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# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNANCE



## Politics and Governance: A Critique of the 2019 Nigeria Presidential Election

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### Abstract

The study examined politics and governance a critique of the 2019 Nigeria presidential election. Specifically, the study examined the; effect of political apathy on governance in Nigeria, extent of political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria and effect of good governance on the economic growth of Nigeria. The population consists of 562 staff of Independent National Electoral Commission in the Southeastern Nigeria. The study used the survey approach. The primary sources used were used to administer 290 copies of questionnaire to the sampled staff of Independent National Electoral Commission in the Southeastern Nigeria, 282 were returned and accurately filled. The validity of the instrument was tested using content analysis and the result was good. The reliability was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). It gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.87, which was also good. The hypotheses were analyzed using f-statistics (ANOVA). Result of the analysis shows that Political apathy has significant effect on governance in Nigeria. It was also observed that there is political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The study further indicates that good governance has significant effect on the economic growth of Nigeria. Political apathy is a product of electoral violence and it negatively affects upon the electoral process and its outcome. There is, therefore, the urgent need to embark on serious holistic electoral reforms that will bring about free, fair and credible elections to stimulate popular participation in the electoral process. As INEC prepares for the 2019 general elections, it must study the nature, causes, dimensions and consequences of political apathy within the context of Nigeria's nascent democracy.

**Keywords:** Political Apathy, Governance, Presidential Election.

### Introduction

#### Background of the Study

The beauty of democracy depends not on the number of registered political parties in a country but rather on the degree of popular participation in the democratic process. In his search for the best form of government, Adisa, (2010) opined that 'there is no difficulty in showing that the ideal best form of government is that in which the sovereignty or supreme controlling power in the last resort is vested in the entire aggregate of the community; every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty but called on to take an actual part in the government'. Taking

an actual part in the government does not mean that every citizen will have a portfolio in government house and begin to govern.

It implies that every adult, citizen has a compulsory role to play in the choice of who governs either by contesting or by voting credible representatives to form the ruling class. In other words, every citizen must play a part in the democratic process. Adesina (2016), argues that effective participation is a criterion for the perfect democratic governance.

Voting at elections is one of the easiest ways for citizens to participate in the democratic process. According to Agu, Okeke, and Idike (2013), a political system is democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote. Unfortunately, the spate of bombings, kidnapping, massive fraud and harassment associated with the electoral process in Nigeria not only tarnish the image of our democracy, they also grossly affect voters' interest in politics. Voting, which is an important ingredient of democracy, is thus seen as the business of party supporters and political thugs who are paid peanuts to turn the whole process of election into a violence-packed political jamboree suitable for only fiendish individuals with violent minds (Akintunde, 2009).

This unfortunate political trend in the country does not encourage popular participation in politics. Many Nigerians now see politics as a dirty game and so believe that active participation in political activities is tantamount to embarking on a journey of no return. The true meaning of politics has been wrongly interpreted by the attitudinal expressions of our politicians who venture into politics not with the mind to serve but to be served. They interpret politics to mean a platform for selfish aggrandizement of wealth and fame. Winning of elections in Nigeria does not depend on the people's choice but on the number of political thugs, cultists, political godfathers and mothers at the disposal of public office contestants (Andy, 2017).

This ugly scenario has far-reaching implications for our nascent democracy and national security. Refusing to take part in politics does not; will never solve the problem of electoral violence in the country. Instead, an apathetic citizenry will only fan the fire of systematic electoral violence lubricated by systemic corruption. This study thus investigates apathy and governance: A critiques of 2019 presidential election.

### **Statement of Problem**

This study examines apathy and governance a critiques of 2019 presidential election. At a workshop on voter apathy organized in Abuja by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on 9<sup>th</sup> June, 2011, Prof. AttahiruJega, the then chairman of the Commission, noted that Nigerians' participation in the electoral process was low, saying that only 35% of the 70 Million registered voters took part in the 2011 general elections (Andy, 2017). The INEC boss also noted that the low participation in the polls was an indication of political apathy in the country and citizens' disinterestedness in the electoral process (Ibid).

Similarly, The Nigeria Civil Society Election Situation Room observed that only 25.6% of the total registered voters actually turned out in the November 2013 gubernatorial election in Anambra State (CNN). In a polling unit in Anambra State, for instance, 980 people were registered but only 30 persons turned out for the election. This means that 950 voters did not turnout for the election. This development portends serious danger because without sufficient turnout, there can be no true elections that would reflect people's preferences.

After all, elections are nothing other than preferences aggregation. A low voter turnout would not be a true reflection of the people's preferences. While a high, voter turnout will not only make the result of an election more credible, it will also deter criminals from hijacking or sabotaging the electoral process, guarantee more impartiality and fairness, thereby minimizing electoral violence (Anifowose, 2014).

The central problem to be investigated in this study therefore is the extent to which the twin problems of electoral violence and political apathy have negatively affected the democratic process in Nigeria and the impending collapse of the nation's nascent democracy if this ugly political trend was not reversed in the 2019 presidential elections and other future elections in the country.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this research work is to examine political apathy and governance a critiques of 2019 presidential election. The specific objectives of this study include the following;

1. To examine the effect of political apathy on governance in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the extent of political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria.
3. To determine the effect of good governance on the economic growth of Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the effects of political apathy on governance in Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria?
3. To what extent does good governance affect the economic growth of Nigeria?

