

**A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ANNULMENT OF THE JUNE 12, 1993
ELECTION IN NIGERIA**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This great piece is dedicated to the Holy Spirit, who in His unfailing fellowship and love has been able to guide me into all truths during my academic journey, most especially, in this crucial age of my life, the youthful age.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

In Nigeria, politics seems to be an aspect of the country in which a larger part of her citizens does not want to get involve. Political Apathy became a major problem in the democratic politics in Nigeria. Many have lost interest and zeal, even trust in Nigerian politics has been sacrificed a long time ago. This situation can be attributed to the incident of the June 12, 1993 presidential election.

After the attainment of Independence, Nigerian's political atmosphere was a mixture of sorrow and excitement. There was the unforgettable painful effect of colonization which gave birth to the hunger for independence and the longing and excitement for a rule by an indigenious leader. Nigeria's political life has however been shuffled between civilian government and military government. The 1993 saga began in 1983 after the overthrow of the second attempt at civilian rule in Nigeria. Citizens kept a broad face on this replacement of the civilian government by the military government. This was due to the corrupt, unjust, and selfish activities under civilian rule. So, the overthrow was taken as a needed change. However, it was a reformation of government they wanted, not a long-term military rule.

Democracy, which could be said to be the best form of government, has filled in Nigeria right from its installation. The June 12, 1993 presidential election in Nigeria, which was locally and globally seen as the fairest and clearest in Nigeria's political history was annulled by Ibrahim Babangida, the military president of defense. During the election, the hope of a better Nigeria ruled by an indigenous leader was kindled in the citizens. About a greater percentage of the country's population, if not every citizen, put their large and little effort towards building a Nigeria which would be conducive for all. This hope was short-lived. It met its end after the annulment of the election. Another political aspect was born instead: political apathy, which is or a major problem in Nigerian politics today.

Ibrahim Babangida took over power with the promise to return power to the civilians but failed to when the time came. June 12, 1993 presidential election was an election viewed by many, locally and globally, as a successful one, yet Babangida failed to fulfill his promise. Why would he annul such an obviously peaceful and successful election? Babangida himself put up a Political Bureau report, the creation of two political parties, creation of more states and the integral series of elections just for the successful transition of power from military rule to an incorruptible civilian rule. After preparations during his regime for eight years, why then did he annul the election? According to Tunji Omotosho

and Soji Oyeranmi, in their work, "The June 12 Struggle as a phenomenon in Nigerian political history (Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences, Vol: 5. Number 5.2, Quarter II, 2014) Pg. 1, it was due to the ethnic issues in Nigeria. Nigeria is made up of over 250 ethnic groups of which the Hausa-Fulani comprises the most dominant part of the north, the Yoruba form the largest part of the west, and the Ibo are the largest group in the east. These three are the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The largest part of the North constitutes Muslims who traditionally controlled Nigerian politics and the south dominated by Christians, have been at loggerheads for a long time. Ethno-religious violence has been a major problem in Nigeria for a long time now. This can be seen in the civil war which broke out in 1967. This war was caused by the ethno-religious violence and anti-Igbo programs in Northern Nigeria which resulted to the persecution of Igbo living in the North. Since her independence, and by the time the election was annulled, Nigeria has experienced about ten years of civilian rule in its thirty-three years of independence (1960-1998) and no southerner had ever hold office as an elected president: Nigeria's political landscape had been dominated by the appalling struggle for choice politics by the regional/ethnic elites right from the beginning of decolonization till date, and the annulment of the 1993 presidential election demonstrated that the ethnic factor remained the most dominant threat not only to democracy but to the survival of Nigerian

nationhood.

Recently, Muhammad Buhari declared June 12 as a day for the celebration of democracy and remembrance of Moshood k. O. Abiola. The declaration of October 1 as democracy day by Olusegun Obasanjo had been viewed as a tactic to calm the issue of 1993. However, many citizens acknowledged June 12 as the actual day for democracy since its declaration, for it was a time to reckon with when the nation was expressly bounded in freedom, peace, and unity just as it is stated in her anthem.

In this study, apart from analyzing the expect and historical significance of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, the reason why Ibrahim Babangida annulled the election will be analyzed as well.

Statement of the problem

The historical analysis of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election in Nigeria aims to investigate the underlying reasons and implications surrounding the decision, to invalidate the election results, The problem at hand centre on understanding the factors and motivations behind the annulment, examining the impact it had on Nigeria's political landscape, and evaluating its significance and in the country's transition to democracy. By examining in detail this historical event, the study seeks to shed light on the complexities, power struggles, and repercussions related to the

annulment, providing a deeper understanding of Its historical context and consequences.

Scope of the study

The study focuses on everything that can be linked to the June 12, 1993 presidential election in Nigeria regarding its annulment. The time frame is between 1985 and 1998, a period of eight years. It analyzes the events before, during and after the election. It also covers the impact of the June 12, 1993 presidential election on the political and socio-economic development of Nigeria.

Justification for the study

Although much work has been done on the processes and circumstances surrounding the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, some more work be done to completely understand why the election was annulled. The present study is a contribution to the effort to historically explain why the annulment took place when it did.

Aim and objectives

The aim of the study was to determine the causes of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election in Nigeria.

The objectives were to;

1. inquire into the nature of the preparation for the return of democracy in 1993;
2. examine the processes that produced M. K. O Abiola and Ibrahim Tafa as the presidential candidates of the social Democratic Party and National Republican Convention, respectively;
3. assess the content of the presidential election in terms of openness and fairness; and
4. explain the annulment of the election.

Literature Review

In the process of carrying out the study, several works were reviewed. These works discussed on transition programme of the regime of Babangida, the life of Abiola, the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, and its aftermath. The book, titled “The Tale of June 12: The Betrayal of the Democratic Rights of Nigerians” by Omo Omoruyi, gives answers to the following questions: who annulled the election? Why? When? And how? Omo Omoruyi, the author, was a close friend of Ibrahim Babangida who he said he met in Jos in August 1979. This level of closeness can be seen in his statement in the book that "How I wish that General Babangida, had allowed the June 12, 1993 presidential election to be concluded on the basis of what we discussed in his office

between 12:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on June 21, and later that day at his residence between 9:00 P.m. and 2:00 a.m. I am sure that whatever blunders he might have committed while in office would have been forgiven him”. According to Omo Omoruyi, Babangida had without prompting from him, described the June 12 presidential election as the best in the nation's history. Why then did he allow the result to be nullified? Why refuse to make history when the occasion for it arose?”¹

People did not believe him when he said that the annulment did not occur because Babangida wished to cling to power. Then he decided to write, supporting his claims and gave his view on the account of the June 12, 1993 crisis, being a personal friend of Babangida. In writing about the tale of June 12, 1993. Omo Omoruyi was fair in his narration and judgements. He was not happy about the actions of the Yoruba and the north prior to the annulment. He questioned the loyalty of Yoruba officers to the cause of June 12 during the events leading to the annulment and after, and also, he criticized the anti-Yoruba plan called “alternative Yoruba leadership” created by Oladipo Diya.

