

**Empirical Evaluation of Democratic Representation and Responsibility in Nigeria:  
Towards Citizenship Participation and Inclusion**

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## **Abstract**

The return to democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999 held the promise that citizens would leverage elections to choose candidates and political parties with policy proposals that would appeal to the broad aspirations of the public. Democratic representation is predicated on campaign promises by candidates and parties that are designed to lure voters to confer representative mandate on politicians. In a liberal democratic tradition elections are considered as a veritable means of citizenship participation and inclusion in governance. Relying on documentary evidence and an online sample of Nigerian electorates, data was generated and analyzed on the quality of representation and responsibility in Nigeria since 1999. The study found that, once elected, representatives are then bound to actualize the promises made and in turn are responsible to citizens for effective governance. This process is activated by normative persuasion. Result of empirical studies in Nigeria reveal that electoral campaigns are hardly driven by policy articulations by candidates and parties suggesting that voters and politicians' interest do not necessarily coincide. Besides, manipulated elections exclude majority of citizens from the democratic and governance process. It can be concluded that 'Elected' politicians in Nigeria are therefore not motivated by the desire to be re-elected based on the quality of representation and responsibilities rendered hence are less concerned about the credibility of their future promises. To strengthen and achieve credible outcomes of representations, citizens must increase their vigilance by demanding for a sustained public engagement with representatives. The activation of a progressive ideologically focused civil society that insist on realizing the essence of elections as a participatory and inclusive democratic strategy to be utilized to strengthen electoral processes for democratic accountability, representation and responsibility in governance is an imperative.

**Keywords: Citizen participation, governance, inclusion, representation, responsibility**

## **Introduction**

Representation is a core function of democracy and is located at the heart of democratic governance in a sense that it serves as the symbol of democratic rule (Peters, 2018). As an expression of the nucleus of the relationship between citizens and governance outcomes, it has remained a vehemently contested element of democracy. This contestation is borne out of the normative value which binds and regulates the relationship between citizens and representatives. Those elected as representatives of the citizens are granted the mandate in trust which exercise is predicated on honesty. Citizens are in principle required to trust elected representatives who in turn should whole heartedly commit to the needs and aspirations of citizens (Ignatieff, 2013).

There is a profound assumption in representative democracy that those who offer themselves for elective positions share substantial interests of citizens. Put differently, citizens enjoy a preponderant congruence of interests with their representatives as the justification for voting for particular candidates ( Arnesen & Peters, 2017). This theoretical premise however, meets disturbing shocks in reality where citizens and their representatives do not share collective interests. Once elected representatives are expected to seek to discern those interests and pursue them. The relationship between representatives and citizens is embroiled in controversy when the latter strive to control former by presenting a clear mandate. The activation of this control suffers experimental reality in democratic practice and the tension between citizens and representatives then heightens. Closely related and nearly inseparable is the exercise of responsibility by representatives when hard decisions need to be taken in the interest of citizens but which was considered as original component of citizen's collective interest that informed the mandate.

Contemporary democratic citizens are exasperated by the failure of representatives to defend their interest. Representatives thus suffer faith and trust deficits in relation to the

electorates. Indeed in most contemporary democracies the electorates would then outrightly have little or no confidence in their representatives (Leighley & Oser, 2018). This fact is reinforced by representatives' conduct that isolates them from the electorates until the next election cycle; a tendency that fuel electorates skepticism and fury. When the electorates express dissatisfaction with the performance of their representatives, they give vent to the idea that political trust of representatives should be conditioned on the offer of satisfactory service and withdrawn upon failure by representatives to deliver commensurate service (Ignatieff, 2013).

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate that democratic representation and responsibility would be effective only where trust exist between citizens and elected representatives which allow some discretion for politicians to exercise their functions in politics. This discretion would only be activated where there is limited trust. The empirical evaluation of responsibility and representation in Nigeria takes into account the myriad of factors that shape the conduct of representatives especially the transactional nature of Nigerian politics.

