# Comparative Analysis of Electoral Violence in the 2015 and 2019 General Elections in Nigeria and the Role of Security Agencies: Prospects for Future Elections

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## Abstract

Democratic political system is one which makes the government responsive and accountable to the people. Election on the other hand is the fulcrum of democracy hence; election related violence cannot be discussed without the role of security agencies and various non-state actors in the elections. This is a prerequisite for maintenance of law and order that brings about stability and enhances national security. Nigerian democracy since inception has been a subject of controversy with periodic elections consistently marred with issues of violent crises and insecurity. The 2015 and 2019 general elections in Nigeria were no different, the two elections recorded the height of ethno-religious tension in the history of Nigerian election as well as ethno-religious violence that threatened the indivisibility of the entire country. While the 2015 was relatively peaceful despite the violence tension it created in the pre-election campaigning, the 2019 elections were marred with violence. More so, the elections were held in the most insecure atmosphere with the Boko Haram conflict and the herders/farmers conflict going in the northeast and north central zones simultaneously. In addition, security during elections was a source of concern. The Police and other security agencies were often accused of partiality during electoral processes. The paper carries out a comparative analysis of electoral violence during 2015 and 2019 general elections. Drawing data from both primary and secondary sources such as in-depth interviews, key informant interviews (KII), questionnaires and extant literatures

**Background to the Study**

Elections are vital to any democracy's success, just as security is a necessary component of well-run elections. Election is also an important part of the transition from one civilian administration to the next in any stable democratic society. Election is a struggle for legitimate power that occurs inside a political arena. In this context, it's critical to remember that elections don't eliminate conflict; instead, they focus on managing and containing it within agreed-upon bounds. The most recognized manner of changing a government around the world is through elections, and at the turn of the 21st century, democracy was the system of administration selected by the vast majority of countries on earth. Elections are always used to establish democracy, whether in its direct form as practiced in ancient Greece's city-states or in its contemporary representative form. Even better, elections have become such an integral part of democracy since the third wave of democratization began in Southern Europe in the mid-1970s that it is difficult to imagine a democratic regime without them, and there is a real danger of conflating the holding of regular, fairly competitive, and transparent elections with democracy. Africa had its own democracy prior to the arrival of democracy, which includes separation of powers and checks and balances in its pre-colonial forms of government (Molomo, 2006).

Nigerian democracy since inception has been a subject of controversy with periodic elections consistently marred with issues of violent crises and insecurity. The eventual collapse of the first and second republic resulted from incidences of elections violence and the attendant security challenges that accompanied them. The third republic could not survive due to coups and counter coups, however, the fourth republic that succeeded it is no difference with the first and second republics in terms of violence and insecurity. According to Obakhedo (2011), "electoral violence is one of the greatest obstacles in Nigeria. Mostly, election violence occurs within party (intra-party) and outside the party (inter-party), this affects the quality of election (outcome) results in the electoral system, the rule of law and democratic practice in Nigeria. Furthermore, violence affects the stand of elections being free and fair, as well transparent by foreign observers.

Nigeria's security agencies face an uphill task ahead of the coming elections. The security agencies have been stretched to their limits. Ensuring secure conditions for free and fair elections in such a volatile, politically charged environment is challenging. It is also not helped by the spread of vitriolic political messages on social media. The 2019 general election is not likely to be radically different from the 2015 elections. There are signs that security agencies are prepared to ensure free and fair elections. State-level gubernatorial elections in Edo, Ondo, Anambra, Ekiti and Osun states were mostly peaceful. Nigeria's population, which was approximately 186 million in 2016, is predicted to rise to around 396 million by 2050, making it Africa's fourth most populated country. Despite this sterling reputation, the country has been plagued by violent conflicts, which has hampered the voting process. In this light, the study examined the following: The build-up, the conduct, issues that arise from the process, challenges that are encountered, and successes that are recorded, and then plausible alternatives for future implications were provided in a comparative analysis of electoral violence in the 2015 and 2019 General Elections in Nigeria and the Role of Security Agencies.

## Conceptual Clarification
### Election
An election may be defined as an act of choosing or selecting candidates who will represent the people of a country in the parliament and in other positions in the government. Election is also said to be a contest between competing political parties or groups for government power. Election becomes imperative as a result of impossibility of direct representation in the modern state, as practiced in the small ancient Greek City, due to rapid increase in population and expansion of cities; this paved way for the adoption of democracy as a system of government.

