic consolidation as a scenario in which "democracy is the only game in town" because of the significant contribution ideological-based democracy makes to national cohesiveness and political stability. According to Obi (2003), the rule of law, constitutionalism, and political behaviour that adheres to a democratic ethos are all signs of democratic consolidation.

Another school of thought emphasizes the necessity of "the rule of two turnover elections" in establishing the fundamental ingredients of democratic consolidation when emphasizing the significance of elections in entrenching democracy and strengthening political legitimacy. When an elected government voluntarily surrenders power following elections, democracy is said to be strengthened, and another elected government does the same once new leaders are chosen. This is a process of democracy growth and institutionalization to limit or eliminate

the possibility of relapsing to authoritarianism or anarchy to paraphrase Obi. As a result, political stability and democratic peace are more likely to be achieved (2003).

To summarize, democratic consolidation entails the development of mutually reinforcing structural, institutional, political, constitutional and procedural arrangements that help sustain democratic culture and values while also safeguarding and meeting the needs of individuals without giving undue consideration to group affiliation or ideological cleavage.

In general, emerging trends in African political life show that many African states are showing characteristics of democratic backsliding rather than democratic consolidation. Exceptions include Botswana, South Africa, Senegal, Mauritius, the Benin Republic, Malawi, and Zambia, as well as (in some respects) Cape Verde and Ghana. This is because those nations that were able to successfully democratize following the end of the cold war in 1989 have now begun to experience a democratic disaster. In part, this is because many African independent states claim to be moving away from authoritarianism, a contemptible anachronism, in favour of multiparty democracy, but they have not done nearly as much as they could to develop mechanisms to ensure electoral security during their respective democratization and democratic experimentation processes. Rather than advancing democracy in post-Cold War Africa, this odious trend has presented a grave threat to people's collective survival in postcolonial national life. A few examples of countries where election violence has sparked unrelenting tensions and national disintegration are Uganda; Tanzania; Kenya; Nigeria; the Central African Republic; Côte d'Ivoire; and most recently, Mali.

Conceptual and constitutional frameworks for democratic consolidation and political stability in post-Cold War Africa must therefore focus more on the implications of electoral security for lasting peace, which is a sine qua non for integrated development and human security as well as national integration in the interest of sustainable peace.

Insecurity in the Nigerian Political System

Nigeria's political culture has grown synonymous with violence, and this has been seen in almost all of the country's elections to date. Nigeria had seven national elections (from 1960-2011) as well as many regional and state-level elections throughout this time period. In 1964, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011, there were general elections. There have been no elections in Nigeria since independence that have been held in an atmosphere of significant electoral security, which may have contributed to the demise of the country's previous three republics and subsequent military intervention. The preelection period, Election Day, and postelection period are all times when electoral violence manifests itself to various degrees and amounts around the country.

Re-election conflict and violence can show themselves at both the intra- and interparty levels in matters such as party formation; undemocratic internal arrangements for party primaries; the nomination of candidates for elected positions; state government sponsorship for certain parties; manipulation by party stalwarts; undue godfather influence on party proceedings; zoning issues; a lack of clear ideology; and political intolerance and manipulation of pubs. In regard to election-day violence, there are many contributing factors. These include insufficient security for elected officials and elected officials in office, partisan security agency disposition, abuse of security personnel's responsibilities, incompetence of INEC officials, and media bias. Violence in the aftermath of elections, including repression by the

government of unsuccessful candidates, falsification of results and the INEC's public declaration of falsified results, the exclusion of parts of the country controlled by opposition parties, judicial compromise, and poor handling of election petitions, are all examples of this.

Evidence abounds in Nigeria's political history that successive administrations' incapacity to establish an enabling political atmosphere for election security has been a key element in the collapse of previous Republics' governments.