It is argued here that the relationship between citizens and elected representatives in Nigeria's contemporary democracy is extremely weak and this is exemplified by the peaked degree of distrust and the ineffective responsibility which is vitiated by ever expanding discretion forcefully acquired by politicians. These arguments are undergirded by the normative democratic theory that reinforces the conceptual delineation of representation. The premises for activating democratic representation and responsibility are then explored while an empirical evaluation is turned to establish the reality of a defined representation in Nigeria profoundly influenced by pecuniary interest of representatives.

## **Methodology**

Qualitative and quantitative approaches were deemed appropriate for the study. The qualitative approach assisted in exploring the historic and normative trends of the ‘how and why’ questions on representation and responsibility in governance since 1999 in Nigeria. The qualitative method focused on in-depth thematic exploration of literature on the nuances in electoral processes that formulate representation in Nigeria. Quantitative method employed the administration of 1200 online questionnaire to collate perceptions on election and electoral outcomes that substantiate representative functions and responsibility in governance. Tables are used to present aggregated data in order to clarify the effect of key variables on representation and responsibility in governance.

## **Representation, Responsiveness and Responsibility in Governance**

Democratic governments lay claims to being representative, responsive and responsible (Mair, 2011). These tasks have remained unfairly balanced in the face of complex emergence of centres of claims upon representatives in government such as political parties, interest groups and strong politicians with overwhelming influence on democratic processes. Another angle to this crisis of balance is the increasing commitments of states to international obligations and economic independence. It is important to begin with conceptualization of these phenomena to underscore the contention between them and the compelling impact on the citizen-representative relation in connection with accountability.

Traditional conception of democratic representation revolve around the idea that representatives make promises at campaigns to constituents to be kept upon election. For some inexplicable reasons these same promises may not be kept (Mansbridge, 2003). This is the traditional narrative model of the principal-agent theoretical framing of representation and

constitute promissory representation, one of the four forms of representation established by Mansbridge (2013). This is a form of representation in which representatives are evaluated on the basis of promises made to constituents during election campaigns. Constituents grant their consent to the authority of a representative. Promissory representation has continued to be the most important form of representation in which citizens can influence outcomes in government through their representatives. While this is the dominant form of representation, Mansbridge's three other forms have arisen in tandem with the growth of democratic complexity. These include anticipatory, gyroscopic and surrogacy.

The evolution of anticipatory representation follows the dynamics of representation and complex growth of democracy. In anticipatory representation, representatives shift attention from promises made at campaigns to what constituents would reward them with at the next election. This tendency challenges the notion that elections as an accountability mechanism draws principally on retrospective activities (Guinier, 1994). It is possible therefore that economic fortunes may change or political issues may be altered by emergence of new conditions and voters would shift attention away from previous considerations to new issues and these would determine the basis of electoral rewards.

In gyroscopic representation, once elected, representatives turn to their experiences that conceive and define the interests and principles that form their actions. These experiences turn to overshadow the promises made at campaigns and therefore instrumentalizes the look within appeal (Mansbridge, 2013). In most cases, issues that inform the build up to elections may be overshadowed by emergencies and new political concerns which representatives' experiences will become more vital as the new basis of decisions. In surrogate representation, representatives may be acting on behalf of citizens outside of their primary constituency. For example, when

marginal groups are fragmented into different districts where they may be minorities, they may look to representatives of districts where their members are dominant as representing them too. Such representatives are then compelled by identity formation and obligation to assume representation of members of such groups found fragmented in other districts other than their primary constituency.

While these forms of representation offer citizens opportunities for representation that is legitimate in any democracy, the other three forms hardly can activate accountability and authorization as mechanisms for representation. Without these, representation is a draw back on democratic governance as citizens lose their relevance in the whole framework of sovereignty as the basis (locus) of power with the ability to sanction non-performance.

