

Interrogating Voting Patterns in Nigeria's Legislative Elections Under the Fourth Republic

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INTRODUCTION

The legislature as a democratic institution plays a crucial and indispensable role in democratic governance. In presidential system of government where government powers are diffused among three organs—executive, legislature and judiciary, the legislature prevents arbitrary use of power by the executive and the judiciary. This gives credence to the notion that any system of government which claims to be democratic and which operates within the confines of the rule of law must be made up of the three organs

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performing distinct functions and roles which must be complementary. As posited by Nwabueze (2003) the legislature is the symbol of a country's existence as an independent and supreme entity and the hallmark of its prestige as a state and the source through which the executive derives most of its powers and authority in administering the state. Based on this, it was further noted that the supreme authority of the state is therefore, vested in that organ which possess the power to make laws that are binding on the state (Nwabueze 2003). This must have prompted Polsby (1975) to describe the legislature as the 'nerve ending' of any democratic polity.

What however epitomises the role of the legislature in democratic governance is representation. The legislature in any democratic government represents the voices of the diverse ethno-cultural and religious groupings, particularly in ethnically diverse and heterogeneous societies. By doing this, the legislature serves as a viable connection between those who exercise power and authority and the electorate (Okoosi-Simbine 2010). While the legislature is primarily saddled with the function of making laws, it performs other important roles such as representing the interest of the constituencies from which they emerge. The Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) (2016) noted that one of the basic parameters for measuring the effectiveness of the legislature is the extent to which it responds positively to challenges and issues affecting the general public. In this regard, citizens have the right to feel the impact of their representatives because such legislators represent the interest and aspirations of the various constituencies they represent. Thus, the representation function of the legislative institution is significant to democratic growth and sustainability (PLAC 2016).

One derivative of the above is that much as the legislature occupies a central position in democratic governance, its members are considered men and women of honour. By virtue of the fact that members of the legislature perform the role of representation, they derive their mandate from the people particularly those they represent. In essence, the legislators derive their power, authority and status from the people. This notion is buttressed by Bogdanor (1991) when he observed that membership of the legislature resides with the electorate within a political community. Therefore, legislators are mere representatives of such political community. The power to become a member of the legislature resides with the people and such people exercise the power through elections for their preferred candidates. In Nigeria, elections are held every

four years to elect representatives to the National Assembly comprising of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The patterns of such legislative elections have significant effects on democratic sustenance. It is on this premise that, this chapter examines voting patterns in the Nigerian legislative elections in the Fourth Republic. The chapter is structured into four sections. The first section is the introduction. The section dwells on theoretical exposition on periodic election and legislative recruitment. This is followed by an overview of voting patterns and electoral outcomes in Nigeria legislative elections since 1999. The fourth section examines implications of the voting pattern on democratic sustenance in Nigeria and the way forward.

PERIODIC ELECTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The conduct of elections since the emergence of democratic regimes has become one of the major democratic norms in Africa. Since the adoption of democratic system of governance in Africa the conduct of elections has become a significant characteristic of developing democracies most especially those of Africa. Mindful of their transparency and credibility, the fact that elections are held on periodic bases without interruption signifies that the new democracies of Africa are consolidating and developing. Over the years, scholars have demonstrated the importance of elections to democratic consolidation and development (Wojtasik 2013; Dunmoye 2010; Höglund 2009; Sisk 2008; Hughes and May 1988; Cohen 1983).

As noted by Wojtasik (2013) the purposes elections serve are a function of the type of system of government operation in a polity. He argued on the one hand that, in parliamentary systems elections are a way of determining or soliciting political consensus which will at the end translate to a parliamentary majority which have the legitimacy to rule. In presidential systems on the other hand, elections serve as a modicum through which influence can be exerted by elected representatives on the opposition. Other factors which influence the classifications of the functions of elections are the type of electoral system in use in the polity. The electoral system determines the nature of organs which take part in the electoral process and basis on which elections are held and the basis on which winners and losers are determined (Katz 1997).

Generally, elections serve a myriad of purposes in a democratic society. According to Dunmoye (2010) elections help to ensure that those who

exercise governmental power emanate from the choices of the electorates. In essence, elections in his perception ensure that the elected representatives are guaranteed legitimate rule. This claim was buttressed by Hughes and May (1988) when they posited that election helps to institutionalise the process of succession by creating a legal administrative framework for handling inter-elite rivalry and providing a modicum for popular backing for the leaders (Hughes and May 1988). To Cohen (1983) elections serve as the basic framework for the workings of the social contract which binds the rulers and the rules. In this regard, he emphasised that the basic utility of elections can be located in educating, entertaining and giving the people a voice and feeling of participation. It was further argued by Cohen (1983) that elections offer electorate freedom of choice, the power to hold elected leaders accountable and provide protection against perpetration of arbitrary rule. Thus, elections serve as the mechanism for converting the consent of the people into government authority.

Elections come in various forms, each being held or conducted according to its purpose. Elections can be categorised as general elections, primary elections, referendum and initiative elections, plebiscites, legislative and recall elections (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2018). General elections are held to determine which political party or candidate will occupy political offices. In primary elections political parties select candidates to represent the party in general elections. The candidates who garner the highest number of votes in the primary election go on to contest the general election on behalf of the party. The referendum and initiative elections are elections in which the preferences and choices of the community as regards a particular issue of public interest is solicited. Referendum and intuitive elections are usually held for voters to vote 'yes' or 'no'. Plebiscites are elections conducted to decide two critical political issues. These are government legitimacy and the nationality of territories contested between governments. Legislative elections are held to elect members of parliaments or the legislature. Recall elections otherwise known as representative recall is a process by which an elected member of parliament can be removed from office by voters through direct vote before the expiration of the term of office of such member (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2018; Yanina 2016).

