



African Humanities Research
& Development Circle



Journal of
**AFRICAN HUMANITIES
RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT (JAHRD)**

Volume 3, 2026
Published by The African Humanities
Research and Development Circle (AHRDC)

E-ISSN: 3115-5375

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT IN NIGERIA

Egodi Uchendu and Peremoboere Egbe

University of Nigeria and Independent Scholar

egodi.uchendu@unn.edu.ng

Introduction

Nigeria's search for a viable democracy has been marked by a long and chequered history, dating from the First Republic (1963–1966) to the present Fourth Republic. Nigeria's democratic experiment commenced with the British model of the cabinet/parliamentary system of government between 1963 and 1966. Subsequently, the country adopted the American model of the presidential system of government, which has remained in operation since 1979. However, Nigeria's democratic experience has suffered intermittent setbacks, paving the way for several military coups between 1966 and 1993. The pertinent question, therefore, is why Nigeria has found it so difficult to consolidate its democracy. A vast body of scholarship on Nigeria's democratic experiment has offered diverse explanations. Among these scholarly contributions, the politics surrounding the conduct of elections has received considerable attention. Jose Ortegay Gasset aptly observed that “the health of any democracy, no matter its type or status, depends on a small technical detail: the conduct of elections. Everything else is secondary.”¹

The conduct of elections in Nigeria is often perceived and managed as a tug-of-war among politicians, who deploy religion,² ethnicity, language, and financial resources to achieve their political objectives. In the process, they frequently disregard the means while justifying the end. Reflecting on this no-rules approach to politics in Nigeria, Prof. Claude Ake observed:

We are intoxicated with politics. The premium on political power is so high that we are prone to take the most extreme measures in order to win and maintain political power, our energy tends to be channeled into the struggle for power to the detriment of economically productive effort, and we habitually seek political solutions to virtually every problem. Such are the manifestations of the overpoliticisation of social life in Nigeria.³

This bibliography on democracy and elections has been compiled in an effort to identify more sustainable solutions to the challenges confronting Nigeria's democracy, the conduct of its political class, and the behaviour of the electorate.

¹ José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994).

² Olufemi Vaughan, *Religion and the Making of Nigeria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

³ Larry Diamond, “Nigeria in Search of Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs* 62, no. 4 (1984): 905–27.

Bibliometric Analysis

More than two hundred publications on democracy and elections in Nigeria were consulted, of which over seventy-five are analysed in this bibliography. Each analysis includes the author's name, title of the work, publication information, theoretical framework, methodology, and principal findings. Most of the publications are journal articles sourced from the JSTOR platform and other credible online databases, alongside a number of book chapters, conference proceedings, and theses/dissertations. The criterion for selection was that each publication addresses issues relating to democracy and elections within the Nigerian political context. While some of the works consulted date back to the First Republic, the survey extends through the Fourth Republic.

The publications reviewed in this essay are organised into thematic subsections, including democracy and elections, religion and politics, zoning and power sharing in Nigerian politics, ideology and political parties in Nigeria, party defections, godfatherism in Nigerian politics, among others. On average, three publications on each thematic area are reviewed.

Democracy in Nigeria: Elections, Electoral Administration, and Political Parties

1. E. E. Obioha, "Role of the Military in Democratic Transitions and Succession in Nigeria."⁴

A popular but succinct epigram commonly associated with pro-democracy activists during the height of military rule in Nigeria was that "the worst civilian government is better than any military government." The rationale behind this assertion is that civilian governments are elected, whereas military regimes, regardless of their achievements in governance, remain an aberration.

From this standpoint, Obioha argues that, apart from the electioneering process that ushered in the First Republic (1963–1966), all subsequent republics in Nigeria (1979–1983, 1992–1993, and 1999 to date) have been tainted by the stigma of founding elections—that is, elections marking the beginning of a new political dispensation following successive military interregnums. However, have these founding elections, midwived by the military, succeeded in entrenching democracy? Obioha answers this question in the negative, arguing that military rule, rather than advancing democratisation, has constituted a disruptive force in Nigeria's democratic development.

The study further contends that the military has sustained this disruptive role by truncating previous republics while simultaneously presenting itself as the false custodian of democratic principles through the initiation and management of flawed transition programmes that have proved unsustainable for democratic consolidation. It also argues that the military's involvement in organising and supervising elections was largely self-serving, a phenomenon it describes as milidemocracy, implying that former military officers merely exchanged khaki for agbada⁵ and subsequently contested elections whose processes had been stage-managed by the military establishment. Consequently, the

⁴ E. E. Obioha, "Role of the Military in Democratic Transitions and Succession in Nigeria," *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 251–68.

⁵ A flowing, wide-sleeved traditional robe worn by men primarily in Nigeria and other parts of West Africa. Derived from the Yoruba language, the word literally translates to "voluminous attire." <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agbada>

paper presents the military as a partisan institution that has functioned more as an obstacle than a catalyst for democratic transition and consolidation in Nigeria since independence.

Finally, Obioha's paper notes that "the way towards the success of democracy is the citizens' sense of political efficacy of elections and implicit belief in their ability to effect the political change through the constitutional means or process."⁶ However, it also observes that electioneering under civilian administrations has fared little better. The overarching conclusion is that democracy in Nigeria remains in a dilemma, as neither military regimes nor their civilian successors have successfully nurtured democratic consolidation.

2. Emmanuel Olusegun Stober, "Stomach Infrastructure: Lessons for Democracy and Good Governance."⁷

Drawing on the 2014 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, in which the then Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate, Mr. Ayodele Peter Fayose, secured a surprising victory over the incumbent governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Stober argues that voters demonstrated a clear preference for meeting basic survival needs—including food, employment, loan facilities, skill acquisition, and healthcare. The paper identifies this emerging political trend as "stomach infrastructure," describing it as a new paradigm in Nigerian politics. Stomach infrastructure represents a form of economic democracy that places citizens' immediate welfare above the provision of physical infrastructure, both of which are regarded as dividends of democracy.

The study maintains that the central premise of stomach infrastructure is that only individuals whose basic needs have been met are able to appreciate physical infrastructure. To a hungry citizen, modern roads, bridges, and other physical developments are of limited value. Consequently, any government that prioritises physical infrastructure while neglecting the welfare of its citizens is likely to fail because it is exceedingly difficult to govern a hungry population. Furthermore, the study argues that the politics of stomach infrastructure has a long historical trajectory in Nigeria. Citing the electoral success of Chief M. K. O. Abiola in 1993, as well as the widespread popularity of Chiefs Lamidi Adedibu in Ibadan, Oyo State, and Olusola Saraki in Ilorin, Kwara State, Stober suggests that their pro-people programmes, including the provision of free meals for the underprivileged, endeared them to the electorate.

The paper concludes by advocating that good governance should be anchored on addressing the most pressing needs of society at any given time. Since the prevailing concern among many Nigerian voters is survival, governments must establish "a point of convergence between physical infrastructure and the people's welfare 'stomach infrastructure,'" because only a well-fed citizen is capable of thinking productively and participating meaningfully in democratic governance.

⁶ Obioha, "Role of the Military in Democratic Transitions and Succession in Nigeria," 262.

⁷ Emmanuel Olusegun Stober, "Stomach Infrastructure: Lessons for Democracy and Good Governance," *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy* 4, no. 3 (2016): 449–60.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 455.

3. Ernest Tooichi Aniche, “The ‘David and Goliath’ and 2015 Election Outcomes in Nigeria: From the Opposition to the Ruling Party.”⁹

In this study, Aniche asks a fundamental question: why is internal democracy largely absent within political parties in Nigeria, particularly in the current Fourth Republic? Aniche attributes this deficiency to the authoritarian character of political parties, which he argues mirrors the broader authoritarian nature of the Nigerian state.

According to him, the authoritarian disposition of party leadership often results in dictatorial and unilateral decision-making. This tendency has far-reaching consequences, including internal party conflicts, factionalisation, incumbency advantage, ideological inconsistency, personality cults, weak party discipline and cohesion, widespread defections—particularly during pre-election periods—and poor leadership recruitment. He argues that these characteristics were deeply entrenched within the then ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and ultimately contributed to its defeat in the 2015 presidential election, transforming it into an opposition party. It further expresses concern that the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has become susceptible to the very same weaknesses that undermined the PDP.

The study concludes that the absence of internal democracy within Nigerian political parties undermines the credibility of the electoral process and, consequently, weakens democratic sustainability and consolidation. Although the paper correctly identifies the authoritarian nature of political parties as a major impediment to democratic development, it does not sufficiently explain the origins of this authoritarian political culture. Arguably, decades of military rule constitute the principal source of this enduring authoritarian legacy.

4. Babayo Sule, “The 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria: An Analysis of the Voting Pattern, Issues and Impact.”¹⁰

This paper contends that presidential elections in Nigeria have historically been marked by divisions that have undermined national cohesion and, at critical moments, threatened the country’s corporate existence. It substantiates this concern by demonstrating that voting patterns and political behaviour have traditionally reflected ethnic, religious, and regional cleavages. Consequently, Nigerian presidents are often elected on the basis of identity politics rather than universally accepted democratic standards such as competence, merit, and broad national appeal. The study further observes that even highly educated voters frequently allow ethnic and religious sentiments to override objective assessments of candidates’ suitability for public office.

The study also notes a peculiar electoral trend: while voter apathy is commonly observed in elections other than presidential contests, presidential elections consistently attract high voter turnout despite adverse weather conditions, security threats, and other logistical challenges. Using the 2019 presidential election as a case study, Sule argues that the APC’s presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, was portrayed by religious leaders and other opinion moulders as honest, morally upright,

⁹ Ernest Tooichi Aniche, “The ‘David and Goliath’ and 2015 Election Outcomes in Nigeria: From the Opposition to the Ruling Party,” *Insight on Africa: A Journal of Contemporary African Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2018): 21–36.

¹⁰ Babayo Sule, “The 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria: An Analysis of the Voting Pattern, Issues and Impact,” *GEOGRAFLA: Malaysian Journal of Society and Space* 15, no. 2 (2019): 129–40.

incorruptible, and committed to the welfare of ordinary Nigerians. Conversely, the PDP candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, was widely portrayed as corrupt and morally deficient.

In conclusion, Sule observes that the 2019 presidential election differed from previous elections because an unprecedented ninety-one registered political parties participated in the electoral process, although only seventy-one eventually fielded presidential candidates. He recommends intensive voter education as a means of reducing the influence of ethnic and religious considerations in electoral decision-making.

5. Shade Ifamose, “The Behaviour and Attitude of the Political Class in Nigeria with Particular Reference to Democratic Ethos, Culture and Practices.”¹¹

The study argues that political behaviour is fundamentally shaped by the prevailing political culture of a society. It further contends that political behaviour is central to the sustenance of democracy, particularly the electoral process, since democracy requires citizens to freely choose their representatives, who, in turn, remain accountable to the electorate. While this democratic ideal enjoys broad acceptance, the paper maintains that Nigeria's political culture and the conduct of its political class deviate significantly from internationally accepted democratic norms.

Ifamose observes that Nigeria has yet to institutionalise the norms and values necessary for a democratic political culture. Instead, it exhibits what he describes as a low-level political culture characterised by military coups, ethnic politics, electoral fraud, political violence, the monetisation of politics, weak party ideology, self-succession, godfatherism, vote buying and selling, and other practices that continue to undermine democratic governance. Despite these challenges, the author acknowledges that successive governments have introduced various initiatives aimed at promoting democratic values and reorienting citizens. These include: (a) the Code of Conduct for Public Officers enshrined in the 1999 Constitution; (b) the War Against Indiscipline (WAI); (c) the Directorate for Social Mobilisation; (d) the establishment of the Centre for Democratic Studies; and (e) the creation of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The paper identifies several factors underlying Nigeria's dysfunctional political culture, including the country's heterogeneous federal structure, the perception of political power as a vehicle for personal enrichment rather than public service, and democratic practices that fail to accommodate a viable opposition. To address these challenges, the study recommends renewed political education for both the political class and the electorate. It argues that political leaders should embrace the democratic values of compromise and tolerance, while voters should base their electoral choices on competence and merit rather than ethnic, religious, or other primordial considerations.

¹¹ Shade Ifamose, “The Behaviour and Attitude of the Political Class in Nigeria with Particular Reference to Democratic Ethos, Culture and Practices,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 18 (Special Edition) (2009): 61–78.

6. Richard A. Joseph, “The Ethnic Trap: Notes on the Nigerian Campaign and Elections, 1978–79.”¹²

The paper opens with the following observation:

It is important that we avoid a reopening of the deep splits which caused trauma in the country...Those splits, as was made known to the outside world during the civil war, were ethnic, regional, and, to a lesser extent, religious in nature. Of these three modes of overt division, Nigerians have always been most successful in controlling the religious aspect.¹³

Against this backdrop, the paper uses the 1978–79 electoral process which ushered in the Second Republic (1979–1983) to examine “whether in the 1978–79 campaign and elections Nigeria made a notable step forward in transcending or diluting the political significance of its ethnic scission.¹⁴ The study argues that the Federal Military Government deliberately designed the transition programme to minimise the influence of ethnicity in electoral politics through provisions contained in the Electoral Decree of 1977 and the 1979 Constitution. These measures required that: (a) political party membership be open to all Nigerians irrespective of place of origin, ethnicity, sex, or religion; (b) party names, emblems, and mottos should not reflect ethnic or religious identities; (c) party headquarters be located in the Federal Capital; and (d) party executive committees include representatives from at least two-thirds of the states of the federation. In addition, the 1979 Constitution institutionalised the federal character principle by requiring that appointments to public office reflect Nigeria’s diversity and promote national integration.

The paper concludes that, of the five political parties registered by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) to contest the 1979 general elections—the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian People’s Party (NPP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Great Nigeria People’s Party (GNPP), and People’s Redemption Party (PRP)—only the NPN demonstrated a genuinely broad national appeal that substantially transcended ethnic divisions. According to the study, this cross-regional character was a major factor underlying the party’s victory in the 1979 presidential election.

