

Corruption and Crisis of Governance in Nigeria: A Threat to Democracy

Dr Ogedi Jacob

Department of Political Science
Federal University Otuoke
Bayelsa State
jacoboo@fuotuoke.edu.ng

Frank Prince Diepreye

Department of Political Science
Federal University Otuoke
Bayelsa State
diepreyefrank@gmail.com

DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.v10.no6.2024.pg47.67

Abstract

This study investigates how corruption serves as a trigger for governance problems, damaging democratic processes and contributing to public disillusionment. The corruption cycle is used as the conceptual framework to demonstrate a recurring pattern in which corruption is entrenched in the country. The study was qualitative and relied on secondary data gathered from peer-reviewed publications, news media, and relevant organisations, among others. Data was presented using textual descriptions, tables, and charts where appropriate, and analysis was done under appropriate themes with textual descriptions. The findings show solid evidence of chronic corruption in Nigeria, as seen by persistently low rankings on Transparency International Corruption Perception Index from 1999 to 2022. The investigation also revealed the systemic character of corruption, indicating its pervasiveness in governance. It emphasises the far-reaching impact of corruption-induced governance deficits on various democratic institutions and processes, such as constitutional supremacy, legitimacy, periodic election conduct, separation of powers and checks and balances, popular sovereignty, press freedom, and political parties, among others. The study also revealed that disenchantment with democracy in Nigeria has manifested itself in a gradual fall in voter turnout in elections since 2007. Finally, the study advocated for increased public participation and coordinated action by appropriate duty-bearers to combat the pervasiveness of corruption and its negative effects on governance and democratisation in Nigeria.

Background to the Study

Nigeria's progress from an arduous journey through an era of military dominance marked by intermittent coups and counter-coups (from 1967 to 1998/1999) to its longest stretch of democratic rule, spanning the period between 1999 and 2023, faces a threat of reversal to authoritarianism. Following independence and the long stretch of intermittent military dominance, the turn to democracy across the continent and in Nigeria in the 1990s was widely accepted (Adejumobi, 2000; Jega & Ibeanu, 2007). Nigerians expected not only better guarantees of freedom but also better developmental outcomes under participatory

governments (Jega & Ibeanu, 2007). The reality has, however, been a far cry from the expected guarantees of freedom and development. The continent in general and the Nigerian state in particular have remained trapped in a web of seemingly intractable development crises (Gumede, 2017), which has engendered public dissatisfaction with democratic governance and cleared the path for a reversal of authoritarian military regimes. Amartya Sen's (2006) conceptualization of development as freedom has been widely called into question, as liberal democracy is widely associated with freedom.

Threats facing democracy are not peculiar to Nigeria. Discourse on democratic decline, shrinking civic space, and rising authoritarianism have been on the front burner of global democratic fora for the past decade (Adejumobi, 2000; Dahl, 2020). Within the Nigerian state, public dissatisfaction with the government of the day and its associated institutions has remained palpable. Developmental challenges, pervasive poverty, and reduced trust in public institutions climaxed in country-wide end-SARS protests in 2020. Also, there is pervasive disillusionment with democratic institutions like the election management body, the legislature, political parties, and even civil society organisations, amongst others (Dunn, 2018; Fawole, 2005), pointing to a growing threat to democracy in the country. This is compounded by the emergent military wave across neighbouring countries, which makes the threat of military intervention a very potent one (Gutteridge, 2023; Taruvinga, 2023).

The July 26th, 2023, coup in Niger created far-reaching concerns about the status of democracy in Africa and the emerging reversal of military rule on the continent. These concerns were further heightened with the August 30th coup in Gabon. Democracy in Africa is no longer just in decline but is on an apparent nosedive with other countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea that are already under military regimes and enjoy some level of public support (Gutteridge, 2023; Taruvinga, 2023; Bukari & Braimah, 2023; Yusuf, 2023). The narrative that democracy has 'failed' to address the deplorable living conditions of people across the continent has been widely advanced to justify coups in recent times.

The narrative of 'failed' or 'failing' democratic regimes', though advanced by 'coupists' and advocates of authoritarian rule, is getting widespread buy-in, especially amongst citizens. From Niger to Gabon, reports have shown that citizens, albeit not all, rejoiced over the military takeover (Citi Newsroom, 2023; CBC News, 2023). This presents a paradox: the people who ought to be active participants in the governance process and who ought to be major beneficiaries of democratic governance are rejoicing over an overthrow of the system. Drawing from trends in other countries as captured in the earlier example and the massive dissatisfaction with democratic institutions in Nigeria, we conjecture that a military takeover in the country would be accompanied by some element of public support.

The aforesaid constitutes a major cause for concern. This is because the military (and perhaps other authoritarian regimes), being devoid of all democratic modalities to ensure government responsiveness, runs a risk of producing even worse developmental outcomes. It is, therefore, necessary to rethink the practice of democracy in Nigeria and the African continent. Is democracy (and its institutions and structures) the problem in itself, or do other factors account for the dissatisfaction with democracy? This paper attempts to interrogate the challenges facing democracy in Nigeria with emphasis on the link between corruption and governance crises as drivers of poor democratic practice. This focus is not to discard the possibility of a mutually reinforcing relationship between corruption, governance crises, and flawed democratic

practices but stems from the argument that the observed flaws in Nigeria's democratic practice stem largely from corrupt practices in governance processes.

Keywords: Democratic processes, public disillusionment, Transparency International Corruption perception index, constitutional supremacy, systemic corruption.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is a richly endowed country with vast human and material resources (Umezina, 2012). Yet, she continues to grapple with endemic democratic challenges (Ewetan & Urhie, 2014). The shift from military to civilian rule has done little to improve the quality of life of citizens (Joseph, 2014), and the state is becoming increasingly distant from its citizens. What accounts for this failure of democracy to engender development and the accompanying citizen distancing in Nigeria and Africa? Ake (1996) answers this question by pointing to the failure of leadership on the continent to introduce an indigenous development paradigm and commit to its achievement. Ake noted that the preoccupation with the pursuit of political power makes African leaders to ignore the task of development on the continent.

