

## THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE QUEST FOR CITIZENS' DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Africa is democratizing but the democratization occurring in Africa does not appear to be in the least emancipatory. On the contrary, it is legitimizing the disempowerment of ordinary people who seem to be worse off than they used to be because their political oppression is no longer perceived as a problem inviting solution, but a solution endowed with moral and political legitimacy.

– Ake (1994:1).

... the democratic project is about and for citizens who have stakes in the project and expected dividends from it.

- Osaghae (2004).

### **Introduction:**

The 2015 general elections was in several respects a historical watershed in Nigeria. The elections took place against the background of important but debilitating factors. First, western Afro-pessimism reached its zenith with its apocalyptic prediction of Nigeria's Armageddon. The country was expected to fall finally to the fatality of its age-old political immune deficiency disease and not hold together as a nation after 2015. Second, the ravaging security crisis and the take-over of parts of its territory in the North East in a glaring inferiority of the state to the Boko Haram insurgents in terms of monopoly of violence evidenced the fragility of the Nigerian state. Third is the deepening economic crisis complicated by the global fall in the price of oil, economic mismanagement, and endemic grand corruption. These resulted in an increased inability of the state to fulfill its social responsibilities to the citizens, mass disillusion, disempowerment, poverty, unemployment and extremist radicalization with multiplicities of challenge and threats to the state corporate existence.

Fourth, is the fragmentation and desperation among the political class in control of state power who were manifestly corrupt, inept and directionless; yet struggling to hang on to power it had in its grip since May 29, 1999. Fifth, a coordinated challenge by an opposition; much like an amalgam of frustrated political gangsters that for too long were shut out of power equation and the opportunities power confers for primitive capital accumulation. This time determined for a historic onslaught to stop at nothing to capture state power. Finally, was the realization by ordinary Nigerians nationally that they

have suffered democratic scam in the last fifteen years of the return to electoral politics under a democracy without dividends.

In the eve of transition from the military authoritarian regime, democracy was packaged by the apostles of democratization; both domestic and international, to Nigerians as a *sine qua non* for development. Hence, with the return to civil rule on May 29, 1999, the mantra of dividends of democracy which soon fizzled out became the populist political rhetoric. The hope for economic, social and political justice, popular empowerment, development and better life with the advent of democracy provoked was supplanted by injustice, disempowerment, insecurity, maladministration, poverty, indignities, backwardness and underdevelopment. Nigerians have become devalued, underdeveloped and victims of a flawed democracy.

Viewed against the corrosive socio-economic and political inanities that underscored the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, the paper interrogates and explains the outcome of the elections. Its central problematic is to answer the query why and how it was possible for the mandate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) after sixteen years in power and its arrogant boast to retain power for sixty years to be voted out of power in favour of the opposition All Progressive Congress (APC)? Why did Nigeria contrary to predictions witnessed post-election peace despite the pre-election violence nationwide, hate campaigns, the heightened state of insecurity complicated by the Boko Haram insurgency in the North East, the abuse of state power for political advantage, the monetization of politics and corruption of the electoral process, some glaring infelicities on the part of the electoral management body, INEC, before and during the elections, as well as the provocative postponement of the date of the elections?

The paper argues that the unusual and unexpected outcome of the 2015 general elections was majorly a consequence of the resilience of the Nigerian people who had suffered from a convoluted democratic scam through the imposition of an inferiorized, sub-standard and tropicalized version of democracy (Olukotun, 199). There is a truism in Momoh (2006:62) assertion that, "... Nigeria is neither a democracy nor is it involved in democratization, rather it is imposing new dictatorship in the form of de-democratization project". For the ordinary Nigerians therefore, the 2015 general elections was a referendum not just on the political leadership and the continuity of the Nigerian state, but an opportunity to reclaim and reinvent democracy from predatory political class in their quest for citizens' democracy. Hence, the popular currency and mass appeal of the All Progressive Congress (APC) 'change' mantra; though the party is made up mostly by the same political characters that have mismanaged the state and, economy and have transversed the political landscape since 1999 was not by accident. There was a sense in which the people believed that exercising their democratic choice even to change one group of the political elite for another valorizes their political power as the supreme sovereign.

In the next section of the paper, a framework of analysis built around the philosophic concern of democracy, the state, and social media is provided. This is followed by an interrogation of the 2015 general elections: prelude, e-day and the day after, after which we have the conclusion.

Framework of Analysis: Democracy, the State and Social Media (don't forget to link with the crisis of accumulation and the use and misuse of state power)

In the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union, the hegemony of democracy as the most preferred system of government became finally established. As Cororan, 1984, cited in Kurki, 2010:362) submits, "Democracy has become "the world's universal religion". Democracy is thus seen as politically correct and a universal value relegating its competitors to global irrelevance (Sen, 1999). This informs, Axel Hadenius (1997, cited in Mair, 2005) celebratory declaration that, "the principles of democratic government...have been triumphing."

Archie Mafeje (1995:7) correctly opines "... that all social concepts are historically determined". Democracy is no exception. Democracy is a product of its history as a tragic hero, used by the ancien class to legitimize their hold on power and paradoxically by the new class justificatory for uprooting a decadent ruling class from power. Democracy is a victim of its appeal and success as an ideal and as the best system of government. Beyond its global historical trajectories of manipulation in the service of different social forces, Mafeje (1995) further conferred legitimacy on theorizing 'democracy' "on the basis of the social history of one country". In other words, democracy must be historically and culturally specific to be useful.

Since Harry Truman Second Inaugural Speech of January 20, 1948, democracy has attained an international character. The contemporary appropriation of democracy for instrumentalist use by the Bretton woods institutions in the service of global capitalism has further given the concept a transnational character. The challenge, therefore, is to understand democracy in the context of the social relations that gives it political existence in a social formation without losing touch of its transnational breath.

In an elaboration of the Marxist position, Olorode (1990:3) opines that "The nature of appropriation of the surplus value is an important consideration in whether a society is democratic or not". Thus, democracy is not a-political, hence cannot be reduced to a word whose meaning is specified in the dictionary (Mafeje, 1995), the national and international political economy that condition its realities must be interrogated and analyzed.

Why a simplicity conceptualization sees democracy as majority rule, democracy is more than an arithmetic or political majority. As Leszek Kolakowski (1990) perceptively observed, "The principle of majority rule does not by itself constitute democracy; we know of tyrannical regimes that enjoyed the support of a majority, including Nazi Germany and the Iranian theocracy. We do not call democratic a regime in which 51 percent of the population may slaughter the remaining 49 percent with impunity." Democracy is only meaningful as the prevalence of regime of rights and majority rule. It is for this reason that Sen (1999:5), notes that, "Democracy is a demanding system, and not just a mechanical condition (like majority rule) taken in isolation".

Whichever way democracy is conceptualized it is reducible to the question of power in a state. What is the ultimate source of power? To whom is power given? Who gives power? What purpose should power serve? In whose interest should power be used? And how is power to be controlled? These finds

expression in practical typologies of democracy put forward by Lively (1975, cited in Held, 1996:3), "(i) all should govern; (ii) all should be involved in crucial decision-making; (iii) rulers should be accountable to the ruled; (iv) rulers should be accountable to the representatives of the ruled; (v) rulers should be chosen by the ruled; (vi) rulers should be chosen by the representatives of the ruled and (vii) rulers should act in the interest of the ruled".

