ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES AND PROBLEMS IN AFRICA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
The objective of this paper was to examine various electoral malpractices and problems in Africa, looking critically at suffrage, franchise and elections and the attendant problems as well as the malpractices associated with it. The paper espoused the theory of franchise as postulated by various school of thought such as the Natural school, with writers like Montesquieu and Rousseau, while the other school is of the view that the right to vote is rather a public office or function conferred upon the citizen for reason of social expediency. Furthermore, the paper examined the electoral process Vis-a-vis the electoral malpractices together with the attendant problems and functions. The methodology employed in this research was the descriptive and the analytical as well as the case study method. It relied extensively on secondary sources of information: internet, the physical library, journals, magazines and newspapers. The paper found out that electoral malpractice in Africa is closely related to the type and forms of historical system practiced by each society, coupled with the class structure, social stratification estheticism and religious differences. It was concluded that until elections become completely competitive and the electorate are free to make a choice between alternatives and that a liberal political system is put in place, there will always be electoral malpractice. Finally the paper made some recommendation for future conduct of elections in Africa.

INTRODUCTION.
An election is a procedure by which members of communities and for organization choose representatives to hold an office (Dieter Nohlen 1996).

The general idea of the meaning of election is reflected in the below definition. “Elections are the democratic method of choosing representatives of the people”. If the above definition is so, then how does it come about that election are held in all types of countries, even in those where democracy does not exist?

To Nohlen (1996), “elections are a technique for forming representative bodies and or for delegating authority”.

It means therefore, that elections can be used instead of other techniques (designating representatives by succession ex officio or by appointment) without having any democratic substance. In other words, elections are not confined exclusively to democracies.
In essence elections had been held in western democracies long before universal suffrage was achieved and in actual fact elections are held in political systems which do not have a democratic structure: a classic example is USSR, where the domination of one party (The Communist Party) was written into their constitutions. Other include; Socialist Hungary and Romania, where representatives were reappointed at regular intervals.

Also are authoritarian regimes where the exercise of power by the ruling group is not questioned e.g Portugal under Salazar, Philippines under Marcos, Brazil under military regime, Nigeria under military regime etc.

According to Nohlen (1996), the fact that elections are held in democratic authoritarian and totalitarian political systems leads to the following conclusions.

- The concept elections vary in accordance with the type of political systems.
- The significance of elections is not the same under different political system.
- The functions of elections differ from political systems to political system.

**Theoretical Framework**

According to Mahajan (2006), there are two schools of thoughts with regard to the nature of the right to vote; The first school posit that, it is a natural and inherent right to every citizen who is otherwise not disqualified on account of his conduct or physical unfitness, This right belongs to him by virtue of his membership of the state. This view dominated USA and France Political thought in the latter half of the eighteenth century, this views includes that of Montesquieu and Rousseau, who were of the opinion that all the inhabitants of the state ought to have the right of voting at the elections of representatives, except such as are in so means a situation as to be deemed to have no will of their own.

The second school opined that “The right to vote is rather a public office or function conferred upon the citizen for reason of social expediency. It is not a natural right which belongs to all without distraction”. Therefore, the right to vote is a privilege, but there is a difference of opinion whether it is a moral duty or a legal obligation. E.g Jameson in Mahajan (2006) was of the view that suffrage “is not a right at all, it is a duty or a trust enjoined upon or committed to some citizens and not to others”.

Mahajan (2006), citing the case of Anderson versus Baker, in USA the supreme court of Maryland observed”, the right of suffrage is not an original, indefeasible right, even in the most free of republican governments, but every civilized society has uniformly fixed, modified or regulated it for itself, according to its own free will and pleasure.

But Duguit (2003) in Mahajan (2006) viewed suffrage to be a right and an office at the same time.

Furthermore, Sheperd (2005) in Mahajan (2006) has identified 3 theories of suffrage.