He also had problems with the north which believed that Babangida was actually thinking of handing over power while he was serious with the transition programme. The northerners instigated the removal of Olu Falae from the office of the Secretary to the Federal Military Government and nominated a Fulani, Aliyu Mohammed, with a mission

to swerve the transition programme into a northern-driven project. However, he believed that Nigerians were betrayed in 1993, he hoped that Nigerians will learn from the aftermath of the annulment so that M.K.O. Abiola would not have died in vain. The book looked at Nigeria from the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates on January 1, 1914, through the attainment of Independence on October 1, 1960, the military rule, Babangida's regime, the transition process, the establishment of the June 12 Crisis, Two- party system, events of the June 12 crisis, to the events of June 12, 1993 presidential election and its aftermath, and the future of democracy in Nigeria.

The collection of articles in *Transition Without End: Nigerian Politics and Civil Society under Babangida* edited by Larry Diamond, A. Kirk- Greene, and Oyeleye Oyediran, examines the rise and fall of the democratic transition and structural adjustment in Nigeria during the eight-year regime of Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993), chronicling the descent from the promise of reform and renewal to an unprecedented political and economic depression. The book looks at the plans for transition which never happened. The June 12 crisis aside, there is no doubt that Babangida's regime was one to reckon with in Nigerian history. According to Adewunmi Falode, in his article titled, "The military and Nation-Building in Nigeria: The General Ibrahim, Babangida's Regime", "General Ibrahim Babangida ruled Nigeria at a very important period in the

country's political history".² His work give a general view of Babangida's regime.

A school of thought believes the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election was the result of some ethnic clashes. However, to Okorie E. Ngwuta in her work titled, "Annulment of June 12 Presidential Election and the Elusive Question for Democracy in Nigeria", provides a different interpretation. "In that connection, he announced the repeal of Decrees 13 and 52 of 1993, which was the driving force, for the exercise. Babangida in his usual whimsicality stated that his action was informed by the need to save the judiciary from integration".³ Her work states that Babangida annulled the election to save the judiciary from further ridicule and erosion of confidence.

The information published on the Guardian Newspaper on 6th August 2021 states that Babangida annulled the election to prevent a coup. "If it materialized there would've been a coup d'etat which could have been violent. That's all I can confirm", Babangida said".⁴ This was documented in Babangida's speech in an interview on Arise TV decades after the June 12, 1993 crisis.

In an article titled, "The Failed Transition to Civilian Rule in Nigeria: Its Implications for Democracy and Human Rights", by Selah Mahmud, Nigerians' view of democracy was analyzed "Nigeria now prefer to call democratization process "democracy". Not that demos have gone crazy but rather the kratia (rule or authority) has

become crazy”.⁵ This he said, was a result of the obvious abuse of the democratic process by the elite, its most remembered origin being the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election.

Tunji Omotosho and Soji Oyeranmi in their article, “The June 12 Struggle as a phenomenon in Nigeria political History”, pointed out that the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election by Ibrahim Babangida appeared to have been motivated by ethnic considerations”.⁶ In the work, it was mentioned that the Hausa-Fulani made an attempt to rubbish the June 12 crisis as a Yoruba issue, the reason being that M. K. O. Abiola was from the Yoruba group which the Fulani accused to be in control of the country's economy and bureaucracy. As such, the Fulani could not relax and Watch power being given to the Yoruba; it will amount to losing everything.

From the above, it is obvious that the study is not new. Several, historians have written one or two items about it. These writings were channeled toward the question of what happened during the 1993 presidential election. Although it is just a few that pointed to reason behind the annulment. According to Omo Omoruyi, most writers of this important land mark in Nigerian history, do not know the actual reason behind the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election.

Research Methodology

This study relied on data from the secondary sources. Materials used majorly came from books, journal articles, newspapers, and magazines, among others- As such, there is no requirement for respondents or the use of a questionnaire. For the purpose of understanding the “why” behind the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, several books and writings of professionals had to be studied.

Significance of study

Even though so much has been written, there is still so much controversy on the reason behind the annulment of the 1993 presidential election. This study is essential for understanding the country's political history democratic development, the challenges, power dynamics, and struggles faced during this critical period. This is Important for the evaluation of the socio–economic and political effects of the annulment. Most importantly, according to the “Nemo dat quod non habet”, which means literally that “no one can give what they do not have”. So, almost similarly, this study is significant i.e. helping to have a knowledge of a crucial past, to make the future great for it is a legacy to draw lessons from and to avoid such issues again.

Endnotes

1. Omo Omoruyi, *The Tale of June 12: The Betrayal of the Democratic Rights of Nigerians (1993)* (London: Press Alliance Network Limited, 1999), xiii.
2. Adewunmi J. Falode, “The Military and Nation-Building in Nigeria: The General Ibrahim Babangida Regime, 1985 -1993”, *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, January 2019, 2.
3. Okorie E. Ngwuta, “Annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential Election and the Elusive Question for Democracy in Nigeria”, *South East Political Review (SEPSR)*, 5(1), 2020, 27-40.
4. Editor, “June 12 Presidential Election was annulled to prevent a coup-Babangida”, *The Guardian*, August 6, 2021.
5. Sakah Mahmud, “The Failed Transition to Civilian Rule in Nigeria: Its Implications for Democracy and Human Rights”, *The Journal of Africa Today*, 40(4) (4th Quarter), 1993, 87-95.
6. Tunji Omotosho and Soji Oyeranmi, “The June 12 Struggle as a phenomenon in Nigerian Political History”, *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 8.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE OF THE PREPARATION FOR THE TRANSITION TO

DEMOCRACY

Military rule rose in Nigeria after the fall of civilian government due to corruption, poor economic performance, political violence, elector fraud, rising regional and ethnicity crises, etc. "From the country's chequered history, we can discern two short periods of civilian rule (1960-1966 and 1979-1983) and two long periods of military rule (1966- 1979 and 1983-1999)".¹ From the quotation above, it can be deduced that Nigeria has been ruled for a longer period by the military than by the civilians. The political seats have been mostly occupied by the Northerners. "The Southern officers know that they are not under any illusion as to where power resides in the country and in the army. They must accept the leadership of Northern leaders, civilian or military".²This move has been termed "Northernization". However, within the period of the long military dictatorship was the creation of 19 federal units (states), which later increased to 30 under Babangida's regime and further increased to 36 under Abacha's regime.

