Participation in Nigerian Elections

Bachelor Thesis Within Political Science
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ABSTRACT

Participation in Nigerian elections is an interesting issue. This study is aimed at comparing the 1999 elections with 2003 elections. There is more participation in elections, organized by the Civilian government than that of the Military government. Nigerians feel freer and secure to participate in elections organized and conducted by the civilian government because it is more democratic than the military government.

The part identification model, and a sociological approach were tested in relation to Nigerian elections. The Sociological approach influences voter’s decision during elections. Democratic government in Nigeria has much to do for it to be consolidated. The issues of Political Rights and Civil Liberty have to be properly addressed.
**Definition of terms**

**Apathetics:** People who do not engage in formal politics.

**A wave of democratization:** A group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes which take place at a particular time.

**Clientelism:** politics based on patron-client relationships. For instance, people are very loyal and submissive to their patrons who do assist them in various ways, but control their votes.

**Electoral Commission:** An institution or official group of people given the responsibility to control elections, political parties, and all matters relating to elections, i.e. in Nigeria.

**Gladiators:** Vigorous supporters or campaigners of a political battle, e.g. the activist campaigners.

**Military coup:** Overthrow of government and seizure of political power by the armed forces.

**Republic:** A political system in which the people elect their representatives.

**Spectators:** People who observe political contest but rarely participate beyond voting.

**Abbreviations:**

AG: Action Group
AD: Alliance for Democracy
ANPP: All Nigeria Peoples Party
APLP: All peoples Liberation Party
APGA: All Progressive Grand Alliance
BNPP: Better Nigeria Progressive Party
DA: Democratic Alternatives
JP: Justice Party
LDPN: Liberal Democratic Party of Nigeria
MNN: Masses Movement of Nigeria
MDJ: Movement for Democracy and Justice
NAC: National Action Council
NAP: Nigeria Advance Party
NCP: National Conscience Party
NCNC: National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon
NDP: National Democratic Party
NEPU: Northern Elements Progressive Union
NPC: Northern People Congress
NNPP: New Nigeria Peoples Party
PDP: Peoples Democratic Party
PMP: Peoples Mandate Party
PRP: Peoples Redemption Party
PAC: Progressive Action Congress
UNPP: United Nigeria Peoples Party
ARP: African Renaissance Party
CAN: Christian Association of Nigeria
FOMWAN: The Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria
INEC: The Independent National Electoral Commission
MSS: The Muslim Students Society
NBA: The Nigerian Bar Association
NLC: The Nigerian Labour Congress
NSCIA: Nigerian Supreme Council for Islam Affair
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1 Introduction

1.1 The research problem

The political upheaval of the 1960s remained in the memories of our old and uneducated parents for years, at least, up to the 1980s. That forced them to the conclusion that politics is the root of hatred and untimely death. It was actually the thought that dominated the minds of Nigerians, especially, those in the villages. Of course, one could not blame them, they were quite acquainted with the political circumstances surrounding the death of the Nigerian Prime-Minister during the first Republic.

Between 1960 and 1966, there were a series of political problems in Nigeria which involved an election crisis in the western Nigeria, agitation for a separate state by the minority groups, rioting, looting, and arson across the country. In 1964, there was political commotion over the 1963 population census. The Ibo, Yoruba and other ethnic groups thought that the number of people in the Northern region was overestimated to give them more of a representation in the federal parliament. As these problems continued, the army had no other option than to overthrow the civilian government in January 15, 1966. Other coups that followed, for the sake of politics claimed many lives. No one could convince the villagers that politics was not a game solely for the gun-men. Their thought was that every politician was sitting on gunpowder ripe to explode at anytime.

The dominance of the Nigerian political scene by the armed forces is like adding insult to injury. Its presence did not usher in a more peaceful political atmosphere, but into victimization, arrest, detention, and assassination.

Today, as grown-ups, we can understand the importance of politics. There is need for political participation and elections. We are in a position to educate our old and illiterate parents about it.

People vote for particular parties in Nigeria based on various reasons. The results of elections have been one of the major problems that contributed to the fall of the preceding Republics because the military did not like the outcome of those elections (Adigun and Oyeleye 1999).
1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate participation in the Nigerian 1999 and 2003 elections. It might be that the participation in 2003 elections, organized by the civilian government was higher than the 1999 elections, done under the military government. That is why it is important to compare those elections. I will explain the outcome using the Party Identification Model and a sociological approach.

1.3 Question: Is participation in the 2003 elections, organized by civilian government stronger than the participation in the 1999 elections, done under the military government?

This question is necessary because the military government had ruled Nigerians for several years. It was the military that ushered in the civilian government in April, 1999. This means that elections which brought the civilian government into power were organized by the military government. Since then, other subsequent elections, for example, the 2003 elections were done under the civilian government. It is therefore important to find out the differences in participation during the 1999 elections and 2003 elections.

It will be interesting to discuss the question from a theoretical point of view. Reading other peoples works that are relevant to the study makes the author more grounded in explaining the concepts that enable him to answer the research question properly. “Other studies often provide fruitful concepts and propositions that will help you interpret your data. You should review the literature to relate your study to what others have done. Most good research builds on what has been done before” (Bogdan 1984, p. 135).

1.4 Method

The method I will use in this study is qualitative literature study. The method investigates the depth, richness as well as the complexity of occurrences, events or facts. In other words, the aim of using qualitative method is to reach an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reason behind such behavior. The bottom-line is that qualitative literature study is based on assumption that the whole needs to be examined so that a phenomenon could be understood.

I really want to use this method because of its advantages: explorations are usually based on in-depth understanding and descriptive written in such a way that it is detailed enough for any reader to grasp and pinpoint prejudices of the writer. This method makes it possible
for a researcher to come up with a well written research report which demonstrates the writer’s ability to illustrate, describe the phenomenon concerned.

I will also use a quantitative method using primary data from Afrobarometer.org, Freedomhouse.org, internet, and other sources.

In this method, the researcher is able to describe or present the picture of a phenomenon or phenomena, as the case may be, under investigation. In other words, the researcher presents his research in a descriptive manner.

The method aims at gathering data without manipulating the research context. It is for the researcher to gather information, describe the situation as it is during the study. It has the advantage of enabling the researcher to focus on individual subject, variable or factor and goes in-depth or in detail in the course of describing them (Silverman 1993; Peninsular Research and Development Support Unit 09-04-03).

David Silverman (1993, p. 37), explains that what a researcher is trying to find out determines the type of methods he chooses to use. For instance, for a researcher to determine how people are likely to vote, a quantitative method seems the most appropriate. On the other hand, to explore people’s life histories or daily behavior, then qualitative method could be useful. Qualitative research method can be used for the analysis of collected data like the official statistics even though they are large dataset, while qualitative research method helps to provide an in-depth understanding of social phenomena than can be received from only quantitative data. He explains further that quantitative data can be incorporated into qualitative research method. That is, some uses of quantification in qualitative research method could be necessary at times depending on what the researcher is trying to find out. “There is no reason why qualitative researchers should not, where appropriate, use quantitative measures. Simple counting techniques, theoretically derived and ideally based on participants’ own categories, can offer a means of survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research” (Silverman 1993 p.37).

