

Security Challenges and Election Management in Nigeria

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Abstract

A part from routine policing and defence responsibility of security institutions in Nigeria, they also perform the duties of providing security and conducive environment for electoral staff and their materials, voters, and candidates during election processes. They focus on manning polling units, collation centers, INEC offices and general security patrol. Yet; since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, elections in the country have been characterized by various mal-practices such as snatching of ballot boxes, political assassinations, rigging and all forms of malpractices prior to, during and after elections. This has often brought unpopular politicians into power and consequently their poor performances. In this study, we examine how security deployment, security professionalism and their non-partisanship relate with elections management in Nigeria. The western countries have achieved remarkably in their electioneering processes due to professionalism exhibited by its security institutions and modern policing strategies but developing countries like Nigeria are still far from reaching that landmark. The study adopted the survey research design which allowed the researcher the use of questionnaire to explain described and predicted relationship between the observed variables. The population of the study comprised of staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission and Cross Riverians of voting age that participated in previous elections in the state. The stratified random sampling techniques and quota system was used to determine the sample size for the study. A total of 150 respondents were drawn from the three senatorial districts of the state. Data for the study was analyzed using the Pearson moment correlation coefficient techniques. The modernization theory was used as a theoretical frame work. The result of the tested hypotheses shows that there is significant relationship between the rate of security deployment and election management. Also security professionalism significantly relate with election management in the state. It was also revealed that there is significant relationship between security partisanship and election management. All these were discovered to have affected election management negatively in the state. It was therefore recommended that security institutions in the state should improve on the numerical strength of personnel deployment during election processes. Security personnel should also be exposed to special elections coverage training to acquaint them with the necessary skill to handle election related crisis. Furthermore, the leadership of security institutions in the state should setup personnel monitoring team that should ensure personnel are non partisan during election coverage.

Keywords: Security challenges, Security Deployment, professionalism, Elections

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Introduction

In every democratic society, elections constitute an essential framework for a change in political dispensation. It serves as an avenue where citizens make political choice on who to represent them within a given period. However, Nigeria since the restoration of democracy in 1999 after a long era of military rule, elections administration has rather lead to societal hostility and tensed political environment. This hostility is seen in the numerous intra and inter-party crisis within the period and election-related violence that constitute security challenges in election management in the country (Ogundiya and Baba, 2007).

According to Shaapera, Obadahum and Abdulrahman (2014), election-related crises since 1999 and the aftermaths of the 2002, 2007 and 2011 general elections have posed great security challenges for the country. It is estimated that over 20,000 Nigerians have lost their lives, hundreds of thousands displaced, while property worth billions of naira have been destroyed following elections crisis.

In a civilized democratic setting where elections are administered without any form of violence, intra or inter party political disputes are diplomatically resolved. Such system created the prospect for credible election management. But where elections are characterized by violence, intimidation, thuggery, rigging, ballot box snatching and stuffing and all manners of electoral malpractices, they create an avenue where candidates and their political parties reject the outcome of such election leading to numerous post elections litigations across the country.

Nigerians experiences with general elections has shown that the security institutions in the country vested with the mandate to ensure peaceful political atmosphere before, during and after elections, lack the capacity in terms of personnel deployment for elections to cover every section of the country, proper election coverage skills, modern election monitoring technology that could guaranteed peaceful and credible electoral process in the country. In addition to the statutory policing and defense responsibilities, the Nigerian police and other sister security agencies are expected to provide security for voters, candidates, electoral staff and party workers during the electoral processes. Their responsibility centers on manning polling units, collation centers, INEC officers and general patrol to ensure a hitch-free political environment. But the security institutions seem not to have braced up to the challenges of security breaches during elections in the country.

In Cross River State, the 2019 general elections has come and gone but the aftermath effect have leads to series of post elections litigations in the state election petition tribunal. The All Progressive Congress (APC) in the state rejected the outcome of all the elections citing security lapses that favours the ruling Peoples Democratic Party to rig the elections in the state. The central senatorial district of the state also witnessed prevalent inter party crises that resulted to loss of lives and property in Abi, Etung, Yakurr, Obubra and Boki local government areas. The political uncertainties in the state creates avenues for aggrieved groups to agitate for the cancellation of the 2019 elections in the state and a fresh election to be conducted on the bases of effective security.

