

Electoral Administration, Integrity and Voting Pattern in Nigeria's 2019 Presidential Election

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Abstract

Electoral Administration, Election Integrity and Voting Pattern in the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria is not too different from the previous pattern of voting in Nigeria. The aim of this paper is to examine the conduct of 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria, while also critically examine the salient issues in the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria. To suggest/recommend plausible solutions to the problem of electoral integrity in Nigeria. The paper employed secondary source to gather information and used qualitative mode of data analysis. The paper find out that 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria falls below international standard of electoral integrity. The paper also recommended that international standard practice should be adhere to in order to put Nigeria in her rightful position within/among comity of nations and giants of Africa as she usually claimed. The paper also conclude that for Nigeria to improve her electoral integrity an impartial election management body should be manned by leaders with high personal integrity and their selection process should be devoid of politics.

KEY WORDS: *Election, Electoral Administration, Election Integrity, and Voting Pattern,*

INTRODUCTION

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The pre and post-election reaction to the 2011 election was violent. Human Rights Watch (2011) reported that not less 65,000 persons were displaced while 800 persons died. In the 2019 Presidential election, Nigerians heave a sigh of relief that irrespective of the outcome there would be no post-electoral violence since the two major contenders were northerners though from different zones in the North. President Muhammadu Buhari was from the North West (Katsina State) While Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was from the North East (Adamawa State). Sequel to the above, the postponement of the 2019 election was precipitated by the fear that the elections would go awry and blur the integrity of the 2019 Presidential Election. It also showed that INEC needed more time to firm up its preparations.

The paper employed secondary source to gather information and used qualitative mode of data analysis. The secondary sources include journal articles, official documents, textbooks and other periodicals. This paper is divided into eight sections: following the introduction is the statement of problem, aims and objectives of the study, research questions. Literature review and the salient issues in 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria, Voting Pattern and Election Results in Nigeria's 2019 Presidential Election, Voting Pattern and Geographical Distribution of 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria, Post-Election Responses, findings, recommendations and conclusion. Lastly, references.

Nigeria since independence has had a chequered political cum election history as a result of her inability to form a government that is a product of free, fair and credible election. The 1959 general election was without its shortcoming of loss of lives and properties which was borne out of political power permutation/calculation between/among the three leading political parties (AG, NCNC and NPC) and the 1962 Western Regional Crisis (Eghosae, 2002). The 1964 federal election was described by Eghosae Osaghae thus:

The campaign and preparations for the election was violent The election was massively rigged and manipulated by both parties, but NNDP's incumbency gave it the edge. Both parties claimed victory in the election and each actually tried to swear in their own leader as Premier. (Eghosae, 2002)

The supposed victory of the NNDP was greeted with violent protests and demonstrations by AG supporters. Lives and properties were destroyed in 'Operation Wetie' (literally, wet with the petrol) in which an estimated one thousand lives were lost and properties worth millions were also destroyed. Over 1800 lives were lost and unquantifiable properties were also destroyed during Second Republic (Apter, 1987). Ondo state was the most affected state among states that witnessed loss of lives and properties. Akin Omoboriowo who was declared the winner of gubernatorial election fled to Lagos where he hibernated as governor-elect-in-exile until his election was overturned by the electoral tribunal. A similar situation occurred in Oyo State, another UPN stronghold taken over by the NPN.

In this Fourth Republic, loss of live is given thus, in 1999-11 lives were lost; 2003 -100lives were lost; 2007-200 lives were lost; 2011-800 lives were lost; 2015-58

lives were lost and in 2019-626 lives were lost whilst unspecified amount of properties were equally lost to electoral violence. (INEC reports 2019).

Objectives of the Study

- The main objective of this study/ paper is to examine the conduct of 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria,
- while the subsidiary objective is also critically examine the salient issue in the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria.
- To suggest/recommend plausible solutions to the problem of electoral integrity in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- How would you describe the conduct of 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria?
- What are the salient issues in the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria?
- What can be done to ameliorate these persistence problems of electoral Integrity falling below international standard in Nigeria?

Literature Review

(i.) **Election:** Election all over the world is regarded as the foremost and the most peaceful means of changing governments in a democratic setting. It provides the citizens the opportunity to determine who governs them as at when and how. Election in the twenty-first century has been seen as the most veritable way of selecting leaders and the most veritable means of participating in the governance process in any country. In recent times, the election has become a tool for legitimating government leadership even when the government has not adopted democracy in principle and practice. Whenever there are controversies in electoral politics, judiciary mediation is inevitable.

Elections are deeply rooted conditionality in a democratic society that is enshrined in the constitution of the country. Usually an electoral body or commission that would oversee it is also stated. In Nigeria, the 1999 constitution stated that elections must be organised by INEC. In modern states elections are held periodically and it ranges from one country to another. (Ejue and Ekanen, 2011; Birch and Muchlinski, 2017). In Ghana, Nigeria, USA it is a cycle of four years. It is seven years in China and in the UK, India which practices the parliamentary system, it takes place as soon as the ruling party loses its majority in the parliament. The age of participation is prescribed and it is eighteen (18) years in many cases, the political parties field candidates and the electorates shall

have the freedom to vote anybody of their choice. In some countries like the USA, independent candidacy is allowed in which any citizen can contest without the platform of a political party. In some countries only one party exists and in some there are two dominant parties while in others many parties contest the elections. (Hamalai, Egwu and Omotola, 2017). The critical requirement for an election in the best global practice is that it should be free, fair and credible. When these values are upheld the government will enjoy the confidence of the people who shall be assured that the mandate which they gave them freely can be withdrawn during another round of elections to another party or another candidate. (Dahl, 1971; Oni, Chidozie and Agbude, 2013; Ojo, 2008; Cohen, 1983; Hughes and May, 1988).