Jennifer Manson also shared the same idea concerning the possibility and necessity of integrating different methods-qualitative and quantitative. This is also in line with David Silverman’s explanation that qualitative and quantitative research method can complement each other. She summarises what quantitative research is all about: Quantitative research concerns how social world can be interpreted, understood, experienced and produced; it is
based on methods of data generation, method of analysis and explanation to understand complexity, detail and content (Jennifer Mason 2002).

The contribution of David Silver and Jennifer Manson are valid and significant sources. David Silverman is Professor Emeritus of sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. His book is a guide on how to conduct a research project, especially on qualitative research study.

Jennifer Manson is a senior lecturer in Sociology in Leeds University. Her book is to help introduce students to the practice of quantitative social research.

1.5 Limitations

This thesis is focused on participation in Nigerian elections. Comparison is made between the 1999 elections, organized by the civilian government and the 2003 elections, done under the military government. The study is limited to participation in the 1999 and 2003 Nigerian elections due to lack of time in gathering materials. The available materials: books, journals and magazines were used in the course of the study. Internet sources were very useful in carrying out this study: Google, Freedomhouse.org, Afrobarometer.org, and other websites.

1.6 Summary

There have been series of political problems in Nigeria since her independence. The results of elections also contributed to the fall of the previous republics because the military did not like the outcome of those elections. The chapter also discussed the purpose of the study, the research question, method and limitations of the study.
2 Presentation of Nigerian Politics and History

The presentation of the political history of Nigeria serves as a background to the study, and to acquaint the readers with the general knowledge concerning the administration of the country before and after independence. Readers will thus be able to follow and grasp the trends of the essay. This chapter traces the history of Nigeria from the first republic to the fourth republic, and discusses the eras of military rule in Nigeria. On the aspect of civil society, attention will be focused on religious organizations, The Nigerian Bar Association, The Nigerian Labour Congress and the Media. The National assembly of Nigeria, and political parties will be discussed in this chapter.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, situated in the western part of the continent. It was ruled by the British for a lengthy period of time: 1866 to 1960. British colonial administrators divided Nigeria into three regions in 1914. The Hausa/Fulani occupied the Northern region, the Ibo occupied the Eastern region, while the western region was for the Yoruba. This was done by the colonial masters to make the country easy for them to administer. They created geographical boundaries to demarcate the ethnic groups, and used ethnicity as a yardstick for identity to gain political power. Political consciousness in every ethnic group was therefore reinforced.

The establishment of federalism in Nigeria by the colonial officials also explains the beginning of ethnic politics and political tension among the regions, and between majority and minority ethnic groups.

When Nigeria gained her independence October 1, 1960, power was handed over to its citizens. Political parties were developed along regional lines before Nigeria became independent. The Action Group (AG) party was formed by the Yoruba in the West; the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) was formed by the Ibo in the East, while the Hausa/Fulani formed the Northern Political Congress (NPC) and Northern Elements progressive Union (NEPU). After independence, especially during the first republic, political parties continued to be in regional or ethnic bases (Lancia 02-22-2007).

During the first republic, the Federal Republic of Nigeria adopted a parliamentary system of government - the type of her colonial master. This lasted for six years until the military coup flushed it out owning to political unrest. Both civilians and several military officers
lost their lives by the military coups that followed. Nigeria fought civil war from 1966 to 1970 as the Ibos made an attempt to secede and form the Biafra state.

General Olushegun Obasanjo, then military head of State put in place a democratic transition; and handed over power to civilian government. This was the birth of the second republic on October 1, 1979. The parliamentary system of government which was adopted in the first republic was abandoned for a presidential system of government- the American type, under President Shehu Shagari.

On December 31, 1983, the military officers came back to the political scene and took over the government of president Shehu Shagari because of inept administration: mismanagement of funds, corruption, riots, election malpractices, victimization and a host of other nefarious attitudes. The second republic was abruptly terminated.

The second republic was succeeded by the military junta. Major-General Muhammadu Buhari and Brigadier Tunde Idiagbo were installed as the head of state and Chief of Army staff, supreme headquarters, respectively. The regime failed to come up with a plan to hand over power to the civilian government but put all its attention on promulgation of various decrees to fortify her holds on to power. “War against indiscipline” was the watch words of the military rulers. There were a lot of arrests, detention, imprisonments, and retrenchments in private and public sectors of the country. The state of the economy was not getting better. A palace coup took place on the 27th of August, 1985, to ousted Buhari and Idiagbo.

The new regime was headed by Major-General Ibrahim Badamasi Babaginda. People thought he was a Messiah to save the country, as he quickly abrogated the decree that curtailed the freedom of the press and promised to respect the fundamental human rights of Nigerians. Most people believed that his regime would be different from that of General Yakubu Gowon and Major-General Muhammadu Buhari who never made any public promise to terminate the military rule and return civilians to power.

Babangida began the programme of transition to democratic rule in 1986 by the inauguration of a political Bureau to prepare a blue print for the transition to democratic rule. The original transition timetable prepared by Babangida regime was subsequently changed three times by the president to suit his purpose. It got to a point that no one could predict his phase of the transition owning to his attitudes of banning and unbanning politicians as
well as political institutions. Nigerians began to suspect that he had a “hidden agenda”- no readiness to hand over power to an elected civilian government. The presidential election was deferred till June 12, 1993.

He eventually annulled the June 12 presidential election result, according to him, on the basis of massive electoral malpractices. He proposed another presidential election, and promised to hand over power to civilians on August 27, 1993.

Babangida handed over power to the Interim National Government(ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, in August 26th 1993. Ten weeks later, on November 17, 1993, General Sani Abacha took over power following the resignation of Chief Ernest Shonekan. His first move was the abolition of political institutions ranging from local government to the federal level. He arrested and detained Mr. M. K. O Abiola because of treasonable offence. In April, 1994, Abacha came up with a transitional timetable which he later subjected to several changes. Besides, he set up National Constitutional Conference Commission as “crisis-management mechanism”.

Just like Babangida regime, Abacha’s became illiberal in its method towards transition. Abacha consolidated his hold on power by purging the army and restricting political activities. There were series of arrests, detention, and proscription of media houses.

All the five political parties of that time selected Sani Abacha as their only presidential candidate for August 1, 1998, presidential election. This means, he would have been elected a president to head the civilian government. Death never allowed him to complete his plans.

He died of heart attack in 8th of June 1998. Mr. M. K. O. Abiola who was arrested and detained by him, also died in detention five weeks after the death of Abacha. Major- General Abdulsalam Abubakar was sworn in as Nigerian Head of State and commander in chief of the armed forces. He eventually completed the transition to democratic civilian rule which led to the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as the president of Nigeria (Adigun & Oyeleye 1999, Brackett 1997, Diamond & Oyeleye1997, Miller 1995).

