NIGERIA AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS
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Abstract: One basic assumption of contemporary liberal democratic theory is the efficient management of elections as a fundamental prerequisite for democratic order. Yet, the history of election administration in Nigeria is largely seen as a history of electoral fraud and violence. Indeed, there has been a linear relationship between Nigeria's history of election administration and the inability to enthron a democratic order in the country. However, the implication of Nigeria's electoral history for the enthronement of a democratic order is yet to be exhaustively explored. This paper seeks prove that whilst elections are clearly linked to democracy and are in fact an important conditions for it, elections on their own do not qualify a country to be classified as democratic.

I. Introduction
Democracy has been a leading system of governance since the end of the cold war and many nations of the world have sought to attain democratic governance in its highest level possible. A fact to be taken with little or no restraint is that democracy is often attributed to development, although this could otherwise be proven in its vice-versa form. Most developed countries of the world operate a democracy and this very fact makes the adoption of democracy and subsequent democratization, a goal for most of the less developed nations. In the immediate past monarchy Used to be the prevalent form of governance, however, with the adoption of democracy by a few successful nations, the democratic wave spread like wild fire. This wave of democracy also caught up across Africa with false starts, and by 1990s, the general discontent with corrupt, inefficient, repressive and dictatorial systems of governance that had plagued Africa since Independence in the 1960s and the debilitating effects of economic recession coalesced into a strong wave--of pro-democracy demonstrations that swept through the continent and, combined with the pressure from foreign donors, forced most African leaders to introduce political reforms and some forms of multi-partyism. However, some writers have argued that most contemporary African states traditions are built on legacies of autocratic chieflaincies, patriarchy, gerontocracy and imperial control.

Independence did not reduce authoritarianism, in most cases, it increased it. Nigeria as a country has had her share of democratic structure. Presently Nigeria is operating a democracy. This is after a period of military rule in the past. With the promises which democracy seemed to hold for the people of Nigeria, the system was, popularly embraced and from 1999 till date, there have been hopes of a better Nigeria through democratic governance. It is no doubt that the form of government that is being practiced in a country relates directly to the development, stability and status of such a country. The issues that form the background to this seminar presentation cut across the expectations, realities and shortcomings that obtain within the Nigerian democratic experience. In addition, the actual Problem of Nigeria will constitute the major crust of this paper. Is the problem of Nigeria a function of democracy or the election being held in Nigeria? Is there a need for a better form of government for a better Nigeria? Do we excommunicate democracy in the discussion of the Nigerian Malady? All these will form part of the body to this presentation. Also, the constituents of a democracy will be examined 'as well as the conditionality for a successful democracy. All these will be thoroughly studied in order to identify in particular the problem of Nigeria. Do we put the blame on democracy as a form of government and thereby suggest a new and better form which will eradicate the problem being encountered in the country, Or do we single out the country's election as the culprit which should be apprehended and dealt with appropriately in order to have a better Nigeria where our hopes and dreams for the nation get to be fulfilled.

According to Elendu report, what Nigerians expected at the arrival of democracy are:

- The installation of competent and accountable administrative machinery, the end of arbitrariness and the use of public office for private gain
The putting in place of effective constitutional and procedural checks and balances on the exercise of State power
The nurturing and respect for a free and independent judiciary
The creation of an environment conducive to business and foreign investment and,
The commencement or the drive for a higher standard of living for our people, and a drastic reduction in the levels of poverty and corruption.

Although the foregoing aspiration of the people which they believed will materialize in a democracy is not over bearing and has materialized in many countries of the world, the same cannot be said of the Nigerian reality as the opposite holds sway. The people keep grinding under the burden of poverty and unemployment keeps moving on the rise, criminal activities escalate due to poverty and the feminization of poverty do not lend a helping hand in putting a stop to the heart wrenching situation of the country. According to a report of Emmanuel Edukugh of Vanguard, a leading newspaper in the country, ‘leadership’ in Nigeria is expensive while the economy is impoverished. The education sector also seems to be going down the drain while the focus of the country’s leaders wanders away from this sore occurrence. Many have argued that leadership is the problem of Nigeria but one is forced to ask what the correlation this has with democracy which is the anchor on which the Nigerian dream lies. In other words, we cannot delve, into any other probable problem without first having a grasp of what in the first place gave rise to the belief in a better tomorrow for Nigeria regardless of what ever is presumed to be the malady of the country. In the developed countries such as the United States and Britain, the dividends of democracy is evident and the lack of such in our own society calls for a rigorous analysis and questioning in order to get to the root of the setback and dashed expectation. For, many, the end of the military regime and the offshoot of representative: government was for them the beginning of a new life and a better standard of living not ‘forgetting the promotion of the status of the country as the ‘giant of Africa’.

