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Between May 29 and June 12 1993: The Political Intrigues of Democracy Day Celebration in Nigeria

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Abstract

The article examined an issue that has attracted wide-spread debates and intrigues in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2018) - democracy day celebration. Initially May 29, ostensibly to mark the end of military rule and the commencement of the Fourth Republic; it was changed to June 12 almost two decades later. The reason for such action was to perhaps honour M.K.O Abiola; the acclaimed winner of the enigmatic June 12 1993 presidential election. Both decisions, particularly the latter, have been given various interpretations, particularly coming in less than a year to the 2019 general elections. The article therefore analyses the political intrigues around Democracy Day celebration in Nigeria. In achieving its objectives, an online survey was conducted among fifty-four Nigerians, resident in the country and in the Diaspora. Besides, scholarly works and newspaper articles were reviewed. The article argued that the decision to declare May 29 as Nigeria's Democracy Day and the subsequent change to June 12 was elitist, politically-strategic and not in the interest of the people which democracy represents.

Keywords: Political Intrigues; Democracy Day Celebration; Elites/Masses; May 29/June 12, 1993.

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Introduction

Nigeria's present democratic experience was ushered-in on 29th May, 1999 after lingering years of military rule. One of the high-points of the period of military rule was the abortion of the Third Republic, occasioned by the annulment of the 23rd June, 1993 presidential elections which was adjudged the freest and fairest in the country's history (Aribisala, 2018). Still nursing the bruises caused by the unwarranted and unjustifiable annulment, Nigerians perceived the idea of another transition programme, mid-wived by the military with cynicism. It however became a reality when Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military ruler was declared winner and was sworn-in as president on 29th May, 1999; marking the commencement of the Fourth Republic.

On his assumption of office, President Obasanjo officially declared 29 May as Nigeria's Democracy Day. The declaration was however greeted with mixed reactions by Nigerians. While the ardent of the 'sacredness' of June 12 believed that June 12 was more significant to Nigeria's democratic history, others praised the action by the president. Still disgruntled with the declaration, governors under the Alliance for Democracy (AD) who were concentrated in the South-west region of the country; the region that produced the acclaimed winner of the June 12 election subscribed to June 12 as their Democracy Day.

Almost two decades down the line, the All Progressive Congress government led by President Muhammedu Buhari honoured the Chief M.K.O Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the June 12 1993 presidential election with the highest honour of Nigeria – Grand Commander of the Federal Republic (GCFR) which was exclusive to former and serving presidents. Also, Chief Abiola's running-mate, Alhaji Babagana Kingibe was bestowed with the Grand Commander of the Order of Niger (GCON) – a title exclusive to former and serving vice presidents. Besides the conferment on Abiola and Kingibe, the late human activist, constitutional lawyer and ardent of democracy, Chief Gani Fawehinmi (SAN) from the South-west region, was as well awarded with GCON. In an emotion manner, President Buhari apologized to Nigerians particularly members of the political class and the immediate members of Chief Abiola's family on the injustices done to their hero and father by the military community.

President Buhari's action, although was touted by the opposition as a political strategy to win the hearts of Nigerians especially ardent of June 12 1993 in the face of perceived several failures and as the 2019 general elections approach, it indirectly confirmed Abiola the true winner of the June 12 1993 presidential election. Beyond the honours bestowed on Abiola and Kingibe, President Buhari recognized and declared June 12 as Nigeria's democracy to take effect from 2019. This action nullifies May 29 as Nigeria's Democracy Day.

To this end, this article examines the political intrigues of democracy day celebration in Nigeria. Also, perspectives on the significance of both June 12 and May 29 to Nigeria's democratic history were analysed.

Theoretical Framework

Elite Theory

The study employs elite theory to explain the politics and intrigues of Democracy Day celebration in Nigeria. Elite theory holds that every society consists of two categories of people: one, the elite or the minority within a social collectivity which exercises a preponderant influence with the collectivity; and two, the masses of the majority which is governed by the elite (Gaubá, 2007: 440). According to Maloy (2018), elitism is a theoretical perspective that is premised on the notion that the affairs of a community are best handled by a small subset of its members and in modern societies; such an arrangement is in fact inevitable.

