25 YEARS OF NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY AND ITS CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Nigeria started civilian administration again on May 29th, 1999, when military men disengaged from politics. The vision and aspiration of the then civilians, military leaders, rulers and other stakeholders who fought vigorously for civil rule were dashed to pieces and jeopardised because of crises among political parties, corruption, terrorism, and kidnapping that cut across the nooks and crannies of the country, coupled with the role of civil society and the elections tribunal in the last 25 years that have been so worrisome. The paper examines democracy in Nigeria and analyses its challenges. The paper adopted the survey method and used primary and secondary data to gather and collate data. Findings revealed that corruption and lack of internal democracy are parts of the challenges of Nigeria's democracy in the last 25 years. At the end of the study, the following recommendations were made: (i) political parties in Nigeria should strictly adhere to internal democracy; (ii) all hands should be on deck to deal with all hypocritical behaviour, such as defections from one political party to another and double dealing; and (iii) there should be free, fair, credible, and acceptable elections that cut across the federation during general elections.

Keywords: Corruption, democracy, election, kidnapping, poverty and terrorism.

1 Introduction

Nigeria's democracy started again in 1960, when the late Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe served as Prime Minister and President, respectively, using the parliamentary system of government. After a short period, the administration was toppled by military regimes. The arguments of the military men for overthrowing the administrations during this period included corruption, insecurity, inflation, marginalisation, and electoral malpractices such as rigging, snatching of ballot papers, killing, assassination, and others. In 1979, the military head of state, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, handed over power to the late civilian president, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, after the general election. Again, the administration was toppled by

another military regime in 1983, and from 1983 up until May 28th, 1999, Nigeria was ruled by military regimes.

Since 1999, when Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, the former president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, began his administration, up until today, there have been crises among the political parties as a result of faulty congresses and faulty primaries. Though, conflict is inevitable in any given society, crises among the political parties, either democratic or conservative, are borne out of a lack of internal democracy and a quest for power at all costs, which make politics become do-or-die activities among the gladiators and stakeholders. That was why Antonia (2012) noted that political parties and democratic sustenance in Nigeria call for the concerns of all stakeholders. The vision and aspirations of the then military leaders, rulers, and other stakeholders who fought vigorously for civil rule were dashed to pieces and jeopardized. They fought for civil rule so that they could establish a nation state that was free of corruption, terrorism, and kidnapping, a nation-state with a robust economy, and a nation state where all political parties would strictly put into practice genuine internal democracy, thereby pave the way for free, fair, credible, and acceptable elections. Unfortunately, the reverse was the case because there are contentious issues affecting the democratic sustainability of Nigeria.

The rate at which terrorism and kidnapping have taken centre stage in the affairs of the country since 1999 cannot be overstated. Democracy in Nigeria faces the problem of terrorism and kidnapping because politicians, businessmen and women, academia, traders, artisans, civil servants, educated elites, and students are terrorising and kidnapping on a daily basis. Most of the time, the victims end up losing their properties and lives if they are unable to pay the ransom requested and demanded by the terrorists and kidnappers. That was why Chate (1994) emphasised that terrorism and kidnapping are problems that can be traced to African democracy.

Apparently, corruption is one of the factors that makes average citizens in Nigeria wallow in abject poverty. Corrupt practices by public figures such as political functionaries and civil servants through the misappropriation of public funds, embezzlement of public funds, and diversion of public funds to private uses and gains make the education sector, health sector, agricultural sector, and of course, all other sectors of life in

Nigeria decay. All the public funds and resources meant to construct and build good roads, hospitals, health centres, education institutions, transportation and communication, and industrial technology have been wasted and diverted to private and individual uses and gains. Recently, the chairman of the Economic Financial Crime and Commission (EFCC), Mr. Ola Olukoyede, alleged that trillions of naira had been stolen by 36 states governors and the Minister of Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. That was why Chazon (1992) opined that Africa's democratic challenges revolve around corruption.

