



THE YOUTHS AND INCLUSIVE POLITICAL SPACE IN NIGERIA: BEYOND THE “NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN” ACT

Social Sciences Research

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Nigeria

Vincent Chukwukadibia ONWUGHALU ¹ & Collins OBIORAH²

^{1,2}Department of Public Administration, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

This paper appraised the “*Not Too Young to Run*” Act recently passed by the National Assembly as a way of shoring up youth’s participation in the leadership of Nigeria by reducing the constitutional ages for vying for certain elective positions in the country. The study was descriptive in approach and secondary data contained in documents were analysed. Relying on the Relational Leadership Model as a framework of analysis, it argued that reducing the age limits for elective offices so as to allow younger persons to run for political offices in the major political parties is not a guarantee for youths’ ascendancy to leadership positions in the country in the midst of other virulent barriers such as high fees charged by the major parties for Expression of Interest (EoI) and Nomination Forms for elective offices in the 2019 general elections. It further submitted that the ruling class through elite conspiracy will continue to emasculate the youths insofar as they remain in control of the structures of the major political parties. The paper recommended reduction in the cost of Expression of Interest (EoI) and Nomination Forms by mainstream political parties, formation of youths political parties to enable them participate actively in the electoral process as well as aggressive youth’s mobilization leveraging on the demographic configurations of the country.

Keywords: Not Too Young to Run, leadership, political space, political parties, participation

Introduction

The history of inclusive participation in politics is one characterized by struggles. Several authors, including Okoye (1996), Birch (1972), Dye and Zeigler (1975), Pritchett (1977), Schapiro (1979), Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979) and Okafor (1981) have documented the struggles leading to the extension of voting rights to certain demographic groups in different climes.

Though, the hurdles of limited suffrage posed by ownership of properties, race, religion, sex, income, etc. have been conquered, one of the factors that has continued to pose challenges to inclusive participation in the contemporary political spaces particularly in Nigeria are legal and constitutional barriers on age limits to elective political offices as well as cost of nomination forms. While the age qualifications for contestants still holds sway in many countries, Oyeyipo and James (2016) observed that most countries have addressed the issue of age discrimination by removing the legal and constitutional inhibitions and liberalized access to political space thereby accommodating young persons in leadership and decision making process. See appendix I.

The likes of France, Canada, Australia and a host of other countries today boast of youthful presidents. Even in South Africa, the major opposition party Economic Freedom Fighters is led by a 37 years old (Julius Malema); and just recently in Botswana, a 29 years old lady, Ms. Bogolo Kenewendo was appointed the Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry. Same could not be said about where according to Senator Ben Bruce, "The average age of ministers in the United Arab Emirate (UAE) cabinet is 38. By contrast, the average age of Nigeria's cabinet is over 50." He further observed that whilst the Minister of Youths in the UAE is 22 years old, her counterpart in Nigeria is 51 years (retrieved from <https://www.legit.ng/729428-senator-ben-bruce-mock-buhari-ministers>. html on 25th October 2018).

In spite of the recent passage of the "*Not Too Young to Run*" Act by the National Assembly, the qualifying age limit for elective offices in Nigeria is still very high when compared to what is applicable in other countries across the world. The least age for political office in the country was 25 years old for councillorship position. However, sequel to the age reduction law, the age limits for House of Representative and Houses of Assembly were reduced to 25 years from 30 years, the President to 35 years from 40 years while 35 years contained in the Constitution was retained for anyone vying for the post of Senate and Governor (see Sections 65(1)(a) and section 177(b) of the 1999 Constitution).

Section 192(4) of the Constitution provides that "No person shall be appointed as a Commissioner of the Government of a State unless he is qualified for election as a member of the House of Assembly of the State." In the case of the Federal Government, "No person shall be appointed as a Minister of the Government of the Federation unless he is qualified for election as a member of the House of Representatives." The import of the above provisions is that for a person to be appointed a commissioner or minister, he/she must have attained the ages of 30 years.

By virtue of the foregoing, Mengistu (2017), Ebije (2017), Mohammed (2017), United Nations (n.d), United Nations (2016), Oyeyipo and James (2016) observed that the Nigerian political space is closed up and the youths who form the bulk of the population remain excluded. Wariboko (2017) rightly observed that the failure to create and sustain inclusive political and economic institutions has affected the psychology of most people as they erroneously perceive leadership and decision making as exclusive preserve for old people or the elite.

In the face of these enervating challenges, palliative measures like creation of Ministry of Youths Development and implementation of numerous youth empowerment

programmes have done very little in giving the youths a voice in the governance of the country. Restriction of participation by age has continued to deny Nigerian youths the opportunity to contribute to policies and governance and merely restricted them to voting in elections. In view of the consequences of the foregoing scenario, agitations for reduction of age limits for elective positions in the country coalesced into a global movement and campaign that sought also for provision for independent candidacy (United Nations, 2016; Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2017).