After the overthrow of the second republic on December 31, 1983 a coup, the citizens kept a broad face. This was because the overthrow was a needful change as the civilians in power then were corrupt. However, it was a reformation of government they

wanted. As a result, Buhari was overthrown on August 27, 1985 by Ibrahim Babangida in less than two years in power. Babangida's regime was solely on the bedrock of his transition programme which he promised a change of government to a reliable and trustworthy civilian rule. As such some certain relevant programs which course through the political, social, and economic aspect of Nigeria. These programs included political Bureau, National Electoral Commission (NEC), National Directorate of Employment Commission (NDE), etc. Babangida launched a transition programme in 1986 that was to be completed, in four years, ending in 1990; but-the final stage of the programme was postponed at four different times between 1970 and 1992. Yet much of the programme seemed to have progressed with the successful completion of all aspects except the presidential election June 12, 1993. The third republic which was initiated by Ibrahim Babangida was an unsuccessful attempt to restore Nigeria to democracy.

However, Ibrahim Babangida regime war a great one to reckon with in Nigeria history. "General Babangida carne to power with a reactive "Pro-human rights" policy stance that most of the articulate and critical groups and classes in society found most refreshing".³ It would be a great question if asked that why the coup? Why did Babangida stage a coup against Buhari's regime? Ibrahim Babangida and Muhammad Buhari were both military men and them in power is still a military rule and not a civilian

rule. Well, it must be noted that Buhari's overthrow of the civilian government, the second Republic, was as a result of its corruption and mismanagement of government. However, Buhari's attainment of power, was not very different from the overthrown civilian government.

Ibrahim Babangida took over power "to sanitize the polity, build a strong economy, and organize a durable transition of power to the civilians"⁴, in his own words. As Babangida emerged as the head of state, he raised the people hope of a possible and peaceful, and also a quick transition of power. In his national broadcast made shortly after his assumption to office, he assured the public of how committed he was to an elected government. In other words, Babangida through his national broadcast in the early hours of his assumption to office, he declared his quest for a peaceful transition of government to an honest and legal civilian government.

In light of this, Babangida set up a transition programme which emerged as one of the important political aspect of Nigerian history which cannot be swept under the carpet. In recognition of the different transitional programme in Nigerian history, much importance has been attributed to Babangida's transition programme.

The transition began with 17-member political Bureau set up in 1986 to formulate a blue print for the transition based on ideas collated during a nationwide

debate. This Bureau concluded that the local government can be further strengthened as an effective third tier of government and that a two-party system should be created. This was welcomed. The Political Bureau which was composed of young intellectuals agreed and formulated that the two-party system should be fully financed by the state. The two-party system marked the departure from the multi-party system of the past. The government decreed the formation of the two-party system in October 1989 and that it should be drawn or formulated from a national angle instead of the regional or constituency angle, to prevent the growing Muslim-Christian division looming in the air (the north-versus-south character). In order to curb political fraud, and mismanagement of funds, and limit the influence of private individual in election processes, the Political Bureau limited the available slot for political parties to two. In the second republic (1999-1983), multi-party system: was operated, as well as in the first republic; but corruption, election rigging, thuggery, arson and general misrule was the order of the day, which prompted the return of military government. To prevent the reoccurrence of past events, the political Bureau limited for the party system to two- party systems.

Consequently, in order to implement the idea of two-party system, a new constitution review committee was set up; the National Electoral Commission (NEC) was

set up; the Local Government was strengthened; there was the creation of local councils through non-partisan elections; a Constituent Assembly (CA) was set up to rectify the drafted constitution; there was the creation of more states and local government: areas; census was carried out ; revenue was allocated to different local government areas and states for a smooth administration; introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) to promote economic efficiency in the country; etc.

The Unique aspect of Babangida's transition program was the two-party system and the blanket ban placed on the politicians. The blanket ban was placed in all former politicians and top political officeholders, especially those found guilty of abuse of office. This was a sweeping ban which created the total prohibition of top political leaders and politicians, who has formerly held one seat or two in Nigerian government, from participating in the government of the third republic. This gave rise to what was termed “the new breed”. Every previous politician who have been affected or involved in corruption, ethnicity and religious extremist were exempted from the political aspect of Nigeria in the third republic. In order to participate in the government of the third republic, even the eligible ones, a clearance certificate issued by the Federal Electoral Commission must be submitted.

“As part of his program to wean Nigeria from its corrupt and

divisive politics, and start a new, President Ibrahim-the latest of a long line of military rulers, of this 30-year-old West African nation - has barred most former officeholders from participating in the latest round of politicking. The ban, embodied in 1987 military decree, covers anyone who served in electoral office during Nigeria's two brief periods of civilian rule, 1960-1966 and 1979-1983, as well as former government ministers and anyone convicted of an economic crime".⁵

This ban was to create a non-partisan political atmosphere.

With the removal of, ban on political activities in May 1989, about forty-nine associations were formed, even with the strict requirement that seemed almost impossible. The National Electoral Commission (NEC), rejected most associations, on the claim that their manifestoes were weak, some were occupied by banned politicians, and that most membership claims were false. The NEC, National Electoral Commission rejected the political associations that were formed, yet the constitution promulgated on May 5, 1989, proclaimed the end of the transition programme to be October 1, 1992.

"The functions of the NEC were to organize, conduct, and supervise all elections into all elective offices...to register two political parties and determine their eligibility to sponsor candidates for elective offices..."⁶ To ensure the eligibility of candidates and for

the functions of the NEC to be carried out successfully, Babangida organized some programmes to educate the Citizens democratically. To this end, another body was created to oversee the education. The Directorate of Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) was created. This body was also part of the Resolutions of the Political Bureau. MAMSER was headed by Dr. Samuel J. Cooley. MAMASAR was established on July 25, 1987. Amidst every other important role of MAMSER was the propagation of the need to avoid all vices in public life, including corruption, dishonesty, electoral and census malpractices, ethnic and religious intolerance.

