

Innovations

How Foreign Influence Undermines Nigeria's Elections: Evaluating Aspects of the 2015- 2023 Presidential Polls

Chike A. Ezenwa (PhD), Archana S. Njoku (PhD) & Udensi A. Vitalis

Directorate of General Studies,
Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria

Abstract: *Elections into public offices in Nigeria since the first republic and regrettably to date have been characterized by disquieting malpractices and violence. Available evidence indicates that during elections, political parties always strive to win at all cost even to the point of breaching official rules of engagement. In the bid to capture power, no amount of intrigue is spared between and among competing parties. As a result, politicians in Nigeria usually appeal to ethnic, religious and other primordial sentiments including resort to violence to manipulate the outcome of elections. These internal pitfalls ordinarily appear to define Nigeria's electoral process over the years. However this research is probing the apparent covert role of foreign influence on Nigeria's elections which indeed tend to pose more damaging impact than the internal disruptive activities of political parties. This streak of foreign influence could manifest as overt or covert interventions, bilateral and multilateral aid packages, technical assistance, veiled threats and open sanctions against the targeted country. This paper therefore addresses and interrogates the overarching and yet barely recognized level of influence exerted by foreign elements on elections in Nigeria by evaluating the effects of foreign influence on the 2015, 2019 and 2023 presidential polls. The qualitative research method was engaged and data were mainly collected from secondary sources in the forms of written documents, high profile texts, declassified intelligence reports and the internet.*

Keywords: *Digital Technology, Elections, Foreign Influence, Funding and Insecurity*

Introduction

The history of elections in Nigeria to a large extent has been a history of manipulated, rigged and violence prone exercise. The very concept of election in the country's political lexicon connotes intense struggle and survival of the fittest. In

the local parlance among Nigeria's politicians, elections are often regarded as 'a do or die affair'. This actually means that the party with the highest capacity to derail the process through any unorthodox means stands the chance of winning any election. Agbu (2004) argued that elections in Nigeria were not about popular vote, but about power relations, patronage and selection. It was the ability to harass your opponent, threaten his life and those of his family, recruit thugs to cart away electoral materials, intimidate INEC officials and if possible assassinate your opponent. In the same vein, Ahmad et al (2015) maintained that problems of the electoral process in Nigeria had always included missing names of some registered voters, intimidation and disenfranchisement of voters, multiple and under age voting, snatching or destruction of ballot boxes, miscomputation and falsification of results. This culture of perennial electoral malfeasance and gross violations of democratic process ostensibly became the hallmark and defining features of Nigeria's elections. Since elections in Nigeria were already subject to massive domestic disruptions and disorder, the subtle and discreet nature of foreign interventions seemed not to matter. However, on the contrary, the emerging scenario indicates that the influence of external forces on elections in Nigeria especially the presidential polls cannot be ignored. Domestic electoral lapses seem to be tacitly encouraged by foreign countries in order to serve their interests through some domestic lackeys. It is imperative to note that foreign influence in other countries' elections is not necessarily a new phenomenon. According to Kelly (2020) elections have traditionally been a matter of entirely domestic jurisdiction and even a hallmark of sovereignty. In recent decades, however this image of elections has grown increasingly inaccurate, as elections in many countries have acquired a strong if underappreciated international dimension.

While analyzing the Nigerian experience, Peterside (2023) argued that globalization and its ever increasing tendency for interdependency and interoperability of nations have brought to the fore the interests of global economic power players in Nigerian elections. However there seems a disturbing hiatus between the crisis during domestic elections and the role of foreign interlopers. This gap in the body of mainline literature informs the essence of this work. Tampering with electoral outcomes in Nigeria by extraneous interest actually began as a covert colonial policy designed to transfer political power dominance to Northern region of Nigeria. According to Acbebe (2012), it was discovered that a junior English civil servant named Harold Smith had been selected to oversee the rigging of Nigeria's first elections, 'so that the compliant friends in Northern Nigeria would win power, dominate the country and serve British interest after elections'. This reality captures the role external interest could play in the outcome of elections in Nigeria even at that teething period of democratic evolution. Iyayi (2005, citing Okonjo, 1974)