Election tribunals that are supposed to correct all the flaws that came up during the general elections in Nigeria end up creating more troubles because of corrupt practices among the lawyers and judges. There are corrupt practices in the judicial institutions to the extent that they pervert justice to favour their clients at all costs, and this puts democracy in Nigeria at risk and danger. As of today, six (6) states out of thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria had their own governorship's elections at different times as a result of election tribunal verdicts and judgements, and these states are Balyesa, Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, Edo and Kogi. That was why Ademola & Dauda (2019) defined election as an act by which the people choose those that will govern them or direct their affairs.

It is obvious that, civil society plays vital and critical roles in sustaining democracy in any nation state of the world, of which Nigeria is not exclusive. But the Nigerian civil society ends up in partisan politics, and this singular act endangers their primary roles and responsibilities. They are to educate and enlighten the general public about the good and bad policies of the government, but they are involved in politics and have neglected their roles and responsibilities as required of them. In the developed countries of the world, such as Britain, the USA, and Germany, the role of civil society to educate and enlighten the general public is well carried out without any involvement in politics, and they serve as an eye-opener and mouthpiece of the various policies of the government to the public. In Nigeria, civil society is involved in politics in order to get juicy positions such as minister, ambassador, director, and chairman of the board and commission, and a host of others from the government. That was why Jen (1994) argued that, civil society is a neo colonial project driven by political elites in their own

interests, and Peter (2007) argued that civil society is a new liberal ideology legitimising the anti-democratic attack of economic elites on institutions of the welfare state.

The fundamental questions that confuse and disturb our hearts include: To what extent have civilian administrations tackled all the reasons given by the military men for overthrowing the governments in Nigeria? To what extent do military regimes tackle the reasons given by themselves for their involvement in politics when they were in power? Does corruption in the country have become a day-to-day activity and practice? All these and many more are fundamental questions that should be addressed by all stakeholders, gladiators, rulers, leaders, political parties, pressure groups, civil servants, politicians, and civil society, so that the challenges of Nigeria's democracy will be ameliorated. Since May 29, 1999, when civilian administrations started in Nigeria, a list of contentious issues and challenges has been confronting Nigeria's democracy. These contentious issues and challenges include poverty, corruption, terrorism, kidnapping, election tribunals, political parties, inflation, civil society, mass media, militants, secession, unemployment, civil unrest, and rigging, just to mention a few. The study critically examined how political parties, terrorism and kidnapping, corruption, election tribunals, and civil society affect Nigerian democracy. The study is divided into five sections. Section one focuses on the on the introductory aspect, statement of problem, and research objectives, while section two is about conceptual clarification and the theoretical framework. Section three highlights methodology and research questions. Section four is on data analysis and discussion of the results, and Section five deals with conclusions and recommendations.

1.1 Statement of the problem

It has been observed that crises among the political parties are one of the contentious issues affecting the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria (Szeftek, 2019), and this may be due to the fact that the internal democracy of the political parties is full of faulty congresses and faulty primaries. It has been argued that terrorism and kidnapping in Nigeria painted the image of the country badly. Pizam & Smith (2000), and this may be due to the fact that, the government at all levels failed to address all national questions being agitated

by the minorities and other groups who felt marginalised in the country. It has been said that, corruption contributed greatly to the woeful economic situation (Nikkhajh & Redzuan, 2009), and this may be due to the fact that there are corrupt practices among public figures such as political functionaries and civil servants. It has been debated that election tribunals that were supposed to correct the problems and confusion created by politicians during the elections caused more trouble for democratic sustainability. Tukura & Tukura (2020), and this may be due to the fact that there are corrupt judges who blindfolded with billions of naira and dollars and thereby perverted justice to favour their clients/politicians. Finally, it has been presumed that civil society has neglected its primary roles and responsibilities of educating and enlightening the general public about the good and bad policies of the government. Cohen & Arato (2016), and this may be due to the fact that the civil society in Nigeria is involved in partisan politics.