We as Political Scientists have the responsibility of looking into the situation of the country through historical and scientific analysis in the light of the present condition of the country M. order to identify the problem, explain it, describe it and proffer workable solution to the problems earlier identified. Hence we ask? What exactly is this problem? Although it has already been identified, it will be of use to reiterate that the problem of Nigeria being referred to in, this seminar presentation is the non-realization of democratic dream, the benefits which democracy holds and the outstanding manifestation of democratic governance. Superior among these expectations is the ‘better life’. Statistically democracy correlates to more Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita. In other words, the standard of living that mirrors the form of government which democracy represents and which is widely proclaimed among the wealthy countries of the world. A popularly accepted fact is the direct correlation between stability and development. In other words, in a stable society, it is often believed that there will be relative development and such development hold within it, the actualization of this democratic hope which is a better standard of living in the country, a reality which is yet to materialize owing to the report that the average Nigerian lives on less than 1.5 dollar per day.

II. Clarification of Concepts

Concepts that are closely knit with this presentation will be clarified in this section of the study. The concepts include democracy, election and what the problem under consideration. This will make for a better understanding of the content of this paper.

1. democracy: This is essentially refers to the rule of many which is usually done through representation. It is a form of government in which he people have the freedom to choose who their leaders will be through free and fair election which could be direct or indirect. The word “democracy” according to Bangura (2013) is used to describe three different political systems. According to him, this system of government has to do with the rule of many and also are presentation of the true interests of the people. These characteristics of democracy differentiate it from other forms of government that are dictatorial and which does not take cognizance of the wishes and desires of the people in whatever sphere be it in the choice of who represents them in government or in overall decision making. Democracy is a system of government that many countries of the .world seek to acquire and those countries which have already acquired it seek to make it more developed for the purpose of reaping the dividends attached to such level of democratization.

2. Democratization: This is a process geared towards attaining democratic governance.

3. Elections: This has to do with the process by which the people of a place choose those who will represent them in government. These election takes place in order to fill public offices at various level of government be it federal, state or local. Election is a major feature in a democratic system and this is because the people must have their voices heard and opinions valued in their leadership and in key decision making if such form of government is to be considered a democracy.

4. Problems: The problems being referred to in this study are those shortcomings in the realization of development which is deemed to follow the operation of a democratic system. These problems are the various irregularities that are evident in the Nigerian situation despite the fact that we claim to operate a democracy. A major problem in this regard is the stagnant standard of living in our country. A second which is not far from the
first is the quality of governance we have in the country. The low level of socio-economic development in the country is also worth mentioning in this segment. At the end of military regime and the beginning of democratic rule in the country many had high hopes concerning the future of our country but fifteen years down the line, there seem to be more retrogression than development and this is why a lot of issues are under question including democracy as a process, institution and term of government. We cannot but raise questions and this leads to such questions that seek to examine the authenticity or otherwise of our governance as well as the salient characteristics of our form of government and this is where election comes to play. Election in Nigeria as in the words of a top figure in Nigeria politician is a “do or die affair” Could this be a peculiarity of the democracy being practiced in Nigeria or just a variation found only therein? This and other equally important issues will be addressed in the course of this presentation. In this segment, the election referred to in this paper will be further explained.