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Political apathy does not have any significant effect on governance in Nigeria.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: Good governance does not have significant effect on the economic growth of Nigeria.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Concept of Political Apathy**

Apathy is the mental state of not caring much about something or about anything at all. It is the suppression of passion, emotion or excitement for something. We have political apathy, religious apathy, cultural apathy, etc. We are concerned mainly with political apathy in this discussion.

Political apathy is defined as the lack of interest in taking active part in matters of politics either by voting or being voted for or having no share in political activities. Political apathy is expressed and measured by the degree of political phobia and non-participation in political activities in a country. According to Chris and Tope (2011), a brief reflection on our historical antecedents would show clearly that the choice of ruler ship or leadership in the entity called Nigeria has never been by popular will. It has always been by some imposition. This scenario has led to a paradoxical situation in which more Nigerians clamour for democracy and at the same time shun political activities such as participation in elections, contributing to public opinions, joining of political parties etc.

Political apathy is the lack of psychological involvement in public affairs, emotional detachment from civic obligations, and abstention from political activity. The takeoff point however relates to the word "apathy," at once denoting "an individual's impassivity or indifference and a form of collective political behavior" (Emiri, 2010). As against the dictates of political participation, which brings the people to bear in the political and democratic process of a nation, political apathy shows reservation,

restraint and abandonment of the system. Since participation in the political system as discussed previously, the individual has a voluntary right to participate or not to participate in the political system.

Political apathy is evidenced in mass, collective behavior but has its origin at the level of the individual psyche. It usually starts with an individual showing disappointment, distrust and faithlessness in the electoral system and encroaches like a virus to other members of the society. Taken together, political apathy is revealed by attitudes and an absence of expected activity. When people cease to care about political life, withdraw from obligations to civil society, and perform entirely nominal or rote acts- or none at all- in political institutions or organizations, apathy is indicated (Gani, 2017). Apathy therefore negates the true meaning of democracy, which is government of the people, by the people and for the people. The emerging regime in the state of apathy cannot be considered as a true representative of the wishes of the people and it may lack the local and international backing for its successful administration. It is obvious, therefore, that as a subset of political behavior, voter apathy is multidimensional, operating as it does at the intersections of psychology, sociology, economy and geography, history and the contemporary, laws and structures, process and actors, memory, retention and perception, among others (John and Adeoye, 2012).

In describing the political apathy situation in Nigeria, Attahiru Jega maintained that there exists voters' apathy in Nigeria is no longer contentious. Voter's turnout in the just concluded general elections had provided a scientific and empirical evidence of the existence of voter's apathy and disinterestedness of sections of the electorates in elections. This ugly scenario has implications for popular participation and governance (Krug et al, 2012).

However, several factors have been identified in literature as fueling the growing political apathy. These include psychological involvement and collective memory of historical and contemporary events and issues, patterns of trust, feelings of efficacy, political engagement and disengagement of individual, geographic regions (Mashood, 2012). Psychological involvement is purely and individualistic notion that describes the feeling of participation that an individual have about the political process. People will rationally stand aloof when they see the system as biased towards a particular system and more so when they see the election system as not credible. In addition, campaigns communications and the media (Mill, 2011) have the probability to instigate political apathy. In the wake of hate campaign, political blackmail and libel, that alienates the people from the electoral process, apathy will increase. The media from time has been a critical determinant of public opinion, which may be in favor of one person or group at the expense of another. Thirdly, the role of space, distance and convenience of voting (Nwolise, 2017) can have varied impact on the electoral process, which is a fundamental aspect of the democratic system. When the voting system occasion huge cost implication to the individual or the voting system is rigid, electorates will show voting apathy. To this end, governments all over the world strive to make the electoral system as simplified as possible so that voters are able to participate irrespective of their educational status, age, abilities and economic status. More so, polling station should be decentralized and brought closer to the people so that the people in the creeks and hinterland can participate in the elections.

Furthermore, Okolie, (2009) opined that the competitiveness of elections on account of extent to which elections are considered strategic and election outcomes are projected to be close influences political apathy. On the part of those contesting in election, the perception on the fairness of the entire electoral process will determine if he or she will participate in the democratic process. Other motivating factors include impact of technologies and the human, including poll worker, dimensions



of elections (Pascal, 2017), the electoral policy itself (Sesan, 2012) and the wider issues connected to economic considerations and voting (Udo, 2015).

### **Political Participation in Nigeria**

Although the literature reviewed thus far has delved into some aspect of political participation in Nigeria as part of the global system, there is a need to set the status of political participation in proper perspective.

The nature of political landscape in Nigeria over time has not motivated political participation. Getting it right remain a challenge as fingers keep pointing at electoral stakeholders and players. At the center of the Nigerian electoral system that has kept people afraid of elections is violence. Violence has become synonymous with Nigeria's political culture such that virtually all elections held so far in the country are violent-ridden (Adisa, 2010). Rather than rejoicing and showing optimism at the approach of election period, people become more skeptical and apprehensive of the system. In an abstraction of the situation, Adesina, (2016) noted that although the national assembly election held on Saturday, April 9 2011 has been appraised by many as successful, some cases of malpractices and violence recorded across the country threaten to dim light on democratic progress. From 1999 to 2011, hardly ever any election was not characterized by pre-election, election or post-election violence. In such atmosphere, people prefer to save their head rather than cast their votes. This is the reason why Albert Legogie, former deputy Senate President, pointed out that it was clear from the trend of the election that there was a big gulf, a dichotomy between the north and the south and between Christians and Muslims (Agu, Okeke, and Idike, 2013). The volatility of the Nigerian nation to violence during election has kept the international community on their toes, expecting the worse during any successive administration. Such pessimism necessitated the proposal that Nigeria will divide after its 2015 election. Although Nigeria escaped the dooms day, many Nigerians relocated and expressed fears conserving the said election, which was keenly contested.