The “*Not Too Young To Run*” bill passed by the National Assembly in July 2017, ratified by two thirds (2/3) of the 36 State Houses of Assembly in February, 2018 and was assented to by the President Muhammadu Buhari on 31st May, 2018 (Asadu, 2018; Oluwole & Iroanusi, 2018; Isah, 2018). While the Act has somewhat reduced the age for those seeking elections to the President, House of representatives and Houses of Assembly, it should not be misconstrued as a cure-all for youth exclusionism in the politics and governance of the country. There are still challenges of cost of politics, democratic primaries within political parties, cost of securing party nomination, campaign expenditure (Isah, 2018).

This paper appraised these encumbrances after it had explored the concept of political participation particularly in a democracy, analysed the prevailing political environment in the country and carved a nexus between the subject matter of the paper with the relational leadership model which is the theoretical framework of the discourse.

Brief Literature Review

Central to the argument of inclusive political space is participation and there are many aspects of participation in electoral process. Studies have shown that young people in most developing climes are seen to be active mainly in the areas of political parties’ campaigns and casting of votes (United Nations, 2016; Mengistu, 2017; Pavin & Saunders, 2018), perpetration and perpetuation of all forms of electoral malpractices and violence. Opinion survey conducted in 186 countries by the United Nations, (n.d) observers revealed that young people are shut out from participating in formal political institutions and processes like political party’s management, public administration, decision-making, and seeking elective offices at all the levels of government.

Political participation denotes the active involvement of individuals and groups in the governmental processes affecting their lives. Political participation is not limited to involvement in political processes such as elections and leadership recruitment notwithstanding that “participation by citizens in competitive elections is a distinctive feature of democratic politics” (Bingham, 1992). Instead, it includes the involvement of the people in governance and related institutions of society, such as the economy and culture. Chaturvedi (2006, p. 239) defined political participation as the activity by individuals or groups intended to influence those who govern or how they do so. It is those action of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics.

Youth and young person, on the other hand, are concepts defined by age. Countries and international organizations have therefore classified youths simply as persons within

certain age bracket. According to the United Nations (n.d), they are those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Similarly, Commonwealth Secretariat (2018) and the African Union cited in Ubi (2007) defined them as persons within the ages of 15 and 29 and 15 and 35 years respectively.

In Nigeria however, youths are persons between 18 and 35 years (Second National Youth Policy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). It is pertinent to note that in spite of the age disparities, the terms youth and young person are used interchangeably in extant literature as depicted in Griffiths (1996), Mintzer and Cushing (2017), United Nations (2013), Multilateral Investment Fund (n.d), etc.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2017) has noted that youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. With regards to Nigeria, it argued that this latter age limit has been increasing, as higher levels of unemployment and the cost of setting up an independent household puts many young people into a prolonged period of dependency. Based on the foregoing, this study posits that the term young people encompasses both persons within the various age brackets identified above and those within 40 years, as they are regarded to be young going by the popular notion in the country. As a result of these, young people or persons and youth are used interchangeably in this study.

Young persons' participation in politics and decision-making process is a function of inclusive political space which the National Democratic Institute (2016) defined as the avenues, opportunities and entry points available for citizens to express their voice and influence political processes and outcomes. Thus, Mohammed (2017) observed that inclusion and participation are twin principles that underpin constitutional democracy and indicate democratic development in any society. She therefore, pointed out that political alienation and marginalization is not only anti-democratic but a recipe for political instability. In fact, according to Okeke and Obiorah (2009, p.128), "Democracy cannot be conceived in theory or created in practice without the creation, recognition, encouragement, and expansion of opportunities for participation. Hence at the centre of the democratic idea is the notion of participation which describes the extent to which individual members of society share, take part, or get involved in the life of that society."

While United Nations (2005) observed that all men and women have equal right to participate fully in all aspects of political process under international standards, contracting of political spaces has been acknowledged to be of a global growing concern in countries with tradition of democratic practices and norms (National Democratic Institute, 2016; Parvin, 2009). This manifests in forms of limits on fundamental rights like freedom of assembly, association and speech, stringent registration processes for local civic groups, associations, networks, international non-governmental organizations, and restriction to domestic non-governmental organizations' access to external funds, (Rutzen, 2015; Carothers, 2015), together with legal and constitutional barriers to elective offices that are regarded as the commonest obstacles to young persons' full participation in the decision-making process in the political space (National Democratic Institute, 2016; Mengistu, 2017; United Nations, n.d).