According to Benjamin (2009), election is the process that allows members of an organization or community to choose representatives capable of holding positions of authority and governing its administration. Nwolise, (2007) and Bamgbose (2012), defined election to be "a process of selecting the officers or representatives of an organization or group by the votes of its qualified members". To Anifowose (2003), election is "the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given political system". As viewed by Salman (2008), "it implies that voters (Electorates) are presented with alternatives, that they can choose among a number of proposals designed to settle an issue of public concern". This invariably means that in defining fundamental essence of elections is the contribution they make to democratize governance. The history of Nigeria's elections shows that the 2007 general election is believed to be the worst election in history since it first held election in 1922, thus the compelling need to embark on electoral reforms is obvious in the fourth republic, having recorded the worst election in history (Report of the electoral reform committee, 2008).

### Electoral Violence
Elections have posed the greatest security concerns in Nigeria since independence, particularly in terms of how to provide security to election staff, election materials, voters, and candidates running for office. Nigeria's experience with elections and electoral violence dates back to her colonial era, and elections have posed the greatest security concerns in the country since independence, particularly in terms of how to provide security to election staff, election materials, voters, and candidates running for office (Orji, 2014). Fischer (2002) defines electoral violence (conflict) as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threats, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced "protection," blackmail, property destruction, or assassination Igbuzor (2010), also defines electoral violence as "any act of violence committed in the course of political activities, including before, during, and after elections, and which may include thuggery, the use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process participants, or to cause bodily harm or injury to anyone involved in electoral processes."

According to Albert (2007), electoral violence encompasses all organized acts or threats – physical, psychological, and structural – aimed at intimidating, harming, or blackmailing a

political stakeholder prior to, during, or after an election in order to determine, delay, or otherwise influence the electoral process. The aforementioned descriptions of electoral Violence have caught the deeper nature and stages of electoral violence in Nigeria, notably since the Fourth Republic's inauguration in 1999.

## Election Security

Security is a safety from harm; the degree of resistance to, or protection from harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling community, nation or organization. However, security as a word has different dimensions in psychology, public safety, defense and military matters, information etc. though is used in different disciplines and to mean different things but general meaning is to protect" and to provide maximum protection for certain thing. Despite that we are only concerned with security during election; it is still pertinent to acknowledge the fact that it is used in other areas like computer security, Data security, information security, human security, personal security, national security, financial security, electoral security, to mention but few.

## Theoretical Underpinning

The conflict theory explores the modern capitalist state using conflict theory as a conceptual framework, in which the political class has established weak institutions in order to preserve control over the state's resources. To begin, we will use Karl Marx's theoretical writings as a Prussian political economist and activist to support our case (1818-1883). In conflict theory, dominance and power, rather than consensus and compliance, are thought to preserve social order. That is, those who have wealth and power seek to maintain them by all means possible, including oppressing the poor and defenseless. Conflict theory has been used to explain societal phenomena such as wars and revolutions, prosperity and poverty, discrimination, and domestic violence. As a result, because it juxtaposes electoral violence, this theory is particularly pertinent to our research. in addition to political stability, it suggests that Nigerian electoral violence is the result of a primitive accumulation-based quest for political power. It is critical to emphasize that the failure of Nigerian authorities to build effective governance, cement national integration, and promote actual economic success through well-articulated policies has resulted in widespread poverty and unemployment. As a result, community, ethnic, religious, electoral, and class tensions now define the country. This is due to the ruling party repeatedly using the State Security apparatus, particularly, the Nigeria Police Force, to restrict and disseminate their will, these differences have major repercussions for political stability. Resistance like the one described above leads to violence, as unemployed people are hired for pittances for the benefit of the wealthy, poverty and unemployment have bred a lot of violence in Nigeria, particularly election violence. The country now has a reservoir of impoverished people eager to sell their conscience to the wealthy in order to profit through dodgy electoral procedures. Devastation is unleashed through elections and the acquisition of political power. As a result, their wealthy owners employ them as mercenary fighters, kidnappers, and electoral thugs. In theory, this means that poverty and a lack of money increase the number of people willing to kill or be killed for a small sum of money.

