

ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES AND THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW OF THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

Daniel Chukwuma Nzereogu, PhD* & Jessica Ogechi Nnolum**

Abstract

The 2023 presidential election in Nigeria is a central event that has significantly impacted the nation's democratic progress. While Nigeria has made strides in consolidating its democratic institutions since transitioning from military rule in 1999, the electoral process continues to be plagued by persistent malpractices. These malpractices, including voter intimidation, vote-buying, ballot stuffing, and falsification of election results, have raised concerns about the credibility and fairness of elections in the country, posing a severe threat to the integrity of the democratic framework. The erosion of public trust, potential threats to political stability, and legitimacy concerns for elected officials further compound the repercussions of these issues. These problems collectively jeopardize the dividends of democracy in various ways. Voter suppression and legal inconsistencies lead to inequitable representation, impacting resource distribution and public services. Compromised elections also fuel policy instability, hindering long-term development. Ultimately, these challenges weaken democratic values and governance systems, emphasizing the crucial need to address them for the preservation of democracy's dividends. Hence this work would focus on examining the historical context of electoral malpractices in Nigeria and their impact on the country's democratic journey, analyzing the challenges faced by Nigerian democracy, with a focus on the 2023 presidential election, investigating the factors contributing to electoral malpractices and their effects on the legitimacy of the electoral process, evaluating the role of electoral institutions, civil society, and international actors in addressing electoral malpractices and strengthening democratic governance.

Keywords: Democracy, Elections, Malpractices, Citizens, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria, a West African nation, has been on a persistent journey to establish and strengthen its democratic system since gaining independence in 1960.¹ The pivotal transition to democracy in 1999 marked a significant milestone in the nation's political history. However, the path to democratic consolidation has been marred by recurring challenges related to electoral malpractices.

In a historical context of Nigeria's democratic evolution, scholars have consistently highlighted the prevalence of electoral malpractices in past elections. Osaghae and Suberu, for instance, underscored that during the early post-independence era, Nigeria grappled with frequent electoral irregularities, which eroded the legitimacy of elected governments.² Furthermore, Imhonopi argue that despite Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999, electoral malpractices like voter intimidation, ballot stuffing, and manipulation of election results continued to taint subsequent electoral processes.³

The challenges confronting Nigeria's democracy have been a subject of extensive academic inquiry. Among these challenges, corruption stands out as a formidable threat, as noted by scholars like Adesokan and Olaniyan. Political corruption not only compromises the integrity of electoral procedures but also erodes citizens' trust in the government.⁴ Additionally, the intricate web of ethnic and regional divisions presents another critical hurdle that shapes Nigeria's electoral landscape.⁵ These divisions often sway voting patterns and can escalate tensions during elections.

Efforts to bolster democratic participation and curb electoral malpractices hinge on voter education and engagement. Zhang for instance, underscores the imperative need for effective voter education programs that equip citizens with knowledge about their rights and responsibilities as voters.⁶ Moreover, voter turnout is intricately linked to socioeconomic disparities and poverty levels. Scholars have observed that higher levels of poverty correlate with lower voter turnout, rendering vulnerable populations more susceptible to manipulation and inducements during electoral processes.⁷

As Nigeria grapples with these multifaceted challenges within its democratic framework, it becomes

increasingly important to critically assess the impact of these issues in the context of the 2023 presidential elections. Understanding the dynamics and repercussions of electoral malpractices in this specific electoral event is essential for charting a path toward a more robust and resilient democracy in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

This work has the following objectives-

1. Examining the historical context of electoral malpractices in Nigeria and their impact on the country's democratic journey.
2. Analyzing the challenges faced by Nigerian democracy, with a focus on the 2023 presidential election.
3. Investigating the factors contributing to electoral malpractices and their effects on the legitimacy of the electoral process.
4. Evaluating the role of electoral institutions, civil society, and international actors in addressing electoral malpractices and strengthening democratic governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has experienced a complex relationship between electoral processes and democracy. The country's journey towards democratic governance has been marked by periods of promises and challenges, including significant issues related to electoral malpractices.

The book "Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic" by Richard A. Joseph underscores how the persistent aspiration for a democratic political system in Nigeria faces obstacles. These obstacles arise from the deepening of ethnic, linguistic, and regional identities, which can complicate the path toward democracy.⁸

The book also explores how individuals from various social strata contribute to the perpetuation of prebendal practices. In doing so, it offers insights into the challenges facing constitutional democracy not only in Nigeria but also in other nations confronting similar issues.

"Nigeria's Critical Election" by John A Ayoade and Adeoye A Akinsanya highlights the pivotal role of elections in Nigeria's political history and how they have often contributed to instability and regime changes.⁹ It points out that elections in Nigeria have frequently fallen short of meeting the criteria of citizen acceptability and electoral neutrality. Rather, they have pushed the country to the edge, resulting in significant constitutional and political crises. It further emphasizes how Nigeria's electoral history has been marred by instability, irregularities, and power struggles, with some elections being viewed as better than others but still leaving much room for improvement.

"Crippled Giant" by Eghosa Osaghae is a well-regarded book that provides an excellent insight on Nigerian political history. Here Osaghae presents a balanced and neutral perspective on Nigeria's politics, economy, and foreign relations. His writing is detailed and informative, providing insights into various aspects of the country's history and governance. One of the key conclusions drawn by Osaghae is that Nigeria's challenges are not recent but have deep-rooted structural origins dating back to the colonial era.¹⁰ This insight underscores the importance of understanding historical factors in analyzing Nigeria's political landscape. "Crippled Giant" therefore offers a well-written, coherent narrative and balanced analysis of Nigeria's political history from independence highlighting the enduring structural issues that have shaped the nation's challenges.