The importance of elections in recruiting legislators cannot be overemphasised. The fact that elections are conducted to select parliamentarians and legislators to represent people of a particular constituency for a period of time shows that elected legislators are responsible to electorate through

whom they derive the mandate to become members of the legislature. In essence, electorate holds the power to 'hire and fire' ineffective legislators. One way through which the electorate exercises this power is through periodic elections. On the one hand, the power to hire a legislator is exercised when the people of a constituency cast their votes for a particular candidate during legislative or parliamentary elections. On the other hand, the people of a constituency can recall a legislator who they consider not representing their interest enough. In this regard, such legislator is considered ineffective and can as well be voted out of office in subsequent legislative election.

In most democracies all over the globe, elections are conducted to determine those who become members of parliament. For instance, in the United States of America, Elections for Senate and Representatives as well as Delegates to the Congress are conducted every six years. The time, place and method of holding such elections are determined in each state by the legislature, although, this can be altered by the Congress. The elections are conducted in each of the states and territories of the United States on every Tuesday after the first Monday in November of every even-numbered year. Elections of the Representatives and Delegates to the Congress are held on the third day of January of the following year (United States Senate 2010). Being an even-numbered year, election to the United States Senate was conducted on 6 November 2018. In the election, 33 of the 100 seats were contested in regular Senate election while two other vacant seats in Minnesota and Mississippi were contested in special elections. The winners in the elections are to occupy the office for six years starting from 3 January 2019 to 3 January 2025 (Aron 2018).

It is important to mention that the Constitution of the United States of America does not make provision for nor does it authorise the recall of Senators and Representatives. This accounts for the reason why no member of Congress has ever been removed from office through recall election (Maskell 2012). Nevertheless, nineteen states in the United States of America have provisions for recall election for state officials and representatives (National Conference of State Legislatures 2016). For instance, Chapter 15 Article 48 of Alaska Statute stipulates that a state official or Representative can be recalled with 25% of the last votes cast for the office being occupied by the official. The grounds on which such officials can be recalled include: lack of fitness, incompetence and neglect of duties or corruption (Encyclopaedia of American Politics 2018).

In Britain, parliamentary elections also known as general election give every part of the United Kingdom the opportunity to have a voice in the selection of the Members of Parliament (MP). MPs represent various Constituencies in the House of Commons for a period of five years. Parliamentary elections in Britain are held after the parliament has been dissolved. The party that wins the majority in the elections forms the government. While it is statutory that parliamentary elections are to be held every five years, there are two conditions under which elections can be held before the expiration of five years. Such elections can occur when: (i) a motion of no confidence is passed on the ruling Government by a simple majority and 14 days elapses without the House passing a confidence motion in any new Government formed and (ii) a motion for a general election is agreed by two-thirds of the total number of seats in the Commons including vacant seats, currently 434 out of 650 (Lynch 2007). British parliamentary elections are conventionally held on a Thursday (Siaroff 2003).

While British voters have the right to vote for individuals who become members of the British Parliament, such voters also have the power to recall non-performing or incompetent parliamentarians. The power of the electorate to remove any member of MP is derived from the Recall of Members of Parliament Act, 2015. The Act stipulates that a recall petition could be instigated if a member is convicted by a competent court of law or he or she is suspended from the Parliament for nothing less than 21 days. If any of these conditions occur, the Speaker of the House would publish a notice to a petition officer, who in turn give notice to the constituency of such member. Following this is a petition that will be made available for signing eight weeks. If at the expiration of eight weeks, 10% of electorate in the constituency of the legislator signed the petition, the seat would be declared vacant, thus, requiring that a by-election be conducted (British Parliament 2015). The rationale behind the adoption of the Act can be found in the long-standing argument in British politics that British voters unlike their American and French counterparts who have two votes each for executive and their legislators, cast one vote for both parliamentarians and executive at the same time, thus given the parliamentarians the burden of double loyalty to their constituency and the political party they represent during elections (*The Economist* 2014).

In South Africa where governance is also based on parliamentary system, elections are held to fill seats in the National Assembly which consists of 400 members who are elected by proportional representation

system based on a close list model (Election Guide 2014). Elections into the South African National Assembly are conducted every five years. Elections can be conducted on the order of the President when the Assembly is dissolved. Such elections must be held within 90 days of dissolution of the National Assembly (Election Guide 2014). The last election was conducted on 7th May 2014 the next election therefore is billed to hold on 6th May 2019 provided the National Assembly is not dissolved by the President.

Similarly, in Kenya elections are held to choose members to occupy seats in the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly comprises of 290 members elected from single-member constituencies, forty-seven women representatives elected from the forty-seven counties each forming a single-member constituency and twelve special-interest representatives nominated by political parties in accordance with the proportion of their seats in the National Assembly and a speaker who is an ex-officio member of the Assembly. On the other hand, the Senate comprises of forty-seven members directly elected from each county, sixteen women nominated by the political parties in the Senate on the basis of the proportion of the seats they control; two representatives of the youth (a man and a woman); two representatives of persons with disabilities (also a man and a woman); and the Speaker of the Senate who is also an ex officio member. Parliamentary elections are held every five years precisely on the second Tuesday of August of every five years (The Federal Republic of Kenya 2010).