In addressing the press concerning the spate of political violence, killings and destruction of properties, the state commissioner of police stated that the police and other security agencies in the state were very ready to tackle security challenges that is capable of truncating the electoral process through effective policing of the nooks and crannies of the state. Despite the activities of the security institutions during the elections, they were still some cases of election-related violence which truncated the general elections in some local government areas due to security challenges. The question therefore is, what is the relationship between the rate of security deployment and election management? How does security professionalism relate with election management? How has security partisanship affect election management in Cross River State? Analyzing the above questions and lots more forms the purview of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between security challenge and management of elections in Cross River State. Specifically, the study sought to examine:

- How security deployment relate to elections management in Cross River State
- How security professionalism relate to the management of elections in Cross River State
- How security partisanship affect elections management in Cross River State

Conceptual and Theoretical Discourses

Election Security and Electoral Violence in Nigeria

Elections are means of selecting those to represent the people in various public positions within the polity. It provides citizens with influence over policy making (Powell, 2000). But since the return of democracy in 1999, election management has turn to be a threat to national security in Nigeria as seen in wide range of political killings and violence during electioneering processes in the country. As a result of this, the security forces in the country have also been mandated to provide security for electoral staff, voters, candidate, election materials to curb elections related violence at various levels.

Nkwachukwu and Nkiru (2012) asserted that the prevalence of violence that is attributed to elections in Nigeria is always to severe for the security forces to handle interms of capacity in the area of deployment, arms and professionalism. This they said justified the reason for military addition and strengthening in elections security since the Nigerian police force cannot be dependent upon in providing adequate protection for the numerous difficult situations. They submitted that the Nigerian police are identified as being feasible only when crisis occurs, and they are always component of the trouble interms of elections hostility and equally uses their status to intimidate and harass electorates who are associated with a party that rivals the contender that gave inducement for support. These they said is responsible for various attacks on security personnel and electoral material witnessed during elections in the country which have truncated credible and acceptable elections in Nigeria.

Ogboja (2007) also conducted a study on security challenges and election administration in Nigeria and discovered that politicians and political parties sees electoral contests as a must win affair. Consequently, engaging in activities or actions that constitute emotional or structural threats, directed at harming, threatening, black mailing political opponents prior to, during and after voting with the objective of influencing to their selfish interest. This he said has breach the security situations put in place for a peaceful election which has compromise the process in most cases.

Omojuwa (2007) aligned himself with Ogboja by stating that elections in Nigeria since the return of democracy in 1999 have been characterized with wide range of violence due to the fact that, sitting governments are usually difficult to unseat through elections. He noted that the government in power sometimes cause the security to compromise and work for them against their opponent. Consequently, leading to security personnel extra-judicial killings. In the same vein, when the national security apparatus refused to compromise, they import arms for political thuggery to counter security forces and also explore security lapses in a bid to compromise the electoral processes.

The Effect of Inadequate Security Deployment on the 2019 General Elections in Cross River State

The security of the citizens is the primary duty of any government. National security is the podium of democracy and its values for the people. As such, there is no factor that provides meaning and legitimacy to democratic rule than security (Onodugo, 2015). Election management has necessitated heavy security deployment due to its threats to lives and property over times. Like in some third-world countries going through democracy, Nigeria have faced the challenge of ensuring convincing and clear voting environment. The challenge is more witnessed in civilian-civilian changeover than military-to-civilian changeover. In this situation, the processes of election are cause to be weak to lots of abuses through manipulation of the whole arrangement.

The effect of inadequate security on ground to square violent intention was witnessed in Cross River State in the 2015 general election. During the build up to the general election, some high profile politicians in the state who were denied tickets in the Peoples Democratic (PDP) defected to the labour party (LP) to run against their former party. The situation made

the state volatile interms of violence and all sort of political manipulations due to growth of opposition political party in the state.