**Historical Overview of Electoral Violence in Nigeria**

The history of electoral violence in Nigeria could be traced to the colonial period. This means that thorough understanding of the problem of electoral violence in Nigeria requires situating it within its political history. Scholars have argued that colonial settings laid the foundation of future political conflict in Nigeria. This argument was hinged on a number of British political experiments in West Africa in general and Nigeria in particular among which were, the introduction of the elective principle in 1922 and on the emergence of the 1946 Richards constitution. For instance, the elective principle, though to a very large extent was non-violent, was too limited with income and residential qualifications, could be a potential basis for violence Omotola (2007). This argument could be corroborated with what happened when elections were held into the regional Houses of Assembly in 1951 across the country. The elections which were held based on the then electoral system introduced by the 1951 constitution led to widespread dissatisfaction among majority of Nigerians in 1952. Thus, in 1953, there was increase in the intensity of political agitation (Falola, et al, 1991). The 1946 constitution paved the way for the division of the country into three regions in which each region was dominated by a major ethnic group. For example, the Hausa-Fulani dominated the Northern region, while the Yoruba and the Igbo dominated the Western and Eastern regions respectively. Thus, within each region, there were numerous other so-called minorities which were at a considerable disadvantage as far as political power was concerned. The emergence of political development in 1950s marked the genesis of electoral violence in Nigeria. In 1951 for instance, elections were held into the regional Houses of Assembly based on the introduced electoral system of the 1951 Constitution. This electoral system created a widespread dissatisfaction among the Nigerians (Falola et al, 1991).

The first and immediate post-independence electoral violence in Nigeria occurred during the 1964 general elections, the first election to be conducted after independence. The Northern People's Congress needed the elections to consolidate its power at the centre. The Action Group (AG) also needed it in order to dislodge Chief S.L Akintola from power in the West. The NCNC on its own also wanted to improve its bargaining strength in the East. It became obvious that all the major political parties were adequately anxious to participate in the elections (Falola et al, 1991). By the middle of 1964, two major political alliances had emerged from all the maneuvers. The NPC and the NNDP founded the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). The AG and the NCNC constituted themselves into the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). The 1964 federal election was contested between these major alliances (Ige, 1995). Two main coalitions contested these elections: the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) made up of the NPC and some other minor parties; the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) comprising the NCNC, AG, NEPU and UMBC (Falola, et al, 1991). The campaigns by these coalitions generated much bitterness, acrimony and violence, especially in the west. The elections which were said to have been massively rigged through different means lead to widespread violence/conflicts in the west following the announcement of results by the Chairman of Federal Electoral Commission in person of Mr. Esua. This argument could be corroborated with the address of president Azikiwe and the then Inspector General Police, Mr. Louis Edet. Azikiwe in his Dawn broadcast to the nation, expressed the head of state condemned the way and manner the electioneering was

conducted and his disappointment. The politicians in power have no right to employ instruments of power in order to perpetuate their stay in office. The president cited instances where Nigerian citizen had been deprived of their constitutional right to freedom of association. He warned the politicians that: "If they have decided to destroy our national unity, they should summon a round table conference to decide how our national asserts should be divided for it is better that we should disintegrate in peace and not in pieces" (Anifowose, 1972). In a similar view, the inspector general of police, Louis Edet made a nation-wide broadcast reporting that incidents involving violence had reached alarming proportions. He appealed to the politicians to protect Nigeria's enviable reputation as a bastion of democracy in Africa (Anifowose, 1972). The attendant violence, including arson, looting, killing, wanton destruction of properties and the total collapse of public order especially in the western region, was unprecedented. For example, at Ishokun, Ilesha, twenty school children were murdered on the ground that they were in town to combat an impending riot. Also, at Isho, a village few miles from Owo, sixteen people were killed. As it was in the west, so also it went on in the Middle Belt. A good example was the second Tiv riot of 1964 (Anifowose, 1972). The last straw that broke the camel's back was the elections into regional assembly in the west in October 1965.