In Nigeria, these barriers have resulted in recycling of the same crop of old persons in leadership (Ebije, 2017; Nnawetanma, 2018), failure to create and sustain inclusive political and economic institutions (Wariboko, 2017), and young persons' exclusion, marginalization in the political space as well as disillusionment with the political process which manifests in forms of voter apathy, violence, and restiveness (United Nations, n.d; Resnick & Casale, 2011; Oyeyipo & James, 2016). The creation of artificial barriers and limitations to participation in the political space, according to the United Nations Development Programme (2003) cited in Mengistu (2017) has given fillip to concerted efforts in mainstreaming young persons in leadership and decision-making process. This accounts for increased global information sharing and discussions on the subject that has attracted global attention and the involvement of international development agencies in pressuring member states to create inclusive political space.

Governance and power structures in Nigeria that side line young people have emboldened them to organize themselves under different groups and networks to either change the power structure or influence change in it. They found the amendment of sections 65, 106, 131 and 177 of the 1999 Constitution that prescribed age qualifications for elective offices pertinent and agitated for the introduction of independent candidacy clause in the Constitution to bolster youth's participation in politics. It was based on the foregoing and leveraging on the networks created by the global campaign and movement for inclusive political space that the National Assembly and thirty-three (33) States Houses of Assembly passed the *"Not Too Young To Run"* bill that has been assented into law by the President against all odds,

It is imperative to point out that the passage of the bill into law generated arguments both in favour and against reduction of age qualifications for elective positions in the country. Arguments canvassed in favour of the bill were predicated on the following grounds: a) Given the global trend it is timely; b) It gives equal opportunities for the young and old; c) It will give room for the young people to contribute their quota to development; d) It brings about inclusiveness in the system; e) It supports the majority (i.e. young people) in the country under democracy to have their way in vying for elective offices; and f) It is in line with global standards and international best practices.

On the other hand, arguments proffered against the bill were that: a) Leadership requires experience that the young people do not have; b) The country is enmeshed in myriad of problems which the young people do not have the experiences to handle; c) The root of the country's problems could be traced to young persons who assumed leadership immediately after independence; d) The coup by the "Young Majors" ushered in successive military regimes in the country; and e) Most of the past and present leaders at all the levels of government were/are below sixty (60) years, thus, could be regarded as young people; therefore, there is no basis for the bill.

In view of the foregoing therefore, it should be pertinent to note that the political milieus at independence and contemporary times are quite different. The 21st century is a digital age and knowledge-based economy when policies, programmes, actions and governance must be driven by leaders who are highly knowledgeable, skillful and understand the dynamism of globalization and information communication technologies

that have permeated every facet of the individual lives, national and international arena. As Senator Ben Bruce puts it, "fresh thinking can only be brought about by youth well versed in today's technology"(retrieved from <https://www.legit.ng/729428-senator-ben-bruce-mock-buhari-ministers.html> on 25th October 2018). The young persons are more favourably disposed to functioning better in tapping the unlimited opportunities created by the interactions of globalization and information communications technologies in the knowledge-based economy, through leadership and governance of the country leveraging on their energies, age and cutting-edge skills.

Furthermore, the minimum educational qualification for elective positions in the country, as contained in the 1999 Constitution, is Senior School Examination Certificate which is usually acquired before the age of 20 years. The least age limit in the Act is 25, and it is believed that at 25 years old, many young people must have graduated from tertiary institutions and gained some leadership experience in either public or private establishments. At that stage of life, they are considered to be at their prime with the required youthfulness, zeal, enthusiasm, brilliance, intelligence, energy, skills, etc. needed for leadership and governance.

Elective Offices and Age Specifications in Nigeria

S/N	Elective Offices	Ages before the Bill was proposed	Ages in the proposed Bill	Ages in the Act assented into Law
1.	President	40 years	30 years	35 years
2.	Senate	35 years	30 years	35 years
3.	House of Representatives	30 years	25 years	25 years
4.	Governor	35 years	30 years	35 years
5.	State House of Assembly	30 years	25 years	25years

Sources: Adapted and modified from Obioha, J. I. (2017). *Will passing of the "Not Too Young To Run" bill end youth marginalization in Nigeria politics?* Retrieved April 4, 2018 from <http://venturesafrica.com/will-the-passing-of-the-not-too-young-to-run-bill-end-the-marginalisation-of-nigerian-youths/> Isah, M. (2018). *Statement by the Not too young to run movement on the signing into law of the age reduction bill (Not too young to run) by the president Muhammadu Buhari.* Retrieved October 7, 2018 from <http://yiaga.org/statement-by-the-not-too-young-to-run-movement-on-the-signing-into-law-of-the-age-reduction-bill-not-too-young-to-run-by-the-president-muhammadu-buhari/>

The table above shows elective offices and the prescribed age limits prior to the amendment of the Constitution, as contained in the proposed bill and ones in the *Not Too Young to Run* Act. Global statistics show that the age brackets proposed by the bill are in tandem with the trend in other political systems. For instance, Sebastain Kurz became the President of Austria at age 31, President Enrico Carattoni of San Marino was 32 years old, Kim Jon Un became the leader of North Korea at 34 years, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar was 37 years, while Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand was elected at 37

years. Leo Varadkar of Ireland 38 years, Juri Ratas of Estonia 39 years, and Emmanuel Macron of France 39 years (Corcoran, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The paper anchored its analysis on the relational leadership model. The framework is derived from the works of Hosking, Dachler and their colleagues like Fineman and Morley. The variant adopted here is a triangulation of the expositions by Uhl-Bien (2006), Komives, Lucas and McMahan (2007).