Prior, during and after the election, the state experienced widespread violence across the three senatorial district that led to destruction of houses, political killings, politically motivated kidnappings, snatching of ballot boxes, manipulation of results among other malpractices. The situation exposes the inadequacy of security personnel in the state as most of these havocs were committed without security presence or interventions.

According to the publication of an online media outfit Crossriver watch of 15 February, 2015, eleven persons in Ekori Yakurr Local Government Area, lost their lives following a clash between supporters of labour party and the Peoples Democratic Party in the area. It was reported that the crisis lasted for about two days without security prompt intervention to avert the situation. The security breach in the area affected the turn-out of the electorate to come out and vote on the election days for fear of being harm. This further collaborated with Augustine (2017) assertion that voters turn out in a particular state is dependent on the level of security deployment and presence in a given area.

Furthermore, the former governor of Cross River State Senator Liyel Imoke also blamed the poor voter turnout recorded in the 2015 election when compared to what was recorded in 2011 in the state to security inadequacy and lack of capacity in some flash points which causes apathy in some local governments. It was further noticed that lack of security personnel in some polling units in the state created an avenue for free intimidation of electoral staff by political thugs who manipulated results for their principal. The act affected the credibility of the election as announced by the independent National Electoral Commission in the state as there were differences in result recorded and what was announced.

Despite the order of the Inspector General of Police to the state police command that the incident of the 2015 general elections should not be repeated intrerms of security deployment and coverage, the 2019 general election in the state never witnessed security adequacy. They were wild spread violence between the supporters of the All Progressive Congress and the peoples Democracy party where lives and properties were destroyed. The independent Electoral Commission also announced the cancellation of the last presidential and national assembly elections in Etung and some council wards in Obubra and Boki local government areas as a result of violence outbreak.

Security Partisanship and Election Management in Nigeria

The safety of citizens and their party is basically the primary responsibility of every administration. Internal security and national defence is the platform that ensure smooth democratic practices in any given nation. As a result, there is no aspect that gives implication as well as legality to democratic system, election management than effective and consistent security. According to Edeko (2011), the professionalism of the security institutions of a given country guaranteed the successful operation of every other division or components in a democratic arrangement. The reason is that security capacity serves as the main stay of orderliness, firmness and growth in all spheres of communal values and ambitions.

Ali (2013) also conducted a study on election security and discovered that the quality, quantity, professionalism of security personnel have direct connection with election management because both are people oriented. He went further to state that the factor of insecurity before, during and after elections in Nigeria is on the increase due to the unprofessionalism and partisanship of security personnel in the country. Consequently, election rigging, political killings using some compromises security personnel have caused Nigerians to loose faith in the country's electoral process.

Eme and Onyishi (2011) also stressed that the poor performance of Nigeria electoral umpire to deliver credible elections to the satisfaction of the electorates is caused by the activities of the security outfit that are deployed to safeguard the process. They argued that security institutions in the country are still using obsolete equipments in election coverage

compared to what is obtainable in western countries. A comparative analyses of how elections are covered in developed countries like United State of America shows that modern technologies like the CCTV cameras and crime detective device are deployed to strategic area before, during and after elections.

Furthermore, Ighodalo (2011) in a related study revealed that security personnel in Nigeria lack the requisite training and skill to adequately safe-guard the hostile elections environment in the country. He argued that the skill needed for effective election policing is different from the conventional security training in the country. He observed that most of the crisis witnessed in the country's electoral process, are caused by security personnel deployed to cover election because of their unprofessionalism and unskillfulness. Comparatively, he said that elections in developed countries are relatively peaceful because there are provisions for special election security training for their security forces.

Albert (2011) argued that the partisanship of security personnel deployed to cover elections is a big threat to Nigeria democracy. He stated that it has become a practice that security institutions with the mandate to safe-guard elections have rather turn themselves to security officers of politicians and political party with the highest offer. He argue that the security institutions in the country are the problem of Nigeria democracy because they engages in intimidation, rigging and manipulation of electoral process and circumvent the will of the people. Consequently, this has brought unpopular governments to power with the resultant crisis, breakdown of law and order, post election litigations, and poor performance.

