

Metaphysics of the Means-End Continuum and Electoral Malpractices in Nigeria

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Abstract

In this paper, I demonstrate how electoral malpractices in Nigeria violate logical principles as well as the principle of finality. A growing trend in electoral malpractices in Nigeria is that elections are mostly allowed to be held seamlessly and peacefully up to the counting and declaration of results at polling units, whereas the results are subsequently falsified or doctored during their collation and declaration at wards, in local government areas and/or states. I argue that the falsification of results of successful polls at polling units during their collation and declaration at wards, in local government areas, or states is a disruption of the means-end continuum, a violation of logical principles and the principle of finality upon which the natural (moral) and physical laws are premised. I conclude that the principle of finality and the idea of the means-end continuum which enunciate that the end (outcome of an election) must necessarily and logically follow from the means (electoral processes/procedures) determined by, and directed towards, the end should be taken into consideration by judges adjudicating electoral cases in Nigeria.

Keywords: Electoral Malpractices, Finality, Logic, Means-end continuum, Metaphysics

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Introduction

Every purposeful human activity is primarily oriented towards achieving a goal or target. The goal – an end in view – may guide the selection and rejection of means or resources (materials, tools, ideas, approaches, strategies, procedures) – available or potential – to be employed in realizing the end. If it is the case, we rationalize that the means are goal-directed, that is, they are driven by the end. On the contrary, the means may guide the development of a goal. In this case, the original goal is constructed or formulated by letting the available means to direct its formulation. The goal here is therefore said to be means-directed.

Nonetheless, whether it is the goal directing the means or the means guiding the goal, they all operate along means-end continuum. Accordingly, in goal-directed human activity, the end dictates the means. There is a certain order or pattern which must be strictly adhered to so as to achieve the end which the order represents. To this extent, the means (the order in nature) coincides with the end.¹ Election is the process by which the electorate, in a democratic country, votes to elect some citizens who will represent them at the executive and legislative arms of government. The purpose of elections is chiefly to choose a leader and ensure the accountability of government.

Elections afford the electorate the opportunity to effect a change of leadership when government policies and programs do not reflect their aspirations and interests. They therefore serve as “a means of checking the excesses of the people's representatives...”² If the primary purpose (end) of elections is to choose a leader and ensure accountability of a government, then the means (processes, procedures) must be free and fair, otherwise the will of the electorate will not prevail and thus the purpose of elections is defeated. Elections are said to be free and fair when it is devoid of any form of rigging. It extends beyond allowing eligible voters to freely vote for the candidates and political parties of their choice to letting the electorate's votes to count at polling units, wards, local government areas, and states.

Regrettably, a growing and disturbing trend in electoral malpractices in Nigeria is that elections are for the most part allowed to be held seamlessly and peacefully up to the counting and declaration of results at polling units, whereas the results are subsequently

¹. Francis O. C. Njoku, *Studies in the Philosophy of Mind*, (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, Nekede, 2010), 33.

². Ibiyemi Oyeneye, Michael Onyenwenu and Bodun E. Olosunde, *Round-up Government: A Complete Guide*, 2nd ed., (Ikeja: Learn Africa Plc., 2006), 337.

falsified or doctored during their collation and declaration at wards, in local government areas, or states. The aim of this paper is to contend that the falsification of election results during their collation and declaration at wards, local government areas, or states is a disruption of the means-end continuum, a violation of logical principles as well as the principle of finality upon which the natural (moral) and physical laws are premised. To this end, I will explore metaphysics of finality, deductive and inductive reasoning in order to establish the inextricable connection between means and end. I will thereafter argue that the growing trend in electoral malpractices in Nigeria are disruption of the means-end continuum, and violate the principle of finality. Finally, I will conclude that the principle of finality and the idea of the means-end continuum should be taken into consideration when adjudicating electoral cases in Nigeria.

The Principle of Finality

The principle of finality, which was first developed by Aristotle, states that: “(1) Every material body acts by virtue of intrinsic tendencies directed towards the attainment of definite goals (2) These tendencies are directed primarily towards the perfection of the individual concerned, or of the species to which it belongs.”³ A thing can be directed towards a goal (a need) intrinsically or extrinsically. The orientation is intrinsic if the tendency towards a particular goal is built in the nature of the thing. It is extrinsic if its natural tendency towards a particular goal is directed by an extrinsic agent that acts within its very nature. For instance, an acorn has an intrinsic tendency to develop into an oak tree (intrinsic orientation). But an aircraft flying from Nigeria to London needs to be directed by a pilot (an extrinsic agent) to reach its destination (extrinsic orientation).