Mansbridge's forms of representation are set against Pitkin's (1967) conceptualization of political representation in different viewpoints. These are characterized as formalistic, descriptive, symbolic and substantive representations. These views are open to different approaches to looking at representation and the standards required for evaluating representatives. Formalistic representation addresses institutional arrangements that give meaning to representation through authorization and accountability (Guinier,(1994; Christiano, 1996). In this context, the process of gaining power through election is emphasize and the ability of constituents to punish underperformance and hence the incentive for representatives to be responsive to constituents is amplified. Symbolic representation rather emphasize the identified ways that a representative stand for constituents. This determines the nature of response invoked by the representative. Descriptive representation relates to the specific way in which the representative shares interest commonalities with constituents. Substantive representation then

deals with the actions that are taken on behalf of constituents which can be assessed in terms of policy options that meet the preferences of constituents.

These variations in the forms of representation should not detract from the focus of democratic representation which is to allow the citizens decide through their representatives on any governance issue. It is in this sense that political representation is tilted towards the principal-agent and Rousseau's social contract framing that is predicated on normative foundations. Political representation is thus understood as a way of establishing the legitimacy of representative democratic institutions and the erection of constitutional incentives for government to be responsive (Amy, 1996; Barber, 2001).

Political representation has therefore moved away from a monolithic concept and achieved a shift away from territorial fixation and a principal-agent, formulation. In other words, representation has attained reflexivity as a qualified measure of its legitimacy (Disch, 2011). To this rightly evolved degree is the constructivists' notion of legitimacy which emphasizes the "representatives role in creating and framing the identities and claims" of the citizens being represented (Saward, 2014, p. 302). This strongly resonates with Mansbridge's (2003) anticipatory representation.

Liberal democratic representation still wears the garb of ideal and fair representation created through free and "fair open elections in which every citizen has an equally weighted vote" and is the perfect result of the competition that characterize interest group pluralism framework for democratic societies. Since interests are shared in plural societies in which different interest groups compete for space in government to meet their aspiration, these strands of representation yet offer a coherent approach for achieving fair representation.

As a relational complex phenomenon Rehfeld (2011) and Mansbridge (2003) have stressed that representation generally requires that representatives should feel a constant obligation beyond election times to justify their conduct while voters are entitled to being skeptical about these justifications. Putting trust forward for politicians must be conditional, “earned through service and revoked for disservice” (Ignatieff, 2013).

Democratic representation is meaningful when an apparent evidence of responsiveness is empirically verifiable. Where representation is engaging, responsiveness is indicated by a match between what they receive in policy outcome (Mair, 2013). Responsibility appears as a more complex and even contentious issue than representation. Governments owe citizens the responsibility for public welfare and security which means that politically, any democratic government would seek to achieve political equality of citizens, protect them from threats that may not be known to them and ensure that democratic procedures are fair devoid of corruption or personal gain. Government responsiveness must benefit from a leeway to take hard decisions or make unpopular choices that portray it as responsible. To do this government must have demonstrated that it can be trusted by its past records of goodwill that can be leveraged in difficult moments by taking hard decisions of responsibility. Without accumulated trust, it would be difficult for government to make unpopular decisions which by all intents are unresponsive but reasonably responsible.

Navigating the representative, responsive and responsibility nexus throws up a regime that is reasonably democratic and enduring. This means that democratic regimes must control corruption to enhance public trust that representatives are not representing themselves. Democracies must also be seen to deal with issues that seek to pull societies apart to again boost government legitimacy and trust to manage the polity for equitable participation. And

democracies must be able to continue to recruit qualified and credible people to serve in public office. It is in these that the value of representative democracy make sense to citizens.

### **Normative Theory of Democratic Representation**

Democratic representation as an integral part of democracy has been examined and discussed for over two million years. Rooted back to Thomas Hobbes (1994) it was elevated and extolled as a fundamental function of democracy by James Madison. Jean-Jacque Rousseau (1978) would repudiate its transience and distortion of democracy but it would be institutionalized by Mill (1991) and then acquire a pluralized application by Robert Dahl (1956).