revealed that the British colonialists worked assiduously to tilt the political scale in favour of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) in the 1951 and subsequent elections prior to independence. It may be noted that foreign influence in any targeted country's electoral process is not restricted to less developed countries like Nigeria. During the 2020 presidential election in the US, between Joe Biden of the Democratic party and Donald Trump of the Republican party, allegations were rife that certain countries including Russia and Iran made spirited attempts to influence the outcome of the election in favour of Trump. According to a declassified report by Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA,2020) "we assess that Russian President Putin authorized, and a range of Russian Organizations conducted influence operations aimed at denigrating President Biden's candidacy and the democratic party, supporting former president Trump, undermining public confidence in the electoral process and exacerbating sociopolitical divisions in the US" . As a large economy in Africa and the most populous black nation in the world, Nigeria's elections tend to attract global interest due to new perceptions of the country as a major power within the West African sub- region. According to Peterside (2023), the west has multiple interests in Nigeria and this is what may drive her to take steps to influence the outcome of the Nigerian elections. Historically, the US and the European Union (EU) intervention in Nigeria's election in the recent past have always been on the electoral process and promotion of democracy. A lot is at stake in this 2023 elections that the west may be tempted to go beyond the traditional cursory interest in promoting democracy to becoming overtly or covertly involved in these elections. The 2019 and the 2023 Presidential polls just like the 2015 edition were recognizably mired in the vortex of foreign influence controversies

Conceptual Clarifications

In order to properly situate the salient concepts in this paper, it is germane to clarify some of the key words in this study. Foreign influence in election refers to some discreet overtures or strategic moves made by a country usually a stronger and more economically viable nation towards another, usually less developmentally endowed country during her elections. Elections in Nigeria attract a lot of interest from external forces in the international community for purposes of alliances and strategic interests. According to Declassified documents of the Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA, 2021) election influence includes overt and covert efforts by foreign governments or actors acting as agents of, or on behalf of foreign governments to affect directly or indirectly a US election, including candidates, political parties, voters or their preferences or political processes. Even the American Bureau of Investigation (FBI) while analyzing foreign influence in elections observed that the process include covert actions by foreign governments to

influence US political sentiments or public discourse..The goal of these foreign influence operations is to spread disinformation, sow discord and ultimately undermine confidence in our democratic institutions and values. (FBI.Gov.2024) In essence, foreign influence mechanisms by the dominant country are broad and include the diverse aspects of the election process of the target country. According to Aidt et al (2019), foreign influence in elections involves a foreign power, (a state or non state actor) which seeks to affect a policy outcome in a (often less powerful) target country that is de jure outside of its jurisdiction. Election on its own score is a democratic process through which citizens of a given country choose their leaders in an ordered and constitutional manner. Elections represent part of the command and control system for decision making of a nation. Influencing an election can alter decision making to align with a foreign power's interest and nations have been trying to influence each other in this way for centuries, Baines and Jones,(2018). Digital Technology in the context of this paper refers to the recent trend of using technological gadgets in the organization and administration of elections in many African countries including Nigeria. The application of technology in Nigeria's elections began in 2007 and attained all time sophistication in the 2023 polls.

Theoretical Underpinning

The theory of post colonial state is adopted here to properly situate and explain the dynamics of foreign influence in Nigeria's elections. This post-colonial state which was originally created by the departing colonial Authority became a symbol of immense power, too sophisticated and detached from the local conditions and prevailing level of development. As a result of this perceived "over development" of the state, it tended to stand aloof from the post-colonial society, as a huge instrument of privilege and leverage. Any group that controls the state virtually controls everything in terms of sociopolitical and economic advantages of the emergent post-colonial environment. Given the weak economic status of the new indigenous power elite that inherited power in the former colonies like Nigeria at Independence, the struggle to capture, control and consolidate on the instruments of the state became the sole preoccupation of the new political class. Politics inevitably became a means of production as the politicians devised all kinds of crude strategies to rig elections in order to gain and remain in power perpetually thereby fueling instability and general underdevelopment. One of the foremost advocates of this theory, Alavi, (1984) believes that the state in post colonial societies stems from the fact that it is not established by an ascendant bourgeoisie but instead by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie. At independence however, the direct command of the latter over the colonial state is ended. But by the same token, its influence over it is by no means brought to an end. In the Nigerian case, the original colonial power, Britain