In addition, the political environment of the country did not offer any iota of hope for the citizen to feel at home with the system. Politics in Nigeria is a serious battle that is orchestrated to dislodge, destroy and defame the opponent. Unlike the developed democracies where politics are issue based and content filled, politics in Nigeria is a struggle for survival. Agu, Okeke, and Idike (2013) expressed that politics in Nigeria is regarded as a dirty game and it is practiced with bitterness, hatred, rancor and other associated evils. The outcome of this is that Nigeria is in vicious cycle of political crises and instability. The spirit of sportsmanship is next to zero and no loser seem to be in concordance with the electoral process. From the very foundation, politicians have learnt to exploit the religious and ethnic diversities of the country to their advantage, crying foul when the process does not skew to their selfish motives and setting different ethnic and religious nationals at loggerheads.

From the standpoint of the electoral management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission noted that Nigerians' participation during the last general election in the 2011 was low. Only 35% of the 70 million registered voters took part in the election. This is appalling and a testimony that the democratic system of the country is failing. The Friedrich Elbert Stiffing Foundation conducted a research on the 2011 election and identified lack of transparent elections, election violence and politicians' noncommittal to their campaign promises as major reasons for voters' apathy in the country (Akintunde, 2009). It is clear that the social contract has severally been compromised and broken by elected political public office holders. It is thus a rational action for a man to show reservation when his trust has been broken. Issues of transparency in election remain a continuous challenge. Although the phenomenon is prevalent all over the world, the rate at which

election is manipulated in Nigeria is alarming, leaving huge workloads for election tribunals to handle. Next to this is the issue of electoral violence, which has been previously identified, and the failure of politicians to keep to their campaign promise. The general atmosphere when a politician presents a manifesto (in the event that he or she has) is that of indifference. It is worthy of note that the failure of the politician to keep to the social contract was partly responsible for the successive military intervention in the democratic system.

The consequence of this is the inability of the masses to have a link between their state of underdevelopment and their non-participation in the electoral process (Andy, 2017). It is unfounded that after successive democratic regime, an average Nigerian still lives on less than one dollar per day while elected few enjoy a life of affluence. Some have attained a level of influence whereby they can manipulate the political and judicial system to remain in power. The question citizens always ask is, 'why should I vote when I know my vote would not count? The rate of underdevelopment viz-a-viz the volumes of looting by politicians remain a mystery to the electorate who committed power to such individual. None participation therefore becomes the end results in frustration in the system. It is in this regard that Anifowose, (2014) concluded that the Nigerian political culture has not given room for the entrenchment and sustenance of true democracy.

Another issue relating to political participation that has hit the global political spotlight is that of women participation and marginalization in the political system. Over time, politics and political decisions has been restricted to the men even when the impact of such wrong decision are most likely to be felt by women and children. This is disturbing and alarming especially in the developing and underdeveloped societies. Chris and Tope (2011) expressed that the low level of political participation of the Nigerian women is becoming alarming and disturbing. This has been an age long tradition that has its foundation in most African cultural setup where the woman is to be seen but not heard. Since the emergence of political independence in 1960, the Nigerian women have remained invisible in the political process. This perhaps has been the reason why few women aspire for political position and a huge percentage does not see the relevance of participating in the electoral process. Although, the 1985 Beijing declaration to which Nigeria is a signatory provides that 30% of all positions in government should be given to women (Emiri, 2010), this policy is yet to be implemented in Nigeria because there is a continuing trend of male domination of political and other public positions (Anifowose, 2014). To Nwolise (2017), the marginal involvement of African women in the political process results from the lingering inhibitive cultural and patriarchal forces against women's engagement in politics that characterized African traditional societies. Breaking loose from this ugly trend will improve the participation of women in the electoral process.

### **Democracy and Political Apathy in Nigeria**

There is an adverse relationship between political participation and political apathy. When political participation is high, apathy will be low and vice versa. In general, while political participation strengthens the democratic process and system, political apathy weaken the system and makes the central government susceptible to anarchy. The existence of political apathy in Nigeria thrives on the low participation of the electorates in the electoral system. This review establishes a link between democracy and political apathy in Nigeria.

A democratic government ensures participation and inclusiveness and is responsive and accountable to its people. Otherwise, there will be apathy in the political system. Rather than benefit the democratic system, apathy crumbles the system and makes room for external and military aggression. It is the indifference on the part of citizens of any state as regards their attitudes towards

political activities such as elections, public opinions, and civic responsibilities. Political apathy is therefore absence of interest in, or concern about, socio-political life. Thus, an apathetic person lacks interest in the social and political affairs of his country.

In Okolie, (2009), democratic politics is always everywhere built on certain minimum principles. These principles include participation and inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability, transparency and good governance, regular, free and fair elections, freedom and respect for human rights and the observance of rule of law. Participation and inclusion pertains to the individual freedom to vote and be voted for as enshrined in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In addition, the responsiveness of the system in the democratic system relates to how people oriented the political system of the country is. People oriented leadership is central to good governance and such is the goal of any democracy. Regular, free and fair election cannot be compromised and political participation expected to increase. More so, respect and value for human right will determine the value placed on the system. In a country where human right is valued, the democratic and political system of the country will also be valued by the citizen. An old African adage states thus, 'respect is reciprocal', hence, respect of the citizen by the promotion of fundamental human right will make the people more committed to the electoral system. A last consideration is the observance of the rule of law, the way and manner in which the leaders obey the rule of law will determine the way and manner the citizen will respect the rule of law. In Nigeria, all of these variables are negative, people are excluded from the electoral process, the election system is marred with many inconsistencies, good governance remains a mirage, human right is worse and the unbiased hand of the law is manipulated to suit selfish individual interest.

