Reflecting the Management and Policing of Nigeria Election: An Issue for Governance and Development

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Abstract

Management of electoral violence by the police gives rises to Series of considerable issues. The lack of skills and illogical manner by which the security agencies perform this function in Nigeria has however often led to loss of live, injuries and destruction of property. The reciprocal suspicion by the citizens towards the police seriously complicates the involvement of the Nigeria police in the electoral process. The objective of this study is so appraise the role of police in management of electoral process in order to achieve electoral integrity, good governance and administration. Contents analysis was adopted, themes relevant to the topic was developed, conceptual, empirical and theoretical review was made. Findings revealed that the complex and fundamental chains in the success and credibility of the electoral process is election security. No electoral management body can conduct successful election if the security environment is charged, pollute or violent. The study conclude that the climate of violence adds constraints to the actions of the security forces in the management of elections and weakened the security forces. The study recommended that the police should not under any circumstances involved directly in the actual process, they should avoid allegation of being partisan, it undermines the sanctity of the election.

Keyword: Management, Election, Policing, Governance, Administration, Security.

Introduction

Nigerians experience with elections has shown that the political elite have not fully come to terms with the referents of elections for democratic sustenance and national security. More often than not, the elite have failed to play by the rule of competitive electoral politics which prioritizes politics of tolerance, conflict and consensus, bargaining and compromise. They see elections as warfare, characterized by gangsterism and political disorder. Political parties who are part of the elections are also like

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armed band of men and women going to war, where there must be victors and vanquished. Elections have become warfare, where it is a sin to lose. (Jolaade, Ngwube and Idowu, 2018).

Security is indispensable to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections from provision of basic security to voters at political party rallies and campaigns to ensuring that result forms are protected during the whole electoral process is circumscribed by security considerations. In view of the large scale general elections in Nigeria, the number of people involved, election materials that need to be moved, difficulty of terrain to be transversed, as well as physical locations that need to be protected; such operation is bound to be complex. It presents logistics and planning challenges that require a wide range of stakeholders processes, locations and issues in times and space. The significance of electoral security is important for creating the proper environment which electoral staff require to carry out their duties; for voters to freely and safely go to their polling units to vote and for candidates and political parties to organize rallies and campaigns, and for other candidates and political parties to organize rallies and campaigns and for other numerous stakeholders to discharge their responsibilities under the constitution and

the electoral act of Nigeria. With the return of democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 otherwise known as the "Fourth Republic", the people have expected with great enthusiasm that the new political leadership and democratic governance would bring about rapid development in all facets of the Nigeria security.

Statement of the Problem

Management of electoral violence by the police gives rises to a series of considerable issues shrouded in a mysterious package. The issue over the role of police has arisen from fears of partisanship during elections and widespread incidents of electoral violence. In many cases, police are not only unable to prevent and curb electoral violence but are actually alleged to be perpetrators of violence directed at lawful participants in the electoral process. In many cases, post-election crises and violence have been linked to public perception that incumbents manipulate the security agencies to serve their interest of retaining power at all costs.

The partiality and the involvement of security officials primarily the police in several electoral malpractices, include ballot box snatching and stuffing, disruption of voting and alteration of election results. These security lapses and challenges contributed to the lack of credibility

associated with past elections in the country. This assertion of partiality rendered by the police during election was clearly noted by Oyadiran and Toyin (2015) "*the Nigerian Police are saddled with the constitutional responsibility of assuming the success and credibility of elected government in Nigeria. to a very large extent, the success or failure of any elections is dependent on the conduct and performance of police officers on election duty… in the past, the police have been accused of being used by politicians to intimidate opponent and to rig elections".*

The lack of skills and illogical manner by which the police perform this function has however often led to loss of live, injuries and destruction of property as the police conduct has always catalyzed instead of diluting chaos. The systematic and reciprocal suspicion by the citizens towards the police seriously complicates the involvement of the Nigeria police in the electoral process. They are perceived by all key, stakeholders in the process as biased in favour of those in power and authority. It was thus, expected that the political leadership would address the critical social-economic and political problems bedeviling the country such as poverty, insecurity, unemployment; corruption; poor governance; among others. However 19 years into the Fourth Republic in Nigeria, the extent to which these problems have been address as a means towards deepening democracy; instituting good governance; fast-tracking the country's development remains a matter of opinion.

Objective of the Study

To appraise the role of police in management of electoral process in order to achieve electoral integrity, good governance and administration.

Research Methodology

The study adopt a qualitative contents analysis and the researchers developed themes relevant to security and election management, the concept of governance and development, empirical and theoretical studies relevant to the topic were gleaned from text books, journals, the internet and other publications from which conclusion and recommendations was made.