1.2   Research Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to examine Nigeria's democracy, and the specific objectives are to:

1. examine the degree of crises within the political parties in Nigeria in the last 25 years.

2. assess the impact of terrorism, kidnapping, and other militant activities on Nigeria's democracy in the last 25 years.

3. examine the aftermath and effect of corruption on Nigeria's democracy in the last 25 years.

4. analyse how election tribunals have affected democracy in Nigeria in the last 25 years.

5. examine the roles of civil society in Nigerian democracy in the last 25 years

1.3   Research Questions

1. What have been the causes of crises within the political parties in Nigeria in the last 25 years?

2. To what extent have terrorism, kidnapping, and other militants' activities affected democracy in Nigeria in the last 25 years?

3. In what ways has corruption retarded democracy in Nigeria in the last 25 years?

4. In what way have election tribunals affected democracy in Nigeria in the last 25 years?

5. What have been the roles of civil society in Nigerian democracy in the last 25 years?

2   Conceptual clarifications

Democracy

Osaghae (1992) argued that all versions of democracy, whether liberal or capitalist, socialist and African, share the fundamental objective of how to govern society in such a way that power actually belongs to all the people. It is obvious that in Nigerian democracy, in the last two decades, power has actually belonged to the few people who represented the majority in the parliament and executive. Chate (1994) opined that democracy means the involvement of the people in the running of the political, socio-economic, and cultural affairs of their society. Ordinarily, democracy in Nigeria is questionable when the involvement of the people in the running of the political, socio-economic, and cultural affairs of the society takes centre stage. Schumpeter (1990) described democratisation as the institutional arrangement for arriving at a political decision in which individuals acquire the power to decide, by means of a competitive struggle for the people's role, an independent judiciary, a bill of fundamental human rights, a free-market economy, and a two- or more-party system after being referred to as a choice of country to power through periodic elections. The beauty in the above explanation of democratisation according to Schumpeter cannot be overestimated because Nigeria's democracy since 1999 is very far from achieving all the laudable ingredients in his submission because democracy in Nigeria is full of power marginalisation, corrupt practices, militants, civil unrest, kidnapping, and a host of others.

In a nutshell, democracy means accountability, transparency, due process, efficient and effective government, good leadership, good followership, and, of course, an enabling and conducive environment and constructive criticism. While, democratisation means the process of being

democratic, what must be in place to see democracy work?

Poverty

Marwa (2004) defined poverty as the state of being poor, a condition in which income and revenue cannot support the most basic and minimum survival requirements. He argues that poverty is the inability of people to access the minimum level of income needed to buy the basic necessities of life. He concluded that poverty is often referred to as living below the poverty line. Ovwasa (2000) classified poverty into three categories: absolute poverty, relative poverty, and material poverty. He argued that relative poverty connotes an inability on the part of certain sectors of society to satisfy contemporary levels of living, while material poverty, according to him, refers to a lack of ownership control of physical assets such as land and animal husbandry by those who are poor materially. While Atkinson (1987) opined that absolute poverty is the inability to provide for physical subsistence to the extent of being incapable of protecting human dignity. Based on the above views of scholars on poverty, poverty in Nigeria could be seen as when average citizens lack the capacity and capability to feed themselves on $2 per day, according to the UNO Report (2015). Even, moving away from average citizens in Nigeria, poverty could be seen among the workers in local governments, teachers of private and public primary and secondary schools, ministry workers, especially from grades 0–6, artisans, market women, and traders, because the largest percentage of these people could not feed on $2 per day, and makes the rate of poverty in Nigeria so alarming. Poverty cuts across all the nooks and crannies for average Nigerians because the majority of the citizens in Nigeria cannot feed themselves as and when due. What type of country do we find ourselves in? What type of leaders do we have in Nigeria? Where are the visionary leaders who will bail out Nigeria from the shackle of poverty?