Ekhosuehi K. Osazuwa in his most recent publication “Nigeria is Sick, who cares?” provides an introspective overview of Nigeria, a nation rich in natural resources and potential but facing numerous challenges. It highlights the contrast between Nigeria’s abundant capabilities, including educated citizens and artistic achievements, and the difficulties its people endure, such as insecurity and leadership issues.¹¹ The author emphasizes the need for change and suggests that the word “Obidient” symbolizes hope for a new Nigeria, especially in the context of the just concluded 2023 elections. It critiques religious and traditional leaders who support ineffective political leaders while citizens face threats from various sources. The book underlines the importance of unity and obedience to the call for a “New Nigeria.” It suggests that by coming together under a common vision, represented by the term “Obidient,” there is still hope for a better future where Nigeria serves its citizens’ interests with the hashtag “#NigeriaForNigerians.”¹²

“Nigeria’s Flawed Electoral System: The History of Bad Elections in Nigeria” is a comprehensive ebook that traces the evolution of Nigeria’s electoral system from its independence to the present day. It extensively covers the persistent electoral malpractices that have marred Nigeria’s democratic progress, examining their detrimental effects on the nation and proposing solutions for establishing a credible and transparent electoral system.

The ebook offers a historical perspective, detailing the flaws in Nigeria’s electoral system over time. It dives deep into the various forms of electoral malpractices such as voter suppression, political violence, and election rigging. The challenges posed by these practices are thoroughly analyzed. The ebook scrutinizes the roles of key political actors, including political parties, the government, and the electoral commission, in perpetuating electoral malpractices. It explores how these malpractices have affected Nigeria’s social, economic, and political development, emphasizing their negative consequences. The ebook highlights the significant contributions of civil society organizations, the media, and international organizations in promoting electoral integrity and transparency. It outlines a comprehensive roadmap for necessary reforms aimed at achieving free, fair, and credible elections in Nigeria.¹³

Moses T. Aluaigba in his work titled “Democracy Deferred: The Effects of Electoral Malpractice on Nigeria’s path to democratic consolidation” discusses electoral malpractice, which involves the violation of norms and principles that ensure the credibility of elections. It is defined as illegal actions committed by government officials, political parties, or individuals with the intention to manipulate election outcomes.¹⁴ Electoral malpractice is detrimental to democracy as it undermines the peaceful transfer of political power and the legitimacy of elected officials.

The article further delves into the legal framework for conducting elections in Nigeria. It explains that stringent laws exist to guide the electoral process, define electoral offenses, and specify punishments. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 and the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) provide the legal basis for electoral procedures and regulations.¹⁵ The Constitution outlines election modalities for various political offices, qualifications for voters, and the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Election Tribunals. The Electoral Act 2010 details specific electoral offenses and their penalties, such as buying or selling voters’ cards, hindering voter registration, bribery, impersonation, and more. These legal provisions aim to prevent electoral malpractice and enhance the credibility and integrity of elections in Nigeria.¹⁶

Despite these legal safeguards, the article implies that electoral malpractice continues to be a problem in Nigeria’s electoral process, highlighting the need for further efforts to address this issue.

Equally important to this essay, is the edited work of Kelechi Johnmary Ani and Victor Ojatorotu titled “Elections and Electoral Violence in Nigeria” The work examines elections and election violence in African countries, attributing the governance issues to various factors such as poverty, unemployment, and media influence. It highlights how election violence hinders nation-building in Africa and suggests

that states struggle to achieve their intended transformation due to widespread violence and manipulation in electoral processes.¹⁷ The book focuses on Nigerian states, exploring the history of elections, past election patterns, and the roles of youth, the judiciary, electoral authorities, social media, and gender in shaping elections in Nigeria.

Lastly, Terry A Odisu's article "Threats and Challenges to Nigeria's Nascent Democracy" discusses the challenges hindering the democratization process in Nigeria. It identifies several key issues such as corruption, partisan influences in elections, electoral violence and malpractices, poverty, high government expenses, and the need for improved citizenship education.¹⁸ The paper emphasizes the importance of democracy, which involves the participation of citizens in free and fair elections, citing examples from countries like the USA, UK, France, and Ghana. It points out obstacles to democracy in Nigeria, including poverty leading to voter manipulation, corrupt electoral officials, partisan security agencies, excessive government salaries, compromised justice delivery, and electoral violence in some African states.¹⁹

Overall, the literature reviewed above extensively addresses vital issues that are related to electoral malpractices and democracy in Nigeria thereby showing their relevance to the study. This review has shed light on the multifaceted challenges faced during electoral processes, and these challenges have not only eroded the integrity of the electoral process but have also posed significant threats to the democratic aspirations of Nigeria.

CONCEPT OF ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE

Election is a method for choosing representatives or delegating authority, not exclusive to democracies. According to Nohlen, the concept, significance, and functions of elections vary depending on the type of political system, leading to distinct interpretations and roles.²⁰ Elections are the cornerstone of democracy however, most elections held in the world today are marred by some degree of fraud, manipulation or other electoral crime.

Electoral malpractice typically involves violating the established norms and principles that ensure the credibility of elections. It entails the use of deception, falsehoods, manipulation, and cheating by various means to manipulate the election's outcome. According to Ezeani, electoral malpractice can be described as "illegal actions committed by government officials responsible for the conduct of election, political parties, groups, or individuals with malicious intentions to influence an election in favor of a candidate(s)."²¹ Birch categorizes electoral malpractices, which she terms as "electoral corruption," into three groups: those related to the legal framework, those connected to shaping preferences, and those focused on electoral administration.²²

Electoral malpractice encompasses any illicit actions intended to undermine the fairness of electoral procedures, often with the goal of unfairly benefiting a specific candidate or party. Boye further characterizes it as a deceptive practice aimed at manipulating election outcomes to enhance a rival candidate's vote share or prospects of winning an election.²³ Electoral malpractice, according to Ebirim, involves manipulating election rules to favor specific interests, including tactics like rigging and falsifying results.²⁴ Bamsaye & Awofeso describe it as a determined effort by politicians and parties to capture power through any means, including rigging and voter intimidation.²⁵ Ibrahim defines election rigging as illegal actions, such as bribery, intimidation, and result falsification, aimed at influencing an election in favor of a candidate.²⁶ Overall, these authors highlight various aspects on electoral malpractice.