Adapting Ake's logic, this study contends that the challenge with democracy in Nigeria stems from the flawed governance practices engendered by corruption and the desperate pursuit of power at all costs. Corruption and governance crises are two issues that have plagued the Nigerian state in its over 110 years of statehood and 63 years of independence. Corruption constitutes a pervasive and insidious challenge within the fabric of Nigerian society, infiltrating crucial sectors and profoundly affecting governance structures (Hellman et al., 2000). This multifaceted problem takes various forms, including embezzlement and bribery, posing a significant hindrance to the efficient functioning of governmental institutions (Akpata and Akpan 2023). This research aims to examine the impact of corruption on Nigeria's governance mechanisms and to shed light on its diverse manifestations as well as assess the severity of its impact on the overall efficiency of public administration. The research questions are as follows:

- i) How pervasive is corruption and its impacts on governance in Nigeria?
- ii) How does corruption in governance undermine democratic processes in Nigeria?
- iii) How does corruption in governance drive public disillusionment with democracy in Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The broad aim of this paper is to show how corruption impacts governance processes and undermines participation in Nigeria. This informs the following specific objectives:

- i) To show the pervasiveness of corruption and its impacts on governance in Nigeria.
- ii) To show how corruption in governance undermines democratic processes in Nigeria.
- iii) To show how corruption in governance drives public disillusionment with democracy in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Nigeria's struggle with systemic corruption is a recurrent theme in the literature, with scholars such as Abdul-Baki et al. (2023), Adamaagashi Izuchukwu et al., (n.d.), Nasidi (2023), Nwoke et al. (2023), and Olujobi (2023) highlighting its pervasive nature and profound impact on economic development, social justice, and public trust in institutions. Corruption is identified

as a potent force for undermining governance effectiveness as it leads to weakened institutional frameworks and inadequate accountability mechanisms(Nasidi, 2023). This has resulted in inefficiencies in resource allocation, exacerbating socio-economic disparities, and eroding confidence in the government(Abdul-Baki et al., 2023; Nwoke et al., 2023).

The relationship between democracy and accountability is also present in the literature. Nwoke (2023) contends that democracy plays a pivotal role in curbing corruption through mechanisms such as citizen engagement, media freedom, and a robust legal framework. The literature underscores the significance of a healthy democracy, providing checks and balances that can help mitigate corrupt practices(Nasidi, 2023). However, despite strides towards democratic governance, Nigeria faces challenges with democratic backsliding(Gyimah-Boadi, 2021; Hess & Aidoo, 2019). The decline of democracy has been prominently featured in the global democracy literature (Bauer & Becker, 2020; Fomunyoh, 2020; Jee et al., 2022), as have instances of corruption undermining democratic institutions(Hellman et al., 2000; Nasidi, 2023).

Broadly, scholarship has explored the phenomenon of corruption and its effects on governance and democracy as distinct, seemingly mutually exclusive variables. This study is a departure from this trend as it takes a holistic shot at examining the corruption-governance-democracy nexus by looking at the impact of corruption in governance on democracy in the country.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, we adopt the concept of the corruption cycle as an explanatory tool. The concept has been used by various scholars including Bicchieri & Duffy (1997), Aluko (2021) Figueroa (2021), Roy, *et. al.* (2020) and Accinelli et al., (2022) in varying contexts. Although used in different ways by scholars depending on the context to which it is applied, the concept of the corruption cycle essentially refers to a recurring pattern or process by which corruption becomes entrenched and perpetuates itself within a system or society(Bicchieri& Duffy 1997). It involves a sequence of events or actions that contribute to the continuity and expansion of corrupt practices (Aluko, 2021; Bicchieri& Duffy 1997; Figueroa 2021). While the specifics may vary depending on the context, the corruption cycle generally involves six key elements: opportunity, incentive, engagement, normalisation, impunity, and reinforcement (Aluko, 2021; Bicchieri& Duffy 1997; Figueroa 2021).

The cycle of corruption often begins with opportunities for corruption to occur. Weak institutional structures, insufficient checks and balances, and inadequate enforcement of laws create an environment where individuals find opportunities to engage in corrupt activities without facing significant consequences. Corruption is fueled by incentives, which may include personal gain, financial benefits, or the pursuit of power. Individuals within the system may be motivated to engage in corrupt practices due to personal or institutional factors, such as low salaries, a lack of job security, or a culture that tolerates corrupt behavior. Once opportunities and incentives align, individuals or entities within the system engage in corrupt activities. This can range from bribery and embezzlement to nepotism and favoritism. The cycle continues as more actors participate in corrupt practices, creating a culture where corruption becomes normalized (Aluko, 2021; Bicchieri& Duffy 1997; Figueroa 2021).

Over time, corruption may become normalised within the social and institutional framework. As corrupt practices become more widespread and ingrained, they are accepted as part of the

status quo. This normalisation further facilitates the continuation of the corruption cycle. A lack of accountability and enforcement contributes to the perpetuation of the corruption cycle. When individuals involved in corrupt activities face little or no consequences for their actions, it emboldens others to engage in similar behavior. The absence of a deterrent reinforces the cycle. The cycle is reinforced as corrupt individuals or networks gain more power and influence within the system. They may use their positions to protect their interests, suppress anti-corruption efforts, and further exploit the vulnerabilities in the system (Aluko, 2021; Bicchieri & Duffy 1997; Figueroa 2021).

A pivotal assumption in our model is that corrupt politicians, in their pursuit of re-election, must offer material incentives to voters. Even without the direct distribution of benefits by clientelist organisations, corrupt politicians can implement policies to ultimately improve their chance of retaining power. Implementing such policies requires the expenditure of resources by the politician. Therefore, to sustain systemic corruption, politicians need resources, and a turnover is likely when these resources are depleted. Whenever the penalty for corrupt behaviour is negligible, politicians will be incentivized to leverage their control over public resources to augment their power.

Research Propositions

Drawing from the logic of the conceptual framework above, this study is founded on the following propositions:

- i) Corruption is pervasive in Nigeria, and it impacts governance processes adversely.
- ii) Corruption in governance undermines democratic processes in Nigeria.
- iii) Corruption in governance drives public disillusionment with democracy in Nigeria.

Research Design

This is a qualitative study that relies heavily on existing evidence from published publications and reports. The study adopts the *ex-post facto* research design. In *ex post facto* research design, both variables and associated issues have already occurred and are studied in retrospect without the researcher applying experimental manipulation to the variables (Azalea, 2022). It assesses governance in the Nigerian State and tries to understand the impact of the independent variable without the research attempting to manipulate either of the variables. The design is considered fitting for this study because the researcher merely attempts to establish a link between the variables under study without applying any form of experimental treatment to them. The issues, being a social phenomenon, are already there and the researcher, like Galileo, merely observes the ball rolling down the inclined plane.

Methods of Data Collection

The study will draw from a diverse array of reputable sources, encompassing academic articles, governmental reports, and publications from international organizations. Academic articles contribute in-depth analyses and scholarly perspectives, offering a theoretical foundation and insights into the dynamics of corruption, governance, and threats to democracy. Governmental reports and newspaper publications provide valuable information, often reflecting official stances and policies, while publications from international organisations offer a broader contextual understanding and comparative insights. By incorporating these sources, the study ensures a comprehensive and multi-faceted exploration of the subject matter, enhancing the depth and reliability of the findings. The reliance on well-established and peer-reviewed

materials also bolsters the validity of the research, aligning with best practices in qualitative research methodologies.

