2023 NIGERIA'S (PRESIDENTIAL) ELECTION: DOMESTIC IMPACTS AND FOREIGN POLICYIMPLICATION FOR CONSOLIDATION

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Abstract

Elections are terminal events in which competitive political activities are galvanized towards the race into government offices in many democratic countries ,where political parties struggle for power among themselves for the control of government (statecraft) for subsequent years. All these come with intensive, aggressive, and high-spirited manners employed by stakeholders in elections management, electorates, and political elites. Nigeria is not an exception, as it is in the 24th year of the Fourth Republic of democratization practices, consolidation efforts for popular participation, and collective governance with their principles. This paper interrogates the 2023 General elections, their efficacy, issues, problems, and prospects for sustainable political growth in Nigeria. The paper examines the domestic impacts towards the election, before, during, and shortly after the emergence of the winner as announced and declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Likewise, it noted the external implications on the conduct of the elections as the dynamics of the exercise shaped her national interest and foreign policy disposition to the world. The paper therefore posits to identify as domestic factors – the rise of ethnic /religious cleavages, weak political institutions, voters' perceptions, vote buying and ballot-box snatching syndromes, identity crisis issues, post–election crises while the foreign policy implication evolved from insecurity, kidnapping, banditry, corruption, state fragility, high rate of piracy, border trafficking in drugs and persons, low compliance to the rule of international law, unstable economic and social policies, image crisis and perceptions of foreign observers to the elections. The paper recommends government policy options like providing an enabling environment for political stability, the rule of law to operate freely and fairly, trust in the judiciary, reduction in economic, social, and political tensions, avoidance of ethnic and primordial interests as variables tools for domestic politics, while genuine efforts in the confidence building, increase in foreign capital flow, diaspora inputs, legitimacy, and security guarantee. The study makes use of secondary sources to elicit data, while it adopts political legitimacy theory and the pluralist theory of democracy to mid–wife the study.

Keywords: Democracy, Domestic impacts, Electoral Act, Elections, Foreign Policy.

Introduction

Liberal democracies, with their patterns, have changed their coverage over the years in a peaceful world in which domestic and international crises are resolved by democratic means of law and negotiations. The consequence of socio–economic inequality and new challenges by various forms of popular participation in electing management have emerged on the political landscape in democratic dispensation (Mulfer – Romme & Geibel, 2020:225). There was a sharp departure from the narrative of conflict or authoritarian style to democratic manner of governance across the world especially in the developing states shortly after their independence from the colonial masters. The world movement of starting transitional elections witnessed a milestone and historical manner, which was known as the "Third wave" of democracy as people from different states and individuals embraced the system in their electoral institutions and intergovernmental organizations for wider participation and representation as well as many people supported inter-state relations and multilateral engagements (IDEA, 2022:4).

According to Kuna (2003), Contemporary notions of democratic governments were shaped largely by ideas and institutions across the world that sought to define the limits of public power and the relationship between rulers and ruled. Thus, in medieval, evolving concepts of divine natural and customary laws served as restraints on the exercise of power. Similarly, in the nonWestern world, notions of the rights and privileges of rulers, as well as mechanisms of admonishing or removing rulers from power, are well documented, while the development of liberal democracy has influenced and has impacts on the concept of natural rights, political equality, sovereignty, adult suffrage, state power, accountability participation etc. (Kuna, 2023:26)

Democracy was not formulated until the 17th and 18th centuries, an epoch which was called the Age of Enlightenment in the history of Western Philosophy. It was only then that philosophers defined the essential elements of democracy (Jubrin, 2016; 40). Democracy has been imputed to our political mentality and hence participation since the Greeks 'city–states' era. It means the people in the governance of their own affairs, as the concept of democracy has been generalized and used across the world where citizens elect their members to occupy one position or another in a representative or direct pattern (Agu, 2015:110). It is the rule of the people expressing their will through votes, where the ultimate authority of government is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform with the choice of the people and to serve the interest of the masses (Gauba, 2003:329). It is in the form of a democratic system in which the governing body is a comparatively large portion of the entire nation (Johari, 1989:300).