In Aristotle's book titled *Metaphysics* he discusses the notion of potency and act. Potentiality “is an origin of change in something else or in a thing *qua* something else.”⁴ A being in potency can change or move from potentiality to actuality. Potentiality is the “capacity of an object to pass from one state to another.”⁵ An entity is in potency when it has inherent potential or capacity to realize its form or actualize its end. But an entity is in act when it has fully realized its form or attained its full development. Actuality is therefore “what a thing becomes at the end of the processes of change or development.”⁶ For

³. John L. Russell, “The Principle of Finality in the Philosophy of Aristotle and Teilhard De Chardin, I,” *The Heythrop Journal* 3, no. 4 (1962): 237. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2265.1962.tb00301.x>

⁴. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. Trans. Stephen Makin, ed. Lindsay Judson, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 9.

⁵. John V. Luce, *An Introduction to Greek Philosophy*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1992), 177.

⁶. Joseph I. Omeregbe, *Metaphysics without Tear: A Systematic and Historical Study*, vol. 3, (Ikeja: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd. 1996), 142.

example, an egg is in potency since it has the inherent potential to develop into a hen or a cock. It is said to be in act when it finally develops into a hen or a cock. Therefore, the actual is the realization of the potential. In other words, it is “the end, that for the sake of which the potency exists or is acquired.”⁷ Potency and acts are therefore two basic elements inherent in all entities.

Aristotle also distinguishes between four causes, namely, the material cause, the formal cause, the efficient cause, and the final cause. These causes are components of sensible things. Material cause is the stuff of which a thing is made. The formal cause is the form or the essence of a thing. Efficient cause is the agent that produces a thing or brings it into existence, while the final cause is the end or purpose for which a thing is made. In *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle asserts that every action and rational choice “is thought to aim at some good; and so, the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims.”⁸ The good is defined here in terms of an end. Goodness is an essential attribute of being which is applicable in all the categories of substance (being).

Given that goodness is an inherent attribute of every being, a being possesses the natural tendency or disposition (potentiality) to be good (actuality). It is in the nature of a being to tend towards that which defines its nature. Thus, the metaphysics of finality determines the metaphysics of obligation. Put differently, the end for which a being is sought determines the nature and content of being's obligation. Accordingly, human ends constitute human nature or essence. It implies that “the ends appropriate to human nature are built into the very nature or essence which determines a human person.”⁹ The formal cause is the goodness of being that constitutes its nature. Goodness denotes that dispositional property or essence which is in the process of realizing its form or attaining its development. The final cause is the end of the development of the dispositional attribute that constitutes the formal cause. To this extent, the formal cause and the final cause are inextricably bound up with each other. The end (good) is an act of which potency – a process of development – is a part. The end therefore embodies the completion of developmental processes.

Aquinas follows Aristotle in maintaining that good is the end of human action. According

⁷. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2003), 310.
⁸. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*. Trans. and ed. Roger Crisp, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3.

⁹. Francis O. C. Njoku, “Development, Conflict and Peace in Nigeria,” in *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*, ed. Miriam Ikejiani-Clark, (Ibadan: Spectrum Book Limited, 2009), 213.

to Aquinas, “every agent of necessity acts for an end”¹⁰ and that end (good) is built into the very nature of the agent, whether it is intelligent or non-intelligent, that acts. Although the non-intelligent being does not know formally the end to which its action tends, it acts for an end. An agent acting for an end must not be intelligent as agent for its tending to an end to be intelligent. What is required for an act, which tends to an end, to be intelligent is that it is orderly. Besides, non-intelligent agent that acts may be directed by an intelligent agent to act so extrinsically within the very nature of the agent that acts. For example, when I am using an iron to press my clothes, I am directing the iron by placing its natural tendency to iron clothes within its particular nature. Therefore, while a rational being properly tends to an end by directing itself to the end, an irrational being properly tends to an end, as directed or led by another (an extrinsic agent). Aquinas explicates thus:

It must be observed that a thing tends to an end, by its action or movement, in two ways: first, as a thing, moving itself to the end, as a man; secondly, as a thing moved by another to the end, as an arrow tends to a determinate end through being moved by the archer who directs his action to the end....¹¹

The principle of finality is the ontological grounds for natural (moral) and physical laws. Njoku asserts that “Aristotle natural law doctrine is strongly rooted in the conviction that nature stands as a capacity for development inherent in particular things and aimed at a particular end or purpose both in respect to physical and moral phenomena.”¹² Every human person acts according to his nature and he is naturally inclined to achieve his proper ends through the natural reason and free will consistent with natural law – which claims that “human law is based on the rational nature of human beings.”¹³ Moreover, the principle of finality accounts for uniformities and regularities observed in natural phenomena which are referred to as laws of nature. The uniformity of nature relates to behavior, relationships, and patterns of things and so forth on the basis of which reality and future events can be explained and predicted respectively, thereby making scientific knowledge possible.