Nigeria's federalist system was put in jeopardy in 1965 by a wave of upheaval, notably in the country's western region. The federal government declared a state of emergency to stop the crisis's tide, but it was too late for the 1st Republic, which ended with the entry of a military dictatorship to Nigeria's postcolonial politics. After 13 years of military rule, Nigeria was able to engage in only democratic activities in 1979.

In 1983, the incumbent president, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the NPN standard bearer, was proclaimed the winner of the presidential election, which was generally believed to be riddled with electoral malpractices and irregularities. As a result, of the political upheaval sparked by that election, the country's integrity was once again put in jeopardy, and the military was given justification to return to the political scene. Since the Nigerian electoral process has always served to increase the political temperature rather than serve as a foundation for the consolidation of democratic culture, principles, and practices, this has exacerbated the country's feeling of instability. In other words, a lack of political will on the side of the government to provide election security in Nigeria has been a destabilizing element in the country's postcolonial history.

Furthermore, the early demise of the Third Republic was influenced by the military's inability to plan a smooth transition from military to civil administration. No matter how transparent, peaceful and free Nigeria's 1993 presidential election was—and although it generated results that were definitive and universally accepted—the military government led by Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB) went ahead and annulled it nevertheless.

The democratic process was not built on a firmer basis than the country had previously had in previous republics because the political climate did not represent the criteria for electoral security at the time of the development of the 4th Republic in 1999. In general, Abdul-Salami Abubakar's military administration did not have enough time to develop a feasible blueprint for an honest electoral process, which contributed greatly. Perhaps the military rushed into a transition exercise that did not represent a hopeful electoral process due to pressure from civil society and other stakeholders both inside and outside the nation.

Compared with other reasonably advanced democracies in Latin America and Asia, Nigeria's electoral process did not appear to have matured in the 1999 election, which led to the establishment of the 4th Republic, despite a lack of physical violence on election Day. More than anything, Nigerians voted only grudgingly in the 1999 general elections to ensure that the country would be free of the military's harsh rule for the first time in more than a decade.

Following the 4th Republic's shaky elections, another wave of electoral violence seems inevitable. Following the 2015 elections, electoral violence increased rather than decreased, posing a greater threat to Nigeria's security. This is because electoral violence occurred in all parts of the country, including Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). This massive loss

of life and property has come from a lack of confidence in the election process, which is counterproductive to democratic consolidation. Politicians, statesmen, and ordinary citizens, including children, continue to be murdered in the course of the country's escalating election-related violence. It has been reported that, from state to state, there have been violent conflicts, deaths, arson and destruction, and abductions, intimidation and victimization.

There were signs leading up to the 2007 general elections that the process would be marred by rigging and other malpractice. For example, during the 2007 election campaign, General Olusegun Obasanjo was widely reported as saying that the election was a "do-or-die" event. The truth is that the 2007 general elections were marred by yet another round of irregularities, which sparked unrest in several parts of the nation. The elections were regarded as the most rigged in Nigerian history because 'electoral criminals' and 'political scavengers' within the polity broke all the laws that regulate the practice of 'good politics' with impunity.

During the 4th Republic, political opponents and citizens were subjected to acts of electoral violence on a number of occasions. The cases are included in the table below.

As previously noted, elections in the nation have consistently been marred by violence of increasing severity and size, posing grave dangers to the country's fledgling democracy in the 4th Republic's future.

For example, when the 2011 general elections drew nearer Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom state, there were reports of horrible crimes. Some areas of the city were rocked by interparty violence on March 22, 2011. Machetes, assault weapons, and explosives were used in the fight between the PDP and the opposition action congress of Nigeria (ACN). More than 20 people lost their lives as a result of the incident, while dozens more were injured. Over 1,000 cars were vandalized, including the presidential campaign offices of President Goodluck Jonathan and Vice President Nnamadi Sambo.