The NEC, however, was to answer to senior military officers, the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC). This had made the NEC to be questioned. Democratically, an electoral body is expected to be an autonomous body, but the fact remain that the time was a transitioning period governed by military force, and not a democratic Period. “How could the autonomy of the agency be preserved while it had to report to senior military officers whose behavior traditionally is informed by authoritarian not democratic, doctrines?”⁷

However, “in theory, the autonomy of the NEC was properly protected...Further section 5(1) of the enabling decree empowered the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) to give to the commission such

directives of its functions”.⁸

This already laid law or section of the constitution attributed to the actions of the Armed Forces Ruling Council after the disqualification of most political association by the NEC in 1989. The Armed Forces Ruling Council set up new programmes for democratic stability. It dissolved all political association and created, by itself, two new political parties which were the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). NEC was made to single-handedly write the Manifestoes of these parties and their constitutions to ensure they were rightly written in the way it would be accepted by the established laws. Electoral laws were created to prevent anyone from hijacking the politics of the Third Republic. The Armed forces Ruling Council came up with strategies to ensure that the political parties and the electioneering campaigns were duly funded by the state to regulate the role of private money in politics. To avoid the defect of the second republic and of the first republic: corruption and privatization of political parties, the Political Bureau mentioned that the Third Republic political parties should be duly funded by the state and this was enforced strictly by the Armed Forces Ruling Council. Agencies like Centre for Democratic Studies (CDS) and Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) were established to teach, instill, and influence the democratic behavior of the people. The electoral processes were

also supervised by the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) itself.

The Babangida Transition Programme was the most extended programme in Nigerian Transition history. The date of handing over power was shifted from 1990 to 1992. The transition programme was supposed to be the best Blueprint to a republican government:

“The 1st-2nd quarters, 1990: election of state legislatures and governors; 3rd quarter, 1990: convening of state legislatures; 4th quarter, 1990: swearing-in of state governors; 4th quarters, 1991: local government elections; 1st-2nd quarters, 1992: National Assembly elections and convening); 3rd-4th quarters, 1992: Presidential election inauguration”.⁹

The transition programme of Babangida was altered four different times. The first happened in 1989 and the second in 1990. The third happened in November 1992. The third was the most intensified alteration. During this period, there was chaos and uprising in the presidential primary elections which led to the displacement of 23 presidential candidates, two party principle was dissolved and the programme process was restarted. As a result, the presidential election was withheld and postponed from January to 8th August, 1993. The Fourth was unexpected and it led to a nation-wide revolt from the citizens - the annulment of the presidential election in June 1993. It was a disastrous

move that overthrew Babangida's regime. The reason behind this fourth alteration is the major focus of this research.

Economically, Babangida's transition programme sought to build a strong financial foundation on which the political aims should prevail. Along with the political programme was the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which began in October 1985. Babangida desired the country to live within its means by reason of this programme. This came in place to increase productivity and growth and reduce corruption and waste. This Structural Adjustment Programme was strictly and closely followed even far more than the expectation of the International Monetary Fund. However, it must be noted that Babangida's Transition programme was unfolding in the midst of economic depression, and it came to be that the possibility of a successful Structural Adjustment programme waned not too long when it started. At the birth of this programme, of which Babangida aimed that the country should live within its means, Babangida won popular supports from a large number but with continuous decline in living standards and devaluation of naira, the people revolted against the programme. Anger became intensified in the country's heart due to the rate of political corruption and mismanagement, and the authoritarian manner in which economic reform policies were imposed from above. This resulted to uprising from popular classes and organized forces

in the civil society, even students in May 1989 protested in their large numbers against SAP. The country to living within its means was burdensome. Naira relentlessly declined. In 1987, a dollar was about four to five naira but it declined to eighteen naira in 1992. The middle class returned to being a subsistence man. The country increased in debt. Consumption power was lost, workers became restive, and the professional workers left the country in large numbers. The Doctors, Engineers, Pilots, Professors, etc., left the country in large numbers. The institutions, companies and industries they were supposed to occupy became almost void. Income and revenue degenerated in the country. This was what added to the disbelief of the people when Babangida reassured the public of a transition on August 27, 1993. Babangida publicized that there would be a transfer of power, even after the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election, on August 27, 1993, coupled with the economic state of the country, the people found it hard to believe. All hope for a possible transition of power was lost after the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election.

There was the amendment of the 1979 constitution which gave room for many activities carried out during the third republic. For this amendment, a 46- member Constitutional Review committee was appointed. They are to use the 1979 constitution, the Political Bureau Report, and the related government white popper as the basis for its

work. In a space of 6 months which was allocated to them, they submitted their report to the government in February 1988. Then the government created a Constituent Assembly of 566 members - 177 were nominated by the Federal government and 450 were elected by the Local Government council. The Constituent Assembly began work on May 11, 1988. By April 5, 1989, the Constituent Assembly submitted their draft to the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) which amended the draft consequentially and the result was the 1989 constitution. This constitution was promulgated on May 5, 1989 and the Transition programme was scheduled in this constitution that it is to be completed on October 1, 1992. The AFRC promulgated the constitution based on Decree Number 12. Despite the changes, the constitution of 1989 is somewhat similar to that of 1979. The major difference was the two-party system. The 1979 constitution also provided for full-time legislature and for a multiparty system, while 1989 constitution provided for a part time legislative system and for a two-party system. However, the releasing of prisoners that were forcefully imprisoned by the previous military tribunals; promised respect for human rights; 17-member Political Bureau; creation of the class called the 'new breed' system where he introduced men and women into politics assuring them of a fully sponsored political party and that they don't have to pay to produce infrastructures for the parties; the creation of MAMSER (Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic

Recovery), and CDS (Centre for Democratic Studies) which was organize training programmes for over 400,000 “new breed” politicians between 1989 and 1993; the creation of two -party system; NRC (National Republican Convention) and SDP (Social Democratic Party); the option A4, under which presidential aspirants had to commence their nomination process; the creation of states, Akwa Ibom from Crossriver and Kastina from Kaduna and creation of 9 more states on Aug 27, 1991; increasing the number of states to 30 and number of Local Government Area to 589; etc., all these Babangida did for the foundation of this rule and the preparation towards a successful transition power.