7. Cletus Famous Nwankwo, “The Spatial Pattern of Voter Choice Homogeneity in the Nigerian Presidential Elections of the Fourth Republic.”¹⁵

Voter behaviour during election seasons in Nigeria is influenced by a myriad of factors, among which religion, alongside ethnicity and other considerations, features prominently. This is particularly evident in presidential elections. Nwankwo employs the concept of Voter Choice Homogeneity (VCH) to examine the effect of religion on voter choice homogeneity in presidential elections during the Fourth Republic (1999–date). The study makes a number of important discoveries. First, it finds that economic indicators had a significant effect on VCH from the 2003 presidential election but exerted

¹² Richard A. Joseph, “The Ethnic Trap: Notes on the Nigerian Campaign and Elections, 1978–79,” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 11, nos. 1–2 (1981): 17–23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Cletus Famous Nwankwo, “The Spatial Pattern of Voter Choice Homogeneity in the Nigerian Presidential Elections of the Fourth Republic,” *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series* 43 (2019): 143–65.

a negative impact during the 2015 election. Second, religion had a negative impact on VCH in the 1999 presidential election but exerted a strong positive influence in all subsequent presidential elections, thereby underscoring the salience of religion in shaping voters' choices during presidential contests.

The paper concludes that although governance, economic, and security considerations significantly influenced voters' choices in the 2015 presidential election, these factors became particularly influential when they were commingled with ethno-religious considerations. Consequently, Nigeria was effectively divided into two major voting blocs, with the VCH reflecting both the country's religious cleavages and ethnic fault lines.

8. Gberevbie, Daniel Esemé, "Democracy and the Future of the Nigerian State."¹⁶

Citizens everywhere desire to have a say in the affairs of government in particular and the state in general. Democracy has been widely acclaimed as the most reliable platform for citizen participation in governance, guaranteeing good governance and peaceful coexistence, especially in highly heterogeneous societies such as Nigeria. However, democracy can effectively perform this role only in multiethnic states that adopt political systems allowing every federating ethnic nationality the opportunity to participate meaningfully in governance. This, indeed, constitutes the foundation for development in any society.

The paper expresses concern that this democratic ideal has been either deliberately subverted, inadequately implemented, or constrained by persistent structural challenges, including widespread public distrust of political leadership under both military and civilian administrations. It argues that a substantial disconnect exists between political representatives and the citizens they are expected to serve, as public officials often fail to uphold the principles of accountability and transparency while mismanaging public resources. Consequently, political competition frequently assumes extra-democratic forms, with actors seeking access to state power through military coups or by collaborating with politicians to manipulate electoral outcomes rather than through credible democratic processes.

The paper maintains that if development is antithetical to undemocratic tendencies, then the Nigerian state can guarantee development and peaceful coexistence only by: (a) enthroning a democratic political culture; (b) practising true fiscal federalism; (c) initiating electoral reforms that introduce a proportional representation model, thereby ensuring fair sharing of elective and appointive offices based on the percentage of votes won during elections; (d) promoting interreligious tolerance; and (e) embracing democratic values such as respect for fundamental human rights, freedom of the press, religious tolerance, and freedom of association.

¹⁶ Daniel Esemé Gberevbie, "Democracy and the Future of the Nigerian State," *Journal of Social Development in Africa* 24, no. 1 (2009): 165–91.

9. Hilal Ahmad Wani and Andi Suwirta, "Democratisation in Nigeria: Problems and Future Prospects."¹⁷

The paper opens with a quotation from Alexis de Tocqueville: "Democracy does not provide a people with the most skillful governments, but it does that which the most skillful governments often cannot do." The authors argue, however, that Nigeria's democratic experience departs markedly from this ideal. They contend that, although Nigerians have not consistently been governed by highly competent administrations, successive governments have also failed to realise the broader democratic benefits envisaged by Tocqueville. Instead, both military and civilian administrations have frequently engaged in practices that undermine democratic principles, weaken public trust, and impede democratic consolidation.

The paper argues that Nigerians welcomed the advent of the Fourth Republic with great optimism. Nevertheless, the country has failed to effectively manage the inherent divisions that typically challenge federal states, particularly one characterised by ethnicity, religion, inequitable distribution of resources, unequal access to political power, human rights abuses, minority grievances, fiscal federalism debates, and persistent agitations for political restructuring. Consequently, the paper contends that democratisation will remain elusive unless these diverse interests are recognised, accommodated, and effectively addressed.

The authors submit that scholars of democracy have identified six essential criteria for assessing democratic development. These include: (a) the conduct of periodic elections that are free, fair, and representative of the will of the people; (b) respect for freedom of association; (c) freedom of the press and the right to disseminate information; (d) effective separation of powers among the executive, legislature, and judiciary; (e) respect for the rule of law; and (f) accountability and transparency in governance. The paper concludes that although democracy is a continuous process rather than a project or a single event, Nigeria's democracy continues to struggle to satisfy most, if not all, of these criteria. It recommends the adoption of an autochthonous, people-oriented constitution, the development of genuinely pro-people political parties, the protection of the sanctity of votes, and the promotion of accountable and transparent governance.

10. Osabiya Babatunde, "Democratisation and the Military in Nigeria: A Case for an Enduring Civil-Military Relations in the Fourth Republic and Beyond."¹⁸

A significant portion of Nigeria's political development has been dominated and shaped by the military. It is therefore unsurprising that virtually every aspect of the country's socio-economic and political life—including democratic experiments, economic management, governance, the civil service, constitutional development, and inter- and intra-ethnic relations—bears the imprint of military rule. In this paper, Babatunde worries that these overwhelming military influences have hindered both national development and democratic consolidation.

¹⁷ Hilal Ahmad Wani and Andi Suwirta, "Democratisation in Nigeria: Problems and Future Prospects," *SOSIOHUMANIKA: Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan* 6, no. 2 (2013): 143–58.

¹⁸ Osabiya Babatunde, "Democratisation and the Military in Nigeria: A Case for an Enduring Civil-Military Relations in the Fourth Republic and Beyond," *Review of Public Administration and Management* 3, no. 1 (2015): 1–5.

The paper argues that the military's profound negative impact on Nigeria stems from its excessive quest for political power, driven by the pursuit of wealth and its self-appointed role as the custodian of Nigeria's corporate existence. It concludes that if democracy and democratic consolidation are to be sustained, constitutional and policy measures must be adopted to contain militarism. Among its recommendations are: (a) the adoption of objective civilian control of the military; (b) ensuring that defence policy is formulated by appropriate civilian authorities; (c) expecting complete military loyalty to the constitutionally elected government; and (d) promoting good governance by the political class as a natural antidote to militarism.

11. Michael M. Ogbeidi, "Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis."¹⁹

Corruption within the political class frequently features prominently in discussions seeking to explain why Nigeria has failed to match the developmental progress of many of its contemporaries. Ogbeidi identifies corruption among both military and civilian political leaders as the principal factor responsible for Nigeria's numerous developmental challenges across virtually every sphere of national life. Using a historical and socio-economic perspective, the study investigates the depth and extent of corruption within Nigeria's political leadership since the 1960s. The paper concludes that Nigeria's fundamental challenge extends beyond corruption to include leadership failure. Nevertheless, it maintains that the situation is not beyond remedy, recommending that Nigeria can achieve meaningful socio-economic development only when credible, people-oriented leadership emerges to institutionalise good and selfless governance.

12. Omololu Michael Fagbadebo, "Exploring the Politics of Impeachment in Nigeria's Presidential System: Insights from Selected States in the Fourth Republic, 1999–2007."²⁰

The early years of Nigeria's Fourth Republic witnessed a series of impeachment crises across several states of the federation. Among the most notable were those involving Governors Rashidi A. Ladoja of Oyo State, Diepreye S. P. Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa State, and Chris N. Ngige of Anambra State. Relying on structural functionalism, elite theory, and legislative role theory, this dissertation investigates the politics of impeachment by State Houses of Assembly against state governors between 1999 and 2007.

The study finds that external influence significantly weakens the capacity of legislatures to perform their constitutional oversight functions over the executive. It further notes that patron-client politics, particularly the politics of godfathers and godsons, encouraged the selective and discriminatory use of impeachment powers to settle personal political scores. According to the study, the consequences were multifaceted: (a) weakening the oversight role of the legislature; (b) undermining accountability; and (c) precipitating governance crises.

Finally, the dissertation concludes that:

¹⁹ Michael M. Ogbeidi, "Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis," *Journal of Nigeria Studies* 1, no. 2 (2012): 1–25.

²⁰ Omololu Michael Fagbadebo, *Exploring the Politics of Impeachment in Nigeria's Presidential System: Insights from Selected States in the Fourth Republic, 1999–2007* (PhD diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2016).

“The Nigerian presidential system is unable to deliver public goods through an integrated institutional process. Policy outputs run contrary to the institutional framework that is supposed to provide the requisite capacity for the promotion of good governance in their exercise of political power, the political elite exploit institutional structures and processes at the expense of the public. This has evolved into a political culture that undermines good governance.”²¹

The study therefore recommends, among other measures, judicial independence, legislative independence, the institutionalisation of multiple mechanisms of accountability within Nigeria’s presidential system, and the reorientation of public perceptions regarding political power.

13. Clement Nwafor Okonkwo and Felix N. Unaji, “Intra-Party Conflict and Prospects of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.”²²

Democracy remains arguably the most attractive system of government, both in Nigeria and elsewhere. It offers one of the quickest routes to political influence, wealth, and prestige. Political parties and elections therefore become the principal avenues through which political power and legitimacy are acquired. However, this study by Okonkwo and Unaji argues that democracy in Nigeria has failed to deliver its expected dividends, particularly good governance, and has consistently performed below expectations. It attributes this poor performance largely to persistent intra-party conflicts and their adverse effects on democratic consolidation. The authors identify the major causes of intra-party conflict as: (a) weak institutional structures within political parties; (b) the absence of coherent political ideology; (c) the overriding interests of party elites; and (d) the lack of transparency in candidate selection processes.

Arising from these findings, the paper recommends that Nigerian political parties should reposition themselves as genuine agents of political socialisation by inculcating democratic values and principles among citizens thereby significantly facilitating democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

14. E. S. Nwauche, “Political Parties, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and the 2011 General Elections.”²³

Political parties perform indispensable functions in every democratic system. Among their most important responsibilities is political education, through which citizens are informed about democratic values, public policies, and electoral participation. When effectively performed, this role contributes significantly to democratic consolidation by strengthening political institutions and promoting informed civic engagement. Nwauche observes that political parties in Nigeria have largely failed to perform these statutory responsibilities, particularly political education.

²¹ Ibid, vii.

²² Clement Nwafor Okonkwo and Felix N. Unaji, “Intra-Party Conflict and Prospects of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria,” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 21, no. 5 (2016): 91–98.

²³ E. S. Nwauche, “Political Parties, the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and the 2011 General Elections,” *Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 46, no. 4 (2013): 407–29.

Guided by the provisions of the 1999 Constitution and informed by the experience of the 2011 general elections, with the 2015 elections in prospect, the author advocates a renewed phase of electoral reform as a follow-up to the recommendations contained in the Justice Uwais Electoral Reform Report. The paper advances four key proposals aimed at strengthening democratic consolidation in Nigeria:

- a. The existing framework governing the role of political parties, particularly in relation to electoral competition, does not adequately reflect Nigeria's unique political circumstances;
- b. Given these realities, there is a need for more robust regulation of political parties, including the establishment of a Political Parties Registration and Regulatory Commission, as recommended in the Uwais Report;
- c. The judiciary should continue to exercise oversight through the review of political party constitutions; and
- d. Electoral disputes should be determined on the basis of sound legal principles and established judicial standards.

The first two recommendations draw attention to the internal and external weaknesses of political parties in Nigeria, whilst the latter two reaffirm the judiciary's pivotal role in institutionalising political parties and strengthening democratic governance.

15. Ejikeme Jombo Nwagwu, "Political Party Financing and Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria, 1999–2015."²⁴

The importance of political parties in a democratic system is beyond dispute. Through free, fair and credible elections, political parties confer legitimacy upon governments in the eyes of both the electorate and the international community. Whilst their significance is widely acknowledged, the capacity of political parties to perform their statutory functions effectively depends largely on the availability of adequate financial resources for electioneering activities and the sponsorship of candidates. This challenge is further compounded by regulatory constraints imposed by the electoral authorities on party financing.

Nwagwu observes, however, that political parties in Nigeria frequently breach party finance regulations through excessive fundraising activities. He contends that when parties seek to raise funds beyond legally prescribed limits in order to meet their considerable financial obligations, they become increasingly susceptible to the influence of major donors, particularly where electoral oversight institutions are weak. Such dependence on wealthy financiers has far-reaching consequences, including the emergence of plutocratic tendencies, the erosion of democratic values, the entrenchment of godfatherism, authoritarian control within party structures, exorbitant nomination fees, costly media campaigns, and the effective subordination of political parties to powerful political benefactors. Collectively, these developments pose serious threats to democratic consolidation.

Against this background, the study examines the impact of political party financing on democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It concludes that where affluent political financiers exercise disproportionate influence over major political parties, particularly the ruling party, corruption is likely to thrive with little restraint during the process of governance. This, in turn, undermines the rule of

²⁴ Ejikeme Jombo Nwagwu, "Political Party Financing and Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria, 1999–2015," *International Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 4 (2016): 74–85.

law, political stability, democratic governance, economic development, and other fundamental pillars necessary for the sustenance of a democratic order.

16. Sulaiman Balarabe Kura, “Clientele Democracy: Political Party Funding and Candidate Selection in Nigeria.”²⁵

The paper outlines several scholarly perspectives on democracy and political parties, noting that following Samuel Peter Huntington’s Third Wave of Democratisation, there has been a significant increase in transitions from authoritarianism to democracy across the Third World. To operationalise this widely embraced liberal democratic model, political parties are regarded as a *sine qua non* of democracy. However, the paper argues that the character of political parties in any given state significantly influences the quality of democracy. Furthermore, the nature of political parties is shaped by the pattern of party funding, which, in turn, determines the process of candidate selection for elective offices. Against this backdrop, the paper contends that political parties, although indispensable to democracy, have contributed substantially to the emergence of clientele democracy²⁶ in Nigeria, particularly through the manner in which parties are funded and candidates are selected.