The significance of periodic elections in recruiting legislators cannot indeed be overemphasised. Elections ensure that elected members of legislatures are accountable to the people of their various constituencies, thus making them act in the interest of the electorate who brought them to power. When elections are conducted for choosing legislators on periodic bases, the fear that a representative who fails to fulfill his or her campaign promises may not be re-elected, thereby, making elected representatives accountable to their constituencies (Fowler 2004). The above position was buttressed by Fowler (2004) when he posited that periodic and democratic elections help in selecting good representatives and incentivising elected representatives to be sensitive to their constituencies, needs and welfare. The accountability of legislators to their constituencies has also been found to be related to the type of electoral system operational in the polity (Matlosa 2003).

For instance, in South Africa, where parliamentary elections are based on proportional representation, voters chose political parties and not individual candidates, thus members of the South African parliament are accountable to their various political parties. This is not to say that the accountability of such representatives is limited to the political parties. The parties in order to ensure that elected representatives are accountable to their constituencies make a list of candidates who will occupy parliamentary seats. When a member of parliament resigns, is expelled, 'cross carpets' to another party or dies the party chooses another person to fill the seat. This indicates that the party is vested with great powers therefore members who ignore party discipline or who reneges on his or her campaign promises loose their seats in parliaments (Matlosa 2003). This position has generated two contending perceptions to the effectiveness of proportional representation in keeping elected parliamentarians effective, responsive and accountable to their various constituencies.

Lodge and Scheidegger (2006) and Sebudubudu and Bothomilwe (2013) argued that members of parliaments are prone to be more accountable to their respective political parties other than to the electorate from whom they derive their mandate. They further argued that constituency-based model in which electorate in certain geographical zone vote during elections for an individual candidate of their choice engender greater accountability and responsiveness to the electorate because there is a direct connection between the geographical zone and individual Member of Parliament. On the contrary, Matlosa (2003) and Norris (1997) argued that proportional representation system gives room to a fairer representation of political parties in the parliament. They are of the opinion that parliamentarians are not necessarily more accountable in a constituency-based electoral system. They argued that disagreeing with party decisions is not necessarily motivated by issues relating to political principles but may necessarily be motivated by career or other political considerations. In essence, they posited that irrespective of the electoral system, some Members of Parliament will at all times maintain a cordial relationship with their respective constituencies.

Fowler (2004) in a study to determine whether elections help in selecting competent representatives discovered that previously held elections do help in recruiting better representatives which invariably aid incumbents to perform well when they are re-elected. This, according to him, cannot be unconnected with the notion that the electorate always determine the re-election of representatives. In another explanation of

the significance of elections in recruiting legislators, Maravall (2007) presented a sequential illustration of how election works. He noted that in the first instance, individual candidates jostle for the votes of the electorate by presenting prospective voters with their intended policies and their ability to initiate the formulation and implementation of such policies. Second, voters during election choose candidates whom they feel possess the ideal policies, initiatives for their development and general welfare. Third, elected representatives after assumption of office put in efforts to set the promised policies in motion. The intended or actual policies under certain political conditions produce outcomes, which shapes the lives of citizens.

By the expiration of the tenure of office of representatives, electorate assesses in retrospect the actual achievement of representatives' vis-à-vis their campaign promises. Before the next election the electorates update their preferences about policies and individual candidates. Lastly, the voters in another election re-elect representatives who they deem had satisfied their desires and aspirations or reject representatives who they perceive as not competent to represent their interest in the legislature. In this regard, elections play the role of selection and assessment in a democratic system (Maravall 2007). This perception of the important role of elections in recruiting and rejecting legislators is shared by Manin et al. (1999, p. 8) when they posited that:

Mandates are particular kinds of signals that are emitted in elections. They constitute a choice among proposals offered by competing teams of politicians. Once elected, the victorious politicians adopt policies. These policies become transformed into outcomes under the noise of conditions. As the electoral term ends, voters evaluate the outcomes and decide whether or not to retain the incumbent government. (Manin et al. 1999, p. 8)

The significance of elections in recruiting representatives to the legislature can further be explained within the context of the theory of representative democracy. The theory of representative democracy was developed in contrast to the notion of direct democracy as practiced in the Greek-city states (Urbinatil and Warren 2008). According to the authors, representative democracy evolved from two important sources. The first is the expansion of franchise, which transformed liberal and constitutional governments to popular democracies. The second is the creation of a

balance between the rulers and the ruled through structured constitutionalism, thus making political parties the main source of representation. Representative democracy is a governance system in which citizens of a country through elections vote for representatives to deliberate on issues related to legislation for the ruling and general welfare of the citizens. It contrasts sharply with autocracy where a dictator has unlimited powers given no room to the people to have a say in the governance process of their country (Gaus and Kukathas 2004).