Corruption

Marwa (2004) emphasised that the survival of democracy in Nigeria hinges on the capacity of stakeholders in the policy to combat corruption. He

submitted that, the effects of corruption in the Nigerian state are deep and devastating, to the extent that political and administrative structures have significantly lost their capacity to perform their functions. He concluded that democracy cannot be sustained without supporting institutions, but the institutions are being weakened by the menace of corruption. To what level has corruption been drastically reduced among public figures and political functionaries? What has been the effect of corrupt practices in the last two decades in Nigeria? Elijah (2019) argued that of all the elements that threaten good governance, corruption is the most destructive. He concluded that corruption and mismanagement of the economy cripple the economic growth and development of any country. Section 2 of the ICPC Act 2004 defines corruption to include bribery, fraud, and other related offences, while the EFCC Act 2004 broadens the definition of corruption to include money laundering, embezzlement, bribery, looting, and any other form of corrupt practices. Ordinarily, it is hypocritical behaviour such as defection and double dealing among public figures, political functionaries, civil servants, educated elites, politicians, stakeholders, and gladiators that leads to corrupt practices.

Elections

Ademola & Dauda (2019) opined that an election is an act by which the people choose those who will govern them or direct their affairs. He sees election as the act of choosing those who will exercise political authority in a democratic setting. As laudable as the purpose of the election, all general elections into various positions in the country were characterised by malpractices, hooliganism, rigging, inconclusiveness, re-runs, killings, shootings, and a host of other vices. Also, in the last two decades of Nigeria's democracy, during the internal democracy of the political parties, where the political parties choose their party officials and their party flag bearers, there has always been rancour, rifts, tensions, and skirmishes among stakeholders and generated polity across the country. Essentially, presidential primaries, gubernatorial primaries, national assemblies, and house of assembly primaries in the last two decades were full of shortcomings on the part of the electoral umpire, political parties, electorates, delegates, security personnel, and the mass media.

Election tribunals in Nigeria were on most occasion not concluded until the tenure of office of the position in questions remain few months to be expired example was Aregbesola versus Oyinlola. But, since 2015, when Mohammadu Buhari became president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, election tribunals have concluded their assignments within the stipulated period of 6–9 months given by the law. Election tribunals greatly affect Nigerian democracy because what is the essence of disputes when justice is delayed up to 4 years? Aregbesola versus Oyinlola as illustration, after Oyinlola spent almost 3 years and some months in office, the tribunal declared Aregbesola the winner. Prof. Osubor versus Comrade Adam Oshomole, Segun Oni versus Kayode Fayemi and Iheoida versus Hope Izodima are cases for illustration.

Political parties

Foley (1996) defined a political party as a more or less permanent institution with the goal of aggregating interests and presenting candidates for elections with the purpose of controlling government and representing such interests in government. As laudable as the submission of Foley on political parties, political parties in Nigeria are characterised by ethnicity, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, and regionalism. Politicians in developed countries can be categorised as the Left and the Right, and it is through their actions and inaction on what they preach, showcase, and practice that they can be recognised.

Civil society

Civil society is one of the issues and challenges that have confronted Nigeria's democracy in the last two decades. They neglected their primary assignments of education, watchdog, mobilisation, service provider, advocacy, and regulator. Instead of doing these assignments, they tend to play politics, and causes concern. This action of civil society in Nigeria made Peter (2007) argue that civil society is a neo-liberal ideology legitimising the anti-democratic attack of economic elites on institutions of the welfare state through the development of the third sector as its substitute, and Jen (1994)

opined that civil society is a neo-colonial project driven by political elites in their own interests.

Mass Media

Chazon (1992) argued that one of the democratic challenges in Africa is mass media because they are involved in politics day in and day out. In the last two decades, the press in Nigeria has tended to romance the government of the day so that, in return, they get political appointments and thereby neglect their responsibilities of checking the activities of the government of the day. In any democratic setting, it is the press that has the sole responsibility of putting across the image of the government to the public, whether good or bad, through all the avenues at their disposal.