While these concern is about the power of the ruled, in reality, with the ideological hegemony of the ruling class and the socialization process of social institutions the masses often take for granted the right of the political elite to rule. Society thus promotes popular compliance with the status quo. Mafeje (1995:26), "..., ordinary people only fight when their livelihood is threatened. In other words, they fight in order to guarantee the necessary conditions for their social reproduction". For Piven and Cloward (1979), when people make demand for change, a "major transformation has occurred". Two implications can be inferred from this: first, the power to determine political incumbents in the hand of the people is often not used. Second, it is used when it becomes compelling to struggle for "equitable (not equal) distribution of resources" as a result of failure of those in control of state power to provide basic needs of the people. While the direct capture of state power may not be necessary or possible, the essence is the primacy of the will of the people in decision-making as well as the valorization of their power as the political sovereign. This often results in the replacement of decadent political elite with another reformist political elite waiting in the win to snatch power.

However, the different class interests that have captured democracy for its own project historically has confused and misrepresented democracy, such that its form is now taken for its essence. For instance, America global hegemony since the end of World War II is based on the appropriation of democracy which it promotes as the irreducible desideratum for human progress and development. This finds intellectual apology in Sen (1999), development as freedom. Presently, democratization and liberal democracy are misconstrued as democracy particularly in countries of the South who were recently pilloried and pressurized to abandon authoritarian governance models by the International Financial Institutions and governments of the advanced capitalist nations. As a consequence, there is a great confusion as to what democracy is and what it is not. Not only are there multiplicities of democracy, it is often reduced to liberal multi-party democracy.

However, according to Ake (2000:7), "For a political concept, 'democracy' is uncharacteristically precise. It may mean popular power, or in a famous American version, government of the people, for the people, by the people". Similarly, Mafeje (1995:5), notes that, "Since Greek times there has been only one definition of 'democracy', namely, rule by the 'demos', i.e., the people. But throughout history there have been people and 'non-people'. This fact marks the historicity of the concept of "democracy". The people and non-people thus become a relation of power as determined by the social relations of production. The eclipse of the people as a relevant political category under liberal democracy has been institutionalized in most African states. In the context of the ascendancy of corporate capital globally, neo-liberalism has transformed democracy into a government of the corporate capital, by corporate hegemony, for corporate profits. In this new 'democracy' prevalent in Africa, the market and profit has replaced the state and people as the constitutive logic of liberal democracy.

The possibility of illiberal democracy (Zakaria, 1997) mean that democracy cannot be taken for granted. As Zakaria (1997:30) note, while “Constitutional liberalism is about the limitation of power, democracy about its accumulation and use [or misuse]”. In this wise, liberal democracy is domination by democratic pretense and a kick against the sovereignty of the people (Ake, 2000). As a political doctrine, the individual comes before the collective, just as it makes the people onlookers in decisions that shape their existence. Ake (2000:11) captures this poignantly thus, “Instead of the collectivity, liberal democracy focuses on the individual whose claims are ultimately placed above those of the collectivity. It replaces government by the people with government by the consent of the people. Instead of the sovereignty of the people, it offers the sovereignty of law”.

Lummba-Kasongo (2005) argues that the deficits of liberal democracy are such that it is an inadequate theoretical basis for social construction. This is particularly so because of its ideological disconnection between the political and economics. Ayelazuno (2007:20) correctly notes, this “... made it possible for the liberal state to depoliticise bread and butter issues as ‘private’ or ‘economic’, and as such not to be interfered with by the state”. This negates the utility of democracy for economic empowerment for Africans. According to Ake (1993:241), “Ordinary Africans do not separate political democracy from economic democracy or for that matter from economic well-being”. By reinforcing neo-liberal market fundamentalism within the political sphere, the desire for “dividends of democracy”, seen as economic empowerment of the people is jettisoned. The ideology of liberal democracy thus empties democracy of its empowering essence.

This resulted for the victory of global capitalism with the simultaneous fall of the Berlin Wall and the ideological liquidation of the Soviet Union. Pye (1990) argues that the global crisis of authoritarianism in the 1980 was resolved in favour of international capital that imposed its version of democracy on a people brutalized at home by its political elite and from abroad by the dictate of global market imperatives. Joseph (1990) sees the product of this process as virtual democracy; another name tag for liberal democracy. A democracy without substance characterized by: formal citizen rule without popular participation; fraudulent election to achieve forced legitimacy; narrow choices and outcomes; support for election to preserve the status quo and interest of domestic and international capital (Joseph, 1990: 61). These are the legacy of democratization in Africa.

Democratization is not the same as democracy (Ake, 1996; Momoh, 2006; 2015). It is possible to democratize yet be undemocratic. Though the two concepts may transverse similar route, they have different destinations and implications. This is particularly so as Joseph (1990: 61) argues, “... authoritarian regimes [imposed market driven multi-party democracies] mastered the script of contemporary democratization while finding ways to neutralize and disable its transformative mechanisms”. Young (1999) also made a similar assertion that the African patrimonial autocracy finds continued accommodation and seeks dubious legitimacy within liberal democracy with implications for identity politics, corruption, electoral violence, flawed election, state crisis and de-politicization of the people and de-democratization. It is in this respect that Ake (1994) implicates democratization as a mechanism for mass disempowerment. In other words, democratization promotes exploitation by other means.

Mkandawire (1999) argues that democracy has suffered trivialization under the liberal democracy project which has brought the concept to an all-time low as the political correlate of capitalism with all the anti-democratic implications. First, is the powerlessness of elected officials to provide for the social welfare of citizens in the face of transnational capital. Second the reduction of democracy to an instrument of expropriation and expropriation by transnational capital (Mkandawire, 1999). This sort of democracy cannot serve as a bulwark against the ills of global capitalism in peripheral social formations like Nigeria. In this regards, Plattner (2010:84 ) notes that "... modern democracy has a dual character – it is itself, in this sense, a kind of hybrid regime, one that tempers popular rule with antimajoritarian features. For while it seeks to ensure the ultimate sovereignty of the people, at the same time it limits the day-to-day rule of the majority so that it does not infringe upon the rights of individuals or minorities".

Liberal democracy has created problems and becomes a political liability for democracy with the eclipse of the people. This is reflected in democratic disengagements even in leading western democracies. The determination of major domestic issues by actors dispersed in the global space (Dalh, 1994) and the externalization of political accountability engender by neo-liberal globalization has compounded the citizens powerlessness under liberal democracy. This informs Plattner (2010:84) submission that, "The solution to the problems of democracy cannot simply be more democracy because liberal democracy is in tension with itself." Thus, since liberal democracy is the problem, administering more will only compound the problem. Britain (1975) calls attention to another deficit of liberal democracy, the negative effects of group's self-interestedness, rather than the collectives. For this reason, Ake (1993:241) argues that "In order for African democracy to be relevant and sustainable it will have to be radically different from liberal democracy. For one thing, it will have to de-emphasize abstract political rights and stress concrete economic rights, because the demand for democracy in Africa draws much of its impetus from the prevailing economic conditions within".