The announcement of the election results by the Federal Electoral Commission, which led to the victory of Chief S.L Akintola of the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) as against the wishes of many people who expected that Chief Adegbenro of the UPGA led to large-scale widespread violence in the whole of western region on the ground that there were irregularities in the election results. The decision of the federal government to recognize the election thus gave Chief Akintola the power to form a new government. This however made UPGA to embark on a spontaneous and violent demonstration known as "operation wet e" – an operation which required the spraying of houses, cars and persons with petrol and then setting fire to them (Ige, 1995). There were series of protests and demonstrations carried out by angry students, market women, farmers and other groups in most towns and villages throughout the western region, and these were accompanied by looting, arson, killing on an unprecedented scale and burning of houses, vehicles and shops. Anti-governmental placards were displayed, party slogan- Awo! Awo! UPGA! UPGA! -as well as war songs were advanced. In some cases, the demonstration ended in clashes with anti-riot police squad, who did not hesitate to shoot. A typical song by the angry demonstrators was "E jeki a mura ogun, eleyi l on je iya (let us prepare for war, this is an insulting behaviours) (Anifowose, 1972). The high rate of electoral violence (pre and post) following the 1964 and 1965 elections were said to have contributed in no small measure to the collapse of the first Republic (Osaghae 1998; Akinwumi 2004). The electoral process of the second republic (1979– 1983) was equally led to various cases of electoral violence across the whole of Nigeria. The most important one was the second election that was conducted after the first administration in 1983. The structure of politics, despite the alteration in the structure of the federation from three (and later four) regions of the first republic, to nineteen states, was still largely driven by ethno-religious forces, where each party maintained its stronghold in a given regional/ethnic domain (Omotola 2007,). For example, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) dominated the Northern region, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) dominated the Western region while the

National Council of Nigeria Citizen (NCNC) dominated the Eastern region (Abimbola & Adesote, 2012). The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), obviously NPC's successor, controlled the federal government between 1979 and 1983. In the 1983 elections, it wanted to extend its reach to other regions, either by hook or by crook. The elections were marred by anomalies and corruption once again, causing uproar. a series of disturbances following the election The Military Junta led by General Muhammadu Buhari overthrew the Second Republic because the center could no longer hold. Due to odious policies and a lack of vision for a Transition Programme, Buhari's government was unable to navigate the political terrain for long, and the regime was deposed in a palace coup engineered by his Chief of Army Staff, then Major General Ibrahim Badamusi Babangida. A general election was held in 1993, with Babangida's transition plan on track. The 1993 elections were widely recognized as the freest and most transparent in Nigerian history. Chief M.K.O. Abiola of the Social Democratic Party was widely believed to have won the election. The annulment of the election by the Military Junta was met with vehement opposition, leading in political upheaval. As part of the post-election violence, Chief Abiola declared himself President. This action heightened tensions and exacerbated instability in Nigeria until Chief MKO Abiola died and General Sani Abacha, the then-Head of State, disbanded Chief Shonekan's Interim Government. General Abdulsalami Abubakar took leadership on May 29, 1999, and the country was reverted to the 4th Republic, with Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as President of the Federal Republic and Commander in Chief of the Nigerian Armed Forces. For eight years, President Obasanjo governed over the country. His government engineered the 2003 election, which was marred by irregularities and conflict in almost every state of the Federation. He was handed over to President Umaru Ya'Adua, who openly condemned the faulty election that brought him to power. Umaru Ya'Adua died, and Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, his Vice President, assumed his place. President Jonathan presided over the 2015 General Election, which was marked by violence, as did the previous one.

**Comparative Analysis of the 2015 and 2019 General Elections and the Role of Security Agencies**
The 2015 and 2019 elections in Nigeria witnessed election related violence in some parts of the country, there were irregularities such as ballot snatching, intimidation of voters and violence, coupled with INEC Staff harassment. During the 2019 elections in the northwest region, the number of deaths was highest with 172 deaths during the election, the northeast followed with 146 deaths. The south-south and the north-central followed with 120 and 111 fatalities respectively. The next in line is the southwest with 63 deaths, and the least fatalities was recorded in the southeast with 14 deaths. The 2019 election have been reported to have recorded more violence than the 2015 election because of the manner it was conducted and the violence that were carried out during after the elections. Unlike in the 2015 where the President Jonathan conceded to defeat to the opposition rested the planned violence attacks and brought peace to the election (Human Right Watch, 2020).