(ii.) Electoral Administration and Integrity: The administration of election is handled by an electoral body. There are three variants of such a body. It can be an independent, in which case it controls its funds and makes independent decisions on elections without the control of, or certification of the government. It can be a government model one whose funding and activities are controlled by the government and the third is an admixture of the two. (Jinadu 1997; Lindberg, 2004; Lopez-Pinto, 2000; USEAC, 2008;) In Nigeria, the membership of the body is nominated by the executive and confirmed by the legislature. It is to be made up of people with conscience and who enjoy unblemished record and who do not belong to any political party. (International IDEA, 2006). The task of the electoral body is of crucial importance because they set the date of elections, recruit the polling officers, acquire and deploy electoral materials. In fact, the Election Management Body (EMB) determines the authenticity, admissibility, acceptance and credibility of elections. Firmness, fairness and thoroughness must be acknowledged (Llewyn, 2008; Kimball and Baybeck, 2009; Agbaje and Adejumobi, 2006).

(iii.) Election Integrity: Scholars on this issue concentrated more on what integrity is not, rather than what it is. On the one hand, Schedler, (2002) and Birch (2011) believe that the behaviour of incumbent government on the seat in trying to manipulate the choice of electorates by setting legal framework and influencing electoral umpires to design a slanted system which compromise the principle of fair play and puts a stain on electoral integrity. On another hand, the Inter Parliamentary Council (1994) asserts that organising a free and fair election where the electoral procedure is followed amounts to what electoral credibility connotes. This includes an up to date register of voters, free expression of franchise by all citizens that have attained the prescribed age of adulthood,

vote sorting and counting without hindrance and announcement of results fairly and accurately.

Norris (2014), Elklit & Svenson, (1997) Bishop & Hoeffler, (2014) were in alliance that when elections were held and concluded without intimidation and violence and the citizens were convinced that their votes translated into the results that were announced then it would be said to have credibility. They opined that when elections conform to the prescription of the UN and it is acclaimed by the political actors, the electorates, journalists and scholars, it would be said to uphold the principle of electoral integrity. They insisted that conformity to the process of the elections is what constitutes integrity. Some scholars including Alvarez, Atkeson & Hall, (2012); Munck, (2009; O'Donnell, (2001) contend that the legal framework and domestic regulations that guide the election procedure as well as the general conduct and administration of the elections constitute the yardstick to measure integrity of elections.

Electoral integrity can be defined "as a holistic or comprehensive observance of the electoral laws guiding electoral conduct of a country throughout the electoral cycle through which a collective will of the people can be achieved and upon which the election can meet international standard". (Amao, 2019) What is most significant is these definitions are that it encompasses the nomination process and election cycle leading to good governance. In the acceptance of the necessity to uphold integrity, academics designed a methodological and theoretical basis to assess it through the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP), at the Harvard University and the University of Sydney in Australia that was coordinated by Pippa Norris. It is notable that their academic exercise had continued to gain international recognition and followership in the global arena including the US, Nigeria, Mexico etc. Their measures are being used by domestic and international observers to assess elections and the electoral procedure. It gives them the exactitude to describe the electoral process as fair, credible, free or tainted by manipulation, malpractices or fraud. (Bjornlund, 2004; Reynolds, 2005; Young, 2009; Vickery and Shein, 2012). They emphasised that these yardsticks would assist the security agencies and the judiciary to track and exert sanctions on offenders of the electoral procedure. And the press would continue to spread the message of malfeasance in the electoral procedure.

(iv.) Voting Pattern: As a concept, the voting pattern is the study of partisan preferences or choices of selected voter groups or individuals (Merrill and Grofman, 1999). The

pattern of voting of such voting groups or individual is not static but is largely dynamic due to realignment. While several factors are crucial in explaining voting patterns, shared cultural attitudes towards a government, group or the society at large remain one of the conspicuous factors (Merrill and Grofman, 1999). Voting behaviour is an electoral activity. It is a combination of personal and electoral action, which manifests during an electoral process. Such include voting during elections, involvement in electoral campaigns and participation in electoral rallies as well as support for a candidate or a political party (Bratton et al., 2012, Amao, 2021). In essence, it connotes the participation and non-participation of the electorate in an electoral process. In other words, voting pattern refers to the ways voters voted for contesting candidates in a particular election in a political system. (Amao, 2021)

The Salient Issues in 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria

Party Primaries and Candidate Selection

The electoral law emphasised the importance of party primaries for selection of candidates for elections by all political parties. It established the authenticity of the candidates. This is where litigation always erupted once the political parties failed to adhere strictly to electoral laws and their party constitutions. Though, since the commencement of the Nigerian fourth republic, the cycle of the electoral process had been trampled upon by the political parties. This was because they failed to foist internal democracy within their respective political parties, rather, the stakeholders sometimes fouled the process and forcefully fixed their favoured candidates over and above the real candidates that won the party primaries. As argued earlier, there was no sufficient evidences to show that All Progressive Congress, APC ‘the incumbent party or the main party in power only formalised the party primary and didn’t allow other candidates to contest against the incumbent President i.e. President Muhammadu Buhari. The APC as a party does not put much importance to this internal party democracy. (Amao, 2019)

Lamentably, the APC failed to uphold this fundamental principle of internal party democracy where the participation in competitive party primary was a sine qua non to establish the legitimacy of the exercise and obviate litigations. This was incidentally the case in the primaries that produced General Muhammadu Buhari as the candidate of the party. He was declared the sole candidate of the party despite the fact that Alhaji Mumakai-Unagha, Dr SKC Ogbonnia and Chief Charles Udeogaranya who signified

intention and contested against him were not allowed to do so. (Premium Times October 7th, 2018).

