

Implementations, Issues and Opportunities of Electoral Laws in Nigeria

Lawrence O. Odeh, Ph.D.¹, Maria Oyediji, Ph.D.²

¹Department of Political Science and Public Administration Faculty of Social and Management Sciences
Benson Idahosa University Benin City Edo State, Nigeria.

²Department of Political Science and Public Administration Faculty of Social and Management Sciences
Benson Idahosa University Benin City Edo State, Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500432>

Received: 08 May 2026; Accepted: 13 May 2026; Published: 03 June 2026

ABSTRACT

The trend of electoral contests in Nigeria is characterized by moneybags and godfatherism syndrome; influencing the electoral victory of their favoured candidates, through acts that circumvent due process of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Illicit acts, such as vote buying, bribery, and other financial inducements by politicians, including inducement of security agents, electoral officers, and civil society groups have become major features of most elections conducted in Nigeria, since the commencement of democratic rule in 1999. It is in this regard that this article examined as its main objective the implementations, issues and opportunities of electoral laws in Nigeria. While its specific objectives are to: examine the relationship between Nigeria's Constitutional provisions and electoral integrity; determine the relationship between Electoral Act 2022 and credible elections in Nigeria; and assess the effect of the Nigeria Police Act of 2020 on peaceful conduct of elections in Nigeria, among others. The study utilises qualitative research design, and adopted the secondary method of data collection, which relies on the use of text books, government documents and publications, academic journal articles, internet sources, and so on. The obtained data were analyzed through the adoption of textual and thematic analysis. Findings from the study showed that the poor implementation of Nigeria's Electoral laws is the bane of credible elections and good governance in the country. Several policy recommendations were advanced towards mitigating the challenges of electoral democracy in Nigeria, such as enactment of a new legislation that would no longer make the President of Nigeria the appointing authority of the Chairman of INEC and other officials, rather, a competitive process that would be piloted by the National Judicial Commission, and the National Assembly should be put in place for the emergence of the countries' electoral umpire, among others.

Keywords: Constitution, Democracy, Electoral laws, Elections, Electoral democracy, Police.

INTRODUCTION

Election involves the choice of political leaders by electorates, through voting to represent them in a legislative assembly, or to administer the affairs of the state on their behalf (Roger, 2007). Leadership has been viewed as the exercise of influence on people with the aim of achieving a common goal (Kayode, et al., 2014, cited in Ndisika & Odeh, 2021). The emergence of elections in Nigeria can be traced to British colonial era, when the country witnessed the first ever conducted general election in 1954. This election was remarkable, as it was the first time Nigerians were allowed to participate in a democratic process. The 1999 general election was also remarkable, since, it was the election that formed the present Fourth Republic (Ibe, Nwakoby, & Ihediuche, 2024). It was in this context, that Schumpeter (1942) viewed election as the crux of democracy which enables citizens to accept or refuse those who govern them. In a similar dimension, Osaghae (2019) opined that: "Elections are at the core of democracy and democratic governance. They not only offer opportunities for inclusive participation, but also make popular sovereignty meaningful by giving citizens the power to determine who governs them, and lay the basis for accountability and legitimacy".

Elections legitimise democratic processes, creating the opportunity for citizens to confer authority on those selected to govern them and demand accountability from them. In modern democratic states, electoral credibility is required for the attainment of peace, effective governance, and responsiveness of governmental authorities. In Nigeria, where democratic consolidation is still in process after decades of military regime, elections have become both constitutional mandates and political routine (Okeke & Anushiem, 2025). Section 14(2)(a) of Nigeria's amended 1999 Constitution stated that "sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority" (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN), 1999). However, there is an outright disregard for this ideal through recurrent perpetration of electoral malpractice (Okeke & Anushiem, 2025), by the ruling elites. In Nigeria, out of the seven general elections that have been conducted since the inception of the Fourth Republic in May 29, 1999, which are 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023 elections, as well as, several local governments, and off-season elections undertaken in different parts of the country, only the 2011 and 2015 general elections were certified as relatively credible in terms of attaining global best practices (Oni, 2024; Akah et al., 2024; Usman et al., 2023).

The place of money in Nigeria's electioneering campaigns cannot be over-emphasized as it does not create a level playing field for political aspirants, and it has entrenched the ideology that political offices are for sale. Such trend has translated to political exclusionism and absence of belongingness of the citizenry in the political system (Usman et al., 2023). Earlier findings by Adetula (2015, cited in Usman et al., 2023) noted that money, godfatherism, and electoral violence are factors responsible for voting behaviour and political participation in Nigeria. Similarly, Electoral contests in Nigeria are characterized by moneybags and "godfatherism" syndrome, influencing the electoral victory of their favoured candidates, through acts that circumvent due process of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Illicit acts, such as vote buying, bribery, and other financial inducements by politicians, including inducement of security agents, electoral officers, and civil society groups, have become major features of most elections conducted in Nigeria, since the commencement of democratic rule in 1999 (Oni, 2024; Usman et al., 2023). Furthermore, Usman et al. (2023) noted that despite the fact that money is of utmost significance in electioneering campaigns and democratic politics, it has been abused by some political actors who adopted it as instrument for selfishly influencing the political process through vote buying and other similar electoral malpractices, with the overall aim of influencing public policy decisions for their benefits.

The leadership failure of the Nigerian electoral management body (EMB), known as INEC is the major challenge confronting the credibility of elections in Nigeria (Nwosu, 2008). In countries practicing liberal democracy, elections serve as means of achieving democratic governance through citizens' choices in governance, participation in the political process, and ensuring that principles of accountability is upheld by political leaders (Nwosu, 2008). Most African leaders view elections as symbolic exercise for achieving political power for personal gains, rather than as vital democratic process for the emergence of effective political leadership based on popular mandate of the citizenry (Usman et al., 2023).

There is plethora of scholarly studies on electoral systems, election administration, election irregularities and other election related issues. For example, Akah et al. (2024) investigated elections administration and Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) technology: Interrogating the 2023 Nigerian presidential election. Oni (2024) further examined party discipline and the crisis of election administration in contemporary Nigeria. Also, Ugoh and Ukpere (2024) conducted a study on executive interference in the administration of justice at the Election Petition Tribunals in Nigeria: Myths and realities. Similarly, Awhefeada et al. (2023) reviewed the legal regulation of internal party democracy in Nigeria. Furthermore, Usman et al. (2023) carried out a study on exposé on encumbrance in political parties' financing and electoral credibility in Nigeria. In a related development, Agunyai et al. (2024) studied digitalise voting system and electronic transmission of election results in Nigeria: Insights from the 2023 Presidential Election.