Kura further submits that the prevailing system of party funding, candidate selection, and nomination has fostered clientele democracy, in which godfatherism has become the dominant organising principle of party politics. The influence of political godfathers has become enormous because of their financial capacity to sponsor political parties. Consequently, they exercise veto power over candidate selection and nomination while simultaneously controlling party structures and, ultimately, government resources. The paper therefore concludes that the prevalence of godfatherism in party politics undermines the growth and institutionalisation of both political parties and democracy in Nigeria.

17. Azeez Olaniyan and Olumuyiwa Babatunde Amao, “Election as Warfare: Militarisation of Elections and the Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria.”²⁷

Following the governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun states in 2014, the APC, then the major opposition party in Nigeria, sought separate court injunctions in Lagos and Sokoto states to restrain then President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan from deploying security forces during elections. This paper contributes to the debate on the deployment of security personnel for election purposes in Nigeria, particularly in the period leading up to the 2015 general elections.²⁸ The authors observe that security

²⁵ Sulaiman Balarabe Kura, “Clientele Democracy: Political Party Funding and Candidate Selection in Nigeria,” *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 8, no. 5 (2014): 124–137.

²⁶ In clientele democracies, political parties are organised around personalities rather than programmes and ideologies.

²⁷ Azeez Olaniyan and Olumuyiwa Babatunde Amao, “Election as Warfare: Militarisation of Elections and the Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria,” *International Affairs Forum* 6, no. 1 (2015): 71–82.

²⁸ The article exhibits a discernible bias in favour of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Most publications by scholars of Yoruba extraction on the deployment of security agencies during the period when the APC was in opposition (2014–2015) similarly opposed the use of the military in elections. For example, while quoting Femi Falana, the authors state: “It is abundantly clear that the power of the President to deploy the armed forces for internal security is limited to (a) the suppression of insurrection including insurgency and (b) aiding the police to restore order when it has broken down. To that extent, it is illegal and ultra vires on the part of the President to deploy the armed forces to maintain law and order during elections.”

agencies deployed during elections often engage in acts such as voter intimidation, oppression, and victimisation of opposition party members, excessive displays of force, and collusion with politicians to perpetrate electoral malpractice.

The paper examines two central questions: what accounts for the deployment of security forces during elections, and what implications do such deployments have for democratic consolidation in Nigeria? In addressing these questions, the authors advance two principal arguments. First, they contend that, given Nigeria's long history of electoral violence—from the First Republic to episodes such as the post-election violence that followed the 2011 general elections in parts of northern Nigeria—the deployment of security personnel during elections is, to some extent, necessary. Secondly, they argue that the militarisation of the Ekiti and Osun gubernatorial elections was partisan in nature, as reflected in the selective harassment and intimidation of opposition party members. As they observe, “A situation where security forces are deployed to intimidate the opposition in order to secure a victory for the President's party ... does not bode well for democracy.”²⁹

The paper concludes that both the excessive militarisation of elections and the politically motivated deployment of security forces pose significant threats to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. To address these challenges, the authors recommend strengthening the Nigeria Police Force to assume primary responsibility for election security. They further advocate the abandonment of the winner-takes-all political culture that has become entrenched among Nigeria's political elite.

18. Adeagbo A. Adekola and Omodunbi O. Olumide, “Election Gifting and the Ordeal of Democracy in Nigeria.”³⁰

While numerous studies on democracy and elections in Nigeria have largely attributed the country's democratic shortcomings to the political class, this paper takes a different position by arguing that the electorate is equally culpable. It contends that “election gifting,” referring to vote selling and the acceptance of gifts from politicians during campaigns and on election day, has contributed significantly to the deterioration of democracy in Nigeria. According to the paper, vote buying and the acceptance of electoral gifts undermine democratic accountability, as citizens who exchange their votes for material inducements are less likely to hold elected officials to account after elections.

The paper further argues that vote buying and selling are sustained by the frequent absence of coherent party manifestos among political parties. In addition, widespread political cynicism among the electorate, mass illiteracy, pervasive poverty, weak legislation addressing electoral offences, and widespread disregard for electoral rules by both politicians and voters all contribute to the persistence of this practice. In conclusion, the paper advocates the establishment of proactive and vibrant civil society organizations to educate the electorate on the dangers of vote buying and vote selling.

²⁹ Olaniyan and Amao, “Election as Warfare,” 81.

³⁰ Adeagbo A. Adekola and Omodunbi O. Olumide, “Election Gifting and the Ordeal of Democracy in Nigeria,” *European Scientific Journal* 15, no. 5 (2019): 119–131.

19. Hakeem Onapajo, Suzanne Francis, and Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, “Oil Corrupts Elections: The Political Economy of Vote-Buying in Nigeria.”³¹

A growing body of scholarship on electoral studies identifies poverty, the electoral system, and the nature of politics as major factors explaining vote buying. Nigeria represents one of the principal examples where this phenomenon has become deeply entrenched. Drawing on Professor Michael Ross’ “oil-impedes-democracy” framework, the paper argues that oil-dependent states such as Nigeria are particularly susceptible to vote buying because oil revenues generate enormous financial resources that facilitate diverse forms of electoral malpractice.

The paper attributes the prevalence of vote buying to oil-induced corruption, which intensifies elite competition for political office and encourages politicians to win elections by any means, including purchasing votes. According to the study, vote buying is carried out through several mechanisms, including: (a) allocating substantial funds for electoral logistics, such as payments to electoral officials and polling unit personnel; (b) distributing money under the guise of “door-to-door campaigns;” (c) inducing citizens financially to register and obtain voter cards; and (d) employing the “see and buy” strategy, whereby voters receive payment only after confirming that they voted for a particular party.

The paper also links the prevalence of vote buying to incumbency advantages, arguing that sitting presidents enjoy privileged access to oil revenues, which enables them to consolidate political power. Finally, the paper observes that vote buying and vote selling constitute a dual process. While politicians are willing buyers of votes, there are equally willing sellers among the electorate. Unfortunately, the practice continues to expand because many citizens perceive elections as their only opportunity to partake in the “national cake,” particularly given the wide representative-represented gap that emerges after elections and the generally poor service delivery by elected officials.

20. S. M. Omodia and V. Egwemi, “Party Politics and the Challenge of Political Representation in Nigeria.”³²

This paper draws attention to several paradoxes that characterise electoral democracy in Nigeria. First, it underscores the widening gap between representatives and the represented, a divide largely shaped by the conduct of political parties. Secondly, although political parties remain the principal instruments of political representation, the increasing number of registered parties has not translated into broader political participation. Rather, opportunities for meaningful representation have continued to diminish.

Among the factors responsible for this trend, the paper identifies electoral malpractice, the influence of political godfathers and their protégés, zoning arrangements, widespread inter-party defections, a compromised electoral umpire, zero-sum political competition, and a weakened security architecture. On the basis of these observations, the paper argues that Nigeria’s return to multiparty democracy in 1999 has not yielded the anticipated level of political representation, as political parties

³¹ Hakeem Onapajo, Suzanne Francis, and Ufo Okeke-Uzodike, “Oil Corrupts Elections: The Political Economy of Vote-Buying in Nigeria,” *African Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (2015): 1–21.

³² S. M. Omodia and V. Egwemi, “Party Politics and the Challenge of Political Representation in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 2, no. 22 (2011): 270–275.

and their leadership remain largely self-serving rather than people-oriented, particularly in a political environment in which the electorate is readily susceptible to manipulation.

21. Muinat Adetayo Adekeye, “Party Primaries, Candidate Selection and Intra-Party Conflict in Nigeria: PDP in Perspective.”³³

Deploying group conflict theory as its analytical framework, this paper argues that party primaries, candidate selection processes, and intra-party politics are major causes of internal conflicts within political parties, particularly the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). The paper contends that although there are established guidelines and regulatory institutions responsible for overseeing political party activities in Nigeria, political parties frequently disregard these rules and openly violate directives issued by the electoral umpire. Such persistent non-compliance has resulted in frequent defections, the proliferation of political parties, unconstitutional changes in party leadership, and ultimately contributed to the defeat of the PDP in the 2015 general elections. In light of these findings, the paper recommends a comprehensive restructuring of the PDP’s internal laws and policies to enable the party to perform its statutory responsibilities more effectively thereby contributing to the healthy growth of democracy in Nigeria.

22. Hakeem Onapajo, “Violence and Votes in Nigeria: The Dominance of Incumbents in the Use of Violence to Rig Elections.”³⁴

The paper argues that electoral outcomes in Nigeria are frequently shaped by extensive behind-the-scenes manoeuvring among political parties. It contributes to the ongoing debate concerning which political actors are more likely to employ violence during elections. In particular, it engages with two competing perspectives: the widely held view that incumbent ruling parties are more inclined to use violence to influence electoral outcomes, and the alternative argument that opposition parties bear greater responsibility for electoral violence.

According to the study, incumbent ruling parties are more likely to deploy violence to manipulate elections due to their easier access to state security apparatuses. By contrast, opposition parties are more commonly associated with post-election violence. The study attributes these patterns to several features of Nigerian politics. First, the extensive powers vested in the executive arm of government provide ruling parties with greater opportunities to employ coercive tactics during elections. Secondly, reports from election observer missions consistently suggest that ruling parties are more likely than opposition parties to use violence to influence electoral outcomes. The paper recommends the reduction of the powers of the federal executive and the strengthening of state institutions to ensure effective checks on executive authority during electoral processes.

³³ Muinat Adetayo Adekeye, “Party Primaries, Candidate Selection and Intra-Party Conflict in Nigeria: PDP in Perspective,” *Covenant University Journal of Politics & International Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2017): 22–39.

³⁴ Hakeem Onapajo, “Violence and Votes in Nigeria: The Dominance of Incumbents in the Use of Violence to Rig Elections,” *Africa Spectrum* 49, no. 2 (2014): 27–51.

Elections and Parties

1. Ebenezer Oluwole Oni, Nicholas Idris Erameh, and Azeez Olalowo Oladejo, “Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Electoral Administration and the Challenge of Democratic Consolidation.”³⁵

The paper begins from the premise that elections alone do not constitute democracy. Rather, democracy is defined by what occurs between elections through the provision of democratic dividends, the protection of fundamental freedoms, and the promotion of security and good governance. Nevertheless, in many Third World countries, elections remain the principal indicator of democratic practice because they confer legitimacy on governments. Against this backdrop, the authors argue that the major obstacle to democratic consolidation in Nigeria is ineffective electoral administration. In their assessment, successive elections conducted since 1999 have failed to institutionalise and consolidate core democratic values.

The paper attributes the weaknesses of Nigeria's electoral administration to several interrelated factors, including: (a) an inadequate legal framework governing elections; (b) a politicised judiciary and protracted election litigation; (c) poor voter registration; (d) the politicisation of security agencies; (e) intra-party politics and flawed candidate selection processes; (f) the power of incumbency; (g) voter compromise and civic apathy; (h) widespread corruption; and (i) inadequate funding of the electoral management body.

The authors conclude that democratic consolidation in Nigeria requires deliberate institutional strengthening of the electoral commission, comprehensive reforms of electoral laws and guidelines, strict compliance by political parties with electoral regulations, and sustained civic engagement by civil society organisations.

2. Nkwachukwu Orji, “Nigeria's 2015 Election in Perspective.”³⁶

Written in anticipation of the 2015 general elections, this paper examines the persistent volatility of elections in Nigeria. It explores why elections are frequently characterised by violence, identifies the likely sources of tension surrounding the 2015 elections, highlights issues expected to shape the polls, and discusses potential triggers of electoral violence.

The author attributes electoral volatility to several factors, including the monetisation of politics, unresolved regional grievances, the mobilisation of political protesters, insecurity, and weak law enforcement. The paper also identifies several developments that could heighten tensions during the 2015 elections, such as the lingering effects of the 2011 post-election violence, rising socio-economic inequality, concerns over the credibility of the electoral process, and the increasing use of social media in political campaigns. The paper further argues that the outcome of the 2015 elections would have significant implications beyond domestic politics, particularly for Nigeria’s counterinsurgency campaign against Boko Haram, energy security in the Niger Delta, and the country's role as a model for democratic promotion across West Africa and the African continent.

³⁵ Ebenezer Oluwole Oni, Nicholas Idris Erameh, and Azeez Olalowo Oladejo, “Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Electoral Administration and the Challenge of Democratic Consolidation,” *African Journal of Governance and Development* 6, no. 2 (2017): 38–72.

³⁶ Nkwachukwu Orji, “Nigeria's 2015 Election in Perspective,” *Africa Spectrum* 49, no. 3 (2014): 121–133.

3. Odoh Patrick Abutu and Ku Hasnita Ku Samsu, 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria: Reasons Why Incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan Lost to Buhari.”³⁷

The authors describe the presidential election of 28 March 2015 as a watershed in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic because it marked the first time an incumbent president was defeated by an opposition candidate. The paper seeks to explain why President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lost the election to General Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC). Among the major explanations identified are: (a) widespread perceptions of corruption, reinforced by former Central Bank Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi’s allegation that approximately US\$20 billion in oil revenues was unaccounted for and by Nigeria’s poor ranking in *Transparency International’s* 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index; (b) worsening insecurity arising from the Boko Haram insurgency, particularly the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls; (c) deep internal divisions within the PDP, including disagreements over zoning arrangements, President Jonathan’s decision to seek re-election, and the public opposition of former President Olusegun Obasanjo; (d) the introduction of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) and Smart Card Readers; (e) Muhammadu Buhari’s personal popularity and reputation; and (f) the APC’s successful “Change” campaign, which resonated with an electorate eager for political transformation.

4. Michael M. Ogbeidi, “A Culture of Failed Elections: Revisiting Democratic Elections in Nigeria, 1959–2003.”³⁸

The paper argues that stable electoral democracy has remained elusive in Nigeria, largely because the country has failed to conduct consistently free, fair, and credible elections. Through a historical analysis of elections from 1959 to 2003, the author identifies ethnicity and religion as persistent factors that have undermined electoral integrity and contributed to the collapse of successive democratic republics. The study concludes that Nigeria’s socio-political and economic stagnation is closely linked to the failure of its electoral process. Since credible elections are often compromised, capable leaders frequently fail to emerge, resulting in ineffective governance and unpopular public policies.

To improve future elections, the paper recommends comprehensive reforms, including the amendment of the Electoral Act, stricter punishment for electoral offenders, greater independence for the electoral commission, more rigorous regulation of political parties to discourage ethnic and religious mobilisation, expanded civic education, poverty reduction initiatives to curb voter inducement, and stronger collaboration between international election observers and domestic civil society organisations.