Security agencies were engaged to provide basic security to voters, election officials and at polling units. The conduct of security agencies in Nigeria's 2015 and 2019 elections had a positive impact on the entire electoral process, their efforts consequently prevented electoral

violence in many parts of the country and thus facilitated the overall peaceful conduct of the elections. Apart from providing security for INEC materials and officials. Security agencies were able to provide secured environment that enabled Nigerians to turn out in large numbers to vote. However, there were also misconducts by some segment of security agents as reported by the CDD, some overzealous security agents in some States engaged in intimidation and harassment of voters. In addition, some voters were prevented from taking pictures and recording the voting process.

Political thugs working for the APC and the PDP were implicated in violence at election commission centers and polling places. They hijacked voting materials, disrupted voting, and countered the activities of rival groups. For instance, eight people, including four election poll workers in Emuoha, Phalga, and Bonny, during the Rivers State elections said that unidentified men armed with machetes, glass bottles, rods, and sticks stormed the polling places and the election commission's registration center. The armed men threatened to kill the officials, destroyed ballot boxes, tore up ballots and snatched tallies of results.

Political parties in Nigeria generally lack internal party democracy, especially amongst the two major political parties. This in effect contributed to election related violence across the country. It also important to note that majority of the pre-election violence was brought about from the 2019 general elections in Nigeria as a result of lack of credible political party primaries with the APC and PDP. Furthermore, inflammatory election campaigns amongst the political parties led to a number of violence between party supporters in some parts of the country during election season. There is urgent need to strengthening of INEC procedures for the collation of results to improve integrity and confidence in electoral results. The 2019 elections unlike the 2015 election did not meet the expectations of many Nigerians and the role played by INEC undermined confidence in the electoral process. In Nigeria's 2015 and 2019 election international observers and CSOs commended the elections to be largely free and fair, nonetheless the elections process was regarded as imperfect but visibly a maturing one. In addition, INEC was commended from all quarters for organizing the elections in a professional and credible manner and also for setting up the inter-agency consultative Committee on Election Security, which to a considerable extent assisted in achieving relatively orderly and effective management of the 2015 elections. On the 2019 elections, the European Union Election Observation Mission and the joint Nigeria International Election Observation Mission of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) identified flaws in the elections and called on the federal government and INEC to address them.

Generally, the two elections recorded the height of ethno-religious tension in the history of Nigerian election as well as ethno-religious violence that threatened the indivisibility of the entire country. While the 2015 was relatively peaceful despite the violence tension it created in the pre-election campaigning, the 2019 elections were marred with violence. It marked the first defeat of a seating president in presidential elections in Nigeria with the president conceding defeat to an opposition and handed over power. More so, the elections were held in the most insecure atmosphere with the Boko Haram conflict and the herders/farmers conflict going in the northeast and north central zones simultaneously.

## Contending Issues of the 2015 and 2019 General Elections in Nigeria

Nigeria's democracy has on a good platform with the existence of democratic institutions, plural society, vibrant civil society organizations and critical mass media among others. These ingredients have the structure and capacity to make democracy strive in Nigeria. But it is germane to note that, Democracy in Nigeria has remained grossly unstable since the return to this popular form of governance in 1999. The political terrain has been home with lots of challenges precipitating against the genuine realization of the system. In fact, the impediments to the nations unending desire for a true democracy seem to assume a more perilous proportion by the day. Some of the major challenges faced in preparation and conduct of the 2019 general elections relate to the cynicism and skepticism of the Nigerian voters and citizens generally; the peculiar attitudes and mindset of the typical Nigerian politician; those associated with the use of technology in our infrastructure-challenged environment; the constraints imposed by the extant legal framework and those emanating from the prevalence of the phenomenon of weak institutions and other systematic peculiarities of the Nigerian polity.