Reasoning in Logic

Logic is the study of the methods and principles of distinguishing correct (good) reasoning from incorrect (bad) reasoning.¹⁴ It stands to reason that not all reasoning is good reasoning. In reasoning, we construct and evaluate arguments with propositions which are the

¹⁰. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica, First Complete American Edition in Three Volumes*. Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947), I-II, q. 1. a. 2.

¹¹. Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 1. a. 2.

¹². Njoku, *Studies in the Philosophy of Mind*, 87.

¹³. Njoku, “Development, Conflict and Peace in Nigeria,” 13.

¹⁴. Irving M. Copi, Carl Cohen and Kenneth McMahon, *Introduction to Logic*, 14th ed., (New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd., 2012), 2.

building blocks of our reasoning. An argument is any group of propositions one of which is the premises that are claimed to provide grounds for the other proposition called the conclusion. In other words, the conclusion is affirmed or inferred on the basis of the premises.¹⁵ Reasoning is said to be correct if the premises provide adequate grounds or reasons for affirming the conclusion, otherwise it is incorrect. What this means is that the conclusion arrived at must strictly follow from the premises to have correct reasoning. Deduction and induction are the bedrock of good reasoning.

Deductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning claims that the premises of an argument provide conclusive grounds for the truth of its conclusion. Here, the conclusion of an argument is claimed to follow from the premises of an argument with absolute necessity. The premises set the limits within which options are selected and rejected in the course of arriving at a conclusion.¹⁶ In deduction, reasoning moves from general statements (or principles/rules) to a specific, logical conclusion. We say that if something is true of a class of things in general, then it is also true for all members of the class. Every deductive argument claims that its premises guarantee the truth of its conclusion, but not all deductive arguments live up to that claim.¹⁷ Deductive argument is said to be valid if all its premises are true, then its conclusion must obviously be true.

It is impossible for the conclusion of a valid deductive argument to be false if all its premises are true. This means that deductive argument is valid when there is no possible instance or case in which all premises are true and yet its conclusion is false. A deductive argument is therefore invalid if it is possible for its premises to be true and its conclusion is false. In logic validity and invalidity apply to arguments, whereas truth and falsity apply to propositions. Thus, a deductively valid argument can have false premises and a false conclusion, while a deductively invalid argument can have true premises and a true conclusion.

Therefore, our primary concern in determining the validity of a deductive argument is whether a conclusion follows or infers from its premises with logical necessity. It is the

¹⁵. Emmanuel M. Ome and William Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, (Enugu: Institute for Development Studies, 2004), 358.

¹⁶. Phyllis Chiasson, "Peirce and the Continuum of Means and Ends," *The Comments Encyclopedia: The Digital Encyclopedia of Peirce Studies*, new ed., 2001. Eds. Mats Bergman and João Queiroz, Pub. 121229-1303a, <http://www.commens.org/encyclopedia/article/chiasson-phyllis-peirce-and-continuum-means-and-ends>

¹⁷. Copi, Cohen and McMahon, *Introduction to Logic*, 24.

argument form, and not its content, that determines its validity or invalidity and so “all arguments that have a valid argument form are valid.”¹⁸ It is because a deductive argument has a valid argument form that makes it impossible for all its premises to be true and the conclusion is false. On the whole, a deductive argument is valid if the conclusion follows with logical necessity from the premises, regardless of what else may be true in the world or what other information may be discovered or added.¹⁹

Nevertheless, that a deductive argument is certified valid does not make it sound since one or all of its premises can be false. A deductively valid argument is sound if all its premises are true and its conclusion is also true, otherwise it is unsound. The following example is a sound deductive reasoning:

If the Senatorial District elections in South East are held in 2023 peacefully at most polling units and the results of the poll are announced at the polling units, then the results will not be falsified or doctored during the collation at Ward, Local Government Area, and State levels.

Anambra North Senatorial District election in South East was held peacefully in 2023 at most polling units and results of the poll were announced at the polling units.

Therefore, the results were not falsified or doctored during the collation and declaration of the results at Ward, Local Government Area and State levels.

In deductive reasoning, the purpose (conclusion), an end in view, guides the selection of means (premises) for affirming or denying the end. It is the end (finality) that determines the processes (obligations) to be carried out for the achievement of the end. Deductive reasoning is therefore goal-directed and operates along the means-end continuum.