Endnotes

1. Omoruyi, *The Tale of June 12*, 3.
2. Ibid., 2.
3. J.'Bayo Adekanye, "The Military in the Transition", in *Topics on Transition Without End*, ed. L. Diamond, A.Kirk-Greene, and Oye Oyediran (Ibadan: Vintage Publishers, 1997), 34.
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6. Eme Awa, "Electoral administration in the Early Transition", in *Topics on Transition Without End*, ed. Diamond, Greene, and Oyediran, 128.
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CHAPTER THREE

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORAL PROCESS

“Who can become president of Nigeria?”¹ This question Omo Omoruyi said can be asked in different ways: what are the qualifications for election as president of Nigeria? Did Chief M.K.O. Abiola meet those qualifications? The Political Bureau made up of 17 intellectuals both male and female which notes established in 1986, saw two-party system as the best option for an election process: in the third republic of Nigeria. In order not to repeat the same mistake of the first and second republic, formation of these two political parties was decided to be from a national ground instead of regional constituency. This was decided to prevent the growing Muslim-Christian division looming in the air. The government agreed to this decision and decreed the formation of the two new and only parties in October 1989. Several laws and principles were put in place to regulate the formation of these parties. Previous politicians were banned from participating in the electoral process of the third republic. Everyone who has participated in government in the first and second republic, either in the local levels or in the state levels, were prohibited in the politics of the third republic. The removal of ban on political activities in May 1989, about forty-nine political associations were formed. The National Electoral commission (NEC) rejected most association on the claim that their manifestoes were

weak, some were occupied by banned politicians and most membership claims were false. However, to this end, the highest ruling authority, the Armed Forces Ruling Council deliberately created two different parties: National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SAP). Also, to authenticate them, their manifestoes were written by the National Electoral Commission and their constitution as well.

“There is no doubt that the stringent measures that NEC imposed on associations desiring registration was meant to sift the grain from the chaff”.² The registration fee was made a sum of fifty thousand naira to restrict the numbers of association which might register. However, with all association which registered the NEC reduced the number of the associations to top thirteen from top thirteen, it was reduced to top six. “On 7 October 1989, while politicians patiently waited to know which two of the top six (or of all 13) associations that sought registration would be registered...”.³ Babangida, however denied all the 13 associations and instead decided to create two new parties - National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

The two- party systems was the recommendation of the Political Bureau, provided that (1) both the political parties accept the national philosophy of government (2) the difference between the two party-system are the precedence and scheme of implementation of the national objectives (3) that the membership of both parties is open

to all regardless of tribe, language, sex, religion, or origin (4) the national executive organ and the principal officers of the parties must reflect the federal character of Nigeria (5) and each party is established in at least two-thirds of the local government area in each states. "These conditions were meant to assuage the fears of those who warned or argued that a two-party system might or would divide the country along ethne-religious and similar parochial lines, as in Lebanon and Northern Ireland".⁴

In funding the political parties, the Political Bureau agreed that the parties must be funded by the government, that is, a public funding method. This was agreed upon to prevent the issue of privatization of political parties which happened during the second republic.

“There is need for serious limitations on the freedom which political parties are allowed to have in respect of funding... It is very essential, in the light of the experience of (1979-1983, to set limits on the amount of financial contributions that can be made to political campaigns of candidates by any individual whether or not he is a member of the polite party... The objective is to control the role that money should play in the political fortunes of political parties, and candidates at the polls. Disclosure of donations to political parties should be made compulsory: Failure to disclose should be

regarded as a criminal offence".⁵

To ensure a free and fair electoral process and regain Nigerians confidence in the electoral process, the political Bureau agreed that an honest, competent, non-partisan administration should run the elections, the political parties must be widely accepted, and that an independent Judiciary should interpret the electoral laws. However, having a free and fair election had been a continuous and reoccurring problem in Nigerian politics. Compared to the realities of the first and second republic where a multi-party system was operated and Bribery, corruption, and election rigging was the order of the day, the third republic tend to operate in a different way. Although, having free and fair elections in the third republic was a huge problem as well due to the political events that happened in the first and second republic which made the people lost confidence in the political affairs. To curb this problem, the Political Bureau proposed that:

“a neutral body outside of the political party orbit is necessary to monitor the activities of the political parties, not only at election periods, but also on a continuous basis. It is important that this body has the authority to conduct investigations in the activities of political parties and campaign activities of members and candidates at any time”.⁶

Also, to be a member of the electoral body, one must be a person of integrity who has not

been actively involved in politics but have held positions in public places and sectors, Age constraints was put in place to limit the membership of the electoral body.

In the transition programme, elections were slated to hold between 1987 and 1992. The transition programme reflected that five elections would be carried out - Three at the local government level, one at the state level and one at the federal level or national level. The election dates were strategically chosen to show a progression from local government through the State levels to the Federal government. No right is more precious in a free country than the right of citizens being able to elect their rulers. Other rights even the most basic rights are deceptive if the right to vote is undervalued. In the third republic, rulers were democratically elected and not appointed. Citizens were democratically elected in the state assemblies, state governors, and the federal legislatures. In 1991, the gubernatorial and state legislative elections were held. In 1992, the Federal legislative primary and the executive primary were held. In September 1992, presidential primaries were cancelled due to political irregularities and the parties were urged to try again. The local government elections were carried out in December, 1987 on non-partisan basis to “test run” the level of excellence and skills of the “new breed” politicians which are to emerge as a result of the attempt to exclude the “old cargoes” from the political system of the Third Republic.

For the party primaries, two kinds were provided for: (1) the direct closed primaries for council chairman, governor and president; (2) and indirect closed primaries for councilor, and membership of state and federal legislative houses. However, the party primaries underwent some challenges. Ward meetings were rarely held. Party membership dues were not paid and the executives could not summon courage to ask due to the fact that they could not account for the public funds that were injected into the parties in the form of take-off grants by the federal government. The conduct of the primaries was undermined and arbitrated. There were weak party structures at the grassroot words and local government levels. Accountability and participation as the bedrock of the party system were neglected. It was in this context that the general public at various times agreed that the primaries of the parties should be entrusted to the National Electoral Commission as a neutral body. This agreement by the general public is however not new to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) because, the Decree of 1987 vested NEC with the power “to monitor the political campaigns and provide for rules and regulations which shall govern the political parties”, but NEC was reserved in the defining of the phrase “to monitor” on the conclusion that their monitoring of the parties might reduce the powers of the party leadership and cause a crisis of confidence in the leadership.

“The grassroots structure of the two- party system has suffered. a severe, set-back. The primaries process has been "contaminated" and compromised not because it was unworkable but because it has been a victim of intra-party hegemonic struggles and the failure of the political class to pursue their rivalry with moderation and in a spirit of compromise...”.⁷

However, this is not to deny the fact that amidst all these laid the redeeming features in the two-party system.