The origin of elite theory lies in the writings of Gaetano Mosca (1858-19410, Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Robert Michels (1876-1936), and Max Weber (1864-1920) (Higley, 2010). Mosca pointed to the ways in which tiny minorities out-organise and outwit large majorities, noting that “political classes”, -referring to political elites usually have “a certain material, intellectual, or even moral superiority” over those they govern. Pareto postulated that in a society with truly unrestricted social mobility, elites would consist of the most talented and deserving individuals. He likened types to governing elites to foxes and lions (Higley, 2010).

Michels opined elites (oligarchies) in the need of large organisations for leaders and experts, in order to operate efficiently, as those individuals gain control of funds, information flows, promotions, and other aspects of organizational functioning, power becomes concentrated in their hands while Weber posited that political action is always determined by “the principle of small numbers, that is, the superior maneuverability of small leading groups (Higley, 2010). The tenets of the theory are:

- i. There is a minority which determines major decisions which affect the society and the decisions usually reflect the interests of the elite than the wishes of the majority;
- ii. The elite owes its power to its internal organization and forms a united and cohesive minority in the face of an unorganized and fragmented mass;
- iii. The mass of the population is largely controlled and manipulated by the elite, passively accepting the propaganda which justifies elite rule.
- iv. The minority derived its original power from almost invariably from force and coercive services such as the monopoly of military function;
- v. The minority who constitute the elite composed of all those who occupy commanding political positions and it undergo changes at times either through recruitment from lower strata or by a complete replacement by “counter-elite” through a revolution; and
- vi. The rule by a minority is an inevitable factor of social life and the ruling minority is superior to the mass of the population who lack capacity for self-government and require the leadership and guidance of an elite (Aregbesola, 2013; Okeke, 2014; Ibietan and Ajayi, 2015).

Within the context of public policy, Thomas Dye explained that elitism implies that public policy does not reflect the demands of the people so much as it does from the interest, value and preferences of elites. Therefore, change and innovation in public policy come about as a result of redefinitions by elites of their own values (Dye, 2005: 22-23). By implication, public policy is viewed from the preference of and the values of the government elite.

The theory has been criticized on its relationship with liberal democracy. This depicts the anti-democratic reputation of elite theory (Delican, 2018:331). Pareto’s criticisms lie in his

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failure to provide a method of measuring and distinguishing between the supposedly superior qualities of the elite and that he failed to define the conditions governing changes in the proportions of residues (Priya, 2018).

Within the African context, the elite have been burdened with false expectations of being what they can never be and unfortunately, the people in their confusion identify with them, nursing the illusion that they could be the instruments of their deliverance. As observed by Larok (2011), African Scholars in which Claude Ake is foremost, have repeatedly argued that liberal democracy is the least suited for Africa's realities. The basis for such argument is that liberal democracy is not democratic in the first place because it gives power to a few (the elite) to rule the majority. According to this proposition, liberal democracy poses the least profile for popular participation, because it alienates the majority from direct participation as attempted in ancient Greece (Larok, 2011).

For instant, Ake (1996:5) poignantly argued that in Africa, the-elite-supported-democracy as only a means to power, while international agencies subscribed to it as a pre-condition to structural adjustment. By implication, African States got stranded between the demands of external donors for economic liberalization on the one hand and the needs of political majorities on the other. The result of this is the creation of 'exclusionary democracies', which allow for political competition, but can't respond to majority demands in a meaningful way. Ake observed that:

....the political arrangement of liberal democracy makes little sense in Africa. Liberal democracy assures individualism but there is little individualism in Africa...it assumes abstract universalism, but in Africa that would apply only to the urban environment, and finally political parties of liberal democracy do not make sense in societies where associational life is rudimentary and interest groups are essentially primary groups ...

In contrast, Ake argued that African Democracy in a collective social sense offered a form of political participation that was different from and superior to liberal democracy - because the African notion of participation did not rest on the assumption of individualism or conflict of interest but on the social nature of human beings. Liberal democracy is deemed irrelevant because it is looked at as the political correlate of advanced capitalism (Ake, 1994).