According to Gauba (2003),

> … in a representative democracy, election is the process by which the members of a community or organization choose one or more persons to exercise authority on their behalf. The provision of election in a democracy a democracy is intended to ensure that the government will exercise its powers with the consent of the governed. In other words, election legitimacy leads to the authority of the government. This source of legitimacy is regarded as important in the modern age that some non – democratic or authoritarian systems also try to legitimize their authority through the façade of

elections. The real test of a genuine election is whether the voters have real alternatives before them for exercising their choice or not (Gauba, 2003:433).

Furthermore, democracy connotes people empowered to govern themselves in the form of government in which all citizens have votes (Edubirdle, 2022: 5). The political arrangement could situate the people to assemble where their affairs are determined and held in their own hands (Jega 2005:5). To Agagu (2007) Democracy connotes a representative form of government with participatory decision making, accountability and the guarantee of human and civil rights without whose exercise the political system of democracy could not function and it is a consensual system where its legitimacy comes from an acceptance of the fairness and transparency of its procedures for elections to state offices and policy – making   (Agagu,2007:74), while democracy is characterized by representation as officials are held accountable to the public through periodic elections that confirm them in power or replace them with new official ls (Aver & Orban, 2014;88). The essence of government at any level is to ensure the upliftment of the human condition through the people's participation in the determination of the decisions which affect their lives at all levels and at all times (Igodalo, 2006:73).

Theoretical Framework
 The research paper is founded on the theories of political legitimacy and the pluralist theory of democracy, which assume that elections require a model and platform for their paths to be able to administer their specific objectives. Political legitimacy theory, in its discourse, reflects and stands on the right to govern, rule, and exercise the constitutional rights to oversee the affairs of the state by the government on behalf of the people, having secured their consent, mandate, and approval in the first place through elections, selections and appointments as the case may be. According to Max Weber, cited by Knight & Schwartzberg (2019):

What makes power legitimate is that it is "rightful" according to prevailing standards of morality; those who hold it come to their position according to widely recognized and acceptable processes and then act according to given norms and values. David Beethan interprets Weber as arguing that it is the beliefs of people in a government's legitimacy that make it legitimate. He goes on to list what, in his view, constitutes legitimate government and governmental practices: [i] It conforms to established rules; [ii] the rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and [iii]there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relations (Knight subordinate; & Schwartzberg, 2019:368)
While Aloysius – Michaels & Chime (2014) noted that:
> … the fundamental point to note" is that the ability of the state in a policy to stimulate development and perform primary responsibility is inversely proportional to the quantum of sovereignty and legitimacy such a state commands …Legitimacy manifests the residues of power and authority and defines state system along the lines of mass-oriented or autocratic mass umpire (Aloysius Michaels & Chime, 2014:2)

It is often used, especially in times of political crises, to test the degree of acceptance or otherwise to which a political system or regime, political institution, mechanism or leaders or policies satisfy the requirements of political legitimacy on whether or not and to what extent they embody the best way to govern and the right to leads (Jean–Marc, C,2019:3) Among the writers, thinkers and the theorists of political legitimacy theory include Barker, R (1990), Beethem, D, (2013); Habermas (1973) & Hard. I. (1999), amongst others. The defects of the theory lie in the fact that it is still subject to controversy on its conceptual normative and empirical approaches. The very idea of legitimacy is called into question since one finds it impossible to account for conflicts between legality and legitimacy and that legitimacy is not limited to the law and that the legality does not suffice to establish the right to govern which is obvious, also by the fact that the law cannot give rise to all alone to a belief in legitimacy (Jean–Marc, 2019:32).

The leakage of the theory to the study explains the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. That is, the results of the 2023 presidential general election in Nigeria, by the declaration of the candidate of the Action Progressive Congress as the winner of the results, certainly and automatically confer the political legitimacy on him and his administration to lead and govern this country on behalf of the people of this country.