OVERVIEW ON ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES IN NIGERIA

The legal framework for conducting elections in Nigeria is crucial for maintaining the integrity and credibility of the democratic process. This framework is primarily defined by the 1999 Constitution of the

Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Electoral Act 2010, as amended. The 1999 Constitution outlines the structures and procedures for various elections, including those for the National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly, the President, and State Governors. It also establishes Election Tribunals for resolving election disputes. The Third Schedule of the Constitution establishes the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), specifying its functions, powers, and the qualifications of its chairman.²⁷

The Electoral Act 2010, on the other hand, provides detailed definitions of electoral malpractices and the corresponding penalties.²⁸ Examples of these offenses include buying or selling voters' cards, hindering voter registration, impersonation, bribery, and many others, each with its own specified punishment, such as fines or imprisonment. These legal provisions are intended to deter electoral malpractice and uphold the credibility of elections in Nigeria, but challenges in enforcing them persist.

The elections in Nigeria from 1964 to 1993 were marred by electoral malpractice, violence, and manipulation. The 1964 election led to upheaval due to malpractice, and the subsequent 1965 election was also fraudulent. In 1979, despite the introduction of a new constitution and multiple political parties, the military played a dubious role in influencing the outcome. The 1983 election saw more rigging and violence, leading to a military takeover. The 1993 election, which introduced a two-party system, was annulled, causing political instability and further military rule under General Abacha. These events reflect a turbulent period in Nigeria's political history.²⁹

However, since the re-emergence of democracy in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic, the country has conducted seven nationwide elections (in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023).³⁰ The 1999 election marked the beginning of Nigeria's Fourth Republic after years of military rule. It was a transition to civilian rule and was conducted with high hopes for democracy. The presidential election took place on February 27, 1999, and Olusegun Obasanjo, representing the People's Democratic Party (PDP), emerged as the winner. Simultaneously with the presidential election, gubernatorial elections were held across Nigeria's 36 states. The elections were marred by violence in various parts of the country. Political thugs and rival supporters clashed, resulting in injuries and even loss of lives. Vote buying was also a widespread malpractice, with politicians and their agents offering money, goods, or other incentives to voters in exchange for their support. Allegations of result manipulation and irregularities in the vote-counting process were common. Opposition parties accused the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) of tampering with results to secure victories. Some individuals attempted to cast multiple votes using different identities or exploiting weaknesses in the voter registration system thereby undermining the accuracy of election results. Many voters, especially in rural areas, lacked proper education about the voting process. This, made them vulnerable to manipulation and misinformation. There were instances of disruptions at polling stations, including ballot box snatching and stuffing. Irregularities in the electoral process raised doubts about the credibility of the elections.

The 1999 elections in Nigeria stood out from previous elections due to the relatively subtle nature, reduced magnitude, and increased sophistication of electoral malpractices. Notably, violent malpractices, such as physical violence during and after elections that resulted in high casualties, were less prevalent in this election cycle.³¹

The 2003 elections in Nigeria took place in three phases, beginning on April 12 with National Assembly elections, followed by the presidential and gubernatorial elections on April 19, and concluding with state house of assembly elections on May 3. While voter turnout was high on April 12, the elections were marred by irregularities, violence, and logistical issues in many areas. Both domestic and international observers expressed concerns about the electoral process's fairness. These issues raised questions about the credibility of the results. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) described the elections as "characterized by monumental fraud" in its final report.³² Violence was a significant problem during the April 12 and 19 elections, leading to opposition party boycotts and voter disillusionment by the time of the May 3 elections, although some incidents of violence persisted.

In 2007, Nigeria had hoped for a better election, believing that the end of the president's two-term rule would reduce the incumbency factor. However, President Obasanjo's statement that the 2007 elections would be a 'do-or-die' affair set the stage for the worst electoral violence in Nigeria's history, surpassing events from the 1960s. This time, the violence involved godfathers, governors, and candidates for legislative houses who recruited armed followers and thugs. The state was grossly irresponsible, with the presidency promoting violence. The police, in collusion with the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), were accused of rigging elections and favoring PDP candidates. The high and mighty in society directly participated in election malpractices, including ballot box snatching and voter intimidation.³³ Opposition parties and candidates contested the results in court, alleging widespread electoral malpractices. Legal battles ensued, further highlighting the controversies surrounding the elections. Umaru Yar'Adua was inaugurated as Nigeria's President, but his legitimacy remained a subject of debate due to the widespread allegations of irregularities in the election.

The 2011 elections were the fourth national electoral cycle in Nigeria since its transition from military rule to democracy in 1999. These elections marked an improvement over the flawed 2007 elections, with increased integrity, professionalism, and independence of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).³⁴ However, post-election violence erupted following President Jonathan's victory, leading to significant casualties and destruction, particularly in northern states. This violence was one of the worst episodes in Nigeria's recent democratic history, underscoring the need to address its underlying causes for Nigeria's democratic and political future.

The 2015 general elections in Nigeria, held on March 28 and April 11, have been widely regarded as the best in the country's electoral history due to significant improvements in the electoral process. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) introduced innovations and technology, such as biometric voter registration and the Smart Card Reader, which contributed to the credibility of the elections. However, despite these improvements, there were still operational deficiencies on the part of INEC, including late arrival of election materials, overcrowding, card reader failures, result manipulation, and voting by under-aged individuals in some Northern areas. Electoral malpractices like the snatching of electoral materials, ballot boxes, and inflation of election figures were also observed. For instance, in Akwa Ibom State, the number of votes cast exceeded the number of accredited voters.³⁵

The 2019 Nigerian elections were a pivotal moment in the country's political history. The presidential election took place on February 23, 2019. Incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC) sought re-election, facing former Vice President Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as his main rival. Buhari won the election, securing a second term in office. Concurrently with the presidential election, elections were held for the National Assembly. This includes the Senate and House of Representatives. The APC maintained its majority in both houses. Gubernatorial elections in Nigeria's 36 states were held on March 9, 2019, and various states saw a mix of APC and PDP victories.