³⁷ Odoh Patrick Abutu and Ku Hasnita Ku Samsu, “2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria: Reasons Why Incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan Lost to Buhari,” *IOSR Journal of Business and Management* 19, no. 5 (2017): 132–141.

³⁸ Michael M. Ogbeidi, “A Culture of Failed Elections: Revisiting Democratic Elections in Nigeria, 1959–2003,” *Historia Actual Online* 21 (2010): 43–56.

5. Maiwa'azi Dandaura Samu, "Chauvinistic Nepotism, Dogmatism, Conspiracy, Negation, Intraparty Polarity, Ethical/Deontic Logic of the Nigerian 2015 Election: A Political Inquest."³⁹

The author states that the paper neither seeks to condemn nor praise any political party or candidate but rather to examine the lessons arising from the 2015 presidential election. According to the study, internal divisions within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) created opportunities that were exploited by the Northern Elders Forum (NEF), the opposition APC, and, in the author's assessment, the leadership of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The paper also discusses how threats of violence, particularly against Christian communities in parts of northern Nigeria, affected the PDP's electoral performance in the region.

Several factors are identified as contributing to President Goodluck Jonathan's defeat. These include the PDP's inability to recognise changing voter preferences, internal factionalism, corruption within the party, deteriorating public confidence, controversies surrounding voter registration, allegations of underage voting, manipulation of the electoral process, electoral violence, the influence of social media, and the public endorsement of opposition candidates by prominent Nigerians such as former President Olusegun Obasanjo and Wole Soyinka.

The paper recommends comprehensive electoral reforms, restructuring of INEC, limitations on the powers of its chairman, stricter regulation of campaign finance and political advertising, efforts to reduce regional polarisation, and the testing of electoral technologies and logistics before elections.

6. Moses T. Aluaigba, "Democracy Deferred: The Effects of Electoral Malpractice on Nigeria's Path to Democratic Consolidation."⁴⁰

The author argues that although credible elections constitute the foundation of democracy, Nigerians have yet to fully exercise their democratic right to choose political leaders through genuinely free and fair elections since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999. The paper identifies numerous forms of electoral malpractice, including result manipulation, electoral violence, ballot-box snatching, underage voting, vote buying and selling, and voter intimidation.

The study asks several important questions: How do electoral malpractices affect election outcomes in Nigeria? Can democracy be consolidated where elections fail to reflect the will of the electorate? What reforms are necessary to place Nigeria on the path toward democratic consolidation? The paper argues that widespread electoral malpractice has produced voter apathy, weakened the legitimacy of elected officials, encouraged corruption by turning elections into financial investments to be recouped after assuming office, generated post-election unrest, and undermined the role of political parties as peaceful vehicles for political competition and transfer of power. The author concludes that democratic consolidation depends not on the regular conduct of elections but on the transparency, credibility, and integrity of the electoral process.

³⁹ Maiwa'azi Dandaura Samu, "Chauvinistic Nepotism, Dogmatism, Conspiracy, Negation, Intraparty Polarity, Ethical/Deontic Logic of the Nigerian 2015 Election: A Political Inquest," *Justice & Human Security Initiatives* (2015): 1–17.

⁴⁰ Moses T. Aluaigba, "Democracy Deferred: The Effects of Electoral Malpractice on Nigeria's Path to Democratic Consolidation," *Journal of African Elections* 15, no. 2 (2016): 136–158.

7. Daniel Esemé Gberevbíe, “Democracy, Democratic Institutions and Good Governance in Nigeria.”⁴¹

The paper examines the interrelationship between democracy, democratic institutions, good governance, and national development in Nigeria. It argues that sustainable development depends on the effective functioning and consolidation of democratic institutions. However, this relationship remains weak because key democratic actors often lack both the institutional capacity and democratic values necessary to sustain democratic governance. The author further identifies ethnic chauvinism, deliberate sabotage of government policies, and the prioritisation of ethnic interests over national interests as additional obstacles to democratic governance.

The paper concludes that democratic consolidation requires the strengthening of key democratic institutions, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National Assembly, the judiciary, and the security agencies. It also recommends sustained political education for both political elites and citizens as a prerequisite for good governance and national development.

8. Simon Aondohemba Shaapera, Simon O. Obadahun, and Abdulrahman Alibaba, “Election-Related Violence and Security Challenges in Nigeria: Lessons from the Aftermath of the 2011 General Election.”⁴²

The paper explores the relationship between elections and insecurity in Nigeria, using the aftermath of the 2011 general elections as its principal case study. It argues that electoral contests in Nigeria have frequently degenerated into violent conflicts, resulting in loss of lives, displacement of people, and widespread destruction of property. According to the authors, politicians often weaponise religion, ethnicity, bribery, incumbency advantages, corruption, abuse of electoral procedures, and political intolerance in their pursuit of political power. Drawing lessons from the violence that followed the 2011 elections, the paper warns that where elections are treated as zero-sum contests, democratic consolidation becomes increasingly difficult because many citizens are intimidated from participating in the electoral process, thereby weakening the legitimacy of elected governments. The paper recommends that politicians cultivate greater political tolerance regardless of party affiliation, that political office cease to be viewed primarily as a means of personal enrichment, and that internal democracy within political parties be strengthened to reduce candidate imposition, godfatherism, and factional conflicts.

9. Mike Omilusi, “Electoral Behaviour and Politics of Stomach Infrastructure in Ekiti State (Nigeria).”⁴³

The paper expresses concern that the people of Ekiti State, widely regarded for their high level of educational attainment and human capital development, have increasingly prioritised “stomach infrastructure” over long-term sustainable development. Drawing on the 2014 governorship election

⁴¹ Daniel Esemé Gberevbíe, “Democracy, Democratic Institutions and Good Governance in Nigeria,” *Ethiopian Journal of the Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSRR)* 30, no. 1 (2014): 133–152.

⁴² Simon Aondohemba Shaapera, Simon O. Obadahun, and Abdulrahman Alibaba, “Election-Related Violence and Security Challenges in Nigeria: Lessons from the Aftermath of the 2011 General Election,” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19, no. 12 (2014): 59–68.

⁴³ Mike Omilusi, “Electoral Behaviour and Politics of Stomach Infrastructure in Ekiti State (Nigeria),” in *Elections—A Global Perspective*, ed. Ryan M. Yonk (London: IntechOpen, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.81387>.

in Ekiti State and the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, the study identifies several paradoxes in voter behaviour. It poses a central question: What explains the rejection of a manifesto-driven candidate in favour of campaign slogans promising immediate material relief?

To answer this question, the paper examines the philosophical and socio-political factors that encouraged voters to prefer the politics of “stomach infrastructure” over development programmes centred on physical infrastructure and long-term planning. It makes four major observations. First, despite Dr. Kayode Fayemi’s perceived intellectual credentials and development-oriented agenda, voters preferred Mr. Ayodele Fayose of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), whose grassroots appeal resonated more strongly with the electorate. The study argues that Fayose’s success was rooted less in policy articulation than in his populist connection with ordinary citizens, suggesting that many voters prioritised immediate economic needs over long-term development.

Second, the electorate placed considerable emphasis on the perceived benefits of alignment with the PDP-led federal government. Third, the study observes widespread impatience among voters with governments unable to satisfy immediate socio-economic needs. Finally, the paper highlights a growing sense of public disillusionment, captured in the observation that “lazy men become billionaires and smart men work for them,” reflecting widespread perceptions that political success depends more on patronage than merit or hard work.

10. Linus Ugwu Odo, “Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects.”⁴⁴

The paper argues that mature democracies exhibit a close relationship between democratic governance and good governance. In Nigeria, however, decades of democratic rule have not produced the level of democratic consolidation necessary to deliver sustainable development or improve citizens’ welfare. The study attributes Nigeria’s democratic challenges to several interconnected factors, including: (a) leadership failure, particularly the emergence of what the author describes as “accidental leaders” rather than visionary leadership; (b) pervasive corruption; (c) an electoral system that remains vulnerable to manipulation; (d) the growing incidence of insurgency and insecurity across the country; and (e) state impunity, which undermines the rule of law.

To address these challenges, the paper recommends strengthening key democratic institutions—including political parties, the National Assembly, the judiciary, anti-corruption agencies, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)—to enable them to function independently. It also advocates an anti-corruption campaign that is insulated from ethnic, religious, and partisan considerations, the reorientation of societal values to reward hard work, reducing the attractiveness of political office through measures such as part-time legislative service, and removing constitutional immunity from key political office holders, including the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

⁴⁴ Linus Ugwu Odo, “Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects,” *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: F Political Science* 15, no. 3 (2015): 1–8.

11. Mike Omilusi, “From Civil Rule to Militarised Democracy: Emerging Template for Governance in Nigeria.”⁴⁵

The paper examines the controversies surrounding the deployment of military personnel during the 2014 governorship elections in Ekiti and Osun States. It notes that the then main opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), strongly opposed the Jonathan administration's decision to deploy the armed forces for election security. The author argues that Nigeria cannot consolidate democracy while increasingly relying on military involvement in routine electoral processes. According to the paper, the growing militarisation of elections poses a significant threat to democratic development because it reinforces authoritarian tendencies within a civilian political system.

The paper summarises its position in the following observation:

The process of military disengagement from the political arena... has been concluded in Nigeria; however, the process of demilitarisation, conceived in a broader sense, is yet to be fully accomplished... Suffice it to say that the citizens and other stakeholders should also imbibe the culture of democratic values. For democratic values to be passed on to members of a given society, formally or informally, the political culture within a country should be conducive to democratic ideals. For example, it is difficult to expect democracy to take root in a dictatorship.⁴⁶

The paper concludes that meaningful democratic consolidation requires not only civilian control of government but also the broader demilitarisation of political culture and the institutionalisation of democratic values throughout society.

12. Abiodun Odusote, “Nigerian Democracy and Electoral Process Since Amalgamation: Lessons from a Turbulent Past.”⁴⁷

This paper investigates the factors responsible for persistent electoral malpractices in Nigeria, including election rigging, ballot-box stuffing, political violence, and election-related criminality. Through a historical examination of electoral administration from the colonial period to the Fourth Republic, the author identifies several structural weaknesses in Nigeria's electoral system. Among the principal challenges identified are: (a) the absence of coherent political ideologies, resulting in parties that lack clear policy positions on critical national issues such as unemployment, insecurity, corruption, and state policing; (b) the ethnic, regional, religious, or personality-driven orientation of many political

⁴⁵ Mike Omilusi, “From Civil Rule to Militarised Democracy: Emerging Template for Governance in Nigeria,” *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* 6, no. 6.2 (2015): 1–20.

From all indications, the article is partisan in favour of the APC as the then opposition party. It was written at the height of the APC's campaign against the deployment of the military during elections. To advance this position, the APC instituted legal actions in Lagos and Sokoto States seeking to restrain the Jonathan administration from deploying the military during the 2014 Ekiti and Osun gubernatorial elections. Ironically, after assuming office, the APC government adopted similar measures by deploying the military for election security. This development underscores the distinction between opposition politics and the realities of governance.

⁴⁶ Omilusi, “From Civil Rule to Militarised Democracy,” 17.

⁴⁷ Abiodun Odusote, “Nigerian Democracy and Electoral Process Since Amalgamation: Lessons from a Turbulent Past,” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19, no. 10 (2014): 25–37.

parties; (c) the absence of internal party democracy, particularly candidate imposition and consensus arrangements; (d) persistent conflicts between political godfathers and their protégés; (e) delays in the administration of electoral justice; (f) inadequate punishment of electoral offenders; (g) vote buying and other forms of election-day corruption; (h) the deliberate creation of insecurity to suppress voting in opposition strongholds; (i) the financial dependence of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); and (j) the growing tendency for electoral outcomes to be determined through judicial rather than electoral victories. To address these deficiencies, the paper recommends amending the Electoral Act to permit independent candidacy, establishing an Electoral Offences Commission, and promoting civic education and citizen participation as means of reforming Nigeria's political culture.

13. Babayo Sule, Mohammed Azizuddin Mohammed Sani, and Bakri Mat, “Opposition Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Examining the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 General Elections.”⁴⁸

The paper observes that Nigerian politics has traditionally operated as a zero-sum contest in which the ruling party monopolises political power while opposition parties remain marginalised. According to the authors, this pattern was disrupted in the 2015 general elections when the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) defeated the incumbent People’s Democratic Party (PDP) in the presidential election.

The study therefore investigates the factors that enabled the APC to achieve what previous opposition parties had failed to accomplish. It identifies several contributing factors, including: (a) the successful merger of major opposition parties, including the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), and the “New PDP;” (b) the party's strong financial base, supported by serving governors, members of the National Assembly, and defectors from the PDP; (c) effective strategies aimed at preventing electoral manipulation; and (d) the APC's ability to present itself as a credible alternative capable of preventing the emergence of a dominant one-party system.

The paper concludes that the APC’s electoral success preserved political competition in Nigeria by preventing one-party dominance. It therefore recommends greater cooperation among opposition parties, including strategic alliances and mergers where necessary, to sustain electoral competitiveness and democratic consolidation.

14. E. O. Abah and Paul M. Nwokwu, “Political Violence and the Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria.”⁴⁹

The paper argues that democratic consolidation has remained elusive in Nigeria largely because of persistent electoral violence and other electoral irregularities occurring before, during, and after

⁴⁸ Babayo Sule, Mohammed Azizuddin Mohammed Sani, and Bakri Mat, “Opposition Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Examining the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 General Elections,” *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* 21, no. 4 (2018): 81–112.

⁴⁹ E. O. Abah and Paul M. Nwokwu, “Political Violence and the Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria,” *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 20, no. 11 (2015): 33–44.

elections. It warns that unless these problems are effectively addressed, both Nigeria's democratic experiment and national cohesion will remain under serious threat.

The authors identify several major causes of political violence, including: (a) the absence of fairness and transparency in the electoral process; (b) widespread public distrust of the electoral management body; (c) the perceived partiality and ineffectiveness of law enforcement agencies; (d) the excessive political ambitions of politicians; (e) the continued influence of ethnic politics; and (f) the financial rewards associated with political office, which encourage intense political competition.