3   Theoretical Framework

Participatory Theory

The proponent of the participatory theory of democracy was J. J. Rousseau in the 18th century, and it was later promoted and developed by John Stuart Mill and G. D. H. Cole. The theory implies that political participation is indispensable for a just society. They emphasised that citizens have the opportunity to be involved in decision making on matters that affect their lives. The Oxford English Dictionary (2016) noted that participation is the art of taking part in an activity or event. This simply means that democracy revolves around political parties, electoral processes, participation, and deliberation in the activities of the internal arrangements of the country. This participation involves the electoral body, the security officials, and the spectators. It involves the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive. It involves artisans, market women, traders, students, businessmen and women, civil servants, the press, pressure groups, partisan politicians and non partisan politicians, and, of course, everybody. Participatory theory is a vision or conceptual framework that attempts to bridge the subject-subject distinction. That was why Ferrer (2011) opined that the kernel of this participatory vision is a turn from intra subjective experiences to participatory events in our understanding of transpersonal and spiritual phenomena.

Participatory democracy is a form of government in which citizens participate individually and directly in political decisions that affect their lives, rather than through elected representatives. Harper (2000) defined participation as partaking. This means the involvement of every member of the party in the decision-making process. The purpose of participatory theory is to empower those involved in the process, according to Nikkhah and Redzuan (2009). Participation in design, or participatory design, is a process and strategy that allow all stakeholders to partake in the design process. It is a democratic process for design based on the assumption that users should be involved in the designs they will go on to use, according to (Bannon & Ehn (2012).

To what level are citizens allowed to be involved in designing their way of life during democratic processes and practices? Democracy is just based on the selected people (representatives) that represent the people or citizens in the state and national assemblies and in the executive. Participatory planning is an alternative paradigm that emerged in response to rationalistic and centralised top-down approaches. Its aim is to integrate technical expertise with the preferences and knowledge of community members, such as citizens, nongovernmental organisations, and social movements, directly and centrally in the planning and development processes, producing outcomes that respond to community needs. Lane (2005). Participation has been the cornerstone to understanding the perspective of redistribution of power between the haves and the haves nots according to Lane (2005).

4   Methodology

The research design for the study was survey research. Ogbomoso South Local Government Arowomole Area of Oyo State was clustered into ten groups, and these groups were bankers, elites, local government workers, primary school teachers, secondary school teachers, academics, politicians, students from LAUTECH, religious leaders, and traders/masses. One hundred (100) samples were selected from the total population. Ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from bankers, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from elites, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from local government workers, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from primary school teachers, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from secondary school

teachers, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from academia, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from politicians, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from students from LAUTECH, ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from religious leaders, and ten (10) sampled were randomly selected from traders and masses.

Feasibility and accessibility were the justifications for the 10 samples randomly selected from the clustered groups. Primary and secondary data were used for the analysis. The primary data is gathered through the questionnaire. Secondary data is obtained through books and journal articles. It is my opinion that the sample was capable of justifying the challenges to Nigeria's democracy. Variables to measure the challenges of Nigeria's democracy are crises in political parties, terrorism and kidnapping, corruption, election tribunals, and civil society. Five research questions were raised and answered by a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) (5), Agreed (A) (4), Strongly Disagreed (SD) (3), Disagreed (D) (2), and Neutral (N) (1) to get responses from the respondents after the mean was calculated. A decision rule was made on any mean that was between 2.50 and accepted, while a decision rule on means less than 2.50 was rejected.