This shows that there were issues with the internal party democracies in the APC as a political party in Nigeria. The popularity of Muhammadu Buhari would have been put to test for the second time within APC as a political party. Therefore, that was a conspicuous minus for the party as other members were disenfranchised within the APC as a political party in Nigeria. Specifically, The researcher had pointed out earlier that, APC ‘the incumbent party or the main party in power only formalised the party primary and didn’t allow other candidates to contest against the incumbent President i.e. President Muhammadu Buhari. The APC as a party failed to ensure unhindered participation and promote the competitive spirit of internal party democracy by denying other candidate the opportunity to stand toe-to toe with the incumbent president PMB. Lamentably, they allowed them to wasted their resources and fund to procure the nomination forms and declaration of interest forms. Perhaps some of the leading lights of the party defected to the opposition party where they strongly believed in their internal party democracy. This definitely defeated the objective of rigorous party primaries and defeated the essence of democratic principles. (Amao, 2019)

On the other hand, the party primary of the PDP which was held at Port Harcourt was adjudged to be fairer and more transparent. The PDP organised a more transparent party primaries in Port Harcourt where a total of twelve persons contested (Vanguard October 7th, 2018). The 12 candidates that obtained the nomination forms were given the opportunity to campaign and to be voted for during the party primary by the national delegates of the party. And both the voting and counting was done publicly and televised live on AIT.

Table 1. PDP Presidential Party Primary Election Results

S/N	Candidate	Votes Scored	Percentage (%)
1.	Atiku Abubakar	1,532	48.6
2.	Aminu Tambuwal	693	22.0
3.	Bukola Saraki	317	10.1
4.	Rabiu Kwankwaso	158	5.0
5.	Ibrahim Dankwambo	111	3.5
6.	Sule Lamido	96	3.0

7.	Ahmed Makarfi	74	2.3
8.	Tanimu Turaki	65	2.1
9.	Attahiru Bafarawa	48	1.5
10.	David Mark	35	1.1
11.	Jonah Jang	19	0.6
12.	Datti Ahmed	5	0.1
Total		3,153	100

Source: The Punch Newspaper. 25th Feb. 2019.

The exercise was, however, reportedly marred by allegations of massive deployment of money by the contenders. The twelve candidates that contested were the Governor of Jigawa state, Alhaji Sule Lamido; former Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Rabiu Nusa Kwankwaso; Mr Fela Durotoye; Chike Ukaegbu; former Minister of Education, Mrs Oby Ezekwesili; former Governor of Cross River state Mr Donald Duke; Mr Tope Fasua; former Minister of Special Duties, Alhaji Kabiru Tanimu; Mr Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim; Mr Kingsley Moghalu; Mr Omoyele Sowore; former Governor of Kaduna state Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi, Mt Obadiah Mailafia; former Vice President and Turakin Adamawa Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Mr Remi Sonaiya.

While Alhaji Atiku Abubakar emerged in PDP, President Muhammadu Buhari was picked in APC. PDP selected former Governor of Anambra state Peter Obi as running mate while APC re-sponsored Vice President Yemi Osinbajo as the running mate. The diagnosis from these was that geo-regional, ethnic and religious considerations were factual. Atiku and Buhari were Muslims and Fulani men from the North, Mr Obi is Igbo from the South East and Prof. Osinbajo was Yoruba from the South West. The two running mates were Christians.

Electioneering Campaigns: The campaign, like an encore of the previous exercise in 2015 became a theatre for tantrum and mudslinging. Instead of establishing what they wish to accomplish, personal abuse took the centre stage. One strong fact that was unearthed was that PMB did not possess the minimum school certificate required to hold a public office in Nigeria. This became confirmed at the presidential election petition tribunal, when the first witness that was called to testify for PMB who was his classmate in the Army General Paul Tarfa, debunked the alibi bandied by the President

that his secondary school certificate was in the coffee of the Army (This Day, The Punch, Sahara Reporters 31st July 2019).

Campaign Issues: The campaigns for the 2019 elections by the two main candidates was anything but a demonstration of the finesse of politics. In fact when the media organised a session for all the candidates to debate, the incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari failed to attend, only for him to get the federal government-owned and controlled, i.e. NTA to conduct his own for him. It was anchored by Mrs Kadaria Ahmed and it was attended by the Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo who came in frequently to answer some of the questions or illuminate some issues. Notwithstanding these salient observations there were still pockets of issues that came up like the Boko-Haram attacks and unprecedented decline of the Naira against international currencies during the campaign that threw up challenge for the government. A representational view of the two candidates on some of these issues is provided in Table 5.10 below:

Highlights of Buhari, and Atiku's Campaign Promises on November 19th, 2018

President Muhammadu Buhari (PMB) promised to ensure the passage of Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) that has been on the shelf of the National Assembly since 2007 when it was sponsored by late president Yaradua, this the researcher however noted that the 8th National Assembly actually passed the bill but was never assented to in his first administration. Just as he did to over 60 other bills that he vetoed. Unfortunately, although the oil industry was still being regulated with the 1969 decree that was promulgated by General Gowon regime but the Buhari administration was not bothered that Nigeria had been losing billions of dollars. In sport, the Buhari administration also promised to ensure that the 1994 AFCON winners who were earlier promised houses for their victory that time, which had not been fulfilled he promised to do it. At the same breath, the 1985 Golden Eaglets that won the under-17 FIFA KODAK tournaments were going to received the promised he earlier made as Military Head of State that time because his regime was overthrown by General Ibrahim Badamoshi Babangida (IBB) (Rtd) and his cohort and all subsequent government after that did not fulfilled that promised.

Athaji Atiku Abubakar on his parts promised to ensure that the third tier of government i.e the local governments become operationally autonomous to fulfilled their mandates to the people. To this extent, he reiterated that local government were going to

be fully democratic and autonomous in finance and staffing and not any more an appendage of the second tier of government i.e. state government. See other electoral promises in table 2. below:

Table 2. Selected Campaign Promises by Muhammadu. Buhari and Atiku Abubakar

S/N	BUHARI’S CAMPAIGNS	ATIKU’S CAMPAIGNS
1	I will take Nigeria to the next level	I will get Nigeria working again
2	To engage 1million N-Power graduates.	To produce 5 million bpd of petroleum in 2025.
3	To train 10 million Nigerians in various skills.	Increase downstream oil sector contribution to GDP from less than 0.5% to 2% by 2025.
4	Give 1 million farmers inputs and jobs via Anchor borrowers scheme.	Redefine 2million bpd of oil in Nigeria and export 50% of it to ECOWAS member states.
5	Create 1.5 million jobs through livestock, beef, crop programmes.	Export 10-15% of manufacturing output by 2030 and 25% by 2035.
6	Create 5 million jobs through mechanised agriculture.	Lift 50 million people out of extreme poverty by 2025.
7	Provide \$500m innovation fund for Tech and creative sector to create 500,000 jobs.	1 million youths to benefit annually from apprenticeship scheme.
8	Train 200,000 youths for outsourcing market in tech, services and entertainment.	Sign African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA, agreement, and mitigate the potential risks.
9	Create 6 regional industrial parks and economic zones.	Increase Export Stimulation Fund from N700 billion to N1.5 trillion to enhance access to credit by manufacturers.
10	Increase children fed through the school feeding programme from 9.3 million to 15 million.	Will stimulate the economy absorb 50 -60% of the 2 million new entrants into the labour market annually.
11	Feeding programme to provide 300, 000 extra jobs for vendors and farmers.	Reduce unemployment and under-employment rate to a single digit by 2025.
12	Complete coastal rail (Lagos-Calabar), 2nd Niger Bridge, East-West road, Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria to Kano road among others.	Creation 3 million self-and wage-paying employment opportunities in the private sector annually.
13	Complete Ibadan-Kano rail, Port Harcourt-Maiduguri rail, etc.	Re -launch the National Open Apprenticeship Programme (NOAP) which will recruit, annually, 100,000 Master Craft Persons (MCPs) who will train 1,000,000 apprentices in various trades.
14	Move broadband coverage to 120,000 km of bre network across the country.	Ensure speedy passage of the National Research and Innovation Fund Bill, in order to produce 100,000 entrepreneurs every year.
15	Increase power generation by 1000MW every year.	Increase the absorptive capacity of the formal post-basic, TVET and Vocational Centres from the current total enrolment and completion of less than 200,000 students to

		500,000 in 2025 and 1,000,000 by 2030.
16	Raise power distribution to 7000MW; 9 universities, 300 markets and clusters to have uninterrupted power.	Facilitate \$250 million SME Venture Capital Fund by the private sector to provide for longer-term capital for targeted small firms.
17	Implement \$550m rural electrification programme.	Increase the MSMEs funding window currently from N200 billion to N500 billion.
18	Provide N1million soft loans to artisans.	Work with existing Micro Finance Banks (MFBs) in each local government area to administer a new N15.48 billion Community Micro Enterprise Fund (CMEF) to stimulate community enterprise development.
19	TraderMoni beneficiaries to be increased from 2.3 million to 10 million.	To double current infrastructure stock to approximately 70% of GDP by 2025 from current 35-40% of GDP.
20	Establish 109 One Stop Shops of all regulatory agencies (CAC, NAFDAC, SON, etc).	To invest \$35 billion annually in the next 5 years to finance core public infrastructure projects.
21	To retrain all teachers in public primary and secondary schools.	Rehabilitation and develop 5,000 Km of roads across the nation by 2025.
22	To remodel 10,000 schools every year.	To deliver 1 million housing units every and reduce housing deficit from 15 million to less than 10 million by 2025.
23	Use co-payments to share cost of health insurance between individuals, the private sector and government. Poorest 40% of Nigerians to be exempted from co-payments.	Reduce the share of recurrent revenue in the budget from 70% to 35% by 2025.
24	Increase population covered by primary health care from 12.6% to 45 % in 2023.	Increase primary school enrolment from 60% to 90% and graduation rate from 63% to 82% by 2027.
25		Increase secondary school enrolment from 47% to 80% and graduation rate from 56% to 75% by 2027.
26		Ensure that 65% of Nigerians have access to basic Primary Health Care (PHC) and services package by 2024, and 80% coverage by 2030. Current baseline PHC coverage levels range from 35% to 49%.
27		Reduce by 40% the number of Nigerians who are impoverished due to out-of pocket health care expenses by 2024.
28		Restructure Nigeria and devolve power to lower tiers of government. Issues bordering on minerals and mines, internal security including Police, law and order, railways, communications, transport, environment, land matters, etc will be devolved to the concurrent list so that, states can partake in them. Local Governments shall remain as independent tier of government.

29		The Federal Government will match State's IGR up to \$250 million per state.
30		Launch National Anti-corruption strategy that is based on the rule of law, separation of powers, neutrality and non-partisanship to reposition and refocus Anti-corruption and Law Enforcement Agencies within the first 100 days in office.
31		Set up Major Corruption Case Monitoring & Review Committee for all major corruption cases under the Office of the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Justice that would include Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Media.
32		Eliminate arbitrary or selective investigation and prosecution of major corruption cases by all anti-corruption agencies within the first 100 days in office.
33		Resolve Niger Delta militancy issue by implementing the Niger-Delta Master Plan; and move the Niger Delta Ministry to the region.
34		Address North East development issues via effective and efficient intervention funds; return IDPs to their homes and schools; rebuild damaged infrastructure.

HighlightsofBuhari,&Atiku'scampaignpromises.VanguardNews.<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2>accessed on 18/11/2019.

Electoral Administration and Election Integrity:

Election Administration is the major function of the EMB. It has to do with the efficient and effective sequential obedience to the electoral procedure throughout the electoral cycle. Electoral integrity focuses on elections that are conducted in accordance with the electoral law. Given the accepted procedure that what constitutes electoral integrity consists of the entire gamut of the electoral process, then it is sacrosanct to focus on the EMB and how it upheld the dictum of impartiality and strict adherence to the electoral laws, autonomy of INEC, the capacity of its full-time and ad-hoc staff, their technical competence and the performance of the security agencies. These were the determinants of a peaceful or rancorous election and violence before, during and after the elections. It also determines why contestants willingly accept or vociferously contest election results in the election tribunal and court of law. (Amao, 2019).