maintained substantial sociopolitical and economic control over the former colony by way of neocolonialism.

This theory of the post colonial state essentially revolves around the nature and character of the coercive instruments of state power inherited from the departing colonial establishment which the competing political parties jostle to appropriate and control in every election cycle in Nigeria. According to Ibeanu (2023) alienated from the colonized, this state ...could not evolve as an autonomous force that unified the people. Instead, to date it has continued to be a ruthless force that acts without consultation and essentially promotes the sectional interests of its controllers--- political parties, religious groups, ethnic and other communal groups. Politics in Nigeria has been reduced to a struggle for the acquisition, control and consolidation of the instruments and apparatuses of state power by the various political elites who are always eager and willing to engage foreign assistance in any form to achieve their mission of state capture. As rightly observed by Aidith et al (2019), the foreign power has a stake in what the policy choice in the target country is, has a stake in who in the target country control the policy choice. Together, they give the foreign power an instrumental, economic reason to intervene in the decision making process in the target country. The competing groups strive to capture state power for the expropriation of the common wealth of the nation by the emergent successful political class. Claude Ake (1982) maintained that the post colonial state is a state that is interventionist and involved in class struggle, a state already dragged to politics and politicized.

Research Methodology

As a research on social realities arising from the complex relationship between elections and perceived influence of foreign interests in Nigeria, the qualitative method was adopted to distill, collect and analyze the identified variables. Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to gather and analyze non numerical data in order to gain an understanding of individuals' social reality including understanding their attitudes, beliefs and motivation (Wikipedia, 2023) It is not always easy to measure qualitative research in an empirical sense. This is because as Aidith (2019) observed, measurement is a challenge because many types of foreign influence are covert and not directly observable and even when an intervention is observable, it is difficult to quantify the subtle details needed to fully understand the consequences. Modalities that could be used include observations, interviews, focus groups, surveys and secondary sources of data collection. With respect to this study, we settled for the secondary research option. This implies that we drew our data essentially from documented records, declassified publications, authoritative reports from Elections Management Bodies (EMBs), International

Elections Monitoring Groups and other high caliber election based data banks and credible civil society organizations.

Dimensions of Foreign Influence on Nigeria's Elections

Overt Intervention

There are situations when powerful nations decide on their own that stakes are high and would directly influence elections in some 'victim' states. As corroborated by Kelly (2020) Russia also attempted to undermine Ukraine's 2004 elections, where Russia's public relations experts participated directly in Viktor Yanukovich's election campaign and where Russia offered political and economic incentives to convince voters of the importance of maintaining good relations with Russia. In the same vein, the United States Senate select committee to study Government operations with respect to Intelligence activities in 1975 uncovered how the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funded opposition parties especially the Christian Democratic Party in the 1964 Chilean elections to discredit the incumbent, Salvador Allende. Later in 1970 election, the programme included seeking to discredit Allende and blocking him from office when he won the elections, Baines and Jones,(2021). In the build up to Nigeria's 2015 Presidential election, the United States and the United Kingdom governments came out boldly to suggestively influence the candidacy of Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC) against that of the incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP). The US and United Kingdom made no secret of their choice between president Jonathan who was running for a second term in office and Buhari the frontline candidate of the opposition party, (All Progressive Congress). To betray sufficient enlightened interest in the 2015 elections in Nigeria, Obama addressed Nigerians on March 23, 2015 thus: "Hello, today I wanna speak directly to you, the people of Nigeria,...now you have a historic opportunity to write the next chapter of Nigeria's progress by voting in the upcoming elections, Today, I urge all Nigerians from all religions, all ethnic groups and all regions to come together and keep Nigeria one. And in this task of advancing the security, prosperity and human rights of all Nigerians, you will continue to have a friend and partner in the United States of America" (Chiedozie, 2023). The roles of the US and UK to radically influence Nigeria's 2015 general election with particular interest in the presidency was a testimony to how far the metropolitan powers can go to realize their objectives as far as regime change through programmed elections was concerned. Direct influence by a foreign power in the election of another sovereign state could equally come as a demonstration of power and expansion of spheres of influence. Since elections denote a process of choosing political leaders, domineering countries usually prefer to use such moments to achieve their goals in the targeted country.