Inductive Reasoning

Inductive reasoning involves making generalizations from specific observations. Here, we move from the specific to the general. In other words, we move from particular statements to a general conclusion, from the known premises to other propositions that the premises entail. It claims that the premises of an argument provide only some degree of probability, but not certainty, to its conclusion. Here, the conclusion of an argument is “claimed to follow from its premises only with probability, this probability being a matter of degree and

^{18.} Alan Hausman, Howard Kahane and Paul Tidman, *Logic and Philosophy: A Modern Introduction*, 12th ed., (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning, 2013), 8.

^{19.} Copi, Cohen and McMahon, *Introduction to Logic*, 26.

dependent on what else may be the case.”²⁰ Whereas deductive arguments are evaluated as correct or incorrect on the basis of validity and invalidity, inductive arguments are tested as strong or weak according to the degree of probability which their premises confer upon their conclusion.²¹

An inductive argument is said to be sound when it is strong and all its premises are true, then its conclusion is probably true. But it is unsound when it is either weak or strong and at least one of its premises is false. It is possible for the conclusion of a strong inductive argument to be false, while its premises are true. Thus, true premises do not provide incontrovertible grounds for the truth of their conclusion, but rather makes their conclusion likely or probable, or probably true. This implies that a conclusion is never established with certainty even when the premises are all true, and provide a strong support for the conclusion.²²

Inductive reasoning is predicated upon facts of human experience from which conclusions are drawn. In induction, “a causal connection logically depends on a regularity or repetition in the sequence we observe...”²³ We observe regular patterns or resemblances in our experiences and then proceed to project them onto other cases.²⁴ Some factors make inductive arguments strong or sound like appeal to authority, analogy, and enumeration. An example of a sound (strong) inductive argument:

Senatorial District elections in South East for Anambra North, Central, and South, Enugu West, East, and North, Ebonyi North, Central, and South, Abia Central and Imo East were held in 2023 at most polling units peacefully and results of the poll announced at the polling units were not falsified or doctored during the collation and declaration of the results at Ward, Local Government Area and State levels.

So, results of any Senatorial District elections in South East in 2023 announced at polling units where elections were held peacefully would not be falsified or doctored during the collation and declaration of results at Ward, Local Government, and State levels.

In both deductive and inductive reasoning, conclusions are results inferred from validly constructed logical arguments. In deduction, inferences or judgments are predicated on

²⁰. Copi, Cohen and McMahon, *Introduction to Logic*, 27.

²¹. Ome and Amam, *Philosophy and Logic for Everybody*, 362.

²². Copi, Cohen and McMahon, *Introduction to Logic*, 25-26.

²³. Ilham Dilman, *Induction and Deduction: A Study in Wittgenstein*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 118.

²⁴. Hausman, Kahane and Tidman, *Logic and Philosophy*, 6.

accepted general rules or theories, whereas in induction, inferences are drawn from specific observations. In any case, conclusions or results logically follow from premises asserted in arguments. Conclusions are synthesis of past data; they are drawn from earlier experiences.

Deductive and inductive reasoning is consistent with the idea of metaphysics of finality in that premises are built into conclusions of both reasoning. Conclusions or results are explained by causal (preceding) events. Put differently, conclusions are results of actions within arguments. A conclusion comes to be by virtue of the cause (premises) which is a necessary attribute of the conclusion. Thus, the conclusion (the effect) of deductive and inductive reasoning is contingent upon the premises (the cause) of both reasoning.

Nze rightly states that “obedience to the laws of nature which is indeed a searching out for a common species is a necessary condition for the fruition of the natural transition from cause to effect or from premises to conclusion.”²⁵ This connection between premises and the conclusion enables us to explain uniformities and to predict effects and regularities in nature.

Like deduction, induction begins with the means (premises) directed by the end (generalization), albeit such a conclusion is a probability. The probable end is therefore the determining factor in the formulation of the means to the end. Inductive reasoning is therefore end-directed and operates along the means-end continuum. In both deduction and induction, the means (premises) are driven by the end in view (conclusion, generalization). Thus, both deduction and induction entail end-directed processes.

The Means-End Continuum and Electoral Malpractices in Nigeria

Our discussions of the principle of finality as well as reasoning in logic show that every rational human activity is goal oriented since individuals act for an end. The end to which an activity is directed determines the nature of resources or materials to be employed as a means of achieving the end. In logic, reasoning is valid and sound when a conclusion is drawn from true premises (means). This implies that it is the projected outcome (end) that guides the selection of means (premises) leading to the conclusion of the outcome (conclusion). Deductive and inductive reasoning is goal-directed since it is the goal (outcome, generalization) that defines the means (premises) by which the goal can be reached.²⁶ It is therefore the goal that underlies the fundamental principle of all reasoning.