Election according to this presentation incorporates both the ideal form of election and the Nigerian adaptation. What will however differentiate one from the other is the context within which such election holds. For instance in Nigeria there have been periodic elections but some have been more credible than others. In the history of Nigeria from 1999 till date, the 2011 election was ranked the most credible however, from firsthand experience in the said election, we cannot totally rule out the occurrence of some undemocratic and non-credible practices. All the identified problems above are however products of the primary problem which is that the State is not yet well formed. This can be gleaned from the findings of Fadakinte: “The State is the power house of society because it is the instrument of order. A class usually holds this instrument in bringing about hegemonic order i.e. leadership, discipline and domination”. In the Nigerian situation, the lack of a hegemonic order for a stable State makes it a faulty foundation for a democracy to function. This problem then points to the various inadequacies and irregularities encountered in the Nigerian State. We cannot climb a tree from the top and so we cannot identify the Nigerian problem from the surface without first digging deep into the root cause of the problem. There is no hegemonic order in the Nigerian State because the ruling class do not have economic dominance to balance up and the absence of a common interest among the ruling elites make the framework of the State all the more unstable thereby not providing enough capability for the Smooth running of a democracy.

III. Theoretical Framework

The Democratic Peace theory will be used in analyzing the problem of Nigeria as it relates to democracy and/or election. The Democratic Peace Theory points out those democratic countries do not make war with one another. Another statement of fact gotten from this theory is that Militarised Interstate Dispute rarely occurs in a democracy. The third, which is most useful for this study is that democracies do not encounter much internal wars. In the light of the foregoing, since a stable political system attracts foreign investment and also promote internal growth and development, a democracy is often desired. The Democratic Peace theory attributes democracy to a high degree of tranquility which has been proven to be true in many countries. However, the country of emphasis is Nigeria and though it can be said that there is peace in some parts of Nigeria, this cannot be said of some other parts especially the Northern part and even if the South is to a large extent free from the internal crisis in the country, it will not be factually correct to base our judgment on one part without the other being considered also. In essence, the level of Peace in Nigeria is unbecoming of a democracy and this pertains to the upheaval being witnessed in the Northern part of Nigeria. This massive bloody turn out of events over time has since debunked the democracy peace theory in the Nigerian exigencies.

The devastating international recognition which the Boko Haram insurgency has brought on Nigeria has had great backward impact on the economy of the country and made the democratic consolidation in Nigeria difficult. And some have argued that the consolidation of democracy is what leads to the yielding of the positive expectation and manifestation for the people. This will lead us to the next part of the study which focuses on the preconditions for a democracy.

IV. Preconditions of a Democracy

Without entering into the polemics of what is or is not democracy; it will suffice for our purposes here to point out that there is at least general agreement that a democratic regime must satisfy certain minimum requirements viz.

i universal adult suffrage,
ii. periodic, free, competitive and fair elections,
iii the existence of more than one serious party, and

iv the existence of alternative and accessible sources of information v existence of the a means of adjudication.

In the words of Upset (1959), “Although they are not part of the system as such, a modicum of individual and economic freedoms, which result in the formation of a significant middle class and a broad and flourishing civil society are often seen as preconditions for liberal democracy”.

A broad and flourishing civil society cannot be said to exist in Nigeria. Civil Society has not yet broadened to set the adequate precondition for a successful working of ‘democracy in Nigeria and this could be a major source of setback in the advancement of democratic government in Nigeria.

In addition, loyal opposition is also a key precondition which Nigeria as a country has never satisfied especially in the face of contemporary realities. What occurs in Nigeria is an uncanny drive for power regardless of what the opposition deserves or what the people of the nation desire. Ideally, opposition is not supposed to be harmful rather, the person who loses public office sees himself as a relevant member of the system and does riot seek to undergo extra-legal miles in order to attain position. This is in contrast with what holds in Nigeria as contenders see one another as ruthless enemies and human lives are counted for nothing, all in a bid to attain power. No measures deemed too bogus as long as there is assurance or possibility of success at the polls. This is done through acts of thuggery, murder, mobbing, rigging and many others. The fact that this important precondition of democracy is downplayed makes ‘the democracy we are running in Nigeria with its inherent features less genuine. In a democracy, toleration must hold sway and this has proved to be a lost virtue in the Nigerian setting. As far as Nigeria is concerned, most seekers of public office do so without considering any bound or limit. In the face of this sort of foundation, which is no doubt faulty, one begins to wonder to what extent the structure will eda.re and if the dividends of democracy will ever come to be in a society like ours.