For instance according to Baines and Jones (2021) the UK allegedly interfered in Indonesia's election in the mid 1960s. This was conducted through the foreign office's information Research Department to overthrow the regime of President Sukarno because of his...attempt to derail the British backed Malaysian Federation.

External funding

The use of illicit funds to influence elections is a common practice among nations seeking to achieve some predetermined electoral outcome beyond their borders. Foreign funding is often seen as a detrimental interference with the political process of the recipient country as the foreign country may use these financial flows to support particular political parties, (Faguera et al., 2014) This is illegal by the provisions of Nigeria's Electoral Act (2022) which stipulates that any political party that holds or possesses any funds outside Nigeria in contravention of section 225(3) (a) of the constitution commits an offence and shall on conviction forfeit the funds or assets purchased with such funds to the commission and in addition may be liable to a fine of N5000,000.00 (five million Naira) Even the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission had at some point expressed worry over the high prospects of illicit funds being deployed in the 2023 elections for vote buying, as the negative role of money in elections goes to the very heart of our democracy, (Kwem, 2023). The influence of money on Nigeria's elections both from within and outside the country is immense. Money remains the most compelling article of attraction that essentially determines the outcome of elections outside physical violence and ruthless intimidation of the electorate. These funds come from diverse sources and disbursed to a cross section of individuals, groups and organizations including the Election Management Body, Civil societies and other self styled Democratic organizations. According to Abulude (2023), Nigeria is a collection of foreign agents and that is why the international community will come to supervise our elections. I wanted to know why INEC after collecting N350 Billion from Nigerians would still collect money from such bodies as the European Union (EU) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It is evidently obvious that any election funded by foreign interest will definitely be influenced by such extraneous forces. Nigeria's elections over the years have been financially backed by International donor Agencies which are not necessarily altruistic benefactors but using the strategy as a front to continue to manipulate Nigeria's electoral process to suit their economic and political interest. The USAID News (2018) reported that on June 22 2018, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) amended a memorandum of understanding to extend their joint funding arrangement to support Nigeria's electoral process with additional

5.5 Million British Pounds or 7.3 Million US Dollars. In the same vein it was also revealed that there were high profile allegations of quite substantial foreign backers of some aspirants with fingers pointing at China, a country that is lately making strong inroad into Nigeria's affairs especially from the standpoint of access to loan facility, expertise in the Railway construction and other heavy industries, (Odinkalu 2022). China is unarguably a major trading partner of Nigeria and outstanding creditor. The Chinese ambassador to Nigeria revealed the strong bond that holds the two countries which apparently makes it imperative for China to have more than a cursory interest in Nigeria's elections. According to Jianchun, (2024), Nigeria has long ranked as China's largest project contracting market, second largest export market and investment destination in Africa. China and Nigeria have achieved fruitful outcomes in the high quality Belt and Road cooperation featuring a series of infrastructure projects undertaken by Chinese enterprises such as the Zungeru Hydropower project and the Lekki Deep Sea Port.