After the 2011 elections, the Police and Legal Advocacy Centre in Abuja carried out a postelection violence study in Kaduna state, which highlighted the extent of the problem. After the state's postelection violence erupted, Kaduna's former Inspector General of Police (IG), Hafiz Rimgim, stated that the city was one of the most dangerous in the north, with 518 people dead, including six police officers. Dr Goodluck Jonathan, the PDP presidential candidate, had been declared the victor of the election by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Further confirmation from the IG revealed that 77 people were injured to various degrees and that 22,000 people were internally evacuated to safer areas of the nation. In addition, tens of millions of naira worth public and private property were damaged. There were 157 destroyed churches, 46 destroyed mosques, and 1,435 destroyed homes. The IG also reported that 437 cars and 219 motorbikes were destroyed in the blaze.

Recent events indicate that election security in Nigeria is still a major concern, which puts the country's consolidation of democracy and long-term sustainability at risk.

Law and order in the country is in peril because of the polarization of the political parties. This is because, to various degrees, each political party includes men and women who are clamouring for political power and willing to use whatever means are necessary to stop their competitors and achieve their lofty goals. Nigeria's political stability and internal security would be jeopardized if major participants in the governance process did not recognize the

importance of electoral security for democratic consolidation, resulting in a growing crisis of legitimacy and political indifference.

Nigeria's successive administrations have used a forceful strategy to maintain voting security. Electoral security is believed to be threatened primarily by unwanted actions occurring on election day. Nigerian administrations have often failed to hold peaceful elections that allow citizens to participate without fear, favour, or prejudice because of this erroneous belief. As a consequence, the country's democratic experiment has suffered from a legitimacy crisis, as well as an increase in public anxiety and political indifference. This means that using force to ensure election security on election days is not only ineffective but also dangerously deceptive and harmful. Nigeria's political geography requires constitutional involvement and other social network activities at all three levels of the voting process to ensure electoral security.

Nigeria's political environment has been marked by uncertainty since the establishment of the 4th Republic, making it difficult for the country to generate its "best eleven" for positions of leadership at all levels. Instead, the country's sacred center of government has been overrun by political predators. For example, a number of ideologically motivated leaders and social justice activists have been assassinated by ruthless and visionless rivals, who show a high degree of cowardice in politics by inflicting physical and psychological harm on their opponents. Despite their patriotism, many Nigerians are afraid of proclaiming to run for office at all levels of government. This is set against the backdrop of Nigeria's dismal track record of delivering justice, with those responsible for election violence still at large. As a result, citizens of all political stripes feel uneasy and disinterested in politics.

This suggests that election insecurity has harmed Nigeria's democratic consolidation and political stability since the country gained its independence in 1960. In other words, Nigeria's 4th Republic's drive for democratic consolidation depends on the emergence of a political climate that is attentive to the need for election security in deciding the entrenchment of democratic ideals. While the 4th Republic of Nigeria has been able to hold four consecutive back-to-back elections, the assumption that democracy has taken root on the basis of the uninterrupted holding of elections may be misguided, since the country has yet to establish an efficient electoral security control network. Continuing election violence in Nigeria, as Ladan (2006:52) properly notes, puts at risk Nigeria's efforts to achieve stable democratic transitions and long-term aspirations of consolidated democracy. For Ladan, the challenges we face now might develop and take on monster proportions, which could not only cut short Nigeria's democratization journey but also the entire national project if they are not addressed diligently by concerned groups of stakeholders. We may conclude that the 4th Republic of Nigeria faces a high risk of democratic reversal, counterproductive growth, and the syndrome of the failed state if it does not improve the quality of its election management procedures in the near future.

Determinants of Electoral Insecurity in Nigeria

This research reveals several interlocking problems that threaten Nigeria's election stability. The following are the elements that are examined in this section:

No political party based on ideologies

Owing to Nigeria's lack of an ideologically motivated political party structure, democracy has faced problems since independence. As a result, political parties are more likely to be founded and run by individuals with certain personalities or ethnic backgrounds than they are to reflect national perspectives. Electoral violence has increased as politicians use group feelings such as ethnic awareness and cultural distinctiveness to rally voters, encouraging their kin to take up guns if necessary to secure victory regardless of the cost.