In addition, Kantack and Lassi (2021) examined the effects of electoral violence on electoral behaviour and electoral results. Also, Etim et al. (2019) conducted a study centered on electoral system and court verdict. In a similar vein, Patrick (2021) embarked on a study titled: electoral systems, elections management, and implications of electoral act on elections. In a similar development, Ahmad et al. (2022), and Gavin (2023) investigated the impact of the 2023 Nigerian election on democratisation in the African sub-region. The above

studies were centered on electoral laws, electoral management, electoral systems, and democracy. But none of the studies directly relate to implementations, challenges and prospects of electoral laws in Nigeria. This, therefore, constitute the gap which this present study is designed to fill.

The main objective of the study is to examine implementations, issues and opportunities of electoral laws in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: examine the relationship between Nigeria's constitutional provisions and electoral integrity; investigate the effect of Electoral Act 2006 and 2010 on electoral democracy in Nigeria; determine the relationship between Electoral Act 2022 and credible elections in Nigeria; and assess the effect of the Nigeria Police Act of 2020 on peaceful conduct of elections in Nigeria. It specifically, emphasised the reviews of electoral laws in Nigeria so as to identify their challenges and prospects. Also, several research questions were raised in the study, such as: How has the Nigeria's constitutional provisions improved electoral integrity in the country? What is the effect of Electoral Act 2006 and 2010 on electoral democracy in Nigeria? What is the relationship between Electoral Act 2022 and credible elections in Nigeria? How has the Nigeria Police Act of 2020 ensured peaceful conduct of elections in Nigeria?

The study utilises qualitative research design, and adopted the secondary method of data collection, which relies on the use of text books, government documents and publications, academic journal articles, internet sources, and so on. The obtained data were analyzed through the adoption of textual and thematic analysis, which according to Chioke (2022), cited in Ibe and Nnonyelu (2024), is premised on expressive data that present descriptive narrative information aimed at the achievement of a stated research objective. In addition, the interpretation of the secondary data was based on logical presentation of facts and comparative analysis of the issues under investigation. The choice of adoption of secondary data for the study was based on its cost effectiveness in comparison with the primary data collection that is cost intensive, and with rigorous, as well as, complicated methods of data analysis. Also, the article was divided into six sections to fast-track the achievement of its objectives. These include the introduction, review of electoral laws in Nigeria, theoretical framework, discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Review of Electoral Laws in Nigeria

Nigeria is among the African countries with the least capacity to conduct free and fair elections, with political "money bags" and political "godfathers" acting like gladiators. The electoral laws and rules are formalistic and symbolic in the country, easily circumvented or frequently altered; the outcome of these are the emergence of a set of powerless and politically excluded electorates, who are usually at the mercy of the political heavyweights that determines political outcomes in the country. These political barons often impose unpopular candidates into political offices, against the general interest, and they would deploy every conceivable illicit tactic to violate the electoral due process in favour of their chosen candidates, and against the general will of the masses. (Fomunyoh & Obe, 2017, cited in Agunyai et al., 2024). "By some accounts, elections in the country are stage-managed, and outcomes are not determined by how people vote, but are rather manipulated, cooked up, even predetermined, suggesting that elections may be bogus and far from what they are supposed to be. This situation obviously led one scholar to conclude long ago in exasperation that electoral outcomes in Nigeria defy (rational) explanations; the results just have to be accepted as presented" (Osaghae, 2019).

Nigeria has witnessed eight (8) electoral acts and amendments, since the commencement of the Fourth Republic, and between the periods 2001 to 2022. The various acts and amendments are as follows: Electoral Act 2001; Electoral Act 2002; Electoral Act 2003 (amendment); Electoral Act 2006; Electoral Act 2010; Electoral Act 2010 (amendment); Electoral Act No. 2, 2011 (amendment) (Obisesan-Aina, 2023, p. 2). However, in this study, a review of some of the electoral acts, such as the 2006, 2010 and 2022, the 1999 Constitution, and Nigeria Police Act 2020, were carried out.

Nigeria's Constitutional Provisions of 1999, and Electoral Integrity

The foundations of elections are rules that qualify aspirants to contest elections, rules that make citizens eligible to vote, the procedures to be adopted in the voting process, and the categorisation of officials that would preside over the elections (Roger, 2007). In Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the institutional framework designed for the conduct of elections, to ensure fairness, transparency, and

accountability in the electoral process at both the national and state governments' levels, while its counter-part at the state government level known as states independent electoral commission conduct elections for local governments. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), (as amended) is the fundamental law guiding the conduct of elections in Nigeria. Sections 65, 106, 131 and 177 make certain provisions for the criteria aspirants need to meet to be eligible for political contests in Nigeria (CFRN, 1999). A major qualification for vying for political position is that the candidate must be a citizen of Nigeria. Furthermore, the Constitution spelt out in Sections 25, 26 and 27, several methods of citizenship acquisition in the country, such as by birth, registration or naturalization. But the Constitution specifically states that, only Nigerians who are citizens by birth are eligible to contest for the offices of the President and Vice-President, as well as, Governor and Deputy-Governor of a State respectively (CFRN, 1999).

The Constitution stipulates the required ages that make citizens eligible for electoral contest in Nigeria. These are stated as follows: For the office of the President and Vice-President, the required age is forty (40) years; for the office of the Governor and Deputy-Governor, as well as, elections into the House of Senate, the stipulated age is thirty-five (35) years; while for those aspiring to contest elections into the House of Representatives, and the State Houses of Assembly, the age limit is thirty (30) years (CFRN, 1999). However, the constitutional age for contesting elections in Nigeria has been reduced by the recently enacted Not Too Young to Run Act. The age for contesting elections into the House of Assembly and House of Representatives was reduced by the Act from 30 to 25 years old, the Senate and Governorship from 35 to 30 years old, while the President was reduced from 40 to 35 years old (Ibe et al., 2024).