To serve as an instrument for freedom and empowerment, Lumumba-Kasongo (1998:34 cited in Lumumba-Kasongo, 2005:21) opines that, "Democracy should be a struggle against social inequality, injustices, exploitation, and social miseries ... Democracy is both a process and a practice that involves equal economic and social opportunities for the citizenry. It is a corrective process in which a given society, especially a formerly colonized society, is born again ...". To qualify as democracy in this sense certain attributes must be discernable: Consent of the governed, formal political equality, inalienable human rights including rights to political participation, accountability of power to the governed and the rule of law (Ake, 2000: 10-11).

Dahl (1994), directs attention to the democratic dilemma in the context of a pull between system effectiveness and citizen participation. He opines that there is an inverse relationship between democracy and citizens' participation and control as the city-state enlarged to the nation-state, as well as with the replacement of the nation-state by multiplicities of transnational actors and activities. However, problematic as the impact of contemporary transnational activities are for democratic practices, the benefits associated with the Information Communication Technology, the internet, and the social media goes a long way in the enhancement of democracy, citizens participation and popular control.

Reducing the idea of democracy to popular control and political equality Beetham, (1998), notes that citizens, not government institutions should have primacy in any consideration of democracy. Not only is the focus of democracy about the citizens in a state, the citizens confers legitimacy on government through an electoral mandate. Beetham (1998) further argues that “It is from the citizens that democratic governments receive their authorization, and it is to the citizens that they remain accountable and responsive, both directly and through the mediating organs of parliament and public opinion”.

Democracy is impossible where there are no citizens, just as citizens find meaning and political relevance through democracy. According to Adejumobi (2001:153), “Citizenship ... is a form of social pact, constituted by the dual elements of reciprocity and exchange between the individual (citizens) and the state”. Only citizens have political rights to make a choice of those who govern through their franchise in elections. For Prah (2006: 25), “When we say a socio-political system is democratic, we are also saying that the system is sensitive and responsive to the interests of the citizenry and also that the citizenry operates the routinisation of government through an institutionalised elective process which gives them a share in government, however, removed they may be from the immediate area of political leadership and decision-making”. This resonates in Beetham (1998:23) position that, “Securing equal rights of citizenship, to enable people to influence the decisions that affect their lives, thus constitute the foundation of democracy”.

Citizenship democracy derives from the idea of citizenship. For Ibrahim (1997: 16), “Citizenship implies not only the erosion of the arbitrary use (misuse) of state power but also the movement away from what has been called ‘pro-forma democracy’, in which ‘formal citizens’ are directed by so-called mass parties, national single parties, national liberation movements etc. to act in particular ways defined and imposed by autocratic leaders”. When and where citizens in the expression of their rights live according to their personal specifications and desires we have democracy (Ibrahim, 1997). Citizens’ democracy by definition involved a contestation of relations of domination. The mere existence of civil society falls short of citizens’ democracy. Beckman (1997:25) reminds us that “There is nothing inherently democratic about associations. They can be organised on chauvinistic and racist lines, with authoritarian and anti-democratic aspirations and modes of operation”. Organizations, even supposedly revolutionary organizations, have been found to be mechanisms for mass de-radicalization. The tendency for labour aristocracy is a good example in this respect.

Citizens’ democracy is rooted in the canon of collective and popular power as against individualism of liberal democracy. It flows from popular incentives for empowerment and control in what is seen as a new civilization (Amuwo, 1992). As argued by Codak (cited in Amuwo, 1992:5), “While the old civilization was mostly determined by rulers and dominating cultural elites, the character of the new one is determined by changing expectations of population everywhere on the planet; it is engendered by mass movements and common desires, by new aspirations, forceful redefinitions of social justice and social contract” (Italics original).

Citizens’ democracy as public interest oriented governance system under which power is de-monopolized by individuals or groups is centered on citizens’ rights and concerns. It promotes a

democracy that empowers and recognizes that sovereignty belongs to the people. Power with responsibility, accountability and answerability are the trinitities of citizens' democracy. It concerns beyond the liberal democracy limited focus on procedural legitimacy through the periodic rituals of elections, to output legitimacy that deals with concrete existential and life enhancing citizen-focused issues.

Citizens' democracy thus seeks to redress the caricature of democracy occasioned by liberal democracy foisting pseudo-democracies on the people of the global South. Villoro (1998) profoundly captures this when he notes that, "Current democratic institutions are based on ... substitution of the real people by a nation of citizens. And it is at this stage that social realities betray the people since, once established, democratic institutions lead to a new form of domination of the people in the name of the people". He further opines that liberal elections disempower the people as a system through which the people sanction their own domination (Villoro, 1998). In this respect, citizens' democracy entails engendering a new social contract between the state and the citizens. It is inclusive and empowering.

"Voters must become citizens"; argue Logan and Bratton, (2013) "if citizens' democracy must be institutionalized". This process of political rebirth is possible only with the consciousness of political rights and activist political orientations. This condition does not just happen without a purposive action of the citizenry. According to Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller and Teichman (2007:35), "The pursuit of social democracy [citizens' democracy] usually demands a major departure from past political practices. It requires the creation of a new politics that promotes participatory democracy, challenges the special privileges of powerful groups, and builds a class compromise supportive of social justice". In other words, political rupture and anti-status quo orientation are implicit as a constitutive logic of citizens' democracy. Therefore, change must be an all-consuming concern of the people who desire a citizens' democracy. However, while, citizens' democracy must necessarily engender social progress and empower the people, the nature and character of the state is a major determinant in this regard. This is because, the social-economic and political context of the state in a way provide the constructive logic of social action by the people. This is in terms of both the state autonomy or non-autonomy, tendencies and space it allows for citizens participation, as well as the reactions and counter-reactions to state actions.

Linz and Stepan (1996) contention that "No state, no democracy" is unassailable. The state gives meanings to economic and political practices within its territorial boundaries. For Ake (1985: 9), "The state is a singularly important phenomenon in periphery formations". Also, for Poulantza (1977) the state is a "political condensation of class struggle". In this respect, the state is a site of struggle within and between social classes particularly because capital accumulation is an important function and indispensable for the reproduction and survival of the state itself (Ekekwe, 1985). This is more so because as Olowu (1994) argues, the formation of the nation-state evinces the centralization of political power. This centralization of power in the national state in African nations is often used to suppress the people's political agitations for change, through cooptation, violation of rights, brutalization, oppression, and domination.

How the state is constituted is important for citizenship, democracy and development. Ake (1994) rightly notes that "... in most of Africa, state power is constituted in such a way as to render democracy impossible". With reference to Nigeria, Ake (1985:9) notes that, "... the state is immersed in the class struggle and it is not impartial or perceived as impartial". In peripheral social formations like Nigeria where the "state is a major means of production" (Miliband, 1977), its role as the "executive committee" of the ruling class is more pronounced. This is because given the appropriation and expropriation of surplus extra-territorially the domination and suppression of the people becomes inevitable. Furthermore, as a "totality of the materiality of the political class domination in society" (Ibeanu, 1998:120) the state expressly lacks the autonomy of social classes indispensable for both democracy and development. This robs negatively on class relations and domination, structures and institutions necessary for functioning of the state (Ibeanu, 1998).