Apart from China, Germany is another country associated with some level of financial influence over Nigeria's elections. With massive economic interest in the country, Germany is covertly engaged in ensuring that Nigeria's election does not in any way endanger her strategic economic interest. Pelz (2023) argued that Germany is looking forward to the upcoming change of power regardless of who ultimately wins the race. Nigeria is the most important trading partner for German Companies in sub-Saharan Africa after South Africa. Funding can also come from big Multinational Corporations who would like to invest in the elections in order to secure their privileges with success of the party in power.

Complicity of Nigeria's Political Class

A very curious dimension to foreign influence in Nigeria's election is the obvious indictment of members of the political elite as accomplices in the act of undermining the nation's elections. Through a process that may be referred to as commercialization of election, the politicians see election as a commodity to be bought and sold. Against the backdrop of its history and evolution, the Nigerian power elite appear not to have any scruples with aligning with foreigners to influence the nation's elections as long as their personal and group interests were guaranteed. This tendency validates the theory of the post colonial state which depicts the indigenous power elite as mere appendages of international capital without any root in the autonomous development of the purported independent nation. In the course of the 2015, 2019 and 2023 elections, Nigerian politicians traded accusations against each other on alliances with foreign interests designed to undermine Nigeria's elections. Between 2015 and 2019, the two leading political parties, namely, the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic

Party (PDP) accused one another of courting foreign influence during elections with the intention of upstaging each other. According to Falana,(2019) the APC accused western countries of supporting the PDP in the 2019 elections. Have both the APC and PDP not engaged the services of lobby groups to convince the governments of western countries to believe in their ability and competence to fix the problems of Nigeria? Have both political parties not sought the endorsement of governments of western countries? Having regard to the commitments of both parties to guarantee unrestrained exploitation of the nation's resources by imperialism, it is naïve to think that the governments of western countries are going to maintain neutrality in the politics of the country. Again, in the wake of the 2023 elections, no less a person than Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari warned the international community to steer clear of the country's elections. He called on foreign Ambassadors posted to Nigeria to desist from interfering in the country's forthcoming election, (Ejime, 2023). It has been proven that Nigeria's politicians were instrumental to these extraneous interventions for purposes of state capture and primitive accumulation of capital. Whichever side the pendulum of international support swings depicts a measure of influence and those who feel the swing is against them would complain about the meddlesomeness of some overzealous west European countries. In reality, successive Nigerian governments had been quite aware of foreign influence on elections, but would only agitate when the influence is not working in their favour. Again, in 2019 when the political fortunes of the APC seemed to be declining in an election year, members of the party became jittery about the direction of foreign influence on the forthcoming elections This led the vociferous Governor of Kaduna state, an APC stalwart to threaten that foreign powers that interfered in the 2019 general elections would 'return to their countries in body bags because nobody will come to Nigeria and tell us how to run our country' El-Rufia, (2019) It has already been observed that the average Nigerian politician is obsessed with winning at every election. As a result they could sabotage the national interest to hold on to power. This may explain a situation behind contracting even foreign espionage group to undermine the nation's election in order to win at the polls. In 2015, Nigeria's president Jonathan was alleged to have secured the services of an Israeli professional election influencer, one Hanan to swing the election in his favour against his rival Buhari. As corroborated by Cadwalladr and Kirchgaessner,(2023) previously unpublished emails leaked to the Observer and Guardian Newspapers proved that Hanan had interfered in the 2015 Nigeria's presidential elections in an attempt to bolster the electoral prospects of then incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan and discredit Muhammadu Buhari his main rival. He did it in alliance with Cambridge Analytica.