The theory of representative democracy according to Urbinatil and Warren (2008) has four main assumptions. First, it assumed that representation is a form of relationship between the agents and the principals. In this case, the principals are the constituencies created on a territorial basis and represented by elected agents to represent the interests and aspirations of the people of the constituencies. This clearly separates the source of legitimate power from those who exercise the power. Secondly, the fact that representatives are elected gives credence to the notion that state power and sovereignty resides with the people. Thirdly, the responsiveness of political parties and elected representatives is achievable by elections. Lastly, universal suffrage engenders quality electoral representation and political equality. Thus, elections, responsiveness, guarantee of universal franchise as well as equality are significant concepts to representative democracy. In essence, accountability, quality representation and responsiveness are all derivable through periodic free, fair and credible elections (Esaiaasson and Narud 2013).

It is worthy to note that the theory of representative democracy presupposes a form of mutual political relationship between the constituency and the representatives. This political representation, according to Castiglione and Warren (2006, p. 6) can be demonstrated in two distinct ways. First, they noted that: 'political representation involves a representative X being authorized by constituency Y to act with regard to good Z. Authorization means that there are procedures through which Y selects/directs X with respect to Z, and that responsibility over actions/decisions of X rest with Y.' Authorisation further implies the process of selecting representatives through voting in elections. They further noted that: 'political representation involves a representative X being held accountable to constituency Y with regard to good Z. Accountability means that X provides, or could provide, an account of his/her decisions or actions to Y with respect to Z, and that Y has a sanction over X with regard to Z' (Castiglione and Warren

2006, p. 6). This demonstrates that political representation involves a mutual symbiotic relationship between electorates of a constituency and the representative chosen to represent such constituency.

When people of a particular constituency that is, 'Y' vote for individual candidates or parties to represent their interest in the legislature, it is expected that the representatives 'X' after assuming office through the mandate of the people are expected to be accountable to the people in the sense of providing for the general welfare and development of the constituencies. This is what Castiglione and Warren (2006) refer to as good 'Z'. In a situation where 'X' reneges on the expectations of 'Y', then 'Y' sanctions 'X' by voting him or her out in subsequent elections. This illustration can be located within the notion of electoral democracy which Urbinatil and Warren (2008) refer to that aspect of representative relationship in which representatives are given the mandate to represent the people of a constituency to act on behalf of their interests after which they are assessed and re-elected or rejected in future elections. Much as elections are important to recruiting legislators and members of parliament, two important questions are also of equal importance to the study of legislative elections. The first is why do people vote the way they do in a legislative or parliamentary election? Second, what are the implications of the results and voting patterns on democracy? It is therefore critical to know that the most interesting aspects of an electoral process is not always about who wins and who losses but also about explanation and analysis of election results to identify the sources and implications of voting pattern (Merrill and Grofman 1999).

VOTING PATTERNS AND ELECTORAL OUTCOMES: NIGERIA'S LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS SINCE 1999

The Nigerian state operates a bicameral legislature referred to as the National Assembly comprising of the Senate and House of Representatives. The National Assembly (NASS) deriving its powers from the 1999 Constitution is the nation's highest lawmaking body. While the Senate is headed by the President of the Senate and assisted by the Deputy President of the Senate, the House of Representatives is headed by the Speaker and assisted by the Deputy Speaker. The Senate on the one hand consists of 109 members which reflect the 109 Senatorial districts of the country. The Senatorial districts are equally divided among the 36 states which make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Each of the states has

three senatorial districts while Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory) has one Senatorial district. The House of Representatives on the other hand comprise 360 members representing the 360 Federal Constituencies in which the country is divided. Legislative elections are held every four years to elect the 109 members of the Senate and 360 members of the House of Representatives.

THE 1999 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Since the restoration of democratic rule in 1999, legislative elections have been conducted on a regular and stable basis. Since that year till date six different elections have been held. These are the legislative elections of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. The outcomes of these elections took various patterns and dimensions. The 1999 Senatorial and House of Representative elections were held on the 20th February 1999 and contested by three political parties. These were: the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the All Peoples Party (APP). The pre-election period was characterised by campaign promises of the revitalisation of the country after several years of military interregnum. The Inter-parliamentary Union (1999) noted that the three political parties were separated by a narrow margin of ideological differences, thus the campaign period was largely driven by the same vision and appeal to ethnic and regional sentiments to solicit for votes. The conduct of the elections was generally peaceful. It was observed that while the elections were marred by low turnout and 'some serious irregularities' they were generally adjudged to be fair (National Democratic Institute 1999).

The result of the Senatorial election showed that out of a total number of registered voters of 57, 938, 945 voter turnout was 24, 386, 247 approximately 42% of the total number of registered voters. The distribution of the seats indicated that the PDP won majority of the seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Table 4.1 shows the number of seats won by each of the three political parties in the National Assembly.