## Ethno-religious Factor

This remains one of the forces that have contributed greatly to socio-political instability in the country. The latest sectarian turbulence in the country and the clamour for the presidency by the varied ethnic groups indicate that the society is still balkanize by tribal and religious sentiments (Victor, 2002). Each ethnic nationality in Nigeria has its own faith, interest, culture, language and level of aspiration and these forces seems to affect the economic fate of each group. In addition, they make the creation of a common identity problematic, thereby exacerbating the difficulty in attaining a true democracy in the society. Currently, Nigeria lacks the necessary democratic values (civil and human abuse is rampant, freedom of speech and expression are hampered, lack of social security and distributive justice) hence the rampant social unrest in the polity (Victor, 2002). For one, the manipulation of unoriginal identity reached new heights in the march towards the elections, making the election to appear like a form of warfare between the North and the South. In the build up to the election, there were campaigns by local PDP activists urging voters in the South East not to support the APC, describing the party as a reincarnation of the Northern-Yoruba alliance that defeated Biafra in the Civil War of 1967-1970. Following the APC victory, there was a growing perception that the APC government would alienate the South-East and South-South, in the same way the two regions were marginalized in the aftermath of the civil war. For another, the seemingly unprecedented level of elite fragmentation, also along ethno-regional and religious lines was another source of serious concern.

## Technology Adaptation in an Infrastructure Challenged Environment

The Electoral Management body recognized, quite early, the need to increasingly use technology to improve the conduct of elections in Nigeria. However, one key challenge is the absence of Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs). Majority of the equipment has to be sourced through vendors, and imported from abroad, who impose extortionate conditions, arbitrarily reviewing upwards licensing fees on account of 'proprietor' rights. As most technology relies on electricity, inadequacy of power supply requires additional expenses on

batteries, spare parts and redundancies. INEC tried to appropriate technology, albeit through vendors, but with effort to curtail their total control, by signing on to contracts with detailed specifications and use of Open-Source Software. But doing this also has its own challenges. There are also other associated challenges. For example, meeting the production deadlines in the production of PVCs was seriously affected by power failures, which damaged equipment, which the vendor could not quickly replace. The use of the Smart Card Reader (SCR) was constrained by the fact some polling units are located in areas where there was no internet coverage or in schools, which used as RACs, with no electricity to charge batteries and Smart Card Readers. The smart card readers and the welfare of ad-hoc staff continue to constitute challenges to the electoral process. INEC is yet to match commitments with action on prompt payment and adequate welfare for ad-hoc staff. The malfunctioning and deliberate none-usage of the smart card reader continues to hinder the smooth running of the elections.

## The Incumbency Factors
In political parlance, incumbency refers to holders of political office who enjoy certain privileges (such as wider media coverage and security) which are not available to other contestants in the electoral contest. These privileges create some electoral margin for the incumbent running for re-election leading to an incumbency abuse factor. In Nigeria, this factor promotes appointment of corrupt and or compromised electoral officers, manipulation of the electoral law and the constitution, manipulation of the electoral tribunals to protest stolen mandates, use of state security forces and apparatus to intimidate opposition parties, denial of access to state owned media houses etc to ensure they regain or elongate their tenure against popular will (Nwanegbo & Alumona, 2011).

## The Politics of God-Fatherism
Another great impediment to democratic consolidation in Nigeria is the phenomenon of God-Fatherism which has been dominating the political scene of the country. It is a game where political kingmakers and gladiators manipulate the political system to enthrone their crowned political stewards. Ogundiya, (2010) asserts that GodFatherism is both a symptom and a cause of the violence and corruption that together permeates the political process in Nigeria. Public officials who owe their positions to the efforts of a political godfather incur a debt that they are expected to repay without end throughout their tenure in office. They control state resources and policies not minding the corporate existence of the state. In fact, their activities help frustrate the basic democratic values in society and block the democratic process by obstructing selection of good and qualified candidates for elective posts thereby making the rise of true democracy a hard nut.

## Corruption
According to John Campbell, USA Ambassador to Nigeria; corruption is a clog in the wheel of any nation struggling for the enthronement and consolidation of democracy and good governance (Punch July 7th, 2005). This shows that democracy cannot be predicted on a fragile and unstable political base. Corruption as a devastator has greatly eroded the fundamental values of democracy and its essential principles Corruption in its popular conception is defined as the exploitation of public position, resources and power for