5   Empirical Analysis

Table 1: Responses of the respondents on the factors that causes crises within political parties in Nigeria in the last 25 years

S/N	Items	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	N 1	N	$\bar{\chi}$	Decision
1	Godfathers tend to dictate his wishes on the party at all cost.	45 225	25 100	10 30	5 10	15 15	100 380	3.80	Accepted
2	Corruption can be seen as highest order among the political parties in the last two decades.	36 180	38 152	10 30	6 12	10 10	100 384	3.84	Accepted
3	Political parties in Nigeria in the last two decades lack internal democracy.	30 150	20 80	25 75	10 20	15 15	100 340	3.40	Accepted
4	Most of the party followers are illiteracy.	40 200	30 120	5 15	20 40	5 5	100 380	3.80	Accepted
5	Political parties in Nigeria lack ideologies.	29 145	50 200	12 36	4 8	5 5	100 394	3.94	Accepted

Author's Survey 2024

Table 1 shows how 45 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that godfathers tend to dictate their wishes to the party at all costs, and 50 out of 100 agreed that the majority of the political parties in Nigeria lack ideologies. Also, it could be seen from the table how corruption, lack of internal democracy, illiteracy, and lack of political efficacy have caused crises among the political parties in the last two decades in Nigeria. This corresponded with Antonia (2012), who affirmed that lack of internal democracy among political parties is one of the problems of political parties in the Fourth Republic.

Table 2: Responses of the respondents on the extent at which terrorism, kidnapping and other militants' activities affecting democracy in Nigeria in the last 25 years

S/N	Items	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	N 1	N	$\overline{\chi}$	Decision
6	One of the missions of the terrorists is to disturb the elections day so that they will gain more popularity.	40 200	10 40	15 45	30 60	5 5	100 350	3.50	Accepted
7	Kidnappers and bandits always kidnap party stalwarts and candidates before the general election.	15 75	20 80	20 60	40 80	5 5	100 300	3.00	Accepted
8	Terrorists, kidnappers and other militants' activities cause civil unrest before, during and after elections.	40 200	4 16	20 60	27 54	9 9	100 339	3.39	Accepted
9	Secession from the country by some sections comes as a result of lack of trust and feeling of marginalization.	30 150	18 72	35 105	7 14	10 10	100 351	3.51	Accepted
10	Killing, assassination and murderers of party stalwarts and candidates before, during and after election.	5 25	12 48	43 129	30 60	10 10	100 272	2.72	Accepted

Author's Survey 2024

Table 2 showed how 40 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that one of the missions of the terrorists is to disturb the election days so that they can gain popularity, and how 40 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that terrorists and kidnappers cause civil unrest before, during, and after the election days. To be simple, assassinations, burnings, protests, and killings of party stalwarts pose dangers to Nigeria's democracy. This submission was in

line with Chate (1994), who supported the idea the idea that terrorism and kidnapping are some of the problems of African democracy.

Table 3: Responses of the respondents on how corruption retards democracy in Nigeria in the last 25 years

S/N	ITEMS	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	N 1	N	$\bar{\chi}$	Decision
11	Corrupt practices end up in making average citizens to wallow in abject poverty.	50 250	20 80	10 30	10 20	10 10	100 390	3.90	Accepted
12	It is the corruption of leaders and public servants that make the economics of Nigeria to be retrogressed.	45 225	15 60	10 30	10 20	20 20	100 355	3.55	Accepted
13	Corruption retards democracy in Nigeria through low standard of education that cut across all level of education sectors.	60 300	05 20	10 30	15 30	10 10	100 390	3.90	Accepted
14	The rate of unemployment in Nigeria comes as a result of diversion of public funds to private uses.	50 250	15 60	05 15	25 50	5 5	100 380	3.80	Accepted
15	Individuals in the government circle always loathe the treasury and this end up in crisis of governance and inflation.	45 225	15 60	05 15	10 20	25 25	100 345	3.45	Accepted

Author's Survey 2024

Table 3 showed how 45 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that individuals in the government circle always loathe the treasure, which ends up in crises of governance and leads to inflation, and how 60 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that corruption retards democracy in Nigeria through a low standard of education that cuts across all levels of education sectors.