According to him, “the primitive tribal theory prevailed in the city states”. He regarded the right to vote as necessary attribute of membership of the state. The Feudal theory regarded suffrage as a vested right usually accompanying the ownership of land; and the ethical theory regards suffrage as a necessary and essential means for the development of individual personality.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research is purely qualitative in nature. It employed the descriptive and analytical approach as well as the case study method in its analysis.
The paper relied extensively on the secondary sources of information such as the internet, textbooks, journals, Magazines and Newspapers. While it adopted the APA style of referencing

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Elections
Elections that take place in different political systems are distinguished from each other. This is due to the fact that in certain countries, the voters may choose from among several parties and reach their decision freely, while in others, voters can only give their vote to a single party. Since no other parties are allowed to put up candidates.

According to Kenneth (1963), election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office. He opines that, elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century.

The notion of elections, in its proper sense implies competitiveness as well as freedom of choice Nohlen (1996). In order for suffrage to really be practiced, the voter must be allowed to choose between different candidates or political parties, between different ideologies and policy programs.

According to Nohlen (2006), “suffrage is really in practice only when voters have a choice between at least two options. Voters must be able to decide freely between the options, otherwise they are elections without choice”.

It means, elections are competitive and non competitive, depending on the degree of freedom of choice, we can therefore make the following classifications.

Competitive elections – Democratic systems
Semi- Competitive elections – Authoritarian systems
Non – Competitive elections – Totalitarian Systems.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

In the political debate regarding electoral system, especially in those countries with less electoral experience, the concept tends to be stretched to the extreme, sometimes even including everything related to the electoral process, beginning with voting rights, passing through electoral administration and driving at electoral contention”.

Sometimes the criterion used, depends on the utility which the electoral system served.

Electoral systems determine the rules according to which the voter may express their political preferences and according to which it is possible to convert votes into parliamentary seats (in the case of legislative elections) or into government posts (in the case of elections for the president, governors, mayors e.t.c.

The concept also includes the following dimension districts, candidates, voting, conversion of votes into seats and it also contains all the technical elements which gives concrete forms to these dimension and interrelates them in order to construct an individual electoral system.” Nohlen (1996)

ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE:
The simplest and most common

Malpractices in its ordinary meaning has to do with illegal or wrong behavior while in a professional job. For the purpose of this paper, this could range from

- Pre- electoral malpractice/manipulation.
- Post – electoral malpractice/ Election manipulate
Falsification of results, to violence, snatching of ballot boxes, multiple voting, illegal voters list register, impersonation, purported switching of votes or among the wrong winner in an election by an electoral officer etc

**Classification of Electoral Malpractice:**

Malpractice Fraud: Tella (2002) Classified electoral fraud into two categories:

(a) Pre-Election manipulations
(b) Post-Election manipulations

**a) Pre-Election Manipulations**

(1) Tailoring of electoral regulation, to de-enfranchise candidates or groups of people.
(2) Technical disqualifications of candidates through arm stringing the electoral body by the attempt to establish stringent rules.
(3) Ethnic – cultural and religious manipulations of the selection process.
(4) Deliberate prevention of independent candidates from contesting.
(5) Monetization of the electoral procedure before selection of candidates at party and electoral commission level.
(6) Snatching/stealing of ballot boxes, including the delivering of electoral materials etc

- **Middle of election Manipulation**

  (1) Stuffing of ballot boxes with legal and illegal ballot papers
  (2) Starving of opposition strong hold with electoral materials with a view to de-enfranchising them their right to choose.
  (3) Under-age voting, encouraging toddler voting.
  (4) Multiple-voting, some as many as six to seven times
  (5) Deliberate omission of candidates photograph/ names, etc.

**b) Post – Election Manipulations:**

(1) Deliberate refusal to count ballot boxes/papers from the opposition strongholds
(2) Doctoring of results between the voting centers and collation centers
(3) Outright theft of ballot boxes after voting or stuffing of empty ballot boxes with stolen ballot papers.
(4) Declaration of result before the arrival of ballot boxes papers from the polling centers.
(5) Outright cancellation of election result or total annulment of election result as witnessed in June 12, 1993 presidential election in Nigeria.