The second theory that piloted the study is the pluralist theory of democracy. It believes in the system of multiple political parties' participation and representation as well as citizens/people involvement in their various divergent views and activities in party politics of their choices. It focuses on varieties in groups' political divisions relating to different processes to the path of governance. It is a theory whereby political power is fragmented among the branches of government, sharing power between states and a multitude of people and institutions. It ensures more politicization of the people in all spheres of life under mass participation in political decisions. It represents a social system that provides for the co-existence of political customs, traits, and other variables as they aggregate their commonalities and differences together (Cunningham, 2002:82).

Proponents, writers and theorists of this theory include James Madison, Robert Dahl, Charles Lindblom, David Truman, Seymour Martins Lapset, Authur Betley, James Burnham, etc. They all agreed on their philosophical thoughts that in the political system, policies are made by mutual consultation and exchange of opinions among various political groups. The sovereignty of the state should be in the forms of power relations among the constituent groups that have a stake in the country.

The leakage of the theory to the paper noted that the state involves many people, institutions, and political parties that require their participation and representation in different manners and styles as the citizens have various interests in the state project. While the weakness of the theory could be observed that it does not ascertain internal democracy among them, it only centers on decision making, and it overlooks those issues on which no decisions could be agreed. Though they are very critical as well, the theory tends to be mass-oriented, it finally gives chances for the elites to have their ways and become their leaders.

History of Democracy in Nigeria

The relative stability and sustenance of multiparty democracy hold good prospects for governance in Nigeria. A cursory glance at the political history of Nigeria reveals that the current democratic dispensation has the largest number of political parties and is formidable in the system towards consolidation (Ajayi and Ojo, 2014:113).

According to Jalingo (2003) that:

> The Nigerian pre-colonial democracy, which was by consultation and consensus, is nearer to direct democracy (the Libyan type) than it is to parliamentary democracy, especially in Nigeria, where representatives have subverted the purpose for which they were elected. In any case, the gap between the electorate and the parliamentarians is far narrower than it was when the British first imposed elections and their Westminster model of governance in Nigeria. All this confirms democracy because it was imposed on Nigeria by the departed colonial master (Jalingo, 2003:70)

The nation's democracy has been weak and not stable since independence. Various governments have managed to create feelings of general cohesion in a complex country wherein borders were drawn by the colonial masters, which joined all the ethnic segments together. Nevertheless, civil rule and development have grown speedily at different places across the nation of multiethnic diversity. The first, 2nd, and third abortive republics have passed through the political space with the civil war. The dynamics of instability and other issues associated cases with political crises in Nigeria, especially from 1999 to date, have been noticeable with challenges and prospect as well as against stagnation, dictatorship and fragility of the state (Hoffman & Wallace, 2002:8).

According to Ibrahim (2009), The language of Nigerian politics is often expressed within the syndrome of ethnic regional domination. It is a language whose grammar is defined by two elements. The first is the control of political powers and their instruments, such as the armed forces and the judiciary. The second is the control of economic power and resources. Both are powerful instruments that are used to influence the authoritative allocation of resources to groups and individuals. Both contribute to the climate of fear that is pervasive in Nigerian politics (Ibrahim, 209:39). Democracy in Nigeria exhibits a peculiar form, nature, and behavior. Since independence, democracy has been thrice aborted. In spite of the euphoria that created independence in 1960 and the handover of power to elected civilian governments in various transition periods, it has not gotten to the stage of democratic consolidation due to frequent military interventions over the years (Agagu, 2007:71). The main point of the struggles to restore democracy in the period under review as analyzed within the framework of democratic imperative. The triumph transition plans that provided e the middle grounds for satisfying the democratic forces over those of military dictatorship are attributed to the resilience of civil society, the deconstruction of the myth of superior morality and attendant precipitate loss of legitimacy and social capital, and finally, the intervening but supportive variables of economic decline, adjustment and the global democratic revolution that attracted tremendous support for the democratic struggles in Nigeria (Osaghee, 2022:420; Egbule, 2020:4).