For the 2019 election, it is crucial to point out that a new Chairman had been chosen for INEC, Prof. Mahmud Yakubu. He was also a Prof of History unlike his predecessor, Prof. Atahir Jega who was a Political Scientist. Although Prof. Yakubu Mahmud also brought onto the board academics to superintend the presidential like in the era of Prof. Atahir Jega, but unfortunately many of the results declared by INEC in many states were enmeshed in controversy. These included Rivers, Kano etc. Worse indeed was the fact that the presidential election was contested at all prescribed level of the judiciary, beginning with the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal. In fact it was the elections that recorded the highest level of voided votes since the kick-start of the Fourth Republic. Ab initio, the credibility of the elections was put into doubt when President Muhammadu Buhari refused to assent to the amended electoral law of 2018 that was passed by the Eighth Senate, which was targeted, and acknowledged at enhancing the credibility of the electoral system. While the President could not contest the validity of the amendments, he pushed forward a subterfuge that the time was short.

This paper subscribe to the view of Omotola, (2010) that the position of domestic and international observation teams often pin point what is the level of confidence that the citizens have in the electoral process that began in 2018, and also what level of integrity it possesses and if it meets international standards and practices. This is shown in Table 5.11.

Election Observation Reports in Nigeria 2019.

A Summary of Selected Election Observation Reports in Nigeria 2019

ELECTIONS	OBSERVERS	REPORT
2019	CDD,	Described the election as the least transparent election since 2011 they heaped the blame on INEC which refused to consolidate on the gains that were made in 2011 and 2015 elections respectively. The non disclosure of the details of the wards to senatorial elections contributed to the opaque nature upon which the election was held. Much more pungently the non disclosure of the 1,289,607 voided votes contributed immensely to the contrivance that attended the declaration of the 2019 PE which made it susceptible to it been discredited and challenged from the tribunal to the supreme court level. The dysfunctionality of the card readers and electronic devices that were introduced to enhance the credibility, and integrity of the elections process actually compromised the confidence that would have been reposed in the conduct and

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declaration of results that were announced in favour of PMB.

EU, EOM.

The poor conduct of the presidential elections strongly necessitated a high level of (30) thirty reforms which the observer team suggested in order to strengthened democracy in the country and make the political leadership responsive and responsible to the yearnings of the citizenry. It specifically recommended dialogue to be held among the stakeholders that should include the political leaders of the ruling and opposition parties, the Civil society.

COMMONWEALTH

Consider that INEC have done a good job within the circumstance given the fact that it was the fifth election it was over seeing as observers in the country. They however recommended specific reforms that will strengthened and protect the democracy within the country and serve as a model within the commonwealth of nations. They specifically berated the execute for failing to assent the amendments to the electoral law that was passed by the 8th National Assembly that would have serve as corner stone to engender the integrity and credibility of the elections.

Nigerian Civil Society
Election Situation Room
(NCSESR)

They commended Nigerians for painstakingly withstanding the rigours of election and gave tribute to member of the NYSC who were the field officers at the polling Units nationwide. They however expressed disappointment that in spite of the postponement of the election, INEC could yet not do a better job than it was witnessed in the good conduct of the 2015 election. The observable laxity according to NCSESR was responsible for thuggery before, and during election as well post election litigations that 2019 election witnessed.

Sources: CDD, 2019, EU EOM 2019, NCSESR, 2019,

Some deductions can be made from above:

The 2019 Election in Nigeria was not without its own problem going by the various reports of the numerous election observers the election failed to meet international standard. The 2019 Presidential and National Assembly elections which was described as less transparent election by IRI/CDD election observer report, given the widespread and significant nature of ward-level collation challenges throughout the country. It is not inconceivable that they might have manipulated the results of the presidential or senatorial elections. It is sad to note that the EMB neither published the results that emanated from the ward level nor the votes that were declared invalid or

provided detailed lists of which polling units experienced cancelled elections and why. INEC has provided this information only at the state-level. This lack of ward-level transparency is part of a more worrying trend in election administration in Nigeria. The fact that the EMB failed to place the full details of the results of the 2019 presidential election on its private website, just as it did after the 2011 presidential election was a minus. This opaque approach reverses the tangible progress INEC had made in results transparency following the 2011 and 2015 general elections. It is also worrisome why INEC was unable to publish a detailed breakdown of the number of voided votes - 1,289,607 for the presidential election - by polling unit or registration area.

As a result, it is impossible to analyse whether these voided votes were concentrated in politically significant locations; or whether the reasons for voiding them were avoidable (i.e. non-use of card readers and poor voter education); or difficult to prevent (i.e. politically orchestrated over-voting and violent disruption by political thugs). The lack of transparency surrounding these voided votes raises additional questions about the integrity and transparency of the conduct of the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. It also raises questions about the indirect or vicarious responsibility of INEC for the lapses in the conduct of the elections.

Voting Pattern and Election Results in Nigeria's 2019 Presidential Election:

Although, the presidential election of 2019 was contested by the candidates of 73 political parties, but as a matter of fact the contest was between General Muhammadu Buhari and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. Between the two of them, they recorded over 96.82% of the votes. This left a paltry figure of 3.18% of the votes for the remaining 71 persons on the field. Analysis of the election showed that the elections maintained some trends that had subsisted in the past. This included the geo-regional pattern, religious and ethnic groupings. Atiku was from Adamawa state which is in the North East and he made a good showing. Buhari was from Katsina in the North West and he led there. Notwithstanding there were also some issues that showed a difference with the past. One noticeable thing was that the two leading candidates recorded handsome results, in Muslim dominated states. This is in contradistinction to the 2015 elections in which the leading candidates belonged to different faiths. This is explicable because Alhaji Atiku and President Buhari were both Muslims. Being a Catholic Christian, the running mate of the PDP candidate Mr Peter Obi attracted votes from his Igbo ethnic stock in the South

East who are predominantly Catholics. It is also significant to reiterate that the Atiku was favoured in the South East because his last wife Jamillah is an Igbo from the zone. Similarly, the Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo won huge votes from the South West that he hailed from and the non-orthodox Christians and in particular the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) at where he was a Pastor. Not only that, Alhaji Atiku also scored high in the South- South due to the influence of former President Jonathan.