**Other forms of electoral Fraud:**

(1) Appointment or selection of partisan electoral officials.
(2) Declaration of winner where no candidate was fielded.
(3) Inflation of electoral register in order result.
(4) Disqualification of candidates envisaged to be a threat to a favoured candidate
(5) Using of the apparatus of state media, logistic, personnel in favour of the incumbent, particularly at re-election periods.
(6) Intimidation harassment of voters by things and police to discourage people from exercising their voting rights.
DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL PROCESS

Poor electoral process snowballing into legitimacy crisis is one of the major impediments of an enduring democracy in developing States. In Nigeria for example, the democratic process had been several times criticized as a result of political topsy-turvy arising from poor electoral process among other factors. Although the factors negatively impacting on the African electoral process are multifaceted, these factors ranges from ethnicity, lack of independence in the operative of the judiciary and the electoral body, poor political culture among others (Ibaba, 2007; Omodia, 2007).

Although there are different conceptions of democracy (Janda, et al 1997; Ntalaja, 2003; Massoud, 2000) however the democratization process that took place in most African states in the 1990’s were geared towards the western liberal democracy which emphasizes the following:

a) Competitive party politics through constitutionally recognized opposition.

b) Entrenched fundamental human rights through which the citizens could exercise political participation in the political system.

c) The existence and adherence to the principle of rule of law that must guide functional conflicts as regards the process for power acquisition.

d) Independent electoral body that should be free from the maneuvering and influence of governmental officials and must be viewed as credible by competing parties.

e) The principle of political equality which respects the notion of one man, one vote and where the votes of the electorates count.

f) The notion of free and fair election, where electorates are not intimated nor in secure in participating in elections.

In most countries of Africa, elections especially its freeness and fairness constitute the central factor in ensuring democratic survival. This is because the lack of free and fair elections often tends to threaten the democratic process as a result of legitimacy question. Thus factor no doubt has characterized the democratic experiment of the Nigerian Fourth Republic in that there have been persistent crisis of legitimacy kin governance arising from poor electoral system (Omodia, 2008).

In other words, while elections could not be said to be synonymous with democratic process in that democracy encompasses other attributes, but elections are so central to the operation and survival of democracy in that it defines the level of freedom exercised by the people in decoding who represent them in government. It also serves as an index of noticing whether the electoral body and the judicial organ of the government are independent of the legislature and the executive organ.

ELECTORAL PROCESS AND ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES IN AFRICA - THE CASE STUDIES OF NIGERIA AND SOME OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES

In the present democratic dispensation of the Nigeria, events have shown that the electoral body is not independent of the party in power. This has been defined in relation to the manner of which the electoral body had conducted elections in a way that advantaged the party in power through poor planning, the device of excluding electorates from voting materials, or late arrival of voting materials and electoral officers to polling stations (Abdullahi, 2008).

In addition, there have been cases in which candidate that won electoral primaries were replaced by candidates that either never contested or by candidates that were defeated during the exercise which was observed by the electoral body. As regard this aspect, the case of Rotimi Amaechi that was substituted by Celestine Omehia for the PDP 2007 Gubernatorial Election in Rivers State...
comes to mind among many others. Moreover, the scenario in which flag bearers of political parties either in the Presidential or gubernatorial elections were disqualified from contesting elections few days to the conduct of elections for no genuine reason by the electoral body as observed in the 2007 general elections was an indication that the electoral body was not truly independent of government as those decisions served the interest of the party in power.

As regard the Judiciary under the present democratic dispensation, unlike what was obtained in the aborted Third Republic where the Judiciary served as a tool for creating political topsy-turvy that undermined the democratic process, the judiciary in the present dispensation could be said to be a major improvement from what has obtainable in the past.

While in some cases the judiciary has served as a tool for upholding democratic decisions with such cases as the judicial pronouncement of Peter Obi of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) as the duly elected governor of Anambra State rather than Dr. Chris Ngige of PDP, and the further judgment that the tenure of the administration would end in 2010 rather than 2007. This is coupled with several judicial judgments that led to the re-run of elections in States like Kogi, Adamawa, Sokoto among others.