V. Election Administration and Democratic Order: An Exploration of the Linkages.

Election administration as Jinadu notes entails “the organization and conduct of elections to elective (political) public office by an electoral body” (Jinadu 1997). This definition as Jinadu aptly notes subsumes both structure and processes. By structure is meant the bureaucracy that is set up or established to organize and conduct elections which is usually an electoral body like NEC. It should be noted however, that apart from this specific bureaucracy whose primary function is the administration of elections, there are agencies or institutions like the civil society, police and security whose support and cooperation through the provision of logistical support is vital to the operation of the electoral body. By process however, is meant the rules, procedure and activities relating to among others: the establishment of electoral bodies; the appointment of their members, selection and training of electoral officials, constituency delimitation, voter education, registration of political parties, registration of voters, the nomination of candidates, balloting, counting of the ballots, declaration of results, and in some cases supervision of party nomination congresses (Jinadu, 1997). In another submission, electoral administration is defined as the management and organization of all stages of the electoral process (i.e. the pre-election, election and the post- election stages,) by an electoral body (Ajayi, 2007).

Although, the foregoing definitions of electoral administration emphasize the existence of an independent electoral body upon which the administration of elections is incumbent, it should be noted that experience in some, countries across the globe (as in table one) indicate that election administration is not necessarily incumbent on an independent body. Indeed, despite the popularity of independent’ EMB’s across the globe, in some countries election administration is the responsibility of government agencies. However, the import of the two definitions of election administration outlined above lies in the exposition of the electoral administrative process as a complex set of events and not just an event- polling as is sometimes misconstrued.

Democratic order on the other hand may simply be defined as the institutionalization of a democratic regime; of which the electoral administration, process is a critical part of. Indeed, there is an inextricable link between elections and the enthronement of a democratic order. Elections are no doubt a “critical part of the democratic process” (Wail, 1978); and all other variables of democracy do not just ‘revolve around elections’ (Almond, Powell, Strom and Dalton, 2004), but on the quality of the electoral process. An examination of some major democratic theories reveals the high premium attached to the quality of the electoral process for the qualification of a regime as democratic.

VI. The Balance Sheet after 15 Years of Democratization; Nigeria Experience

The whole idea of democracy among many Nigerians seems to have been equated with the holding of election at regular intervals, irrespective of how these are organized and their outcome. As Andreas Schedler points out, elections have historically been an instrument of authoritarian control as well as a means of democratic governance. Most post-1990 elections in Nigeria appear to have been organized to merely give some semblance of democratic legitimacy. While elections are linked to democracy, and are in fact an important conditions for it, elections on their own do not qualify a country to be classified as a democracy. Put simply, democracy can hardly be expected to take hold where elections are reduced to a process of participation with predictable results rather than a process of competition with uncertain results. The liberal democracy being focused on in this section is the presidential form that is synonymous to that of the United States' in many ways and which Nigeria seeks to attain. Liberal Democracy does not just work by default; there are conditions for the successful working of democracy. These conditions include national sentiment, spirit of tolerance, high moral character, widespread education including economic security and equality. Aside these conditions, opposition political parties are considered to be an essential structural characteristic of modern, liberal democracy. They are supposed
to challenge the ruling parties on all issues of governance and provide a blear and credible alternative to existing policies. The stronger the opposition, the brighter the prospects for democracy is likely to be. These mechanisms are pivotal to the entrenchment of the principles of democracy such as government by consent, public accountability, majority rule, recognition of minority rights and also constitutional government. All these will be considered in the light of the Nigerian situation.

In Nigeria, right from the onset which is the election of officials into government the consent of the people does not count for much. Politicians have won elections in 1999 and 2003 without votes from voters. They achieved this through manipulation of the electoral process at the levels of formulation of rules establishment of election management bodies, conduct of elections and adjudication. They fear losing elections through liberal competition. They want all uncertainties associated with liberal democratic elections removed. Thugs, then, were useful to them at each of those levels. For instance, assassinations of opposition political elites and bureaucrats have been common. Assassination of other politicians during and after elections has also been common. All of these, have created fear in ordinary citizens and prevented them from appearing physically at the polling units to cast their votes or even stay on effectively on the opposition. Winning elections without the input of voters has created a strong sense of pride and uselessness of voters to securing power in local political elites. In Nigeria, there are already many examples of ethnic militia groups already being used to serve partisan political interests. This experience over the decade confirms 'Samuel Huntington’s observation that the weaker and less accepted a regime, the greater the likelihood of corruption.