The Role of Digital Technology

One of the smartest and apparently innocuous strategies designed to influence elections in Africa including Nigeria is the new craze for election technologies. At the end of the massive investment in digital technology, elections in Nigeria have become increasingly flawed. It has thus been proven that solution to election issue in Nigeria does not necessarily lie with advanced technologies procured from abroad. Often the technologies come in the form of aid to support the emerging democracy across Africa. However as Ibeanu (2023) observed, election technologies have become a major component of aid and trade in Africa. Incidentally, financial support for the purchase of digital election technology still returns to the producing countries outside Africa. Many times the terms of financial engagements for aid are way out of proportion to the needs served to the point of defeating the very idea of the aid. The highly flawed and hotly contested 2023 election in Nigeria especially the presidential poll was a product of the most advanced election technologies. In the face of massive election technology revolution in Nigeria, virtually all the shortcomings of the manual methods of election were still prevalent because the human element has not changed. The politicians are still good students of the departed colonial masters who taught them the art of election rigging. By using the template of their foreign collaborators even the most advanced digital technology could be made to malfunction in order to produce the desired wrong outcome. This was exactly what happened in the 2023 presidential poll in Nigeria. In the first place these advanced election technologies were all imported from abroad which is a form of capital flight from Nigeria and prosperity for the country that owns the technology. Since the expertise and franchise belong to foreign personnel, the product would be structured to permanently render Nigeria's electoral process susceptible to sundry manipulation even with a deluge of digital infrastructure.

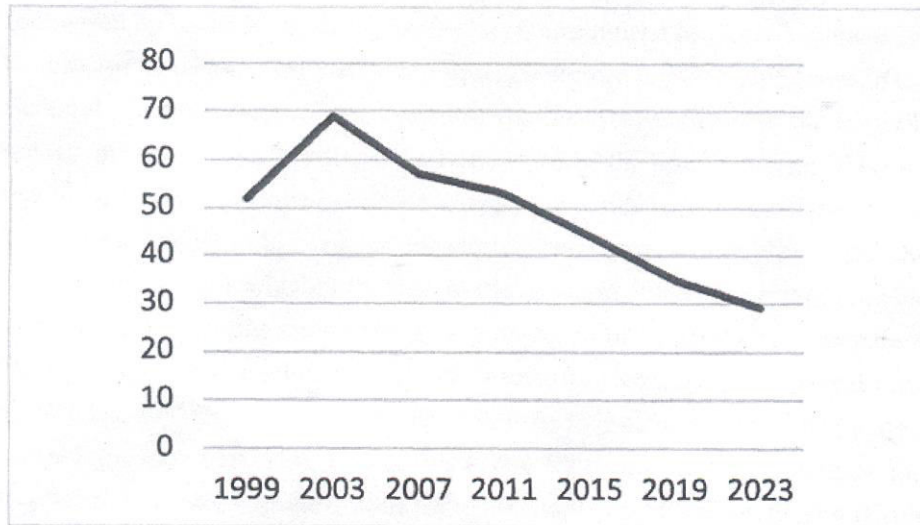
From which ever angle one views the issue of election technology in the Nigerian context, it bears the full and unambiguous imprint of foreign control. It did not evolve from Nigeria's domestic technological advancement. As revealed by Achampong (2023), the technology deployed in the 2023 elections proved to be insufficient in resolving these electoral credibility deficits. Aside from the multiple technical challenges that bedeviled the technology in the course of these elections, voter turnout was the lowest in the history of the 4th republic as depicted by figure 1. It is instructive that simply making decisions to purchase technological gadgets without careful scrutiny of the requisite conditions will only make the technology disabling rather than enabling (Ahmad S. etal 2015, citing Rajesh 2003). Nigeria's experience of election technology has remarkably reflected strong attachment to foreign influence and control.