With the low autonomy of the state in consequence of the underdevelopment of productive forces, the political process and particularly democratic practices are manipulated to achieve the economic goals of the domestic petty-bourgeois class and transnational capital. In Nigeria, since the return to civil rule in 1999, despite all pretenses to the contrary, development and democracy are not on the agenda. The agenda has been the management of the crisis and contradictions of decadent capitalist by a comprador and petty-bourgeois class for primitive capital accumulation and profit of transnational capital through the instrumentality of the state.

To achieve these objectives, the post-colonial state in Nigeria like its colonial progenitor continues to exercise absolute and arbitral power. For Ake (1996:3), "It continued to be totalistic in scope, constituting a static economy. It presented itself as an apparatus of violence, had a narrow social base, and relied for compliance on coercion rather than authority". To this end, the state and the political class in Nigeria are major problems of democracy. There is a sense in which democracy constitute a threat to the interest of those who controls the Nigerian state. As Vanhanen (2003 cited in Welzel, 2009) poignantly argues, "In the history of states, the institutionalization of peoples' power has been an unlikely achievement. As power maximizing actors, power elites have a natural tendency to give as little power away as possible. There is a natural resistance among elite to grant civic freedom to the wider public because such freedoms limit elite power".

Two major legacies of the state in Nigeria that continues to rob it of democratic currency are its colonial origins (Momoh, 1997) and military past (Ibrahim, 1997). The Nigerian state not only inherited the absolutism and arbitrariness of colonial autocracy, it replicates the anti-democratic disposition and intolerance of military rule. Only those who control state power are safe from its ferocious fangs. For Ibrahim (1997:60), "The military legacy is the fabrication of a political culture oriented towards the imposition of a command and control structure on the political process that is destroying the residual democratic values that have managed to survive". Lacking a productive base the political class in Nigeria, leverage on its control of the state for economic advantage transforming the nation into a neopatrimonial state.

As Ibrahim (1997:59) observe, in the years after independence, "Nigeria was transformed into a neopatrimonial state based on the promotion of booty capitalism ...The neopatrimonial bourgeoisie is

parasitic and predatory and has no interest in transparency, in accountability, in the existence of political opposition or in the culture of public debate that democracy breeds". The logic of the neopatrimonial state, in essence, is antithetical to democracy.

While tolerance and democratic self-control are two important conditions for democratic success (Schumpeter, cited in Britain, 1975:147), the neopatrimonial state is intolerant of democracy and social justice. Without any limitations that can be achieved with state power, the allure of power through state capture became the governing passion of the political class. Aloysius-Michaels, (2006:69) perceptively notes that, "The character of the state in Africa rules out a politics of moderation and mandates a politics of lawlessness and extremism for the simple reason that the nature of state power makes the capture of state power irresistibly attractive". This promotes "deepen inequalities and democracy emptied of essence" (Sandbrook, R., M. Edelman, P. Heller, and J. Teichman, 2007:35), with elections a show of primitive accumulation of votes (Ibeanu, 2007). In this context, Obi (2008:10) submitted that, "Multiparty democracy in Africa has been for the affluent and the powerful, more a game of musical chairs in which various individual members of the political elite take their turns at the seat of power, but do not change the music".

From the foregoing, it is clear as Momoh (2002:18) argues that "Nigeria's politicians do not believe in the concept of the covenant, mandate or popular rule. For them elections marks the end of the role the people has to play in politics after that, the elected representatives are the Leviathans to whom the people have mortgaged their freedom and rights. Hence, state sovereignty takes the place of popular sovereignty". This is the essential fallacy of electoralism (Karl, cited in Diamond, 1999:9).

The dominant class in Nigeria; a product of the underdevelopment of the mode of production in the state is underdeveloped and incapable to promote accumulation for development. Also, the development imperative of the Nigerian political economy is in conflict with the interest of foreign capital that controls the lever of the Nigerian state. It thus became imperative that class position and location be maximally exploited by the petty and comprador class in Nigeria for accumulation. This not only engenders state crisis, it negates the imperative of development, popular empowerment, and democracy.

Furthermore, as a colonial imposition, the state in Nigeria is unrelated and delinked from its pre-colonial past (Olowu, 1994). Hence, it lacks the welfarist underpinning that was the basis of the legitimacy of the pre-colonial state (Olowu, 1994). As a result, the state is seen by the people as alien institution disconnected from their existential concerns. The imposition of its authority by force is a logical outcome of its nature and character and a contributory factor to its anti-democracy orientation.

The contradictions inherent in the nature and character of the state which gives rise to what Ake (1996: 14) describes as "a maze of antinomies of form and content: the person who holds office may not exercise its powers, the person who exercises the power of a given office may not be its holder, informal relations often override formal relations, the formal hierarchies of bureaucratic structure and political power are not always the clue to decision-making power". What results is that the people become victims of power under a condition of the exercise of power without responsibility, and responsibility

without power. This has implications for the lack of accountability, transparency, misuse and abuse of power and democracy.

Finally, the struggle over state power not only fragment the political class, different factions seeks to enhance their hold on state power through alliance and collaboration with imperialist forces. Similarly, the people reflected this line of fragmentation of the political class. In this manner, democracy is subverted while the liberal democracy agenda stays afloat. The result is a lack of effective representation, depoliticization and shutting the people out of power, misrepresentation, infrastructural decay, insecurity, maladministration, lack of transparency and accountability, impunity and arbitrariness and corruption as witnessed in Nigeria between May 29, 1999 and the 2015 general elections.

To be relevant therefore political participation should be seen for what it is, an important dimension of class struggle. As Carpentier (2011) correctly note, "... the political nature of participation manifest itself in the struggles to minimize and maximize equal power positions of actors involved in the decision making process that are omnipresent in all societal spheres". Against the skewed conditions for participation by the people in conventional platforms, the social media has opened a new vista for collective action through what is referred to as digital democracy and reconstituted social movements.

The emergence of social media through which social movements are deepening citizens' democracy through the mechanism of digital democracy is contemporary variant of the Marx grave diggers' postulation. These phenomenons are produced in the womb of capitalism, its contemporary crises and contradictions. Particularly, the subalterns and vulnerable that used these platforms as mechanism for political participation and citizens' democracy are products of social necessities and material hardship imposed by neo-liberalism.

Denied by circumstances of the opportunity to meet physically, citizens formed a visual solidarity community in the cyberspace in what has been aptly described by Loader and Mercea (2011) as "Networking democracy". It is in this context that McCarthy and Zald (1977) see social movements as those set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents the preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution in a society (1977: 1217-1218). The democratic currency of the social media is in its de-monopolization and neutralization of media hegemony by those who controls the means of production, the state, and conventional media. With no restriction over what they produce and disseminate, simply technology, no need for professional skills and low cost or no cost, social media serves as alternative media for information and mobilization for democracy. This decolonization of the public sphere is a strong tonic for citizens' democracy and was used to advantage in the 2015 general elections. The influence of this alternative media plays a major role in the outcome of the elections in its use by citizens' journalist to spread messages, campaign for change, debunked propaganda and mount counter-propaganda. This resonates with Castells (2007: 241, cited in Prokhorov, 2012:10) that, "what does not exist in the media does not exist in the public mind".