2.1 Civil Society in Nigeria

Civil Society is included in this study because of its important roles in Nigerian democratic society. Civil society groups in Nigeria have been in existence and engaged in democratic struggle before the independence. It contributed positively towards the attainment of Nigerian independence, and thus the end of colonial rule in the country. During the protracted
military rule in Nigeria, civil associations like the Nigerian Bar Association, Nigerian Labour Congress, the Religious Association, and the Mass Media condemned the authoritarian government, and supported the transition to democratic rule in one voice. Also, in this era of civilian government, civil society in Nigeria continued with its roles to ensure good governance in the country.

To discuss civil society in this thesis is necessary because the topic “Participation in Nigerian elections” will not be effectively and completely discussed without mentioning the civil society in Nigeria owning to its involvement in political activities in the country. Civil society plays vital roles in democratic processes in Nigeria. The group is recognized by the government; it manages the flow of influence between the government and the people, and involves in constructive criticisms of the government policies and sometimes makes alternative suggestions to certain policies.

(Civil Society International 2003) describes civil society as “intermediary institutions” such as professional associations, religious groups, labour union, citizen advocacy organizations, which give voice to various sectors of society and enrich public participation in democracies”. This means that civil society groups advocate and take actions for social development and public interest.

Civil society groups in Nigeria are also being referred to as functional pressure groups. Functional pressure groups are the types of pressure or interest groups whose functions or activities are not only to promote and protect self-centered interest, but pursue policies that benefit citizens within their society. Examples of such functional pressure groups in Nigeria are the Nigerian Bar Association, Nigerian Labour Congress, Religious Organisations, and the Media. These groups in Nigeria are highly involved in political participation, vocal and pursue goals and policies in the interest of Nigerian citizens. For instance, they criticize unfavorable policies of the government, organize conferences, seminars, rallies, and so on, and sometimes make alternative suggestions to government programme they considered not favorable to the society. Through these groups the government easily gets the reactions of the people towards her policies. The Nigerian government recognizes the civil society groups, and that is why it at times gives responsibilities to some of their members. Besides, civil society groups in Nigeria are free to affiliate to political parties, and members can contest elections. For instance, many labour leaders contested and won elections under the auspices of political parties.
2.2 Religious Organisations

Religion in Nigeria is categorized into three groups; Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. Christianity and Islam have some influences in Nigerians political scene while African Traditional Religion remains dormant in political affairs.

Christianity is of different denominations such as catholic, protestant and Pentecostal. There are also several Christian associations based on these denominations, which are further brought together under the same umbrella in the name of Christian organization called Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). In other words, CAN consists of various smaller Christian organizations based on denominations.

Islam is also of various organizations such as Society for the victory of Islam, The Muslim Student Society (MSS), The Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN), etc. Nigerian Supreme Council for Islam Affairs (NSCIA) is the pre-eminent Muslim Organisation in Nigeria.

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have in one voice condemned government’s encroachment on religious rights and the well-being of the citizens. For instance, religion associations teamed up with other civil societies to criticize the dubious military’s democratization projects, and its interference with the transition process to democracy. They have also encouraged citizens to take active part in the democratization process. They advised their members to register and participate in various elections to usher in the democratic civilian government. CAN Association advised church leaders to carefully study parties manifestoes, and educate their members accordingly.

Religious leaders and organizations promote democratic values by encouraging “Nigerians to bring the religion principles of integrity, honesty, selflessness, sacrifice and unity to bear on their involvement in politics” (Adigun & Oyeleye 1999, p. 37).

2.3 The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA)

The association has been known for its active involvement in the country’s polity. This group, probably because of its profession, is bent on defending the fundamental human rights of the people. During the Babangida administration, two members of the association were nominated to take part in the constitutional review committee, and other two were in the Constituent Assembly to assess the work of the constitutional drafting committee.
The association worked in conjunction with pro-democratic activists to ensure the success of the democratic transition. The Ikeja and Lagos branches of the association offered free legal services to defend those arrested in connection with pro-democracy activities. Besides, its members were involved in a one-week boycott of the courts because of “executive lawlessness” that was part and parcel of the military government. Even when the president of the association was appointed Attorney-General of the federation by the Babangida administration, the association continued to oppose the military government for manipulating the transition programme. Several press statements and conferences concerning the rights of the citizens and inadequacies of the transition programme were issued by the same association. They study party’s manifestoes to choose the party that adheres to democratic principles. They also communicate this to the people via press release and conferences (Adigun & Oyeleye 1989, Brackett 1997).

2.4 The Nigerian Labour Congress

This group has been very active in the country’s polity. During the transition period, it had two of its members in the Constitutional Review Committee and two in the Constituent Assembly. The congress condemned the military government for not upholding the transition time table, and questioned the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election. The union urged the military government to hand over power to the civilians in accordance with the transition time table, or else, it would call upon workers to go on industrial strike (Adigun & Oyeleye 1999).

2.5 The Media

The media is an important tool for inspecting and legitimizing elections in Nigeria because electorates are able to receive information about candidates, the electoral process, voting dates, as well as the necessary rules concerning voting via the media. All facets of the transition to democracy ranging from Babangida era to that of Abdusalam’s were fully covered and reported by the media.

An agenda-setting seminar for journalists entitled “The media and the Transition” was organized in August 1998, to prepare them for effective and extensive coverage and report of the Abdusalam transition programme. Feedback on government policies, including areas like morality, accountability, management of national economy and its ability to alleviate
poverty is properly done by the media. The watchdog role of the media encourages the exposure of any fraudulent activities by individuals, organizations and the government.

The media reminded and advised the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure free and fair elections. For instance, the Guardian Editorial comment of August 19, 1999, suggested that the Independent National Electoral Commission should leave no stone unturned to discourage rigging, and should not succumb to any manipulation by the government security agencies and administrators.

National elections are extensively monitored and documented by the media. For instance, Newswatch reported irregularities in the state assembly and governorship elections. There were cases of underage voter in Katsina State, multiple voting in Abia State, and cases of bribery during voting in Delta and Ekiti States. The presidential elections in February, 1999 were covered by the media as well. Apart from elections, other government activities within and outside the country are covered by the media (Adigun & Oyeleye 1999).

2.6 The National Assembly of Nigeria

The National Assembly of Nigeria is a bicameral legislature. The Senate is the upper house. It consists of 109 members (senators). Nigeria has 36 states, each of the states is divided into three senatorial district. Each senatorial district elects one senator for its representation in the senate. A senator represents the federal capital territory, Abuja. The senate president is the presiding officer of this house.

The House of Representative is the lower house. It has a total of 360 members elected in single member constituencies base on simple majority (or first-past-the post system). The speaker of the house is the presiding officer of the house of representative (Nigerian national Assembly-federal Republic, 2006).