The elections were not without controversy. There were concerns about irregularities, violence, and logistical challenges. The opposition PDP alleged rigging in some areas. Voter turnout was relatively low, with only about 35% of eligible voters participating.³⁶ This was partly attributed to security concerns and distrust in the electoral process. There were reports of voter suppression and intimidation in certain areas, which deterred some citizens from casting their votes. Vote buying, where politicians or their agents offered money or goods to voters in exchange for their support, was a widespread issue. Incidents of ballot snatching, often accompanied by violence, were reported in various regions, leading to the disruption of the voting process. There were allegations of result manipulation, where the reported vote counts did not align with what was observed by independent monitors and party agents. Delays in the arrival of election materials and late opening of polling stations in some areas disenfranchised voters. Some eligible voters were disenfranchised due to issues with the distribution of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs) or being unable to vote at their registered polling units. Overall, transparency issues in the

collation and announcement of election results contributed to doubts about the credibility of the process. These malpractices and irregularities raised questions about the integrity of the 2019 Nigerian elections, leading to legal challenges and debates about the need for electoral reforms to address these issues in the future.

On the other hand, the most recent 2023 Nigerian elections marked a significant point in the country's democratic history.³⁷ The elections took place on two main dates, February 25 and March 18, 2023. On February 25, the president and vice president were elected, with the incumbent, President Muhammadu Buhari, unable to run due to term limits. Simultaneously, elections for the Senate and the House of Representatives were conducted. On March 18, gubernatorial elections were held in 28 states, along with elections for state houses of assembly in all 36 states. However, these elections occurred amid high tensions between political parties and multiple security crises that affect all regions of Nigeria, with challenges to the regular conduct of elections. The election was marked by high projected turnout initially, but it faced challenges such as reports of vote buying, voter intimidation, attacks on polling units, and allegations of fraud. Additionally, there were issues with trust in the election process, as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) failed to upload polling unit results to the IReV(INEC Result Viewing Portal) as promised.³⁸

Electoral malpractices in Nigeria have been a persistent challenge, casting a shadow over the country's democratic processes. These malpractices undermine the principles of free and fair elections. While progress has been made in some areas, such as the use of technology and international observer missions, there is still much work to be done to ensure the integrity of Nigerian elections. The future of Nigerian democracy hinges on the collective effort to combat electoral malpractices and uphold the will of the people.

REASONS FOR ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES IN NIGERIA

Corruption: Corruption is a form of dishonesty, unethical conduct, or abuse of power in which individuals or institutions, often in positions of authority or trust, engage in actions to gain personal, financial, or political advantages at the expense of the public interest, the rule of law, or ethical standards. Corruption is the breeding ground for electoral malpractices. The widespread corruption in Nigeria directly leads to the prevalence of irregularities in the country's elections. Individuals involved in the electoral process, much like other corrupt public officeholders, exploit their public positions for personal gain. They accept bribes from desperate politicians, engaging in various unlawful activities, such as manipulating election results, all with the aim of providing these politicians with an unfair advantage during the elections.

Ethnic Sentiments: Ethnic sentiment refers to the feelings, attitudes, or emotions that individuals or groups hold toward their own ethnicity or the ethnicities of others. It can encompass a wide range of sentiments, including pride, identification, prejudice, discrimination, or stereotypes based on one's ethnicity. Political candidates or parties may exploit ethnic sentiments to manipulate voters by spreading false information or engaging in voter suppression, such as disenfranchising specific ethnic groups. In some cases, electoral authorities exhibit bias based on ethnic sentiment, leading to discriminatory practices in voter registration, candidate eligibility, or the allocation of resources for campaigning. Ethnic sentiments can lead to bloc voting, where a significant portion of the electorate from a particular ethnic group votes en masse for a candidate, often without considering their qualifications. This can distort election outcomes and lead to the exclusion of minority voices. In the 2023 general election, there were reports of ethnic-based disenfranchisement of the Igbo people, particularly in Lagos, where threats against Igbo voters who didn't support the All Progressives Congress (APC) were captured in viral videos. This issue echoed past incidents, such as the massive ballot box stuffing observed in the 2011 Presidential election in Anambra State in favor of Goodluck Jonathan. Additionally, the practice of allowing underage voter registrations and voting was influenced by the desire to bolster the voting power of specific ethnic

groups in their respective regions.

Political Apathy: Political apathy refers to a lack of interest, enthusiasm, or engagement in political activities and civic responsibilities among individuals or a population. It manifests as a disinterest in political affairs, elections, government policies, and public issues. Political apathy can take various forms, including low voter turnout, lack of participation, indifference to public affairs, cynicism and informed inaction. When a significant portion of the population is politically apathetic and chooses not to vote, it can create an environment where a small, motivated, and potentially well-funded group of individuals or special interests can have a disproportionate influence on the electoral process. They may exploit the lack of engagement among the broader electorate to manipulate or distort the outcome. In the face of political apathy, there may be less public demand for electoral reforms or measures to enhance transparency and fairness, making it easier for those who benefit from malpractices to resist change. Elected officials may feel less accountable to an apathetic electorate, as they believe that their constituents are unlikely to take an active interest in their performance or hold them responsible for any electoral wrongdoings. During the 2019 general elections, in some parts of Nigeria, there were reports of relatively low voter turnout, especially among young voters who were disenchanted with the political system. This political apathy resulted in reduced scrutiny, manipulation of results and weakened accountability all which contributes to electoral malpractices.

Weak Electoral Institutions: Weak electoral institutions in Nigeria have contributed to electoral malpractices through various means. For instance, during the 2023 general election, it was observed that people voted without their Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) due to a flaw in the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). BVAS only required the Voter Identification Number (VIN) and the physical presence of the registered voter for accreditation, unlike the Card Reader technology that read the card itself. This discrepancy allowed individuals without PVC to vote, even though the INEC Chairman emphasized "no PVC, no voting." Such loopholes in the electoral system are being exploited by politicians to commit electoral fraud.³⁹ Also, electoral institutions require adequate funding to conduct elections effectively. When funding is insufficient, it can result in poorly managed elections, making them susceptible to malpractices. For example, budgetary constraints have limited INEC's ability to implement necessary reforms, increasing the likelihood of irregularities. Furthermore, Weak enforcement and inconsistent application of electoral laws can create an environment where malpractices are tolerated. When there are no significant consequences for electoral law violations, it encourages misconduct. In the 2019 elections, numerous allegations of vote-buying and ballot box snatching were reported, but many perpetrators went unpunished.