It is also instructive to note that unlike the previous presidential elections, for instance the 2003 elections where it was not only the two leading contestants that swept the polls. PDP candidate President Obasanjo recorded 61.94% while the ANPP candidate General Buhari scored 32.19%. These totaled 94.13% but the remaining 18 candidates that contested with them scored 5.87%.

The details are contained in Table 5.1.

Table 4. Results of the Presidential Election, 2019.

S/N	Candidate	(Party)	No of Votes	% of Votes
1	Ositelu Isaac Babatunde	AP	19,209	0.07
2	Abdulrashid Hassan Baba	AA	14,380	0.05
3	Omoyele Sowore	AAC	33,953	0.12
4	Chike Ukaegbu	AAP	8,902	0.03
5	Shipi Moses Godia	ABP	4,523	0.02
6	Nwokeafor, I. Udubuisi.	ACD	11,325	0.04
7	Oby Ezekwesili	ACPN	7,223	0.03
8	Obadiah Mailafia	ADC	97,874	0.36
9	Yabagi Sani Yusuf	ADP	54,930	0.02
10	Nwachukwu, C. Nwabuiku	AGA	4,689	0.02
11	Chief Umenwa Godwin	AGAP	3,071	0.01
12	Obaje Yusufu Ameh	ANDP	3,104	0.01
13	Fela Durotoye	ANN	16,779	0.06
14	Shittu Moshood Asiwaju	ANP	3,586	0.01
15	Tope Fasua	ANRP	4,340	0.02
16	Ibrahim Aliyu Hassan	APA	36,866	0.13
17	Muhammadu Buhari	APC	15,191,847	55.60
18	Shitu Muhammed Kabir	APDA	26,558	0.10
19	Gbor John Wilson Terwase	APGA	66,851	0.24
20	Yusuf Mamman Dantalle	APM	26,039	0.10
21	Obinna U. Ikeagwuonu	APP	3,585	0.01

22	John Dara	ASD	2,146	0.01
23	Angela Johnson	AUN	1092	0.00
24	David Esosa Ize-Iyamu	BNPP	1,649	0.01
25	Abah Lewis Elaigwu	CAP	1,111	0.00
26	Ojinika Geff Chhize	CC	2,391	0.01
27	Emmanuel Etim	CNP	1,874	0.01
28	Ukong Frank	DA	2,769	0.01
29	Awosola Williams Olusola	DPC	5,242	0.02
30	Osakwe Felix Johnson	DPP	14,483	0.05
31	Chris Okotie	FRESH DP	4,554	0.02
32	OWUBUYA	FJP	4,174	0.02
33	Akhimien Davidson Isibor	GDPN	41,852	0.15
34	Eke Samuel Chukuma	GPN	4,924	0.02
35	Albert Owuru Ambrose	HDP	1,663	0.01
36	Madu Nnamdi Edozie	ID	1,845	0.01
37	Chukwu-Eguzolugo, S. Chik	JMPP	1,853	0.01
38	Fagbenro, B. Samuel Adesina	KP	1,911	0.01
39	Kriz David	LM	1,438	0.01
40	Muhammed Usman Zaki	LP	5,074	0.02
41	Funmilayo Adesanya Davies	MAJA	2,651	0.01
42	Bashayi Isa Dansarki	MMN	14,540	0.05
43	Santuraki, Hamisu	MPN	2,752	0.01
44	Rabia Yasai Hassan Cengi	NAC	2,279	0.01
45	Ademola Babatunde Abidemi	NCMP	1,378	0.01
46	Salisu Yunusa Tanko	NCP	3,799	0.01
47	A. Edosomwan Johnson	NDCP	1,192	0.00
48	Akpua Robinson	NDLP	1,588	0.01
49	Ishaka Paul Ofemile	NEPP	1,524	0.01
50	Asukwo Mendie Archibong	NFD	4,096	0.01
51	Eunice Atuejide	NIP	2,248	0.01
52	Ike Keke	NNPP	6,111	0.02
53	Maina Maimuna Kyari	NPC	10,081	0.04
54	Ibrahim Usman Alhaji	NRM	6,229	0.02
55	Moses Ayibowu	NUP	5,323	0.02
56	Felix Nicolas	PCP	110,196	0.04
57	Atiku Abubakar	PDP	11,262,978	41.22
58	Ameh Peter Ojonugwa	PPA	21,822	0.08
59	Victor Okhai	PPC	8,979	0.03
60	Hamza Almustafa	PPN	4,622	0.02
61	Gbenga Olawepo Hashim	PT	2,613	0.01
62	Israel Nonyerem Davidson	RAP	2,972	0.01
63	Osuala Chukwudi John	RBNP	1,792	0.01
64	Nsehe Nseobong	RP	2,388	0.01
65	Donald Duke	SDP	34,746	0.13
66	Da-silva Thomas Ayo	SNC	28,680	0.10
67	Ahmed Buhari	SNP	3,941	0.01

68	Balogun Isiaka Ishola	UDP	3,170	0.01
69	Mark Emmanuel Audu	UP	1,561	0.01
70	Inwa Ahmaed Sakil	UPN	1,631	0.01
71	Nwangwu Uchenna Peter	WTPN	732	0.00
72	Ali Soyode	YES	2,394	0.01
73	Kingsley Moghalu	YPP	21,886	0.08

SOURCE: INEC, 2019; NCSESR, 2019.

SUMMARY

A	Total Number of Registered Voters	84,004,084
B	Total Number of Registered Voters As (Collated)	82,344,107
C	Total Number of Accredited Voters As (Collated)	29,364,209
D	Total Number of Valid Votes As (Collated)	27,324,583
E	Total Number of Rejected Votes As (Collated)	1,289,607
F	Total Number of Votes Cast As (Collated)	28,614,190
G	Percentage Turnout As Collated	35.56

SOURCE: INEC, 2019; NCSESR, 2019

Table 5. Spatial Breakdown of Voters' Turnout in 2015 and 2019 Presidential Elections.