Literature Review

The concept of security and election management:

Security could mean different things at different times to different people. Generally, security could be referred to as a measure that ensures peaceful co-existence and development at large (Adebayo, 2011). Where there is security, there is likely to be absence of fear, threat, anxiety, tension and apprehension over loss of life,

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liberty, property, goods and values, among others. The success of an election largely depends on how effectively state security measure are put in place to minimize occurrences of post-election violence as observed during 2011 elections. Violence and unrest in the run-up to the 2011 polls claimed lives of more than 800 people and led to the displacement of approximately 65,000 (Human Right Watch, 2011).

However, election security is becoming a lasting issue facing the management of elections in Nigeria. several security threats now exemplify the election process. These include physical attacks on INEC staff and facilities, attacks on political opponents; cyber-attacks targeting INEC's databases, especially the register of voters, violence at campaign, intimidation of voters, snatching and destruction of elections materials among others. These threats are now exacerbated by insecurity in some parts of the country, making the conduct of elections in those parts even more insecure.

In reaction to the rising challenge of electoral insecurity, INEC in 2011 worked with security agencies to establish the Inter-agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) as the main structure for managing election security. The roles of ICCES include:

i. Coordinate the design of a comprehensive election security management system for INEC;

ii. Develop locally focused plans for providing security before, during and after elections;

iii. Harmonized the training, deployment and actions of security personnel on election duties.

iv. Assess existing security threats across the country that have implications for elections and produce a red, amber and green electoral security map that is regularly updated;

v. Advise INEC on rapid response to security threats around elections, including voter registration;

vi. Ensure a reduction in transaction costs (to INEC) of dealing with individual security agencies on issues of elections;

vii. Evaluate the performance of security agencies on election duties and recommend improvements and sanctions, where necessary and

viii. Harmonize the election budgets of security agencies and source funding commonly, if possible.

To achieve these objectives, clear tasks are specified for each security agency while collective responsibilities and coordination are also made clear.

The Concept of Election:

Awopeju (2011) defined election as one procedure and preferences of particular kind. The two features of this definition are procedure and preferences. By procedure, the concept is used to describe a special way of doing something, preference connotes choice between alternates. During elections the electorate is given the opportunity to chose between alternate programes of contestants. This means that it is a procedure that allows members of an organization or community to choose representatives who will hold positions of authority within it. The most important elections select the leaders of local, state and national governments. Elections also promote public accountability, the threat of defeat at the polls exerts pressure in those in power to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and take account of popular interest and wishes when they make their decisions.

The electoral process is a complex process that encompasses the good intentions and undesirable outcome of election administration, particularly in emerging democracies, where general elections are often marred by cultural hued electoral malpractices. Electoral malpractices refer to illegalities committed by government officials responsible for the conduct of elections, political parties, groups or individuals with sinister intension to influence an election in favour of a candidate or candidates (Nnamni, 2014).

Reynolds (2005) describe an electoral system as that which translate the votes cast in a general election into seats won by parties and candidates. The key variables of the electoral formula (plurality/majority/proportional, mixed or other system), ballot structure (voter-votes for a candidates or party and voter makes a single choice or series of preferences) and district magnitude (how many representatives to legislature the district elects). Electoral process commences with the announcement of intention of conduct elections, till elections have been won and inferably lost.

Eko-Davies (2011) point out that election is the exercise of deliberate choice. It has become the cornerstone of democracy and it is essentially a contest for the votes of adult members of the

society by aspirants to political offices. Ojo (2007) added that election are the process of choosing people for particular jobs by voting.

Ojo (2014) noted that in the political sense, election(s) are the process through which person(s) are elected into various offices by virtue of the participation of the governed. This political aspect of electing individuals clearly distinguishes itself from approaching or selecting individuals into various key positions. Aiyede (2007) observed that elections give a cognitive account of voting. The implication is that the voting of individuals is intertwined with democratic practice and it therefore portends that any election result that is contrary to the votes cast by the people create a legitimacy crisis, credible, free and fair elections are salient indicator of democratic consolidation and the principal institutionalized means of forming and changing democratic government.