To safeguard Nigeria's democracy, the paper recommends several measures. These include promoting political tolerance among political actors; discouraging the politics of bitterness and rancour; educating citizens on the dangers of ethnic politics; nullifying election results from polling units where verified cases of electoral violence occur; reducing the financial attractiveness of political office; encouraging citizens to seek legal redress rather than resort to violence; and establishing specialised courts to prosecute electoral offences such as election rigging, ballot-box snatching, voter intimidation, and harassment.

Party Ideology

1. John A. A. Ayoade, "Party and Ideology in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Action Group."⁵⁰

Political ideologies are sets of guiding principles and policy commitments that shape political parties and ultimately endear them to the electorate. Scholarship on Nigerian electoral politics has consistently criticised the absence of clear ideological foundations among most political parties. The Action Group (AG), however, has often been identified as a notable exception. Taking the AG as a case study, this paper examines the origins and development of the party's ideology and assesses its implications for the party's survival and political relevance in Nigeria.

The paper identifies two major ideological strands underpinning the AG. The first is Democratic Socialism, which served as the party's official ideology. This ideological orientation emerged from two tendencies within the party. The first consisted of Marxian socialists, led by Agunbiade-Bamishe and Samuel G. Ikoku, who believed that the primary responsibility of the party was to advance the interests of ordinary citizens through a welfare-oriented state. The second comprised non-communist socialists, led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Samuel Ladoke Akintola, and Bisi Onabanjo, who rejected orthodox communism but advocated cautious industrialisation. They argued that indiscriminate industrialisation would undermine agriculture, encourage excessive foreign investment, and ultimately subject Nigeria to economic dependence and political subordination. As they observed:

...once these foreign investors entrench themselves, it would be difficult for a Nigerian entrepreneur to enter the same business field. The likelihood then would be that unless political action was applied

⁵⁰ John A. A. Ayoade, "Party and Ideology in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Action Group," *Journal of Black Studies* 16, no. 2 (1985): 169–188.

to such a field, it would forever remain closed to the indigenous people of Nigeria. And when the indigenous people are cut off from the lucrative business areas bitter feelings toward the foreign industrialists would develop and disaster might follow.⁵¹

The second ideological pillar of the AG was federalism, which emphasised regional autonomy in recognition of Nigeria's linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity. According to the paper, federalism represented the most viable constitutional framework for sustaining national unity within a heterogeneous society. The paper concludes that although the AG officially embraced democratic socialism, its ideological orientation was less about doctrinaire socialism than about creating economic opportunities and promoting the welfare of Nigerians within a democratic federal framework.

2. Basil S. Nnamdi and Tamunosiki V. Ogan, "Political Ideology and Its Deficiency in Nigerian Political Party System: A Philosophical Perspective."⁵²

Although the paper does not explicitly state its central research question at the outset, it emphasises the indispensable role of political ideology in democratic governance. It defines ideology as "a body of guiding political principles, a blueprint or road map to political parties in articulation of national or state/political issues."⁵³ Accordingly, ideology provides political parties with a coherent framework for articulating public policy and enables the electorate to understand and evaluate competing political programmes.

The paper argues that political parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic are largely devoid of ideological foundations. This ideological vacuum, it contends, explains many of the structural weaknesses that characterise party politics in the country. Specifically, the absence of ideology has produced several consequences. First, political competition revolves around personalities rather than substantive policy issues such as economic development, employment, insecurity, or wealth creation. Second, ideological weakness contributes to the proliferation of political parties and facilitates frequent defections by politicians. Third, politics increasingly serves the personal interests of political elites rather than the broader national interest. Finally, the absence of ideological commitment weakens internal democracy, party discipline, organisational cohesion, and institutional stability within political parties.

3. J. Shola Omotola, "Nigerian Parties and Political Ideology."⁵⁴

This paper argues that political ideology constitutes the defining feature of any viable political party because "ideology functions as a means of self-identification, as an instrument of conflict management, as a prescriptive formula and as a mobilisational and unifying force".⁵⁵ Despite claims

⁵¹ Ibid, 176.

⁵² Basil S. Nnamdi and Tamunosiki V. Ogan, "Political Ideology and Its Deficiency in Nigerian Political Party System: A Philosophical Perspective," *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research* 5, no. 1 (2019): 48–57. The article is primarily a literature review and therefore lacks several of the empirical and methodological features expected of a conventional Political Science study. This emphasis is, however, unsurprising, given that the authors are philosophers rather than political scientists.

⁵³ Nnamdi and Ogan, "Political Ideology and Its Deficiency in Nigerian Political Party System," 48.

⁵⁴ J. Shola Omotola, "Nigerian Parties and Political Ideology," *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences* 1, no. 3 (2009): 612–634.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 627.

by many Nigerian political parties to represent either progressive or conservative traditions, the paper contends that such claims lack genuine ideological substance. According to the author, politics of ideas has largely been displaced by ethnic mobilisation, money politics, political opportunism, party indiscipline, weak organisational cohesion, the absence of internal democracy, and frequent leadership changes. These tendencies have become enduring characteristics of party politics across successive republics.

The paper further argues that the ideological poverty of Nigerian political parties has far-reaching consequences. First, it undermines national integration, democratic consolidation, and sustainable development. Second, political parties become instruments for advancing sectional and opportunistic interests rather than national objectives. Third, in the absence of coherent ideological commitments, political competition becomes dominated by ethnicity, religion, and financial influence. Finally, political parties are left to operate without any consistent policy direction, resulting in governance by trial and error. To address these deficiencies, the paper recommends deliberate political education and social mobilisation across all levels of party organisation to raise public awareness of the dangers associated with ideological barrenness and to encourage parties to develop clear ideological identities.

4. Godwin Ichimi, “Ideologies, Party Politics and Nigeria’s Politico-Economic Development.”⁵⁶

Nigeria’s experience with political parties predates both independence in 1960 and republican status in 1963. Nevertheless, the paper argues that, apart from the First Republic (1963–1966), during which parties such as the Action Group (AG)—later succeeded by the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in the Second Republic (1979–1983)—and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) exhibited identifiable ideological orientations, subsequent political parties have largely lacked coherent ideological foundations. It is against this background that the paper examines the persistent decline of ideology-driven party politics in Nigeria.

The paper, however, offers an important qualification. It argues that “in reality, beneath this seeming dearth of ideology there is a convergence of commitment to some normative values and ideas by the political class which is distinctively neoliberal.”⁵⁷ Thus, although explicit ideological debates are largely absent from party politics, the economic policies pursued by successive governments—particularly under the People’s Democratic Party (PDP)—demonstrate a broad commitment to neoliberal principles characterised by market-oriented reforms and private-sector-led development. The paper concludes by cautioning policymakers to remain mindful of the contradictions and long-term implications associated with neoliberal economic policies, particularly within Nigeria’s unique socio-economic and political context.

⁵⁶ Godwin Ichimi, “Ideologies, Party Politics and Nigeria’s Politico-Economic Development,” *Scientific Research Journal (SCRJ)* 2, no. 3 (2014): 33–37.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

Defections and Carpet Crossing within Political Parties

1. Jaja Nwanegbo, Jude Odigbo and Kingsley Nnorom, “Party Defection and Sustenance of Nigerian Democracy.”⁵⁸

A political system devoid of discernible ideological foundations is capable of producing almost any form of political behaviour. In Nigeria’s Fourth Republic, where political parties largely lack clear ideological identities, a troubling phenomenon has become entrenched in both political discourse and practice—variously described as party defection, carpet crossing, or party switching. This phenomenon typically occurs when politicians who fail to secure their party’s nomination defect to another party in search of electoral tickets. Another dimension of the phenomenon is that many defectors subsequently return to the victorious party after general elections in pursuit of appointive political offices.

The authors observe that defections became particularly widespread in the period preceding the 2015 general elections, as many members of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC) after concluding that their political prospects were brighter in the opposition party. Such incessant movement between parties, the paper argues, has serious implications for democratic development in Nigeria. The paper acknowledges that defections are normal features of mature democracies, where they often strengthen opposition politics and enhance democratic accountability. In Nigeria, however, defections are largely devoid of ideological motivation. Rather, they reflect the absence of coherent party ideology and weak internal party democracy. The paper concludes that the wave of defections witnessed in 2014 ahead of the 2015 general elections illustrates the ideological bankruptcy and internal democratic deficiencies of the then ruling PDP. It therefore recommends social re-engineering, political reorientation, and sustained civic education aimed at cultivating political values rooted in sound ideological principles as effective measures for reducing opportunistic defections within Nigeria’s party system.

2. Lawrence I. Edet, “Politics of Defection and Its Implications on Nigeria’s Democracy.”⁵⁹

Against the backdrop of the high expectations that accompanied the return to democratic rule in 1999 after decades of military dictatorship, this paper argues that Nigeria’s political elite have instead entrenched the practices of defections, decamping, carpet crossing, and party switching within the democratic process. According to the paper, these practices demonstrate that political actors are driven primarily by personal interests rather than commitment to national development or democratic ideals.

The paper examines the politics of defection and its implications for Nigeria’s democratic experiment. It argues that the growing “madding crowd” of political defectors has become a source of public ridicule and reflects political immaturity, ideological emptiness, and the absence of principled party politics. These tendencies are further reinforced by weak party manifestoes that provide little basis for ideological distinction among political parties.

⁵⁸ Jaja Nwanegbo, Jude Odigbo, and Kingsley Nnorom, “Party Defection and Sustenance of Nigerian Democracy,” *Global Journal of Human Social Science: F Political Science* 14, no. 6 (2014): 1–10.

⁵⁹ Lawrence I. Edet, “Politics of Defection and Its Implications on Nigeria’s Democracy,” *Global Journal of Human Social Science: F Political Science* 17, no. 1 (2017): 1–6.

The paper identifies several consequences of this trend. First, political power assumes overwhelming importance because it provides access to economic benefits. Second, party manifestoes have become virtually identical, having been drafted largely by consultants rather than party members. Third, ethnicity, religion, language, and regional considerations continue to dominate party formation and political alignments. Finally, these developments undermine the maturation of Nigeria's democracy.

As a way forward, the paper recommends strengthening relevant provisions of the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2010, while also reintroducing social reorientation and civic education to promote democratic values and responsible political behaviour.

3. Mustapha Alhaji Ali and Yakaka Abubakar, “The Politics of Inter-Party Decamping and the Future of Nigeria's Democracy.”⁶⁰

Inter-party decamping has become a recurring feature of politics across many developing countries, particularly in Africa. This paper contributes to the growing body of scholarship on the subject by employing systems theory to examine why politicians in Nigeria continue to engage in the politics of defection, decamping, and carpet crossing. It argues that political defections are driven by several factors. These include personal ambition and the relentless quest to acquire and retain political power at all costs, a tendency that further weakens Nigeria's fragile democracy. Other contributing factors identified include the absence of internal party democracy, the failure of Section 177 of the 1999 Constitution to clearly specify the conditions under which party members may defect, the prevalence of godfatherism, and disputes arising from the nomination of party candidates.

To curb the growing incidence of political defections, the paper recommends several measures. These include regular reviews of party constitutions; requiring elected public officeholders to resign before defecting to another party, thereby reducing political instability, as illustrated by the controversy surrounding the defection of Senate President Dr. Bukola Saraki from the APC to the PDP during the Eighth Senate; fostering a political culture that promotes unity within political parties and society; discouraging money politics; limiting the abuse of incumbency powers; and ensuring greater transparency in the selection of party candidates.

4. Mustapha Alhaji Ali and Isah Shehu Mohammed, “Politics of Inter-Party Defections in Nigeria: Whose Interest?”⁶¹

The paper begins by identifying three normative assumptions about political defections. First, defections are not inherently unusual in democratic politics. Second, they are legitimate expressions of the freedoms and liberties guaranteed within democratic systems. Third, they are generally expected to be motivated by principles, ideology, or the public interest.

Within the Nigerian political context, however, the paper argues that these assumptions scarcely apply. Instead, it observes that inter-party defections have “assumed an escalating monstrous dimension to the extent that it has rendered the polity to become a jamboree of marketing the parties

⁶⁰ Mustapha Alhaji Ali and Yakaka Abubakar, “The Politics of Inter-Party Decamping and the Future of Nigeria's Democracy,” *Jigawa Journal of Politics* 2, no. 1 (2019): 242–261.

⁶¹ Mustapha Alhaji Ali and Isah Shehu Mohammed, “Politics of Inter-Party Defections in Nigeria: Whose Interest?” *African Journal of Management* 3, no. 4 (2018): 114–135.

and politicians in search of relevance, convenient political accommodation and access to state power and resources.”⁶²

Using historical and documentary methods, alongside organisational theory, the paper pursues three objectives: to explain why Nigerian politicians defect from one party to another; to examine the consequences of such defections; and to recommend strategies for addressing the phenomenon. The paper attributes the persistent wave of defections to several factors, including constitutional weaknesses inherited from the First Republic and judicial failures in resolving political disputes; the character of Nigerian politics; ideological barrenness; the overwhelming influence of money in politics; entrenched patron-client relations; opportunistic manipulation of constitutional provisions; and the absence of a political culture capable of nurturing democratic values and institutional stability.

In conclusion, the paper advocates greater judicial activism, particularly through authoritative judicial interpretations of the provisions of the 1999 Constitution governing political defections, as a means of reducing uncertainty and promoting greater stability within Nigeria’s party system.

Religion and Elections

1. Simeon O. Ilesanmi, “Recent Theories of Religion and Politics in Nigeria.”⁶³

This paper examines the complex relationship between religion and politics in Nigeria by reviewing three major theoretical perspectives: the privatisation thesis, the manipulation thesis, and the hegemonic state thesis. The author argues that these perspectives collectively explain the persistent role of religion in Nigeria’s political development and the challenges it poses to political stability.

The privatisation thesis contends that the Nigeria’s ability to consolidate itself as a cohesive nation-state stems largely from enduring religious rivalry. According to this perspective, Christianity and Islam have become deeply politicised, with each seeking influence over the Nigerian state. Consequently, religious competition has frequently undermined national integration, public policy, and political stability by reinforcing ethno-religious identities. However, the paper critiques this thesis for reducing religion to a purely political instrument and overlooking its broader cultural and moral significance.