The political parties in Nigeria are under the control of the CFRN of 1999, and the constitutions of the different political parties in the country (Jinadu, 2011). The Constitution made provisions mandating the various political parties, through their respective constitutions and rules to democratically hold periodic elections for the emergence of their principal officers, and party executive members, as well as, other governing bodies. Section 223, of the 1999 CFRN mandates the political parties to put into consideration, the federal character principle in choosing party executive members, and other governing bodies. At the moment, the Nigerian political party leadership structure and composition is directly at variance with this constitutional provisions. For example, the internal crises and institutional fragility being observed in most political parties in recent times, is an indication of lack of internal democracy (Ajayi 2016, cited in Awhefeada et al., 2023).

Political party defection, also referred to as cross carpeting has been traced to the era of colonialism in Nigeria, and its occurrence has become a provocative issue which threatens constitutional democracy and national integration. In 1941, some members of the Nigerian Youth Movement, such as Samuel Akinsanya and other Ijebu Yoruba party members defected after Ernest Ikoli, who was an Ijaw man, came out victorious in a legislative election, leading to the establishment of National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) by Nnamdi Azikiwe. In 1951, Chief Obafemi Awolowo prevailed on the NCNC members from his Yoruba ethnic group in Western Nigeria to align with his party, the Action Group (AG), through mass defections, so as to deny Azikiwe the position of premier despite the electoral victory of NCNC. The foregoing pre-independence electoral issues revealed how ethnic cleavages and actualisation of individual political ambition has pervaded Nigeria's party politics (Jenigho & Itsueli, 2026). It is in this regard, that Obi et al. (2019) observed that the outcome of the 2015-2019 general elections depicts the preponderance of ethnicity as determining factor of voting behaviour in Nigeria.

It is in the light of the foregoing, that Section 68(1)(g) and Section 109(1)(g) (CFRN, 1999) stipulate conditions for defections by members of the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly respectively to other political parties. These Constitutional provisions stated that members of legislatures who defect from the political parties that sponsored them to other political parties would lose their seat, except such defections are due to internal crises in their parties, such as, a division in the party, or the party who sponsored them merges with another political party. So, it is only on this ground that they can defect to other parties without losing their seats. All these are attempts towards ensuring party discipline and internal democracies among Nigerian political parties.

The application of Constitutional provisions to election matters in Nigeria has been under contention since the First Republic. There was a resurgence of such legal contention in the application of the provisions of the 1999 Constitution to the highly contested 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria. The legal contestation associated with the electoral contest was centered on the issue of 25% votes in Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The other political parties that contested with the APC represented by Bola Ahmed Tinubu were of the view that INEC should not declare Tinubu winner of the 2023 Presidential election, since he did not win 25 percent votes at Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in line with the provision of the amended 1999 Constitution. Consequent upon the controversy surrounding the 2023 Presidential election, a renowned legal practitioner in the country, Olisa Agbakoba, SAN, urged INEC to interpret the provisions of Section 134(2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution (amended). This, he stated, is to clarify the position of the Constitution on election score of 25% of votes cast in two-thirds of the 36 states and the FCT, with respect to the conducted election for the office of the President of the Federation (Ibe et al., 2024).

Most scholars and public policy analysts have averred that the position of the Constitution is clear on the issue. The interpretation would have been different if the Constitution had used the term “including”. So, the application of the word “and” explicitly suggests that whoever wins the Presidential election must have obtained 25% votes in the FCT as a prerequisite for winning the election, and be so declared by INEC. Contrary to this position, the Presidential Election Petition Court (PEPC), in its judgment delivered on Wednesday, September 6, 2023, held that 25% votes in FCT is not a requirement for electoral victory at presidential election. “According to Justice Haruna Tsammani, the word “and” as used in section 134 shall be seen “as if it were one of the states of the federation”, adding that the FCT shall be taken into the calculation of the two-thirds of the states of the federation, as if it were the 37 states. Aligning with the PEPC’s view, the Supreme Court held that a candidate does not need to get at least 25% of the votes in the FCT to be Nigeria’s president (Ibe et al., 2024). This and many other judicial pronouncements, with respect to election issues in Nigeria have been an issue of academic discuss, since most of the judicial decisions defile simple logic, and are quite at variance with public opinion. Such judicial pronouncement, and plethora of other similar judicial decisions, with respect to election cases have, in fact, cast aspersion on the nation’s judicial system, and have also translated to voter apathy in the country.

This trend has been reinforced in recent time, following statistical reports of corruption in the Nigerian public sector. For example, Ugoh and Ukpere (2024, p. 8) observed that “the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), assisted by the United Nations Office on Drugs (Crimes) (UNODC) published a report which stated that, Nigeria’s public officials received ₦721 billion bribes in 2023, with court judges topping the list of recipients (NBS/UNODU, 2023). This and other similar reports about the nation’s judiciary has in no small measure undermine the output of the Nigerian Judiciary, and election management body (EMB), the INEC. Similarly, it is in view of the contradictory position of Nigeria’s judiciary, that Karibi-White (2013, cited in Ugoh and Ukpere, 2024, p. 7) observed that “the judiciary was linked to the government’s executive arm and acted as an appendage of the executive.”

Electoral Act 2006, 2010, and Electoral Democracy in Nigeria

As at when Nigeria operated a two-party system in the aborted Third Republic, such as the National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP), which was in line with the 1989 constitution, there were provisions for political parties to be funded by the government rather than by private individuals or group of individuals. There was a shift from this practice in the 2010 Electoral Act which made provisions for political parties to be financed by private individuals or group of individuals (Ayeni, 2019; Electoral Act, 2010). Sections 88 to 93 of the 2010 electoral law spelt out regulations of political parties’ finance and the consequences of defaulting. This provision has created a situation of inequity and inequality, since it left the accessibility of political parties’ affairs in the hands of economic elite who have the capacity to fund political parties at the expense of those who, though, may be people of probity and accountability, and fit for public office, but are unable to meet-up with the financial demands of political parties (Usman et al., 2023; Electoral Act, 2010).

Despite several provisions in the electoral laws restraining unregulated use of money in the electoral process, the poor implementation of these provisions has led to indecent conduct and incredible outcomes of successive elections in Nigeria (Ayeni, 2019). This implies that the number of resources available at a political party’s

disposal certainly determines the result of an election in Nigeria because the system is characterised by transactional politics. It is because of the questionable election process (transactional politics) of vote buying and selling, rigging, electoral violence, political thuggery that undermines electoral credibility in Nigeria (Usman et al., 2023, p. 25).