Furthermore, Nigeria's flagrant disdain for the principles and practices of a multiparty system has done nothing to promote efficient power sharing among the country's many component parts. Therefore, political gladiators have not permitted the maintenance of circumstances that guarantee election security in the country's electoral environment. As a result, there has been considerable electoral violence during the country's three-stage election process.

Economic Influence

With political clout comes unrestricted access to public resources. Elections are viewed as a fight by politicians and would be office holders since the outcome impacts their prospects of participating in the country's governing structure at any level. Politicians and political parties are formed to protect group interests inside the governance scheme rather than the rules of the game to promote the principles of power sharing for the benefit of national integration. Successive administrations have consistently fought against efforts to make structural adjustments and alter fundamental institutions to maintain political legitimacy and a transparent election system in perpetuity.

Elite Manipulation

Unfortunately, political enmity and violence are now part of everyday life in Nigerian politics. In Nigeria's political jargon, political supporters are known as "godfathers," whereas businessmen and moneybags are the individuals who foment violence behind scenes and provide the resources for them to continue. This problem is therefore always the work of the elite. They do this on purpose to further their own narrow interests at the detriment of democratic progress. Ex-president Obasanjo, for example, once said that the 2007 presidential race was a "win at all costs" situation because of the PDP government's resolve. Because of the political elite's devolved devil mentality, the general public has become frustrated and has turned to violence as a result.

Weak Institutional Framework

Election violence in Nigeria has become increasingly violent due to the weakened democratic culture and practice institutions and architectures in the country. In regard to uneven representation of political interests, the electoral body (INEC), police, and judiciary have all been accused of playing politics with their respective constitutional and statutory obligations. There are several allegations of collusion between these institutions and the PDP, the country's ruling party, during the present administration. According to others, the PDP's promise of securing central government control for the next 100 years confirms that fundamental institutions of democratic progress in the country are being exploited to pervert the purity of multiparty democracy. If the PDP adopted this notion of determining elections

ahead of time to demonstrate political progress, party maturity, and the importance of free and fair elections, where did it achieve it? Some politicians have also tried to abuse the constitution and the election process to extend their time in power. The tale of General Olusegun Obasanjo's third term is a good example. Consequently, political predators have always sparked violent public responses to systemic misgovernance, resulting in needless internal crises of unimaginable proportions and undermining the promising road to the consolidation of democratic culture.

Government collusion with law enforcement

Coercive and noncoercive aspects of election security have been discussed previously. Security services have exclusive statutory authority to use force to address election instability. However, actual data show that Nigeria's security agencies have fallen short of upholding their statutory duties with a strong sense of patriotism, dedication, and objectivity. Some law enforcement officers have been implicated in increasing election violence on behalf of one or more political parties and their candidates in the past. The Transitional Monitoring Group reported in its final reports on the 2003 general elections, for example, that:

Police cooperation in election malpractices in certain areas was reported, as was party agents' refusal to interfere in obvious examples of electoral fraud. In other states and cities, there was a failure to maintain peace, allowing criminals to wreak havoc.

Additionally, the police service commission confirmed that it was aware of allegations of improper conduct by some police officers, which included conspiring with elected officials to frighten voters away from polling places and turning a blind eye to electoral malpractice, such as the snatching of ballot boxes or the carting away of other election materials by miscreants.

Inadequate Punitive Measures for Electoral Offences

Weak punishments for electoral violence, as well as other social vices in Nigeria, are among the current problems in ensuring that the law is effectively enforced. In addition, the rules are vague in regard to particular criminal offenses, such as threats to election security. 'Nolle Prosequi', for example, is a constitutional clause that grants authority to the Attorney General of the Federation or its counterparts at the state level to withdraw a criminal case from court if doing so is in the interests of the state in question. In other words, the provision fosters election instability by allowing people or organizations with ties to the ruling class to commit acts of electoral violence while remaining unpunished.