Political representation is a social relationship (Pitkin, 1967) understood in a principal-agent framing which the “principal elect agents to stand for and act on their interests and opinion” (Urbinati and Warren, 2008, p. 389). This relationship is cast in a territorial space where the principal’s area constituents are a source of power that grant same to the agent to exercise. This principal-agent relationship defined on a territorial basis is the first component of the standard account of representation established in the seminal presentation of the etymological and ontology rendition on representation that involves authorization, accountability and the pursuit of others interest (Rehfeld, 2005; Pitkin, 1997).

The second feature of the standard account of political representation related to the electoral quality of representation that is expressed in a territorial space is exercised by the state. The third feature indicate that the electoral process ensures that representatives are responsive to the people being represented and on whose behalf they act. The fourth feature addresses the universal franchise as the basis of power of electoral representation which underlines the element of political equality associated with it.

While political representation is strongly identified with authorization and accountability, functional representation can only be achieved by the mechanism of free and fair elections. It is this that underline the normative foundation of political representation that embellish its social character. Political representation is therefore rendered legitimate if and only when it is authorized by a fair and free electoral process in which the principal-agent complexities resonate as the core of the standard account (Pitkin, 1967). This process is activated by different electoral systems that may embody to varying degrees political exclusion. The build up to representative selection involves political parties, pressure groups and corporatist organizations that set the agenda that is thus mediated by civil society and the media that aggregate public opinion that underline legislative debate (Habermas, 1989).

Thus, political representation according to Castiglione and Warren (2006) is associated with three marked features; first, it involves a principal-agent relationship largely on a territorial and formal basis and compels governments' responsiveness to the interest and opinions of the people. Second, representation exercise political power responsibly and in an accountable manner to permit citizens to exert their influence as well as control it. Third, that citizens can vote for representatives that imbues them with some degree of political equality.

Representation is at the heart of "democratic practices" (Manin, 1957; Urbinati, 2005). It gives meaning to the power of authorization and accountability without which democracy is meaningless. It is thus institutionalized through political parties, the media and parliament in a transformational sense in which it is no longer personalized but pluralized. The normative evaluation of representation runs through a judgment that reflect institutional forms that are in turn akin to specific norms. These norms are not attach to any particular institutional arrangement in order to permit the identification of representational relationship within a range

of institutional possibilities and practices and then further evaluated on the basis of contribution to democracy.

### **Democratic Representation and Responsibility in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: The Early Years**

Representation of constituents is the very essence of democracy especially indirect forms of modern democracy that operate by means of voice (Nasstrom, 2011). Democratic representation therefore aggregate and exposes the opinions, judgments and feelings of citizens through a virile public debate thereby generating a “variety of forms of control and oversights” (Urbinati, 2008). By setting in motion a public discourse, representation assert itself as an integral part of its purpose in a democracy which is to discover the political will of citizens and not to merely represent it. It is in this sense that political debate, an essential activity of representatives is considered as a crucial element of representation and it is by this means that creative thinking is aroused to animate popular participation.

At the start of representative democracy in Nigeria in 1922, the electoral space was highly restricted in form and quality and function. For instance, only four representatives were legally elected from Calabar and Lagos and the function of the legislature was circumscribed such that deliberations were restricted to issues that would not ignite radical reforms (Alabi, 2009, Omotola, 2010). Legislation at the time was not a dominant activity of the Legislative Council to give vent to public policy. While the rudimentary democratic space may have been responsible for electoral and deliberative restrictions given the dominant presence of only two political parties (Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) and Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), territorial permissibility in Lagos and Calabar coupled with income restrictions put paid to any form of expanded representations (Mackenzie, 1954).