The political parties' primary election in Nigeria is another aspect where internal democracy is under contention. In this regard, the INEC issued Regulation to guide the conduct of 2018 elections, and such ordered political parties to within 21 days, before their primary elections furnish the Commission in writing, the kind of primary elections they intend to conduct, that is, indicating whether it is direct or indirect, to also state the date, place and time of the elections, the names of the aspirants, as well as, members of the panels, and so on (Saka et al., 2019). In addition, the Commission instructed political parties to notify it of any cancellation of primary elections, not later than seven days before the proposed date of the primary elections. This INEC guidelines are in line with Section 34 of the Electoral Act (2006), which restrain political parties from presenting their parties' nominees based on the whims and caprices of the leaders of the parties. The Act regulates the substitution of parties' nominees based on giving INEC cogent and convincing reasons for such substitution (Awhefeada et al., 2023; Electoral Act, 2006).

The above-mentioned regulations of parties' primary elections have introduced some level of sanity to political parties' internal democracy. Despite these institutional restraints on political parties' primary elections in Nigeria, there have been recorded flagrant violation of electoral due process with respect to primary elections as spelt out by INEC. It is in this context that Senator Shehu Sani observed that:

There are three sure ways through which a candidate can emerge under the All Progressive Congress (APC), either the candidate knows someone in the presidency, who can put a call across to the members of the National Working Committee of the party to include the candidate's name, a candidate can also emerge if he is in the good book of a governor who in turn compels the party chairman to substitute some other person's name with the intending candidate; or where the intending candidate has enough money to pay his way through (Sunday Tribune, 2018, 25, cited in Awhefeada et al., 2023, p. 373).

There is a plethora of litigation concerning primary elections manipulation by most party leaders, which have been decided in favour of the petitioner. Nevertheless, there have been recorded contradictory cases, where some courts have presided in primary election cases in manners quite at variance with simple logic and public opinion. Some notable cases are Amaechi versus Omehia, and Machina versus Lawan. For example:

The notorious case between Bashir Machina and Ahmad Lawan highlights one of the irregularities of 2022 party primaries. Having failed to secure his party's nomination to run in the presidential election, Mr. Lawan tried to reclaim the party's ticket for Yobe North, a district he has represented since 2007. Despite Mr. Machina's victory at the May 28 primary election, the leadership of the APC submitted Lawan's name as candidate for the district. Ruling on the matter, a Federal High Court in Damaturu, Yobe State ruled that Ahmad Lawan, is not the candidate of the APC. The court held that Bashir Machina was the authentic candidate of the party having won the legally recognised primary election supervised by INEC. This was also upheld by the appellate court. To the chagrin of concerned citizens and in contravention of the (Electoral) Act, the Supreme Court declared Ahmad Lawan as the authentic candidate of the APC for Yobe North Senatorial District for the February 25 general elections. In the majority decision, inundated with arid technicality, Justice Nweze said Mr. Machina ought to have commenced his suit by a writ of summons going by the allegations of fraud levelled against the APC in transmitting Mr. Lawan's name to INEC (Ibe et al., 2024, p. 97).

Similarly, as a measure towards ensuring adherence to due process in the nation's electoral process, "political parties have been barred from replacing candidates whose names have been given to INEC by virtue of section 33 of the Electoral Act, 2010" (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2024, p. 13). The inadequacies observed in the 2010 Electoral Act, and the zeal of Nigerians towards the attainment of democratic consolidation led to the clamour and agitation for a new Electoral Act, a trend that eventually dovetailed to the Electoral Act 2022.

Implications of Electoral Act 2022 on Credible Elections in Nigeria

The Electoral Act of 2022, the 1999 Constitution and INEC's own guidelines constituted the legal framework for the conduct of the 2023 general elections (Obisesan-Aina, 2023). The INEC was mandated by the 2022 Electoral Act to maintain a National Electronic Register of Election Results which shall be a different database or repository of polling unit results, including all collated election results of the various elections conducted by the Commission. The Register of Election Results shall be kept in electronic format by the Commission at its national headquarters, which would be made available to any member of the public upon request and payment of prescribed fees (Ibe et al., 2024). Contrary to Electoral Act 2010, the Electoral Act 2022 mandates the presiding officers to use a smart card reader for the accreditation of voters, so as to verify, confirm or authenticate the personal identity of the voter. The INEC prescribed the Bimodal Verification Accreditation System (BVAS) in the 2023 general elections. The BVAS is an electronic machine with the capacity to read Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), and verify voters through their fingerprints, so as to authenticate eligibility for voting in any designated polling unit. The application of BVAS is based on scanning the barcode/QR code on the PVC/Voter's register, or entering the last six digits of the Voter Identity Number, or typing into the device the last name of the voter to verify and authenticate the voter (Ibe et al., 2024; Obisesan-Aina, 2023; Electoral Act, 2022).

Furthermore, the Act empowers INEC to exercise discretion in prescribing methods of transferring results and the total number of accredited voters. In addition, Section 51 of the Act stipulates that the total number of voters which have been accredited will be used as a yard stick for determining over-voting at various election tribunals. In other words, in a situation where the total number of votes cast at any election in a particular polling unit is more than the total number of voters that were accredited in that particular polling unit, the presiding officer is mandated to cancel the result of such election conducted in that polling unit. This digitization in the voting process brought about by Electoral Act 2022 is a major improvement on the previous electoral laws, such as 2006, 2010, and so on (Ibe et al., 2024; Electoral Act, 2022).

As a measure to enhance internal democracy of political parties, the Act stipulates that "every registered political party shall maintain a register of its members in both hard and soft copy. Accordingly, such register must be made available by parties to the Commission not later than 30 days before parties' primaries, congresses or conventions" (Ibe et al., 2024, 91; Obisesan-Aina, 2023). In addition, with respect to political parties changing candidates, the Act stipulates that, "a political party shall not be allowed to change or substitute its candidate whose name has been submitted in compliance with section 29 of this Act, except in the case of death or withdrawal by the candidate" – provided that in the case of such withdrawal or death of a candidate, the political party affected shall, within 14 days of the occurrence of the event, hold a fresh primary election to produce and submit a fresh candidate to the Commission for the election concerned" (Ibe et al., 2024, p. 92). The implication of the above legal stipulations of Electoral Act 2022 is to reduce electoral tension and conflicts in political parties due to manipulation of parties' electoral procedures by political "money bags" who impose candidates that are not duly registered members of the parties, just to achieve their selfish and parochial interests.