Geo-Political Zones	2015	2019
North-Central	43.47	25.16
North-East	45.22	26.88
North-West	55.09	51.07
South-East	40.52	12.94
South-South	57.81	20.27
South-West	40.26	23.47
FCT	-----	2.54

Source: Computed from INEC Database, 2015 & 2019

There are six geo-political zones in the country (Nigeria) namely: the North Central Zones, North East Zone, North West Zone, South East Zone, South-South Zone, South West Zone, excluding Federal Capital Territory. A critical look at the above table

shows that the voters' turnout in all the six geo-political zones as well as FCT was better off or higher in 2015 than in the 2019 Presidential Elections. Even on a comparative perspective the total voters' turnout at 2015 and 2019 Presidential Elections was 29,432,083 and 82,344,107.

In the 1959 General Election, the election that ushered in Nigeria's first republic, voters registered was nine million, forty-three thousand, four hundred and four (9,043,404) and turnout population was seven million, one hundred and eighty-nine thousand, seven hundred and ninety-seven (7,189,797) while the percentage of Nigerian voters' turnout in 1959 General Election stood at seventy-nine-point-fifty-percent (79.50%) which was encouraging and a good start before the Nigeria independence. By the second republic political dispensation and due to prolonged military rule in Nigeria from 1966-to-1979 the voters register decline to forty-eight million, six hundred and thirty-three thousand, seven hundred and eighty-two (48,633,782) and the voters' turnout population was sixteen million, eight hundred and forty-six thousand, six hundred and thirty-three (16,846,633), Consequently the voters' turnout also declined to (34.00%). By the 1983 Presidential Election the voters registered increased as it was put at sixty-five million, three hundred and four thousand, eight hundred and eighteen (65,304,818) and the voters' turnout population was twenty-five-million, four hundred and thirty thousand, and ninety-six (25,430,096) but surprisingly the voter's turnout increased to thirty-eight-point-zero-percent (38.00%).

By 1993 Presidential Election registered voters stood at sixty-five million, three hundred and four thousand, eight hundred and eighteen (65,304,818) and the voters' turnout population was fourteen million, three hundred and twenty-one thousand, nine hundred and sixty-three (14,321,963) and the percentage voters' turnout was thirty-seven-point-zero-percent (37.00%).

By 1999 Presidential Election voters registered was 57,838,945 and the voters' turnout population was 30,280,052, and the percentage turnout increased to fifty-two-point-thirty-percent (52.30%).

By 2003 Presidential Election voters registered was 60,823,022 and the voters' turnout population was 42,018,735. By 2007 Presidential Election voters registered was 61,567,036 and the voters' turnout population was 35,397,517. By 2011 Presidential Election voters registered was 73,528,040 and the voters' turnout population

was 39,469,484. By 2015 Presidential Election voters registered was 67,422,005 and the voters' turnout population was 29,432,083. By 2019 Presidential Election voters registered was 84,004,084 and the voters' turnout population was 82,344,107.

The percentage voters' turnout stood at fifty-two-point-thirty percent in the election of 1999. It increased to sixty-nine-point-ten-percent in the 2003 election. The increase may be as a result of the fact that unlike in 1999 when there was so much skepticism about the reality of the transition programme, after years of several false starts, by 2003 it had become obvious that the democratisation process was on course; hence, the rise in the level of popular political participation, therefore, the voter's turnout increased to sixty-nine-point-ten-percent (69.10%). Moreover, in the 2007 general elections, there was a considerable reduction of turnout value again at fifty-seven-point fifty percent (57.50%). This further declined to fifty-three-point-seventy-percent (53.70%) and forty-three-point-sixty-five-percent (43.65%) in the presidential election of 2011 and the presidential election of 2015 respectively.

The presidential election of 2015 witnessed a low voter's turnout when compared to previous elections. The continuous reduction in the value of the Nigerian voter's turnout may be attributed to the following reasons: Firstly, there were lots of contradictions in the electoral processes. Secondly, lack of absolute independence of the INEC. Thirdly, bribery scandals associated with the INEC officials. Fourthly, the post-electoral violence that greeted the preceding general election in Nigeria i.e. 2011 general election prior to 2015. Fifthly and finally the spate of political upheaval in the country then, thus the fear of being attack during the various stages of the electoral cycle.

Unlike in 2015, the turnout declined the more from 43.65% to 35.56% in the 2019 presidential election. Unfortunately, the percentage voters' turnout also decline from forty-three-point-sixty-five-percent (43.65%) in 2015 to thirty-five-point-fifty-six-percent (35.56%) in 2019 presidential election.

Voting Pattern and Geographical Distribution of 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria

The Nigerian voting pattern and geographical distribution of the 2019 Presidential election indicate the continuous culture of Nigerian voters towards their leaders in an election. The APC candidate has a stronghold of the North-West and east as

the traditional supporting ground that he has since his inception of contesting for the presidential seat in 2003, because of a religious, ethnic, and regional factor since he is a Hausa/Fulani Muslim from the dominant region of his ethnic and religious belonging. The PDP nearly became an official party in South-South and Southwest since 1999 most especially with the emergence of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan from 2011. Expectedly, the North-West and North-East voted massively for President Buhari while the South-East and South-South voted for Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. This was because President Muhammadu Buhari was considered in the North-West and North-East as a charismatic leader that was religious, incorruptible, and a dominant Hausa /Fulani that has been contesting from the region since 2003 with overwhelming support whereas Atiku Abubakar was perceived by the North-West and North-East as corrupt, elite-oriented and pro-southern parts of the country.