The manipulation thesis argues that political elites deliberately exploit religious differences to mobilise electoral support and secure political power. The paper attributes this development to Nigeria’s transition from an agrarian to an oil-dependent economy, which centralised access to state resources and intensified competition for political office. In this context, religion became an effective instrument for mobilising support and legitimising elite struggles for state power.

The hegemonic state thesis shifts attention from religion to the nature of the Nigerian state itself. It argues that the state’s excessive concentration of power and its failure to recognise the autonomy of religious and cultural institutions have generated recurring political and religious

⁶² Ibid, 114.

⁶³ Simeon O. Ilesanmi, “Recent Theories of Religion and Politics in Nigeria,” *Journal of Church and State* 37, no. 2 (1995): 309–327.

tensions. The paper concludes that political stability does not require religious uniformity or extensive state control over religious affairs. Rather, democratic consolidation depends on religious tolerance, constitutional neutrality, and a clear separation between state authority and religious competition.

2. Musa Kabir Umara, Muhammad Ainuddin Iskandar Lee Bin Abdullah and Kamarul Zaman Bn Hajj Yusouf, “An Exploration of the Politicisation of Religion in Nigerian Democratization Process.”⁶⁴

This paper examines the politicisation of religion throughout Nigeria’s democratic history, with particular attention to its implications for democratic consolidation. Drawing on historical analysis, the authors argue that the manipulation of religious identities has remained a recurring feature of Nigerian politics from the First Republic to the Fourth Republic. The study identifies elections as the principal arena in which religious sentiments are mobilised. Political actors frequently invoke religious identities to mobilise support, deepen political divisions, and shape electoral outcomes. The paper further observes that political transitions involving leaders from either Christianity or Islam often heighten religious suspicion and political tension.

According to the authors, the continued politicisation of religion has generated mutual distrust, intolerance, and persistent interfaith tensions that undermine democratic governance and national cohesion. Although acknowledging that religion and politics are closely intertwined within certain Islamic doctrinal traditions, the paper argues that Nigeria’s constitutional commitment to secularism requires deliberate efforts to minimise the use of religious appeals in electoral competition. It concludes that reducing religious polarisation is essential for democratic consolidation and national unity.

3. Hakeem Onapajo, “Politics and the Pulpit: The Rise and Decline of Religion in Nigeria’s 2015 Presidential Elections.”⁶⁵

Onapajo investigates the role of religion during Nigeria’s 2015 presidential election, situating the election within the country’s long history of religious influence on political competition. It argues that religion has historically shaped party formation, political alliances, and voting behaviour from the First Republic through the Fourth Republic. The study observes that religious considerations featured prominently during the pre-election campaigns, particularly through the involvement of religious leaders and attempts by political actors to mobilise support along religious lines. However, the electoral outcome suggests that religious affiliation did not ultimately determine voting behaviour to the extent many observers anticipated.

The paper concludes that although religion remained politically significant during the campaign period, the 2015 presidential election demonstrated a gradual decline in its electoral influence. The author argues that the electorate increasingly prioritised governance concerns over religious and ethnic

⁶⁴ Musa Kabir Umar, Mohamad Ainuddin Iskandar Lee Abdullah, and Kamarul Zaman Haji Yusoff, “An Exploration of Politicization of Religion in Nigeria’s Democratization Process,” in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Law and Globalization (ICLG 2018)* (2018).

⁶⁵ Hakeem Onapajo, “Politics and the Pulpit: The Rise and Decline of Religion in Nigeria’s 2015 Presidential Elections,” *Journal of African Elections* 15, no. 2 (2016): 112–135.

considerations, suggesting a growing democratic maturity and a positive trajectory toward democratic consolidation.

4. Hakeem Onapajo, “Politics for God: Religion, Politics and Conflict in Democratic Nigeria.”⁶⁶

This paper explores the growing influence of religion in Nigeria’s democratic politics. While acknowledging the central role of religion in individual and social life, the author argues that excessive religious influence has negatively affected democratic governance and national cohesion. The paper contends that Nigerians often display stronger loyalty to religious institutions than to the Nigerian state, enabling religious actors to exert significant influence over political processes. According to the study, religion increasingly shaped political developments during the early years of the Fourth Republic.

The author highlights several key developments that intensified religious politics, including the introduction of Sharia law in Zamfara State, protests surrounding President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua’s prolonged illness, the constitutional succession of Goodluck Jonathan to the presidency, and Jonathan’s decision to contest the 2011 presidential election. These developments heightened religious sensitivities and contributed to political polarisation.

The paper also examines major episodes of religious conflict, including the Kaduna Sharia riots, recurrent violence in Jos, and the 2011 post-election violence in northern Nigeria, arguing that these events illustrate the destabilising consequences of religious politicisation. It concludes that constitutional mechanisms should provide clearly defined roles for religious leaders in promoting peace and dialogue while limiting the politicisation of religion in Nigeria’s democratic process.

5. David Tuesday Adamo, “Religion and Elections in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective.”⁶⁷

This paper provides a historical examination of the influence of religion on elections in Nigeria from the colonial period through the 2015 general elections. The author argues that Nigeria’s religious diversity has made religion a persistent factor in electoral competition, often reinforcing political tension alongside electoral violence, corruption, intimidation, and other electoral malpractices. The study demonstrates that religious considerations have consistently influenced leadership selection and electoral behaviour, particularly through the informal balancing of presidential and vice-presidential candidates across religious lines. This practice has featured prominently across successive administrations in Nigeria’s democratic history.

Despite the prominence of religion in electoral politics, the paper argues that religious influence has not improved the ethical quality of elections. Instead, electoral violence, corruption, manipulation, and abuse of state institutions have remained pervasive. It concludes that sustained interfaith dialogue

⁶⁶ Hakeem Onapajo, “Politics for God: Religion, Politics and Conflict in Democratic Nigeria,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 9 (2012): 42–66.

⁶⁷ David Tuesday Adamo, “Religion and Elections in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective,” *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 44, no. 3 (2018): 1–19.

and stronger cooperation between Christian and Muslim communities are essential for reducing post-election violence and promoting peaceful democratic competition.

6. Thomas O. Ebhomienlen and Emmanuel I. Ukpebor, “Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Christian Association of Nigeria.”⁶⁸

This paper examines the political roles of Nigeria’s two principal religious umbrella organisations—the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The authors argue that both organisations have become influential actors in Nigeria’s political process, extending their activities beyond religious affairs into national political debates.

The study traces the origins of interreligious political competition to debates during the 1970s and 1980s over the constitutional recognition of Islamic law. It argues that subsequent controversies—including the adoption of Sharia law in Zamfara State, Nigeria’s membership of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and allegations of religious imbalance in political appointments—have intensified tensions between Christian and Muslim communities.

The paper concludes that cooperation between the NSCIA and CAN is essential for promoting national peace, religious tolerance, and democratic stability. It recommends closer collaboration between both organisations and the government in addressing religious tensions and supporting national development.

7. Uno Jim Agbor, “Religion as a Determinant of Voter Behaviour: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Religious Inclination and Voting Pattern in Cross River State, Nigeria.”⁶⁹

This paper investigates the relationship between religion and voter behaviour in Cross River State, using the 2011, 2015, and 2019 general elections as case studies. The study is motivated by the growing political influence of both Pentecostal Christianity and Islamic revivalism in Nigeria. The author argues that religion and politics interact in ways that significantly influence electoral behaviour because citizens often perceive political outcomes as affecting the protection of their religious interests and freedoms.

The study finds that religious affiliation influenced voting behaviour across the three elections through both direct and indirect mechanisms. These included adherence to religious beliefs, guidance from religious leaders, and directives issued by influential religious organisations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). It recommends expanded civic and voter education programmes designed to encourage citizens to make electoral choices based on public policy and governance considerations rather than religious affiliation.

⁶⁸ Thomas O. Ebhomienlen and Emmanuel I. Ukpebor, “Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Christian Association of Nigeria,” *International Journal of Science and Research* 2, no. 9 (2013): 166–170.

⁶⁹ Uno Jim Agbor, “Religion as a Determinant of Voter Behaviour: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Religious Inclination and Voting Pattern in Cross River State, Nigeria,” *Journal of Social Research* 14 (2019): 3252–3267.

8. Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi, “The Role of Religion in Nigerian Politics and Its Sustainability for Political Development.”⁷⁰

This paper examines the role of religion in Nigeria’s political development since independence. It argues that Nigeria’s religious diversity has made religion a significant factor in political competition and governance. It observes that religion has increasingly become a political instrument used both by politicians seeking electoral support and by some religious leaders pursuing influence and material benefits through political alliances. According to the author, this relationship has contributed to growing religious polarisation within Nigeria’s democratic system.

The paper identifies several consequences of the politicisation of religion during the Fourth Republic, including the implementation of Sharia law in several northern states, increased interreligious suspicion, electoral manipulation based on religious identity, and the use of public resources to satisfy religious constituencies. Despite these concerns, the author argues that religion can make positive contributions to political development when it promotes dialogue, national integration, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. The paper concludes by recommending that government withdraw from sponsoring religious pilgrimages and instead strengthen institutions such as the National Religious Advisory Board and the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council to promote sustained interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance.

9. Azalahu Francis Akwara and Benedict O. Ojomah, “Religion, Politics and Democracy in Nigeria.”⁷¹

This paper examines the historical relationship between religion, politics, and democracy in Nigeria. The authors argue that the interaction between religion and politics predates the creation of the Nigerian state, tracing its origins to both the nineteenth-century Sokoto Jihad and the spread of Christianity during British colonial expansion.

The paper distinguishes the complementary functions of religion and politics. Religion provides moral purpose and ethical guidance, while politics organises the distribution and exercise of public authority. Ideally, both should complement each other in promoting social order and national development. However, the authors argue that the Nigerian experience has largely been characterised by conflict rather than complementarity. Religious divisions have intensified political competition, contributed to identity-based conflicts, and undermined democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s ethnically and religiously diverse society. The paper concludes that the Nigerian state should maintain its secular constitutional character in order to protect fundamental rights, promote democratic governance, and strengthen national unity by reducing the political manipulation of religious identities.

⁷⁰ Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi, “The Role of Religion in Nigerian Politics and Its Sustainability for Political Development,” *Net Journal of Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2015): 42–49.

⁷¹ Azalahu Francis Akwara and Benedict O. Ojomah, “Religion, Politics and Democracy in Nigeria,” *Canadian Social Science* 9, no. 2 (2013): 42–55.

Politics of Zoning, Power Sharing, and Power Rotation

1. Babajide Olusoji Ololajulo, “Eating with One Spoon’: Zoning, Power Rotation and Political Corruption in Nigeria.”⁷²

The paper argues that following prolonged military rule in Nigeria, sustained pressure from the international community and civil society groups for democratic governance culminated in the inauguration of the Fourth Republic in 1999. Although this democratic transition was widely welcomed, the author contends that Nigeria’s deeply polarised political landscape has continued to pose serious challenges to democratic consolidation. Against the backdrop of persistent ethnic distrust, political zoning and power-sharing arrangements have been promoted as mechanisms for ensuring regional balance among the country’s geopolitical zones. The paper notes that existing scholarship generally supports zoning and power sharing as conflict-management and consensus-building strategies in plural societies such as Nigeria.

Drawing on traditional power rotation practices among the Ilaje people of Ondo State, the paper examines how zoning reflects broader issues of identity politics, corruption, and liberal democratic values in Nigeria. It argues that although zoning and power rotation may contribute to political stability and peaceful coexistence, they have largely evolved into elite bargaining mechanisms through which political actors negotiate continued access to state power and public resources. The paper concludes that political defections and rotational arrangements have become instruments for sustaining elite dominance and corruption within Nigeria’s distorted liberal democratic system.

2. Uchechukwu Anthony Nwobi and Umar Sanda Isa Husaini, “Presidential Power Rotation and Unflinching Role of Ethnicity in Nigeria Fourth Republic.”⁷³

The paper examines the relationship between presidential power rotation and ethnic politics in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. It argues that, since independence, the presidency has been dominated largely by individuals from the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group. To address this perceived imbalance and in line with the Federal Character Principle, rotational presidency emerged as a political arrangement intended to promote inclusiveness and national integration. However, the authors contend that rotational presidency has, paradoxically, reinforced ethnic consciousness and competition rather than diminished it.

Using group theory as its analytical framework, the paper investigates how rotational presidency has contributed to the persistence of ethnic politics in Nigeria. It contrasts the Nigerian experience with established democracies such as the United States and the United Kingdom, where national leadership is generally perceived as a symbol of national unity rather than ethnic representation. In Nigeria, by contrast, control of the presidency is portrayed as a highly contested ethnic issue. The paper identifies three critical moments that illustrate the centrality of ethnicity in presidential politics. The first is the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election, which the authors interpret largely through the lens of ethnic politics. The second concerns the constitutional and political crisis that followed the death of President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, when debates emerged

⁷² Babajide Olusoji Ololajulo, “Eating with One Spoon’: Zoning, Power Rotation and Political Corruption in Nigeria,” *African Studies* 75, no. 1 (2016): 153–169.

⁷³ Uchechukwu Anthony Nwobi and Umar Sanda Isa Husaini, “Presidential Power Rotation and Unflinching Role of Ethnicity in Nigeria Fourth Republic,” *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 6, no. 3 (2018): 272–279.

over whether Vice President Goodluck Jonathan should merely complete the unexpired tenure or contest for a fresh mandate. The third is the 2015 presidential election, which the paper characterises as a contest framed largely along North–South ethnic divisions.

To reduce the salience of ethnicity in presidential politics, the paper recommends promoting national leadership capable of commanding broad public confidence across ethnic divides. It also advocates stricter adherence to the Federal Character Principle in public appointments and proposes a more balanced distribution of states among Nigeria’s geopolitical zones as measures for fostering greater political inclusion and national cohesion.

3. Uchekukwu Anthony Nwobi and Fab. O. Onah, “Rotational Presidency and Democracy in Nigeria. Nigerian.”⁷⁴

The paper argues that the perceived monopoly of Nigeria’s presidency by Northern Nigeria has generated widespread agitation, resentment, and feelings of political exclusion among the country’s other five geopolitical zones. It contends that the idea of rotational presidency emerged primarily as a mechanism for assuaging these grievances and promoting a greater sense of inclusion among marginalised ethnic groups. According to the authors, the demand for rotational presidency was driven principally by two developments. First, many Yoruba believed that they had been unjustly excluded from the presidency for an extended period. Second, these grievances were further intensified by the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election under the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida.