2.7 Political Parties

The demise of the former Head of State, General Sanni Abacha, ushered in General Abubakar Abdusalam as the Nigerian Head of State on June 9, 1998. Unlike his predecessors, Ibrahim Babangida and Sanni Abacha, he was committed towards completing the transition and hand over power to the civilians May 29, 1999. General Abubakar quickly set up a plan to carry on with the transition program and revamp the ailing economy of the country.
He dissolved the political parties, National Electoral Commission, Transitional Implementation Committee, and National Reconciliation Committee established by the former Military Government. All elections conducted under the previous Military Government were cancelled for lack of credibility. Abubakar established an Electoral Commission called Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which in turn registered nine political parties.

Election into the local Government Councils was held on December 5, 1998, and was used as a yardstick for the final registration of Political Parties. The condition was that only political parties that could score a minimum of 5% of the total number of votes in 24 States would be registered. Consideration was also given to political party that could score 5% of the total votes cast in more States than other Parties. Only three Political Parties fulfilled the condition:

The Alliance for Democracy (AD)

All Peoples Party (APP)

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

2.8 Summary

Nigeria gained her independence October 1, 1960. The first republic lasted six years until the military overthrew the government because of a series of political problems. Nigeria had experienced military rules for over 15 years before it finally had her transition to democratic government. Civil society in Nigeria played important roles in the country's polity. The British colonial master divided Nigeria into regions, and since then parties are formed and politics played along regional or ethnic lines. Nigerian national assembly is a bicameral legislature.
3 Concepts

In this chapter, the concepts of democracy, political participation and election will be discussed. The author will explain and describe what democracy is all about. Democracy in Africa and factors affecting it will also be discussed. Similarly, references will be made to Africa on the aspects of political participation and elections.

3.1 Democracy

There is no country in the world where citizens will not feel neglected, isolated, robbed of their rights and franchise if they have no opportunities to partake in the making of the policies with which they are governed. Today, there is a dramatic transformation in the world politics through the spread of democracy. Democracy is the only system of government that exercises higher degrees of legitimacy. In fact, International organizations and states are intruding on sovereignty in various and bold ways for the sake of promoting democracy and freedom. They want democracy to be recognized as a fundamental human right.

Before democracy could attain its present position in the universe, it has gone through stages of transition (waves of democratization). Hague and Harrop (2007) made reference to Huntington’s three waves of democratization. The first wave of democratization was from 1828-1926. During this period about 30 countries were able to establish national institutions that were minimally democratic. However, democracy became consolidated in the earliest 19th century. Examples of such democracies are the United States and the United Kingdom.

The second wave of democratization, on the other hand, began during the second World War to 1960s. In this case some of the democracies created at that period did not consolidate until after 1945, and after dictatorship have been defeated. Examples of such democracies are western Germany, Austria, Japan and Italy. The second wave democracies is different from that of the first wave, in that liberal traditions in this wave were poorly represented through parties. Single party became a dominance in the political scene.

Next was the emergence of the third wave. This began in the final quarter of the 19th Century-from 1975 -1991. Before this period, there were less than 40 democracies in the world. Certain unique events took place during this period: A stop to dictatorships in Southern Europe in 1970s; In 1980s there was the retreat of generals in most parts of Latin Ameri-
Communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe crumpled at the end of 1980s. The third wave was actually the era of global political transformation. That era became unfavourable to non-democratic regimes. The third wave peaked in the early 1990s, but there were countries that continued to experience democratic or uprisings in the twenty-first century. Examples of such countries are Georgia and Ukraine. “Elsewhere, including much of Latin America and Africa, many democratic late-comers have not yet fully consolidated, if indeed they are to do so at all” (Hague and Harrop 2007, p. 57).

According to Staffan Lindberg, 1950s was the initial period Africa had its first wave of democracy. This was the time Africans were struggling to gain independence from their colonial masters. Because African countries were still under their colonial powers, restrictions were imposed on them. In Francophone countries there were limited electoral roles for Africans, while elections were restricted to the local government in Anglophone countries (Lindberg 2004).

Democracy signifies rule by the people. “Democracy is the rule by a demos, a citizen body consisting of members who are considered equal for the purposes of arriving at governmental decisions” (Dahl 1989, p. 83). Democracy is also associated with freedom in a magnitude different from that of other regimes, by its advocates. It is the form of government which structure and processes of government and the laws are based on the genuine consent of the people—the governed. This is possible through decision by the majority.

Democracy is being regarded as an instrument to human development. It has been a common assertion amongst the political philosophers since the Greeks that there is a relationship between the characteristic of a regime and the qualities of its people. Dahl also made reference to John Stuart Mill, “The first element of good government(...) being the virtue and intelligence of the human beings composing the community, the most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves. The first question in respect of any political institutions is how far they tend to foster in the members of the community the various desirable qualities, moral and intellectual” (Dahl 1989, p. 92). Going by his explanation, democracy is the best system of government which develops desirable qualities—indifference, self-reliance, public-spiritedness in people through active participation in politics.

Gregory Mahler has also written concerning democracy in Africa. He wrote that Africa is a large region of over fifty independent states with diverse political institutions, political his-
tories, political culture and customs. In spite of these differences, there are features the states have in common that affect them politically. Most African countries were colonized, but later gained independence from their colonial power after 1960. They are also underdeveloped, poor, and economically backward. Political culture in most of the states is heterogeneous because of various traditional tribal units within such states. He explains further that elections and democratic politics in Africa have common history because of how the countries were politically organized by their colonial masters. For instance, in Ghana, Kenya, Sierra-Leone and The Gambia, Africans were elected into legislative council in the 1920s. After independence success and importance of election in African countries become bleak and doubtful. “Elections in much of contemporary African countries were widely regarded as irrelevant or a sham. There was growing evidence of elections which did not reflect democratic values; that those responsible followed neither the electoral procedure set out in the institutions bequeathed at independence nor other requirements of free and fair competition” (Mahler 1995, p. 357).

According to Bratton and Walle, a survey was carried out to measure the extent of democratization between 1988 and 1994 in African countries with respect to political rights score in 1994. The survey’s political right indicator based the extent of democracy on “the right of all adults to vote and compete for public offices and elected representatives to have a decisive vote on public policies” (Bratton and Walle 1997, p. 217). It was found out that 23 African authoritarian regimes went through some measures of democratization between 1988 and 1994. Those 23 countries made gains on both political rights and civil liberties.

African soldier are fond of interfering with politics in their respective countries, and in the process causing a setback in the growth of democracy in the region. They are known for their intervention in politics. Military intervention do take the form of coup d'état whereby the army overthrown the civilian government or a set of armed forces taking over power from the military government. Usually, they do give reasons to buttress their actions for overthrowing the government in power. Amongst the reasons usually given by the mutinying soldiers are economic mismanagement by the government in power, bribery and corruption by government officials, and election malpractices. Intervention of the military in politics was common in African countries in the 1980s and 1990s. They gave instances in which soldiers that intervened in politics in Africa are either pro- or antidemocratic. “We found 13 instances of military actions all told, seven of which (Benin, Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, and South Africa) were supportive of democratic initiatives, and
six of which sought to stem the democratic tide (Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Togo and Zaire)” Bratton and Walle (1997, p. 211).