The Concept of Governance and Development

Governance

According to the World Bank (2000) cited in Adejumobi (2004) governance is the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs. This encompasses the state's institutional and structural arrangements, decision-making processes and implementation capacity, and the relationship between government officials and the public. The United Nations Development Pogramme (UNDP) (1997) describes governance as the totality of the exercises of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising of the complex and mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and meditate their differences. Governance denotes how people are ruled and how the affairs of the state are administered and regulated (Okpaga, 2009). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1999) cited in Adejumobi (2004) on the other hand, defines governance as a process of social arrangement between the rulers and the ruled in a political community. Its component parts are rule making and standard setting, management of regime structures and outcome and results of the social pact. Governance therefore, refers to a nation's system of politics and how this functions in relation to public administration and law.

Development

Naomi (1995) assert that development is usually taken to involve not only economic growth, but also some notion of equitable distribution, provision of health care, education, housing and

other essential services all with a view to improving the individual and collective quality of life. Scott and Marshall (2005) conceptualized development as a staged transition from traditional to modernity, to be brought about at the economic level by the operation of the market and foreign investment, at the social level by the adaption of appropriate western institutions, values and behaviours and at the political level by the implementation of parliamentary democracy, while Gboyegu (2003) captured development as an idea that embodies all ramifications. It implies improvement in material well-being of all citizens not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future. It also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances.

From the foregoing, it is reasonable to know that development is not only an economic exercise, but also involves both socio-economic and political issues and pervades all aspects of societal life.

Empirical Studies

Akpan (2018) researched on police and the election management in Nigeria: Akwa Ibom state perspective, 1999-2015. Using desk research base on data generated the study indicated that police do not live and perform the functions assigned them during elections. That the police were partial, becoming loyal to the ruling party or government, and concluded that quite a large number of Nigerians have lost confidence in the police especially in election days.

Vaaseh and Danladi (2018) studied police and democratization in Nigeria: appraising its role and challenges in the conduct of elections since 1999. The study discovered that endemic corruption, political control, poor training, lack of equipment, and other issues constitute major challenges against effective performance of the police in the ongoing democratization in Nigeria. the paper concludes by recommending adequate welfare packages, proper synergy between the police and other security agencies, provision of basic logistics to enhance electoral security in Nigeria.

Al-amin (2018) carried out a study on the police and management of electoral violence in Nigeria: issues, challenges and options. The study reveals

that the lack of security is one of the key impediments to development and democracy in Nigeria and the role of the Nigeria police force in the maintenance of law and order. The study recommended that to improve on the performance level, the challenges of policing need urgent attention.

These above recent studies did not point out the role of police in management of electoral process so as to achieve electoral integrity, good governance and administration which this study hope to achieve.

Theoretical Framework
Deprivation theory:

Tougas and Beaton (2002) assert that the theory posits that (collective) action stems from individuals psychological reactions to the gap between expected circumstances and actual ones. The gap becomes apparent when they perceive themselves to be in a relatively unjust position vis-à-vis another person or group to which they might reasonably compare themselves. The theory of deprivation is a phenomenon that pulls in the domino effects of reactions in the polity. If the environment is healthy, the institutions will be healthy and if the environment is deprived of basic healthy etiquettes then the institutions

which it will produce will be deprived. The deprivation as applied in this work are deprivation due to unequal distribution of political, social and economic largesse. The theory does not claim that in all social groups one will find consensus in values – rather it considers some of the consequences of situations where there is consensus. Where people do not agree on values, relative deprivation can also be noticed.

Relative deprivation theorists have suggested that perhaps it is not Ego Relative Deprivation (ERD) that motivates individuals, but rather perceptions of group or collective relative deprivation (CRD). CRD occurs when the individual feels that his or her group has been deprived. This is a major reason why violence eruption in Africa and most developing economies is prominent and regular. Various groups and interests in the state might bear neglect and deprivation for a while but after some times the marginal propensity and the elastic limit of the various groups to forbear becomes exceeded therefore agitations, protest and violence inevitably ensures. These are usually noticed during the electoral process.

Discussion of Findings

The possible solution available to address the problems raised above are multiple and varied. One of these solutions lies in involving in a relevant manner institutions specialized in security matters, notably public security forces in the management of elections. Another solution which is a natural and indispensable complement of the former is meant to improve the contribution of all key players in the electoral process given that each one of them constitute a potential source of violence, insecurity and conflict during elections.

It is commonly recognized that today, elections per se are not a source of insecurity and conflict. On the contrary, when they are managed, they are expected to help prevent conflicts, arbitrate between the various concepts of managing state affairs and can even serve as a safety value for any representative democracy worth the name. if actions that are likely to create or increase insecurity are taken during the electoral process and nothing is done to control them and possibly eliminate them, the consequences for election results, peace and even for the entire democratic system are well known. Sometimes, these may be the disqualification of some candidates or some political parties; other times, it is an unending electoral dispute or sometimes also, it is simply

the rejection of the entire electoral process or the election of illegitimate public authorities if not political instability.