**Electoral Problems in Nigeria**

**General Election Crisis (1983):** This crisis was a child of irregularities in the conduct of general elections held throughout the country in 1983 and bitter political past.

**Causes:**
1. Ethnically-based political parties
2. The party in power was bent on emerging victorious.
3. The winners-take-all attitude.
4. Irregularities in the conduct of the elections.
5. Election malpractices by FEDECO officials.
6. Declaration of candidates with minority votes as winners.
7. The move by the NPN-led federal government to control political power in the Eastern region dominated by UPN.

**Consequences:**
1. Massive destruction of property and loss of lives
2. Friction and political unrest in the country.
3. Political immunity.
4. Military intervention which toppled the government on December 31, 1983.
5. Breakdown of law and order.

**Nigerian general election, 2007:** The Nigerian general elections of 2007, held on 14 April and 21 April 2007. Governorship and state assembly elections were held on 14 April, while the presidential and national assembly elections were held a week later on 21 April. Umaru Yar'Adua won the highly controversial election for the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and was sworn in on 29 May.

**Background**
On May 16, 2006 the Nigerian Senate voted to block a constitutional amendment which would have allowed its president to serve more than two terms in office. President Olusegun Obasanjo
thus could not pursue a third term. Additionally he was unsupported by Atiku Abubakar, his vice-president. Presidential candidates were announced in late December 2006 and 50,000 assault rifles were ordered to help the military maintain order during the election. Umaru Yar’Adua contested the election for the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP), and the opposition All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) chose Muhammadu Buhari. Atiku Abubakar, the current Vice-President, announced on 25 November 2006 that he would contest the election, and he subsequently became the presidential candidate of the Action Congress in December.

**States and Governors**
The POP controls 28 of the 36 states, but the largest city, Lagos, have been in the hands of the Alliance for the Democracy (AD) since 1999.

**Attacks**
Nigerian military killed at least 25 suspected Islamic militants 18 April, while battling extremists who attacked a police station on 17 April in Kano, days before the election. Shortly before voting began on 21 April, there was an alleged attempt in Bayelsa State to kill Goodluck Jonathan, who is the PDF vice-presidential candidate and the governor of the state, as well as a failed attempt to destroy INHC headquarters in Abuja with a truck bomb.

Nigeria has never yet managed a peaceful handover from one democratically elected president at the end of his constitutional term to the next. The most recent failed election was the 1993 election of M. K. O. Abiola, which was annulled by Ibrahim Babangida, the military dictator ruling at the time. General Sani Abacha eventually seized power, and when Abiola tried to claim his presidency, he was imprisoned until his questionable death in 1998. (Akinsanya and Ayoade 2005)

**RESULTS**

**Number of Votes Per Candidate**
Official figures on voter turnout were not released but the turnout was estimated at 57.5 percent of 61.5 million registered voters.

The first results to be released, from Rivers State, showed a large majority for Yar’Adua. On April 23, Yar’Adua was declared the winner by INRC, which said that he had received 70% of the vote (24,638,063 votes). Buhari was said to be in second place with 18% of the vote (6,605,299 votes), while Abubakar was placed third with about 7% (2,637,848 votes). Both Buhari and Abubakar rejected the results. The opposition candidates believe the election was rigged in Yar’Adua's favor. Outgoing president Olusegun Obasanjo stated in a televised address that the election "could not be described as perfect".