3.2 Political Participation

Political participation can be described as various ways or means through which the people tend to influence the composition of the government or governmental policies. There are diverse ways in which citizens can partake in politics. It could be by attending political rallies, party meetings, canvassing for candidates of their choice, voting during elections, and contacting their representatives. Political participation also involves activities which are less conventional in the forms they take-appending ones signature on a petition, part taking in a peaceful demonstration against the local government and the state government. It depends on ones choice either to get involved in politics, through which means, and the extent of his involvement (Hague & Harrop 2007).

3.3 Political Participation in liberal Democracy

To shed more light on participation, Hague and Harrop, made reference to the works of Milbrath and Goel carried out in the United States of America. Milbrath and Goel in their study to determine political participation in the United States of America, applied an analogy concerning the Roman contest where a few gladiators performed for the mass of spectators. In the course of this, some apathetic felt unconcerned about their performance, and thus refused to watch the show.

They divided American entire population into three categories: the gladiators, spectators and apathetic. With this they could determine the extent of participation in each of the categories. The gladiators group represents the population that takes active part in politics; Spectators group represents the population who observes political context but mainly takes part in voting. They are not willing to participate beyond that. The apathetics group represents the population that is not engage in formal politics.

From the result we can observe that gladiators group is just a small proportion of the population. This is a replica of what happens in the democratic world. It is not peculiar to the study carried out in the United States of America. Voting in national elections is the aspect in political participation that a majority of citizens engages themselves. Other political participations are usually carried out by the minority activists. The proportion of those who neither vote nor follow up politics via the media (apathetics) outnumbers that of the gladi-
tors. It is observed that party membership and traditional engagement in politics is declining in most democracies. This means that gladiators are just a cross-section of society in almost every democracy.

Participation in politics is higher in upper social group than in any other group. Two prominent factors are responsible for this. The upper social groups are wealthy, well educated, and have communication skills which give them courage and ability to express themselves in public during political meetings, rallies, presentation of manifestos, and so on. Besides, an educated person has access to information, and is able to interpret information received.

High-status persons are more interested in politics because they have the means to become involved without fear. They are well to do, influential, and have enough time to put into politics as they are not like the poor pre-occupied with how to make ends meet. The non-participants in politics are mostly those persons without qualification because they are not educated, unemployed, and probably from a minority group. Most of them are poor, and therefore pre-occupied with daily struggles.

Unlike men, women do not engage much in political activities, especially at the higher political level. They occupy fewer political positions compared with men. On the other hand, they could form a majority of voters in most countries.

Social movements are allowed to exist and engage in political participations in liberal democracies. Members of social movements come together to seek common objective, sometimes question the legitimacy and the decisions of the government. They could also organize protests, peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins, boycotts and political strikes if there is need for that.

Political participation is an essential condition for a true democracy. This is because, democracy as the rule by the people requires their participation in political activities like voting during elections to enhance a representative system. To ensure that there is equality of participation, in elections for instance, there is therefore the need for the application of universal suffrage. This could be restricted by citizenship, mental sanity and age. Equality of participation in this regard, can be determined via the percentage of electorates who took part in electoral processes; and through the rights of individual candidate to contest elections under the auspices of his or her respective political party. This means that both the incumbents and opposition parties should be free to participate in electoral processes.
When individuals and political parties are given opportunities to fully participate in political activities, and without any act of frustrating oppositions to boycott elections, is an indication of higher democratic quality. “I take full opposition participation to indicate presence of democratic quality in terms of realization of this aspect of equal participation” (Lindberg 2004, p. 54).

3.4 Participation in authoritarian States

Although political participation is allowed in authoritarian states, the rulers tend either to restrict or tightly control it. This is done to prevent any threat on the regime. Patron-client networks or clientelism is a technique for controlling political participation in authoritarian states. These networks exist in other political systems, but more emphasized in authoritarian regimes.

In developing countries like African countries, clientelism is common in political participation as most people are poor and struggle to survive. Such people are very loyal and submissive to their patrons who do assist them in various ways, but control their votes. As reward for their clients, patrons do give them access to government resources, jobs, contracts, subsides and food for those in need. A Patron enjoys a share from government’s resources as reward for his clients’ votes. This type of participation via patronage links people of different levels within the state. In other words, it links centre and regions. “Participation through patronage is a device which appeals particularly in authoritarian settings because it links elites and mass, centre and periphery, in a context of inequality” (Hague & Harrop 2007, p. 173). An outstanding disadvantage of the type of patron-client relationships is that it inhibits democracy because the clients vote according to the instructions of their masters.

3.5 Elections

A proper democratic process is not complete without elections. Election is a process by which a population chooses persons to hold formal office. It is a mechanism by which representative democracies fill legislative offices, sometimes in both executive and judiciary. It can be described as a formal process by which voters are free to make their political choices on candidates to occupy public offices. It is a formal expression of preferences by electorates, and this is aggregated and transformed into a decision concerning who is chosen and who is not.
Elections do make fundamental contribution to democratic governance. Accountability is not undermined because of fear of re-election. Through elections, voters are able to select leaders of their choice who could be held accountable for their performance in respective offices. Periodic election and its acceptance paves way for the continuation of democracy. This is a possibility in competitive elections in which the choices of voters are not restricted. Election again, enhances political education for the citizens. Parties and their candidates do educate voters about the parties future plans or program during election campaign, party meetings, etc. It is an avenue to discuss public issues, and thus facilitates the expression of public opinion.

Participation in elections makes citizens to feel a sense of belonging, and reinforces self-esteem. They no longer feel isolated but see themselves as part of the government, and part-taking in decision making. Legitimacy of a political society is also reinforced by elections. The government has the right to govern, and the governed recognizes the rights of the government to govern (Harrop & William 1987).

In Africa, politics is such that political aspirants use promises of future patronage reward to secure elections into offices. They mobilize electorates to vote for them, and promise to reward them as soon as they become insiders when the new government is installed. Wealthy and influential political aspirants use their resources to finance electoral campaign and win elections. Even if such successful business men lost elections their followers are still attracted to them because of their riches and influences. On the other hand, those aspirants who have no personal wealth and influence to buy their ways into offices turn to the successful businessmen for sponsorship. This is done with the promise to pay back in one way or the other when they are successful. Rich and influential men in Africa are referred to as “big men”, and they usually emerge to lead opposition movement. These acts of patronage and clientelism have impact on democracy in African countries. Politicians who won elections with the promises to reward their supporters and voters while in offices, and the tendencies to quickly amass wealth and win subsequent elections are also reasons for corruption and nepotism. Transparency among politicians and public officers is therefore prevented, and government treasury is being looted by those greedy politicians (Bratton and Walle 1997).

In many African states, emphasis on sub-national ethnic identities is a factor affecting democracy. Although national identity is being emphasized to prevent ethnic division within a
state, political activities are often organized in line with ethno-regional identities. Some of the political elites are conscious that emphasis on ethnic division can endanger unity and democracy in a state. To overcome this problem, they resulted in building political alliance across ethnic groups and regions (Bratton and walle 1997).