²⁵. Chukwuemeka B. Nze, “The Causative Role of the Middle Term in Nature”, *UCHE* 11 (2005): 94.

²⁶. Chiasson, <http://www.commens.org/encyclopedia/article/chiasson-phyllis-peirce-and-continuummeans-and-ends>

The means must be appropriate for the end that dictates it, for the end is built in to the very nature of the act that is geared towards the end. To this extent, the means and the end are inseparable and perfectly arranged on a continuum.

Means and the end are interrelated. The end cannot be considered in isolation from the means used to achieve it. We are able to attain an end (a goal) because the requirements of the goal defines the materials (methods or means) selected for attaining that goal. In other words, the end sets the parameter within which the means are selected, in so far as the process we are engaged in is goal directed. The end (good) for which humans achieved aim at is achieved because the selection of means is driven by the value that interacts with both the means and the end. The end does not possess value per se. It has value only in relation to resources or materials that are employed in achieving it as well as other consequences the end may produce. In this regard, Dewey argues that “the value of enjoyment of an object as an attained end is a value of something which in being an end, an outcome stands in relation to the means of which it is the consequence. Hence if the object in question is prized as an end or 'final' value, it is valued in this relation or as mediated.”²⁷

The end must be good as well as its means of accomplishment, for the end does not always justify the means. The end is worthless if the means (methods) are arbitrarily selected, to the detriment of other things that are directly or indirectly affected in the course of achieving the end. In the words of Dewey:

Only the conception that certain things are ends-in-themselves can warrant the belief that the relation of the ends-means is unilateral, proceeding exclusively from ends to means....The arbitrary selection of some one part of the attained consequences as the end and hence as the warrant of means used (no matter how objectionable are their other consequences)... is the fruit of holding that it, as the end, is an end-in-itself, and hence possessed of 'value' irrespective of all of its existential relations.²⁸

The end directs the means and provides a condition to be taken into consideration in the process of attaining the end. The end embodies the conclusion of a process and thus cannot be valued wholly independent of its context in the continuum of activities. It is unreasonable to consider an end as possessing value independent of appraisal of the means employed in attaining it. For the end to be justified, it must logically and necessarily follow from the means.

Electoral malpractices in post-independence Nigeria have become the defining feature of

²⁷. John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 41.
²⁸. Dewey, *Theory of Valuation*, 42.

general elections. Previously, these illegal and blatant acts were mostly perpetrated at polling units and they played out in seizure and burning of ballot boxes, fake printing and thumb printing of ballot papers, the use of political thugs to intimidate and harass voters and electoral officers, or perpetrate violence, unfair counting, announcement of conflict results, and so forth. Given that most of these malpractices were perpetrated at polling units – the early part of electoral processes, the logical conclusion is that the outcome of elections would not reflect popular opinion. It is logically necessary that the end naturally follows from the means. If the means is bad, then the entire electoral processes are marred leading to the undesirable outcomes (ends). The end result here is perfectly natural; it is predictable.

However, it is a whole new ball game when elections are held smoothly and peacefully at polling units and ended with counting and announcement of results, only for the results of the poll to be falsified or doctored during the collation and declaration of results at ward, local government area or state levels. This is the growing trend in electoral malpractices in Nigeria, besides the usual ways of rigging elections in Nigeria I earlier enumerated. As I have stated earlier, every purposeful human activity tends to an end and that end must be fitted into the means in order to be good. The processes involved in goal-directed means must be orderly for the expected end to be achieved. The primary purpose of elections is to elect leaders of people's choice. Achieving this presupposes that elections are conducted in a conducive atmosphere and the electorate's votes count at the end. It entails that electoral processes are ordered and that the processes are not disrupted.

For instance, June 12, 1993 presidential election has been adjudged as the freest and fairest election Nigeria has ever had because the electoral processes were not disrupted and thus the electorate's votes counted. It was when the Babangida-led administration saw that M. K. O. Abiola – the candidate of the people's choice – was winning that an order was ridiculously given to discontinue the announcement of the result.²⁹ The annulment of the election was greeted with scathing remarks and widespread condemnation (both nationally and internationally) since it was clearly evident that the processes (means) leading to that final declaration of the results (end) were not hijacked. The annulment would not have been inveighed against if the output (results) had not reflected the input (popular opinion).