The relationship between the Nigerian government and the people between 1999 and 2015 is a continuation of what started at independence in 1960. The bases of the social contract were that the government would provide security, justice liberty and welfare for the people. The study will further examine the four bases of the social contract as a foundation for the promotion or discouragement of political apathy.

### **Provision of Security**

One of the bases for the existence of government and forms a central part of a democratic government is the provision of security. To Pascal (2017), security is freedom from danger or relative freedom from aggression and unwarranted violation. He further added that that the amount of security a state enjoys is just a mere reflection of its defense system. Thus, the threat of invasion or actual invasion of a territory by hostile forces is regarded as a threat to the security of that entity. According to Plato, one of the most critical functions of the state is the protection of the society (Sesan, 2012). The bases of this social contract is that the people were to obey and support the state while the state was to, among other things, protect the citizens against the danger in a state of nature in which life was very dangerous (Pascal, 2017).

In Machiavellian perspective, human nature as essentially selfish and the motives on which a political leader must rely were egoistic. Masses desired for security while the rulers desired power. Thus, the state and the force behind it were the main power that could hold society together (Sesan, 2012). Just as Machiavelli, Hobs saw the state of nature as unpleasant, people lived in a state of anarchy- a state of lawlessness, in constant fear of death because the strong could easily overpower and kill the weak for selfish interests. As such, man's life was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". If for any reason "the state could no longer guarantee security and prosperity then it has lost its justification for existence" (Udo, 2015).



On the contrary, Locke saw the state of nature as one of “peace, goodwill, mutual assistance and preservation” (Adisa, 2010). Locke state of nature is denoted by the natural right of human beings, which includes right to life, liberty and property. It is on this note that the state came into being because of the contract of individuals in the state of nature with the sole purpose of protecting the individual’s natural right. An ideal state as such is one capable of, and in reality, protecting life, liberty and private property. Locke further establishes the security rationale for state existence. Similarly, Jean Jacques Rousseau’s concept of an ideal state is one which protects “with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as ever” (Adisa, 2010).

However, how far the Nigerian state has gone in providing security for her citizen remains a topic for debate. In terms of political security, it is expected that the government will provide a conducive political atmosphere, which is devoid of any threat to individuals’ participation in the states’ political activities. This is however missing in the Nigerian state as so-called godfathers and leaders impose their will on the people. Policy decision are not reflective of the people need and the people are left helpless in the system. During election, the agents of the state including the law enforcement agencies are used to rig election, manipulate result and cancel the election when it does not tally with their selfish ambition.

Another aspect of security that the Nigerian state is expected to provide is economic security, which centers on the protection of individuals against unemployment, inflation, hunger and starvation. The citizens on their part are to pay their taxes and contribute towards the development of the country by engaging in development activities. The core source of income for the government to meet its core responsibilities is through taxation. In Nigeria however, people do not oblige to pay taxes because the government has been notorious for embezzling taxpayer’s income with unemployment, inflation, hunger and starvation staring the citizenry in the face (Adesina, 2016). Lastly, military security is a core demand of the citizen. This has to do with the protection of lives and properties of individuals by the state against both internal and external aggression. Rather than securing the citizen, military forces in Nigeria have been involved in protecting the political class at the expense of the Nigerian people. More so, the inability of the military to protect Nigerians during the pre-election and post-election crises that have rocked the nation leaves Nigerians disappointed in the system.

Summing up the failure of the government to meet the security need of the people as enshrined in the social contract, apathy becomes the result.

### **Sustenance of Justice**

Justice is the second objective and obligation of the state. Even though George Orwell tried to portray in his book that some animals are more equal than others, the existence of the state is to ensure that all animals are perceived and treated equally (Agu, Okeke, and Idike, 2013). In the eyes of the law, all citizens are equal and therefore should be treated equally. In the philosophy of St. Augustine and some other religiously minded people, “the state is a moral community, a group of persons who are governed under the same laws” (Akintunde, 2009). The position of St. Augustine not only defined the existence of a common law within the state, establishes the communal life within the nation. Justice must be seen to be the benchmark of any credible leadership. As observed by Andy (2017), Unless the state is a community existing for ethical purposes and holding together by moral ties, it is nothing more than a highway robbery on a large scale. It is upon these foundations that many societies imbibe the tenets of the rule of law, which is the acceptable standard in any nation. It should be noted that

Nigeria is made up of multiple ethnic national with different standard, practice and code of conduct as enshrined in their culture. The existence of these ethnic national as a country therefore makes the need for justice and equity.

The rule of law as common to every democratic setup including Nigeria can be seen as just if and only if there is supremacy of the law, equality before the law where all men are equal before the law and fundamental human rights. The supremacy of the law implies that the rich, political office holders and so-called godfathers are not superior to the law. In addition, it ensures that the fundamental human right of the people is defended. Human right determines the dignity and value of individuals within the country. One of the fundamental human rights is the right of life; right to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to private and family life, right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and right to freedom of expression. The existence of the state is not only expected to guarantee this right but to promote and protect this right at all times.