The approach of Africans to electoral acts has refused to change even at the coming of multi-party elections since in the 1990s. Voters’ choice of representatives is based on client-patron relationships. “Voters seem to continue to choose representatives based on how good they are as “patrons” of their respective community or constituency” (Lindberg 2004, p. 14).

3.6 Summary

Democracy is the rule by the people, a citizen body consisting of members who are termed equal for the purposes of arriving at governmental decisions. It is the only system of government that exercises higher degrees of legitimacy. Democracy has gone through stages of transition (waves of democratization).

Political participation can be described as various ways or means through which the people tend to influence the composition of the government or governmental policies. There is more political participation in liberal democracy than authoritarian states.
4 Model and sociological approach

The party identification model, and sociological approach in relation to political participation will be discussed in this chapter. The author wants to test whether they are applicable in Nigerian political domain, especially as Nigeria has adopted the American type of presidential system of government.

4.1 The Party Identification Model

This model was developed at the Michigan University, in the United States of America in 1950. It is a concept which deals with behavior of electors or voters towards parties they identify themselves with and for which they cast their votes during elections. In this model, the act of voting is regarded as expressive, not instrumental. “It is a way of demonstrating a deep seated loyalty to a party” (Harrop & William 1987, p. 148).

This model is based on the following propositions:

1. Most electors inherited their allegiance to a part through the family.
2. Party identification helps equip electors with political information, and this to a large extent influences their attitudes.
3. Ones attachment to a party is strengthen in accordance with the length of time it is held; partisanship also depends on ones age. Changes in party identification may lean on geographical or social mobility factors.
4. There is the certainty that electors who vote against their party at a particular election owning to the influence of a particular campaign still maintain their partisanship and come back to their original party in subsequent elections.

Identifying oneself with a party does not mean you must be a formal member, but could also be in psychological sense. It does not also mean that you must consistently vote for the party.

According to this model, electoral choice of a voter depends on his attitudes towards three facets of politics. They are candidates, policies and the connections between parties and the social group. A Voter believes that the interest of his social group is best represented by a party even if he can not in any way substantiate his assessment. Party identification has a direct influence on a voter’s decision. A voter casts his vote for a party because of his affiliation to the party. The voter’s attitude to the candidate, policies and group benefit is influenced by party identification.
In summary, group membership and family influence identification with a party, and party identification in turn influences voters’ attitudes to candidates, policies and group benefits, which consequently influences voter’s decision (Ball & Peters 2005, Harrop & William 1987).

4.2 The Sociological Approach

The sociological approach emphasizes the group membership of voter base on social class, religion, regional or ethnic loyalties, age and sex of the voter. It concerns the rate at which various groups vote for parties. Sometimes these features may overlap, for instance a voter could belong to a particular working class, a church-going female from an ethnic group (Ball and Peters 2005). The sociological approach is not a theory, it claims that its variables like class, religion, age could be the cause of voting decisions but are not the consequences of such decisions. That is, it may be possible for people’s age to affect their vote, but it is not possible for how they vote to alter their age (Harrop & Williams, 1987).

In Nigeria sociological approach has much influence on electorate’s voting behavior. Voter prefer to vote for a candidate of the same religious background irrespective of his or her manifestoes (Ayantayo 2008). Religious leaders in Nigeria study parties manifestos and advise their members to vote for a particular party. Ethnicity is another factor that influences voters behavior in Nigeria. Some voters vote for candidates not because of the content of the manifestos but because of the ethnic group or region the candidate belongs. Political party could be described to belong to a particular region judging from the ethnic background of the founders and leaders of such a party (Lancia 22-02-2007).

Clientelism is a prominent feature in Nigerian politics. It was present during the military regimes. It is also part and parcel of the civilian government. The “godfather” controls the votes of his clients in return for assistance given to his clients (Ukana 2007).

4.3 Summary

The behavior of the electorate towards the candidate, policies and group benefit is influenced by the party identification. Electorates demonstrate deep seated loyalty to their parties. It is characterized by stability and a high level of allegiance to specific political parties (Ball & Peters 2005). The sociological approach explains the group membership of voter based on variables like social class, religion, regional or ethnic royalties, age and sex.
5 Elections in Nigeria

This chapter particularly deals with elections in Nigeria. I have chosen to compare the 1999 elections and the 2003 elections in terms of participation. The two elections are chosen to fulfill the purpose of this thesis which aimed at investigating the participation in the 1999 and the 2003 elections in Nigeria. The reason behind the careful and deliberate selection of the two elections is because each of the elections was done under different regime. To be specific, the 1999 elections were done under the military regime while the 2003 elections were organized under the civilian government.

To enable the readers to follow the sequence of the comparison of these elections, it is important to know that elections in Nigeria are usually organized by an independent body, the electoral commission which could be established or reformed by the government in power. Its roles are very important and do determine the success of the electoral process.

During the preparation towards the 1999 elections which also marked the transition to democracy in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission was established by Decree No 17 of 1998 based on the laws of Nigeria by the military government. The commission comprises a chairman, who is the Chief National Electoral Commissioner and the Chief Executive of the Commission, and 12 other members known as National Electoral Commissioners. A branch office of the commission with a resident Electoral Commissioner is established in every state of the federation, including Abuja-the federal territory (National Electoral Commission decree, August 5, 1998).

5.1 Elections results.

The results of the 1999 elections and the 2003 elections conducted by the electoral commission are presented below. The source of the results is African Elections database: Elections in Nigeria, June 5, 2007. The presentation of the results is done in the following sequence: The results of the national assembly elections held on 20 February 1999; the results of the 1999 presidential election conducted on 27 February 1999; the results of the national assembly conducted on 12 April 2003; the results of the presidential election conducted on 19 April 2003. These results of each elections mentioned above are presented on Table 01, Table 02, Table 03, and Table 04 respectively. Each table displays the names of the parties (though abbreviated) which participated in these elections. Number of votes, seats won, and percentages of votes are also shown on each table. Registered number of voters for the
elections, total votes (voters’ turnout), total valid votes, and invalid/blank votes are displayed too. Below each table, the source of the results is shown, and a brief summary explaining the result is included. This brief introduction to the analysis is made here to help readers understand the results of the elections at a glance without any difficulties.

**20 February 1999 National Assembly Election.**

On the 20 February 1999, election into the Nigerian national assembly was conducted. This was done to elect the representatives in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The same number of voters was registered for the election into both chambers. The figure is displayed before the table 01.

**Senate:**

Registered Voters: 57,938,945.

Total Votes (Voters Turnout): 24,386,247 (42.1%) of the registered voters

**House of Representatives:**

Registered Voters: 57,938,945.

Total Votes (Voters Turnout): 23,573,407 (40.7%) of the registered voters.