Akintola (2008) observed that security ineffectiveness in the country have contributed greatly to elections postponement and inconclusive election declarations in crisis prone areas citing security challenges. He noted that security anti-riot units are not given the needed intensive drill and training that will prepare them for emergency/crisis situation during elections. He gave instances where there was violence during elections with no security on ground to tackle them. In some cases, the security are called notifying them of violence but they won't come until lives and property are destroyed. The security forces must therefore brace up to meet global best practices to the reality that their operations and performance will be evaluated in relations to the rule of law, election credibility, human right, civilized conduct and their role in democratic consolidation.

The study adopted modernization theory as a theoretical framework. Modernization theory is seen as a functionalist approach to society and institutional development. It is relevant to this study because it advocates for a change in attitude of all stakeholders in election management, the use of modern security technologies in securing election processes, modern information gathering system, training of security personal in modern policing among other to address election security challenges. The assumption of the theory is that any society or institution that is willing to develop must abandon it old method of doing things and embrace contemporary and innovative approach through the use of modern science and technology.

The theory sees normative and traditional approaches as an impediment to development and therefore, advocate for re-orientation in attitude of institution as facilitator of development. The implication of this theory is that if Nigeria wants to attain effective election administration, security personnel, INEC staff, political parties, electorates must change their traditional believes towards elections and embrace modern democratic practices that enhances credible election management like what is obtainable in developed countries.

The theory is also considered imperative for this study because it advocate for the use of modern security devices such as electronic voting system against manual and the introduction of modern security gadget such as CCTV cameras in strategic places during electioneering period. The application of modern technologies will therefore, enhance credibility of elections and reduce spate of cases of security challenges.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. Survey design is a subtype of expo facto design that allows the researcher the use of questionnaire to explain, describe and predict relationship between variables. The population of the study comprised of staff of the independent national electoral commission and Cross Riverians of voting age that have participated in previous elections in the state. The reason is that the study is limited to studying security challenges and election management in Cross River State.

The sampling technique adopted for the study is the stratified random sampling technique. The technique allows the researcher to stratify the study population into three (3) different strata using senatorial districts in the state. The population was further downsized to selecting two local government areas from each senatorial district making a total of six local government area. An equal allocation of twenty five (25) respondents were selected from Calabar south, Calabar municipality, Abi, Yakurr, Yala and Ogoja local government areas. This give a total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents and that forms the sample size for this study. Data for the study were collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary source of data deals with informant gotten from the field using structured questionnaire, while secondary source deals with information derived from existing literatures.

Data for this study was analyzed using the Pearson moment correlation coefficient techniques. The technique was used to determine the extent of relationship between the observed factors and election management as well as determine how security challenges impact on effective elections management in Cross River State.

DATA PRESENTATION

S/N	Structured questions	SA	A	D	SD
	Items on the rate of security deployment				
1.	Security personnel present in your unit were not adequate to tackle violence in your unit	75(50%)	50(33.4%)	10(6.6%)	15(10%)
2.	There were electoral malpractices in your polling unit because security personnel were not on ground to ensure orderliness	84(56%)	48(32%)	9(6%)	9(6%)
3.	People do not come out to vote because there were no enough security to prevent violence	66(44%)	54(36%)	20(13.4%)	10(6.6%)
4.	Election results in your area are manipulated when security officials are not on ground	74(49.3%)	40(26.7%)	16(10.6%)	20(13.4%)
	Items on security professionalism				
1.	Violence recorded during the 2015 and 2019 elections in the state were due to lack of security skill capacity to tackle them	75(50%)	48(32%)	9(6%)	18(12%)
2.	Cruel method of covering election is responsible for while there are still rigging in the state	54(36%)	84(56%)	4(2.6%)	8(5.4%)
3.	Security forces in the state will performance better when they are retrained for election duties	75(50%)	40(26%)	20(13.4%)	15(10%)
4.	Poor security capacity interms of skill sometimes result to destruction of election materials by party supporters	73(46.6%)	38(25.4%)	22(14.6%)	17(11.4%)
	Items on partisanship of security personnel				
1.	The activities of some induced security personnel in the 2015 and 2019 elections was responsible for the wide rejection of the outcome by candidate and their parties in the state	68(45.5%)	52(34.6%)	14(9.4%)	16(10.6%)