History of Political Parties in Nigeria

Political parties are the bedrock the of a democratic system in all political systems with the interest articulation, aggregation of ideas, education, and communication, as well as the socialization of political norms and cultures. It is the agent of instrument of mobilization conflict management, identification of actions, and judgment of individuals. They are essential elements in any democratic state, which are credence that Nigeria's Political system is being consolidated, especially in the fourth republic (Oladeji, 2022:5). Political parties developed in Nigeria following the national sentiments consciousness and movements as nationalist agitators were formed into groups and associations to stand against the colonial rule as the principal reason for creating them (Ocholongwa, 2022:8). Political parties are important ingredients to democracy as they operate in a realm of regulated manner, while very many people and states lives under the system of democracy which injects government responsiveness to the people (strokes, 1999:8).

> According to IRI (2020), political parties are critical to democratic governance, linking citizens and governments and being the platform for citizens to influence government. In Nigeria, political parties tend to be organized along ethnic, religious, or geographical issues. Political parties are most effective when they bring together like-minded citizen with common political preferences and goals. In colonial Nigeria, Political parties provided an avenue through which to mobilize and educate citizens and grow the independence movement (IRI, 2020:3-4).

Furthermore, towards the 2023 Nigeria general elections, 18 political parties registered and engaged for the elections as a result of their political rights to participate in Political activities of their choice. This was an indication that Nigeria's democracy is thriving and consolidating, regardless of some attending challenges, confronting our democratic system. Financial inducement and ideology were noticeable, but the people placed their collective resolve above ethnic and religious inclination and beside to exercise their rights adequately (Adeagbo, 2023:4)

Moreover, election is a form of democratic way in the political pattern for every political system where it adopts electioneering as a symbol of democracy. However, if the process is marred with irregularities, it tends to undermine the integrity of the process/system and affects the democratization agenda (Chitleoarporn, 2015:3). Elections play a vital role in deepening democratic rule as they enable the governed to govern them. Credible elections remain a critical indicator of democratic consolidation, peaceful power change, and the rule engagement of a multiparty system are all hallmarks of democracy (Osaghe& Adamu, nd; 50).

Essentially, political parties are important institutional components of liberal democracy and the electoral process that produce candidates, set the parameters of issues and agenda within which elections are to be fought, and are expected to perform them, which defer from one election to another. The growth of modern democratic practice revolves around political parties, which stand out as organized platforms for the articulation of aspirational and canvasing for electoral votes (Adebayo, 2006:63).

Names of political parties that participated in the 2023 Nigeria's General Elections.

S/N	Names of Political Parties	Party Acronym	Names of Parties' Flag bearers	Remarks/ Year founded
1.	Accord party	A	Professor Christopher Imumulen	2017
2.	Action Alliance	AA	Al-Mustapha Hamza	2005
3.	Action Democratic Party	ADP	Sanni Yabagi Yusuf	2017
4.	Action People's Party	APP	Nnadi Charles Osita	2018
5.	African Action Congress	AAC	Omoyele Sowore	2018
6.	African Democratic Congress	ADC	DumebiKachikwu	2005
7.	All Progressive Congress	APC	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu	2013
8.	All Progressive Grand Alliance	APGA	Professor Peter Umeadi	2003
9.	Allied People's Movement	APM	Yusuf Mamman Dan-Talla	2018
10.	Boot Party	BP	Adenuga Sunday Oluwafemi	2016
11.	Labour Party	LP	Mr. Peter Obi	2002
12.	National Rescue Movement	NRM	Osakwe Felix Johnson	1999
13.	New Nigeria People's Party	NNPP	Mr. Rabiu Kusa Kwankwaso	2001
14.	People's Democratic Party	PDP	Alhaji Atiku Abubakar	1998
15.	Peoples' Redemption Party	PRP	Mr. Kola Abiola	1978
16.	Social Democratic Party	SDP	Prince Adewole Adebayo	1989
17.	Young Progressive Party	YPP	Prince Malik Ado-Ibrahim	2017
18.	Zenith Labour party	ZLP	Nwanyanwu Daniel Daberechukwu	2022

Sources: Mutsol, V. & Wangare J. (2023); John, E, (nd)

Pre – Election Campaign Activities

The pre-election campaigns started on the notes of preparedness, accusations, and counter-accusations from the strongest parties to political tensions and anxiety among the public and shareholders of election managers. The issues ofthe merger of political parties', a notice of

convention, congress, monitoring of political parties nomination of candidates by parties, offenses in relation to finances of political parties, period to be covered by the annual statement, power to limit contribution to political parties, limitation on election expenses of political parties, the conduct of political rallies and processions, prohibition of certain conduct at political campaigns, prohibition of the use of force or violence during political campaigns, limitation on political broadcast and campaigns by political parties, campaigns for elections, prohibition of broadcast 24 hours preceding or on polling day and campaign based on religion or tribe are indicators to elections proper as both prescribed by the election umpire and regular norms to the eve of an election or normal standards across the world (Electoral Act, 2022:A3550) These are electoral guidelines before the conduct of elections.