Basically, poverty, economic retrogression, unemployment, inflation, high rates of crime, and public mismanagement cannot be overemphasised, as could be seen from the responses of the respondents in the table. This submission agreed with Marwa (2004) when he submitted that the effects of corruption in Nigerian states are deep and devastating to the extent that political and administrative structures have significantly lost that power to functions, and Elijah (2019) also emphasised that of all the elements that threaten good governance, corruption is the most destructive.

Table 4: Responses of the respondents on ways election tribunals greatly Affected democracy in Nigeria in the 25 years

S/N	ITEMS	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	N 1	N	$\bar{x}$	Decision
16	Election tribunals wasted resources and times	50 250	20 80	10 30	10 20	10 10	100 390	3.90	Accepted
17	Billions of dollars were wasted during the election tribunals.	55 275	05 20	10 30	20 40	10 10	100 375	3.75	Accepted
18	Many of the election tribunals portray and painted the judges badly and this make the judges lost their honour and prestige.	55 275	15 60	10 30	10 20	10 10	100 395	3.95	Accepted
19	There are tensions and anxiety among the stakeholders before the judgment on elections petitions.	50 250	15 60	05 15	10 20	20 20	100 365	3.65	Accepted
20	Some of the judgments from election tribunals lead to crises of status-quo.	40 200	05 20	15 45	30 60	10 10	100 335	3.35	Accepted

Author's Survey 2024

Table 4 shows the responses of respondents on the ways in which election tribunals affect democracy in Nigeria. It was revealed how 50 out of

100 respondents strongly agreed that election tribunals affect democracy in Nigeria through the wasting of resources and time, and how 55 out of 100 respondents strongly agreed that many of the election tribunals portray and paint the judges badly, which makes the judges lose their honour and prestige. It is obvious that the morale of the judiciary in Nigeria has been lost due to their interference in politics that contradicts their ethics, and this submission of the respondents corresponds with Paul (2001) analysis of Nigeria and corrupt law in his book titled "Law and Social Change."

Table 5: Responses of the respondents on roles of Civil Society in Nigeria democracy in the last 25 years.

S/N	Items	SA 5	A 4	D 3	SD 2	N 1	N	$\bar{\chi}$	Decision
21	Civil society in Nigeria educates, orientates and enlightens the masses through their action and in action.	50 250	20 80	10 30	10 20	10 10	100 390	3.90	Accepted
22	Civil society serves as watch dog to checkmate the action of government.	45 225	10 40	10 30	25 50	10 10	100 355	3.55	Accepted
23	Civil society uses interest articulation and aggregation to achieve their desire and primary objectives.	45 225	15 60	10 30	5 10	25 25	100 350	3.50	Accepted
24	Civil society uses lobbying and propaganda to get their demands in other to defend the rights of citizens.	50 250	20 80	10 30	10 20	10 10	100 390	3.90	Accepted
25	Civil society engages in protest and strike action to get the attention of the government.	40 200	20 80	10 30	10 20	20 20	100 350	3.50	Accepted

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Table 5 showed how 40 out of 100 respondents strongly agreed that civil society engages in protest and strike action to get the attention of the government and how 45 out of 100 respondents strongly agreed that civil society uses interest articulation and aggregation to achieve their desires and primary objectives. However, civil society serves as a watchdog for the government of the day. This agreed with Marwa (2004), who submitted that civil society organisations play an important role in consolidating democratic rule and ensuring accountability and human rights. Also, this submission is in line with Chazon (1992), who claimed that the nurturing of civil society is the most effective measure of controlling repeated abuse of state power, holding rulers accountable to their citizens, and establishing the foundations for durable government.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

The first objective is on the degree of crises within the political parties in the last 25 years. It could be seen from the study that 38 respondents out of 100 agreed that corruption can be seen as the highest order among the political parties in the last two decades, and 30 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that all political parties in Nigeria in the last 25 years lack internal democracy.

The second objective is to examine the impact of terrorism, kidnapping, and other militant issues on Nigeria's democracy in the last 25 years. It could be seen from the study that 40 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that one of the missions of the terrorists is to disturb the election days so that they can gain popularity, and that 40 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that terrorists and kidnappers cause civil unrest before, during, and after the election days.