When it is evident that electoral processes are credible, free and fair, one can logically predict that the outcome (end) of elections would follow from the means, for the end and

²⁹. Nwosu, as quoted in Victor Ogunyinka, "Without Me, There Couldn't Have Been June 12 Election – Humphrey Nwosu," *Vanguard Nigeria*, June 17, 2019, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/06/without-me-there-couldnt-have-been-june-12-election-%E2%80%95-humphrey-nwosu/>

the means coincide. The electoral processes involve some stages during the conduct of elections. The stages are like the spider's web to such an extent that the disruption of any stage affects other stages. The stages of elections embody the outcome of elections. They are the building blocks of the outcome. The success of any general election depends to a large extent on what transpires at polling units. This is due to the fact that, all things being equal, it is the results of the poll announced at various polling units that will be collated and announced at respective wards. The same results recorded at respective wards are transferred to respective local government areas for collation and announcement which will in turn transferred to the state for final collation and declaration.

Given that stages leading up to the outcome are inextricably linked, elections cease to be free and fair when any stage is disrupted. For instance, if the electorate's votes are not allowed to count during the counting and announcement of results at polling units, subsequent stages are logically certain to be fraudulent since such elections are rigged from the start. Prior to 2019 general elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) assured Nigerians of free, fair, and credible elections. In elections, the end is directing the means. To ensure peaceful, seamless, free and fair conduct of elections in Nigeria in 2019, INEC mapped out seven-step voting procedures at polling units. The procedures were also followed in the 2023 general election. They are as follows:

Step 1: Upon arrival at the polling unit, join the queue and present yourself to the INEC official, Assistant Presiding Officer (APO) III at the polling unit who will determine whether you are at the correct polling unit and check if the photograph on the Permanent Voter Card (PVC) matches your face. If he is satisfied with the check, he would direct you to the next INEC official (APO I).

Step 2: The official (APO I) will request your PVC to confirm that your card is genuine, and your details, using the smart card reader. He will ask you to place your finger on the card reader for confirmation and authentication.

Step 3: If successful, you will be directed to the next official (APO II) who will request your PVC to confirm that your name and details are in the voters register. If confirmed, your name will be ticked and your PVC returned to you. He will there after apply indelible ink to the cuticle of your appropriate finger to show that you have been accredited to vote (If your name is not found on the register, you will not be allowed to vote).

Step 4: The Presiding Officer (PO) will stamp, sign, and endorse your ballot paper. He will

thereafter roll the ballot paper inwardly with the printed side inwards and give to you. He will then direct you to the voting cubicle where you vote in secret.

Step 5: You will stain your appropriate finger with the ink provided. Thereafter, use your stained finger to mark the space or box provided on the ballot paper for your preferred candidate/party. Roll the marked ballot paper (in the manner the PO gave to you).

Step 6: Then leave the voting cubicle and drop the ballot in the ballot box in full view of people at the polling unit.

Step 7: You will then leave the polling unit or wait if you so choose in an orderly and peaceful manner to watch the process up to declaration of results. The result of each polling unit shall be pasted at the unit and for everyone to see.³⁰

It is regrettable that after following the standard procedures religiously, results of the poll were still falsified in some wards or local governments. A case in point is the Imo West Senatorial District election held on 23 February 2019. The election was held smoothly and peacefully at most polling units that constituted the district. There were expectations that the will of the electorate would prevail at the end, having successfully carried out election exercises at the polling units. However, that hope was dashed when the INEC declared Rochas Okorocha, the candidate of All Progressives Congress (APC) the winner of Imo West Senatorial District election.

The returning officer for Imo West Senatorial District election, Professor Innocent Ibeabuchi, disclosed that he was being held under duress to announce the results. As he states it: “My area commander; my P.Os; the part agents here present; members of the press; ladies and gentlemen. I have been held hostage here for days. So, I'm trying to ease off and take my life home back to my children and for the sake of that I am calling these results under duress.”³¹ Onyeriri, the People Democratic Party (PDP) candidate for the senatorial district election centre alleged that the returning officer initially refused to announce the result after observing that “the whole results were rigged and inflated in

³⁰. The Punch, “INEC Releases Seven-Step Voting Procedure for 2019 General Elections,” January 10, 2019, <https://punchng.com/breaking-inec-releases-seven-step-voting-procedure-for-2019-general-elections/>

³¹. As quoted in Ebuka Onyeji, “How I Was Forced to Announce Okorocha Winner of Senate Seat – INEC Returning Officer,” *Premium Times*, February 25, 2019, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/316087-how-i-was-forced-to-announce-okorocha-winner-of-senate-seat-inec-returning-officer.html>