The election campaigns also witnessed controversial opinion polls towards one candidate against the saga of campaign of calumny. Ethnic, religious, and tribal sentiments were noted, which was against the Electoral Act section 97, 2022 social media falsification of comments and statements from all sides, threats to personal dispositions and unwarranted assertion of data presentation to justify one's stand. There was panic and pandemonium in campaign sites as many billboards were destroyed by political thugs, and the existence of illegal firearms was noticeable during those periods. Again, there were party internal crises on the emerged of the right person to lead the party towards general elections, which led to many party' conventions held on different occasions on the same party platform.

General Elections Proper
 The elections were conducted on Saturday, February 25, 2023, across the 176 846 polling units from the 36 stated and Federal Capital Territory.
(FCT) in Nigeria. Though 240 polling units from the 176,846 have no elections held because no new registration was chosen for those polling units and no voters indicated interest in transferring to them during the last Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) mainly for security reasons (Taiwo, 2023:2). Electronic voting was employed through the use of Bimodal voter Accredited System (BVAS) which was an electronic device designed to read permanent voters' cards and authenticates voters using the voter's fingerprint by entering the last six digits of the voter's identity numbers or typing the last name of the voter' (Arogbonlo, 2023:2). All the eighteen political parties participated in the keenly contested elections across Nigeria. There were issues with the late distribution of INEC materials to polling centers across the country, resulting in the disfranchisement of a few eligible Nigerians while the collation procedure was slow and cumbersome.

Table 2: Nigeria's Presidential Results of 2023 Elections: The four Prominent Political Parties according to their voting strength.

S/N	NAMES OF PARTIES	NAMES OF PARTIES CANDIDATES	TOTAL VOTES CAST	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL VOTES CAST	STATES WON
1.	All Progressive party (APC)	Asiwaju Bola Tinubu	8,794,726 (Winner)	36.61% (Winner)	12
2.	People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Alhaji Atiku Abubakr	6,984,520	29.07%	12
3.	Labour Party (LP)	Mr. Peter Obi	6,101,533	25.4%	12
4.	New Nigeria's Peoples PParty (NNPP)	Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso	1,496,687	6.23%	01
5.	Others	Others	648,474	2.7%	Nil

Source: Ekekwe, N. (2023)

Issues Associated with Post–2023 General Elections In Nigeria

i.   Electronic Transmission of Results

Through the introduction of technologically driven interventions for bimodal voters. The accreditation system and INEC Result viewing portal made the transmission of election results quick and fast for grand collation and announcement of the winner of the elections (Aina, 2023:30). Though it has raised dust due to its process, which has been contested in the Election Tribunal for lack of transparent manner.
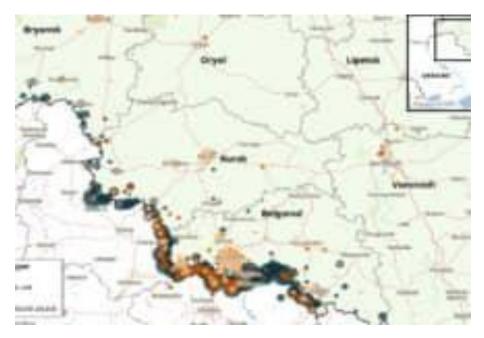
ii.   Poor performance of Nigeria's Political parties, the apparent inability of INEC to deliver on its mandate, the slow and cumbersome procedure of voting and collation of election results, and the lack of confidence in the election conflict management processes and institutions.