Effect of Insecurity

Insecurity arising from the activities of bands of insurgents with external affiliations became a major influence with far reaching negative implications for elections in Nigeria. The emergence of Boko Haram armed struggle against the Nigerian state from 2009 made matters worse. The capture of a large swath of territory in the North east of Nigeria by Boko Haram coupled with increasing wave of banditry in the North west, made it impossible to conduct any elections in those areas. As widely reported by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD, 2023), Nigeria will go to the polls in 2023 amidst a host of security challenges. All six geopolitical zones of the country are confronted by insecurity, which has led to the deployment of the Nigerian Military across the Federation. Northern states are engulfed in long standing violence with extremist Jihadist groups, criminal bandit gangs and other non state armed groups who are engaged in deadly attacks against local communities. In the south, civil unrest continues against the backdrop of on-going violence between farmers and herders and secessionist agitators. The ultimate ripple effect and implication of this insecurity is reluctance to vote thereby leading to massive low turnout of voters during elections especially in 2023. It is evidently obvious that this relentless insurgency cannot thrive or be sustained for these years without active support of foreign interest. The foreign dimension of insecurity is borne out of the fact that these non state actors and terrorist organization have linkages and alliances across borders. According to Alihadzie et al, (2013), as long as terrorist organizations and other non state actors are not part of the regular forces, they are foreign to the country. They operate on their own as independent entities determined to disorganize the country and establish one after their warped ideals. The activities of non state actors contributed to undermining Nigeria's elections consistently from 2015 and beyond. It is rather curious that the international community is usually the first to react to pre election insecurity. For instance towards the end of October 2022, foreign missions began issuing terror alerts to their citizens in Abuja. Several missions began evacuating staff and citizens while some establishments temporarily closed down as a result. (Adekaiyaoja 2022). This further mirrors the international dimension of insecurity as a significant influence on elections in Nigeria. Most of these terrorist groups ravaging the land are operating from outside the borders of Nigeria. According to Ajayi (2023) Nigeria is surrounded by poorer countries with more than a thousand porous borders. The Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS) free entry and exit allows people from Chad, Niger, Cameroun and Benin republic and others easy access through the land borders. This resultant effect is the free flow of arms and ammunition into the country with which these criminal elements strive to destabilize the country and prevent voters from participating in elections. The implication is the sustenance of a

perpetual culture of fear and instability in the polity accentuated by the alliance with global terrorism mainstream groups like Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Alqaeda to undermine national and global peace and security through

Figure 1. Voter Turnout in Nigeria during the Fourth Republic (%)



Source: The INEC (1999–2023).

violence, gun running and drug trade.

Table 1: Showing the impact of various dimensions of foreign influence on elections

S/NO	Dimensions of foreign Influence on Election	Impact status On 2015 Poll	Impact status on 2019 poll	Impact status on 2023 poll
1	Direct Influence	High	Moderate	Moderate
2	External funding	High	High	High
3	Complicity by Politicians	High	High	High
4	Digital Technology	Moderate	High	High
5	Insecurity	High	High	High

Source: Chike Ezenwa (2024)

Conclusion:

This study identified some fundamental issues and variables which underpin and underscore the dynamics of foreign influence in Nigeria’s elections. One of the most significant results is the artificial origin of Nigeria. Nigeria emerged in the process of British colonial enterprise as a business cum economic outpost in Africa. All

elections conducted under the British colonial administration were rigged. Due to lack of unity and a sense of common purpose and identity as a nation the diverse peoples of independent Nigeria would rather choose to do business with foreign interests to advance their interest. Through this mind set, foreign nationals found it easy to penetrate the various sectors of the commanding heights of the national economy including the electoral processes. Our findings ultimately implicated the indigenous power elite who took over from the colonial establishment. They decided to capture the post colonial state for primitive capital accumulation. After years of electoral missteps, Nigerian government decided from 2003 to engage some level of digital technology in the conduct of elections to achieve credible outcome. The momentum continued until it came to a zenith in the 2023 general elections. However this study copiously showed that this adoption of high profile election technologies was unable to guarantee a free, fair, credible and transparent election in Nigeria

In the same vein, inflow of foreign funding of individual politicians and political parties was another source of influence. The massive influence of the American and British governments was tacitly deployed to ensure that a president with the power of incumbency lost to an opposition candidate in the 2015 presidential poll. Furthermore Nigeria's election was radically influenced by the activities of terrorists, bandits, and separatist agitators. Some of them like Boko Haram and their foreign allies took control of considerable swath of territory within the country and made the conduct of elections in such areas practically impossible

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