Relational leadership model focuses on the relational processes by which leadership is produced and enabled. Hogg (2005) in Uhl-Bien (2006) observed that leadership is a relational term—it identifies a relationship in which some people are able to persuade others to adopt new values, attitudes and goals, and to exert effort on behalf of those values, attitudes, and goals. Thus, relational leadership is a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e. evolving social order) and change (i.e. new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, ideologies, etc.) are constructed and produced. Furthermore, Komives, Lucas and McMahan (2007) viewed leadership as a relational and ethical process of people working together attempting to accomplish positive change. They explained that relational leadership involves five components, namely: purpose, inclusive, empowering, ethical and process.

According to Holmberg (2000) cited in Uhl-Bien (2006) a relational understanding, is an opportunity to focus on processes in which both the actor and the world around him or her are created in ways that either expand or contract the space for possible action. This Model sees leadership as the process by which social systems change through the structuring of roles and relationships. These (i.e. roles and relationships) are products of leadership as a result of existing condition(s) in a given place. Based on the foregoing, Murrell (1997) cited in Uhl-Bien (2006) argues that having this knowledge and understanding, we become more consciously disposed to influencing the structure to produce the desired results rather than only it influencing us.

Thus, Komives, et al (2007) note that Relational Leadership Model provides a frame of reference or an approach to leadership in contemporary society, how leadership can be persuaded or influenced to adopt new and positives values, attitudes, etc, in order to change the existing roles and relationships structure and redefine it to be inclusive. In application to this paper, the framework captures and explains the recent initiative by young people to change the narrative on leadership in Nigeria. The initiative aims to expand and make the political space in the country open and inclusive through the instrumentality of the *“Not Too Young To Run”* bill that seeks to accommodate young people in elective positions, decision-making process and public administration. It is observed that the existing structure and leadership in the country promote exclusion of young people from occupying leadership positions and participating directly in decision making and governance. The model further notes that leadership is not static. In other words, it should be open and receptive to new ideas, attitudes, values, innovations, etc, from young people who can be useful in changing the existing structure and its attendant roles and relationships as canvassed by them in the country.

The model equally explains how the perceived obstacles of age limits to elective offices and absence of independent candidacy (i.e. existing conditions) in the constitution interact during the electoral process (i.e. structures) to produce leaders and followers (i.e. roles and relationships) in the country. The existence and interaction of these factors limit the opportunity of the youths to participate as contestants to elective offices in the political space. Therefore, the *“Not Too Young To Run”* Act is meant to influence the country’s leadership to deal with the existing conditions that restrict young people’s participation in decision making and governance.

However, it is germane to note that enactment of the *“Not Too Young To Run”* Act will not automatically translate to the expansion and liberalization of the political space that will guarantee unfettered participation of young people in decision making and governance. The study shares this position strongly. As the Relational Leadership Model points out, it is the posture of actors (leaders and the led) and their relationships in the system that will either expand or contract the political space. Thus, the removal of independent candidacy and retention of age limit for Senate and Governor in the age reduction law; and the high costs for Expression of Interest (EoI) and Nomination Forms of mainstream political parties indicate the unwillingness of the current leadership to expand and liberalize the political space for inclusive participation.

The Prevailing Milieu and *“Not Too Young To Run”* Act

The political environment in the country as presently constituted emasculates the youths and debar their incursion into politics. Besides the age restriction, the attitude of most of the youths who are contented with playing the roles of a lackey to old politicians has ingrained in their psyche the subservient candour of servitude and never-do-well. As Nnawetanma (2018) put it, some of the young persons are ready to toe the established line, kowtow to the kingmakers and propagate the status quo. They are overly contented with playing the lackeys of the older politicians in subservient and subjugation as handy tools for political brigandage, election rigging and subversion of democratic ethos by their paymasters.

Reduction in the age qualifications which is the primary goal of the Act will still not address the problem of youth’s involvement in the absence of a congenial political atmosphere readied to bolster political participation by entrenching transparent, free and competitive electoral process untainted by money politics, devoid of vote buying and preened of election rigging. The National Assembly in tinkering with the bill jettisoned the idea of independent candidacy which would have obviated the challenges of exorbitant fees charged by the major political parties for nomination forms. However, it reduced the age limit for president from 40 years to 35 years but retained 35 years for senate and governor.