Poverty and Unemployment: Poverty in Nigeria is a significant and complex issue characterized by a large portion of the population living in impoverished conditions. Nigeria has one of the highest income inequalities in the world. A relatively small portion of the population enjoys substantial wealth, while the majority struggles to meet basic needs. Unemployment on the other hand is also a significant driver of electoral malpractices in Nigeria. During elections, some politicians exploit the desperate economic situation of unemployed individuals by offering them money or other incentives in exchange for their votes. Poverty can lead to frustration and desperation, making individuals more willing to engage in violence and intimidation on behalf of political parties. This includes becoming involved in political thuggery, which can disrupt the electoral process. The 2023 elections witnessed politically motivated violence and intimidation, often involving unemployed individuals, thereby impacting the credibility of the elections.

Illiteracy and Ignorance: Both illiteracy and ignorance have played significant roles in contributing to electoral malpractices in Nigeria. Ignorance about the importance of fair and transparent elections has made voters susceptible to manipulation by politicians who may use bribery, intimidation, or misinformation to influence their choices. Illiteracy can lead to a lack of understanding of the electoral process, making it difficult for some individuals to vote correctly or to comprehend the consequences of

their choices. Illiterate voters may not be able to recognize or report electoral fraud, such as ballot stuffing or vote buying, due to their limited understanding of the electoral system.

EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES IN NIGERIA

Electoral malpractices in Nigeria have had significant and wide-ranging effects on the country's political, social, and economic landscape.

Undermining Democracy: Undermined democracy describes a condition where the essential elements of a democratic system, such as trust, legitimacy, civic participation, accountability, and stability, are weakened or compromised. Electoral malpractices are one of the factors that can contribute significantly to the undermining of democracy in a given political context. Electoral malpractices erode the foundations of democracy by subverting the will of the people. When citizens believe that their votes do not count or that the process is not fair, they become disillusioned with democracy itself. In Nigeria's democratization process, frequent reliance on electoral fraud by politicians undermines the very purpose of elections as a means to legitimize political office.⁴⁰ If leaders are perceived as having gained power through fraudulent means, it undermines their authority and the credibility of the democratic system.

Increase in Social Tensions: In the context of electoral malpractices, tensions often arise when political actors exploit cultural, social and ethnic differences for their advantage during elections. When elections are perceived as unfair or rigged, it often deepens existing divisions along ethnic and social lines. Politicians may exploit these fault lines to garner support, leading to heightened animosities between different groups. This not only undermines social cohesion but also poses a significant threat to the stability and unity of the nation. The manipulation of identity politics during elections contributes to a divisive atmosphere, eroding social harmony and potentially leading to conflicts that extend beyond the political sphere, contributing to post-election violence and long-term social rifts.

Political Instability and Insecurity: Electoral malpractices not only hinder the achievement of stable constitutional democracy in Nigeria but also pose a threat to overall development. Thugs and hooligans engaged in malpractices can shift their activities to other crimes, such as armed robbery, contributing to the rise of terrorism and banditry. This atmosphere of chaos and violence becomes a breeding ground for retrogressive impacts on Nigeria's development. The recruitment of Nigerian youth for thuggery and hooliganism further undermines progress, unity, and peaceful co-existence. Additionally, the link between electoral malpractice and terrorism, militia, and insurgency drains the country's financial resources and reduces foreign reserves in the efforts to combat these vices.⁴¹

Discourage Political Participation: In recent years, electoral malpractice has led to a decline in citizens' political engagement. It also contributes to increased voter apathy, as citizens become reluctant to participate in elections where dishonest tactics like rigging and false declarations influence outcomes.⁴² The 2023 elections illustrated this trend, as many voters who participated in the presidential election opted not to take part in the gubernatorial election. Their reluctance stemmed from a belief that their votes were disregarded and excluded in the result collation process, primarily due to vote rigging and other forms of electoral malpractice. This on the other hand, poses a threat to the maturation of Nigeria's democracy.

Economic Decline: Electoral malpractices in Nigeria have severe economic implications. Firstly, they undermine the credibility of the democratic process, eroding investor confidence and deterring foreign investments. This political instability hampers economic growth and development. Moreover, the financial resources diverted for rigging, often sourced from government treasuries, deplete funds that could otherwise be allocated to essential development projects. This misuse of public funds contributes to

economic inefficiency and exacerbates issues like unemployment and infrastructure deficits. For example billions of naira misused for rigging the 2007 general election could have been invested in critical infrastructure projects. Instead, these funds were diverted for electoral manipulation, hindering economic development.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN ELECTORAL MALPRACTICES AND DEMOCRACY FAILURE IN NIGERIA

The persistence of electoral malpractices in Nigeria raises questions about the health of its democracy. Certain scholars propose that the connection between elections and democratic governance is fragile.⁴³ Unlike many nations that strive to enhance the credibility of their election processes, Nigeria has experienced a pattern of failed elections, constituting a distinctive feature of its electoral system.⁴⁴ Throughout Nigeria's electoral history, elections have been marred by violence, fraud, manipulation, and other major problems. The issue of violence, often involving clashes between supporters of different political parties undermines the democratic process by suppressing citizens' rights to freely participate in the electoral process. The fear of violence can deter voters from exercising their democratic right, thereby impacting negatively on the legitimacy of the outcomes.

Electoral fraud on the other hand, involves illegal activities that influence election outcomes and poses a threat to the democratic process.⁴⁵ Allegations of electoral fraud, including ballot stuffing, manipulation of results, and voter impersonation, have been raised in various elections. Failed electoral processes, characterized by electoral fraud, have resulted in the collapse of civilian rule and the emergence of military rule in Nigeria. The prevalence of electoral fraud therefore erodes public trust in the democratic process, perpetuating a cycle of political instability and contributing to the failure of democracy in Nigeria. More so, wrong judicial pronouncements, characterized by decisions that deviate from legal norms or principles, can have significant repercussions on the dividends of democracy. Democracy aims to curb corruption and ensure accountability therefore judicial misjudgments can undermine these goals, hindering the dividends associated with transparent and accountable governance.