Results, announced by independent National Electoral Commission (INHC) Chairman Prof. Maurice Iwu. Were:

**The Summary of the 1 April 2007 Nigerian presidential election results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates -Parties</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Umaru Yar’Adua</td>
<td>Peoples Democratic Party (POP)</td>
<td>24,638,063</td>
<td>69.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammadu Buhari</td>
<td>All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)</td>
<td>6,605,299</td>
<td>18.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atiku Abubakar</td>
<td>Action Congress (AC)</td>
<td>2,637,848</td>
<td>7.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orji U/,or Kalu</td>
<td>Progressive Peoples Alliance</td>
<td>608,803</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attahiru Bafarawa</td>
<td>Democratic Peoples Party (DPP)</td>
<td>289.324</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chukwuemeka Od!megw Ojukwu</td>
<td>All Progressives Grand Alliance</td>
<td>155.947</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pere Ajuwa</td>
<td>Alliance for Democracy (AD)</td>
<td>89.241</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Okotie</td>
<td>Fresh Democratic Party</td>
<td>74.049</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Utomi</td>
<td>African Democratic Congress (ADC)</td>
<td>50.849</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambrosc Ovvuru</td>
<td>Hope Democratic Party</td>
<td>28.519</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Okereke</td>
<td>African Liberation Party (ALP)</td>
<td>22,677</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Jedovin</td>
<td>African Political System (APS)</td>
<td>22,409</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habu Fari</td>
<td>National Democratic Party</td>
<td>21,934</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxi Okvvu</td>
<td>Citizens Popular Party (CPP)</td>
<td>14,027</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomew Nnaji</td>
<td>Better Nigeria Party</td>
<td>11,705</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Obayuwana</td>
<td>National Conscience Party</td>
<td>8,229</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olapade Agoro</td>
<td>National Action Council</td>
<td>5,752</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mojisola Obasanjo</td>
<td>Nigerian Masses Movement</td>
<td>4,309</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"The results did not disclose the total votes scored in the states or the percentages of the scores by the presidential candidates. Yar'Adua was inaugurated on 29 May 2007.

**Reasons for Electoral Violence in Africa**

Conflict and tension during elections have been common in Africa's new democracies coming into existence in the 1990s during the third wave of democracy. In fact, many new democracies, especially those with strong authoritarian legacies or deep ethnic cleavages common in many African countries, find it difficult to manage political opposition. The manner in which these tensions are managed can make the difference between an election that proceeds peacefully versus one that degenerates into violence.

Luckily, most elections are not intensely violent. Although the media may focus on the horrific violence that followed the elections in Kenya and Zimbabwe, studies indicate that violence in Africa's elections affects between 19 and 25 percent of elections. In many countries where electoral violence is a risk, it tends to recur and may consequently lead to an unfavourable view of democratization. At least one case—Republic of Congo (or, Congo-Brazzaville)—one may argue that the electorate at violence laid the foundation for a civil war. Unfortunately, attempts to prevent, understand and address electoral violence are not well developed. In many instances, the perpetrators are not charged, the victims receive little or no redress, and the causes of the violence remain unexamined.

Port-Gentil and Libreville, Gabon; Northern Ghana; Niger Delta, Nigeria; Lome, Togo; and Kenya have all been scenes of repeated electoral violence. Indeed, the regularity with which electoral violence occurs in many areas suggests that underlying grievances or structural characteristics may be tied to the elections. Academic research remains underdeveloped in this area, but a few scholars are beginning to focus on grievances over land rights, jobs and ethnic marginalization as contributing to electoral violence, in reality, these tensions intersect and are frequently manipulated by politicians.
Land: The politicization of ill-designed or unfair land tenure laws has served to motivate violence in a number of cases. As Catherine Boone argues, tensions in Cote d'Ivoire over economic crises, nationalism and the unclear rights between indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants in the country's south and southwest regions were exploited by politicians who fanned the fears of the indigenous. Consequently, the non-indigenous—comprising true foreigners, Muslims, and those with northern sounding names—were often violently expelled from their lands and homes and subjected to harassment. The transformation of this conflict into one of citizenship and identity lies at the root of the violence following the 2000 elections and the attempted coup in 2002 by northern military personnel.