Constitutional development recognized the fast pace at which political activities accelerated with rapid expansion in the number of political parties. By 1959, three dominant political parties had emerged (Action Group [AG], Northern Peoples' Congress [NPC] and National Council for Nigerian Citizens [NCNC]) side by side with minority but impactful parties in the United Middle-belt Congress (UMBC) and Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) (Hamalai, Egwu, & Omotola, 2016). It is important to stress that the expansion in the base for representation was driven by nationalism that rooted for independence but had tremendous pull of regional and ethnic political framing. As the number of political parties expanded so did representation continued to be weakened. Continuously Nigerian legislatures increasingly lost their capacity for representation as they merely functioned to ratify what executives brought before it. In Nigerian parlance, the national legislature was by and large a ratification institution bereft of an independent ability capable of provoking quality debate on national issues that could have led to public policy that met citizens' aspirations.

The democratic experiences in the Second and Third republic saw the expansion in the number of political parties and constituencies but no improved substance in the quality of representation. In general therefore, due largely to long years of military rule, the legislature has remained immature, weak and vulnerable to executive domination and manipulation (Ibeanu and Egwu, 2007). It is due largely to the cumulative effect of persistent interruption of democratic rule by the military that has rendered the legislature as the most timid political institution in Nigeria. The weakened representation capacity of democratic institutions exhibited by political parties and legislatures stem from the nature of Nigerian political parties, the structure of politics and colonial legacies. The conspiracy of these factors had made nonsense of democratic representation up to the Third Republic.



## **The Return of Democratic Representation and Responsibility in 1999**

Political parties and the legislature are two critical democratic institutions at the centre of representation. Political parties serve as platforms for recruitment of potential representatives and their presentation to citizens to select or choose from as representatives. The mechanism of elections then offers the opportunity for citizens to make their choices. Credible choices are in turn dependent on the quality of recruitment process of candidates by political parties: how open, free and fair the elections are points to the degree of citizens' vote counting and the rigor of public discourse and articulation of issues before elections. Between 1999 and 2019, there has been regular and periodic elections with tremendous impact on representation. Each of the six cycles of election (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019) has witnessed the participation of progressively more political parties which number has increased phenomenally from three in 1999 to over 90 in 2019. The increase in the number of political parties is due to fractionalization, fragmentation and proliferation caused by the lack of ideology or central galvanizing idea for organizing society and shaping public policy and governance. Party manifestos attract very little public interest by way of debate and it seems they are drawn just to fulfil registration requirements. Political campaigns hardly reflect public concerns as they are personalized rather than framed on issues. Even though the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) pushed for affordable housing, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) pushed for free education and PRP for non-taxation of peasants in the Second Republic without achieving effective representation, contemporary political parties have no commonalities with any issue (Ibrahim, 2014). Rigorous public debate is nearly absent and party candidates stay from any form of organized discourse and yet such parties win elections in Nigeria.

## **Parties and Candidate Recruitment**

The fragmentation of political parties has raised fundamental issues for candidate recruitment due to the foundation of parties around powerful and wealthy individuals called ‘god fathers’ who finance party activities and overwhelmingly influence and determine who is selected as a candidate for elections and whose resources helped such candidates to win (Albert, 2005). This ‘godfather’ influence undermines representation when unpopular candidates are selected who have no inclination to public will that was never discovered through vigorous discourse.

### **Table 1: Political parties field unpopular candidates**

Table 1 describes the outcome of party primaries which is the basic unit at which representation is given structural framing for determination at general elections. How open, transparent and inclusive fundamentally shapes the emergence of a candidate.

Item	A lot	Rarely	Never	Total
Response	700	201	121	1,022

**Source: Online Survey, 2019**

The way and manner in which party primaries are conducted produce unpopular candidates who have little connection with the people. Majority of the respondents affirm this which resonates with the way in which political parties are organized and funded. For example, when Nigerian political parties are personalized around wealthy individuals who drive party activities, the entire party process is hijacked and manipulated in their favour. Party rules are discarded but where they are followed, the outcome of party primaries are then predetermined. Those who are selected as candidates do not emerge from a competitive process that involve articulating positions on issues that constitute the public will. From party primaries candidate’s loyalty is to the ‘godfather’ and not party members hence representation of constituent is narrowed to private

interest of the ‘godfather’ and the candidate and certainly not the constituency on a territorial basis.