Methods of Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will serve as the method of data analysis. Empirical evidence assembled in the study would be systematically scrutinized to uncover patterns, trends, and underlying factors that shape corruption practices, governance structures, and challenges to democratic stability in the specific context of Nigeria. These patterns and trends would be presented under relevant themes, which the researcher would make sense of using a mix of textual description, tables and charts where appropriate. Also, deductive and inductive logic of reasoning would be applied where appropriate to make sense of the data. By employing thematic analysis, the study aims to unearth not only surface-level insights but also the deeper, latent factors influencing the dynamics of corruption, governance, and democratic threats in Nigeria. This approach allows for the exploration of complex relationships and the extraction of meaningful interpretations from a diverse range of qualitative sources, contributing to a holistic and contextually grounded analysis of the research questions at hand.

Empirical Verification

Here evidence assembled during the study is presented to show the trend in the relationship between corruption, governance and democracy in Nigeria. The section provides evidence on the pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria, its manifestation in governance, its impacts on democratic processes and institutions, and the decline of democracy in Nigeria.

Corruption in Nigeria

Extant evidence as assembled in this study reveals that corruption is endemic in Nigeria. The former British Prime Minister, David Cameron's description of Nigeria as fantastically corrupt points to the perception of the country on the international scene (BBC News, 2016). More so, Nigeria has consistently ranked poorly in the global corruption index. The table below, showing Nigeria's position in Transparency International's corruption ranking from 1999 to 2022 alludes to this:

Table 1: Nigeria in Global Corruption Ranking 1999 – 2022

S/N	Year	Score	Position	Number of Countries
1	1999	16	98	99
2	2000	12	90	91
3	2001	10	90	91
4	2002	16	101	102
5	2003	14	132	133
6	2004	16	144	146
7	2005	19	152	159
8	2006	22	142	163
9	2007	22	147	179
10	2008	27	121	180
11	2009	25	130	180
12	2010	24	134	178
13	2011	24	143	184
14	2012	27	139	170
15	2013	25	144	177

16	2014	27	136	175
17	2015	26	136	168
18	2016	28	136	176
19	2017	27	148	180
20	2018	27	144	180
21	2019	26	146	180
22	2020	25	149	179
23	2021	25	149	180
24	2022	24	160	180

Source: The Agora Policy Report (2023)

The trend in poor performance of Nigeria in global corruption ranking index as shown in the table above points to the endemic nature of corruption in the country. Considering the magnitude of corruption in governance in Nigeria, Uwak and Udofia, (2016) asserted that it would not be a mistake or an overstatement to assert that corruption is institutionalized in Nigeria. He further elucidated on the manifestations of corruption by asserting that corruption in Nigeria is evident in how legislatures are bribed by government institutions before budgets of their organization are passed, ministries receive bribes before awarding contracts, politicians buy votes to get elected to political office, inflation of contract figures, and so on (Uwak and Udofia, 2016). While some examples provided by Uwak and Udofia reflect the broader societal manifestations of corruption, the pointers to corruption in governance are difficult to miss. The next section chronicles the seemingly inextricable link between corruption and governance in Nigeria.

Corruption in Governance: Chronicling the Dance of Deceit in Nigeria

Successive governments in Nigeria, both military and civilian, have assumed office on the promise of fighting corruption. In the immediate post-independence era, the military used the pervasive corruption and enormous rigging that characterised the 1964 and 1965 elections to justify their takeover of the initial post-independence administration. Similarly, after a long period of General Gowon's administration, an Assets Investigation Panel established by Murtala Mohammed to investigate state governors and other public officers who served under previous administrations indicted 10 of the 12 military governors who served under Gowon and had their assets frozen (Dent, 2023). Aside from the military governors, approximately 10,000 civil personnel were fired for corruption in what is known as the puge of civil service (Dent, 2023).

Buhari's military administration also exerted efforts at tackling corruption through the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) programme, and the setting up of many investigative tribunals to probe public officials. Under General Babangida's administration, over four hundred million Naira was discovered to have been wasted on the Better Life Project following a probe of the regime (Dent, 2023). Corruption was also pervasive under the Sani Abacha administration as the recovery of the infamous 'Abacha loot' has become a seemingly extra source of foreign revenue for Nigeria. Billions of dollars stolen by Abacha were stashed in various countries, including Switzerland, Jersey Island (UK), Liechtenstein, and the United States. Over the years, significant amounts have been repatriated in multiple tranches, with specific figures detailed during different Nigerian administrations, including Abdulsalami, Obasanjo, Jonathan, and Buhari (The Nation, August 24, 2022).

Corruption in Governance from 1999

The turn to democracy in 1999 saw renewed vigour in the seemingly elusive promise to fight corruption. Under the Obasanjo’s administration, the Independent Corrupt Practices And Other Related Offences (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were established as bodies to fight corruption in Nigeria. This, however, did not stem the tide of corruption in the country. Obasanjo who claimed to be fighting corruption, attempted to prolong his stay in power beyond the 2 terms stipulated by the constitution by paying the legislators huge amounts of money to amend the constitution to allow him to actualize his third term ambition (Uwak and Udofia, 2016). When Obasanjo left office, it was reported that he awarded some contracts to himself and bought or converted some government properties to himself (Aluko, 2022). His Ota Farm was converted from Operation Feed the Nation of the Second Republic (Aluko, 2022).

Musa Yar’Adua took over power from Obasanjo and showed serious commitment to curb corruption in Nigeria, but his body language showed otherwise. His actions in stopping the prosecution of former governor of Delta State James Ibori and the removal of Nuhu Ribadu as EFCC chairman showed Yar’Adua was not ready to fight corruption. Yar’Adua's death made his administration short-lived, and his successor, Goodluck Jonathan showed no courage in fighting corruption, as virtually all his political appointees were found to be corrupt. Jonathan's ministers looted the government treasury and got away with it. Notable examples include Miss Stella Odua’s alleged loot of her ministry’s funds to purchase bulletproof cars for her private use, as well as the alleged loot of a whopping \$9.3 billion by former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Allison Madueke.

The administration of Muhammadu Buhari assumed power on the promise to tackle corruption and insecurity in Nigeria. His fight against corruption has, however, been described as a witch-hunt, and accused of being selective. His reinstatement of Rasheed Maina, the former chairman of the defunct pension fund task force who was standing trail for corrupt practices while in office as head of the task force, was a clear pointer to the lack of genuine commitment to tackle corruption.