Unfortunately, justice remains a big challenge in Nigeria from independence to date. The arm of government responsible for the upholding the judicial system is inefficient. Most judicial workers, judge and lawyers are highly corrupt, accepting bribes from some individual and perverting the course of justice. It is said that justice delayed is justice denied but Nigeria is a clear characteristics of the Nigerian judicial system where cases lingers in court for centuries. Many are put in prison unjustly, spending years before they are proven innocent. This aberration is devastating and leaves the common person wandering if the law actually works. In addition, many political office holders that are charged with corruption offences and misconduct while in office cannot be apprehended and punished because of whom they are. The rule of law therefore seems to apply to specific set of persons rather than everybody. To this end, there are sacred cows that must be sacrificed and George Orwell belief that 'some animals are more equal than others' stands. Under this biased situation, the people tend towards political apathy. They cannot demand justice and is justice served when demanded. Political apathy therefore is perpetuated by the failure of the state to provide for the justice.

### **Guaranteeing Liberty**

Liberty is the third objective, and indeed, another obligation of the state. Liberty has to do with peoples' freedom or rights. Rousseau was of the opinion that the rights and liberties of individuals have no existence at all except in as much as individuals are members of a group. Liberty cannot be said to exist when it pertains to only one person or a segment of the society. Liberty must be ensured and guaranteed for all the individuals in the country. The same freedom can be likened to the freedom of human right as previously discussed in the previous section. These rights are normally divided into the fundamental human rights and other rights (Anifowose, 2014). Fundamental human right is central and core to the state as it determines the feeling of belonging among the citizens. In the case of developed countries, fundamental human right is not compromised. The citizens know their right and will do everything to preserve it. With the understanding that the people know their right, the government are careful not to bridge it. In Nigeria, people do not know their rights and do not care to know because of the frequent abuse of the rights.

Just like the issues of security and justice, whether Nigeria is providing and protecting the rights and liberties of all individuals is something else, this is because rule of law is not strictly adhered. Therefore, as pointed out earlier, instead of having the law as supreme, you have some individuals above the law; and instead of having fundamental human rights and other rights for all individuals,

you have the fundamental human rights and other rights of the privileged few by virtue of their wealth, power or influence being observed by Nigeria (Chris and Tope, 2011).

### **Provision of Economic Welfare**

Apart from making provision for security, justice and liberty, the state has a central role in the provision for the economic welfare of the people. Welfare here pertain to the well being and standard of living of the people. For proper welfare or good life, Nigeria must encourage its unity, strength and self-reliance. Being a country that is tagged richest black nation in the world with crude oil, favorable climate for agriculture and a growing market, the existence of the state is expected to maintain the welfare of the people. One way of ensuring this is through income redistribution that is meant to bridge the gap between the have and the have's not. Nigerians by the virtue of being a part of the state is expected to be open to economic opportunities wherever they are, whether in the rural or urban areas.

The existence of even development has a lot to do with the welfare situation of the country. A country with over 170 million people and over 250 ethnic groups scattered across the length and breadth of the nation is expected to feel the dividend of democracy. Be it provision of social amenities or provision of the necessities of life, the state must not be found wanting in being biased towards any ethnic group. The state of provision of economic welfare in Nigeria is hinged on unity, strength and self-reliance, which are the building blocks of the nation. With a well-established national unity, any Nigerian has the ability and freedom to live in other parts of the country. An Igbo man from eastern Nigeria can live freely and do business in the north and a Northerner can live safely in the South (Emiri, 2010). These are not only the bases for national existence but also a critical factor in the access to economic welfare. In addition, Nigerians are expected to be self-reliant owing to the investment of the government in her people. During the review of this literature, it was identified that the role of the state and indeed democracy if the development of human capital. When the state develops human capital, then productivity of the nationals' increases and each individual in broad sense does not depend on the government.

As common to other expectation of the state, provision of welfare in Nigeria has been a mirage. On the first note, there is a wide disparity between the rural and urban areas more so that this has crippled the agricultural sector of the nation owing to the high rural-urban drift. In addition, political office holders are found of centralizing development in their own locality at the expense of other parts of the nation. The resultant effect of these is a fierce battle for power bent on controlling the 'national cake'. Little wonder politics is no longer viewed as service to the nation but service to one's pocket and ethnic group. It is thus common to see groups clash in order to be represented at the center of power (Gani, 2017). More so, disunity is the order of the day and the nation is paying dearly for it in economic terms. In northern Nigeria for instance, religious and ethnic motivated violence targets other Nigerians, destroying businesses, properties and incapacitating human life. This is evident in the growing decline of the economic prowess of northern Nigeria over time. Unfortunately, the government is not concerned with this trend, as it keeps milking the people for its selfish gains. Therefore, Nigeria is viewed as not having anything good to offer its citizen. Most Nigerians would jump at the offer of traveling abroad because of the unbearable situation of the country.

The four objectives or obligations expected of Nigeria to its society namely, security, justice, liberty and welfare are strongly related or even interdependent. Unfortunately, Nigeria has demonstrated to be very weak and one sided in favor of the privileged few. In fact, the major shortcomings of Nigeria justifies the Marxist perception of a state as an organ of class rule, an organ of the oppression of one

class by another (John and Adeoye, 2012). Of a truth, the citizens and their obligations to the state is the other most significant aspect of the relationship between the state and the society. In the social contract that was entered between the people and the state, it was not only the state that was to carry out certain functions or fulfill certain obligations but also the people were expected to do certain things. The people however will not do certain things when the state fails to keep to its own end of the bargain. The apathy in the Nigerian democratic system is only a revelation of the injury, hurt, disappointment and displeasure of Nigerians with the entire democratic system and governance. Political apathy is a manifestation that can only be corrected by the political class who central to the political problems faced in the country.