The third objective is to examine the effect of corruption on Nigeria's democracy in the last 25 years. It could be seen from the study that 50 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria comes as a result of the diversion of public funds to private and personal uses. Also, it could be seen from the study that 45 respondents out of 100 strongly agreed that it is the corruption of the leaders and public servants that makes the economics of Nigeria retrogress.

The fourth objective is on how election tribunals affected democracy in Nigeria in the last 25 years, and it could be seen from the study that 50 out of 100 respondents strongly agreed that election tribunals affect democracy in Nigeria through wasting of resources, times, and talents, and 55 out of 100 respondents strongly agreed that many of the election tribunals portray and paint the judges badly, and this makes the judges lose their honour and prestige.

The fifth objective is on the roles of civil society in Nigerian democracy in the last 25 years, and it could be seen from the study that 40 out of 100 respondents strongly agreed that civil society engages in protest and strike action to get the attention of the government and that 45 out of 100 respondents strongly agreed that civil society uses interest articulation and aggregation to achieve their desires and primary objectives. However, civil society serves as a watchdog for the government of the day.

6   Conclusion and Recommendations

If political parties in Nigeria, irrespective of their ideologies, can manage their crises and differences effectively through the entire medium available at their disposal, such as mediation, negotiation, and arbitration, it is obvious that there will be a genuine internal democracy that will lead to the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria. Terrorism, kidnapping, and banditry are now becoming more lucrative jobs across the nooks and crannies of the country for the bad wagons and products in society. Formerly, it was the kidnapping and banditry of political leaders, stalwarts, and politicians we heard about in Nigeria, but now it has extended to the kidnapping of Emirs, Obas, Chiefs, Pastors, Chief Imam, bishops, traders, bankers, businessmen and women, and of course, students in primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. Corruption cuts across all sectors of life in Nigeria, and this is not good for democracy and hides the good preaching of democracy. Election tribunals have been reduced drastically to six months since the administration of former president Gen. Mohammud Buhari (Rtd).

In a nutshell, all manner of hypocritical behaviour that leads to the defection of politicians from one party to another, bad character, double dealing, pretending, and fake politicians are not good for democracy. It is

hypocritical behaviour that gives room for corrupt practices among political functionaries and public servants. It is hypocritical behaviour that leads to embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, nepotism, avoritism, and s stealing of any kinds of public funds and practices. Hypocritical behaviour should be ameliorated among the political parties, civil society, mass media, national assemblies, state assemblies, leaders, electoral umpires, security personnel, the judiciary, the executive, artisans, market women, traders, and administrators. They should practice and emulate integrity, honesty, dedication, and being devoted to all the tenets of democracy.

Following are recommendations made after the study on 25 years of Nigeria's democracy and its challenges:

1. Civil society in Nigeria should, as a matter of necessity, exonerate themselves from partisan politics. Civil society should try as much as possible to educate and enlighten the public about the good policies of the government.

2. Election tribunals should be completed before the sworn-in date of the commencement of the administration in order to correct the gaps that existed as a result of delays in judgements.

3. Governments at the local, state, and federal levels should find means of curbing corruption among public figures, public servants, political functionaries, and stakeholders to ensure the minimum and sincerity of anti-graft agencies in combating corruption.

4. Political parties in Nigeria should strictly adhere to internal democracy to elect their leaders and officials, and flag bearers during their congresses, primaries, and conventions.

5. Dealing with all hypocritical behaviour among the political parties, electoral umpire, security personnel, and other stakeholders in the country.

6. There should be free, fair, credible, and acceptable elections that cut across the federation during general elections and thereby limit the volume of election tribunals.

7. Finally, there should be an urgent solution to various national questions that cause secession and thereby eradicate all forms of terrorism, kidnapping and banditry that cut across the nooks and crannies of the country.

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