### **Elections and Representation**

Election constitute the sanctifying mechanism for choosing representatives. In this role, election is a critical institution of democracy. For the outcomes of election to be legitimate, adherence to the rules of the game is fundamental to enhancing the quality of elections which are measured by level of participation and competition between political parties (Hamalai, Egwu and Omotola, 2016). While periodic elections have been institutionalized, the quality of such elections is suspect. Each round of elections in Nigeria since 1999 is characterized by serial irregularities that peaked in 2007 and improved relatively in 2015. However, the 2019 elections took a turn for the worse. Acts of electoral malfeasance returned in torrents with violence, intimidation and vote falsification at the top of the scale (EU EOM, 2019). A phenomenon that loomed larger was vote buying in which voters were coerced into selling their votes (Genyi, 2019) in a monumental manner never witnessed before in Nigeria’s electoral history.

Fraudulent elections over the years have produced compromised results where unpopular candidates imposed on the electorate through electoral manipulation cruise home to victory. Such representatives have had no touch with constituents’ aspirations and the popular will is then substituted by personal will or that of financiers of the election that produced winning candidates. Corruption and the monetization of electoral competition has therefore weakened the function of representation in Nigeria’s democracy. Electoral malfeasance more than anything has compromised democratic representation leading to its classical failure in Nigeria.



**Table 2: Quality of Elections**

The credibility of elections in Nigeria has remained a contentious issue. Choosing representatives would be meaningful only if citizens consider the electoral process as credible. Table 2 reveals the way citizens perceive the electoral process and its outcome and a means of enforcing the normative contract between the electorates and their representatives.

Did you vote in the last election?	Yes	No		
	672	281		
Assess Quality of Elections in Nigeria	Credible	Fraudulent		
	626	371		
Do you think your vote counted	Very highly	Highly	Fairly	Hardly
	121	240	324	421

**Source: Online Survey, 2019**

Since 1999, voter turnout has been on the decline and this is due largely to the strong tendency and belief that the exercise has been fraudulent. The credibility of elections has been a major issue in Nigeria’s electoral process and many citizens have begun to believe that their votes have barely counted during elections of representatives. It is this forlorn sense by many citizens that term Nigeria’s democracy as being struggling.

**Table 3: Quality of democracy in Nigeria**

Table 3 shows the degree of perception of Nigeria’s democracy which has run its course for two decades. Under a representative democracy assessment is against the background of quality of representation and responsibility of representatives in governance.

Item	Not a democracy	Full democracy	Struggling democracy	Total
Response	326	264	421	<b>1,011</b>

**Source: Online Survey, 2019**

Negative views of the quality of elections underline the poor response of representatives to constituents' aspiration which they hardly comprehend. The failure of representation has thus invoke indifference among electorates. This has inevitably led to the decline of commitment to democracy by citizens in Nigeria.

### **Constituents and Representatives**

Territorial constituencies are the basis of choosing representatives who are expected to identify with the aspirations of members of the constituency. Effective representation resonate with issues that affect the members of a constituency. Those seeking to democratically represent the constituency evoke debates through town hall meetings and other avenues to generate the will of the constituency. Once elected the will of the constituency discovered through public debates is then pursued through public policy in programmes, projects or legislation. Active engagement with the constituency is then taken as a constant to ensure the continuous flow of relevant information which enables the representative to be in sync with the people being represented. Representatives give effect to acting on behalf of the people when policy outcomes reflect the wishes of the represented that are predicated on informed positions. In Nigeria, candidates practically stay away from debates and yet emerge with landslide victories (Adulugba, 2018).