### **Causes of Voter Apathy in Nigeria**

According to Krug et al (2012), a brief reflection on our historical antecedents would show clearly that the choice of rulership or leadership in the entity called Nigeria has never been by popular will. It has always been by some imposition. These scenarios has led to a paradoxical situation in which more Nigerians clamor for democracy and at the same time shun political activities such as participation in elections, contributing to public opinions and joining of political parties. The first observable sign of political apathy is voter apathy. In measuring political apathy, Mashood (2012) opined thus, 'Political apathy in a country can be measured by considering the nature of political culture in that country'. This is measured in a given culture by the amount of the citizens' involvement in political activities such as voting for eligible candidates during elections periods, joining of registered political parties, contesting for elective positions, participating in voter's registration exercises, participation in political rallies, canvassing for votes, and showing interest in political discussions.

The first noticeable indicator of voter apathy can be viewed from the voter registration, which is a necessary precondition for elections to take place. In Nigeria in 1999, the total population was put at 108, 258, 35 . Out of this, the actual number that registered was 57,938,945. This is in terms of the expression of interest to be registered. Registration is one thing, while voting is another thing. Many people registered from 1999 to 2011 as shown in the table but did not vote. Out of the 57,938,945 that registered in 1999, only 30,280,052 voted. Similarly, in 2003, out of the 60,823,022 that registered, only 42,018,735 cast their votes. In 2007, out of the 61,567,036 that registered, only 58% voted. In 2011, out of the 73,528,040 that registered, only 39,469,484 cast their votes.

The fueling of this disturbing trend of political apathy was laid down by Mashood (2012) as discussed below.

### **The belief that vote does not count in Nigeria**

Many people dislike voting in elections in Nigeria because of the negative belief that votes do not count in the country. This is built out of years of ballot snatching, mutilation, multiple voting and other vices that have marred the electoral process. The large-scale manipulation and scuttling of the voting process that ends in the announcement of results that do not reflect the needs of the people makes citizens prefer to sit in the comfort of their homes that stand under the scorching heat of the sun to cast a vote that would not count (Mill, 2011).

### **Lack of trust in Corrupt Politicians**

Many people have lost trust and faith in government and the so-called elected politicians. Many believe that Nigerian politicians will say anything to be elected but once in office, they quickly turn

their back on those who put them there. The political class especially in Nigeria has made politics a dirty game, a game of lies and deceit all targeted at arriving at the venue of the national cake. In most cases, people do not see their electorates until the next election and some are rarely seen during campaign because they have the power to hijack the entire electoral process. Most times, Nigerians have to choose between the devil and the deep blue sea because they are skeptical about what each candidate claim to offer (Nwoli, 2017).

### **Absence of Security at Voting Centers**

Due to the volatile nature of Nigerian election, security presence at election system has a way of boosting the courage of the voters. It is however not surprising that security forces posted to an area ends up absconding due to the volatility of such areas. The presence of security means that the individual is sure that his life will be protected when casting his votes. Taking cognizance of the fact that election ground is more like a battle city where anything can happen.

### **Voter Intimidation**

The use of thugs, cultists, criminals and militants to intimidate political opponents and voters has been a trend in Nigerian politics. In some cases, the thugs end up snatching the ballot boxes and mutilating votes. Sadly, the Nigerian security forces in some instance tallies with the government in intimidating voters to vote in a certain candidate. Hence, even with the presence of security forces, Nigerians still maintain an attitude of apprehension over the voting process.

### **Hypercritical Negative Media**

Negative political news coverage and political criticisms, which in most cases are not always constructive, create cynicism in many Nigerians. Thus, voters are at times over-fed with falsehood and frightening image of the political environment. In the 2015 general election, the sitting president and his political party, the People Democratic Party (PDP) sponsored wide critical, abusive and inciting statement against the candidate of the opposition party, Muhammadu Buhari. The hate speeches and documentaries went on print, internet and mass media, contributing to heating the media and promoting the divide between the north and the south. Such anomalies are instigation for voter apathy (Okolie, 2009).

### **Illiteracy and Poverty**

Illiteracy and poverty are two powerful forces, which militate against political participation in Nigeria. Victims of these forces have little or no interest in political activities. The lack of awareness on the fundamental human right of the citizens' is responsible for this trend. Because people are illiterate, they feel alienated from the system and because people are poor, they feel the system has failed them. The same politicians end up manipulating this same group of persons to sell their votes and bribe them with cups of garri and palm oil to cast their vote.

### **Failed Electoral Promises**

The failure of elected political office holders to honor electioneering promises and the imposition of candidates on voters by political parties in no small measure fueled political apathy in the country. The electoral management body cannot also be justified. They have been involved in aiding and abating the selfish aims of these selfish politicians, thereby promoting the collapse of democratic ideals in the country.



It should however be noted that Electoral participation is one of the three main indicators of democratic performance (Sesan, 2012). According to Pascal, (2017), citizen involvement in the political process is essential for democracy to be viable and meaningful. Voting, though it requires little initiative and cooperation with others, is the most visible and widespread form of citizen involvement. Allowing apathy to thrive in the system is devastating and setting a coup against the existence of democracy. To Udo, (2015), apathy may prevent elections to properly perform their three key functions-to discipline the elected officials by threat of not being reappointed (accountability effect), to select competent individuals for public office (legitimacy effect), and to reflect the preferences of a large spectrum of voters (representative effect).