The local government level election took place on 16 June 1990 while the state congresses of the two parties took place on 7 July 1990. The contest for the control of power at the national level by the two parties was more intense. As a result, the parties accepted the idea of zoning which was introduced by the NPN in 1979. This idea gave room for the shuffling of the political seats at the National level or the presidential seats and its contemporaries, among geographical divisions of the country which at times complement or agree with the ethnic divisions. However, this is an agenda that seems to still be in operation today - that is, if the president is from a particular ethnic group, then the Vice President should be from another zone and the chairman of the party and the secretary, etc. This was done as a means of creating balance and resolving ethnic issues but this did not only aggravate ethnic issues, it also caused a breach in the principles of

democracy and political ethnicity. This was why the public thought that it was high time for a Southerner to become the president because since the declaration of democracy in 1960 to the third republic no Southerner had emerged as the president. "Kingibe announced at his first press conference as SDP Chairman that while the SDP supported the idea of zoning, it would be wrong to say that the presidency had been zoned to the South. He argued along the same line Ikimi did: the issue was not one of a Southerner presidency but a Nigerian presidency"⁸ The question of presidential candidates for both parties loom in the air.

The year 1991 seems to be a year of great importance in Nigeria. It was not just another year, but a year of real politics. The first election since 1983 took place. Although there were the local government elections they were "test runs" for the big political event of 1991.

"At the beginning of that year, with everyone taking one cautious step after another in the slow, winding lane of guided democracy, few things were what they seemed. Almost all social events- fund-raising, marriages, birthdays, and the conferment of chieftaincy titles- became more important than they were usually were in the country. They provided opportunities for political meetings and a show of political muscle and rivalries".⁹

The young politicians popularly known as the "new breed" were working out their plans to beat the nomination process. By the middle of the year, many Nigerians, male and female had begun to contend for gubernatorial seats. There were the likes of university professors, retired civil servants, professionals from private and public sectors, wealthy entrepreneurs, etc. Due to the population contending for power, some candidates were listed and this led to a coalition by opposing parties. This problem led to the change in schedule, for the primaries. To curb this issue, Babangida created more states which took the people unaware. This did not only cause a change in the gubernatorial election but also a change in the transition programme. NEC rescheduled the governorship primaries for October 19, 1991. However, amidst the ups and downs was the Successful governorship elections with the NRC party winning with ratio 16:14. NRC won in 16 states while SDP won in 14 states. The presidential election which was stated for 1991 was moved to 1992.

The nomination for presidential candidates began on August 1, 1992 - 40 SDP and 20 NRC; but it reduced after the demands of NEC and the party itself. The parties both inflated presidential form price, NRC required its candidate must get signatures of a party members from the existing 589 local governments before they could get their nomination forms, NEC required that the primary election must be conducted in the 30, available states at that time which were grouped into Six. These criteria to be a presidential candidate

drastically reduced the initial number of candidates to 21, 12 from SAP and 9 from NRC. The electoral method used was called the Option A4 through a modified Open Ballot System (MOBS) in a 4 – staged (ward, local, state, and national) contestation ground of which only the winner at each level can be a presidential candidate. The parties' primaries began on 6 February, 1993 and lasted till 31 March, 1993 because it was held at different levels and at different times. At the end of the parties' primaries M.K.O. Abiola emerged as the president for SDP while Bashir. O. Tofa, emerged as the presidential candidate for NRC. Campaigns began from 19 April till 11 June.

However, during this period of presidential candidate's nominations, the president, Babangida was accused of "Hidden agenda" in September 1992. To rekindle the people's mind toward the presidential nomination process and the transition programme, Omo Omoruyi said that he had to intervene and that his intervention led to the option 4 system.

"I personally worked on these measures with my colleagues at the centre for Democratic Studies. This intervention led to quick introduction of a new nomination system called, Option A4 under which the presidential aspirants had to commence their nomination process from the ward level and work their way up to the national level".¹⁰

June 12, 1993 remains a day never to be forgotten in Nigerian history. The

long-awaited presidential election took place on this day. Over 100, 000 ballot boxes were made available for election. The election spanned between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. The method carried out was called the “MOBS”, “Modified Open Ballast System”. At the end of the election, on 15 June, NEC released results from 14 states including the Federal capital. M.K.O. Abiola and his Vice President Baba Gana Kingibe were with a substantial lead. All seemed to be going until 16th of June, 1993 when the High Court in Abuja ordered the suspension of the election's results declaration. The situation became clouded. Stability lost its course. The public was in disarray. “At 64 percent the Abstention rate was very high”.¹¹

“The selection was characterized by a new pattern of voting, non-seriousness of the NRC presidential candidate, and a low percentage of voter turn-out, particularly in the northern states... some state commissioners tore election result sheet simply because their party, the NRC, could not win the election as in the Nkanu Council Of Enugu State... many Nigerians went late to the polling stations and were turned back... many of them had already misplaced their voting cards ... many have changed from one polling station to another and inter-ward movements were prohibited, many voters did not renew their old cards in January 1993 ... finally, the

Abuja Court's injunction of 11 June, restraining the conduct of the election of the following day, could have also contributed to the apathy and confusion".¹²

From, the above quotation, the level of confusion going on before the presidential election date can be deduced.

Professor Humphrey Nwosu, the NEC Chairman, agreed to suspend the election results following the order of Abuja High Court, but he later went to court to file for the clear interpretation of section 19(1) which he believed authorized his Commission to conduct the election. He also queried the right of Abuja High Court to pass an order with the feeling that the NEC is not worthy of any respect. however, even with everything, the remnant of the election results was never disclosed till date.

By June 23rd, 1993 Babangida annulled the June 12, 1993 election. "On June 12, 1993, both General Babangida and I agreed that the June 12 Presidential election was the best in the nation's history".¹³

"I can vouch for the fact that the President actively solicited for big names to join the race, even to the extent of breaking the rules. The President desperately needed known names to give the new system some legitimacy. To say that he personally welcomed and approved the candidature of Chief

M.K.O. Abiola and Alhaji Bashir Tofa is simply stating the obvious”.¹⁴

These quotations above show Babangida’s approval and great spirit towards the election. M.K.O. Abiola was seemingly the right candidate for the presidential seat. He was a man of the people. He was given chieftaincy titles in over 250 localities. His chieftaincy titles coursed across the Igbo land. This helped to foster unity among the ethnic groups in Nigeria. He was a renowned Muslim. This granted him privilege among the northerners. This gained him some political awareness in the region as well. At the end of the election, members of the NRC Party, that is, his counterpart were already wishing him a great rule, only for Babangida, to annul the election. It is the believe of most Nigerians today that Nigeria could have been better if June 12 presidential election had not been annulled. "The sorting out of voting cards and the counting of votes were carried out in all different polling booths in the presence of the representatives of NEC, the political parties and the voters. The national and International monitoring groups also had their representative in some polling stations and collation centers”. In fact, Babangida declared the election to be “the best in the nation's history” according to Omo Omoruyi.