Beyond the “Not Too Young To Run” Act

As corollary to the above, it is one thing for the law to be enacted and another for the Nigerian youths to rise to the occasion because the system as presently constituted is not designed to give it to them on a platter (Oyeyipo & James, 2016). Politicians are not usually interested in young people and they see youths as their power-grabbers (Mengistu, 2017). Even within the intendment of our elitist political architecture, those already ensconced in power are prone to muscle the youths out in the political equation.

This is clearly evident in the costs of Expression of Interest (EoI) and Nomination Forms of the major political parties, which invariably negate and defeat the essence of the age reduction law (see appendix ii). It amounts to *robbing Peter to pay Paul* as it is obvious that young people cannot easily afford such amount of money to purchase the forms. Aside this, the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) offered automatic tickets to its incumbents in the executive and legislature; and the All Progressives Congress (APC) did same in select states, thereby foreclosing a free and fair contest. These are indications that in spite of the *Not Too Young to Run* Act, it is not yet *uhuru* for young people. The question is, how can Nigerian youths leverage on the Not Too Young to Run Act to shore up their involvement in the political process particularly as it concerns acquiring elective positions? In view of the multi-dimensional challenges espoused in this paper, it becomes very imperative that the young people driving the campaign and movement for inclusive participation in the country’s political space should begin to look beyond the age reduction law and strategize along the lines proffered below.

Formation of youths political parties: Political parties is one of the most strategic institutions that affect young persons’ participation in the political space. In the absence of independent candidacy, it is presently the only avenue to elective offices in the country. Nothing shows that the ruling class who controls the organizational structures of the major political parties is ready to accommodate young people to vie for elective offices on the platform of their political parties. Itodo cited in Oluwole and Iroanusi (2018) observed that parties can undermine and jeopardize youth candidacy during election when party primaries are not transparent.

To checkmate this, the drivers of the campaign and movement for inclusive participation should float about three political parties along three distinct ideologies – left (welfarism), right (capitalism) and centre (mixed economy) - to accommodate all shades of beliefs and diverse orientations of the people. In doing this, the political parties that will be formed should be exemplary and seen to address pitfalls inherent in the mainstream political parties in the country. What should define them include, but are not limited to the following, there should be: (i) clear-cut ideological orientations in the political parties’ manifestoes, (ii) manifestoes which are products of discussion and debates, (iii) proportional allocation of party leadership and elective positions to women and people living with disabilities, (iii) mandatory registration of every intending member with a token of five hundred (N500) naira or less and subsequent monthly or quarterly dues of fifty (N50) naira to checkmate a few money bag or financiers from hijacking the parties, (iv) clear-cut modalities for transparent conventions and primaries

to be manned by members with proven integrity at all levels to ensure internal party democracy.

All of these should be clearly spelt out in the political parties' constitutions. The main opposition party in South Africa, Economic Freedom Fighters was founded in July 2013 and is being led by Julius Malema, a far-left and radical nationalist, who was born on March 3, 1981. He was between 2008 and 2012, the President of the African National Congress (ANC) Youth League. The party is waxing very strong today and the African National Congress (ANC) is at the brink of losing the Presidential election having lost its majority in Parliament.

Formation of shadow government: This is a corollary to formation of political parties by young people. They must be seen to be ready to assume leadership and governance of the country. They should demonstrate this by forming shadow government that will provide viable alternatives to occupants of elective positions across the tiers of government. This is very important and strategic against the backdrop of criticisms that trailed the passage of the "Not Too Young To Run" bill by the National and State Houses of Assembly, the actions and inactions of leadership in tinkering with the bill before transmitting it to the president for assent, as well as, the perceived lack of opposition from political parties that are not in power respectively. Forming of shadow government at the centre and across the thirty-six (36) states by young people will provide the dire needed opposition; this will position them accordingly and endear them to the electorate.

Formation of alliances with young candidates vying for elective offices: In the event that formation of new political parties by young people is not feasible within the time frame as provided by the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) and the Independent National Electoral Commission's general elections time-table for the forthcoming elections, they should form functional alliances with credible young candidates of proven integrity vying for elective offices irrespective of political parties and negotiate the advancement of their collective values and interests when in power. In doing this, emphasis and detailed attention should be devoted further to candidates' pedigree, competence, character, etc, which will inform their marketability to the electorate. With commitment and resolve, the youths can make inroads into the political space considering the strength of its population.

Mobilizing and galvanizing young people: From evidence proffered in this paper, young people constitute a greater percentage of the country's population and within this rank are a greater percentage of people eligible to vote as well. Owing to their numerical strength, young people can change the tides in elections and upturn the status quo. However, it requires the right kind of mobilization to galvanize them in order to achieve the desired results. The leaderships of various young people's groups and networks that elicited international partnerships leading to global campaign and movement which gained the support of the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly that passed the "Not Too Young To Run" bill should also focus in this direction. To link this to the submission above, young people need to mobilize adequately within its ranks to garner support for young candidates that they have endorsed before, during and after the elections.