There is a provision in Section 84(12) of the Electoral Act (2022), which has become a subject of controversy in recent times. It stipulates that "no political appointee at any level shall be a voting delegate or be voted for at conventions or congresses (party primary elections) of any political party". This provision states that any person currently holding or occupying any political office at either federal, state or local governments shall not be eligible to vote or be voted for at the various political parties' conventions or congresses as party flag bearer. The only available option for such an individual is to first resign his political appointment, before the party primaries. But this Section of the Electoral Act 2022 has been contradicted by Section 84(3) of the same Electoral Act 2022, which gives INEC the right to exclude an affected political party's candidate for the political position he/she is vying for (Awhefeada, Okumagba, & Aloamaka, 2023, p. 373; Electoral Act, 2022). This discretion granted the electoral umpire to give waiver to political appointees to vote and be voted for in primary elections can be abused for personal gains. In fact, this provision is a threat to democratic consolidation in Nigeria, considering the political and bureaucratic corruption which have characterised the country in recent times.

Similarly, there has been agitation in several quarters about Section 84(12) of the Electoral Act (2022), which applies only to political appointees, but not to elected political office holders. It has been observed that the above

stated section of the law is appropriate considering the fact that any vacuum created in the office of the elected office holders would have adverse consequences on the nation's public administration and economy, and the only constitutional means of filling such positions is for INEC to conduct elections. That, of course, is an expensive venture which the government would not want to undertake, hence, the framers of that law deemed it necessary to exclude them from such provisions of the Electoral Act 2022 (Awhefeada et al., 2023), to ensure uninterrupted and effective public sector performance, which Ifaka and Unufe (2021, p. 21) viewed as "the measurement of actual output, results or total products against the expected or anticipated target."

Most of the elections conducted in Nigeria's Fourth Republic have been marred with gross electoral irregularities and malpractices. These make them fall short of global best practices. To resolve the challenges of lack of credibility of elections and votes counting, INEC, in line with the provisions of the Electoral Act 2022, signed into law by former President Muhammadu Buhari introduced the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) to be applied to the voting process in Nigeria, and Result Viewing (IReV) portal as a dedicated web portal for the public to view polling units' results in real time as soon as they are finalized on election day (Electoral Act, 2022). This innovative approach to the conduct of elections brought about by Electoral Act 2022, further gave stronger legal basis to the application of modern digital technology to elections in the country, a trend that has increased voters' confidence in the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process, as evidenced in the 2023 elections. The Commission persistently assured the citizens that all election results would be electronically transmitted to IReV portal from every polling unit in the country. As a result of assurances of transparency and credibility giving by INEC, that the new technology would be deployed to help eradicate breach of due process observed in previous elections, the electorates participated massively in the 2023 general election. Despite the digitalisation of the voting process in 2023 general elections, it has been adjudged as one of the worst elections conducted in Nigeria's Fourth Republic which commenced in 1999 (Oni, 2024; Obisesan-Aina, 2023).

Many Nigerians expressed disappointment over the selective transmission of the election results to the IReV portal from the various polling units in the country, (especially that of the presidential election) (Ibe, Nwakoby et al., 2024). "It was observed that election officials in many polling units were unable to access the IReV portal and to upload results of the presidential election. There were reports of election officials, who either refused or were unable to upload results. This failure of the IReV produced allegations of results fraud by INEC and create aspersion on the integrity of the general elections. In addition, the failure of INEC to fulfill a contract with the Nigerian people, damaged the reliability of the electoral process and raised suspicions of possible results manipulation" (Ibe et al., 2024, p. 98). Despite the fact that the Electoral Act 2022 provides for INEC's increased financial autonomy (Obisesan-Aina, 2023, p. 4). The above INEC leadership challenges leading to manipulation of elections results indicate that the optimal performance of institutional frameworks in Nigeria, such as the INEC and the electoral laws is dependent on inculcation of effective leadership skills in the leaders and policy makers in the Nigerian Public Service (Odeh & Unufe, 2019).

Nigeria Police Act 2020, and Peaceful Conduct of Elections in Nigeria

The Nigeria Police Act 2020 has contributed in no small measures to the implementation of the Electoral Act 2022, as a way of reinforcing the Electoral Act 2022, Section 126(3) of the Police Act highlights certain conduct on election day that, which are deemed offensive (Ibe et al., 2024; Nigeria Police Act 2020). For example, Subsection (1) provides that "No person shall do any of the following acts or things in a polling unit or within a distance of 300 metres of a polling unit on the date on which an election is held." Canvass for votes; solicit for the vote of any voter; persuade any voter not to vote for any particular candidate; persuade any voter not to vote at the election; shout slogans concerning the election; be in possession of any offensive weapon, or wear any dress, or have any facial or other decoration which in any event is calculated to intimidate voters; exhibit, wear or tender any notice, symbol, photograph or party card referring to the election; use any vehicle bearing colour or symbol of a political party by any means whatsoever; loiter without lawful excuse after voting or after being refused to vote; snatch or destroy any election materials; and Blare siren (Ibe et al., 2024, p. 95; Nigeria Police Act, 2020).

Despite the aforementioned role of the Nigerian police in ensuring that elections in the country are credible, the reverse has been the case. For example, Osaghae (2019) noted that: "Ballot box snatching, thuggery, dubious

cancellations of results and use of police, military and security agents to intimidate opponents, and suspected manipulation and falsification of results were reported all over the country.” The implications of these observations include the fact that the Nigerian police have failed to enforce the electoral laws that are within its jurisdiction. This aforementioned ineffectiveness of the Nigerian Federal (centralised) police system indicates the need for a state (decentralised) police arrangement in Nigeria as a better policing option due to vast local knowledge of state police personnel, and trust reposed in them by local inhabitants. These attributes would increase their performance as observed in the United States of America (USA), Argentina, Mexico, Columbia, among others (Odeh, 2023, p. 34).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Investment Theory of Party Rivalry

This theory is also known as Investment theory of politics. Ferguson Thomas propounded the investment theory of politics in 1995. The theory argues that business elites have taken over political institutions rather than voters. According to the theory, public policy is a product of competing capitalist elite’s interests rather than voters, since the political system has been hijacked by political “money bags” who exclude the majority of the citizens from participation due to the money-based nature of the political landscape. The theory stresses that political parties and their activities revolve around economic interests. The theory further states that political parties act as agents of economic elite and do not focus on interest articulation and aggregation of the masses. According to the theory, since majority of the people have no financial fortunes to play a meaningful role in politics using the political parties as platform, the few wealthy elite will eventually dominate the political system (Usman et al., 2023). The theory contends that political parties are not merely associations of people that seek votes from citizens to create governments that will represent the general interest, but they are associations of few powerful elites who search for electoral candidates, they would sponsor to win elections. The winner of the election, upon his assumption of office would devote his attention to satisfying the personal interests of his or her sponsor at the expense of the general interests (Ferguson, 1995).