### **The 2015 General Elections: Prelude, E-Day, and the Day After:**

Background to 2015:

Independence failed to yield the promised “life more abundant” except for the political class and their cronies. The almost two decades of military rule witnessed mass impoverishment, human right violation, exploitation and underdevelopment. The return to civil rule in 1999 was seen by Nigeria as opportunity for a “second independence” and mass empowerment through democracy. However, the dominance of the ex-military and politicians with militarist disposition foisted democracy without democrats. All the post-1999 elections were fraudulently manipulated such that in the 2003 and 2007 elections politicians literally dispensed with the drudgery of electioneering campaign. A democracy without the people was enthroned. It was so bad that President Umaru Yar’Adua admitted that the 2011 election that election which produced his presidency was not free, fair and credible.

The state of affairs in the country from 1999 was such that engendered increased frustration as a consequence of unrealized expectations of “dividends of democracy” due to massive corruption, maladministration, poverty, and government failure. These happened at a time when the government made stupendous income from crude oil and members of the political class and their business associates openly looted the common patrimony. The first reaction which reflected the fault line of the Nigerian state was the resort to ethnic justice as against social justice and collective action. This found fillip in the proliferation of ethnic militias such as the Odua Peoples Congress (OPC), the Bakassi Boys, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra Republic (MOASSOB), the Niger Delta Vigilante and Patriotic Force (NDVPF), Niger Delta People’s Volunteer Force (NDPFV), amongst others.

Given the parochial basis of the militia strategy, in no time they proved inadequate as a strategic response to the crisis of democratic empowerment confronting the masses. While some of these militias became irrelevant even to the people whose cause they claim to champion by their transformation into criminal gangs, others were compromised by the government through cooptation scheme disguised as Amnesty programme which produced overnight billionaires of ex-militants.

It was the eventual failure of the militia strategy that led to experimenting with the revolutionary potential of citizens’ democracy through the platform of collective action using social movement and social media strategies. President Goodluck Jonathan first came into power as acting president through the power of social movement centred on the mobilization of the Safe Nigeria Group (SNG) and the Joint Action Front (JAF). They mobilized against the “Aso Rock Cabal” who continued to exercise presidential power by default in the absent of the president who was away on medical treatment by shutting out then Vice-president Goodluck Jonathan. It was the mass action by these groups that forced the National Assembly to invoke the “doctrine of necessity” that allowed Jonathan to become the acting President.

Jonathan was eventually elected as the president in the 2011 elections based on his evocative campaign of “a shoeless school boy” which resonated in the lived experience of the average Nigerian. Jonathan’s election campaign which used also used the social media platform was a social contract to end poverty, deprivation and inequality of which he claimed to have experienced personally in his formative years. After attaining the presidency, his administration withdrawal of petroleum subsidy was seen not only as his capture by an oppressive and anti-people cabal, but also as a breach of a sacred covenant between him and the Nigerian people. It was clear he has turned against the people, hence the people mobilized against his government. Nigerians, particularly the youth, the poor and unemployed with access to the

internet, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and other social movement platform keyed into the Occupy Movement across the world spreading information as a basis for recruitment, mobilization for collective action.

The SNG, JAF and the organized labour were in the forefront of the anti-subsidy protest. But for organizational deficit, ideological poverty and leadership vacillation the Occupy Nigeria subsidy protest was set to change the course of Nigeria's political history. Though the movement failed to achieve its objectives, lessons were learnt and the potential for democratic revolution and change through collective action were clearly obvious. The 2015 general elections provided another opportunity for the people to mobilize for change of what they considered a bankrupt and anti-people leadership.

Though election was alien to democracy at its inception and only became essential to it with the emergence of the nation-state and the concomitant representation, election is the heart and soul of any democracy. Election gives people the ultimate power to determine how government is constituted. An election is the symbol of the collective will of the people, infringing on it, therefore, means violating the rights of the people to determine their own destiny. Under ideal democratic conditions, good governance and political accountability are rewarded while poor stewardship is sanctioned through denial of a return mandate at the next poll. Peaceful succession and organized political change resulting from election promote political stability and system health.

#### (i) Internal Security and Insecurity Complex (ISIC)

As previously noted, the 2015 general elections took place against the background of pervasive skepticism about the continued survival of Nigeria as one sovereign and indivisible nation by the end of 2015. The spates of violence and terrorism across the country in the past few years lent seeming credibility to this prediction. There was and still is a national spread of the geography of violence in Nigeria. No part of the country is spared of violence or its effects in one form or the other. Blanchard (2014), notes that the Boko Haram insurgency has claimed over 5000 lives, with 300,000 people displaced and more than 6 million people affected.

After fifteen years of Nigeria's return to civil rule and four general elections, what Jega (2014:2) referred to as "fits and starts", the concern of Nigerians and the international community changed from instituting to deepening democracy in Nigeria. This for the ordinary Nigerians translates to a democracy that is controlled and responsive to the needs of the people. This was against the background that the elections which took place in Nigeria since 1999 have been mostly flawed, falling short on the critical measure of a free, fair and credible election.

The electoral process in Nigeria as Jega (2012:25) argues, "...have been misused to subvert rather than nurturing or promoting the democratic aspirations of Nigerians". Consequently, the outcomes of most post-transition elections in Nigeria were not products of popular choices. Violence in different forms before, during and after elections has been a major tool for denying the people their democratic rights of electing their leaders. Violence in the context of the electoral process rob citizens the attributes of a sovereign which election confers to make an independent choice and choose their leaders without fear

of bodily harm, destruction of life and property. Violence or its threat is antithetical to democracy and free, fair and credible elections.

Cutting across and erupting in all these states with the approach of the 2015 general elections like a volcano were incidence of electoral violence: insurgency in the North-East states of Adamawa, Bauchi and Bornu, ethno-religious and communal violence exists in the North West and North Central states of Kano, Sokoto, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Zamfara. Similarly, street-level violence in the form of kidnapping, armed robbery, child trafficking, oil theft and cults/gangs/militia violence dominates in Imo, Anambra, Abia, Delta, Edo, Balyesa, Rivers, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Ogun and Lagos states. According to CLEEN (2014), the following states; Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue, Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Taraba, Kaduna, Zamfara, Rivers, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Ekiti and Osun had heightened vulnerability for electoral violence in the approach to the elections.

Given the cloud of pervasive violence, not a few Nigerians were of the opinion that the 2015 general elections should be postponed. The argument advanced was that the terror that characterized the environment would have implications for the unhindered expression of free political choice by the electorates. For others, the war-like nature of the election in Nigeria would seriously inflame the violence that pervaded the country at the time. It was on this account that some like the former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar have argued that 2015 general election will determine the continued existence of Nigeria.

The internal security situation in Nigeria before the elections was tenuous. This had to do with the generalized state of violence and palpable fear as a result of the insecurity of life and property across Nigeria. Government at all levels failed to demonstrate sufficient understanding and capability to deal with the nation's security challenges.