In the Nigerian context, it is important to state that public policies, most times reflect the values and preferences of the elites rather than the demands of the masses. In the first place, the annulment of the June 12 1993 election was a product of the conspiracy between military elites and status quo-driven politicians. Again, in spite public outcry before Obasanjo's inauguration in 1999 to immortalize Abiola and give June 12 a pride of place in Nigeria's political history, he (Obasanjo) went ahead to declare May 29 as democracy day. It is worthy of note that during President Jonathan's tenure, specifically on 29 May, 2012, a feeble attempt was also made to immortalize Abiola with the renaming of the prestigious University of Lagos after Abiola (Ameh, 2012; Onatola, 2012). However, such attempt was greeted with violent resistance, protests and threatened litigations; a development that made the President to reverse his decision. More confusing, 25 years after the June 12 presidential elections and less than a year to the 2019 general elections, President Buhari announced June 12 as Nigeria's Democracy Day, ostensibly in honour of the acclaimed winner of the 1993 polls. The question is "what informed such decision - the preference of the political class or that of the people? In the Press Released duly signed by the President and made available on June 7, 2018, it was clearly stated that the decision to change democracy day to June 12 was a product of 'due consultations'. Okeke (2014) submits beautifully that the elite theory directs

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the attention to the source of policy flow and whose interests' public polices serve. In other words, elitism is, to a reasonable extent top-bottom and not bottom-top.

Literature Review: Global Perspectives on Democracy Day Celebration

Globally, the 15th day of September every year is celebrated as democracy day. The initiative was pioneered in 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly with the aim of promoting and upholding the principles of democracy (UN, 2007). In particular, the UN charged all member states and organizations to commemorate the day in an appropriate manner that is with a view to raising public awareness in order to strengthen democracy (Hashanah, 2018). According to the UN, the International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world. The preamble of the Resolution affirmed that:

While democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy and that democracy does not belong to any country or region... democracy is a universal value based on the freely-expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of life (UN, 2007).

Justifying the importance of democracy day celebration, the UN General Secretary, Mr. Antonio Guterres, during the 2018 International Democracy Day which coincided with the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, explained that:

Democracy is showing greater strain than at any time in decades. That is why this International Day should make us look for ways to invigorate democracy and seek answers for the systemic challenges it faces. This includes tackling economic and political inequalities, making democracies more inclusive by bringing the young and marginalized into the political system and making democracies more innovative and responsive to emerging challenges such as migration and climate change. With this year's 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Day of Democracy is also an opportunity to highlight the values of freedom and respect for human rights as essential elements of democracy (UN, 2018).

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that however the numerous attractions of democracy, the system of government requires deliberate and sincere efforts from its practitioners within specific context to make it work. It was as well emphasized during the 2018 International Day of Democracy that:

... the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government" (article 21.3), has inspired constitution-making around the world and contributed to global acceptance of democratic values and principles. Democracy, in turn, provides the natural environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights (UN, 2018).

The foregoing further strengthens the perspective of a people's-oriented democracy. In response to this and in order to addressing certain peculiar challenges that democracy is confronted with, certain countries have leveraged on the UN initiative. A notable example is

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Canada. On realizing the decline in its electoral system, prominently manifesting in increasing voter's apathy, an initiative was set up in 2011 – Fair Vote Canada, with the aim of revitalizing the country's ailing democracy. The product of such intervention was to engage Canadians in yearly discussions of democracy between the 12th and 18th of every September (Fair Vote Canada).

In Nigeria, which is the focus of this study, the ideology behind democracy day especially in the Fourth Republic is still obscure. During his inauguration and swearing-in ceremony on May 29, 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo declared the day Nigeria's Democracy Day. Although the reason behind such declaration may not have been founded on any particular political ideology or known democratic principle, it was perhaps a move to celebrate the end of sixteen uninterrupted years of military rule and the restoration of democracy. However, many individuals and groups openly condemn the decision, terming it as a 'height of hypocrisy' and a deliberate move to spite the presumed winner of the June 12 1993 election; adjudged the freest and fairest in the country's history (*Punch*, 2017; Brisibe, 2018; Olowolagba, 2018).

On the other hand, the decision by the Buhari-led federal government to acknowledge June 12 as Nigeria's democracy day in less than a year to the 2019 general elections was also described as politically-strategic and a ploy to woo the people of the South-west where Abiola hailed from (Akinwale, 2018). The foregoing strengthens the position that democracy day celebration in Nigeria is elitist and to a very large extent, an instrument of political maneuvers.