The Southeast and South-West also saw President Muhammadu Buhari as a religious bigot and ethnic chauvinist in which Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was not to them. Besides, PDP was the strongest and dominant party in the South-East and South-South, hence any candidate in that party irrespective of his background may get the highest votes there. A major reason why Alhaji Atiku Abubakar was supported by the South-East and South-West was that he was more familiar with the terrain than President Muhammadu Buhari coupled with the opportunity Alhaji Atiku Abubakar had as a former vice president of Nigeria under Olusegun Obasanjo from the PDP made him more acceptable. Not only that, one of the campaign promises he made that he would restructure the country also made him more acceptable to the two geo-political zones. Another reason was that he also married from the South-West. To me, he was more of a nationalist leader than President Muhammadu Buhari.

The North-Central was shared among the two leading political parties or contenders with the APC candidate winning in four States of the six States making the geo-political zone, but with a very narrow margin. The southwest geo-political zone presented a surprise vote because it is seen as one of the strongholds of APC. The ACN, as well as the political godfather in geopolitical zone Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (Jagaban Borgu) spearheaded the alliance and formation of the APC to have access to the corridor of power at the federal level and possibly to have Nigeria political power returned to the South West after the completion of eight years terms of President Buhari. Ahmed Tinubu, the APC national leader was from this geo-political zone and the zone benefited more than any other from Southern Nigeria in terms of major political offices

and infrastructure in the first four years of the APC administration. For every narrative there is always a counter-narrative, the North generally either North-West or North-East benefitted more than any region during President Muhammad Buhari's administration in terms of appointment or anything patronage in the first term. And the most, even in the second term.(Amao, 2020 p.343). Many political appointments that were formerly occupied by people from the southwest once they complete their tenure was never returned to south-west rather it was given to the north. E.g. chairman of FIRS that was occupied by Babatunde Fowler was never returned to the South-West geo-political zone.

Besides, the circumstances that brought President Muhammadu Buhari were no longer prevailing. Moreover, he had failed the masses as the poverty level increased in Nigeria. He had equally failed in the area of security and the uncushioned and most prevalent Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes claiming majorly lives of farmers and wanton destruction of their farmlands. All these accounted for the decline in the vote to APC from the southwest and southeast geographical zones of Nigeria. However, the votes seemed to be shared equally between the APC and PDP in the geo-political zone which indicated a low level of patronage and political culture of that geopolitical zone. This analysis is presented or showed in table, 5.15 below:

Table 6. 2019 Elections Results by Political Parties in the Six Geo-Political Zones & FCT.

Geo-political zone	APC	%	PDP	%	Differences	Winner
NORTHEAST	3,238,783	74.36	1,116,873	25.64	2,121,910	APC
NORTHCENTRAL	2,313,375	54.92	1,763,772	45.08	549,603	APC
NORTHWEST	5,995,651	72.45	2,280,465	27.55	3,715,186	APC
SOUTHEAST	403,968	19.26	1,693,485	80.74	1,289,517	PDP
SOUTHSOUTH	1,051,396	32.01	2,233,232	67.99	1,181,836	PDP
SOUTHWEST	2,036,450	53.41	1,776,670	46.59	259,780	APC
FCT ABUJA	152,224	36.77	259,997	63.23	110,773	PDP
TOTAL	15,191,847	55.54	11,262,978	41.18	3,928,869	APC

SOURCE: ANALYSED AND COMPUTED FROM INEC WEBSITE, 2019.

Similarly, in the 2019 Presidential Elections, where Alhaji Atiku Abubakar squared up with President Muhammadu Buhari who were both Muslim Fulanis. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar had more votes from the North East (NE) where he came from and

president Buhari also won in the North West. It is also important to point out that in the South-South part of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar, had more votes because he is not seen as ethnically bias in favour of his Fulani people, like President Muhammadu Buhari and also perceived as not a religious bigot. Also, Atiku Abubakar being the PDP candidate secured more votes from South-South because there are more PDP governors and legislator from that zone. It is expected however, that in the forthcoming 2023 presidential election when its expected southern Nigeria will occupy the number one seat , the factors that affected the voting pattern in Nigeria will also come to play. In the final analysis, the Presidential Election in Nigeria have gone towards similar pattern with the exception of the 2019 presidential election exercised when 71 candidates entered the race after they dully cleared by INEC under their political party platforms.

Post-Election Responses:

After the declaration of the results, violence was not recorded in the nation. This was largely contingent upon the maturity and statesmanship demonstrated by the PDP candidate, Alhaji Atiku and his running mate Mr. Obi. Instead of inciting the voters as General Buhari did in the run off to the 2015 elections when he threatened that if the elections was not fair, which his supporters interpreted as meaning that if he losses, that the monkey and baboon will be soaked in blood. Instead of resorting to conflagration, they instead challenged the result of the elections in the judiciary. This indeed was a negative indicator of electoral integrity. The PDP candidate and his running mate together helped to save the country from post-electoral violence. The exhibited honour and displayed their peaceful disposition by following the constitutional provisions. This inadvertently kept the democratisation on course.

Findings:

The paper find out that 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria fell below international standard of electoral integrity judging by the reports of both domestic and international election observers on 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The centre for Democracy and Development (CDD 2019) described the election as the least transparent election since 2011 they heaped the blame on INEC which refused to consolidate on the gains that were made in 2011 and 2015 elections respectively. Moreover, they however

expressed disappointment that in spite of the postponement of the election, INEC could yet not do a better job than it was witnessed in the good conduct of the 2015 election. (CDD, 2019, EU EOM 2019, NCSESR, 2019,)

Recommendations and Conclusion:

Based on the finding, that is 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria fall below international standard of electoral integrity. The paper recommended that international standard practice should be adhere to in order to put Nigeria in its rightful position within/among comity of nations and giants of Africa as its usually claimed. The 2019 presidential elections betrayed some lapses that relegated its integrity, lowered the people's confidence in the process and belayed the responsibility it commanded among the domestic and international observers and the citizens. Worse, still, the legitimacy of the government was put to test by observers, commentators and scholars alike. The matter proceeded from the tribunal to the Appeal Court before the apex judicial institution, the Supreme Court of Nigeria. The paper also conclude that for Nigeria to improve her electoral integrity an impartial election management body should be man by leaders with high personal integrity and their selection process should be devoid of politics.

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