 According to Hassan & Obe (2023), : is a case in point. The increasingly fractured electoral landscape demonstrates the extent of Nigeria's political division and makes assessing the accuracy of results announced by the independent National Election Commission (INEC) exceptionally difficult. Even attempting to review the performance of the electoral body can lead to accusations of endorsing results' as

they identified six key issues: insecurity, institutions, information disorder, inter and intra-party squabbles, and inducements that have shaped the elections (Hassan & Obe, 2023:8).

iii.   Threats, risks, and attacks on INEC officials' materials and buildings were reported after the elections, especially in the South East of Nigeria.   Likewise, its website was attacked and hacked several times. INEC equally noted the disruption of polling and counting of ballot papers, the tabulation of results as a threat in the election as well as diversion of sensitive election materials, forgery of result sheets, fake news, misinformation, and blackmail in the media all happened after the general elections (Amata, 2023:4).

iv.   Sensitive ethnic, regional, and religious tensions among Nigerians on their perceptions of the election results. Arguments and counter arguments were reported across the ethnic divided as Primordial Sentiments Observed.

v.   Technology was not enough to capture the outcome of the elections, low voter turnout was discovered, electoral violence on the rise, and the turbulence of social media tragedy all accounted for worrisome tendencies after the election (Nwangwu 2023:3)

Domestic Impacts Of The 2023 Nigeria's General Elections On The Country

i.   **Nigerian Capital Market**

The political economy of the nation is shaped by the choices of the political leadership in the direction of social, economic, and other associated matters as determinants of their policies. The election created a situation of uncertainty, leading to worries for investors, demand and supply, and market forces, as the economic forces, interest rate, and gains/losses in the financial system

impact the capital market greatly. That is, the Political tension dictated the direction of the economic policies on the ground.

ii. Inter /intra Party Crises.

Political parties among themselves have erupted into internal and external crises sequel to the aftermath of the general election, where interest and defections have surfaced within them with the serial of political violence resulting in the burning and destruction of houses, properties, and even human lives lost. The effect of not conceding defects by the losers to the winner brought the nation to political chaos to a standstill (ACLED,2023:4)

iii. Identity Politics.

The domestic effects of the election manifested in many people demanding more inclusion in the politics of the nation. To Kwaja&Sany ,"a central demand amid this campaign is a better inclusion of Nigeria's hundreds of ethnic, religious and other domination in elections and governance". This calls for true federalism and restructuring of the political system.

iv. Religion, Ethnicity and Regionalism.

Ethnic Politics, regional cleavages, and religious inclinations all played their roles before, during, and after the elections in the selection, appointment, and recruitment of principal officers in the executive and legislative houses of the National Assembly, which could be based on prebendal politics and nepotism not on merit base (Adibe, 2023:6).

v. The emergence of viable third force parties

The emergence of prominent parties like the Labour Party (LP) and New Nigerian People Party (NNPP) has changed the political landscape of multi parties system in Nigeria. Their rise to prominence by becoming more relevant, especially the Labour Party, has affected the internal dynamics of Nigerian Politics after the election. It is no longer a business just between two (2) parties, the People Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress(APC) affairs. Votes have shifted from them to the newest parties (Animasaun 2023:6). However, the PDP and LP have taken the APC to court on account of the victory of the APC by challenging it as the case went to the supreme court of Nigeria finally and won by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

vi. Nigerian Currency Cashless Policy.

Towards the general election and after it, the Federal Government then changed the design of the naira to make business/ market transactions to be cashless. As a result of this banking policy, it led to the scarcity of actual cash in circulation, which brought hardship to Nigerians coupled with the results of the elections. The politics of the banking policy was to target specific presidential candidates from not winning the election. As such, the policy affected the internal social, economic, political, and monetary activities not until the Supreme Court's intervention in the concurrent use of both old and new notes.