Sustaining local and international partnerships: The “*Not Too Young To Run*” bill attracted sufficient publicity and support that led to its passage by the National Assembly and thirty-three (33) State Houses of Assembly because of partnerships amongst various local young people’s groups, civil society organizations and international networks like the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, the Office of High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the European Youth Forum. These partnerships should transcend beyond passage of the bill by the legislature and assent into law by the President. In other words, technical, financial, logistics and other forms of support by these partners are needed in floating and sustaining political parties by young people, forming of shadow government, constituting alliances with endorsed candidates, embarking on adequate mobilization of young people, enlightening other stakeholders and mentoring of young people for leadership.

Adequate and constant communication with the electorate: Since the return to civil rule in 1999, perceived alienation of the people is a common feature of successive government in the country which seems to be at its climax in the present administration. In addition to conventional media, the revolution in information communications technologies which threw up new media platforms makes these easier for the young people. Through these media outlets, the shadow governments of young people advocated should communicate policies, proposals, programmes, projects, the merits, pitfalls of the government in power and their own viable alternatives adequately and timely to the masses. Furthermore, they should also carry out constant civic education that cut across voter registration, voter competence, membership of political parties, etc, in order to mobilize and build active citizens participation and political consciousness in order to address the present alienation, apathy, disenchantment and disillusionment with the system.

Inculcating leadership consciousness in young people: There are so many young people’s clubs across the country primarily designed for socializing and welfare of members only. These clubs are breeding grounds for young people who will be leader’s tomorrow. They should be sensitized to deliberately mainstream leadership training, mentorship, entrepreneurship, etc, into their programmes in order to create in young people the required consciousness, develop the right mind-set, values and skills for leadership. This is another area where sustaining partnership with the local and international groups mentioned above will play crucial roles in terms of technical, financial, logistics and other forms of support.

Conclusion

The realization of inclusive political space for young people to participate actively in formal political institutions and processes like political parties, public administration, decision-making, contesting elections to hold offices at all the levels of government in Nigeria is feasible, especially, given the impact of global campaign, movement and support that led to the passage of the “*Not Too Young To Run*” bill by the National

Assembly, thirty-three State Houses of Assembly and its subsequent assent into law by the President. However, this is not going to be an easy task as the prevailing milieu constitutes challenges to changing the narrative.

The President has signed the bill into law; however, it is not yet *uhuru* for young people. For instance, costs of Expression of Interest (EoI) and Nomination Forms of the major political parties, as well as fallouts from their Primaries to 2019 general elections are signals that light may not yet be at the end of the tunnel. Young people will still contend with the ruling class that will not relinquish power easily. This is why it is extremely important that those of them driving the campaign and movement for inclusive political space together with their local and international partners must look beyond the assent of the bill into law. Therefore, they should be proactive by floating their own political parties to avoid being sidelined in the mainstream political parties financed by the ruling class, form shadow government to critique the government and its policies, programmes and projects, enter into alliances with endorsed young candidates in other political parties, embark on adequate mobilization of young people, enlighten other stakeholders and mentor young people in schools and clubs for leadership positions and responsibilities.

References

- Asadu, C. (2018). *States pass "not too young to run" bill*. Retrieved March 27, 2018 from <https://www.thecable.ng/24-36-states-pass-not-young-run-bill>
- Bingham, P.G. (1992). *Contemporary democracies, participation, stability and violence*. Port Harcourt: Sunray Publications Ltd.
- Birch, A. H. (1972). *Representation*. London: Macmillan
- Carothers, T. (2015). *The closing space challenge: How are funders responding?* Retrieved March 24, 2018 from http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP258Carothers_Closing_Space_Final.pdf
- Chaturvedi, A.K. (2006). *Academic's dictionary of political science*. Delhi: Academic (India) Publishers.
- Commonwealth Secretariat (2018). *Amplifying the voice of young people*. Retrieved April 16, 2018 from <http://thecommonwealth.org/youth>
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979)
- Corcoran, K. (2017). *The youngest national leaders in the world, ranked by age*. Retrieved April 17, 2018 from <http://uk.businessinsider.com/the-youngest-national-leaders-in-the-world-ranked-by-age-2017-10?IR=T#1-austria-sebastian-kurz-31-born-27-august-1986-10>
- Dye, T. R. & Zeigler, L. H. (1975). *The irony of democracy: An uncommon introduction to American politics*. Massachusetts: Duxbury Press
- Ebije, N. (2017). *Not too young to run bill: We can raise N50bn for presidential race – Adebayo*. Retrieved March 27, 2018 from <http://sunnewsonline.com/not-too-young-to-run-bill-we-can-raise-n50bn-for-presidential-race-adebayo/>
- Egbas, J. (2018). *This is what it will cost you to buy presidential, governorship forms in opposition party*. Retrieved October 9, 2018 from <https://www.pulse.ng/news/politics/heres-what-it-will-cost-to-buy-pdp-presidential-gov-forms-d8790904html>