Table 4.1 showed that while the PDP won 66 seats, the APP won 23 and the AD won 19 states. With one vacant seat to be filled it can be observed that while the PDP won approximately 56% of the total valid votes cast for the Senatorial election, the APP won approximately 31% while the AD won approximately 12% of the total valid votes cast for the election. The dominance of the PDP in the 1999 Senatorial election also

Table 4.1 Results of the 1999 National Assembly Elections

Political parties	Senate		House of Representatives			
	Number of votes	% of votes	Number of seats (109)	Number of votes	% of votes	Number of seats (360)
PDP	13,753,843	56.4	66	13,924,547	57.1	206
APP	7,608,509	31.2	23	7,046,192	30.6	74
AD	3,023,895	12.4	19	3,023,895	12.4	68
VACANT SEAT	-	-	1	-	-	12
Total	24,386,247	100	109	23,994,634	100	360

Source African Elections Database (2011)

reflected in the results of the House of Representatives election. The PDP like it did in the Senatorial election won the majority seats in the House of Representatives. With 206 seats the PDP had the majority. The APP was able to win 74 seats while the AD had 68 seats. These results depict the dominance of the PDP both in the Senate and the House of Representatives. In the state by state result of the National Assembly elections it was discovered that the PDP won Senatorial and House of Representatives elections in 21 states including all the states of the South-South, South-East geo-political zone. The party also won in seven states in the northern part of the country. APP won nine states cutting across North-West, North-Central and North-East geo-political zones of Nigeria. The AD on its part won all the Senatorial and House of Representatives seats in the entire South-West geo-political zone.

THE 2003 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

On 12th of April 2003 National Assembly elections were held to elect members of the Senate and House of Representatives on the expiration of the four-year term of office of members. Unlike the 1999 National Assembly elections, about 30 political parties contested the Senate and House of Representative seats (INEC 2003). The conduct of the elections was largely described as not transparent and full of irregularities (European Union Election Observer Mission 2003; International Republican Institute 2003). Though about 30 political parties contested the 2003 National Assembly elections, only seven were able to secure seats in

the National Assembly. These were the PDP, AD, All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP), United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP), National Democratic Party (NDP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and People's Redemption Party (PRP) (International Republican Institute 2003). The PDP, ANPP and the AD were the only parties that were able to secure seats in the Senate.

The period leading to the elections was reported to have been characterised by violence which according to reports claimed 100 lives. This was fuelled by a religious riot in the northern part of the country. Election Day violence was said to have claimed about 24 lives (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2003). Out of a total number of registered voters of 60,823,022, turnout was 29,995,171 signifying that 49.3% of the total registered voters participated in the National Assembly Elections. Total valid votes were 29,030,107 (African Election Database 2011). The outcome of the election showed that the PDP won majority seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives. The results of the elections are shown in Table 4.2.

From Table 4.2 it can be observed that the PDP won 76 seats in the Senate, while the ANPP won 27 seats and the AD six seats. This indicated that there was an increase in the number of seats won in the 1999 National Assembly elections from 66 to 76, showing additional 10

Table 4.2 Results of the 2003 National Assembly Elections

<i>Political parties</i>	<i>Senate</i>			<i>House of Representatives</i>		
	<i>Number of votes</i>	<i>% of votes</i>	<i>Number of seats (109)</i>	<i>Number of votes</i>	<i>% of votes</i>	<i>Number of seats (360)</i>
PDP	15,585,538	53.69	76	15,927,807	54.49	223
ANPP	8,091,783	27.87	27	8,021,531	27.44	96
AD	2,828,082	9.74	6	2,711,972	9.28	34
UNPP	789,705	2.72	–	803,432	2.75	2
NDP	459,462	1.58	–	561,161	1.92	1
APGA	429,073	1.48	–	397,147	1.36	2
PRP	204,929	0.71	–	222,938	0.76	1
Others	641,535	2.21	–	587,082	2.01	–
Vacant seat	–	–	–	–	–	1
Total	29,030,107	100	109	29,233,070	100	360

Source African Elections Database (2011)

seats won by the party. This also indicated that the PDP garnered more than 50% of the total valid votes cast during the elections. Also, having garnered more than 50% of the total valid votes cast in the House of Representatives election the PDP won 223 seats showing an increase in the number of House of Representatives seats won in 1999 from 206 to 223. The ANPP won 27 Senate seats and 96 House of Representatives seats with approximately 28% of the total valid votes cast for both elections of the National Assembly. The AD won six Senate seats and 34 House of Representatives seats. This shows that in comparison with 1999 National Assembly election the AD lost 13 Senate and 34 House of Representatives seats.

The UNPP and APGA won two House of Representatives each after securing 2.72 and 1.48% of the total valid votes cast for the House of Representatives election, respectively. The NDP and the PRP won one seat each in the House of Representatives election after securing 1.58 and 0.71% of the total valid votes cast in the election respectively. The result showed the continued dominance of the PDP in the National Assembly. The PDP was able to win more seats initially won by other political parties. For instance, the AD lost 13 seats to the PDP signifying that the PDP was able to capture states in the South-West geo-political zone which was formerly the stronghold of the AD. The PDP won 28 states in the 2003 National Assembly Elections including all the states of the South-South and South-East geo-political zone. It was also able to capture five states out of the six states of the South-West geo-political zone formerly in control of the AD. The ANPP won six states while APGA won in 1 state.

THE 2007 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The 2007 National Assembly elections were held alongside the Presidential election on the 21 of April 2007. Elections were postponed in six Senatorial Districts because of allegations of fraud and malpractices (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2007). 25 political parties participated in the 2007 legislative elections out of which only six were able to secure seats in the National Assembly. While the Independent National Electoral Commission revealed that 35 million voters out of the registered 60 million registered voters turned out for the election, no turnout figures were announced for the National Assembly elections (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2007). Apart from the fact that the elections took place amidst

controversies which emanated from the Senate's rejection of a proposed constitutional amendment to enable the then President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo spend a third term in office, the general conduct of the election was described not meeting up to standard. The election was reported to have been characterised by massive fraud, malpractices and violence (International Crisis Group 2007; Transition Monitoring Group 2007).