Over the years, Nigeria’s anti-corruption body, the EFCC has indicted some former governors over corruption cases and placed others on watch lists. The table below summarizing these cases as reported by Akhigbe (2016), a columnist for *Business Day* a Nigerian-based online news outfit shows the pervasiveness and enormity of corruption in governance within Nigeria.

Table 2: Former Governors Indicted for Corruption or Under EFCC’s Watchlist

S/N	Former Governor	State	Corruption Cases/Charges
1	Diepreye Alamieyeseigha	Bayelsa	Money laundering charges related to £1.8 million found in the UK
2	Joshua Dariye	Plateau	Initially accused of diverting N1.126 billion state’s ecological funds
3	Murtala Nyako	Adamawa	Under EFCC's watch-list
4	Ikedi Ohakim	Imo	Under EFCC's watch-list
5	Sule Lamido	Jigawa	Under EFCC's watch-list
6	Timipre Sylva	Bayelsa	Under EFCC's watch-list

S/N	Former Governor	State	Corruption Cases/Charges
7	Martin Elechi	Ebonyi	Under EFCC's watch-list
8	Ibrahim Shema	Katsina	Under EFCC's watch-list
9	Chimaroke Nnamani	Enugu	Under EFCC's watch-list
10	Orji Uzor Kalu	Abia	Under EFCC's watch-list
11	Saminu Turaki	Jigawa	Under EFCC's watch-list
12	Abubakar Audu (late)	Kogi	Under EFCC's watch-list
13	Danjuma Goje	Gombe	Under EFCC's watch-list
14	Aliyu Akwe Doma	Nasarrawa	Under EFCC's watch-list
15	Jolly Nyame	Taraba	Under EFCC's watch-list
16	Ali Modu Sheriff	Borno	Under EFCC's watch-list
17	Gabriel Suswan	Benue	Under EFCC's watch-list
18	Ayo Fayose	Ekiti	Under EFCC's watch-list
19	Lucky Igbinedion	Edo	Embezzlement of over N19 billion; Convicted for non-declaration of assets
20	James Ibori	Delta	Convicted in the UK for stealing at least \$250 million of public funds

Source: Akhigbe (2016)

The table above further alludes to the pervasiveness of corruption in governance across Nigeria as all geopolitical zones in the country have a governor who has either been indicted for corruption or is under the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission's watchlist. Cases against these notable figures have been pending for years and as of January 2024, the EFCC has reopened its probe against high-profile corrupt public officials, including 13 former governors for corrupt cases worth 722 billion Naira. The affected persons include former Ekiti State governors, Kayode Fayemi and Ayo Fayose; former Zamfara State governor, Bello Matawalle; former Enugu State governors, Chimaroke Nnamani and Sullivan Chime; former Nasarawa State governor, Abdullahi Adamu; former Kano State governor, Rabiu Kwankwaso; former Rivers State governor, Peter Odili; former Abia State governor, Theodore Orji; former Gombe State governor, Danjuma Goje; former Sokoto State governor, Aliyu Wamako; former Bayelsa State governor, Timipre Sylva; and former Jigawa State governor, Sule Lamido (Economic Confidential 2024). Whether or not anyone will be convicted remains to be seen.

In addition to these, three other examples in recent times further speaks to the issue of corruption in governance. First is the issue of Godfatherism as manifest in ongoing case between former governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike and the incumbent, Siminalayi Fubara. A second is the ongoing litigations bordering on corruption at the center of the nation's purse, with former CBN governor Godwin Emefiele facing trials over allegations of illegal procurement and conspiracy. A third is the issue of corruption emerging from the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs.

Godfatherism: Wike vs. Fubara

Godfatherism features prominently in Nigerian politics. During the Obasanjo's administration, discourse on Godfatherism and its impact on Nigerian politics took the center stage following the kidnap of a sitting governor of Anambra state. Since then, the topic has not been as palpable

in the country's political space until recent times when the media reported disputes between former governor of River State, Nyesom Wike and the incumbent, Siminalayi Fubara. Reporting on the incident, *The Cable* (2023) described politics in Rivers State of the South-South version of the wild-wild South-West of the 1960s. The media outfit further asserts that politics in the state has been a modern-day theatre of Nigerian political violence. Writing on the fiasco between Wike and Fubara, *The Cable* (2023) asserts thus:

...The godfather, Wike bared his fangs when lawmakers loyal to him made a move to impeach his 'godson', Governor Amaopusenibo Siminalayi "Sim" Joseph Fubara, a man who is a proud product of Wike's godfather politics. The embattled Fubara had himself revealed that his present travail is 'a father and son issue.'

Godfather politics as manifest in Rivers State in the issues between Wike and Fubara is not a novel phenomenon in Nigeria. In 2003, sitting governor of Anambra State, Chris Ngige had been kidnapped over failure to fulfil commitments made to his political godfather. The politics of 'godfather and godson' in Nigerian politics wields severe costs on governance for the country. In the Wike and Fubara's case, reports indicate that the former governor and godfather has been accused of demanding 25% of Rivers State allocation, with allegations of requesting N2 billion from a N5 billion palliative and 25% of the state revenue. This is a strong pointer to the downsides of corruption, as manifest in godfatherism, on governance in the country.

The Emefiele's Case

Initially appointed by former President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, Godwin Emefiele was the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) for nine years, from June 4, 2014, until June 9, 2023. Towards the end of his tenure, as Nigeria prepared for the 2023 general elections, the CBN, under Emefiele, introduced a currency redesign policy that many perceived to be directed at preventing the excessive abuse of money during elections in the country (*Vanguard News*, November 21, 2023). Paradoxically, following his suspension as Governor of CBN by Tinubu's administration on June 9, 2023, officials of the Department of State Service (DSS) arrested Emefiele over allegations of illegal possession of firearms (Ogune, 2023; Sanusi, 2023). The charges by the DSS against the former CBN governor were struck out, and new charges bordering on fraudulent procurement and conspiracy were brought against him (Ogune, 2023; Sanusi, 2023). While a verdict remains to emerge, the case against the former CBN governor is indicative of the growing concern about corruption in Nigerian governance which justifies public suspicion of officeholders and disillusionment with the government.

Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs – The Betta Edu's Case

Recent events involving the now, suspended Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Betta Edu, her predecessor, Sadiya Umar-Farouq and other notable governmental officials also point to the pervasiveness of corruption, even in governmental ministries and agencies that should, ideally be concerned with promoting people's welfare and responding to humanitarian needs of citizens. Betta Edu who was appointed less than 6 months before the writing of this paper is being investigated for the diversion of 3 billion Naira within her short stay in office (Onuigbo 2024). A specific component of this corruption scandal is the transfer of N585 million naira to a personal account, a direct contravention of Chapter 7, Section 713 of the Federal Government's Financial Regulations 2009, which notes, 'Personal money shall in no

circumstances be paid into a government bank account, nor shall any public money be paid into a private account' (Ariemu 2024). Similarly, the former Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Umar-Farouq, has also been reportedly quizzed by the EFCC on allegations of corruption. Revelations emerging from Betta's case further accentuate concerns about the depth of corruption in governance, with the Presidency, through the Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabamila, approving the disbursement of 3 billion naira simply for the verification of the National Social Register (Fatoye, 2024).