In Nigeria electoral politics today, the word, militarization and securitization, has come to attain a comprehensive cultural meaning, which means the deployment of security forces, consisting of military, police, the department of state service (DSS), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and other security operatives – the deployment usually occurs during an election. It is clear that during President Goodluck Jonathan's presidency – between May 2011 to May 2015, such excessive deployments have taken place in all the five governorship elections conducted under his administration, namely, Edo and Ondo state in 2012; Anambra in 2013; and Ekiti and Osun in 2014. What is common to all five states is that they were controlled by one opposition party or the other. It is also evident that the scale of the deployment has increased with each succeeding election. A case in point is the deployment of security agencies especially the police to the recent Ekiti governorship election held under President Mohammadu Buhari administration in 2018.

One of the complex and fundamental chains in the success and credibility of the electoral process is election security. It is critical to the success of the electoral process and no electoral management body can conduct successful elections if the security environment is charged, polluted or violent. It is on account of the importance of election security and the need for impartiality and independence on electoral duty that some countries domicile the control of and direction of the police force in the hands of the chief electoral officer of the country a week or more before the conduct of the major election, in which case, the electoral management body brings into its web, the security apparatus of the country for purposes of direction and instruction pending the conclusion of elections (Festus Okoye – reflections on election security; http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/01/reflections-on-election-security).

In Nigeria the security forces are responsible for the protection of both election staff and election management materials, namely protection of individuals members of the INEC (Chairman of the body of other officials); election officers (census takers and polling stations officers); protection of election materials, both at the production stage (where necessary if, for example, ballot papers are produced locally) transportation stage and storage stage, including protection of the storage premises.

The institutional framework for the management of relations between the security forces and the other key stakeholders in the electoral process, beginning with the Election Management (EMB), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), also servers special attention. Indeed the chance of guaranteeing security and peace during the election process depends mainly on the proper coordination of actions on the field among all stakeholders of the process. Proper coordination of actions means any arrangement that promotes effective collection and circulation of information required to ensure the security of the electoral process.

In Nigeria, the Electoral Guide determines the conduct of the police in the electoral process, evokes the possibility of collaboration between the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Inspector General of Police (IGP). The electoral law of Nigeria is totally silent over the possible relations between the security forces involved in the electoral process and the other key stakeholders of the said process (particularly the political parties, media,

civil society and even ordinary citizens in general). The provision on relations between the security forces and other key stakeholders in the process state that: "INEC, in consultation with the IGP, shall determine and inform the commission of police services of measures to ensure that incidents reported by and on security forces involved in the process are promptly dealt with (Guide for the conduct of the police involved in elections, Nigeria).

Democratic consolidation, good governance and development have continued to elude the Nigerian state. The leadership has woefully failed to live up to the creed of service to the people and indulged in self-serving, arrogant, exploitative and unscrupulous actions thereby constituting a clog in the wheel of deepening democracy; institutionalizing good governance for administration and development in the country. There is no doubt that these traits of the Nigeria political leadership cannot midwife democratic consolidation and good governance. Consequently, such social ills like poverty, corruption, unemployment, illiteracy, insecurity of lives and property among others have become permanent features of the Nigerian society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the climate of violence that has always characterized elections in the country, and which adds constraints to the actions of the security forces in the management environment of elections added the weaknesses of the security forces in the country. The inadequacies in question concern the content of standard training for the security forces and the specific preparations made before their involvement in the electoral process. The initial continuing training of staff of the security forces reveals important lapses, whether in relation to the modules on Human Rights and electoral standards or to their role and responsibility during the electoral process.

Recommendation

The security forces must avoid allegations of being partisan in order to be effective an credible. This is important because, generally in politics and particularly during elections, perception is important as reality. The security forces need therefore not only to take measures to reduce risks of their members behaving in a partisan manner; they should also avoid being perceived as such. Otherwise, the security forces, instead of reducing violence and insecurity, would on the contrary make their own mission difficult and compromise the entire process.

The police should provide security during the election and should not under any circumstances by directly involved in the actual management of the electoral process. Their direct involvement in handling election materials undermines the sanctity of the election.

The resultant effect of nation security on the polity has a great impact on the political stability of the country and most especially on the electoral process. It is therefore important for the country administrations to keep the country secure before the electioneering period, during the period and after the period. If this is done it will cumulate into a strong and virile economic development of the country.

The training and retraining of the security personnel is also seen as an important factor to the development of the security in the electoral integrity and the polity at large.

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