- Griffiths, P. (1996). *Youth and authority: Formative experience in England, 1560 – 1640*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Isah, M. (2018). *Statement by the Not too young to run movement on the signing into law of the age reduction bill (Not too young to run) by the president Muhammadu Buhari*. Retrieved October 7, 2018 from <http://yiaga.org/statement-by-the-not-too-young-to-run-movement-on-the-signing-into-law-of-the-age-reduction-bill-not-too-young-to-run-by-the-president-muhammadu-buhari/>
- Komives, S. R., Lucas, N., & McMahon, T. R. (2007). *Exploring leadership: For college students who want to make a difference* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kwentoh, M. (2018). APGA begins sale of nomination forms for 2019 elections. Retrieved October 9, 2018 from <https://www.cfrmagazine.com/2018/09/apga-begins-sale-of-nomination-forms.html>
- Mengistu, M. M. (2017). The quest for youth inclusion in the African politics: Trends, challenges and prospects. *Journal of Socialomics*. 6: 1, 1-5
- Mintzer, M. & Cushing, D. F. (2017). [Engaging children and adolescents in local decision-making: Growing up boulder as a practical model](#). in B. Kate & C. Linda (Eds.) *Designing Cities with Children and Young People: Beyond Playgrounds and Skate Parks*. London & New York: Routledge, pp. 207-222.
- Mohammed, A. (2017). *Would the youths be given the opportunity to run in Nigeria?* Retrieved March 27, 2018 from <http://www.connecteddevelopment.org/would-the-youths-be-given-the-opportunity-to-run-in-nigeria/>
- Multilateral Investment Fund. (n.d). *Give youth a chance: An agenda for action*. Retrieved April 16, 2018 from <https://www.fomin.org/Portals/0/Topics/Youth/Glosario-youth.pdf>
- National Democratic Institute. (2016). *A matter of political space*. Retrieved April 3, 2018 from <http://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/issues%2050%20A%20Matter%20of%20Political%20Space.pdf>
- Nnawetanma, C. G. (2018). *Not-too-young-to-run: Why the Nigerian youth are not yet ready for leadership*. Retrieved March 20, 2018 from <http://sahara-reporters.com/2018/03/19/not-too-young-to-run-why-nigerian-youth-are-not-yet-ready-for-leadership-chinedu-george>
- Okafor, S. O. (1981). *Indirect rule: The development of central legislature in Nigeria*. Lagos: Nelson
- Okeke, M.I. & Obiorah C. (2009). Reinventing social mobilization for improved political participation: NOA-media challenge. *Oko Journal of Communication & Information Science*, 1(2), 123-137.
- Okoye, I. K. (1996). *Participation in politics*. Onitsha: Big Ben Printing and Publishing Co.
- Oluwole, J. & Iroanusi, Q. (2018). *Majority states pass "not too young to run" bill*. Retrieved March 27, 2018 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/258951-majority-states-pass-not-young-run-bill.html>
- Oyeyipo, S. & James, S. (2016). *#Nottooyoungtorun: An analysis of the age review of candidates*. Retrieved March 25, 2018 from <http://yiaga.org/nottooyoungtorun/not-tooyoungtorun-an-analysis-of-the-age-review-of-candidates/>