Participation on trial: The impacts of corruption in governance

As nations strive for robust democratic institutions, the prevalence of corruption and deficits in governance structures poses substantial challenges to the vitality and sustainability of democratic systems. It raises pressing questions about the integrity of political processes, equitable representation, and the overall health of democratic governance. This section looks at diverse aspects of democracy, namely: constitutionality, political participation, legitimacy, periodic elections, separation of powers, political parties and press freedom; with a view of showing the how corruption and governance deficit impacts the ability of people to participate.

The Constitution

This is the fundamental laws and rules guiding a state. Every democratic state must have constitution, which could either be written or unwritten. Beyond the mere existence of the constitution, democratic governance is largely dependent on respect for the supremacy of the constitution as the grundnorm of the land (Bellamy & Castiglione, 1997). Where there is a non-adherence or selective adherence to the constitution, it becomes difficult to check against the rise of authoritarian rule.

Corruption and poor governance significantly undermine adherence to the constitution by eroding the rule of law, distorting the principles of justice, and fostering a culture of impunity. In nations plagued by corruption, public officials may engage in corrupt practices to circumvent legal constraints or manipulate the legal system to protect their interests. This compromises the sanctity of constitutional provisions, as legal frameworks are selectively enforced or subverted to serve the interests of the corrupt. Additionally, the lack of transparency and accountability inherent in poor governance often leads to the abuse of power, creating an environment where those in authority can act with impunity. As a consequence, constitutional principles become hollow, and citizens lose faith in the ability of the legal system to uphold their rights and ensure justice.

Furthermore, corruption and poor governance can result in the subversion of constitutional institutions and the co-optation of key decision-making processes. When public officials engage in corrupt practices, they may compromise the independence and effectiveness of institutions responsible for upholding the Constitution, such as the judiciary and law enforcement agencies. Political interference, bribery, and nepotism can skew decision-making processes away from constitutional principles, diminishing the institutions' ability to act as impartial guardians of the rule of law. The recent issues in Nigeria between Wike and Fubara, and the political settlement reached points to a clear case of constitutional violation. Writing on the impact on Constitutionalism, Ukpong (20 December 2023) quoted Rivers elders led by Rufus Ada-George to have asserted that: "...if the peace deal is allowed to succeed it would amount to President Tinubu unilaterally suspending the Nigerian Constitution by reversing the

court order which recognised a pro-Fubara lawmaker, Edison Ehie, as the speaker of the Rivers assembly.”

The impact of corruption and poor governance on adherence to the constitution extends to the broader societal fabric, fostering a culture of disregard for legal norms. When citizens witness pervasive corruption within the government and experience a governance deficit, they may become disillusioned with the constitutional order. This disillusionment can lead to a weakening of civic responsibility and a diminished commitment to upholding the Constitution. Citizens may perceive the Constitution as a mere document without real impact on their lives, further exacerbating challenges to adherence to constitutional provisions.

Popular political participation

Participation is an important condition for every democratic state. This allows the citizens to take active involvement in the political decision-making of the state. It is noteworthy to mention that any political system that frowns at popular participation in politics is not democratic. The crucial place of participation in democratic governance underlies the idea of popular sovereignty, which requires that absolute power resides with the people (AfroBarometer, 2021; Dahl, 2008).

Corruption-induced governance deficits considerably hinder popular participation by undermining citizens' trust in public institutions, creating political apathy, and maintaining civic engagement inequities. As individuals perceive public officials prioritising personal gain over the collective good, widespread corruption adds to a loss of faith in governance mechanisms. This erosion of trust becomes a significant impediment to active civic engagement, discouraging participation in processes such as voting or community initiatives. Political apathy is exacerbated in corrupt environments, where people see their participation in political processes as futile, leading to disengagement and a reluctance to participate in civic activities. Additionally, corruption-driven governance deficits create unequal access to political participation opportunities, disenfranchising marginalised groups and exacerbating disparities in resource allocation. This not only weakens the democratic foundation but also distorts popular participation, hindering the creation of an inclusive and equitable civic landscape

Legitimacy

This entails general recognition by the people for the right of the leaders to govern or lead them. Legitimacy is a unique feature of democracies as it links the right to rule directly with the recognition by the people. A government is illegitimate and undemocratic if it is not recognized by the people (Bekkers & Edwards, 2016).

Corruption-related governance have a significant and negative influence on the legitimacy of public officeholders and critical institutions such as Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The pervasiveness of corruption within the governance structure creates a legitimacy crisis for public officeholders, as their actions are perceived to be motivated by personal gain rather than the public good, eroding citizens' trust in elected officials and the institutions responsible for ensuring fair governance. The impact on INEC is particularly severe, as corruption-related deficits undermine the integrity of electoral procedures, casting doubt on the fairness and credibility of elections. This, in turn, affects public trust in INEC's ability to hold free and fair elections, which are critical to the country's democratic functioning.

The broader systemic legitimacy issue emerges as citizens perceive the entire political apparatus to be compromised, hurting critical institutions such as INEC, which struggle to sustain credibility in the face of continuous governance shortfalls. Addressing corruption and improving governance are critical for restoring and preserving the legitimacy of public institutions and guaranteeing the smooth operation of democratic processes in Nigeria.

Periodic Election

This is an avenue through which a democratic government is formed. Elections are fixed for a period, in the case of Nigeria, four years, and it determines the number of years political leaders stay in office. This helps prevent autocracy and overconcentration of political powers in the hands of a few (Adejumobi, 2000; Afolabi, 2013). Paradoxically, where corruption is pervasive, the potency of elections as an instrument that empowers citizens to hold leaders to account comes under threat.

Corruption has a wide-ranging and negative impact on the quality of elections, jeopardising their fairness, integrity, and credibility. For starters, corruption undermines the electoral process by influencing candidate selection inside political parties, resulting in nominations based on illicit financial contributions rather than merit or public support. This undermines the democratic principle of fair competition and leads to lower-quality candidates gaining an edge through unethical means. Second, corruption undermines the independence and integrity of electoral administration bodies such as election commissions, as bribes and manipulation of policies and appointments call the electoral process into question. Third, corruption contributes to voter disenfranchisement by distorting the genuine will of the public and undermining the quality of democratic representation. Furthermore, corruption in campaign finance creates an uneven playing field, as politicians with access to illicit funds engage in disproportionate spending, weakening the process's fairness and limiting citizens' capacity to make educated decisions based on candidates' merits and proposals.