Using documentary evidence and group theory, the paper assesses the implications of rotational presidency for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It identifies several adverse consequences. First, rotational presidency temporarily excludes other ethnic groups from contesting for the presidency, thereby restricting democratic competition. Second, it reinforces ethnic divisions rather than national unity. Third, it heightens fears of ethnic domination among competing groups. Fourth, it encourages the selection of candidates based on ethnic considerations rather than merit. Finally, it may encourage electoral malpractice in attempts to secure the presidency for the region or ethnic group whose turn it is to occupy the office. The paper recommends the adoption of proportional representation at all levels of government to promote governments of national unity. It also advocates strengthening institutions responsible for electoral administration in order to deepen democratic governance.

4. Anthony A. Akinola, “The Concept of a Rotational Presidency in Nigeria.”⁷⁵

The paper argues that Nigeria’s history has been marked by persistent political instability arising from numerous structural challenges. It examines the principal factors that prompted the proposal for rotational presidency during the 1995 National Constitutional Conference convened under the military administration of General Sani Abacha.

⁷⁴ Uchekukwu Anthony Nwobi and Fab. O. Onah, “Rotational Presidency and Democracy in Nigeria,” *Nigerian Journal of Public Administration and Local Government* 19, no. 2 (2018): 95–108.

⁷⁵ Anthony A. Akinola, “The Concept of a Rotational Presidency in Nigeria,” *The Round Table* 85, no. 337 (1996): 13–24.

The paper identifies ethnic domination as the foremost challenge confronting the Nigerian state. It explains that rotational presidency seeks to institutionalise an arrangement whereby the office of president alternates among the country's major geopolitical or ethnic blocs. According to the author, this proposal was largely informed by the regional and ethnic foundations of Nigeria's political parties since the First Republic. The major parties—the Northern People's Congress (NPC), Action Group (AG), and National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC)—largely reflected Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo political interests respectively. The paper argues that similar regional patterns persisted during the Second Republic, as the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), and Nigerian People's Party (NPP) largely inherited the regional orientations of their predecessor parties.

The paper further identifies separatist agitations rooted in ethnic loyalties as another source of instability within Nigeria's federal system. Rather than fostering national cohesion, political elites frequently prioritised ethnic interests, while ethnic divisions also found expression within the military through a succession of ethnically motivated coups. According to the author, these developments strengthened calls for rotational presidency as a mechanism for promoting national integration. It concludes that constitutional arrangements should reflect Nigeria's historical realities and the aspirations of its diverse ethnic groups. It ends by observing that rotational presidency is regarded by many Nigerians as an important mechanism for fostering inclusion and strengthening national unity.

5. Okwudili Chukwuma Nwosu and Emmanuel Ugwuera, "Rotational Presidency and Political Corruption in Nigeria: A Critical Evaluation of President Obasanjo and Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's Regime, 1999–2010."⁷⁶

Using the administrations of Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007) and Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007–2010) as case studies, the paper examines whether rotational presidency has contributed to reducing political corruption in Nigeria. It argues that the zoning arrangement adopted by the People's Democratic Party (PDP), which alternated the presidency between the South-West and the North, did not diminish corruption. Rather, the paper contends that political corruption remained pervasive throughout both administrations.

According to the authors, corruption was deeply embedded in both governments, which they define as the abuse of public office for private gain. The paper further notes that international assessments, including those by Transparency International, continued to rank Nigeria among the world's most corrupt countries during the period under review. To combat political corruption more effectively, the paper recommends strengthening Nigeria's anti-corruption agencies—the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). It further argues that the leadership of these institutions should be appointed through an independent process rather than by the executive, with appointments based strictly on proven integrity and professional competence.

⁷⁶ Okwudili Chukwuma Nwosu and Emmanuel Ugwuera, "Rotational Presidency and Political Corruption in Nigeria: A Critical Evaluation of Presidents Obasanjo and Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's Regime, 1999–2010," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19, no. 12 (2014): 50–57.

6. Christian Ezeibe, Ifeanyi Abada and Martin Okeke, “Zoning of Public Offices, Liberal Democracy and Economic Development in Nigeria.”⁷⁷

The paper argues that persistent ethnic and religious distrust among Nigeria’s diverse groups prompted the PDP to introduce zoning and power-sharing arrangements between 1999 and 2015. These arrangements were intended to reduce political tension, address fears of marginalisation, and promote national cohesion. The authors, however, contend that zoning has produced mixed outcomes. Rather than advancing liberal democracy or promoting broad-based development, the paper argues that zoning has primarily served the interests of the political elite. According to the authors, political actors frequently employ hate speech, violence, and political intimidation as strategies for acquiring and retaining power, while the broader population derives few tangible benefits from the arrangement.

The paper further argues that the electoral victory of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2015 effectively brought an end to the PDP’s zoning formula. According to the authors, this development renewed complaints of marginalisation, particularly in the South-East and South-South, where many believed that key federal appointments disproportionately favoured Northern Nigeria. The paper recommends that the APC government should have retained the zoning arrangement in order to promote political stability, national integration, and economic development.

7. Agaptus Nwozor, “Power Rotation, Ethnic Politics and the Challenges of Democratization in Contemporary Nigeria.”⁷⁸

The paper examines the relationship between power rotation, ethnic politics, and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It argues that the North–South divide remains deeply embedded in Nigerian politics and continues to shape political competition. To manage these tensions, the PDP introduced zoning and power rotation between 1999 and 2015 as conflict-management mechanisms intended to promote political inclusion across the country’s geopolitical zones.

The paper argues, however, that the emphasis on zoning has reinforced rather than diminished North–South political competition. According to the author, the death of President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua in 2010 and the political controversies preceding the 2011 presidential election further strengthened the role of ethnicity, religion, and regional identity in presidential politics. The paper also suggests that post-election violence has been closely linked to this persistent North–South struggle for political power. The author concludes that, despite its limitations, zoning the presidency among the geopolitical zones remains a useful mechanism for reducing ethnic tensions and supporting democratic stability in Nigeria.

⁷⁷ Christian Ezeibe, Ifeanyi Abada, and Martin Okeke, “Zoning of Public Offices, Liberal Democracy and Economic Development in Nigeria,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 7, no. 3 (2016): 328–337.

⁷⁸ Agaptus Nwozor, “Power Rotation, Ethnic Politics and the Challenges of Democratization in Contemporary Nigeria,” *African Study Monographs* 35, no. 1 (2014): 1–18.

7. Itumo Anthony and Nwobashi Humphrey Nwefuru, “Power Sharing, Ethnicity and Voting Behaviour in Nigeria: Experience from the 2015 Presidential Election.”⁷⁹

The paper argues that voting behaviour in Nigeria is influenced by several factors, foremost among them ethnicity. Using the theories of failed expectations and alternative choice,⁸⁰ the authors examine the relationship between zoning, ethnicity, and voting behaviour during the 2015 presidential election. They contend that the perceived abandonment of the PDP’s zoning arrangement by President Goodluck Jonathan contributed significantly to the resurgence of ethnic voting patterns during the election.

According to the study, the APC presidential ticket of Muhammadu Buhari and Yemi Osinbajo secured overwhelming support in Northern Nigeria and the South-West but performed poorly in the South-South, the political stronghold of President Jonathan. Conversely, the PDP won substantial support in the South-South but recorded comparatively weaker performances in the North and the South-West. The paper concludes that ethnic considerations significantly shaped the outcome of the 2015 presidential election. It recommends the introduction of sustained national reorientation programmes, the constitutional recognition of zoning to ensure equitable access to the presidency by all geopolitical zones, and reforms aimed at strengthening electoral institutions and promoting free, fair, and credible elections.

8. Emmanuel Remi Aiyede, “Federalism, Power Sharing and the 2011 Presidential Election in Nigeria.”⁸¹

The paper argues that federalism is commonly adopted in deeply divided societies as a mechanism for managing diversity and promoting national unity. However, despite Nigeria’s federal structure, governance practices have frequently departed from federal principles, thereby generating dissatisfaction among the constituent units of the federation. To mitigate these tensions, power sharing, zoning, and rotational presidency emerged as political arrangements designed to reinforce the Federal Character Principle and manage interethnic relations, particularly following the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election.

Against this background, the paper examines the controversies surrounding zoning in the lead-up to the 2011 presidential election. It focuses on the political crisis that followed the death of President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, after which Vice President Goodluck Jonathan, a southerner, assumed the presidency and subsequently sought election to a full term. According to the author, this development generated considerable opposition in Northern Nigeria, where many political actors believed that the zoning arrangement entitled the region to retain the presidency for the remainder of its agreed tenure. The paper concludes that while zoning and power sharing have contributed to managing ethnic tensions and promoting political stability, their effectiveness depends largely on the willingness of political elites to apply the arrangements flexibly. At the same time, the author

⁷⁹ Itumo Anthony and Nwobashi Humphrey Nwefuru, “Power Sharing, Ethnicity and Voting Behaviour in Nigeria: Experience from the 2015 Presidential Election,” *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 25, no. 5 (2017): 1143–1152.

⁸⁰ The central premise of rational choice theory is that human beings are rational actors who make decisions intended to maximise the attainment of their goals or preferences.

⁸¹ Emmanuel Remi Aiyede, “Federalism, Power Sharing and the 2011 Presidential Election in Nigeria,” *Journal of African Elections* 11, no. 1 (2012): 31–53.

acknowledges that zoning constrains open political competition and therefore sits uneasily with the principles of liberal democracy.

Godfatherism in Nigerian Politics

1. Isaac Olawale Albert, “Explaining ‘Godfatherism’ in Nigerian Politics.”⁸²

This paper examines the phenomenon of political godfatherism as a mechanism of elite recruitment and political control in Nigeria. It argues that every society has an elite class which, in the Nigerian context, manifests through political godfathers⁸³ who either seek to retain power directly or install loyal protégés (godsons) to safeguard their political and economic interests. Political godfathers are influential individuals who finance election campaigns and possess sufficient political leverage to determine who secures party nominations and ultimately wins elections. As the author defines them, they are “men who have the power personally to determine who gets nominated and who wins an election in a state.”⁸⁴

The paper identifies five categories of political godfathers in Nigeria. First are geopolitical or ethnic organisations, such as Afenifere, the Arewa Consultative Forum, and Ohanaeze Ndigbo, which historically influenced political representation within their respective regions, although their influence has gradually declined relative to that of individual political patrons. Second are influential ethnic leaders who serve as political patrons within their communities. Third are wealthy individuals who sponsor political candidates as a means of expanding their political and economic influence. Fourth are experienced politicians who function as professional political brokers for affluent candidates. Fifth are wealthy patrons who provide political sponsorship to both affluent and less privileged aspirants.

The paper argues that godfatherism is not inherently detrimental. When exercised in the public interest, it can facilitate the emergence of competent leadership. However, in Nigeria, it has largely evolved into a commercial enterprise designed to capture state resources. According to the paper, godfatherism flourishes under several conditions: the existence of profit-driven political patrons, a compromised political system serving elite interests, weak civil society and electoral institutions, desperate political office seekers, and a compliant or compromised media.

The study concludes that godfatherism has profound implications for Nigeria’s democracy. It undermines participatory democracy and electoral integrity, fuels electoral violence, promotes mediocrity and corruption, and ultimately threatens democratic consolidation. The paper illustrates these dynamics through notable political conflicts, including those involving Chris Ngige and Chris Uba in Anambra State, Rashidi Ladoja and Lamidi Adedibu in Oyo State, and Akinwunmi Ambode and Bola Tinubu in Lagos State.

⁸² Isaac Olawale Albert, “Explaining ‘Godfatherism’ in Nigerian Politics,” *African Sociological Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 79–105.

⁸³ Former Enugu State governor Chimaroke Nnamani defines a godfather as “...an impervious guardian figure who provided the lifeline and direction to the godson, perceived to live a life of total submission, subservience and protection of the oracular personality located in the large, material frame of opulence, affluence and decisiveness, that is, if not ruthless... strictly, the godfather is simply a self-seeking individual out there to use the government for his own purposes.”

⁸⁴ Albert, “Explaining ‘Godfatherism’ in Nigerian Politics,” 81.

2. B. Rasak, A. J. Oye, M. Ake, and A. A. Raji, “Godfatherism and Political Patronage in Nigeria: A Theoretical Overview.”⁸⁵

This paper argues that godfatherism and political patronage have remained defining features of Nigerian politics since independence. It observes that the political elites who led the struggle for independence have continued to dominate political decision-making, influencing development priorities and determining the distribution of state resources. The authors contend that existing scholarship has not sufficiently explained how political godfathers have maintained their dominance over Nigeria’s political and economic systems. Drawing on elite, coalition, party system, and meritocratic theories, the paper examines the structures that sustain political patronage in Nigeria.

Using secondary sources, the study argues that state institutions are largely controlled by political elites who derive legitimacy through electoral processes but subsequently exercise state authority to allocate opportunities and resources according to personal and political interests. This arrangement has produced a patron-client system in which political elites function as patrons while citizens become clients whose access to public resources depends on political loyalty. The paper concludes that this patronage structure has institutionalised inequality by concentrating political and economic power in the hands of a small elite while compelling the broader population to depend on patronage networks for access to state resources. According to the authors, this system has significantly hindered Nigeria’s political and socioeconomic development.

3. Kehinde Ohiole Osakede, and Samuel Ojo Ijimakinwa, “Political Godfatherism and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Empirical Evidence from Oyo State and Kwara State.”⁸⁶

This paper investigates the impact of political godfatherism on democratic consolidation in Nigeria, using Oyo and Kwara States as case studies. Employing descriptive survey research and statistical analyses based on percentages and chi-square tests, the authors argue that political godfatherism poses a significant obstacle to democratic development. The study advances two principal arguments. First, political godfatherism constitutes a major threat to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Second, the weakness of democratic institutions is closely associated with the dominance of godfather politics.

The paper concludes that both political godfathers and their protégés undermine democratic governance by denying citizens genuine electoral choice and imposing candidates selected through patronage rather than popular preference. To address these challenges, the authors recommend eliminating the culture of political godfatherism, strengthening democratic institutions, promoting civic education on political participation, and empowering citizens to demand greater accountability from public office holders.