The theory posits that political parties are more likely to manipulate public opinion to suit those economic elite who have invested money on the parties rather than allowing it reflect the views of the ordinary citizens (Ferguson, 1995). The electoral candidates most of whom are usually sponsored by the political “money bags” must not uphold views that are at variance with the views of their patrons. Likewise, voters are not able to pull their funds together to meet-up with the expensive demands of political parties, with respect to sponsoring candidates of their choices, and so accept whatever options presented to them by the economic ruling elite (Usman et al., 2023). This is the state Nigeria political atmosphere has assumed, as the electorates have become helpless in the face of incredible electoral practices and judicial recklessness in terms of handling electoral cases.

The application of this theory to this study is based on the fact that the economic elite in Nigeria who act as political godfathers flagrantly violate Nigerian electoral laws and processes through massive rigging of election results, sponsorship of electoral thuggery and other forms of intimidation of opponents, vote buying, and so on. They literally use their economic power to buy political power and transform themselves into ruling elites for the sake of primitive accumulation of the nation’s common wealth through their protégé that occupy various political offices. And the overall implications of these actions are ineffective implementation of electoral laws leading to a challenging shrinking of the nation’s democratic space.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this article revealed that electoral laws and rules in Nigeria are formalistic and symbolic, easily circumvented or frequently altered by the ruling elites for their personal gains. This finding is supported by Ukwu et al. (2025), who observed that the deficiencies in Nigeria’s electoral laws have given rise to series of electoral malpractices, which greatly undermined democratic consolidation and legitimacy of state institutions. These occurrences are contrary to the views of Ibrahim and Adeyemi (2020), cited in Ajayi and Olumorin (2025), who argued that elections are instrumental to measurement of public accountability, which assist in determining the efficiency of governmental institutions. Furthermore, the political gladiators often impose unpopular

candidates into political offices at the expense of general interests, and would deploy every conceivable illicit tactic to violate the electoral laws in favour of their preferred candidates (Fomunyoh & Obe, 2017, cited in Agunyai et al., 2024).

The findings from this article, also show that most of the judicial decisions concerning election results dispute in Nigeria have always defied simple logic, and quite at variance with public opinion; which have cast aspersions on the nation's judicial system, as well as, leading to voter apathy. Example is the Supreme Court judgment in the disputed Nigerian 2023 Presidential election (Ibe et al., 2024, 99; Karibi-White, 2013, cited in Ugoh & Ukpere, 2024, p. 7). This observation is anti-thetical to democracy, since the citizens' fundamental rights that are supposed to be protected by the judiciary include freedom to Participate in both the electoral and political processes without recourse to ethnicity, class, gender and ability (Shittu & Odeyemi, 2025). Similarly, the rule of law is the framework that translates the electoral process to democratic governance (Ikoko & Latif, 2025). Therefore, the role of the judiciary in electoral democracy cannot be overemphasized.

Further findings from the article revealed that the inability of INEC to regulate the use of money in the electoral process has created a situation of inequity and inequality, since it left the accessibility of political parties' affairs in the hands of economic elites who have the capacity to fund political parties at the expense of those who, though, may be people of probity and accountability, but are unable to meet-up with the financial demands of political parties (Usman et al., 2023). This occurrence has led to indecent conduct and incredible electoral outcomes in Nigeria (Usman et al., 2023; Ayeni, 2019). Nevertheless, the financing of political parties is essential for credible and transparent elections. However, excessive and huge political finances with sources that cannot be identified can engender corruption and loss of morale among political actors and the citizens, thereby frustrating democratic process and sustainable development. Therefore, the reliance on corrupt free money for electioneering campaigns and other logistics lead to consolidation of democratic process and establishment of democratic values (Usman et al., 2023; Nwangwu & Ononogbu, 2016).

It was observed in the study that Electoral Act of 2022, which enacted electronic transmission of election results further empowered INEC to exercise discretion in prescribing methods of transferring results and the total number of accredited voters (Electoral Act, 2022), despite INEC antecedent in the conduct of incredible elections in Nigeria, which earlier necessitated the enactment of the new digitized electoral law (Ibe et al., 2024). It was noted in the study that this section of the law was the bane of the 2023 Presidential Election in which INEC refused to transmit the results of the Presidential Election electronically, while it electronically transmitted those of the Houses of Legislature the very same day, a move many critics attributed to electoral fraud perpetrated by the electoral umpire, the INEC, who was supposed to uphold the integrity of the election results. This failure of INEC to fulfill a contract with the Nigerian people with respect to conducting credible elections, negatively affected the reliability of the electoral process and threatened massive voters' participation in future elections (Ibe, Nwakoby, & Ihediuche, 2024, p. 98).

In addition, Asogwa et al. (2021), cited in Anyadike et al. (2025) noted that the application of high-level technological devices in electoral conduct has been truncated by a series of errors, rent-seeking, lack of political will, unethical conduct perpetrated by officials of election management bodies (EMD), and so on. These issues, they noted, undermined the capacity of EMB to deliver credible and legitimate elections. And embarking on electoral processes, such as deployment of technology in electoral operations, without resolving fundamental socio-political issues embedded in elections, would lead to greater challenges, instead of enhanced strategies of conducting elections, as evidenced in Nigeria.