“This was my source of embarrassment when Abuja-based reporters descended on me like locusts immediately after the annulment. I spoke with many of them that day, expressing my frustration and apprehension about

the future of Nigeria. One of the reporters from the weekly newsmagazine *Newswatch* planted a tape recorder on himself and recorded all that I said. Fortunately, what I said amounted to a repetition of the expression used by the President when we met on June 21, 1993".¹⁵

Why then did Babangida annul the June 12, 1993 presidential election?

Endnotes

1. Omoruyi, *The Tale of June 12*, xix.
2. Babafemi Badejo, “Party formation and competition”, in *Topics on Transition Without End*, ed. Diamond, Greene, and Oyediran, 185.
3. *Ibid.*, 188.
4. Tunji Olagunju, Adele Jinadu and Sam Oyovbaire, *Transition to Democracy in Nigeria (1985-1993)* (Ibadan: Safari Books (Export) Limited, 1993), 142.
5. *Ibid.*, 144.
6. *Ibid.*, 147.
7. *Ibid.*, 225.
8. Babafemi Badejo, “Party Formation and Competition”, in *Topics on Transition Without End*, 197-198.
9. Dan Agbese and Etim, “The State Elections of 1991”, in *Topics on Transition Without End*, ed. Diamond, Greene, and Oyediran, 228.
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11. Ian Campbell, “Nigeria’s failed transition: The 1993 presidential election, *Journal of Contemporary*
12. Bola Akinterinwa, “Transition Without End”, in *Topic The 1993 Presidential Elections Imbroglia*, ed. Diamond, Greene, and Oyediran, 292-293.
13. Omoruyi, *The Tale of June 12*, 28.

14. Ibid., 11-12.

15. Ibid., 28-29.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ANNULMENT AND ITS AFTERMATH

The road map to a successful transition of power was successfully designed by Babangida's government, yet the transition failed: Although there were different road blocks faced in the transition programme but the bedrock of Ibrahim Babangida's to successfully transfer power to an incorruptible civilian government which he failed to. The June 12, 1993 presidential election was locally and globally accepted. The future was envisioned to be bright by most citizens even Babangida attested to the fact that the election was the best, why then did he stop the transition when the chance for a successful transition programme surfaced?

“Why did he allow the result to be nullified? Here was a man who assured me he wanted to make history. Why did he refused to make history when the occasion for it arose? Why did he skip the rare opportunity to have his name written in letters of gold on the pages of Nigerian history?”¹

The government of Sani Abacha “...quickly cashed in to say that there was no election according to the laws governing the transition programme and the Presidential election itself”.²

However, after the annulment, Babangida confessed that “the greatest crisis in

Nigeria's history since the civil war of 1967-1970 occurred on June 23, 1993".³ For Babangida, the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election was the greatest problem that will ever happen in Nigeria, but Babangida was in the best position to have stopped the annulment. He was the only and best person that could have helped Nigeria as at the time. He was the one on whose shoulder the future of Nigeria rested on. Why then did he withdraw from wielding the power he alone possessed? After the annulment, another election was suggested but it was obvious to Babangida that it was not possible before the said date for the end of the transition programme, August 27, 1993.

Omo Omoruyi believed that there were some underlying enemies of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. He believed that the underlying enemies were spearheaded by "the geo-ethno-military-clique", who believed they put Babangida in power to rule in their stead".⁴ The Northerner however had always seen themselves as the ones meant to rule over Nigeria since the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorate in 1914 by Lord Lugard which brought about the idea of Northernization. This idea has continued to be the foundation of Nigeria political problems. Most Northern jurist and Northern theoretician wanted the Southerners to believe that the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election was just another coup, but Omoruyi pinned the reason behind the annulment on the "geo-ethno-military clique".

“This period witnessed the convergence of two cliques, the military clique of Northern origin and its civilian political variant called by various names such as the Northern Elders Council, Northern Elders Forum, Northern Elders Turaki Club, and the Kaduna Mafia to constitute one formidable clique committed to an undisputed, permanent Northern rulership of Nigeria. What this means is that if the civilian component of this clique cannot win an election, the military should come to the aid of the North. This was the whole basis of the annulment”.⁵

Tunji Omotosho and Soji Qyeranmi also agreed that the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election was due to “ethnic issues”.⁶ Omo Omoruyi also believed that the wielding force behind the annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential election was from the North. He believed that president Babangida was pressurized to annul the election. This was because, according to Babangida as written in Omoruyi's book, *The Tale of June 12*, “the June 12, 1993 presidential election was the best in the nation’s history”. He believed that left to Babangida, he would not have annulled the election if he was not pressurized by that which seems to be bigger than him and unsolvable by the transition programme. “From my brief meeting with him on June 18, 1993 before he was whisked away to Minna by the enemies of June 12. I knew he was in trouble”.⁷ Babangida

returned from Minna on June 21, 1993 only to annul the election on June 23, 1993.

Omoruyi believed something must have transpired in his visitation to Minna.

The real factors behind the annulment, were “partly military, partly ethnic, partly personal and partly a combination of them all”.⁸ Partly militarily, the people Babangida, called “his boys” now sided with the anti-democratic elements in the North. Partly ethnic factor was that some Igbo leaders joined hands with the anti- democratic elements in the North to rebel against the in Yoruba for what was done during the civil war. Partly Personal, Babangida was in a state of confusion, days prior to the annulment. “I see disaster for myself and my family. Where do I go now? ... we must find a solution here and now or else I am finished”.⁹ To Omo Omoruyi, there were some underlying people, whose s identity were made anonymous and they were only referred to as “they” in Babangida's words cited in Omo Omoruyi’s book.