The Boko Haram sect continued to record successes in the North East states of Adamawa, Bauchi, and Bornu. The insurgents have been in control of some local governments in Bornu state since August 2014. Towards the time of the elections, the sect hosted its flag and declared a "Caliphate" in Gwazo, Bornu state. The over 300 Chibok girls captured by the Boko Haram were still not found. Some 200,000 Nigerians living in these areas had fled their homes to safety within and outside the country.

Boko Haram is a national problem rooted in the failure to deliver on the promise of democracy. According to Sergie and Johnson (2014), Boko Haram is a product of "grievances over poor governance and sharp inequality in Nigerian society". Its effects spread beyond their operational bases in the North East. Before the elections, it was reported that over 1000 Boko Haram members were arrested in the South West. No one, therefore, knew the next place the sect would attack given that terrorist modus operandi is surprise attack on soft targets. The challenges posed by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as a consequence of the activities of the sect have enormous implications for violence nationally. These were not cheering prospects for the 2015 general elections.

Communal and ethnoreligious conflicts coupled with incidences of street-level violence such as armed robberies, kidnapping, cult and gang wars also constitutes worrisome security dilemma in the days and weeks that preceded the elections. These incidences of violence and threats caused serious trepidations

amongst Nigerians. This was based on the awareness that election time in the country is a period of low-intensity warfare. The high rate of youth unemployment, drugs and substance abuse by the youth as well as unhindered access and proliferations of small arms were incubators of violence in the country at this time. The opportunistic use of unemployed youths and members of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) for violence by politicians who easily secure their service through monetary inducement and provision of arms aggravated these pre-election violence.

#### (ii) The Presidency Challenge

The uncommon challenge to the presidency already weakened as a consequence of internal fragmentation and defections from the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), coupled with erosion of legitimacy as a result of massive corruption, inept leadership, mal-governance and mal-administration complicated matters. In the context of the political economy of Nigeria's rentier state, presidential power within the overarching tenor of Nigeria's distributive federalism is the best price any politician, social force or political party can hope to have. Losing such power by the Nigerian politicians is like losing a life.

The challenge of the presidency has two dimensions: the northern quest for "return" to power in the context of resistant by the south, and opposition gang-up. The essence of the rotational presidency and zoning is to ensure "equitable access" to this enriching opportunity through equitable access by all to the commonwealth is not an issue. The emergence of Goodluck Jonathan from the South-South as president following the uncompleted northern presidency as a consequence of President Umaru Yar'A Dua's death, the electoral routing of Alhaji Abubakar Atiku the northern consensus candidate in the PDP primary in run-up to the 2011 presidential elections, and Muhammadu Buhari in the presidential polls, created political bad blood. The result was the massive post-election violence in the North in 2011 in which over 800 lives were lost.

The 2015 general elections present another opportunity for the north to attempt to regain power at the center. Both Atiku and Buhari, veterans of the presidential race; having contested either primaries or presidential elections at least three times since the return to civil rule were in a way desperate for power. Both, particularly Buhari have wide Northern support amongst the lumpen elements easily predisposed and mobilized for violence. At the 2011 presidential election, Buhari garnered over twelve million votes. Not a few were of the opinion that the post-election violence in most parts of the north was on account of his losing to President Goodluck Jonathan.

In the South-South region where President Jonathan is from, the ex-militant, Asari Dokubo, with millions of dollars from pipelines security contract and arm purchase for the federal government insisted that it was either Jonathan get a second term through fair or foul means, or Nigeria witness Armageddon.

#### (iii) Opposition Merger:

The merger of major opposition parties in the All Progressive Congress (APC), a rare political phenomenon in Nigerian politics introduced a different political calculation and complications to the 2015 general elections. The merger lacking any ideological basis reflected the desperation of parties and

politicians that have been shut out of power since the return to civil rule on May 29, 1999, to snatch federal power from the PDP. On its part, the ruling PDP made no pretense of its desire to be in power by hook or crook. The 2015 general elections provided the first opportunity for the opposition merger to attempt taking power from the PDP. The scale of violence attendant to the governorship elections between the APC and PDP in Ekiti and Osun states as well as the by-election for the House of Representatives in Niger state were dress rehearsals for the 2015 general elections.

(iv) States where incumbents were not returning

Incumbency in Nigerian politics means unlimited resources in terms of financial and the state power which can be misused to confer unmerited and unquestionable political advantage unquestionably. In the 2015 general elections, incumbent governors in six states; Enugu, Lagos, Plateau, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Delta, and Cross-Rivers did not run having served out their constitutionally allowed two terms. The political situation in these states was a form of open market operation as evidenced by the number of political gladiators that showed interest to succeed the incumbent governors.

Paradoxically, most of these governors were not prepared to be statesmen and neutral in the choice of their successors. Rather, they openly endorsed candidates that would take over from them. The implication of this was that state resources and power were recklessly and unconscionably deployed to the advantage of some candidates against the others. In Nigeria, incumbent misuse state power to defend and advance the electoral interests of self and party. Contesting against an incumbent or their anointed candidates is seen as confronting the state. The result was the exacerbation of violence. Added to this, was the PDP determined attempt to take over the southwest, a move buoyed by its success in the Ekiti upset of the APC on the eve of the 2015 general elections.

(vi) Intemperate Political Rhetoric

The desperation for political power by all means possible finds expression in the rhetoric of politicians. Rather than engaging issues, the focus was on personalities. At the formal declaration of Muhammadu Buhari for president, Governor of Rivers state, Rotimi Amaechi said, "they will fight with their lives". Though politicians strive to rule all Nigerians, the language of most Nigerian politicians, either in government or opposition, was divisive, intemperate, selfish, provocative, partisan and unnationalistic. This extreme of this was the death wish of Buhari by the governor of Ekiti state, Ayodele Fayose. Intemperate political rhetoric, particularly by dominant political parties generated tension and ignited violence across the country.

Rather than put the nation first, proffer alternatives course of developmental action, the opposition indulges in unnecessary recriminations while the government busies itself with the blame game and shadow boxing. These antagonistic and confrontational politics of incumbent and oppositional parties set a negative political tenor that encouraged violence throughout the elections. This was because politicians, as Olurode and Jega (2011:v ), noted, are involved in "... desperate struggle to be at the center and not at the periphery, indeed not the wrong side of politics become rational". The height of this was the hate campaign sponsored by the PDP against the persons of the APC presidential candidates, Muhammadu Buhari and its National Leader, Bola Ahmed Tinubu on the African

Independence Television (AIT) and Silverbird Television. Patience Jonathan, wife of the president also called on the PDP supporters to stone those calling for change.

The hate campaign was not limited to those contesting in the 2015 general elections, the integrity of the INEC chairman, Attahiru Jega and the institutional reputation of INEC were smeared and called to question by the PDP. This was on account of the insistent of INEC that card readers would be used to enhance the electoral integrity of the 2015 general elections. The Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB), two banned militia organizations resurrected out of desperation by President Jonathan staged violent protests in the western and eastern parts of the country respectively against the use of the card reader for the elections, and for the removal of Jega as INEC Chairman.