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

The study adopted the Elite theoretical framework because issues of elections, political parties and governance are decided, dominated and championed by the elites. The term “elite” is derived from the French root and it means excellent. The elitist theory is a theory of the state, which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships among various interests in contemporary societies. The core postulation of the theory is that a small group of people consisting mostly of members of the economically dominant class holds the most important power in a society and that this power is independent of a state’s democratic electoral process. The basic assumption of the elitist theory is that every society consists of two classes of people, the class that rules (the elite class) and the class that is ruled (the masses or the non-elite class).

The theory was popularized through the writings of the classical sociologists Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels and Ortega Gasset (Adisa, 2010). Pareto, one of the proponents of the theory also developed the theory of circulation, which describes the movement of elites and individuals from higher to lower levels and vice versa. With respect to his work on the ruling class, Adesina, (2016), maintains that two classes of people exist, a class that rules and a class that is ruled. He argues that the elites constitute an organized minority and it was the class that rules while the masses constitute a unorganized majority and it the class that is ruled. It was based on this that he concluded that all system of government since the existence of human history was only an abstraction of oligarchy.

As observed by Agu, Okeke, and Idike (2013) the argument of Robert Michels in his work – “Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy” (1911), that the iron law of Oligarchy keeps the majority of human beings in a condition of eternal tutelage, thereby submitting themselves to external domination. Using the concept of mass mind, he argues that majority of human beings are politically apathetic, indolent, slavish and subservient and are permanently incapable of self-governing. He believes that people who were apathetic are susceptible to flattery and are weak in the presence of great strength. Hence, the ruling elites take advantage of this to perpetuate themselves in power (Akintunde,2009). In Ortega Gasset’s perspective, the masses decide who rules and how they are to be ruled. He posits that a nation’s greatness depends on the capacity of the people to choose the right type of people to pilot its affairs.

Applying the elitist theory of politics to the Nigerian democratic situation reveals a situation whereby the major political parties in the country are controlled by very few individuals who have besieged the available posts and positions in the upper hierarchy of the parties. They end up taking up all position of interest, impose their decision, and will on the people who in most cases have no chose. In addition, some individuals in governments have wielded so much power that they can monopolize political power and do everything possible to retain it (Andy, 2017). They have the money to buy over any electoral or judicial officer to romance the electoral system and of course, ‘every man has his

price'. They employ every means available including rigging of elections and sponsoring violence to retain political power, which is the surest access to economic power in Nigeria. At the end, the helpless and disillusioned electorates are left to watch the drama.

### Methodology

The study was to evaluate political apathy and governance a critiques of 2019 presidential election. The population consists of 562 staff of Independent National Electoral Commission in the Southeastern Nigeria. The study used the survey approach. The primary sources used were used to administer 290 copies of questionnaire to the sampled staff of Independent National Electoral Commission in the Southeastern Nigeria, 282 were returned and accurately filled. The validity of the instrument was tested using content analysis and the result was good. The reliability was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). It gave a reliability co-efficient of 0.87 which was also good. The hypotheses were analyzed using f-statistics (ANOVA).

### Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 4.1: Response on effects of political apathy on governance in Nigeria.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SA	96	34.0	34.0	34.0
	A	98	34.8	34.8	68.8
	UD	3	1.1	1.1	69.9
	D	27	9.6	9.6	79.4
	SD	58	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	282	100.0	100.0	

From table 4.1, 96 respondents representing 34 percent strongly agree that effects of political apathy affect governance in Nigeria. 98 respondents representing 34.8 percent agree, 3 respondents representing 1.1 percent were undecided, 27 respondents representing 9.6 percent disagree while 58 respondents representing 20.6 percent strongly disagree.

**Table 4.2: Response on the extent of political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SA	100	35.5	35.5	35.5
	A	89	31.6	31.6	67.0
	UD	4	1.4	1.4	68.4
	D	32	11.3	11.3	79.8
	SD	57	20.2	20.2	100.0
	Total	282	100.0	100.0	

From table 4.2, 100 respondents representing 35.5 percent strongly agree that the extent of political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria is very high. 89 respondents representing 31.6 percent agree, 4 respondents representing 1.4 percent were undecided, 32 respondents representing 11.3 percent disagree while 57 respondents representing 20.2 percent strongly disagree.

**Table: 4.3: Response on the effect of good governance on the economic growth of Nigeria.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SA	96	34.0	34.0	34.0
	A	98	34.8	34.8	68.8
	UD	3	1.1	1.1	69.9
	D	27	9.6	9.6	79.4
	SD	58	20.6	20.6	100.0
	Total	282	100.0	100.0	

From table 4.3, 96 respondents representing 34 percent strongly agree that good governance has significant effect on the economic growth of Nigeria. 98 respondents representing 34.8 percent agree, 3 respondents representing 1.1 percent were undecided, 27 respondents representing 9.6 percent disagree while 58 respondents representing 20.6 percent strongly disagree.