The study further noted that the Electoral Act 2022 stipulated that any person currently holding or occupying any political office at either federal, state or local government shall not be eligible to vote or be voted for at the various political parties' conventions or congresses as party flag bearer (Electoral Act, 2022). The only available option for such an individual is to first resign his political appointment, before the party primaries. But this Section of the Electoral Act has been further contravened by Section 84(3) Electoral Act (2022), which "gives INEC the right to exclude an affected political party's candidate for the political position he/she is vying for" (Awhefeada, 2023, p. 373), despite the public distrust on INEC. This the article observed could further aggravate the existing political apathy in Nigeria, since INEC officials could abuse this privilege for personal gains. Several

anti-corruption agencies put in place to combat corruption and abuse of due process in Nigeria have not yielded the desired results. For example, the Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission (ICPC) has failed its responsibility of eradicating corrupt practices in the nation's public space (Odeh & Odigie, 2021).

Other findings from the study revealed that Section 126 (3) of the Police Act highlights certain conduct on Election Day that are deemed offensive (Ibe et al., 2024; Nigeria Police Act, 2020). For example, Subsection (1) provides that "No person shall do any of the following acts or things in a polling unit or within a distance of 300 metres of a polling unit on the date on which an election is held": Canvass for votes; solicit for the vote of any voter; persuade any voter not to vote for any particular candidate; among others (Ibe et al., 2024, 95; Nigeria Police Act 2020). Despite the aforementioned role of the Nigerian police in ensuring that elections in the country are credible. The reverse has been the case, as observed by Osaghae (2019) who noted a great discrepancy between the Nigerian police conducts during elections and the ideal police conducts enshrined in the Police Act 2020. The implications of these observations are that the police have failed in its responsibilities of ensuring law and others during elections. So, observations in this article indicate that the above paradoxical acts of the police and other security agencies with respect to enforcing election laws in Nigeria have further contributed to shrinking democratic and civic spaces in the country, a trend that has made bad governance and its concomitant underdevelopment intractable.

CONCLUSION

Election involves the choice of political leaders by the electorates through voting to represent them in a legislative assembly or to administer the affairs of the state on their behalf. This article examined implementations, issues and opportunities of electoral laws in Nigeria, using the secondary method of data collection and textual analysis of the data. In addition, several electoral laws were reviewed, such as The CFRN 1999 (As Amended); Electoral Act 2006, 2010; Electoral Act, 2022; and the Police Act, 2020. Investment Theory of Party Rivalry was adopted as theoretical framework. The findings from the research article revealed that the poor implementation of Nigeria's Electoral laws is the bane of credible elections and good governance in country. Several policy recommendations were highlighted in the article, such as enactment of a new legislation that would no longer make the President of Nigeria the appointing authority of the Chairman of INEC and the various resident electoral commissioners, rather, a competitive process that would be piloted by the National Judicial Commission, the National Assembly, the Nigerian Bar Association, the Nigerian Labour Congress and other strategic agencies should be put in place for the emergence of the countries' electoral umpire

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequent upon the above research findings, the following recommendations were advanced as panacea to implementation challenges of electoral laws in Nigeria to fast-track her democratic consolidation and achievement of sustainable development.

- a. There should be adequate political education of the citizenry by both the government and civil society associations to equip the masses to become active participants in the electoral process.
- b. Also, there should be adequate sensitization of the citizenry on the paramount importance of constituting themselves into virile civil associations at various levels, and in addition to, becoming active participants in the electoral process, demand good governance and accountability from the political office holders and other concerned public agencies.
- c. The Government should embark on regulations of political parties' spending to prevent dominance by elite political gladiators to the detriment of others.
- d. There should be an enactment of a new legislation that would no longer make the President of Nigeria the appointing authority of the Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the various resident electoral commissioners, rather, a competitive process that would be piloted by the National Judicial

Commission, the National Assembly, the Nigerian Bar Association, the Nigerian Labour Congress and other strategic agencies should be put in place for the emergence of the countries' electoral umpire.

- e. The various anti-corruption agencies should be strengthened so as to acquire the capacity to drastically eradicate the menace of vote buying and other economic crimes associated with the conduct of elections.
- f. The various mechanisms of holding political office holders accountable, such as the judiciary, public complaints commission, and so on, should be strengthened to increase the risk and decrease the benefits of breach of due process and accountability in public governance.

REFERENCES

1. Agunyai, S. C., Phago, K., & Ebirim, S. I. (2024). digitalize voting system and electronic transmission of election results in Nigeria: Insights from the 2023 Presidential Election. *African Renaissance, Special Issue*, 111-133. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.31920/25165305/2024/sin2a5>
2. Ahmad, S., Zia, U., Fatima, A., Uddin, Z., & Shah, F. A. (2022). Presidential election in Nigeria 2023 trial and tribulation of democracy. [PJAR]. *Propel Journal of Academic Research*, 2(2), 1–11. DOI: 10.55464/pjar.v2i2.38
3. Ajayi, O. C., & Olumorin, O. M. (2025). Technological innovations and the outcomes of the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria. *African Journal of Democracy and Election Research*. 5(2), 47–68. DOI:10.31920/2752-602X/2025/v5n2a3
4. Akah, A.U., Edino, O. F., Agbor, U. I., Nwagboso, C.I., Musa, A., Adams, J.A. & Ekpo, S.O. (2024). Elections Administration and Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) technology: Interrogating the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election. *International Journal of Public Administration in the Digital Age*, 11(1), 1-30.
5. Anyadike, N. O., Eze, M. I., Alaku, E. C., Eze, O. C., & Asogwa, S. N. (2025). Militarised democracy and its security challenges in South East Nigeria, 1999-2023 *Agathos*, 16(2), 79-82. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.17490003
6. Awhefeada, U. V., Okumagba, E. O., & Aloamaka, P. C. (2023). Legal regulation of internal party democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Liberty and International Affairs*, 9(2), 369-384. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.47305/JLIA2392476a>
7. Ayeni, O.O. (2019) Commodification of politics: Party funding and electoral contest in Nigeria. *SAGE Open* 9(2). <http://10.1177/2158244019855855>
8. Beauchamp, T., & Childress, J. (1994). *Principles of biomedical ethics* (7th Ed.). Oxford University Press.
9. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) (Promulgation) 1999 No. 24.
10. Electoral Act 2022. Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette, 109(61).
11. Electoral Act 2010. Federal Republic of Nigeria. Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, Abuja, Nigeria.
12. Electoral Act 2006. The Federal Government Printer, Lagos, Nigeria.
13. Etim, E., Akah, A., & Agbaji, D. (2019). The influence of politics over law: Electorates' perception of the Akwa Ibom state election petition tribunal and court verdicts. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 1(5), 340-344. DOI: 10.31142/ijtsrd25292
14. Ferguson, T. (1995). *Golden rule: The investment theory of party competition and the logic of money-driven political systems*, 1st Edition. University of Chicago Press
15. Gavin, M. (2023). The continental implications of Nigeria's elections. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/articles/continental-implications-nigeria-elections>.
16. Ibe, I. U., Nwakoby, C. S., & Ihediuche, T. M. (2024). Electoral laws and elections in Nigeria: Enthroning a new legal framework for the conduct of elections in Nigeria. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka Journal of Private Property Law*, 1(2), 85-101.
17. Ibe, R.C., & Nnonyelu, N. A. (2024). Pension management in Nigeria: Challenges and solutions in view. *International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, Peace and Conflict Studies (IJMSSPCS)*, 7(2), 201 – 209.
18. Ifaka, J.O., & Unufe, J. (2021). The impact of manpower training on staff development in the Nigerian public service. *ESUT Journal of Management Sciences*, 14 (1&2), 19-31.