#### (vii) Proliferations of Arms and Privatization of Security

A major fallout of the several conflicts in the last two decades in the West African region, the Niger Delta crisis, and Boko Haram insurgency is the proliferation of small arms all over the country. Given the war-like nature of politics in Nigeria and the failure of the state to guarantee the safety of life and property, the 2015 general elections benefitted from these arms. The first duty for any “serious” politician interested in power and desirous to stay alive is to organize his or her own “standing army” (muscle men). The two requirements other than money that are needed, arms and a mass of “lumpen” youth are available in abundance.

Huge financial investment in politics increased politicians’ desperation and resort to violence and explains the logic of politicians’ need for “standing armies” to counter-balance the terror of the opposition. Rather than building their support base, politicians during the 2015 general elections were more concerned with building standing armies. This as Olurode and Jega (2011:v) argued, was to be able “to first regulate political contest on one’s term, and second, keep others (‘intruders’) at bay”.

#### (viii) State Capacity to Checkmate Violence

Since the return to civil rule on May 29, 1999, the state’s monopoly of the means of physical coercion have been successfully challenged across the country. Successful and unresolved high-profile political assassination of Chief Bola Ige, then the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Engineer Funsho Williams, gubernatorial candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Lagos state, and Harry Marshal, a leader of the PDP in Rivers State amongst several others exposed the state as incapable of enforcing law and order.

This ugly trend has not abated particularly due to the state complicity or indifference in some of these incidences. The violation of the hallowed temple of justice by thugs of the then Governor-elect of Ekiti State, Mr. Ayo Fayose depicts the lawlessness that was the norm has the nation approached the 2015 elections. T

The widely reported cases of leakage operational secrets to the Boko Haram sect and footage of Nigerian soldiers running from the sect were similarly not confidence enhancing of citizens believe in the

capacity of the state to combat violence in Nigeria. The escalation in the incidence of small arms and non-Nigerians involvement in violence and criminality are due to the failure of our border management by the Customs and Immigration services. The period before and during the 2015 general elections witnessed the lowest point of state incapacity to contain violence in Nigeria.

(ix) Sanctity and Independence of the Electoral Administration /Process

Recent experience in Nigeria has shown that the efficiency and effectiveness of the electoral process as well as the adjudication of electoral cases are strong factors in either engendering or preventing violence before, during and after elections. As Jinadu (2011) notes, though an election is uncertain by nature, for the credibility of its outcome, it demands a fidelity to a certainty of the procedure from those who manage the electoral process.

While the Electoral Management Body, INEC, strived to maintain and jealously guide its independence, insisted and applied the Electoral Act to all parties and candidates without fear or favour, INEC displayed helplessness in the face of the flagrant violations of the Electoral Act by politicians campaigning and pasting posters before the permissible time allowed by law, as well as the challenge of prosecuting electoral offenders. Similarly, its management of the distributions of the Permanent Voters Cards (PVC) left much to be desired. There were reported cases of stolen PVC, missing data, non-printing and late printing of PVC, difficulties in locating where to collect PVC, non-availability of officials at venues of PVC collection, demand for monetary inducement by ad hoc staff before releasing PVC amongst other.

As a result, several Nigerians would have been disenfranchised were it not for the six weeks postponement of the elections. Even at that, some 18 percent Nigerians did not collect their PVC for whatever reason. The voters' education regarding the use of the card readers which was to be used to authenticate voters and curb election rigging was inadequate. But for the change in date of the elections, INEC would not have tested ran the new technology of card reader it planned to deploy for such tension soaked elections.

(x) Nomination of Candidates

The nomination process has proven to be the Achilles of the electoral process in Nigeria. The process which should otherwise be a peaceful affair amongst members of the same political brotherhood is often marred by corruption, arm-twisting, manipulation, and assassination. Most unresolved cases of political assassination in Nigeria were connected with party nominations. The violence associated with intra-party nominations in most cases is far more than during general elections. Political 'godfathers' who would do anything to ensure that their anointed political 'godsons' get the party tickets complicates and makes the nomination process violence prone during the 2015 general elections.

The problems associated with party nominations feeds on the lack of internal democracy within the parties to enhance the credibility of candidate's selection and their acceptance of the outcomes. Most of the parties are operating like secret cults. The internal conflict resolution mechanisms of these parties, which are more of platforms for seeking political power, are very weak. With the judicial process of prosecuting electoral cases especially arising from party primaries often encumbered by technical

landmines, and deemed to be the internal affairs of the parties, the resort to self-help through violence was very common during the 2015 general elections.

(xi) Election Postponement, Monetization of Electoral Process, Identity politics and Sundry Issues

The 2015 general elections was expected to kick-off with the Presidential and National Assembly elections on February 14, 2015. However, a new date was fixed to March 28, 2015, due to claims of inability to guarantee the security of the process by the security agencies. INEC, however, maintained that it was ready for the elections. The general belief was that the window of six weeks was to allow the ruling party and president Goodluck Jonathan to soar up its electoral chances at the polls.

A number of strategies with negative effects on the electoral process were deployed. First, was the exacerbation of ethnic and religious sentiments. These divisive politics saw to the resuscitation of both the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB) and the Odua Peoples' Congress from political obscurity. Second, was the unabashed deployed of monetary inducement to buy political support. Particular beneficiaries of this largesse were religious leaders and traditional rulers across the nation. The militia organizations were also awarded billion of naira pipeline protection contracts.

There were accusations and counter-accusation particularly between the two leading political parties, the PDP, and APC. The APC accused the PDP of planning to orchestrate a military take-over or an Interim Government rather than hand over power to Mohammadu Buhari. Similarly, Femi Fani-Kayode the Media Director of Jonathan Campaign Organization accused APC of planning to release a video that would incite the military to take over power and assassinate the leaders of the party should President Jonathan win a re-election. The spates of violence did not spare the presidential campaign trains. President Jonathan campaign train was attacked in Kaduna, Katsina, Jos, and Bauchi, just at the convoy of Buhari's wife suffered the same fate at Ilorin. In Akure, some lawyers campaigning for Buhari had a communion of violence. There was also strong rumour of plans to force the INEC Chairman, Attairu Jega to go on terminal leave to make room for someone that would do the biddings of the ruling party to conduct the elections. All these increased the tension in the country.

E-Day:

Despite the fears and anxieties that preceded the 2015 general elections, the Presidential and National Assembly elections witnessed mass turnout of voters on the new date of March 28, 2015. Nigerians across the country came out in their thousands to exercise their civil right to vote. However, there were complaints in several polling units of non-functioning of the card readers. While in some cases it took a long time before the problems with the card readers were rectified, in others the problems experienced was due to lack of familiarity with the equipment. For instance, there were many cases of non-functioning Card Readers that were due to the failure to remove the protective cover was one of the reasons for the Card Readers problem which called to question the training of personnel deployed for the elections.

Also, the few card readers that had to do with network problems were quickly resolved with the change to another network provider. Non-appearance of pictures on Card Readers were common. Similarly, some card readers with inadequately charged batteries had the batteries substituted. There were few instances where the card readers failed to work at all or read fingerprints and those concerned had to go home without voting after waiting in vain for the whole day. Voting in some parts of Kosofe and Somolu Local governments in Lagos state started very late in the day on because of Card Readers problems. A major explanation for this was that there were insufficient technical hands to attend to the card readers' that had problems despite INEC claim to the contrary.