- Parvin, P. (2009). Against localism: Does decentralizing power to communities fail minorities? *The Political Quarterly*, 80 (3): 351 – 360
- Parvin, P. & Saunders, B. (2018). The ethics of political participation: Engagement and democracy in the 21st century. *Res Publica*, 24: 3 – 8
- Pritchett, C. H. (1977). *The American Constitution*. New Delhi: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company
- Resnick, D. & Casale, D. (2011). *Afrobarometer, the political participation of Africa's youth: Turnout, partisanship, and protest*. Working Paper No. 136. Retrieved March 28, 2018 from <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/134548/AfropaperNo136.pdf>
- Rutzen, D. (2015). Civi society under assault. *Journal of Democracy*. 26, 4. Retrieved December 28, 2017 from www.gijn.org/files/2015/11/05_26.4_Rutzen.pdf
- Schapiro, L. (1979). *The government and politics of the Soviet Union*. London: Hutchinson
- Second National Youth Policy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2009). Retrieved April 15, 2018 from http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Nigeria_2009_National_Youth_Policy.Pdf
- The Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1999). *The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Abuja: Federal Government Press
- Ubi, E. N. (2007). *African Youth Charter: Prospects for the development of the African youth*. Retrieved April 15, 2018 from <http://www.oecd.org/swac/events/42259218.pdf>
- Ugbede, L. (2018). 2019: APC releases timetable; presidential aspirants to pay N45m, governorship N22.5m. Retrieved October 9, 2018 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/282541-2019-apc-releases-timetable-presidential-aspirants-to-pay-n45m-governorship-n22-5m.html>
- Uhl-Bien, M. (2006). Relational leadership theory: Exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *The Leadership Quarterly* 17:6, pp. 654-676
- United Nations. (2005). *Women & elections: Guide to promoting the participation of women in elections*. Retrieved April 3, 2018 from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/WomenAndElections.pdf>
- United Nations (2013). *Youth & migration*. Retrieved April 15, 2018 from <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr/2013/report.pdf>
- United Nations. (2016). *Launching global campaign promoting right of young people to run for public office*. Retrieved March 20, 2018 from <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2016/11/launching-global-campaign-promoting-rights-young-people-run-public-office/>
- United Nations (n.d). *Youth, political participation and decision-making*. Retrieved March 20 2018 from <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-political-participation.pdf>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *What do we mean by "youth"?* Retrieved April 16, 2018 from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/>
- Wariboko, N. (2017). *Politics in Nigeria: The state of a permanent unfavourable investment*

climate. Retrieved March 29, 2018 from <https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2017/09/19/politics-in-nigeria-the-context-of-a-permanent-unfavourable-investment-climate-by-nimi-wariboko/>

Appendix I
Elective offices and age specifications in some countries

S/N	Countries	Elective positions	Age requirement
1.	Belize	Village Council	18 years
		House of Representatives	18 years
		Senate	18 years
2.	Denmark	Any public office	18 years
3.	France	President	18 years
		Senate	24 years
		Lower of Parliament	18 years
4.	India	President	35 years
		Prime Minister	25 years
		Governor	35 years
		Upper House of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)	30 years
		Upper House of a State Legislature (Vidha Parishad) in states where it is bicameral	30 years
		Lower House of Parliament (Lok Sabha)	25 years
		Lower House of a State Legislature (Vidha Sabha) in states where it is bicameral	25 years
5.	Iran	President	21 years
6.	Norway	Any public office	18 years
7.	United Kingdom (except in Scotland)	Parliaments, Assemblies	18 years
8.	United States of America	President	35 years
		Senate	30 years
		House of Representatives	25 years

Adapted from Oyeyipo, S. & James, S. (2016). #Nottooyoungtorun: An analysis of the age review of candidates. Retrieved March 25, 2018 from <http://yiaga.org/nottooyoungtorun/nottooyoungtorun-an-analysis-of-the-age-review-of-candidates/>

Appendix II
Dominant Political Parties' Cost of Expression of Interest (EoI) and Nomination Forms

All Progressive Congress (APC)				
S/N	Positions	Expression of Interest (EoI) Form	Nomination Form	Total
1.	President	N5M	N40M	N45M
2.	Governor	N2.5M	N22M	N22.5M
3.	Senate	N1M	N6M	N7
4.	House of Representatives	N350, 000	N3.5M	N3.85M

5.	House of Assembly	N100, 000	N750, 000	N850, 000
----	-------------------	-----------	-----------	-----------

Ugbede, L. (2018). 2019: APC releases timetable; presidential aspirants to pay N45m, governorship

N22.5m. Retrieved October 9, 2018 from

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/282541-2019-apc-releases-timetable-presidential-aspirants-to-pay-n45m-governorship-n22-5m.html>

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)				
S/N	Positions	Expression of Interest (EoI) Form	Nomination Form	Total
1.	President	N2M	N10M	N12M
2.	Governor	N1M	N5	N6M
3.	Senate	N500, 000	N3M	N3.5M
4.	House of Rep	N500, 000	N1M	N1.5M
5.	House of Assembly	N100, 000	N500, 000	N600, 000

Source: Egbas, J. (2018). This is what it will cost you to buy presidential, governorship forms in Opposition party. Retrieved October 9, 2018 from

<https://www.pulse.ng/news/politics/heres-what-it-will-cost-to-buy-pdp-presidential-gov-forms-id8790904.html>

All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)				
S/N	Positions	Expression of Interest (EoI) Form	Nomination Form	Total
1.	President	N5M	N20M	N25M
2.	Governor	N2M	N8M	N10M
3.	Senate	N1M	N4M	N5M
4.	House of Rep	N500, 000	N2M	N2.5M
5.	House of Assembly	N200, 000	N800, 000	N1M

Source: Kwentoh, M. (2018). APGA begins sale of nomination forms for 2019 elections.

Retrieved October 9, 2018 from <https://www.cfrmagazine.com/2018/09/apga-begins-sale-of-nomination-forms.html>