⁸⁵ B. Rasak, A. J. Oye, M. Ake, and A. A. Raji, “Godfatherism and Political Patronage in Nigeria: A Theoretical Overview,” *Political Science Review* 8, no. 1 (2017): 77–101.

⁸⁶ Kehinde Ohiole Osakede and Samuel Ojo Ijimakinwa, “Political Godfatherism and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Empirical Evidence from Oyo State and Kwara State,” *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 5, no. 8 (2016): 1–12.

4. Aderonke Majekodunmi and Felix Olanrewaju Awosika, “Godfatherism and Political Conflicts in Nigeria: The Fourth Republic in Perspective.”⁸⁷

This paper examines the relationship between political godfatherism and political conflict in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It defines godfatherism as a system of political mentorship, sponsorship, and patronage through which influential individuals determine party nominations and mobilise resources to secure electoral victory for their preferred candidates. The paper argues that godfatherism has become a dominant feature of Nigerian politics and poses a serious threat to democratic consolidation despite the country's prolonged democratic experience.

According to the authors, political godfatherism generates several adverse consequences. It undermines genuine democracy, reinforces the perception that political aspirants cannot succeed without powerful sponsors, encourages conflicts between godfathers and their protégés over the distribution of state resources, and deepens socioeconomic inequality. The paper concludes that eliminating political godfatherism is essential for expanding democratic participation and strengthening democratic governance in Nigeria.

5. Adeoye O. Akinola, “Godfatherism and the Future of Nigerian Democracy.”⁸⁸

This paper defines political godfatherism as the disproportionate influence of wealthy political patrons who sponsor candidates for public office in exchange for continued access to state resources after electoral victory. It argues that, unlike the nationalist political patrons of the immediate post-independence period, contemporary political godfathers are largely driven by personal enrichment, making them a significant threat to Nigeria's democratic development.

The paper examines the relationship between political godfathers and their protégés and explores its implications for democratic governance. Specifically, it seeks “to unravel the mystery behind the power of godfathers, its manipulating strategies, evolution, modus operandi, and factors necessitating the triumph and consolidation of godfatherism in Nigeria.”⁸⁹ Drawing on qualitative interviews and content analysis, the study finds that political godfatherism has undergone a significant transformation. Whereas earlier forms of patronage were largely associated with welfare-oriented politics, contemporary godfatherism is characterised by money politics, violence, personal ambition, and political coercion. The paper concludes that although political patronage may be inevitable in democratic politics, the relationship between political godfathers and their protégés must be institutionalised and regulated to prevent it from undermining democratic governance and sustainable political development in Nigeria.

⁸⁷ Aderonke Majekodunmi and Felix Olanrewaju Awosika, “Godfatherism and Political Conflicts in Nigeria: The Fourth Republic in Perspective,” *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research* 2, no. 7 (2013): 70–75.

⁸⁸ Adeoye O. Akinola, “Godfatherism and the Future of Nigerian Democracy,” *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 3, no. 6 (2009): 268–272.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 268.

The Judiciary and Politics

1. Hakeem Onapajo and Ufo Okeke Uzodike, “Rigging through the Courts: The Judiciary and Electoral Fraud in Nigeria.”⁹⁰

While numerous studies have examined how electoral fraud enables political elites to acquire and retain power, relatively little attention has been devoted to the role of the judiciary in facilitating electoral malpractice. Seeking to bridge this gap, this paper examines the relationship between the judiciary and electoral fraud in Nigeria. The paper begins by noting that election petitions are *sui generis* because of their distinctive legal character. However, it argues that judicial practice in Nigeria has departed significantly from this principle. Rather than merely adjudicating electoral disputes, election petition tribunals have increasingly become arenas in which unsuccessful candidates seek to invalidate the victories of their opponents and secure judicial declarations affirming themselves as the rightful winners.

According to the authors, this trend has created a dangerous perception among political actors that electoral defeat can be overturned through judicial manipulation. Consequently, some politicians now view litigation as an alternative route to political office, relying on corruption within the judicial system rather than electoral legitimacy. The paper illustrates this argument by referring to the controversies surrounding the Ekiti State governorship election petitions of 2007–2009 and cites the widely circulated perception among Nigerian politicians:

Don't waste your time campaigning. Don't waste your money printing billboards, handbills or posters. Don't waste your time throwing away money for mobilisation. Just keep your money in the bank and call a very good lawyer and let him tell you the loopholes in the Constitution or the Electoral Act. Memorise the loopholes and give all the money you've saved to a judge. Tell him: 'I have gotten all the loopholes, they [the opponents] have flouted it' [and you shall win at the end of the day].⁹¹

The paper further argues that the adjudication of election petitions is undermined by restrictive timelines for filing petitions and prolonged delays in judicial proceedings. It concludes by recommending greater judicial independence, accompanied by a comprehensive redefinition of the judiciary's adjudicatory role in resolving electoral disputes in Nigeria.

2. Felix C. Anuniru, “The Judiciary and Electoral Fraud in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Deconstructing the 2007 General Elections.”⁹²

This paper begins by observing that the restoration of democratic rule on 29 May 1999, after decades of military dictatorship, generated widespread optimism that democratic governance would promote

⁹⁰ Hakeem Onapajo and Ufo Okeke Uzodike, “Rigging through the Courts: The Judiciary and Electoral Fraud in Nigeria,” *Journal of African Elections* 13, no. 2 (2014): 137–168.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁹² Felix C. Anuniru, “The Judiciary and Electoral Fraud in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic: Deconstructing the 2007 General Elections,” in *Electoral Reforms, Political Succession and Democratization in Africa*, vol. 2, ed. Sabo (Makurdi: Mangut Academic Publishers, 2008), 184–204.

respect for human rights and improve the welfare of Nigerians. According to the author, however, these expectations were undermined by persistent electoral irregularities. The paper argues that although the 2003 general elections were characterised by significant electoral malpractice, the scale of irregularities witnessed during the 2007 general elections was unprecedented. It contends that the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo was primarily concerned with ensuring a successful transition from one civilian government to another, even though this objective unfolded within an electoral process widely criticised for its deficiencies.

The study maintains that an effective and independent judiciary was indispensable to achieving a credible democratic transition. However, it argues that the Nigerian judiciary was unable to discharge this responsibility adequately because of institutional weaknesses inherited from prolonged military rule. These weaknesses manifested in inconsistent judicial pronouncements and an inability to respond effectively to widespread electoral disputes.

Against this background, the paper examines the role of the judiciary during the 2007 general elections. It argues that the judiciary occupies a critical position in preserving political stability and safeguarding democratic governance. Drawing on Nigeria's electoral history, the study concludes that the 2007 general elections recorded some of the gravest electoral irregularities in the country's democratic experience, thereby placing enormous pressure on the judicial system. Nevertheless, the paper expresses confidence that, with appropriate institutional reforms, the judiciary possesses the capacity to strengthen democratic participation and promote credible electoral governance in Nigeria.

Security and Elections

1. Osisioma B. C. Nwolise, "Security Arrangements for the 2011 Elections."⁹³

Electoral violence has remained a recurring feature of Nigeria's democratic experience. Contrary to the widely held view that the 2011 general elections were characterised by widespread insecurity, the author argues that the elections were conducted under relatively peaceful conditions due to effective security arrangements that enhanced their credibility. The paper identifies several areas in which security agencies played critical roles. These included: (a) securing the voters' register; (b) protecting sensitive electoral materials such as ballot papers and result collation sheets; (c) safeguarding the offices, personnel, and ad hoc staff of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), including members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); (d) securing Nigeria's borders to prevent the registration and participation of foreign nationals; (e) protecting voters during the electoral process; (f) maintaining law and order to prevent election-day violence; (g) safeguarding ballot papers; and (h) protecting the integrity of election outcomes and the people's mandate.

The author further observes that these achievements were made possible by the remarkable neutrality displayed by the security agencies throughout the electoral process. In addition, the paper attributes part of the success of the elections to the commitment of President Goodluck Jonathan's administration to conducting free, fair, and credible elections. However, the paper notes that the post-election violence that erupted following the announcement of the presidential election results exposed

⁹³ Osisioma B. C. Nwolise, "Security Arrangements for the 2011 Elections," *Journal of African Elections* 11, no. 1 (2012): 123–135.

significant weaknesses in Nigeria's security architecture. While security agencies were adequately prepared to secure the electoral process itself, they were insufficiently equipped to anticipate and respond effectively to post-election violence. Nevertheless, the author commends both the security agencies and the Jonathan administration for conducting elections that were largely peaceful, free, fair, and credible, while emphasising the need to address the identified security lapses in future elections.

International Dimensions of Elections

1. Shola Omotola, "From Importer to Exporter: The Changing Role of Nigeria in Promoting Democratic Values in Africa."⁹⁴

The uninterrupted democratic experience that Nigeria has enjoyed since 1999 has significantly strengthened its democratic credentials. Against this backdrop, the paper argues that Nigeria has acquired sufficient democratic experience to promote democratic values in other African countries, particularly within the developing world. The paper attributes Nigeria's growing role in democracy promotion to several factors. These include the country's longstanding foreign policy orientation that places Africa at its centre, its rivalry with South Africa for continental leadership, and the personal diplomatic influence of then President Olusegun Obasanjo. It further notes Nigeria's active involvement in supporting the restoration of democratic governance in several West African countries, particularly those that experienced military coups and unconstitutional changes of government.

Despite these positive external engagements, the paper argues that Nigeria's democratic activism abroad contrasts sharply with persistent domestic governance challenges. These include widespread poverty, socioeconomic inequality, unemployment, and political disenfranchisement. According to the paper, the government's external commitment to democracy may also serve to divert attention from these enduring domestic shortcomings. The paper concludes that unless Nigeria addresses these internal contradictions, its aspiration to serve as a promoter of democratic values across Africa will remain constrained and may ultimately prove unsustainable.

2. Olubukola Adesina, "Monitoring and Observing Nigeria's 2011 Elections."⁹⁵

Prior to the 2011 general elections, elections in Nigeria had frequently been criticised by both domestic and international observer missions for widespread irregularities. The paper notes that such persistent shortcomings informed the characterisation of Nigerian elections as being "fore won" rather than freely contested. However, it argues that the 2011 general elections represented a significant turning point in Nigeria's democratic development.

According to the paper, the 2011 elections were conducted under an unprecedented level of international scrutiny. The electoral process was opened to extensive observation by numerous international organisations, reflecting the growing importance of election observation as an instrument of global democracy promotion. Observer missions included the European Union Election Observation Mission (EU-EOM), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National

⁹⁴ Shola Omotola, "From Importer to Exporter: The Changing Role of Nigeria in Promoting Democratic Values in Africa," *Political Perspectives* 2, no. 1 (2008): 1–26.

⁹⁵ Olubukola Adesina, "Monitoring and Observing Nigeria's 2011 Elections," *Journal of African Elections* 11, no. 1 (2012): 153–170.

Democratic Institute (NDI), the Commonwealth Observer Mission, the Carter Center, and the African Union (AU), among others.

The paper observes that the reports of these observer missions were overwhelmingly positive. Most commended both the preparations for the elections and the conduct of the electoral process, describing the elections as a substantial improvement over previous electoral exercises in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the paper cautions against interpreting international commendations as evidence that Nigeria's electoral challenges had been fully resolved. It emphasises that external approval should not diminish the commitment to continuous electoral reform and the strengthening of democratic institutions in future elections.

Gender and Politics

1. Antonia Taiye Okoosi-Simbine, "Gender Politics and the 2011 Elections."⁹⁶

The 35 per cent Affirmative Action Principle advocates greater inclusion of women in governance and elective political offices. Against this backdrop, the paper examines gender representation in Nigeria's 2011 general elections. It observes that Nigeria remains far from achieving the internationally recommended benchmark for women's political representation, a pattern that has persisted beyond the 2011 elections. The paper attributes the continued underrepresentation of women in elective offices to a combination of structural and institutional barriers. These include religion, culture, financial constraints, political godfatherism, the absence of internal democracy within political parties, flawed nomination processes, deliberate exclusion of female aspirants, vote buying and selling, electoral violence, and other obstacles that undermine gender equity in politics.

According to the paper, the marginalisation of women in politics carries significant consequences. It deprives governance of the diverse perspectives and policy contributions that women can offer and raises questions about Nigeria's commitment to democratic ideals of liberty, equality, and inclusive political participation. Based on evidence from the 2011 general election results, the paper concludes that women continue to occupy a peripheral position in Nigeria's political system and that achieving meaningful gender inclusion remains a long-term challenge. It recommends several measures to improve women's political participation, including ensuring gender balance in the composition of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), adopting alternative electoral systems such as a modified proportional representation system, strengthening gender-focused civil society organisations, empowering the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and providing greater consideration for women in federal and state executive appointments.

⁹⁶ Antonia Taiye Okoosi-Simbine, "Gender Politics and the 2011 Elections," *Journal of African Elections* 11, no. 1 (2012): 74–99.

2. A. Irene Pogoson, “Gender, Political Parties and the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Nigeria: A Reflection on the Democratisation Process, 1999–2011.”⁹⁷

The paper argues that despite Nigeria’s endorsement of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA), which advocates affirmative action to promote women’s political participation, women remain significantly marginalised within the country’s political system. Using the 2011 general elections as a case study, the paper examines how patriarchal structures continue to shape women’s participation, representation, and acceptance within political parties and decision-making processes. The paper contends that the exclusion of women from politics contradicts both constitutional principles and broader legal commitments to equality. It therefore calls for deliberate institutional reforms to address the structural barriers that sustain patriarchal dominance in Nigerian politics.

Among its recommendations, the paper advocates for sustained dialogue between men and women on gender inclusion; increased participation of women in local government elections as a pathway to higher political office; the incorporation of quota systems into political party constitutions; reforms to the electoral system to eliminate discriminatory provisions and adopt more gender-inclusive mechanisms, including proportional representation; and the provision of legitimate financial support by political parties to enable women to pursue electoral petitions and other legal remedies where necessary.

⁹⁷ A. Irene Pogoson, “Gender, Political Parties and the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Nigeria: A Reflection on the Democratisation Process, 1999–2011,” *Journal of African Elections* 11, no. 1 (2012): 100–122.