In most parts of the South East and South-South where the PDP that had vigorously campaigned against the use of the Card Readers held sway, the card readers were jettisoned. Contrary to the position of INEC, manual accreditations were used in the two political zones. These Card Readers problems were largely reduced during the April 11 governorship and State House Assembly elections.

During the March 28 presidential and National Assembly elections, there were logistic problems associated with the movement of materials and electoral personnel in several places nationwide. This led to voters waiting for long time for accreditation and voting. There were, however, few instances where accreditation commenced before the approved time of 8.00 am for the exercise (Observation Report, 2015). Voting could not take place for various reasons in 300 of the 150,000 polling units across Nigeria. Of these figures, 90 polling units spread across five local governments in Lagos were involved.

Though there were reports of juvenile voting in some parts of the North, there were reports of wanton electoral malfeasance in the South- East and South-South. In Imo state, for instance, the state governor, Rochas Okorocha of the APC took to the mass media to condemn the fraudulent election in his state. Also, the INEC Headquarters in Calabar had to be sealed up in the face of electoral violence. Reports of intimidation were documented in Ekiti as well as violence in Bauchi resulting in the imposition of curfew in Bauchi, Alkaleri, and Kirfi local governments.

The Situation Room (2015) reports on incidences that occurred during the elections thus:

Situation Room flagged some and wishes to draw attention to the following concerns and reservations as observed during the elections, which raise issues about the credibility of the elections in some States. Information obtained from our networks of field observers and partners indicate the following: • Numerous cases of electoral misconduct – disorderly conduct at polling units – in Akwa Ibom (10 reports received), Katsina (17) and Sokoto (18); • Many cases of process violations in Sokoto (15 reports received), Adamawa (6), Delta (7) and Katsina States (9); • Polling logistics problems in Akwa Ibom (14), Delta (9), Katsina (8), Rivers (11), Adamawa (6) and Sokoto (12) States; • Cases of election-related violence in Akwa Ibom (18), Abia (9), Anambra (7), Delta (9), Imo (6), Rivers (16), Benue (6), Katsina (17), Sokoto (17) and Kano States (7); • Killings in Rivers State where seven people (including a police officer) were killed as well as in Akwa Ibom (3), Delta (2), Katsina (2). Situation Room is further concerned about the overall conduct of the elections in Rivers and the Akwa Ibom States, where there are good grounds to question the credibility of the elections results in both States. In Rivers State, historically deep-

rooted political animosities played out in a brazen, violent and naked manner to subvert the electoral process in many local governments in the State. In Akwa Ibom, there were also serious questions about the veracity of the results because of reports of active and direct partisan interference with the elections. There are also concerns about Abia State, which recorded multiple cases of electoral misconduct. We note that INEC has had to cancel elections in polling units in some States because of election-related violence and other irregularities; while in others it has commenced investigations. The Situation Room hereby calls on INEC to urgently take steps to clinically scrutinise the final collated results from these three States (Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Abia) against the polling unit results and make a reasoned judgment about them.

#### The Day-After:

Posting of results on the social media started before the conclusion of voting. Expectedly, these results were largely conflicting and created unnecessary anxieties. The PDP issued a press statement accusing the APC of circulating fake results. The situation was not helped as INEC was unable to honour its promise to declare the result of the presidential and National Assembly elections within forty-eight hours.

While the counting was on-going at National Collation Centre, Abuja, the nation, and the world waited with berated breath. No one was sure of what would happen after the final results are declared. Not a few believed that the country would be engulfed in violence irrespective whosoever of the two leading candidates wins. The appearance of Elder Peter Godswill Orubebe, former Minister of Niger Delta, after announcement of eighteen states with the PDP trailing behind the APC, in what appeared as a planned action to truncate the announcement of the 2015 presidential elections moved the nation dangerously close to violence. He accused the INEC Chairman of bias, tribalism, selective, partial and compromised. He also claimed that the results that were still being counted have been printed by Jega and the APC. He insisted that the collation of result would not continue until Jega set-up committees to investigate the elections in Kano, Katsina and Kaduna where the APC had seriously defeated the PDP. This expectedly put the nation on edge and almost confirmed the doomsday predictions on the country.

Miraculously before the declaration of the final result, the unexpected and unimaginable happened. President Goodluck Jonathan called Mohamadu Buhari and conceded defeat. There were calm and joy all-over the nation. When the result was finally announced and Buhari declared the winner, jubilation was witnessed across the nation.

How come the nation was not consumed by the elections? What explained the sudden decision of President Jonathan and his party to concede defeat and congratulate Buhari? How do we account for the defeat of a seating president for the first time in Nigeria history?

#### Deductions and Conclusion:

The peaceful outcome of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria was no doubt a surprise even to the most optimistic believer in Nigeria. There are certainly no single factors to explain the peaceful political fortune of the nation. Amongst the contributory factors are the acceptance of defeat and congratulation

of the APC by President Jonathan, the role of the Abdulsalaam Abubakar Peace Committee and the intervention of friendly nations such as United States of America and United Kingdom.

Above all these, the peaceful outcome of the 2015 general elections in which an incumbent president lost power to an opposition candidate is a credit to the resilience of the Nigerian people who trooped to the street expressing happiness on the outcome of the election. This was preceded by the resounding condemnation on the social media and conversations of the actions of Elder Godswill Orubebe who disrupted the collation of the presidential result. Nigerians also used the social media maximally after President Jonathan conceded defeat in the election to spread his call to the president-elect. The people with their actions before, during and after the elections made it clear that they wanted change. Having achieved a largely pan-Nigeria desire to bring about change in the government of the country and ensure that people's vote counts, the people voted against political violence.

It must however be noted that the change of government was merely a means to an end, which is the enthronement of citizens' democracy. This determined push to end maladministration, insecurity, injustice, impunity and corruption in the affairs of the nation and bring about social progress, justice, popular empowerment as well as development is still incomplete. There is a categorical imperative to bring together the civil society and political society as a platform for mobilization of the Nigerians for the enthronement of citizens' democracy, empowerment and development. The need to transcend the civil society flows from the compromise and willingness to promote the agenda of their imperialist financiers.

The utility and relevance of the political society its largely abandonment for and monopolization by the political elite who as Momoh (2015) correctly argues, " ... have not transformed from being an elite into being a political class. This has resulted in huge deficits for the democratic project; as a result, rather than democratizing, rather it is de-democratizing". It is in this context that the quest for citizens' democracy in Nigeria is an important effort of rescuing democrats from those who has made it a mechanism for mass disempowerment. Though democracy as Sin and Well (2005) argue may be the only game in town, the quest for citizens' democracy seeks to position in the frontline as the top strikers. For this to happen, there is a need to promote class consciousness among people through continuous education and mobilization. The energies of the people also need to be galvanized for a principled and sustained struggle for social justice which citizens' democracy represents as against ethnic justice which promotes the 'democratic' subordination of the people by the political elite. In the finally analysis, though there may be "no choice but democracy", it is unquestionable and democratic for the people to choose and struggle for the type of democracy they desire.

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