19. Ikoko, M.O., & Latif, D. (2025). Analysis of factors impacting electoral integrity in Africa between 2006–2023 - Examining the association between free and fair election and rule of law. *PLoS One*, 20(10), e0334505. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0334505
20. Jinadu, L.A. (2011). Inter-party dialogue in Nigeria: Examining the past, present and future. Lead Paper presented at the Inaugural DGD Political Parties Dialogue Series, Abuja.
21. Jenigbo, P. E., & Itsuelli, P. O. (2026). Party Defections and the Electoral Mandate in Nigeria: A Human Rights and Human Security Analysis. *African Journal of Law and Justice System*, 5(1), 247–269. DOI:10.31920/2753-3123/2026/v5n1a14
22. Kantack, B., & Lassi, T. (2021). Ballots, bombs, and bullets: The effects of mass shootings and terrorist attacks on electoral behavior. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties*. Advance online publication. DOI: 10.1080/17457289.2021.1872583
23. Ndisika, M., & Odeh, L.O. (2021). Administration policy and techniques with effective leadership skills for managing change. *Developing Country Studies*, 11(8), 40–48. DOI:10.7176/DCS/118-05. www.iiste.org
24. Nigeria Police Act 2020. The Federal Government Printer, Lagos, Nigeria.
25. Nwangwu, C., & Ononogbu, O. A. (2016). Electoral Laws and Monitoring of Campaign Financing during the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 17(4), 614–634. DOI:10.1017/S1468109916000268
26. Nwosu, B. U. (2008). Elections and the two publics: A theoretical discourse on the contradictions of liberal democracy in Africa. In Sabo Bako (ed.), *Electoral reforms, political succession and democratization in Africa*, 2, Jos: Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA) and Mangut Academic Publishers.
27. Obi, S.E, Sekpe, S.S, & Stephenson, G.L. (2019). Electoral violence and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's 4th Republic: An assessment of 2011 and 2015 gubernatorial election in Benue State. *Journal of Social and Administrative Science*, 3(1), 144–158.
28. Obisesan-Aina, P. (2023). Reviewing the Nigerian 2022 electoral act: What it meant for the 2023 elections. Center for Democracy and Development Report Paper.
29. Odeh, L.O. (2023). #Endsars protests and the imperative for state police in Nigeria. *ESUT Journal of Management Sciences*, 16 (Special Edition), 34–52. <https://www.rhycekerex.org/Journal?j=Ng==&&vid=Mjg=>
30. Odeh, L.O., & Odigie, C. (2021). Challenges and Prospects of Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission of Nigeria. *South-South Journal of Humanities and international Studies*, 4(4), 17–30.
31. Odeh, L. O., & Unufe, J. (2019). Due process and accountability mechanisms in the Nigerian public service. *Lapai Journal of International Politics*, 5(4 & 5), 162–174.
32. Okeke, O. E., & Anushiem, U. M. (2025). Electoral Malpractice as Treasonable Felony: Constitutional Reappraisal under Nigerian Law. *African Journal of Democracy and Election Research*, 5(2), 69–91. DOI:10.31920/2752-602X/2025/v5n2a4
33. Oni, E. O. (2024). Party Discipline and the Crisis of Election Administration in Contemporary Nigeria. *African Renaissance*, 21(3), 209–227. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/25165305/2024/21n3a10>
34. Osaghae, E. E. (2019). Rethinking Elections in Nigeria. Being a Lead Paper presented at the 32nd Annual Conference of the NPSA, 23rd July. Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
35. Patrick, C. S. (2021). District magnitude, electoral coordination, and legislative fragmentation. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties*, 33(3), 462–478. DOI: 10.1080/17457289.2021.1952210
36. Roger, S. (2007). *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of political thought*, 3rd edition. Macmillan Press.
37. Saka, L., Adebiyi, M.O., & Bakare, A.R. (2019). Political parties and opposition politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 8 (1), 537–549.
38. Schumpeter, J. (1942). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*. Allen and Unwin.
39. Shelby, T. (2016). *Dark ghettos: Injustice, dissent, and reform*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
40. Shittu, A. K., & Odeyemi, T. I. (2025). From exclusion to inclusion: Assessing disability accessibility and participation in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. *International Journal of Disability and Social Justice*, 5(3), 357–376. DOI:10.13169/intljofdissocjus.5.3.0005

41. Titus, U., Aluko, B. (2024). Election, Technology and Political Participation in Nigeria: A Theoretical Review. *Journal of Digital Art and Humanities*, 5(2), 3-15. DOI:10.33847/27128149.5.2
42. Ugoh, S. C., & Ukpere, W. I. (2024). Executive interference in the administration of justice at the Election Petition Tribunals in Nigeria: Myths and realities. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 13(3), 5-22. <https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v13i3.861>
43. Ukwu, F.E., Ayaogu, V.N., Mamah, C. I. Ojonta, P. N. (2025). Electoral Reforms and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria. *African Journal of Democracy and Election Research*, 5(1), 524. DOI:10.31920/2752-602X/2025/v5n1a1
44. Usman, S. O., Enojo, E. K., Ujah, J. S., Kakwagh, V., Ocholi, I. U., Esomchi, O. S., & Obi, S. (2023). An exposé on encumbrance in political parties' financing and electoral credibility in Nigeria. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*, 8(9), 1-36.