The nexus however, between electoral malpractices and democracy failure in Nigeria involves a complex set of obstacles hindering the nation's democratic advancement. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive reforms in electoral processes, legal frameworks, and institutional capacities to restore confidence and uphold democratic principles.

ANALYSIS OF THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Nigeria conducted general elections on February 25, 2023, to choose the president, vice president, and members of the Senate and House of Representatives. Considered the most closely contested since the transition from military rule in 1999, this election garnered significant attention.⁴⁶ Prior to the election, President Muhammadu Buhari in February 2022, ultimately endorsed the long-anticipated and somewhat debated Electoral Act Amendment Bill, making it an official law. Section 29(5) of the Electoral Act provides only aspirants who participated in a political party's primary election to challenge false information provided by the party's candidate, thereby restricting public members from challenging candidates with forged certificates. The new law legitimizes e-voting and result transmission (Sections 47 and 50(2)), allowing the use of smart card readers and granting INEC the power to determine the method of result transmission. Section 84(12) mandates political appointees to vacate their positions before participating in party primaries, while this provision excludes elected officials and public officers employed in the public service. The timing of their resignation is flexible, emphasizing the need to vacate before the party's convention or congress.⁴⁷ The Electoral Act of 2022 also ensures that voters with visual impairment or disabilities receive assistance at polling units, utilizing means such as braille, electronic

devices, and sign language interpretation. Section 51 redefines over-voting by considering the total number of accredited voters, an improvement from the repealed law that focused on registered voters. Section 65 allows INEC to review results declared under duress within 7 days, without prejudice to the jurisdiction of a court or election tribunal.⁴⁸ Section 94 establishes a longer campaign period, starting 150 days before polling day and ending 24 hours prior, in contrast to the previous 90-day limit. Section 34 of the Electoral Act 2022 grants INEC the authority to postpone an election and set a new date within 14 days if a nominated candidate dies before the election. If the candidate passes away after polls begin but before declaring a winner, the election can be suspended for up to 21 days. For legislative house elections, the deceased candidate's party must conduct a new primary within 14 days. However, in presidential, gubernatorial, or federal capital territory area council elections, the running mate continues the election and selects a new running mate in case of the candidate's death.⁴⁹

A total of eighteen candidates representing various political parties, contested for the highest political office in the nation's election. However, only three candidates and political parties garnered public attention the most. The prominent contenders comprised Bola Tinubu (APC), Atiku Abubakar (PDP), Peter Obi (Labour Party); with notable mention to Alhaji Rabiu Kwankwaso (NNPP).⁵⁰ The APC, chose Bola Tinubu, the ex-Lagos governor, as Buhari's successor. Tinubu emerged as the winner from a competitive pool of 25 aspirants, with 14 eventually partaking in the primaries. Notably, he surpassed the former cabinet member and incumbent Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, who landed in a distant third place.⁵¹ During the course of his campaigns, Tinubu, along with running mate Kashim Shettima, promised dedication to the well-being of Nigerians if elected. He plans to build on Buhari's achievements, particularly in infrastructure, agriculture, and poverty alleviation. Tinubu emphasizes the demanding nature of the presidency, pledging hard work, discipline, and commitment. According to him if elected, he aims to replicate successful developmental programs from his tenure as governor in Lagos, and Shettima's in Borno state.⁵²

The PDP on the other hand, encountered a less crowded situation during their selection of a presidential candidate, involving 17 contenders and 774 delegates. Despite demands from southern party members for a candidate from the South, Atiku Abubakar, a Northerner and the party's 2019 candidate, secured victory in the primaries by defeating Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, who represented the Southern region.⁵³ The presidential aspirant in his campaign for presidency promised relief from current hardships. Atiku's economic recovery plan aimed to stimulate productivity, generate employment, and boost business opportunities across various sectors.⁵⁴ He equally promised rapid infrastructural development and improved purchasing power.

Peter Obi and Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, former PDP members until 2022, chose the Labour Party and NNPP for the election, citing the PDP's inability to provide good governance. The real motive was their aspiration to be PDP candidates, seeing no path to victory. Their move energized fringe parties. Kwankwaso's popularity in Kano triggered defections from PDP and APC to NNPP. Obi's appeal, especially among young Nigerians, boosted the Labour Party, with his perceived integrity, youthfulness, and direct engagement with voters standing out. The Labour Party candidate; Peter Obi swift shift to the Labour Party was seen as a turning point, with some considering him the brightest hope for a country facing challenges. With a record-high 10.5 million new voters, predominantly aged 18-34, Obi's supporters, known as "Obidients," actively campaigned on social media and beyond, emphasizing charisma, competence, and credibility as crucial elements for electoral success.⁵⁵ The Obidient movement, through nationwide rallies and political education efforts, has become a formidable force raising awareness and reshaping Nigeria's political landscape. The movement had heightened national consciousness about governance failures, especially among the youth, instilling hope for political change. The movement's mantra, "a new Nigeria is possible," had galvanized politically conscious youth, contributing to a positive impact on Nigeria's democracy.⁵⁶

In the released LP manifesto, the presidential aspirant aimed to transition Nigeria from a consumption to a

production-centered economy, addressing issues like banditry and insurgency.⁵⁷ The manifesto emphasizes restructuring the polity through legal and institutional reforms, focusing on the rule of law, anti-corruption measures, cost reduction, and an efficient civil service. Other goals include propelling Nigeria into the 4th Industrial Revolution, building world-class infrastructure, enhancing the youth's human capital, and conducting an afro-centric diplomacy to protect citizens abroad and promote economic interests.⁵⁸

On 25th February 2023, Nigerians again exercised their democratic rights by participating in the presidential elections, even as allegations of irregularities and fraudulent practices loomed over the process.⁵⁹ The election introduced two key technological innovations: the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) for fingerprint reading and facial recognition during voter authentication, and the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) for real-time access to polling unit results, requiring user accounts for public access. To be declared the winner however, a candidate must score the highest number of votes and at least 25 per cent of votes in 24 states (two-thirds of Nigeria's 36 states and the federal capital, Abuja)⁶⁰