The history of elections in Nigeria generally is divided into two epochs. That is, elections that were held when Nigeria was under colonial governance and those after independence. The elections from the time of independence will be considered in order to situate elections in Nigeria into proper perspective. This will help to actually arrive at the conclusion of the problem in Nigeria being democracy as against elections. This however, does not mean that the elections in Nigeria have been perfect. The history of elections in Nigeria generally is divided into two epochs. That is, elections that were held when Nigeria was under colonial governance and those after independence. The Post-independence elections will be considered so as to have an overview of how elections were at the start of the Nigerian democracy after independence from colonial rule.

The tone for the 1964 elections was dictated by a set of events that took place in the period that followed independence in 1960. These were the imprisonment of stalwarts-Obafemi Awolowo and senior members of his party and the creation of the Mid-Western region out of the Western region and the disputed census figures of 1962 and 1963 (Iyayi 2004). The stakes were high, the pre-election period was chaotic with claims of opponent intimidation across the country. There were new alliances which reflected the political situation in the country and a boycott of the election in the Eastern, Mid-Western regions in Lagos. There was a constitutional crisis in which the Nigerian president Chief Azikiwe declined inviting the Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa to form a government.

At the conclusion of the 1964 elections, which took place in 1965, NNA, an alliance between the NPC and NNP had 197 seats while UPGA which has NCNC and AG combined has 158 (TMG, op. cit.). The 1965 Western regional legislative election proved to be the last straw that broke the back of the First Republic. The “fragile peace” could no longer continue and the violent end of the election only made it sure that the demise of the republic was only a matter of time. The electoral process of the First Republic was severely flawed. The political parties racked restraint. Little of the democratic ethos had been imbibed to political differences and struggles. Under these pressures, the electoral process had broken down completely. It was not perceived to be impartial and remained marginal as a mechanism for ensuring of orderly succession or change of power (TMG, op.cit.). Thus, the Republic came to an end on the heel of flawed electoral system and the ghost of the crisis trailed the Military Junta which plunged the country into an expensive civil war.

The military had changed guns thrice before a return to democratic governance in 1979. According to Pantner-Brick (1979), in the hope of avoiding a return to that kind of cut-throat competition, the Nigerians have put their trust (tempered with varying degrees of skepticism) in four factors. These range from very general presumptions to quite specific legal requirements. The first of these is the assertion that the 1967-70 civil war, far from intensifying internal divisions; brought about greater national integration. Secondly, the federation has been restructured so as to remove the cancer of regional conflicts. The division of the country into nineteen States (instead of three or four regions) has fragmented administratively the largest ethnic groups the Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo, which dominated the old Northern, Western and Eastern regions respectively.

It has also given equal status to minority groups which had long been demanding states of their own. Thirdly, it is hoped that the adoption of the Presidential system will reinforce allegiance to the federation as a whole rather than to some particular section of it. An executive presidency is seen as a focus of National Unity. Finally, political parties’ have been required to conform to certain norms and procedures, designed to ensure that they are both national in character and democratic in organization. It was presumed that these factors would be able to lead to an avoidance of the troubles of the first republic.
The parties registered for the election were National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigerian People's Party (NPP), The Great Nigeria Peoples—Party—(GNPP), and People's Redemption Party (PRP). The outcome of the election was controversial as there arose the need to interpret the meaning of 'twelve thirds' of nineteen states as the leading candidate did not secure 25% of votes in two-thirds of twelve states and two-thirds of the local governments of the thirteenth state (TMG, op. cit.) and Shagari became President 'mathematics'. Thus, the government started on the back of legitimacy crisis. One more party was registered in addition to the existing five parties that competed in the 1979 election. This is the National Advance Party (NAP) which was denied registration in the lead up to the last exercise.