### Test of hypotheses

**Ho<sub>1</sub>: Political apathy does not have any significant effect on governance in Nigeria.**

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.988(a)	.976	.976		.23643

a Predictors: (Constant), Political Apathy

b Dependent Variable: Governance

#### ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	648.720	1	648.720	11604.746	.000(a)
	Residual	15.652	280	.056		
	Total	664.372	281			

a Predictors: (Constant), Political Apathy

b Dependent Variable: Governance

### Coefficient of Multiple Determinants {r<sup>2</sup>}

The R<sup>2</sup> {R-Squared} which measures the overall goodness of fit of the entire regression, shows the value as .976. This means that R<sup>2</sup> accounts for 97.6 percent approximately 98 percent. This indicates that the independent variables accounts for about 98 percent of the variation in the dependent variable. Which shows goodness of fit? From the result, f-calculated {11606.746} is greater than the f-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, f-cal > f-tab. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis {H<sub>0</sub>} and accept alternative hypothesis which means that the overall estimate has a good fit which also implies that our independent variables are simultaneously significant. We now conclude from the analysis that political apathy has significant effect on governance in Nigeria.

**Hypotheses Two**

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.915(a)	.836	.836		.64484

a Predictors: (Constant), Political Apathy

b Dependent Variable: Presidential election

**ANOVA(b)**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	595.188	1	595.188	1431.372	.000(a)
	Residual	116.429	280	.416		
	Total	711.617	281			

a Predictors: (Constant), Political Apathy

b Dependent Variable: Presidential election

**Coefficient of Multiple Determinants {r<sup>2</sup>}**

The R<sup>2</sup> {R-Squared} which measures the overall goodness of fit of the entire regression, shows the value as .83.6. This means that R<sup>2</sup> accounts for 83.6 percent approximately 84 percent. This indicates that the independent variables accounts for about 84 percent of the variation in the dependent variable. Which shows goodness of fit? From the result, f-calculated {1431.372} is greater that the f-tabulated {2.7858}, that is, f-cal > f-tab. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis {H<sub>0</sub>} and accept Alternative hypothesis which means that the overall estimate has a good fit which also implies that our independent variables are simultaneously significant. We now conclude from the analysis that there is political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria.

**Hypotheses Three**

Ho<sub>3</sub>: Good governance does not have significant effect on the economic growth of Nigeria.

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.988(a)	.976	.976		.23643

a. Predictors: (Constant), Good Governance

b. Dependent Variable: Economic Growth, GDP

## ANOVA(b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	648.720	1	648.720	11604.746	.000(a)
	Residual	15.652	280	.056		
	Total	664.372	281			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Good Governance

b. Dependent Variable: Economic Growth, GDP

**Coefficient of Multiple Determinants  $\{r^2\}$** 

The  $R^2$  {R-Squared} which measures the overall goodness of fit of the entire regression, shows the value as .976. This means that  $R^2$  accounts for 97.6 percent approximately 98 percent. This indicates that the independent variables accounts for about 98 percent of the variation in the dependent variable. Which shows goodness of fit? From the result, f-calculated {11606.746} is greater than the f-tabulated {2.7858}, that is,  $f_{cal} > f_{tab}$ . Hence, we reject the null hypothesis  $\{H_0\}$  and accept alternative hypothesis which means that the overall estimate has a good fit, which also implies that our independent variables are simultaneously significant. We now conclude from the analysis that good governance has significant effect on the economic growth of Nigeria.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The result of this study has shown that Political apathy has significant effect on governance in Nigeria. It was also observed that there is political apathy in the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. The study further indicates that good governance has significant effect on the economic growth of Nigeria. Political apathy is a product of electoral violence and it negatively affects upon the electoral process and its outcome. There is, therefore, the urgent need to embark on serious holistic electoral reforms that will bring about free, fair and credible elections to stimulate popular participation in the electoral process. As INEC prepares for the 2019 general elections, it must study the nature, causes, dimensions and consequences of political apathy within the context of Nigeria's nascent democracy. The task of trying to deepen democracy in a country that is staggering out of a long history of authoritarian military rule requires the mobilization of people for popular participation and effective engagement in the electoral process. In doing this, people's perceptions and attitudes have to be studied, analysed, understood and given priority in the scheme of things. The following new strategies are therefore recommended:

1. **Activation of Electoral Laws:** All electoral laws in the country must be activated with immediate effect. Nigeria does not need a National Conference to deliberate on new Electoral Act. There are in existence beautiful excellent electoral laws, which speak only on paper and are never implemented. If all the prohibited conducts, which impinge on the electoral process, are effectively checkmated by relevant bodies with relevant electoral laws, electoral violence will be outdated and political apathy will decline considerably.
2. **The active role of the people in fighting electoral violence:** The fight against electoral violence will remain an exercise in futility unless the people (the class that is governed - the masses) are sincerely determined to resist the temptation of being used to perpetrate violence by the class that rules - the ruling elites (politicians). This is so because refusal to resist violence is an indirect way of inviting the ugly consequences of violence. When eligible



voters, including those who have been duly registered, refuse to turnout on election days for fear of being intimidated or molested by hired hoodlums and thugs, they end up perpetrating the same violence they detest so much. In the November, 2013 gubernatorial election in Anambra State, for instance, only about 26% of voters turned-out to decide the fate of over 3 million people in the state. In some polling centres, ghost voters were recruited by party agents to swell up their figures. Cases like this abound because the people have refused to play active role in fighting the menace of electoral violence.

3. **Incumbent political office holders should resign before contesting elections:** Incumbent political office holders should not be allowed to re-contest for political positions without resignation. The power of incumbency has introduced phrases like "carry go", "do or die" "mandatory second term" etc into the body-politik of the nation. Why should winning election be a do or die affair? What makes a second term in office mandatory? Is there any justification to spend billions of naira on the conduct of elections in a country where the incumbents must "carry go"? Answers to these questions should decide whether incumbent political office holders should re-contest elections without resignation.

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