Economic marginalization: In other instances, politicians exploit sentiments of economic discrimination or dominance of one ethnic group by another. In Kenya's Coast province, the 1997 parliamentary elections threatened to unseat the two representatives of the ruling Kenya African National Union party as they faced opposition from non-indigenous voters in the constituency. Concurrently, the Coast's Digo people accused the non-indigenous of taking their jobs, educational opportunities and land. Exploiting these sentiments, politicians armed local groups to threaten the migrants, effectively driving them out. Approximately 130 migrants were killed and 100,000 were displaced. With the resulting displacement, the politicians retained their seats.

Ethnic marginalization: Identity politics represent a third dominant characteristic of recurrent electoral violence. The chieftaincy dispute between the Kusasis and Mamprusis in Ghana's northern region, which predates Ghana's independence, serves as an example. In the past, the National Democratic Congress and its political tradition were seen to side with the Kusasi's claims to chieftaincy and the traditional area, while the Mamprusis were validated by the New Patriotic Party and its political tradition. Thus, violence between the two groups occurs with each political cycle as each tries to undermine the others' political aims by using violence to put their preferred political parties on top. In 2008, the violence and tensions reverberated beyond the northern regions, with conflicts erupting between the Kusasi and Mamprusi migrant communities in Accra.

Undermining Democratisation: There are indications that elections with high degrees of conflict or continuous violence may slow the consolidation of democracy. An analysis by Afro-barometer of Africans’ view of democracy suggests that poor elections are to blame for dissatisfaction with elections as means to attain political representation. Indeed, among the eighteen countries surveyed by Afro-barometer, the three countries where elections have been relatively free of violence—Ghana, Botswana, and Namibia—are the most satisfied with elections as a means to engage the government. On the other hand, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Zambia, where elections have been more violent and controversial, are the least satisfied. Violence can also undermine the entire election itself. With the presence or threat of violence, voters may opt not to register or decide to stay away from the polls altogether, candidates may withdraw, or politicians may use it as a reason to cancel or postpone the election. When domestic and international observers judge that an election has been marred by violence, the legitimacy of the result is jeopardized, as is the legitimacy of the elected official. For example, at the start of Nigerian President Umaru Yar’Adua’s term, he had to acknowledge the problems in Nigeria's electoral process, and he was forced to submit to a review of his own electoral victory. Many other elected officials also saw their victories reviewed and in a number of cases, reversed. This hardly serves as an auspicious beginning for an administration.
Precursor to Civil War: One may argue that the post election violence in 1993-1994 in the Republic of Congo laid the groundwork for its civil war in 1997. After the result of the May 1993 legislative election, which gave President Pascal Lissouba's party a majority, was disputed by the other two contenders. Denis Sassou-N'guesso and Bernard Kolelas, violence erupted between their militias. The election was re-run in October 1993, and although the opposition picked up a few more seals, Lissouba's party retained its majority. Even though the opposition agreed to participate in the assembly, violent clashes had resumed by November. Between November 1993 and January 1994 as many as 2,000 people were killed. In 1997 clashes between militia loyal to Sassou-N’guesso and Lissouba broke out as a result of disputes over electoral rules, attempts by Lissouba's supporters to stop the electoral process, and claims of assassination attempts by Sassou-Nguesso among other issues. From May 1997 until October when Sassou-Nguesso captured the presidential palace, as many as 15,000 people lost their lives. Clashes continued over the next two years, claiming the lives of 20,000 more.

Management of Electoral Conflict and Violence: Despite Ghana's recurrent electoral violence, actions taken in 2008 by the government and civil society may offer some insights to reversing this history. Three months before the December 2008 general elections, the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) trained and deployed electoral violence observers to 26 constituencies that were considered likely to experience violence. The observers collected data on incidents of violence, perpetrators and victims, and the consequences of the violence. In partnership with the government's National Commission on Civic Education and religious leaders, CDD-Ghana and the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers used this information to develop workshops promoting peace, broadcast radio programs encouraging peaceful elections, and organize educational events to promote peace and non-violence. Preliminary reports suggest that the number of violent incidents decreased after these interventions, 42 incidents of violence were recorded in the first month and 20 incidents in the second month of the project.