The 1983 election was among the most chaotic ever held in the country (Iyayi op. cit.). Osaghae (2002) opines that the election belonged to William Riker's 'critical' elections. The overall complexion of the election was zero-sum calculations and actions and there were accusations and counter-accusations from the political parties of intimidation, thugger and the whole violently charged climate within which the election took place. Against the backdrop of the disputed electoral outcome, President Shagari’s second term began on a most inauspicious note (TMG, op. cit.). In the midst of all these, the country was taken through her longest transition which ended up in running the country to the brink of disintegration. The transition content and timeframe was tinkered with severally military government. This situation suggests that the process was largely predetermined by the regime. Iyayi (op. cit.) observes that the elections of 1992-1993 were frequently delayed, cancelled, postponed and adjusted to produce a result predetermined by the Military. At the height of the tinkering, government decreed two 'test tube' parties (Osaghae op. cit TMG op. cit.). These were Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Congress (NRC).

Following the decision to turn democratic, the' election of 1999 was welcome with the greatest of enthusiasm. Three parties were registered for the process. These were People’s Democratic Party (PDP), All People's Party (APP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD). Akindele (2003) noticed the ethnic colouration of the elections as the national spread of the PDP was only a pretence owing to its inability to penetrate the South West and the inability of the AD to win outside Yoruba-speaking states. The elections witnessed massive rigging and other anti-election behaviours, PDP was the clear winner as it won the presidency, majority seats in the legislature and 21 gubernatorial seats. APP had 7 states governors while AD had 6 states. The shortcomings of the 1999 elections were discredited due to the fact that it was a first election. It was however a sweet welcome to democratic rule which has been absent for sixteen years and the debacle of 1993. Electoral Committee Report (2008) concluded that “though the electoral outcome was generally favourable, it was clear that the 'parties lacked internal democracy and discipline”. This has been a defining feature of electoral process in the Fourth republic.

The 2003 election was marked by the proliferation of political parties after a Supreme Court ruling removing the cap on the requirements for party registration. The parties that had some level of success in the elections include; People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), Alliance for Democracy (AD), 'United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP), National Democratic Party (NDP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), People's Redemption Party (PRP). There was a host other parties that could not justify their registration. The election was described as “a coup d'etat against the people (Iyayi op. cit.)”. The PDP made what was considered fraudulent in-roads to opposition's enclaves. PDP won more states to take its total to twenty seven states, majority holding in the legislature and the presidency. The worst hit of the parties was the AD, which had all but one of its governors swept by the PDP hurricane in the South-West.

The 2007 elections will go into history as the most criticized election ever held in Nigeria. This is because of the obvious flaws and frauds that characterized the elections. Although, the electoral process that supervised the first transition from civilian to civilian rule, and the violence that occasioned left not many in doubt about the accident that caused democratization in Nigeria.

The non-partisanship' of INEC which is supposed to be an independent and credible body was doubted more than ever. Every aspect of the election was far from fair and there were problems in the internal dynamics of some of the parties. The PDP alongside its lack of internal discipline engaged in several litigations and legal harassments of opposition thereby further putting a clause to the credibility of the elections. The fraudulent nature of the election put in proper perspective with the chain of annulments and reruns pronounced by the election tribunals. The AC was the biggest beneficiary of the professionalism and new found freedom of the judiciary.

The most violent elections came up in 2011. This election also was also one of the few elections to be postponed due to poor logistic planning. It was however the best election since the election held in 1999. The conduct of election also came up within improved legal parameters and ensured that the needed instrument autonomy was available. Indeed, there was reduction in the number of litigations in the tribunals compared to the 2007 elections. The election was hailed both nationally and internationally. The sore point of the election was the violence that erupted at the close of the process in which 1000 lives were lost (IGC, 2007). The violence seriously discredited the electoral process. The Corps members who were employed as Ad-Hoc staff were
severely disadvantaged as majority of thorn especially in the North lost their lives in the violence that ensued as a result of the election.