From May 29 to June 12: Reactions of Prominent Nigerians/Groups

Before a review of divergent reactions that trailed the Buhari-led federal government of Nigeria to change the country's Democracy Day from May 29 to June 12, it is important the present the President's position as captured in his June 7, 2018 press release. On the significance of June 12 over May 29 to Nigeria's democratic history, the President stated thus:

For the past 18 years, Nigerians have been celebrating May 29, as Democracy Day. That was the date when, for the second time in our history, an elected civilian administration took over from a military government. The first time this happened was on October 21, 1979. But in the view of Nigerians, as shared by this administration, June 12, 1993 was far more symbolic of democracy in the Nigerian context than May 29 or even the October 1. June 12, 1993 was the day when Nigerians in millions expressed their democratic will in what was undisputedly the freest, fairest and most peaceful election since our independence. The fact that the outcome of that election was not upheld by the then military government does not distract from the democratic credentials of that process. (Press Release, June 7, 2018).

This position by President Buhari invariable shares in the sanctity of June 12 and the credibility of the electoral process. Furthermore, the Press Release captured the events that would herald such declaration and its implications:

Accordingly, after due consultations, the Federal, Government has decided that henceforth, June 12 will be celebrated as Democracy Day. Therefore, the government has decided to award posthumously the highest honour of the land, GCFR, to the late Chief MKO Abiola, the presumed winner of the June 12,

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1993 cancelled elections. His running mate as Vice President, Ambassador Babagana Kingibe, is also to be invested with a GCON. Furthermore, the tireless fighter for human rights and the actualisation of the June 12 elections and indeed for democracy in general, the late Chief Gani Fawehinmi, SAN, is to be awarded the GCON (Press Release, June 7, 2018).

The reactions to Mr. President's decision by prominent individuals, statesmen and group on the decision by the Buhari-led federal government to change Nigeria's democracy day from May 29 to June 12 were collated from various interviews from the electronic, print and social media. Reacting to the decision by President Buhari, a former Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to former President Goodluck Jonathan, Dr. Reuben Abati who is also a renowned media expert, described the action as a ploy by the present government to revive its dying popularity. According to him:

The President's gesture came because long before now, his government had wanted to review its strategy of engagement with the public, as it hoped to move from blame-passing, propaganda, in-fighting and enemy-seeking approach to a more legacy-driven, result-oriented mode. When a government is losing popularity and goodwill, it then hopes to change the narrative. That is precisely what the Buhari government has done with the masterstroke of a special focus on June 12 and Abiola at a time when virtually everyone from the Catholic Church, the opposition, prominent political figures, the media and estranged members of the APC are carrying placards against the government (*ThisDay*, June 8, 2018).

Dr. Abati's position appears to be a reflection of his political affiliation and not as a reputed media practitioner in the country. This is because of his claim that 'everyone' in the Catholic Church... and etc as portrayed in his reaction is an exaggeration and void of objectivity which he was known for before his adventure into politics.

In a similar fashion, the main opposition party in Nigeria, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) through its publicity secretary, Mr. Kola Ologbondiyan described Buhari's decision as a "smacked of hypocrisy and political desperation ahead of the 2019 presidential election. The further stated that:

President Buhari's action merely sought to use the name and person of Abiola to gain a political capital and was not out of genuine reverence and recognition for him... History did not record President Buhari as sympathetic to the Abiola's family when his wife, Kudirat, was gruesomely murdered by the agents of a government which President Buhari served... It is, therefore, a sign of political desperation for President Buhari to seek to use Chief Abiola's name as a tool to sway Nigerians in less than 12 months to an election where he (President Buhari) is seeking a second term (Information Nigeria, 2018).

The above position held by the PDP, is not unexpected as the main opposition party in the country. In a more shocking manner, a political party, All People's Party (APP) blatantly accused the President and is Party- All Progressive Congress (APC) of hijacking an integral part of its manifesto. The Party stated that:

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APP is shocked to see that the President Buhari-led federal government has now graduated to hijacking ideas of true democrats without giving due credit in a desperate bid to secure lost South-west and pro-democracy block votes (Ugbede, 2018).