“They will kill me; they will the president-Elect, Chief M.K.O Abiola, if I went ahead with the election and announced the winner or the elections which we all know to be Bashorun, Chief M.K.O. Abiola. I know so; I am not daft. He won; he tried. I feel bad about the whole matter”.¹⁰

Obviously, from the citation above, Babangida was aware of the winner and he acknowledged it, but he could not go on with the election due to the influence of some

people he called, “they”; and all these transpired after his trip to Minna. “He had lost the battle over the crucial weekend between June 18 and 21st at Minna”.¹¹ Partly a combination of all, Babangida: felt indebted to some people in the military and in the North. For him, because Sani Abacha had helped overthrown Buhari's regime by coup in 1985 and had saved him and his family including his infant child during the 1990 coup, he felt indebted to Sani. Since Sani was against M.K.O. Abiola becoming the president, since Sani could not withstand a Yoruba becoming his president, especially the fact that M.K.O Abiola was from the Southwest, Babangida, to pay his debt was not ready to go against Sani Abacha. “Sani, you know, risked his life to get me into office in 1983 and 1985; if he says that he does not want Chief Abiola, I will not force Chief Abiola on him”.¹²

Babangida annulled the election to prevent another coup. As M.K.O. Abiola was emerging President, different enemies rose militarily and ethnically. Some Northerners who were in the military like Joshua Dogonyaro and Sani Abacha were against M.K.O. Abiola being the President. David Mark swore to kill the President-Elect, “I'd shoot chief Abiola the day NEC pronounces him the elected president”.¹³ Even the Sultan of Sokoto was against M.K.O. Abiola being the President on the fact that the Northerners being the President or ruling power had become a legacy, Sarduna's achievement for the North, and

that Babangida should not put an end to it by allowing the election to go on. From the quotations above, it can be said that Babangida annulled the election to save the President-Elect, M.K.O. Abiola who was a close friend. Due to the threat of Abiola's life, Babangida had no option than to annul the election.

Babangida annulled the election on the basis that both political parties and their candidates were guilty of “flagrant abuse of Nigerian’s election laws”.¹⁴ There was the talk about the wide spread use of money in winning the election. “According to General Babangida, the amount of money spent by Presidential Candidates was over Two billion, one hundred million naira (#2.1 billion)”.¹⁵ Although Babangida could not substantiate this claim when was asked by the hired Washington public relations team, Bob Washington, to provide a proof to his statement so that M.K.O. Abiola's: case could be dismissed before the US congress.

However, regardless of the reasons behind the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election, June 23 should not have happened. The annulment created a culture of despondency, disillusionment and hopelessness in the people, as they see the political institutions put up by the government, as a mere deflection of June 12 1993 and thus not worth their time. The annulment also gave birth to endless quest for democracy. Since the annulment; quest for democracy has been evident in the various elections that have taken

place. The promise of a better government of the people by the people and for the people by the political leaders, have to a large extent been a mere wishful thinking to the people.

Babangida could have just allowed the NEC do their job and not suspend the declaration of the result of the election. Then he would tell his “boys” and the “anti-democratic” elements that the NEC have declared him winner.

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1. Omoruyi. *The Tale of June 12*, xix.
2. Ibid., 25.
3. Ibid., 201.
4. Ibid., 14.
5. Ibid., 6.
6. Omotosho Oyeranmi, *The June 12 Struggle as a phenomenon in Nigerian Political History*, 1.
7. Omoruyi, *The Tale of June 12*, 28.
8. Ibid., 155.
9. Ibid., 162.
10. Ibid., 163
11. Ibid., 165.
12. Ibid., 165.
13. Ibid., 166.
14. Mahmud, “The Failed Transition of Civilian Rule in Nigeria”, 87-95.
15. Omoruyi, *The Tale of June 12*, 189.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Most of the problems that Nigeria as a nation has ever faced were due to ethnic rivalry which stems from the amalgamation and colonization of Nigeria. Prior to the amalgamation, Nigeria was peaceful in her own little ways, but with her, coming under the influence of the whites, peace went missing, identity crisis was birth. Wars became the order of the day, from the civil wars to inter-ethnic wars. There have been turbulent issues in Nigeria since her amalgamation.

“... the Yoruba in Presidency were openly parading themselves in the Villa saying that “Rankadede” ...would soon give way to “Kabiyesi”... these people just think that without them Nigeria cannot move forward. The Ibos should teach them the lesson of history. It was clear that the mistake of 1914 had taken a new tum for Babangida to speak in that way”.¹

In creating a solution, a better Nigeria can be achieved if a sense of brotherhood can be fully activated and powerfully promoted. To do this, Nigeria must revive the dying ethics and values of her culture. Just like the poem, *Vanity* by Birago Diop, “when our dead comes with their dead//when they have spoken to us in their clumsy voices// Just as our ears were deaf to their cries, to their wild appeals, just as our ears were deaf//And

since we did not understand the dead, since we have never listened to their cries...” The Poet addresses the need for Africans not to neglect their past or roots, the Poet-persona is concerned about the abandonment of our ancestral ways, and the teachings of the ancestors, as obtainable in the African traditional society, by the westernized generations of Africa. There is a need for the remembrance of Nigeria’s landmark of the days before she became Nigeria. Only then can everyone let the political seat be for the qualified and not the privileged.

M.K.O. Abiola was a qualified presidential candidate. He won the election but was not allowed to be the president due to ethnic rivalries. The Northerners want to remain the ruler in a country where there are over 250 ethnic groups? In a country filled with different people of different languages and culture, her political seat must be for the qualified and not the privileged. The qualified would be loyal to the people at large while the privileged would be loyal to those who gave the privilege.

Every reason that was attributed to the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election was attached to the prevailing issue in Nigeria: Ethnic problem. Maybe Nigeria would have taken a different turn if the June 12, 1993 election was not annulled. The election was said to be free, fair and the best in the nation’s history but due to some ethnic cargoes, it was annulled. The military regime of Babangida could be seen as the

rule by the privilege. Reason being that, Babangida was assisted by Abacha and Dogonyaro to overthrow Buhari's regime through a coup. As a result, he was indebted to them. He was forced to be loyal to them as they were the ones who made him privileged. Therefore, the fact that M.K.O Abiola was not privileged by the geo-ethno-military clique, he was prevented from being the president. Moreover, the geo-ethnic-military-clique was formed on the idea of ethnicity and principle of Northernization. Babangida said he annulled the election to prevent a coup, however, there would not have been a looming coup if it was not for the underlying ethnic conflicts that existed in Nigeria.

When the country was made up of different kingdoms which were headed by their respective ethnic rulers, there was less political issues compared to when the country is headed by one man called the president. Each ethnic group wants its member to be the president, ethnicity has been a prevailing problem in Nigeria.

Conclusively, the bedrock for the annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential election was Ethnic rivalries. This can be managed or conquered if the sense of brotherhood is fostered among its citizens, and also if efficient procedure is made for the rotation of the presidential seats among the predominant ethnic groups. However, elections in Nigeria should be based on the "qualified" and not the "privileged" for peace to reign.

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