Widespread difficulties with the Biometric Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) led to significant delays in the voter-accreditation process, disenfranchising many people.⁶¹ The INEC's prior mock trials and optimistic presentations about the BVAS's readiness did not anticipate the real challenges encountered during the larger-scale rollout on election day. Issues included breakdowns, failures to function in certain states like Borno, glitches in places like Lagos, and instances where in states like Rivers, biometric details were not captured accurately, even for prominent individuals.⁶² The election also witnessed persistent voter suppression, involving tactics like intimidation, registration hurdles, limited polling station access, and manipulation of electoral boundaries. Notable issues included uneven polling station distribution, late arrival of materials and staff, particularly in densely populated or politically aligned regions, deterring voters and leading to low turnout. Widespread voter intimidation and violence were reported in states like Borno, Kebbi, Sokoto, Kano, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Kogi, Rivers, Enugu, Abia, Edo, Delta, Ogun, and Lagos, with the Oro Cult deployed in Lagos to scare voters, especially women, from participating in the election.⁶³ The IReV on the other hand, intended to operate immediately after voting, faced controversies during the transmission process. INEC officials encountered difficulties with passwords to the IReV portal, hindering the real-time upload of polling unit results. Delays in result transmission were attributed to technical glitches, and the option to use the BVAS offline, especially in areas with weak internet connectivity, did not function effectively. The INEC portal failed to display results from all 176,000 polling units, diminishing the transparency promised by the IReV⁶⁴

In the aftermath of the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) announced that the incumbent APC candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, received approximately one-third of the total votes, amounting to 8.87 million. Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party secured seven million votes, and Peter Obi of the Labour Party obtained 6.1 million votes. Bola Ahmed Tinubu emerged as the winner with 36% of the vote, while his main rivals, Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, secured 28% and 24% respectively.⁶⁵ International and Nigerian observers criticized the election's conduct and flaws in the electoral process, including violence, poor organization, and fraud allegations. Critics argue that the judiciary's consistent affirmation of election outcomes, despite irregularities, poses a threat to the credibility of future elections in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and insights gathered from the examination of electoral malpractices and challenges to democracy in Nigeria, particularly focusing on the 2023 presidential election, it is essential to propose actionable recommendations that can strengthen the democratic foundation of the nation. Weak institutions of democracy like legislature, political parties and Electoral management body in Nigeria

have been unable to protect and promote consolidation of democracy² The weakness of electoral institutions, such as INEC, hinders their ability to conduct elections impartially. To address this issue, it is important to enhance institutional capacity through comprehensive training programs, financial autonomy, and increased collaboration with international electoral bodies for the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

In addition this, addressing voter intimidation which involves enhancing security measures at polling stations, strict enforcement of laws against intimidation and creating an environment that ensures voters feel safe to cast their ballots is also crucial. Civic education campaigns on the other hand, that empower voters with knowledge about their rights and the consequences of intimidation, further fosters a more informed electorate. By implementing these measures however, there is a potential to enhance transparency, fairness, and public trust in the electoral process.

Daniel Chukwuma Nzereogu, PhD
Department of History and International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Email: dc.nzereogu@unizik.edu.ng

And

Jessica Ogechi Nnolum
jessicannolum@gmail.com

References

1. "Nigeria," Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nigeria>.
2. Eghosa E. Osaghae and Rotimi T. Suberu, "A History of Identities, Violence and Stability in Nigeria" *Journal of Political Science* , Vol 6, 2005, p 24
3. David Imhonopi et al "Good Governance and Leadership: Pathway to Sustainable National Development" *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, Vol 6, No 3, 2016, p 37
4. Tejumola Olaniyan and Akinwumi Adesokan (eds) "State and Culture in Postcolonial Africa: Enchantings" Indiana: Indiana university press, 2017, p 62-64
5. Olaniyan and Adesokan's "State and Culture" p 68
6. Danting Zhang "Methods and Rules of Voting and Decision" *Open Journal of Social Sciences* Vol 8, No 1, 2020, p13-14
7. Ejikeme J Nwagwu, Gift O Uwaechia, Kingsley C Udebunam and Rebecca Nnamani "Vote Buying During 2015 And 2019 General Elections: Manifestation and Implications on Democratic Development in Nigeria" *Journal of Politics and International Relations* ,Vol 8, No 1, 2022, pp 5-6
8. Joseph, Richard,"Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic", England: Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp 62-75
9. Adeoye A. Akinsanya, John A. A. Ayoade (ed), *Nigeria's Critical Election*, United States: Lexington Books, 2013, pp 114-120
10. Eghosa, Osaghae, "Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence, Indiana: Indiana University press, 1998, pp 50-78

11. Ekhosuehi, Osazuwa “Nigeria Is Sick, Who Cares? Be Obedient to the Call of a New Nigeria.” 2022
12. Ekhosuehi Osazuwa Nigeria is sick, who cares?.....
13. George, Wells, “Nigeria's Flawed Electoral System”:The History Of Bad Elections In Nigeria, US: Amazon Digital Services LLC - KDP Print, 2023, 10-15
14. Moses, Aluaigba,”Democracy Deferred: The Effects of Electoral Malpractice on Nigeria’s Path to Democratic Consolidation” Journal of African elections, vol 15, no 2, 2016,p 140
15. Ibid 141
16. Ibid 142-143
17. Kelechi.J. Ani and Victor Ojakorotu(eds) “ Elections and Electoral Violence in Nigeria” London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2021, pp 22-25
18. Terry, Odisu, “Threats and Challenges to Nigeria's Nascent Democracy”, Germany: Bod Third Party Titles, 2016, pp 6-10
19. Ibid 15-16
20. Dieter Nohlen, “Elections and Electoral System” New Delhi: Macmillan India, 1996 p 32
21. E.O Ezeani, “Electoral Malpractices in Nigeria.” In Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria, edited by G. Onu and A. Momoh, Lagos: Nigerian Political Science Association, 2005, p 58
22. Sarah Birch “Electoral Corruption” Briefing Paper IDCR, http://repository.essex.ac.uk/4484/1/05_11.pdf Accessed 10th October 2023
23. S.O Boye “Indicators of Electoral Malpractice in a Typical African Country” Port Harcourt: Lekkon Publishing Company, 2006, p 20
24. S.I Ebirim “The Effects of Electoral Malpractices on Nigeria Democratic Consolidation (1999-2003)” Public Policy and Administration Research Vol 4, No 2, 2014, pp 49-54
25. O.A Bamisaye and Olu Awofeso (eds) “Democracy and democratic practice in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Prospects” An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions, Vol 22, 2011, p 132
26. J. Ibrahim “Rigging and Electoral Fraud in Nigeria: State of the Art.” in “Direct Capture: The 2007 Nigerian Elections and Subversion of Popular Sovereignty, edited by J. Ibrahim and O. Ibeanu, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) and Open Society Initiative for West Africa, 2009, pp 10 - 31
27. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999
28. Electoral Act, 2010, Federal Republic of Nigeria.
29. Ucheoma O. Ukachikara and Chizoba A. Elechi, “Elections and Electoral Malpractice: Effects on Nigeria’s Democratic Stability,” National Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, Vol 3, No 7, 2019, p 364
30. Moses Aluaigba,”Democracy Deferred: The Effects of Electoral Malpractice on Nigeria’s Path to Democratic Consolidation” Journal of African elections, Vol 15, No 2, p 142