In light of the above, it may be claimed that developing a holistic strategy for electoral security management, rather than using lawful force on Election Day, is fundamental in solving Nigeria's difficulties of credible elections and democratic consolidation.

Conclusion

There is a connection between election security and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, specifically, as well as in Africa generally, according to this study, for the sake of democratic progress on the whole continent, Nigeria, Africa's microcosm, must make necessary

improvements to its election process. As previously established in this article, Nigeria's last three republics fell apart due to a lack of election security. Similar tendencies have been set up to put the current 4th Republic at risk. Lack of election security has always been a major factor in igniting ethnic, political, religious, and other types of intra-African conflicts since the Cold War.

An enabling climate for election security cannot be secured at the price of a robust foundation for democratic consolidation. In light of Nigeria's history of increasing levels of physical, psychological, and structural violence during the country's democratic transition since independence, politicians in the past and present have consistently ignored the need for election security. To ensure political stability and sustainable development in Nigeria's 4th Republic, guaranteeing electoral security in the political arena would provide an enabling atmosphere for "good politics" and participatory democracy within the context of multiparty ideology. For the sake of long-term growth, political stability, sociocultural enrichment, and national unity, Nigeria's electoral security is critical.

The collective life of Nigeria's component parts and its geographic location on the continent depend on the success of this embryonic democratic experiment, and Nigeria cannot afford to fail. The importance of election security cannot be overstated for democratic consolidation and national security.

Electoral security infuses our governing process and democratic experiment with the values of equality, truth, fair play, and social justice, as well as a culture of loyalty, patriotism, and dedication to the public good.

In each democratic nation, fraud in the voting process has been linked to a crisis of legitimacy. Security in the voting process promotes trust between the government and its citizens.

With electoral security, we can build on our country's long history of excellent governance while also demonstrating our commitment to effective leadership that is both accountable and transparent.

There will be no sense of uneasiness or political indifference since all genuine candidates and voters will exercise their fundamental rights and duties without fear of being disenfranchised. Because it tends to provide a blueprint for the triumph of justice over injustice, protection of human rights against abuses of human rights, and the rule of law over lawlessness, electoral security benefits the entire democratic process as a whole.

Recommendations

Coercive and noncoercive election security networks are critical for guaranteeing the confidence and commitment of Nigeria's voters to democratic consolidation in the 4th Republic. Threats to electoral security before, during and after election periods can apparently shorten the democratic process in the country. This is a new finding, however. As a result, the government and other stakeholders must act quickly to create an environment that encourages the formation of responsive and accountable leadership within a democratic culture. To achieve this laudable goal, the administration must work to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that democratic elections are conducted safely, in

accordance with worldwide best practices. The work of guaranteeing electoral security has not been undertaken with entire dedication, a high sense of political will and uttermost sincerity, which informs the record of little progress accomplished thus far in this respect, despite succeeding administrations having attempted to ensure it in the past. As a result, the following ideas are suggested:

Election system reform must be comprehensive and address the following issues:

i. An electoral body with a balanced makeup that is free of bias and thus represents the interests of all component parts equally.
ii. An impartial body that oversees the electoral process on a legal basis.
iii. Before, during, and after election periods, a functioning electoral offense and complaint commission should be established to handle violations of electoral laws and abuses of electoral procedures.
iv. To help elected public office holders gain political legitimacy, all parts of the election process must be carried out according to the Electoral Act's design, including demarcation of voting areas, registration of voters, and counting and declaring of results.
v. Election bodies (INEC) and security agencies, as well as the judiciary, should be free of influence from political parties, other organizations or people inside the country to carry out their statutory tasks with a strong sense of duty, dedication, and patriotism.
vi. For all actors to feel confident and give a level playing field, electoral rules, laws, and legislation must be placed above feelings or bias. To put it another way, candidates should be given an equal opportunity to run in elections regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, ideology, or any other type of group enclave inside the democratic system.

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