private/'selfish gain. For instance, Dobel, (1978) defined corruption as "the betrayal of public trust for individual or group gain". In a similar vein, Obayelu, (2007) identifies it as "efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense, or a misuse of public power for private benefits". According to Ogundiya (2010), events in Nigeria since 1999 have shown that the tidal waves of reversal have been contending with Nigeria's democratic project. Consequently, democracy remains grossly unstable and the future seems to be very bleak because of rampant bureaucratic and political corruption. Corruption has reached a high crescendo such that an average Nigerian now possibly associates democracy with it. The consequences of political corruption are potently manifest: cyclical crisis of legitimacy, fragile party structure, institutional decay, chronic economic problem and unemployment, and above all general democratic volatility. Corruption in this country is generally characterized by Looting of funds and wealth kept secretly, i.e. capital flight; misappropriation and mismanagement of public funds; money laundering (acquiring money through fraudulent ways); drug and child trafficking; illegal arms deal; gratification which involves monetary, material or physical favour as a condition or reward for performing official duty, official abuse of office in which an official suppresses and violates an oath of office and nepotism which is granting underserved favors to one's relations. The recent corruption scandal in the oil sector totaling N1.7 trillion from 1999-2011, Police Pension Fund of ₦18 billion as well as the James Ibori N450 billion corrupt case of money laundering in London is just the tip of an iceberg as far as corruption is concern in Nigeria.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**
Electoral violence has become a recurrent decimal anytime there is general election since 1999 till date. Security is without doubt a key ingredient for a violence free election and for the process to be perceived as effective. Effective security during elections should not be equated with mere physical presence of security agents. It includes the presence of security agencies, and also their professional roles in terms of being impartial, protecting all political actors and voters and protection of electoral materials, venues, counting centres and prevention of violence during all the phases of the elections. Security according to the Aberystwyth and Copenhagen School seeks to develop a socially oriented transformation by exploring and elucidating human emancipation's barriers and possibilities; which incorporates the basic needs of human desire and fundamental rights.

Prior to deployment of security agents - before, during and after election - there must be proper briefings on roles and responsibilities. Security deployment must also be professionally executed to curb compromise by erring security officials. Security agents must be alive to their responsibilities in ensuring the safety and security of INEC officials, INEC infrastructures, voters and election observers, during and after elections. Law enforcement officials on election duty should ensure that electoral offences published by INEC are either prevented or controlled or do not take place on election days. These offences range from canvassing for votes; persuading any voter not to vote for any particular candidate or not to vote at all at the election; shouting slogans concerning the election; being in possession of any acid, offensive weapon or missile or wearing any dress or having facial or other decorations which in many events is calculated to intimidate voters; loitering without lawful excuse after

voting or after being refused to vote; to the offence of voting or attempting to vote, when one's name is not in the register of voters; among others. The curricula for the training of the police at all levels should include modules on democracy, elections, political parties and constitutional/statutory provisions on elections. The independence of the police force should be guaranteed by strengthening its autonomy from the control of the government of the day, the police force should be strengthened in areas of communication, weaponry and transportation for effective mobilization, deployment and enhanced performance.

**Inter-Agency Collaboration in Future Elections**

1. INEC as elections management body conduct general elections for 36 states and the FCT while the SIECs conduct local government elections in the states.
2. That state governor's use SIECs to conduct elections and the results have always turned to favour their political parties.
3. There should be a clear and definite role for the elections management body (EMB)
4. That collapsing SIECs into the main frame of INEC would help in streamlining then commission while strengthening the process of election but the fact that Nigeria operates a federal system of government, makes matter a constitutional issue.
5. That the police should be the main security agency to man any election because it is their statutory function while other agencies play the subordinating role.
6. The security agencies should be trained, retrained and be involved in the INEC elections preparation.
7. The military should be focused to handle its constitutional roles rather than getting deeply involved in the electoral process.
8. INEC deployed the use of ICT by deploying electronic voting in the 2023 general elections to enhance the process however this should be done in the context of Nigeria cultural and political peculiarities.
9. To achieve free, fair and credible election, every bit of the electoral process that is from opening to closing must be on record.
10. Provide satellite drones/camera to close monitor every bid of activity throughout the electoral process.
11. It is important for the Police as the coordinating security agency to establish cordial relations with the subordinating agencies.
12. On the issue of security ratio in conducting election, at least 3 security Personnel to a PU, therefore by statistics about 600,000 security Personnel are required to man the registered 155,000 PUs and collation centres across the country. And consequently, the manpower deficit that exists among the security agencies should be addressed.

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