Other related issues that have corresponding effects on the domestic politics include:

vii.   Electoral Act of 2022
viii.   INEC Policy ix.Subsidy Policy
x.   Political Elites' personal interests. xi.Insecurity situation of the country
xii.   Weak institution   xiii.Corruption and bad governance

Foreign Policy Implication of The 2023 Nigeria's General Elections
To Peterside (2022), "the responsibility of our nation (Candidates) is to balance national interest with external leakages that are beneficial to our nation".

i.   Election riggers or those who undermine the success of the election shall be denied visas to Western Countries. This stands as a positive measure against malpractices in the election and translates that the foreign nations are on the watch of Nigeria's post-election issues (Akinterinwa, 2023:12.)

ii.   The conduct of the election determined the extent to which it manifested relations with her neighbors and West African sub-region greatly in all manner of planning, coordination, and outcome, including political parties, participation, and emergence of third force parties. Equally involved were the voters' fatigue, personalities engaged, tension recorded, and the militarization of the electoral process, which could be exported abroad for assessment or copied (Kohnert, 2023:17). Foreign Policy responds to domestic Political interests and that interest supporting leaders to change foreign policies which are often consistent in democracies (Leeds & Mattes, 2022:4).

iii.   Insecurity: The foreign states are more interested in the (in) security of Nigeria before, during, and after the general election in the sub–region, economic interests, global oil and gas, migration/refugees, and political influence. Investment prospers where there is stability, peace, and security of lives and properties (Peterside 2022:6; French 2023:4).

iv.   High prospect for Foreign Earnings: The Political stability of the country after the general elections determine the level of more or less foreign earning from abroad, either from foreign investments or from the Nigerian diaspora who have invested already in Nigeria or those who want to now invest their funds money in their dear nation, which amount, to foreign direct investment (Mustapha, Musa &Enakanoselu, 2020:296).

v.   Confidence Building: It ascertains confidence (if normally restored after the election) to the international community that all is well with Nigeria despite the results of the elections for further multilateral diplomatic engagements or otherwise, even in Africa and other African sub-regions (Govin, 2023:4; Watley, 2023:80).

vi.   Resolving other associated challenges that affect the nation's foreign implications of her domestic problems, like the following, will go a long way in diffusing the assertions and narratives of the outside world from such notions that Nigeria is safe, stable, and allies of the global world:

i.   Terrorism
ii.   Banditry
iii.   Piracy
iv.   Humans and weapons trafficking v.Kidnapping and vi.Religious and communal violence (Bukarti, 2o22:12; Okeke, 2020:6).

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Recommendation and Conclusion

In light of the above, several key recommendations can be posited. First and foremost, fostering genuine democracy is paramount, particularly in the context of a multi-diverse society, ensuring inclusivity and representation. Additionally, there is a need for a concerted effort to establish focused leadership, emphasizing issue-based good governance as a crucial foundation. The adoption of deep federalism as a governance model could further enhance representation and regional autonomy. Furthermore, sustaining basic democratic institutions is vital for the stability and functionality of the democratic process. Addressing critical socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping requires a comprehensive strategy. This should involve measures to bolster trust in the judiciary and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), alongside an efficient electoral reform. A significant recommendation is the redefinition of national security policies, encompassing both domestic and international dimensions, with a focus on providing early warning signals to prevent conflicts and crises. Ensuring transparency in the electoral system, where all political parties can compete on a level playing field, is integral to a fair democratic process.

Furthermore, the opinions, judgments, and comments of local and international observers on election monitoring should be upheld and respected by both winners and losers. Electoral malpractices must be actively discouraged to maintain the integrity of the electoral process. It is essential to create an environment that allows a free press and Civil Society Organizations to flourish without fear or favor, fostering a vibrant democratic discourse. These recommendations collectively aim to fortify democratic principles, enhance governance, and contribute to the consolidation of Nigeria's political landscape.

Conclusion

The study has been able to establish issues before, during, and often the 2023 elections in Nigeria, focusing on the presidential election among 18 political parties, with four of them as leading party candidates, while the APC was declared winner by the INEC. It equally noted the internal factors that either aided or marred the 2023 election, likewise the external implications of the election to the outside world. The above rests on sustainability, consolidation, and legitimization of the democratic rule where it allowed multiparty and independence of the electoral body, free press, and free and fair elections to be upheld. The sustenance of credible exercise acceptability, genuine democratic process, and imperatives toward good governance and consolidation of the nation's political system.

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