Separation of power and checks and balances

This is an important feature of democracy. It helps prevent dictatorship by one arm of government, and encourages checks and balances (Klare 2014). It brings about smooth running of the government by allowing arms of government – legislature, executive and judiciary – check the excesses of each other and ensure that government serves the interest of the people (Klare 2014).

Governance deficits caused by corruption have a substantial impact on the separation of powers, a basic premise in democratic regimes. For starters, corruption jeopardises the independence of the court, a critical branch responsible for maintaining checks and balances. Judges may fall victim to external influence and bribes when the judiciary is compromised by corruption, jeopardising their impartiality and weakening the intended separation of powers. Second, corruption in the legislative branch undermines oversight systems and legislative independence, as corrupt members jeopardise their capacity to legislate honestly and exercise oversight functions. This blurring of lines undermines the separation of powers, as politicians prioritise personal interests over constitutional responsibilities. Furthermore, corruption-related deficits may concentrate power within the executive as leaders may use their positions to manipulate or co-opt other branches, jeopardising the autonomy required for a healthy

separation of powers and making the legislative and judicial branches vulnerable to executive control.

Political Parties

A democratic state must encourage political parties' activities as they serve as a means through which people who seek to attain political power are elected to govern. Therefore, a democratic state must have at least two political parties to give room for political competition (Slothuus & Bisgaard, 2021). Beyond the mere existence of parties, their competitiveness and ability to mobilize mass support for party programmes and ideals is a major determinant of the effectiveness and virility of democratic governance.

Governance deficits caused by corruption impact adversely on the quality of political parties and internal party democracy. For starters, corruption within political parties jeopardises the fairness and transparency of candidate selection processes and internal elections. This deterioration of internal party democracy undermines the legitimacy of party leadership and jeopardises candidate quality, as corrupt considerations trump merit and competence. Second, governance weaknesses caused by corruption result in the concentration of power inside party organisations as leaders use positions for personal benefit, silencing criticism and discouraging diverse voices. This concentration of power lowers the quality of internal party democracy, jeopardising true participation and representation and making party members feel marginalised. Furthermore, corruption-related deficiencies contribute to a loss of public trust in political parties, resulting in lower civic involvement and a deterioration of democratic quality overall. The deterioration of public trust impairs political parties' ability to successfully represent the interests of the population and contribute to strong democratic government.

Press Freedom

The freedom or independence and neutrality of the press is a vital element of democracy. Freedom of the press promotes accountability in governance (Hiaeshutter-Rice, Soroka & Wlezien, 2021). Where the media/press can report issues without fear of favour or victimization, citizens are likely to be more informed and make better, or at least more informed, choices that would shape the course and actions or inactions of government (Hiaeshutter-Rice, Soroka & Wlezien, 2021)..

Corruption-induced governance deficits have a profound impact on press freedom, undermining the role of the media as a watchdog and hindering the free flow of information. Firstly, when corruption is prevalent within government institutions, it often leads to the suppression of critical journalism. Journalists who attempt to investigate and expose corrupt practices may face harassment, censorship, or even legal repercussions. This stifling of investigative journalism undermines the media's ability to fulfill its watchdog function, as journalists may fear reprisals for uncovering and reporting on corruption within the government.

Secondly, corruption-induced governance deficits can result in media capture, where media outlets are directly or indirectly controlled or influenced by corrupt officials or entities. This form of media capture compromises editorial independence and undermines the diversity of voices in the media landscape. Journalists may face pressure to conform to the interests of

corrupt entities, and as a result, the quality and objectivity of news reporting are compromised. This erosion of editorial autonomy negatively impacts press freedom, as the media becomes less able to serve as a check on government power and corruption.

Furthermore, governance deficits resulting from corruption may lead to self-censorship within the media industry. Journalists and media organizations, fearing backlash or economic reprisals from corrupt officials, may choose to avoid covering sensitive issues or engaging in investigative reporting. This self-censorship diminishes the media's role in fostering an informed citizenry and holding those in power accountable, further eroding press freedom.

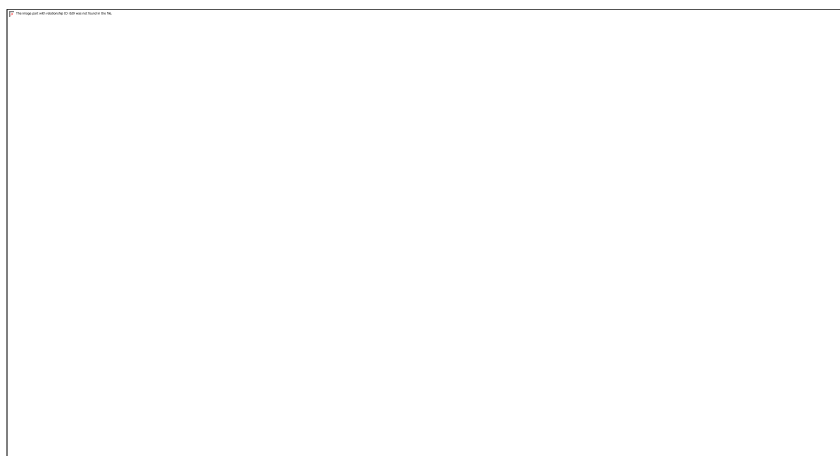
Overall, corruption induced governance deficit constitutes a major threat to popular participation as well as the institutions and practices that are necessary for sustained participation. The constitution, legitimacy, the conduct of periodic elections, separation of powers/checks and balances, popular sovereignty, press freedom, amongst others all gets sacrificed on the alter of self-seeking political leaders in governance. This results in poor governance outcomes for the people and declining interest in participation in governance processes.

Threat to Democratisation in Nigeria

As can be gleaned from the above, corruption in governance impacts on several democratic processes and institutions which adversely impacts public participation. Combining evidence of corruption in Nigeria presented here with the adverse impacts on democratic processes and institutions, the result has been increased citizens' distancing and disenchantment with democratic processes. a trend in voter turnout through Nigerian elections from 1999 alludes to this.

Voter turnout is given as a percentage of the number of votes cast in relation to the total number of registered voters. The turnout for the 2023 presidential election was 26.7%, the lowest since 1999. With 57,938,945 registered voters in 1999, the turnout was 43.84%, rising to 69.08% in 2003 with 60,823,022 registered voters. Following elections saw a drop: 57.49% in 2007 (61,567,036 registered voters), 53.68% in 2011 (73,528,040 registered voters), 43.65% in 2015 (67,422,005 registered voters), and 34.98% in 2019 (82,004,084 registered voters). There were 93,469,008 registered voters in the 2023 election, but turnout was 26.72%, the lowest in Nigeria's six-decade history (See, EU EOM 2023, p. 51; INEC 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, 2023).