The result of the elections indicated a higher majority for the PDP. Unlike the 2003 National Assembly elections when the PDP won 76 and 223 seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, the PDP in the 2007 National Assembly elections won 260 seats in the House of Representatives and 85 seats in Senate. The number of House of Representatives seats won by the ANPP decreased from 96 in 2003 to 63 in 2007. Similarly, the ANPP in the Senate, unlike in 2003 when it won 27 seats could only manage to win 14 seats in 2007. This showed that the party lost 13 Senate seats in the 2007 National Assembly elections. The Action Congress won was able to win six and 30 seats in the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively. The Progressives People Grand Alliance (PPA) won one Senatorial seat and three House of Representatives seats. The Accord Party and the Labour Party won one Senatorial and House of Representatives seat, respectively (African Election Database 2011). The results of the elections are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Results of the 2007 National Assembly Elections

<i>Party</i>	<i>Senate Number of seats (109)</i>	<i>House of Representatives Number of seats (360)</i>
People's Democratic Party (PDP)	87	263
All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP)	14	63
Action Congress (AC)	6	30
Progressive People's Alliance (PPA)	1	3
Accord Party (ACCORD)	1	–
Labour Party (LP)	–	1
Total	109	360

Source African Election Database (2011)

THE 2011 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The 2011 National Assembly elections were scheduled to hold on the 2nd of April, 2011. Due to logistics reasons most especially the absence of voting materials in many of the polling stations the elections were postponed to the 9th of April 2011 (Independent National Electoral Commission 2011). While 56 political parties fielded candidates for the Senatorial and House of Representatives elections, only political parties were able to secure seats in the Senate and only eight were able to win seats in the House of Representatives. Total turnout for the National Assembly elections was 28,552,140 (Independent National Electoral Commission 2011). The number of seats won by each political party in the elections is shown in Table 4.4.

It can be observed from Table 4.4 that the PDP won 71 and 203 seats in the Senate and House of Representatives elections, respectively. These figures indicated a reduction in the number of seats won by the party in the 2007 National Assembly elections. The Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) formerly AC won 18 and 69 seats in the Senate and House Representatives elections, respectively. These showed an increase in the number of seats won in 2007 from six to 18 seats in the Senate and 69 seats in the House of Representatives. The CPC which had not won any seats in the National Assembly won seven seats in the Senate and 38

Table 4.4 Number of seats won by political parties in the 2011 National Assembly elections

<i>Party</i>	<i>Senate Number of seats (109)</i>	<i>House of Representatives (HoR) Number of seats (360)</i>
PDP	71	203
CAN	18	69
CPC	7	38
ANPP	7	28
LP	4	8
DPP	1	1
APGA	1	7
Accord Party	1	5
PPN	-	1
Total	109	360

Source INEC (2011)

seats in the House of Representatives. The ANPP won seven seats in the Senate and 28 seats in the House of Representatives showing a decrease in the number of seats won in 2007 from 14 to seven in the Senate and 63 to 28 in the House of Representatives.

The Labour Party which managed to win one House of Representatives seat in the 2007 elections won four Senate seats and eight House of Representatives seats. The Democratic Peoples' Party (DPP) which also had never won a seat in the National Assembly won one Senate seat and one House of Representatives seat. APGA which has never won a Senate seat won one Senate seat and seven House of Representatives seats in 2011. Similarly, the Accord Party which managed to win one Senate seat in 2007 won one Senate seat and five House of Representatives seats in 2011. The Peoples Party of Nigeria (PPN) managed to win one House of Representatives seat. It is important to note that though the PDP won 71 seats in the Senate and 2003 seats in the House of Representatives, its dominance was reduced in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. For instance, it was not able to win two-thirds of the House of Representatives. The party lost some of its seats to the opposition parties in both Chambers.

THE 2015 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The 2015 National Assembly elections were initially scheduled to hold on the 14th of February 2015. Citing security reasons and poor distribution of voters' cards, the Independent National Electoral Commission announced the postponement of the elections to 28th of March 2015. Out of a total number of registered voters of 67,422,005, turnout for the National Assembly elections was 29,432,083 (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015). Though the elections took place amidst spate of insecurity largely brought about by the activities of the deadly Boko Haram insurgent group, the conduct of the elections were generally regarded as peaceful orderly and credible (AUEOM 2015; EUEOM 2015). While 26 political parties contested the 2015 National Assembly elections only two were prominent. These were the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The APC was formed in February 2013 by four opposition parties. These were the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). It is important

to note that before their merger, these political parties separately won 33 seats in the Senate and a total of 132 seats in the House of Representatives (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015). Similarly, prior to the election there were series of defections from the then ruling party to the then-new opposition party, the APC. Prominent among the defections were the defection of 37 PDP members of the House of Representatives to the APC in December 2013 and the defection of 11 PDP Senators to APC IN January 2014. Also, in October 2014, the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal defected to the APC. Consequently, shortly before the 2015 National Assembly elections the APC occupied more than 180 seats, 20 seats more than the PDP which held 160 seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015).

The outcome of the elections indicated that the APC won 60 seats in the Senate and won a total number of 225 seats in the House of Representatives. The PDP won 49 seats in the Senate and won 125 seats in the House of Representatives (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2015). The outcome indicated that the APC had a majority in both Chambers outnumbering the PDP who had since 1999 maintained the majority in the National Assembly. Table 4.5 indicates the number of seats won by each political party in the National Assembly elections.