It is difficult to assess whether the activities of civil society and the government, in response to the observers' reports, were solely responsible for the decrease in violence, but the effect and impact of their interventions still warrant careful analysis in order to improve strategies for reducing violence. Notwithstanding these efforts, during the tense days between the first and second rounds of the presidential election, a crowd—armed with machetes—gathered at the electoral commission's office to protest the first round's results and the airwaves were littered with derogatory ethnic slurs.

For countries less successful in preventing electoral violence, commissions have at times been established to inquire into the cause or extent of the violence; it may be treated as a passing phenomenon; or it may be addressed as a criminal matter. Following Kenya's 1992 and 2007 elections, where more than 1,000 people died and several hundred thousand were displaced on each occasion, commissions were established to investigate the violence. These commissions have not resulted in punishing the perpetrators, though many were named. Ethiopia treated the electoral violence following the 2005 parliamentary elections as a criminal matter. Approximately 30,000 suspected opposition supporters were arrested and charged with an assortment of crimes, including subverting the constitution. Yet other countries have treated incidents of violence as episodic phenomena, leaving them large unaddressed by the national government. This occurred following the 2000 post-election violence in Cote d'Ivoire. Employing a more robust response, some countries develop a political agreement between opposition groups and the government in a bid to resolve the underlying causes of violence and
maladministration of the election. Kenya, Zimbabwe, Togo, and Zanzibar have each adopted such agreements. While Kenya and Zimbabwe's post-election political agreements (PPAs) have received a great deal of attention and are more robust than those of Togo and Zanzibar, it is still too early to evaluate their effectiveness. However, in light of the attention they have received, important considerations for policymakers are the implications for democratization efforts and the message it sends about the use of violence, when losing political parties are incorporated in a government of national unity in order to keep the peace.

**Summary**

Studies indicate that violence in Africa’s elections affects between 19 and 25 percent of elections. In many countries where electoral violence is a risk, it tends to recur and may consequently lead to an unfavourable view of democratization. The regularity with which electoral violence occurs suggests that underlying grievances or structural characteristics may be tied to the elections and fuel the violence. Electoral violence, especially recurrent, seems indicative of more widespread systemic grievances and tensions. Tensions over land rights, employment and ethnic marginalization are three dominant characteristics of recurring electoral violence. These areas intersect and are frequently manipulated by politicians. Some recent actions taken by the government and civil society may offer insights into reversing the trends of recurring violence. These actions warrant further analysis in order to improve strategies to reduce violence.

**Conclusion**

Electoral malpractice and violence, especially the incidents that occur with some regularity, seems indicative of more widespread systematic grievances. Treating electoral malpractice and violence as a criminal matter or a cyclical phenomenon is not likely to end future elections from being irregular and violent. The more robust approach of adopting post-election political agreements in Togo and Zanzibar showed early promise, but the protests following the recently held elections in Cote’d’Ivore Gabon, Nigeria, Kenya Uganda Togo show a continuing institutional weakness for managing electoral conflict.

Moreover, further research is needed to improve measurement of electoral malpractice and or violence and correspondingly, the factors that trigger it; the effects of electoral violence on democratization; and effective methods for managing the threat or eruption of electoral misconduct.

Finally the African Nations and countries should adopt a political system that is democratic and liberal, which will allow electorates and citizens to choose liberally their choice of representatives in government. Above all a good and viable constitution which will guarantee the practice of the democratic system put in place must ensure the basic tenets of democracy.

**Recommendation**

Several postulations have been put forth by scholars on how to achieve free and fair elections in Nigeria and consequently achieve correlation between elections and legitimacy. For example makenzie (1958), Adamu and Ogunsanwo (1982), Diamond (2002), have put forth the following as common denominators in their recommendations for a free and fair election in
Nigeria as well as Africa multipartism, independent electoral body, independent judiciary, explicit electoral rules.