Figure 1: Turnout Trend in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023 (Presidential Elections)



Source: Researcher's Compilation

The curve above showing the declining trend in voter turnout since 2007 is a pointer to the threat faced by democracy in Nigeria. With the idea of popular participation at the very foundation of democracy, a declining trend in participation in elections constitutes a major source of concern, necessitating action towards improved citizen interest and participation.

Conclusion

Throughout history, successive military and civilian governments in Nigeria have gained power with the promise of combatting corruption and creating better developmental outcomes for citizens. In addition to this, democracy as a form of government promises popular participation and the placing of absolute power with the people. Paradoxically, governments have repeatedly failed to live up to the promise of combatting corruption. Worse still, even top governmental officials have been muddled in the puddle of corruption – a phenomenon that has been described in this paper as ‘corruption in governance’. Pervasiveness of corruption in governance ultimately serve to perpetuate the grip of the ruling class on political power and undermine participatory institutions and structures. A consequence, which is perhaps unintended, is that citizens have become increasingly disenchanted with democratic governance and democratic institutions as evident in the progressive decline in participation in Nigerian elections.

On the above premise, this paper concludes that corruption induced governance deficit is pervasive and manifest across all sections of Nigeria, and it undermines democratic processes by reducing the effectiveness of democratic institutions and practices, thereby driving public disillusionment with the idea of participation in governance.

Recommendations

Corruption serves as a tool to perpetuate the grip of the leadership class on power and it is difficult to conceive of practicable top-down response to corruption in governance. This study therefore recommends active citizens engagement with governance processes, actions and inactions. Where the majority stand together in resilience and commitment to improvement, public office holders in government may be compelled to be more responsive. Beyond this, the following are specific recommendations for duty bearers:

- Implement and enforce robust anti-corruption measures to break the cycle of corruption, focusing on improving institutional structures and enhancing enforcement capabilities.
- Reinforce separation of powers and safeguard judicial independence to ensure the judiciary acts as an impartial arbiter, free from external influences.
- Launch comprehensive civic education programs to inform citizens about their rights, the importance of democratic participation, and the detrimental effects of corruption on governance.
- Institute reforms to ensure transparent electoral processes, addressing issues such as candidate selection, campaign financing, and the conduct of elections.
- Safeguard press freedom by implementing measures to protect journalists from harassment and censorship.
- Implement political reforms to address the influence of godfatherism and corruption within political parties. Internal party democracy, transparency, and inclusivity in candidate selection processes should be encouraged.

References

- Abdul-Baki, Z., Diab, A., & Kadir, A. O. (2023). Resisting institutionalized corruption: The case of public audit in Nigeria. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*, 42(6), 107052.
- Accinelli, E., Martins, F., Pinto, A. A., Afsar, A., & Oliveira, B. M. (2022). The power of voting and corruption cycles. *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 46(1), 56-79.
- Adamaagashi Izuchukwu, P., Onoh, U. C., Bello, K. O., Erezi, E., & Brown-Ofoeme, M. N. (n.d.). *The Fight Against Corruption in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis*.
- Adejumobi, S. (2000). Elections in Africa: A fading shadow of democracy? *International Political Science Review*, 21(1), 59–73.
- Afolabi, O. S. (2013). Votes, security and election administration in Nigeria. *African Journal of Institutions and Development*, 8, 1–12.
- AfroBarometer. (2021). Women’s Political Participation. *Stockholm: International IDEA*.
- Agora Policy (2023). Imperatives of strengthening Nigeria's transparency and accountability measures. Abuja
- Ake, C. (2001). *Democracy and development in Africa*. Brookings institution press.
- Akhigbe, N. (2016, February 21). Thirteen years after, EFCC yet to prosecute 13 ex-governors. Accessed from: <https://businessday.ng/news/news-features/article/thirteen-years-after-efcc-yet-to-prosecute-13-ex-governors/>
- Aluko, O. (2021). Breaking the cycle of corruption in Nigeria: the myth and reality. *Journal of Co-operative and Business Studies (JCBS)*, 5(1).

- Ariemu, O. (2024, January 8). N585m scandal: Four things to know about allegation against Tinubu's Minister Betta Edu. Daily Post. <https://dailypost.ng/2024/01/08/n585m-scandal-four-things-to-know-about-allegation-against-tinubu-minister-betta-edu/>
- Atakpa, O. E., & Akpan, C. S. (2023). Corruption in Public Administration and National Development in Nigeria. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(6), 120-134.
- Azalea, I. K. (2022). Causal-Comparative Research (ex post facto research). Available at: <https://thesiscommons.org/r63f9/download?format=pdf>
- Bauer, M. W., & Becker, S. (2020). Democratic backsliding, populism, and public administration. *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, 3(1), 19–31.
- BBC News (16 May 2016). David Cameron calls Nigeria and Afghanistan 'fantastically corrupt'. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-36260193>
- Bekkers, V., & Edwards, A. (2016). Legitimacy and democracy: A conceptual framework for assessing governance practices. In *Governance and the democratic deficit* (pp. 35-60). Routledge.
- Bellamy, R., & Castiglione, D. (1997). Constitutionalism and democracy—political theory and the American Constitution. *British Journal of Political Science*, 27(4), 595-618.
- Bicchieri, C., & Duffy, J. (1997). Corruption cycles. *Political studies*, 45(3), 477-495.
- Bukari, G. A., & Braimah, A. I. (2023). The re-emergence of coup d'états in Africa: Theoretical and empirical connections. *Russian Law Journal*, 11(5), 1009-1017.
- CBC News (3 August 2023). Hundreds rally in coup-hit Niger as France ends evacuation flights. Available at: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/niger-military-takeover-repatriation-1.6926981>
- Citi Newsroom (30 August 2023). Thousands Gabon citizens storm streets to jubilate after military takeove. Available at: <https://citinewsroom.com/2023/08/thousands-gabon-citizens-storm-streets-to-jubilate-after-military-takeover/>
- Dahl, R. A. (2008). *Polyarchy: Participation and opposition*. Yale university press.
- Dahl, R. A. (2020). *On democracy*. Yale university press.
- Dent, M. J. (2023). Corrective government: Military rule in perspective. In *Soldiers and oil* (pp. 101-138). Routledge.
- Dunn, J. (2018). *Setting the people free: The story of democracy*. Princeton University Press.
- Economic Confidential. (2024, January 14). EFCC Reopens 13 Ex-Governors' N772bn Fraud Cases. <https://economicconfidential.com/2024/01/efcc-governors-fraud/>