Onyeriri stated further that the election was heavily rigged by Mr. Okorocha and revealed that in Ideato South, Okorocha brought all collation officers to his house and compelled them to write results on his behalf.³³ The number turned out was far behind the number captured by smartcard readers. He added that Okorocha also colluded with some Registration Area Centre (RAC) technicians to make the smartcard readers not to work to enable him to do normal registration and thus inflating voters.³⁴

Although the INEC refused to issue Mr. Okorocha a certificate of return, on account of announcement of results under duress, the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja later ruled that Rochas Okorocha be awarded his certificate of return. It is a travesty of justice to give such a verdict that has set a dangerous legal precedent for dealing with similar electoral court cases. Commenting on the implication of the ruling, Barrister Festus Okoye, the INEC National Commissioner in charge of Information and Voter Education asserts:

Obviously, persons who seek elective offices could perceive in this judgement an irrelevance of due process and acting within the law. It is not far-fetched that some of them could in future disregard laid down processes, including voting, arm themselves and mobilize thugs and compel Returning Officers to declare them elected, irrespective of the true outcomes of elections. Moreover, it may become increasingly difficult for the Commission to convince its officials that they are safe to carry out their legitimate functions without fear of being harassed, held to ransom or visited with bodily harm.³⁵

Interestingly, the INEC said it would appeal the court judgment. But if this unpopular verdict on this electoral impunity is not reversed by a higher court of competent jurisdiction, it will portend a disaster for Nigeria's nascent democracy, as corrupt and self-serving politicians may resort to the Machiavellian of the end justifying the means.

Furthermore, an INEC Collation/ Returning Officer, Professor Peter Ogban in the 2019 National Assembly elections allegedly indulged in electoral fraud during the elections. It was reported that Prof. Ogban, who acted as the Collation/Returning Officer for the Akwa Ibom North West (Ikot Ekpene) Senatorial District in 2019, allegedly manipulated and falsified the scores of election results, and announced fake results in Oruk Anam and Etim

³². As quoted in Ebuka Onyeji, “How I Was Forced to Announce Okorocha Winner of Senate Seat”.
³³. As quoted in Ebuka Onyeji, “How I Was Forced to Announce Okorocha Winner of Senate Seat”.
³⁴. As quoted in Ebuka Onyeji, “How I Was Forced to Announce Okorocha Winner of Senate Seat”.
³⁵. As quoted in Ebuka Onyeji, “Okorocha: Why We Are Appealing against Court Ruling – INEC,” *Premium Times*, June 2, 2019, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/334675-okorocha-why-we-are-appealing-against-court-ruling-inec.html>

Ekpo local government areas in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria in favor of a ruling APC senatorial candidate for Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District, Senator Godswill Akpabio.³⁶

Dr. John Enoidem and Dr. Itemobong Ekaidem who were collation officers for Oruk Anam and Etim Ekpo local government areas respectively during the 2019 National Assembly election testified that results they collated at local government levels and submitted to Prof. Ogban, who was arraigned by the INEC on a two-count charge bordering on manipulation and falsification of election results, were at variance with results he finally declared. Dr. Enoidem disclosed that his collated election result showed that the PDP scored 25,123 votes, while the APC garnered 10,534 votes.³⁷ But Prof. Ogban finally declared 15,534 votes for the APC and 20,123 votes for the PDP, thereby reducing the votes for the PDP by 5000 and increasing votes for the APC by 5000.³⁸ Rendering his account, Dr. Ekaidem said that his collated election result indicated that the PDP got 6,603 votes, whereas the APC scored 2,671 votes.³⁹ However, Prof Ogban finally declared 5,671 and 3,306 votes for the APC and PDP respectively which means 3000 votes were deducted from votes for the PDP and added to votes for the APC.⁴⁰

Moreover, Dr. William Olosunde, an INEC Returning Officer for Essien Udim Local Government in the Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District election, claimed in a court that “he and other officials of the INEC were beaten up at the collation centre by thugs”⁴¹ which prompted him to suspend the collation of the results. He noted that he cancelled the elections in Ukana West I Ward and Ikpe Annang Ward, on account of the failure of Collation Officers for the wards to present the unit results from which they supposedly obtained the figures on their wards' result sheets.⁴²

Their inability to present the unit results suggests that electoral guidelines were not complied with and the ward results were falsified in the course of collation and recording of results at the ward level. For example, Olosunde disclosed that the number of accredited