31. Ibid 143

32. Transition Monitoring Group. Do the Votes Count? Final Report of the 2003 General Elections in Nigeria.

33. Osisioma B C Nwolise, "Electoral Violence and Nigeria's 2007 Elections" Journal of African Elections, Vol 6, No 2, p 165

34. "Election Observation Report: Nigeria April 2011 National Elections." International Republican Institute (IRI), 2014, p 4-5

35. Ibid 149

36. Damilola Ojetuunde, "2019 Election: Nigeria has the lowest rate of voter turnout in Africa. International Center for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), <https://www.icirnigeria.org/2019-election-nigeria-has-the-lowest-voter-turnout-in-africa/> [Google Scholar] Assessed 14th October, 2023

37. ACLED. "Election Watch: Political Violence and the 2023 Nigerian Election", 2023

38. "2023 Nigerian Presidential Election." Wikipedia https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Nigerian_presidential_election Assessed 15th October, 2023

39. "Reasons for and causes of the electoral malpractices in Nigeria" <https://listofreasons.blogspot.com/2023/05/nine-9-reasons-for-prevalence-of.html?m=1> Assessed on 17th October, 2023

40. Ibid 151

41. Kolawole Aliyu, Kayode Olawoyin and Olukayode Bamidele "Electoral Malpractice as a Challenge to Sustainable Development in Nigeria" Global Journal of Political Science and Administration Vol 8, No 1, 2020 p 21

42. Ibid 150

43. Preye K Inokoba and Isaac Kumokor "Electoral Crisis, Governance and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria" Journal of Social Sciences, Vol 27, No 2, p 142

44. Michael M Ogbeidi "A Culture of Failed Elections: Revisiting Democratic Elections in Nigeria, 1959-2003" Historical Actual Online, No 21, 2010, p 43

45. Ibid 45

46. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Nigerian_general_election Accessed 26th December 2023

47. Festus Ogun, "Key Provisions of Electoral Act" <https://www.thecable.ng/review-key-provisions-of-electoral-act-2022/amp> Accessed 26th December 2023

48. Alabi Ayokunmi "2023 and Highlights of the Electoral Act 2022" <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/2023-and-highlights-of-the-electoral-act-2022/?amp=1> Accessed 26th December 2023

49. Shuaib Oniye, Yetunde K Olatinwo and Akintoye O Damola "Appraisal of the Electoral Act 2022: A curse or blessing to the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria", International Journal of Innovative Research

and Development, Vol 12 No 5, 2023, p 145-146

50. Jidefor Adibe “2023: Political Events that defined the year” Premium Times, 2023

51. Mark Amaza “Nigeria 2023 Elections: Contenders, Campaigns and Change”, Africa Policy Research Institute, 2023, <https://afripoli.org/nigeria-2023-elections-contenders-campaigns-and-change> Accessed 27th December 2023

52. “#NigeriaDecides2023: Tinubu begs citizens to vote for him in last campaign statement” Premium Times, 2023

53. Ibid

54. Bolanle Olabimtan “Approach 2023 with stronger optimism by voting PDP, Atiku campaign tells Nigerians” The Cable, 2022

55. Wilfred Okiche and Eromo Egbejule “Nigeria’s Peter Obi started a movement. Can he become president?” <https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/features/2023/2/4/nigerias-peter-obi-started-a-movement-can-he-become-president> Accessed 27th December 2023

56. Augustine Aboh and Obasesam Okoi “The Obidient Movement will shape Nigerian politics beyond the 2023 presidential election” <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2023/02/23/the-obidient-movement-will-shape-nigerian-politics-beyond-the-2023-presidential-election/> Accessed 27th December 2023

57. Ayodele Oluwafemi “Peter Obi finally releases manifesto, promises to build world- class infrastructure”, The Cable, 2022

58. Ibid

59. Melody Chironda, “Unmasking Corruption: Examining Nigeria’s 2023 Election Fallout” Permian Times, 2023

60. Abdulkareem Mojeed “Nigeria decides 2023: Final results of presidential election as declared by INEC” Premium Times, 2023

61. Oladeji Mayowa, “Analysis: Fallout from presidential election, did BVAS fail Nigerians” Ripples Nigeria, 2023.

62. Martin Acheampong, “ Overpromising and Underdelivering? Digital Technology in Nigeria’s 2023 Presidential Elections” <https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/the-giga/team/martin-acheampong> Accessed 28th December, 2023

63. Ibid

64. Saheed Olasunkanmi “Voter Suppression and Electoral Integrity; Crisis in Nigeria’s 2023 General Elections” <https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2023/07/20/voter-suppression-and-electoral-integrity-crisis-in-nigerias-2023-general-elections/> Accessed 28th December 2023

65. Leena Koni Hoffman “Nigeria’s election results put disenfranchisement in the spotlight” <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/03/nigerias-election-results-put-disenfranchisement-spotlight> Accessed 29th December 2023