- Ejike, E. (2024, January 15). Ex-Governors, Others Jittery As EFCC Reopens Cases. Leadership. <https://leadership.ng/ex-governors-others-jittery-as-efcc-reopens-cases/>
- European Union Election Observation Mission (2023). Nigeria 2023 Final Report. Available at: <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/EU%20EOM%20NGA%202023%20FR.pdf>, p. 51
- Ewetan, O. O., & Urhie, E. (2014). Insecurity and socio-economic development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development Studies*, 5(1).
- Fatoye B. (2024, January 16). Edugate: Gbaja's Memo To Suspended Minister Stirs Fresh Controversy. Daily Trust. <https://dailytrust.com/edugate-gbajas-memo-to-suspended-minister-stirs-fresh-controversy/>
- Fawole, W. A. (2005). Voting without choosing: Interrogating the crisis of 'electoral democracy' in Nigeria. *Liberal Democracy and Its Critics in Africa: Political Dysfunction and the Struggle for Social Progress*, 149–171.
- Figueroa, V. (2021). Political corruption cycles: High-frequency evidence from Argentina's notebooks scandal. *Comparative Political Studies*, 54(3-4), 482-517.
- Fomunyoh, C. (2020). Facing Democratic Backsliding in Africa and Reversing the Trend. *National Democratic Institute*, 30.
- Gumede, V. (2017). Leadership for Africa's development: Revisiting indigenous African leadership and setting the agenda for political leadership. *Journal of Black Studies*, 48(1), 74–90.
- Gutteridge, W. (2023). *The military in African politics*. Taylor & Francis.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2021). Democratic backsliding in West Africa: Nature, causes, remedies. *Accra, Kofi Anan Foundation*.
- Hellman, J. S., Jones, G., Kaufmann, D., & Schankerman, M. (2000). Seize the State, Seize the Day: An Empirical Analysis of State Capture and Corruption in Transition Economies. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, 2444, 1–41.
- Hess, S., & Aidoo, R. (2019). Democratic backsliding in sub-Saharan Africa and the role of China's development assistance. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 57(4), 421–444.
- Hiaeshutter-Rice, D., Soroka, S., & Wlezien, C. (2021). Freedom of the press and public responsiveness. *Perspectives on Politics*, 19(2), 479-491.
- INEC. (1999) National Report on the National Assembly Elections Held on 20th February, 1999.

- INEC. (2003). Report on the 2003 General Election.
- INEC. (2007). Official Report of the 2007 General Election.
- INEC. (2011). Report on the 2011 General Elections. Available at: <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/REPORT-ON-THE-2011-GENERAL-ELECTIONS.pdf>
- INEC. (2015). 2015 Presidential Election Summary of Results. Available at: <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/summary-of-results.pdf>
- INEC. (2019). Report of the 2019 General Election.
- INEC. (2023). Registered voters and PVCs collected for the 2023 general election. Available at: <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/PVCs-Collected-Registered-Voters.pdf>
- Jee, H., Lueders, H., & Myrick, R. (2022). Towards a unified approach to research on democratic backsliding. *Democratization*, 29(4), 754–767.
- Jega, A., & Ibeanu, O. (2007). *Elections and the Future of Democracy in Nigeria*. Nigerian Political Science Association.
- Joseph, R. A. (2014). *Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria* (Vol. 56). Cambridge University Press.
- Klare, K. (2014). Critical perspectives on social and economic rights, democracy and separation of powers. In *Social and Economic Rights in Theory and Practice* (pp. 19–38). Routledge.
- Nasidi, N. A. (2023). Corruption and Good Governance in Nigeria, 1999–2015. *KIU Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(4), 17–24.
- Nwoke, U., Ekwelam, C. M., & Agbowo-Egbo, H. C. (2023). Curbing corruption and promoting a more efficient corporate governance regime in Nigeria. *Journal of Financial Crime*, 30(2), 536–548.
- Ogune, M. (2023, October 28). EFCC arrests, detains Emefiele after regaining freedom. Accessed from: <https://guardian.ng/news/efcc-arrests-detains-emefiele-after-regaining-freedom/>
- Olujobi, O. J. (2023). Nigeria's upstream petroleum industry anti-corruption legal framework: The necessity for overhauling and enrichment. *Journal of Money Laundering Control*, 26(7), 1–27.
- Olupohunda, B. (2023, November 10). Can Fubara defeat Wike? The Cable. Accessed from: <https://www.thecable.ng/can-fubara-defeat-wike>

- Onuigbo, F. (2024, January 8). Three Women Linked To N84.1bn Fraud In Barely Five-Year-old Humanitarian Ministry. Gist Mania. <https://www.gistmania.com/talk/topic,582545.0.html>
- Roy, P., Iwuamadi, K., & Ibrahim, J. (2020). Breaking the cycle of corruption in Nigeria's electricity sector: a political settlements analysis.
- Sanusi, A. (2023, October 27). EFCC detains Emefiele after DSS frees ex-CBN gov. Accessed from: <https://punchng.com/breaking-efcc-detains-emefiele-after-dss-frees-ex-cbn-gov/>
- Sen, A. (2006). Development as freedom: an India perspective. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 157-169.
- Slothuus, R., & Bisgaard, M. (2021). How political parties shape public opinion in the real world. *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(4), 896-911.
- Taruvinga, G. R. (2023). The Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa: The Case of West Africa and the Sahel. In *Contemporary Issues on Governance, Conflict and Security in Africa* (pp. 147-157). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- The Nation (August 24, 2022). TIMELINE: \$23m, \$311m, other Abacha loots recovered so far. Accessed from: <https://thenationonlineng.net/timeline-23m-311m-other-abacha-loots-recovered-so-far/>
- This Day (2020). Chris Ngige: The true story of my 2003 abduction. Accessed from: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/08/16/chris-ngige-the-true-story-of-my-2003-abduction>
- Umezina, C. (2012). Ethnicity and Nigeria's underdevelopment. *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, 9, 215-229.
- Uwak, U. E., & Udofia, A. N. (2016). Corruption in Nigeria's public sector organizations and its implications for national development. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(3 S1), 27.
- Vanguard (2023, November 21). 2023: Why we introduced Naira redesign during election period – Buhari. Accessed from: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/11/2023-why-we-introduced-naira-redesign-during-election-period-buhari/>
- Yusuf, A. (2023). Resurgence of Coups and Democratic Stability in Africa: An Appraisal. *Resurgence of Coups and Democratic Stability in Africa: An Appraisal* (April 2, 2023).