With the outcome of the elections, the PDP which since 1999 retained majority seats in the National Assembly turned the opposition party after the elections. The configuration of the leadership of the Senate after the 2015 elections revealed that it was the first time since 1999 that only two parties out of the registered 28 political parties for the 2015 general elections were represented in the Senate. This also implied that the PDP which has occupied leadership positions in the Senate will have to lose

Table 4.5 Number of seats won by political parties in the 2015 National Assembly elections

<i>Party</i>	<i>Senate Number of seats (109)</i>	<i>House of Representatives Number of seats (360)</i>
APC	60	225
PDP	49	125
Others	-	10
Total	109	360

Source Inter-Parliamentary Union (2015)

Table 4.6 Number of seats won by political parties in the 2019 National Assembly elections

<i>Party</i>	<i>Senate Number of seats (109)</i>	<i>House of Representatives Number of seats (360)</i>
APC	62	210
PDP	42	122
YPP	1	10
APGA	-	8
PRP	-	2
AA	-	2
APM	-	1
SDP	-	1
ADP	-	1
LP	-	1
ADC	-	3
PENDING	4	8
Total	109	360

Source INEC (2019)

such positions to the APC (Osasona 2015). Table 4.6 shows the party affiliation of Senators since 1999.

THE 2019 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The 2019 National Assembly elections were initially scheduled to hold on 16th of February 2019 alongside the presidential election. Due to logistic challenges the election was later rescheduled to hold on 23rd of February 2019 (Ogundipe 2019). Like in 2015, the 2019 National Assembly elections were held within the context of incessant and persistent violent feud between farmers and herders, kidnappings, armed banditry, cultism and Boko Haram insurgency. Shortly before the elections there was anxiety as to what impact the violent occurrences might have on the elections (Mercy Corps 2015). Many people expressed their feelings that the elections were going to be bloody and violent given the context within which they will be held. Contrary to the notion that the elections will be violent, the 2019 National Assembly elections were generally regarded as peaceful (African Union Election Observation Mission 2019).

The 2019 National Assembly elections were unique in some respect. Firstly, the facts that the elections were contested by 91 political parties

make it the first elections to be contested by the highest number of political parties in Nigeria's electoral history. Secondly, with 84,271,832 registered voters, the elections had the highest number of registered voters in the nation's history. Though 91 political parties contested the 2019 National Assembly elections, only 10 were able to secure seats in the House of Representatives, while only three political parties secured seats in the Senate. The elections also recorded the lowest voter turnout since Nigeria's return to multi-party democracy. Out of a total number of registered voters 84,271,832 only 29,364,209 actually came out to cast their votes on the Election Day (Obiejese 2019). Table 4.6 shows the number of seats won by political parties in the Senate and House of Representatives.

From Table 4.7 it can be deduced that the APC won the highest number of seats both in the Senate and House of Representatives, winning 62 and 210 seats, respectively. The PDP came second with 42 Senate seats and 122 House of Representative seats. The Young Progressives Party (YPP) won one Senatorial seat and 10 House of Representative seats. The All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) won eight House of Representative seats only. The Peoples Redemption Party won (PRP) and the Action Alliance (AA) won two House of Representative seats each. The African Democratic Congress (ADC) won three House of Representative seats while other parties won one House of Representative seats each. It is important to note that the APC had earlier won 217 seats in the House of Representatives and won 65 seats in the Senate, but a Supreme Court Judgement delivered on the 24th of May 2019 in relation to the appeals relating to the dispute over the validity of the All Progressives Congress' primary elections which produced the candidates fielded by the

Table 4.7 Party affiliations of Senators from 1999 to 2019

Year	PDP	ANPP	AD	APP	APGA	LABOUR	ACN	PPA	PRP	CPC	APC	DPP	YPP
1999	71	18	19	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2003	81	22	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2007	87	14	1	-	-	-	5	1	1	-	-	-	-
2011	70	7	-	-	1	4	18	-	-	8	-	-	-
2015	49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	1	-
2019	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62	-	1

Source Osasona (2015) updated by the Authors

party in the last general elections declared all APC votes in Zamfara state null and void and ruled that candidates with the second highest number of votes won to be declared the winner. On this basis, the APC which had earlier won the three Senatorial seats and seven House of Representative seats in the state lost all to the opposition PDP (Adesomoju 2019).

From the foregoing it can be observed that the PDP had dominated the legislative arm of the Nigerian government since the return to democratic rule. The voting pattern has been such that the PDP had not until 2015 when it lost its dominance to the APC, consistently maintained dominance in the National Assembly. The voting pattern which brings about one-party-dominant parliament does not entail one-party system rather it entails that other parties exist but are not strong enough to wrest parliamentary seats with the dominant party. One-party system is in the least democratic and does not recognise the existence of other parties. While one-party system monopolise power, in one-party-dominant parliament a party wins majority seats through elections to the extent that the outcomes of elections conducted to select parliamentarians is to a large extent a farce (Louise De Jager 2009). Such one-party-dominated National Assembly has detrimental effects on democratic sustenance and consolidation (Kanapyanov and Kaliyev 2015).