The Party further reacted that:

Few months ago, we launched our party's healing and national reconciliation agenda, which includes the ceremonial declaration of M.K.O Abiola the winner of the June 12 election and also the enactment of a legislation called the June 12 Act which will declare June 12 of every year as our National democracy day. We presented the draft bill to the public on live television to express our readiness to heal the wounds of the past and honour our fallen democratic hero. APP is in awe that a president who has not done a single creative thing since his election in 2015 would in his desperation to woo South West and pro-democracy votes attempt to hijack a well-thought out initiative of the APP without giving credit to the initiators of the idea (Ugbede, 2018).

The All People's Party however out-rightly condemned the decision, describing it as a height of hypocrisy and a mockery of democracy. The Party expressed that:

To see Buhari pretend to be on the side of June 12 because of his desperation to garner lost goodwill from South West and pro-democracy block is a joke taken too far when the same president few weeks ago was seen praising the former dictator Abacha whose regime denied Nigeria the chance to have an Abiola presidency (Ugbede, 2018).

The APP therefore threatened it would take a legal action within 48 hours if the President to ascribe full credit of the idea to the Party. In a rather skeptical manner, a former aide to President Jonathan, Reno Omokri expressed that President Buhari's declaration of June 12 as the new Democracy Day is a plot to gain South-west votes in 2019. As reported by Akinwale, a correspondent with the *Nigerian Monitor*, Omokri stated that:

President Buhari is a joke. In desperation for the Southwest vote, he has declared June 12, Democracy Day and given MKO Abiola a post humous GCFR. What hypocrisy! This was a man who served Abacha while Abacha jailed Abiola. This was a man who praised Abacha, Abiola's jailer.

In a mixed reaction, the Yoruba apex socio-political group, *Afenifere*, welcomed the development describing it as long over-due. However, the Group sees such gesture as a cheap ploy to woo the people of the South-west region whom the Group described as sophisticated (*ThisDay*, June 8, 2018). Conversely, a former Senator, who was a former Secretary-General of *Afenifere*, Femi Okurounmu, described the move by the President was highly commendable and had also put former President - Olusegun Obasanjo to shame (Information Nigeria, 2018).

Corroborating Senator Okurounmu's position, Chief Frank Kokori, a former Secretary of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, Chief Frank Kokori, who was also instrumental in the enthronement of democracy in 1999

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opined (even before President Buhari's action) that former President Obasanjo's choice of May 29 was to spite Abiola who was the hero of June 12 1993. He argued that:

We know that Obasanjo unilaterally made May 29 Democracy Day to belittle the late M.K.O Abiola and others who fought for freedom and democracy. He did it because he always wants to be the top. His intention was to spite Abiola and those of us who fought for freedom and democracy. If not, what was the basis for it? Was it because he was sworn in on that day, May 29? What role did he play?. Obasanjo did not do much for the struggle for democracy. He only went to prison because he was charged with treason (*Punch*, June 11, 2017).

Following the same trend of criticizing Obasanjo's adoption of May 29 as Nigeria's Democracy Day, a popular lawyer and human rights activist, Chief Femi Falana (SAN) pointed-out that "the declarations have put an end to the hypocrisy of May 29 which was proclaimed by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration as democracy day" (*ThisDay*, June 8, 2018; Olowolagba, 2018). Falana however proposed that the federal government should mark the first national democracy day on June 12, 2018 with the release of all citizens who are being detained illegally all over the country and immediate compliance with all valid and subsisting court orders (*ThisDay*, June 8, 2018).

In his own view, a director of information, Hope 93, MKO Abiola's Campaign Organisation, Mr. Obafemi Oredein, praised President Muhammadu Buhari and requested that a denomination of a national currency should carry the portrait of the winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, the late Chief MKO Abiola (Information Nigeria, 2018). In appreciation to Buhari's gesture, Ogun State Government (the State Abiola hailed from) through its Secretary, Mr. Taiwo Adeoluwa, applauded the President for the recognition of its illustrious son and business icon (Information Nigeria, 2018).