Table 01: 1999 National Assembly Elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Senate</th>
<th>House of Representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of Votes</td>
<td>Number of seats (109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APP</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant/undeclared Seats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 01 shows the results of the 1999 National Assembly of Nigeria elections. PDP won the highest number of seats in both the senate and the House of Representatives, followed by APP, while AD won the least number of seats.

27 February 1999 Presidential Election

The Presidential election was held on 27 February 1999. The same political parties which participated in the elections into the national assembly also participated in the presidential election.

Registered Voters: 57,938,945.

Total Votes (Voters Turnout): 30,280,052 (52.3%) of the registered voters.

Invalid Blank Votes: 431,611.

Total Valid Votes: 29,848,441.

Table 02: 1999 Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>18,738,154</td>
<td>62.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD &amp; APP (coalition)</td>
<td>11,110,287</td>
<td>37.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 02 shows the result of the 1999 presidential election. PDP has the highest number of votes, while the coalition parties (AD and APP) has the least number of votes.

12 April 2003 National Assembly Elections

The national assembly election was held on 12 April 2003. The purpose was to elect representatives into the Senate and the House of Representatives. The same number of voters registered for the Senate and the House of Representatives elections. The figure is displayed before the table 03.

Senate

Registered Voters 60,823,022.

Total Votes (Voter Turnout) 29,995,171 (49.3%) of the registered voters.
Invalid/Blank Votes 965,064.

Total Valid Votes 29,030,107.

**House of Representatives**

Registered Voters 60,823,022.

Total Votes (Voters Turnout) 30,386,270 (50.0%) of the registered voters.

Invalid/Blank Votes 1,153,200

Total Valid votes 29,233,070

Table 03: 2003 National Assembly Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Senate, Votes</th>
<th>% of votes</th>
<th>Seats(109)</th>
<th>House of Representatives, Votes</th>
<th>% of votes</th>
<th>Seats(360)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>15,585,583</td>
<td>53.69%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>15,927,807</td>
<td>54.49%</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANPP</td>
<td>8,091,783</td>
<td>27.87%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8,021,531</td>
<td>27.44%</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>2,828,082</td>
<td>9.74%</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>2,711,972</td>
<td>9.28%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNPP</td>
<td>789,705</td>
<td>2.72%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>803,432</td>
<td>2.75%</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>459,562</td>
<td>1.58%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>561,161</td>
<td>1.92%</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APGA</td>
<td>429,073</td>
<td>1.48%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>397,147</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRP</td>
<td>204,929</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>222,938</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS</td>
<td>641,535</td>
<td>2.21%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>587,082</td>
<td>2.01%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was one vacant seat.


Table 03 shows the results of the 2003 national Assembly of Nigerian Elections. PDP won the highest number of seats in both the Senate and House of Representatives.
19 April 2003 Presidential Election

The Presidential election was held on 19 April 2003. The number of political parties, number of votes and percentage of votes are shown on the table, 04.

Registered Voters: 60,823,022.

Total Votes (Voter Turnout): 42,018,735 (69.1%) of the registered voters.

Invalid/Blank Votes: 2,538,246.

Total Valid Votes: 39,480,489.

Table 04: 2003 Presidential Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
<th>% of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PDP</td>
<td>24,456,140</td>
<td>61.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANPP</td>
<td>12,710,022</td>
<td>32.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APGA</td>
<td>1,297,445</td>
<td>3.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNPP</td>
<td>169,609</td>
<td>0.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>161,333</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>157,560</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>132,997</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP</td>
<td>119,547</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRP</td>
<td>100,765</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMP</td>
<td>57,720</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APLP</td>
<td>26,921</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNPP</td>
<td>23,830</td>
<td>0.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDJ</td>
<td>21,403</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>11,565</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 04 shows the results of the 2003 presidential elections. PDP has the highest votes.

5.2 Summary

The above elections were conducted by the independent National Electoral Commission under different regimes. The 1999 elections were conducted under the military government, while the 2003 elections were conducted under the civilian government. Political participation in 2003 elections was higher than that of the 1999 elections. Tables, 01 and 02 shows the results of the 1999 National assembly elections and the results of the 2003 presidential election respectively. The results of the 2003 National Assembly elections and that of the 2003 Presidential election are shown in tables 03 and 04 respectively. It is glaring on the tables that more political parties participated in the 2003 elections than in the 1999 elections. The political party which appeared most successful in both elections in each of the years is the PDP.
6 Analysis and discussion

The examination of the question asked in the introduction is done in this chapter. The question asked was: Is participation in the 2003 elections, organized by the civilian government stronger than the participation in the 1999 elections done under the military government? To be able to examine the question, the 1999 elections will be compared with the 2003 elections in terms of the type of regime under which the elections were conducted, the number of the electorates, political parties, and the international observers. The concepts of democracy, political participation, and elections discussed in this thesis will be analysed in relation to the Nigerian situation. This means that the author will give a brief summary of each concept, and thereafter relates it to the Nigerian context. The party identification model, and the sociological approach already discussed in the thesis will also be looked into to determine the extent to which they are applicable in Nigerian perspective. The author will treat the analysis in this sequence so that the readers will not find any difficulties in understanding this chapter.

6.1 Comparison of elections results

In this comparison, it is pertinent to know first among other things, that the two elections—the 1999 elections and the 2003 elections were organized by different regimes. The 1999 elections were organized under the military government. This implies that it was the military government that set up the various institutions, and appointed officials who were given the responsibilities to conduct the 1999 elections. For instance, the Independent National Electoral Commission was established by Decree No 17 of 1988 based on the laws of Nigeria by the military government. The chief national electoral commissioner and other officials were appointed and given the responsibilities to conduct the 1999 elections. On the other hand, the 2003 elections were organized under the civilian government. It was the civilian government that made all necessary arrangements and ensured that the 2003 elections were conducted.

To compare the extent of participation in the 1999 elections with the 2003 elections, the author first of all started with the level of participation during the national assembly and the presidential elections.

The total number of voters registered for the 1999 elections was 57,938,945. During the Senate election, 24,386,247 voters turned out for the election and that was 42.1% of the registered voters, while for the House of Representatives, 23,573,407 voters turned out for
the election. It was 40.7% of the registered voters. 30,280,052 voters turned out for the presidential election which was held on 27 February 1999, and that was 52.3% of the registered voters. In 2003, the total number of voters registered for the elections was 60,823,022. During the senate election, 29,995,171 Voters turned out for the election, and that was 49.3% of the registered voters. During the House of Representatives election, 30,386,270 voters turned out for the election, and that was 50.0% of the registered voters. 42,018,735 turned out for the presidential election which was held on 19 April 2003. That was 69.1% of the registered voters. Political participation was therefore higher in the 2003 elections than the 1999 elections.

The 1999 elections and the 2003 elections were also compared in terms of the number of political parties that participated in those elections. As you have seen in the previous chapter, only three political parties participated in the 1999 elections done under the military government, while fourteen political parties participated in the 2003 elections. This is therefore a proof that participation was stronger in the 2003 elections than the 1999 elections.