IMPLICATIONS OF ONE-PARTY DOMINATED PARLIAMENT ON DEMOCRATIC SUSTENANCE

The history of legislative elections in Nigeria's Fourth Republic is that of a one-party dominated National Assembly. The PDP until 2015 had won absolute majority of seats both in the Senate and the House of Representatives. From 1999 to 2015 the PDP held a hegemonic power in the National Assembly. In 2015, the APC having won the highest number of seats both in the Senate and House of Representatives was expected to have a firm grip of the Senate, but the intrigues and controversy that surrounded the emergence of the leadership of the upper house gave the PDP edge over the ruling APC in the affairs of the Upper Chamber. The circumstances which led to the emergence of Dr. Olusola Saraki, a former PDP stalwart as the President of the 8th Assembly was totally unacceptable to the leadership of the APC.

Saraki was perceived to have deceived and misled his party's leadership into believing that he will play along in finding solution to the challenge of choice of candidates for top legislative posts in the National Assembly,

including those of the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives (Sahara Reporters 2015). Saraki was expected to be in a meeting with the party's leadership to find a way out of the leadership crisis instead he held a meeting with PDP and some APC members in the Senate so as to solicit for their support to actualise his aim of becoming the Senate President. The eventual emergence of Saraki as the President of the Senate was seen as blatant disrespect for party rules and wish (Sahara Reporters 2015).

Advocates of one-party-dominated parliament argue that the dominance indicates stability and unanimity (Bowyer 2008; Bimir 2007). They allude to the notion that there is a relationship between party dominance and political stability. They further contend that a dominant political party in legislature fosters hegemony through a well established organisational structure and geographic spread which enables them to carry along people of diverse interests in party activities. This also indicates that the inclusive potentials of a dominant political party in parliament go a long way in stemming the inherent dangers of presidential system. In other words, a one-party dominated parliament can maximise the virtues of parliaments (Oseni 2012).

A one-party dominated parliament has detrimental implications on democratic sustenance. One conspicuous implication is that there is the tendency for dominant political parties in legislature to manage parliaments in the way and manner in which they manage party issues. In such circumstances, the dominant party in the legislature appoints officials to positions without recourse to merit, required qualities and capability (Suttner 2006). A direct consequence of this is that there is no counter force to check the excesses and anomalies of the dominant party in legislative activities and proceedings. In addition this, one-party-dominant parliament breeds impunity and corruption. This is because there is no clear line of distinction between the ruling political, party and the legislature itself. This situation in essence, provides negative motivation for healthy political competition and deliberations among political parties in the legislature. Overall, there is the emergence of a culture of nepotism, corruption and patrimonialism and politics of patronage (Landsberg 2004).

In a one-party dominated parliament, there is the near absence of democratic values, most especially genuine political completion and dynamic legislative electoral outcomes (Giliomee and Simkins 1999). This suggest that dominate parties are maintained in power through dubious

electoral competition. This might have led Karume (2004) to aver that one-party domination of the legislature can be achieved by coercion and electoral fraud. In order to maintain its dominance in the legislature, the dominant political party may alter and manipulate electoral processes to the extent that elections to legislative houses remain a mere ritual of democracy. The dominant party is able to achieve this by utilising state resources as well as its dominance in the parliament over issues of public concern. Furthermore, one-party-dominated parliament subjects other fragmented political parties to varying degrees of official embarrassment and harassment. Members of such parties are restricted from airing their views against the dominant parties. The dominant parties utilise official sanctions such as suspensions from legislative proceedings to erring members of smaller parties.

One-party-dominant legislature does not tow the path of a normal or required pattern of electoral competition they rather seek to manipulate electoral contests so as to maintain domination over other smaller and fragmented political parties. This situation is generally inimical to democratic sustenance and consolidation (Doorenspleet and Nijzink 2013). The basic characteristic of one-party-dominated parliament is captured by Pempel (1990, p. 1) when he asserted that:

In these countries, despite free electoral competition, relatively open information systems, respect for civil liberties, and the right of free political association, a single party has managed to govern alone or as the primary and on-going partner in coalitions, without interruption, for substantial periods of time.

As mentioned earlier, the PDP in Nigeria has maintained a majority in the National Assembly largely through flawed electoral processes particularly those of 2003, 2007 and 2011 (EUEOM 2003; TMG 2007). According to Oseni (2012) opposition parties have remained weak and fragmented specifically from 1999 to 2015. In other words, the dominance of the PDP in Nigeria's National Assembly from 1999 to 2015 has probably been through quasi-legitimate means.

CONCLUSION

It has been demonstrated in this chapter that the history of legislative elections in Nigeria has been that of a one-sided electoral victory for PDP

for four consecutive National Assembly elections held in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. Thus, for the period from 1999 to 2015 the PDP had dominated proceedings in the National Assembly. Even in 2015 when it was expected that the APC will dominate the Senate and the House of Representatives, Saraki's collusion with members of the PDP and some members within the APC to swindle his party to become the Senate President gave the PDP the upper hand in the Senate even before he defected back to PDP. Through this scenario the PDP was able to dominate the Upper Chamber despite having been the minority. While such dominance helps in maintaining stability of the political system, a one-party-dominated parliament has been found to have grievous effects and implications on democracy. Unabated one-party dominance of parliament can imply the establishment of electoral authoritarianism or the entrenchment of it since the dominance is based on hegemony and not healthy party and electoral politics.

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