While political parties have failed to provide platforms for engaging citizens to sharpen the issue areas for representation, candidates too have veered off by avoiding opportunities for engagement which should create the basis for their selection of at elections in competition with others. The failure of this public discourse then move on to disincentivize representatives from even taking on national issues with local effect on constituencies. For example, National Assembly members from the South East disappeared from the national radar in the wake of agitations by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). This development implicated governors of

South East states who remained mute even over reckless harassment and excessive use of force on innocent civilian population by the military deployed in the region to tame the agitators. The same muted stance was reflected by representatives of the Middle-belt states in the wake of the herders-farmers deadly clashes. From Benue to Kaduna, Plateau, Kwara, Kogi and Taraba in the Middle-belt and Zamfara in the North West and Ebonyi and Enugu in South East, National Assembly members did not find the relevant voice to condemn the wanton killings and demand protection for their constituents under attack from herders. Contradictorily, human right activists and the Catholic Church took the gauntlet to demand effective protection of citizens from government (Shiklam, 2017).

**Table 4: State of representation in Nigeria**

Table 4 reveals the graphic characterization of representation in Nigeria by stressing the extent of involvement of citizens in the choice of representatives the manner of which has enormous influence on the quality of representation.

As a voter, does election offer you inclusivity in political participation?			
	In a way	Fully	Not at all
	321	201	411
At what level is representation in Nigeria?			
	Effective level	Passive Level	Ineffective level
	273	360	411
Ineffective representation is due to			
	Inadequate information to representatives before Elections		212
	Disregard for voters		314
	Lack of voters power to punish reneging politicians		426

How often do you meet representatives	
Several times before election	327
Hardly after election	516
Meetings before elections are for	
Declaration of intention to seek for election and solicit support through voting	686
Discussion of issues affecting constituents	221

**Source: Online Survey, 2019**

Democratic representation is ineffective due largely to lack of knowledge of the issues that affect constituencies. Closely related is the lack of voters power to sanction representatives for non-performance when elections are rigged through vote buying and imposition of candidates. When candidates can win elections without the votes of electorates the incentive to perform is weakened. Given this scenario, representatives turn to ignore voters and their wishes if known at all. All avenues of engagement with the constituency such as constituency briefing are curtailed. Candidates then turn to other means to win elections such as violence and manipulation of elections including vote buying and technically ignore voters.

There are practically a number of factors that disincentivize effective representation. These include manipulation of election through imposition of candidates, term limits and vote buying (Bratton, 2007). When party financiers over turn the rules of the game at party primaries and even where they are observed they are still powerful enough to determine the outcome; such candidates are imposed on the party and the electorates. Upon winning at general elections the incentive to perform which had long been removed galvanize representatives to disregard the electorate who are considered as citizens without a role in their emergence. In the same way, term limits are theoretically designed to incentivize representatives to perform especially when

they look forward to another term. Performance then becomes a yardstick for returning to office. The second term however disincentivize representatives from performance since no matter their output, they would not return not even in the interest of the party where its financiers can manipulate the electoral process especially in developing democracies like Nigeria. Vote buying is by far a more sophisticated form of disincentive. The voter receives an offer in material or promise for a job or other favours to monetary terms and then cast a vote in favour of a candidate who had made offers. Upon winning election, the focus of the representative is shifted to recouping cost and primitive accumulation of wealth for financing future vote buying rather than performance as a representative.

## **Conclusion**

Democratic representation and responsibility in Nigeria are totally misplaced elements of democratic governance due largely to the lowering of the quality of elections. Illegitimate elections weaken the normative context of representation predicated on a contractual engagement which election underline. Electoral malfeasance has rendered representation an ineffective means of strengthening governance through public policy that meets the public will which elected representatives promised to achieve. Party fragmentation resulting in reckless carpet crossing, corruption and monetization of the electoral competition have conspired to undermine representation in Nigeria since 1999. The reform of the electoral process to achieve efficiency in vote transmission by leveraging technology points to ensuring that votes counts and those elected are true representatives that would seek to meet the will of the citizens through public policy engagement and outcomes hence citizen inclusivity in the electoral process.

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