In spite of the differences stated above, both elections were closely monitored. The International Republican Institutes sent delegations from many countries of the world, and also sponsored several civil society activists in Nigeria to monitor elections. The monitoring of the 1999 and the 2003 elections was done to ensure a true democracy in Nigeria (The International Republican Institute, 22-04-079).

6.2 The Concepts of Democracy, Political participation, and Election.

The concept of democracy, political participation and election have been explained in chapter three of this thesis. In this section, the author will relate these concepts to Nigerian political scene. Attention will be focused on 1999 to 2003, as this thesis is based on the investigation of the elections of those periods.

The author will first of all briefly summarises what each of the concepts means before relating them to the Nigerian context. Democracy has been explained to mean a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people. The people exercise the supreme power via their representatives, and the delegated authority is periodically renewed through a competitive free and fair elections. Nigeria was under the military rule for over fifteen years, and this meant that Nigerians were not given the opportunity to collectively elect their representatives through free and fair elections. Even though elections were or-
ganized and conducted in 1999 by the military government to bring Nigeria under the civilian rule, democratic principles were not fully applied. For instance, only three political parties were registered to participate in the national assembly and the presidential elections. This could be one of the factors that affected the level of political participation in the 1999 elections.

In a democratic setting, political participation ought to be high as citizens are involved in various political activities. Political participation includes various ways through which the people can influence the composition of the government and its policies. Nigerians are engaged in political activities. Political parties are competing for political posts, electorates are participating in political meetings, rallies, voting, civil societies, and other political activities. Generally, rich, educated, and middle class people in Nigeria are more active in political activities than the poor people who are engaged in daily struggle to live. The 1999 elections were not very competitive if we take into consideration the number of political parties, candidates, registered voters, voters turnout, and the percentage of vote cast. Participation was better in the 2003 elections. It was more competitive than the 1999 elections.

In Nigeria, people feel freer and secured to participate in elections organized and conducted by the civilian government because it is more democratic than the military government. This could be one of the reasons why participation in the 2003 elections was stronger than the participation in the 1999 elections.

Political participation in Nigeria involves patron-client relationship whether it is the military government or the civilian government. During the military era, for instance, president Babangida retired military officers that were not loyal to him, and appointed his favourites to various political and command positions. The army was dominated by the network of patron-client relationship. The regime also favoured influential civil society-groups and individuals that could boost the public image and credibility of his government. Political appointments were therefore given to academic and intellectuals (Ukana 2000). Clientelism is not restricted to the military era; it is part and parcel of the Nigeria’s politics under the civilian government. The ruling class or the patron gives favour to clients in the form of projects, gifts, offices and other pecuniary gains, while clients yield loyalty in return. Patron-client relationship is disadvantageous because it hinders the ideal of democracy, and encourages personalization of power (Ayokunle 2007).
6.3 The Model and sociological approach in Nigerian politics?

In this part, the party identification model and the sociological approach which have been explained in chapter four will be revisited, and find out if they are applicable to the Nigerian situation. The author will start the analysis with the party identification model. Thereafter, he will discuss the application of sociological approach in Nigerian politics. The two approaches to voting behaviour used in this study are the party identification approach, and sociological approach. The party identification approach is based on the electorates stability and high level of allegiance to a political party. It is about how a family and group can influence a voter's identification with a party, and the party identification in turn influences voters attitude towards candidates, policies, and group benefits which consequently influences voters decision. This approach does not apply to Nigerian political situation because voting decisions in Nigeria are not based on the trend presented in the model.

Sociological approach is applicable because voting decisions are based on whether a political party represents the concern of a collective group membership like ethnic, social, religious, and occupational group. Religion has infiltrated into Nigerian politics. Many Nigerians now believe that leaders get power from God. Even though there are elections malpractices some people still believe that whoever gets the power got it from God. Nigerian Christians are fond of making references to the Bible stating that all authority is ordained while Muslims also explain the concepts of political power and nation have their bases in Islamic principle of unity (Ayantayo 2008).

Choice of candidates is being connected to religion. Religious associations and leaders advise their members to vote for a particular candidate. Candidates too talk about getting votes from their religious groups, and make promises to introduce certain religion rule or rules if he or she is given the mandate to rule. This is only common among political candidates from the northern Nigeria who always promised to introduce sharia law.

The renowned religious bodies in Nigeria, Christian Association of Nigerians (CAN), and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islam affairs (NSCIA) are fond of educating their members on religious affiliation of candidates. In Nigeria Voter prefer to vote for a candidate of the same religious background irrespective of his or her manifestoes (Ayantayo 2008).

Religious leaders encourage their members to take active part in the democratization process. They advised them to register and participate in various elections. Church leaders carefully study party manifestoes, and advise members on which party to vote for.
Ethnicity influences voters behavior in Nigeria. Most electorates vote for candidates because of the ethnic groups or regions the candidates belong (Lancia 22-02-2007). Nigerian Bar Association is fond of issuing press release concerning the rights of the citizens. The association studies party’s manifestoes to choose the party that adheres to democratic principles. This is communicate to the people through press release and conferences.

6.4 Summary

The 1999 elections were compared with 2003 elections in terms of the type of regime under which the elections were conducted, the number of the electorates, political parties, and the international observers. It was found out that participation in 2003 elections was stronger than that of the 1999 elections. Patron-client relationship is one of the dominant factors in the political arena of Nigeria. Both patron and client benefit from each other. Patrons do give favour which could be in the form of projects, gifts, offices and other pecuniary gains to clients, and the clients have to yield loyalty in return. The client demonstrates his loyalty by casting his vote for the candidate that is the patron’s favourite.

Two approaches, the party identification approach and the sociological approach were explained in relation to Nigerian politics. The party identification is not applicable in Nigerian politics. The sociological approach is applicable, as voting decisions are based on whether a political party represents the concern of a collective group membership like ethnic, social, and religious groups. Religious and ethnic factors do influence voter’s behavior in Nigeria.
7 A Concluding summary

Participation in Nigerian elections is usually an interesting issue. I did extensive study on literatures relating to participation in elections. Comparison was made between the 1999 elections which took place during the military era and 2003 elections organized by the civilian government. There is more participation in elections organized by the Civilian government than that of the Military government.

Sociological approach influences voters’ choice. It emphasizes the group membership of voter base on social class, religion, regional or ethnic loyalties, age and sex of the voter. It concerns the rate at which various groups vote for parties. Religious leaders encourage their members to take active part in the democratization process. They Church carefully study party manifestoes and advise their members on which party to vote for. Occupational groups such as the Nigerian Bar Association do study party manifestoes, choose a party that adheres to democratic principles, and advise the citizens on that basis. This is done via press release and conferences. Besides, ethnicity is another factor that influences the voter’s decision in Nigeria.

It is now glaring that democracy in Nigeria lacks some democratic principles. The issues of patron-client relationship, the influences of ethnicity and religious affiliations over voters’ decision could pose a barrier to the full realization of democracy in the country. Therefore, the democracy has much to do for it to be consolidated. The issues of political rights and civil liberty have to be properly addressed in Nigeria.
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