### A Categorization of Nigeria’s General Elections (1959-2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Organiser</th>
<th>Type of Election</th>
<th>Outcome of election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959 General Election</td>
<td>Departing Colonialist</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964 General Election</td>
<td>Incumbent Civilian Administration of Balewa</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979 General Elections</td>
<td>Outgoing Military Government of Obasanjo</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983 General Elections</td>
<td>Incumbent Civilian Administration of Shagari</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 General Elections</td>
<td>Outgoing Military Government of Babangida</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 General Elections</td>
<td>Incumbent Civilian Administration of Obasanjo</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 General Elections</td>
<td>Incumbent Civilian Administration of Obasanjo</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 General Elections</td>
<td>Incumbent Civilian Administration of Goodluck</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** Elections which are adjudged to be free and fair is represented by 2, generally free and fair elections (i.e. elections with minimal lapses here and there) is represented by 1 and elections recording widespread procedural irregularities is represented by 0.

The assessment of election observation missions and key personalities in the electoral administrative process formed the basis of the above categorization.

### VII. Democracy and Not Elections is the Problem in Nigeria

From historical experience, there are a huge number of issues and stages in electoral processes, which tends to create conflict, and which sometimes degenerate into violent conflicts. These are sometimes logistical and technical problems which arise in the course of elections, including poorly prepared or fraudulent voters’ registers, inadequacy of electoral materials, particularly the ballot papers leading to the disenfranchisement of voters, transportation of electoral materials especially ballot papers after voting has been concluded, the counting of the votes and the announcement of results. Other issues include electoral malpractices, and unfair adjudication or election disputes. These issues which have created conflicts during electoral processes in the past are mainly logistical and technical problems during elections, for many politicians and political contestants, winning an election is a matter of life and death and the application of violence is part of their overall campaign strategy, either to gain an unfair advantage over their opponents, or to disrupt the process outright when it is clear that they have lost. With reference to the foregoing section, it is obvious that a lot of issues are wrong with the democracy being practiced in Nigeria and this makes our democracy to remain nascent and unconsolidated thereby leading to minimal benefit emanating from it. Aside this, it has made democracy a problem to Nigeria instead of being a blessing. Now we have these ‘democratic’ problems that should not be there in the first place. Elections in Nigeria will be viewed and then it will be clear how democracy and not election is the vice in the Nigerian System.

### VIII. Recommendations

After the analysis of the Nigerian problem and also a look into what the root cause is, the recommendation will then tackle the very root of the problem and as earlier stated; the fruit of a tree can only be made good when the tree itself is good and the goodness of the tree is not independent of the root. In other words, the recommendation here is that the ailing state be made whole in order for democratic practices to be meaningful and effective. The major healing for the state therefore is to have present in the Nigerian society, a hegemonic order, high literacy and relatively high industrialization. With this in place, not only will the state be stable but also, the Nigerian democratic setting will be fortified and election will cease to be a case of brutal opposition in place of loyal opposition. In a situation where the above is no longer a problem, then the secondary problems of Nigeria which were stated in this paper will also be eradicated.

### IX. Conclusion

The problem in Nigeria is not elections but democracy itself. Although, while our conduct of elections have been problematic, one of the major causes is that our institutions of democracy are in infancy or non-existent. The mediation of electoral disputes through legalistic means therefore becomes zero sum, leading to violent conflicts and the destructive consequences we regularly experience at election time. The infancy, poverty and
character of the political institutions in Nigeria therefore points the way to answering the challenges of regime transition because political institutions form an important part of any nation state. It bears down to the various anomalies being accommodated in the democracy being practiced in Nigeria and also failure to meet the conditions necessary to enhance the workings of democracy. Nigeria needs to look inwards and see how to fix the discrepancies in the system and also to put in place the necessary conditions for the smooth running of a democratic system. The erroneous notion that Election, Leaders and by implication leadership is the problem in Nigeria is not so true because these anomalies stems from the bigger problem of the misapplication of democratic principles in the Nigerian system. We have to nip the very problem situated at the root because making the fruits good without making the tree itself palatable is sheer waste of time. Democratic practices in Nigeria are to a large extent undemocratic. Democratic institutions need to be strengthened to produce the kind of individual freedom at the polls where individuals who understand the workings of democracy can stand to be chosen and enlightened decisions are made by the citizens without fear of intimidation on any side.

References