36. Chioma Onuegbu, “Akwa-Ibom Electoral Fraud: Two Witnesses Testify as INEC Concludes Prosecution,” *Vanguard Nigeria*, January 25, 2021, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/01/akwa-ibom-electoral-fraud-two-witnesses-testify-as-inec-conclude-prosecution/>

37. As quoted in Chioma Onuegbu, “Akwa-Ibom Electoral Fraud”

38. As quoted in Chioma Onuegbu, “Akwa-Ibom Electoral Fraud”

39. As quoted in Chioma Onuegbu, “Akwa-Ibom Electoral Fraud”

40. As quoted in Chioma Onuegbu, “Akwa-Ibom Electoral Fraud”.

41. As quoted in Vanguard, “We Did Not Announce 61,329 Votes for Akpabio in Essien Udim – Returning Office,” July 22, 2019, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/07/we-did-not-announce-61329-votes-for-akpabio-in-essien-udim-returning-officer>

42. Vanguard, “We Did Not Announce 61,329 Votes for Akpabio in Essien Udim”

voters for Essien Udim Local Government was 19,455, whereas the APC claimed that the total valid votes were 61,329.⁴³ This large discrepancy shows that the unit results were falsified at the wards and thus the final results do not represent the will of the electorate. It therefore offends against the principle of finality and reasoning, and disrupts the continuity between means and ends when elections are held at polling units successfully, only for results of the polls to be falsified or doctored during the collation and announcement of the results at ward, local government area or state levels.

Besides, during the governorship elections in Nkanu East local government area in Enugu in 2023, there was an alleged manifest over-voting in Uwo and Ugbawka which occasioned discrepancies in the electoral results and the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) reports in the local government area.⁴⁴ The INEC returning officer for the state rejected voting figures from the local government area on the grounds that the BVAS was discarded in the process (Mark, 2023).⁴⁵ One would expect that, if the claim was confirmed after investigation, at least the results of the elections in the affected polling units would be annulled and fresh elections be ordered in the affected areas to ensure the means-end continuum. Regrettably, what an Abuja INEC panel did in exercising its discretion was to ridiculously reduce the over-voting figures and allot different votes to two main rivals – that is, the PDP and the Labour Party (LP) – (Mark, 2023) which led to litigation.

Conclusion

Ends are inseparable from means. The projected end (outcome) of a goal-directed activity is fitted into means employed in attaining the end. The end conditions the means and embodies the conclusion of a process. To this extent, the end logically and necessarily follows from the means (processes) leading to its achievement. It stands in relation to the means of which it is the outcome. Accordingly, the value (in the sense of good) of an attained end is estimated in terms of means of its attainment as well as other consequences its attainment may produce.

The idea of the means-end continuum is underlain and underpinned by the principle of

⁴³. Vanguard, “We Did Not Announce 61,329 Votes for Akpabio in Essien Udim”

⁴⁴. Lawrence Njoku, “How Edeoga's Petition Stopped Declaration of Guber election Winner in Enugu,” *The Guardian*, March 21, 2023, <https://guardian.ng/news/how-edeogas-petition-stopped-declaration-of-guber-election-winner-in-enugu/>. See also Mark Isuma “INEC Rigged Enugu Governorship Election, Declared Peter Mbah Winner – Labour Party Alleges,” *THE WHISTLER*, October 18, 2023, <https://thewhistler.ng/inec-rigged-enugu-governorship-election-declared-peter-mbah-winner-labour-party-alleges/>

⁴⁵. Isuma, <https://thewhistler.ng/inec-rigged-enugu-governorship-election-declared-peter-mbah-winner-labour-party-alleges/>

finality. This principle shows that the end is the part of a stream of events or activities and thus cannot be rightly valued in isolation from the means. Sound logical reasoning is also predicated on the principle of finality. The conclusion of an argument inferred from the premises is true and sound because all its premises are true. Besides, the theory of natural (moral) laws is built on a foundation of the principle of finality. Every rational and free act is for an end and that end must be consistent with the very nature of an agent that acts or is directed to act. The end is good and highly desirable because it is built into the very essence of the acting agent and it necessarily follows from the means designed for its achievement.

It violates logical and moral principles when a process or an event, of which an end is a part, is taking its course, only for the course to be disrupted in the process, thereby producing an unnatural and illogical outcome. Results of the successful polls announced at polling units are carriers of the potential winner of an election to be finally declared at a ward, in a local government area, and/or a state. The falsification of results of the polls at wards, in local government areas or states is a deviation from the natural course of elections. It violates the principle of finality – that underlies moral theory – and disrupts the means-end continuum. Hence, judges handling electoral cases in Nigeria should take into consideration the principle of finality and the idea of the means-end continuum during adjudication of electoral cases.

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