Yet, in spite of all these recommendations, electoral fraud had continued in Africa unabated. Some of the methods adopted are either with rapid crudity or highly sophisticated. These scholarly recommendations made by the highly rated scholars have failed to address problems associated with electoral fraud in Africa because, they have failed to take cognizance of the environment in which their recommendations are to be implemented.

Therefore, attempt is made here to recommend environmentally realistic solutions capable of resolving electoral manipulations. Hence, recommendations, here are borne out of peculiarity of Nigeria and Africa’s environment. First, it must be noted that one of the problems of Nigerian African Counties, such as federation is the creation of an imbalanced structure in which one side north “stands dangerously like a colossus on the rest, East and West”. This imbalance structure has empowered the North electorally and demographically, far and above, the two other regions. Hence, the alleged continued domination of Nigerian politics by the Northerners. This creation of Nigerian federation in 1954 gave the region 56% of both the territories and population.

Therefore, attempts to practice a straight jacket democracy without consideration to the geographical and demographical differences in Nigeria as well as Africa is bound to induce cooperative rigging. This is occasioned either to protect the hegemonic control of the polity by a dominant ethnic group or attempt to wrestle the continued monopoly of the state apparatus by the dominated group. In order, thereof, to discourage cooperative rigging among the major and minor ethnic tribes in Nigeria, there is need to fashion a political arrangement that will be able to assure all tribes or geographical zones in Nigeria of access to power. The Hausas, Fulanis, Yorubas Igbos, Efiks, Ibibios, e.t.c must be assured of equal accessibility to power in Nigerian federation. Political power must not be seen as an exclusive preserve of a section, zone or group. Hence, all call in made for rotational arrangement in our body politics. This is similar to the federal character provision as contained in both 1979 and 1999 constitutions. In this regard, efforts at ensuring equitable distribution of power are to ensure that, cooperative rigging and manipulations of election are discouraged. It is a common knowledge that, all tribes in Nigeria cooperate to manipulate electoral process for one reason or the other. But the moment these tribes are aware of genuine arrangement on ground to assure them of their turn, then cooperative rigging will be discouraged. Elections will therefore, become a yardstick to confer legitimacy on government and its leadership.

Second, there is also the need to discourage the present two term of four years each, as being currently practiced (incumbency factor) in Nigerian politics. This factor (incumbency) has been a major impediment to free and fair, elections. The incumbents have been accused of using the state apparatus and power of patronage to manipulate elections in their favour. It takes leaders with genuine fear of God and respect for humanity to leave the office through electoral defeat. Rather, all the machinery, in the state is set in motion to ensure electoral victory even against the popular wish of the people. To avoid this power of incumbency as a factor in electoral, manipulation, therefore, there is urgent need to discourage the second term syndrome as we have it today, and must be substituted for a single term of five years

Third, any meaningful attempt to stem electoral fraud in Africa must give consideration to the wide gap between the haves and have not. There is no doubt that poverty has impacted negatively on the electoral behaviour in at least three ways: (1) it encourages buying and selling of -votes by the electorate (2) inability of candidates and political parties to access media with
equal strength by competitors for the purpose of citizens education and enlightenment (3) encourages the emergence of the dangerous, dimension of godfather-godson syndrome in Africa politics.

Poverty of ideas and that of wealth have made many of the electoral manipulations easy. It has made it difficult for the creation of a level playing ground politically. A bad candidate with impoverished ideas about governance may be rich. These riches have made him to access hungry minds, print posters to enlighten the electorate, bribe all the stakeholders in the Electoral process. This is because the rich candidate or their god fathers may equally have resources to induce the poverty stricken before or on the day of elections to manipulate voting and electoral process. It is equally possible to buy over hungry voters polling and counting officials and law enforcement agents. All these electoral officers can be induced to facilitate, the rigging of elections by the wealthy politicians.

Poverty has also paved the way for the emergence of the new dangerous development in Nigerian and Africa’s Politics, godfatherism and godson syndrome. The godfathers in most cases are men of wealth who had election of less wealthy politician for the purpose of electoral profit after the election.

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