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Research Article

The tragedy of the umpire: the electoral management body and Nigeria's 2019 general elections

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the challenges of election management in Nigeria as they relate to the integrity of the 2019 elections. As required of a true democracy, the independence of the Election Management Body (EMB) is a vital ingredient for credible elections. Although appearing independent in name, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) by its structure lacks sufficient independence from the political elite and competing groups. The dependent structure of the EMB makes the agency vulnerable to manipulation and this represents a major liability in the process of strengthening the quality of elections in Nigeria. This article argues that the problem concerning the structure of the INEC contributed to the controversial outcomes of the 2019 elections.

KEYWORDS:

Electoral management body INEC Nigeria 2019 general elections

Notes

1. Prior to the present democratic era, Nigeria (in its post-independence period) had the following EMBs: the Electoral Commission of the Federation (1964–1966), the Federal Electoral Commission (1976–1983), the National Electoral Commission (1987–1993), and the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (1994–1998). These institutions were confounded by credibility issues owing to the influence of the Executive branch on their activities. This generated a general lack of trust in them by the people and one of the major reasons for electoral controversies in the previous democratic dispensations in Nigeria. For details, see Jinadu ([2013](#)).

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