From a legal perspective, Non-Governmental Organization - Voters Rights International condemned the change of date of Nigerian democracy day from May 29 to June 12 by President Muhammadu Buhari. The President of the Group, Mr. Jezie Ekejiuba, who is also a lawyer, threatened a legal action against the federal government for what he called unilateral annulment of May 29 as democracy day. He argued Buhari has no powers in any law to so do without recourse to the National Assembly (*ThisDay*, June 8, 2018).

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Presentation of Data: Between May 29 and June 12

To gauge the pulse of Nigerians on the decision by the Buhari-led federal government to change Nigeria’s Democracy Day from May 29 to June 12, an online survey was conducted. Responses were elicited from 54 Nigerians resident in the country and in Diaspora. The outcome of the survey is hereby presented:

Question One: In your view, which between May 29 and June 12 is more significant/symbolic to democracy in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic?

SN	Day	Responses/Frequency
1	May 29	16
2	June 12	31
3	None	02
4	No Response	05

Source: Online survey, 2018.

Question Two: How would you describe the decision by the Buhari-led federal government to change Nigeria’s Democracy Day from May 29 to June 12?

SN	Categories of Responses	Frequency
1	Politically Strategic	20
2	Good/Commendable/Acceptable	17
3	Patriotic	02
4	Unconstitutional	02
5	Confusing/Directionless	01
6	Long overdue	02
7	Unnecessary	02
8	Indifferent	02
9	No Response	06

Source: Online survey, 2018.

Discussion of Findings

Responses to the first question as presented in Table one show that 16 of the total of 54 preferred May 29 as Nigeria’s democratic. On the other hand, 31 responses favoured June 12 as Nigeria’s Democracy Day; 2 respondents chose none while the remaining 5 responses were void. Further responses to the question show that June 12 was preferred on the strength that the day represents free, fair and credible election and that the foundation of democracy in Nigeria was laid. This position is in tandem with a cross-section of Nigerians who believed that the ultimate price for the present democratic order in Nigeria was paid as a result of the June 12 struggles.

On the other hand, respondents that chose May 29 stated that the day marked a true end to military dictatorship and years of oppression and injustices in the country particular under the draconian rule of General Abacha. Describing the background of the Fourth Public, Yax-Nelson (2017) narrated that General Abacha’s attempted to perpetuate himself in power through a forceful “camouflage” democratic means. Such move was however terminated by his death on June 8, 1998. The period of transition from military to civil rule was also characterized by certain remarkable events. Yax-Nelson expressed that:

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General Abdusalam Abubakar, who succeeded Abacha, replaced the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) put in place by General Abacha with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); political prisoners were released and invitations were sent to political exiles to return home. Consequently, a former military head of state, one of the released political prisoners, emerged as the president of Nigeria.

Reacting to the second question, 20 respondents described the decision by the Buhari-led federal government to change Nigeria's Democracy Day from the initial May 29 to June 12 was a product of political maneuvers aimed at winning the heart of Nigerians in the face of perceived failures and as the 2019 general elections approach. The position conforms to that of the country's main opposition party - People's Democratic Party (PDP) and those of the aides of former president – Goodluck Jonathan. In similar vein, 5 respondents perceived the decision as unconstitutional, confusing and unnecessary.

On the other hand, a total of 17 responses described the decision to change Nigeria's democracy day to June 12 as good, commendable and acceptable. Besides these 17 responses, 2 respondents described the President Buhari's action as long overdue, especially when such decision came almost after twenty-five years.

Conclusion

This article has examined the political intrigues of democracy day celebration in Nigeria. Besides, May 29 and June 12 were put on a scale with a view to knowing their significance. In view of the findings, the paper concludes that, the decision to declare May 29 as Nigeria's Democracy Day and the subsequent change to June 12 was elitist and not according to the will of the people which democracy represents. Although, both days (May 29 and June 12) carry significance in the minds of Nigerians, the political intrigues around their adoption as democracy day(s) were borne-out of political calculations and ploy to appeal to the psyche of the people even as the 2019 general elections approach. The foregoing further strengthens the argument that the present wave of democracy in Africa and particularly Nigeria, is elite-driven and aloof the people. It is therefore recommended that rather play politics with democracy day celebration, the Nigerian government and the community of political elites should give the people reasons to celebrate by focusing on delivering democratic dividends to the people.

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