2.	Security personnel sometime banns electorates from voting for a party of their choice	38(25.4%)	70(46.6%)	23(15.4%)	19(12.6%)
3.	Cases of attacks on security personnel by political thugs during the 2015 and 2019 elections were due to the inability of the security to be neutral	55(36.4%)	73(48.4%)	12(8%)	10(6.6%)
4.	Induced security personnel who favoured ruling party in the election was responsible for inter party violence recorded in the 2019 elections	79(52.6%)	62(41.4%)	7(4.6%)	2(1.4%)

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between security deployment and election management. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation was used and the result is presented in table one

TABLE 1
Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between security deployment and election management (N=150)

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	Df	r-cal
Security deployment adequacy	1602	1718			
Election management	1989	11678	2084	148	0.52*

The result in table I showed that 148 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated r-value of 0.52 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between security deployment adequacy and election management.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between security professionalism and election management. To test this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment correlation was used and the result is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between security professionalism and the management (N=150)

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	df	r-cal
Security professionalism	1084	1192			
Election management	1989	11678	2707	148	0.32

The result in Table 2 showed that at .05 level of significance and 148 degree of freedom, the calculated r-value of 4.32 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195. This implies that there is a

significant relationship between security professionalism and election management. However, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant relationship between security partisanship and election management. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation was used and the result is presented in table 3.

TABLE 3
Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between security partisanship and election management

Variable	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	Df	r-cal
Security partnership	1602	1672	1789	148	0.44*
Election management	1989	11678	2.017		

Table 3 showed that .05 level of significant and 148 degree of freedom, the calculated r-value of 0.44 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.195, this implies that there is a significant relationship between security partisanship and election management. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings of the tested hypotheses, it was discovered that the rate of security deployment to cover elections in Cross River State has significant relationship with election management. The study unveiled that poor security deployment for elections duty is responsible for election-related crisis in the state that always affect its credibility. The result is in affirmation with Augustine (2017) assertion that voters turnout in a particular state is dependent on the level of security deployment and presence to ensure peaceful election environment.

The study also revealed that there is significant relationship between security professionalism and election management. It was discovered that unskilled security personnel in the state to cover elections contributes to the challenges the electoral empire faced in administering elections in the state. The security institutions were not professional enough to curb violence in the state during electioneering period. The result was in affirmation to Ighodala (2015) assertion that security personnel in the country lack the need training and skill to adequately safe-guard the hostile election environment in the country.

The result also showed that security partisanship relates with election administration in the state. The study unveiled that compromised security personnel contributed to some of the irregularities witnesses in the conduct of elections in Cross River State. The result agreed with Albert (2011) that the partisanship of the security personnel deployed to cover elections in the country is a big threat to Nigeria democracy. He further states that compromised security personnel are responsible for elections postponement and inconclusive election declarations in some parts of the country.

Conclusion

Past experiences witnessed in the conduct of elections since the fourth republic in Nigeria shows that the state of insecurity in the polity during elections has assumed a frightening height. Even though it may be assumed that insecurity is a global problem, it is worrisome that security institutions have not been able to tackle the problem of election-related violence in the

country to ensure credible elections. In all, what the country need now is effective security during and after elections to ensure good governance and the sustainability of the country's democracy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- 1) Security institutions in Cross River State should improve on the numerical strength of security deployment during elections processes to ensure adequate security presence in all parts of the state.
- 2) Security personnel should be exposed to special election coverage training to acquaint them with the necessary skill in handling election-related crises.
- 3) Modern security devise and gadget should be employed in election coverage in the country.
- 4) The leadership of security institutions in the state should set-up personnel monitoring team that should ensure that personnel are non-partisan when going for election duty.

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