

(Research/Review)

Proportion Of Nigeria's Democratic Consolidation, Security Forces, And Electoral Process: Six West African Countries' Perspectives

Sulaiman T.H, *¹, Abalaka, J.N, ², Ajiteru, S.A.R ³

^{1,2,3}Master of Information Technology, Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi

* staiwohassan99@yahoo.com , abalaka.james@yahoo.com , ajiterudr.sheriffdeen@gmail.com

Faculty of Social Science, in USA, official partners' constituent campuses at government regulated universities worldwide and online operation.

Abstract. This study uses a qualitative methodology and secondary source data to investigate election cheating and its impact on Nigeria's democratic consolidation. It will be examined using historical and content analysis. examination. Nigerian democracy's progress has been severely hampered by election tampering. According to the report, e-election holds enormous promise and might be the solution to voter fraud in Nigeria's electoral system provided it is properly deployed and funded. It starts by looking at the constitutional, legal, and theoretical underpinnings of electronic voting. Second, it examines the real-world obstacles to the adoption and deployment of an electronic voting system in Nigeria by learning from other countries. Nigeria's elections have fallen short of expectations thus far because of a variety of electoral manipulations that have prevented the nation from holding legitimate, free, and fair elections within her political system. In addition to undermining Nigeria's democratic consolidation, election cheating has breached the fundamental human right (right to lives) of a large number of Nigerians. This essay offers some crucial suggestions that could solve the issues of election tampering and explain how those actions can support the need for a democratic atmosphere, which is a need for free and fair elections.

Keywords: E-voting, Democratic Consolidation, Democracy, Election Manipulation, and Security Forces.

1. Overview

We will examine the history of election tampering in Nigeria from 1960 to 2019 and how it has impeded the country's democratic consolidation. Elections are the most effective way to switch governments on a regular basis in a liberal democracy. It emphasizes leadership responsibility in addition to leadership transformation. It facilitates involvement and gives the people more power. Specifically, elections are the most effective way to reveal the people's sovereign authority. According to Ojie (2016), individuals in charge of exercising political authority in a democracy do so with the express agreement and legitimate mandate of the public, which is communicated at regular intervals through an open, free, and fair electoral process. This suggests that a democracy must be a form of governance in which the people, with the consent of the governed, set the pace (Abalaka, 2023).

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Unfortunately, election tampering has prevented Nigeria's elections from upholding the fundamental principles of democracy thus far. Nigeria falls within the group of countries with the least successful election management. Election-related regulations and rules are unclear, subject to change, or simple to manipulate. institutionally less effective; the political elites behave like gladiators, leaving the electorate frequently helpless as they depend on the political establishment and political results. In order to sway the election against the desire of the majority, the political barons, who have a special interest, force unpopular candidates and use every kind of political tactic. Nigerian elections were rigged in 1964/1965, 1979, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. Numerous Nigerians, particularly well-liked candidates, have lost their lives as a result of election tampering and bloodshed between 1999 and 2019. These political killings are carried out by paid assassins employed by evil politicians who will stop at nothing to gain power. Nigeria's modern-day political barons Incredibly credulous electoral officials who use a variety of ploys to help their employers win elections at the expense of the general public and well-liked candidates. But because of this, the system has become quite dull, and many people have turned to staying at home throughout www.ccsenet.org/jpl September 2011, *Journal of Politics and Law*, Vol. 4, No. 2. The Canadian Center of Science and Education is the publisher. 129 electioneering out of concern that they may be threatened or forced to cast a ballot against their will, which is terrible for a nation that is in dire need of establishing a consolidated democracy (Ajiteru, 2020).

Indeed, during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the third wave of democratization—which had started in Southern Europe in the middle of the 1970s—arrived on the African continent. During this time, the majority of The people of the subregion chose to construct multiparty democratic systems that are founded on the rule of law in their nation. Additionally, they decided that elections would be the primary means of choosing their fellow citizens to represent them in the day-to-day administration of state matters. Accordingly, more than 100 elections have been held in the fifteen (15) West African nations since the democratic renewal movement began in the early 1990s (Ajiteru, 2023).

Furthermore, although brief, electoral laws' provisions regarding SF participation in elections vary each nation. More complex texts are found in some of the countries surveyed, most of which are emerging from crises. Additionally, there are variations in the practices of the countries surveyed, pertaining to the methods of deciding and managing the resources made available for security forces' participation in the election process, or the institutional structures for their participation. This study's primary objective is to compare the roles of SFs in the election processes of six (6) subregional nations—Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo—using these countries as samples (Sulaiman, 2023).

2. Nigeria's Search for Free, Equitable, and Open Voting Systems

Free, fair, and trustworthy elections are essential to modern democracies. Voters' personal liberties, taxes, and other elements of everyday life that they take for granted may be impacted by election results. Free, fair and credible elections are thus crucial avenues for attaining sustainable development in any nation. People have an obligation to vote if they wish to have a role in how their futures turn out, considering the profound effects that elections can have. In democracies, the electoral process is important. People sacrificed their lives for the right to vote centuries ago. The importance of elections is highlighted by the sacrifice made by citizens to exercise this crucial privilege. Voting is a way to formally show support for a candidate running for office. Democracy revolves around voting, where each individual's vote is their voice and a nation's vote as a whole is its voice. Every vote counts, whether it's to choose a nation's president or the dean of a faculty. are significant. Only members of the upper classes were allowed to vote in early medieval elections; slaves and impoverished freeborn people were not allowed to do so. Voting rights were granted to male, white, and property-owning individuals in the United States during the era of slavery. Under the Hugh Clifford Constitution, Nigeria exercised its first right to vote in 1922. Nigerians were granted partial suffrage under this Constitution. Only adult males who lived in Lagos and made at least £100 a year were eligible. It wasn't until 1979 that women in northern Nigeria were granted the right to vote that Nigeria attained the status of universal adult suffrage (Abalaka, 2023).

The fundamental tenets of democracy are compromised by election tampering which maintains that the goal of governance is the welfare of the populace. Honest people avoid the political process out of fear of election fraud. Based on past experiences, manual elections systems present a plethora of difficulties. These include voter registrations that are ill-prepared or fraudulent, inadequate electoral materials (especially ballot papers) that result in voters losing their right to vote, ballot boxes stolen from INEC officials, and challenges transporting electoral materials (especially ballot papers) after voting is over. Violence and electoral malfeasance are other problems. Winning an election is a life-or-death situation for many politicians and political candidates. Their whole campaign strategy includes election fraud and rigging, which is carried out to either obtain an unfair advantage over their rivals or interfere with the procedure outright when it is evident that is no longer among them Ajiteru (2023).

Nigeria's history of manual election manipulation began with the country's post-independence elections. A series of events that occurred in the years following independence in 1960 shaped the tone of the 1964 elections. These included the detention of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and key party members, the division of the Western Region into the Mid-Western Region, the contested 1962 and 1963 census results, the boycott of the elections in Lagos and the Eastern and Mid-Western Regions due to accusations of fraud and rigging, and claims of intimidation by opponents nationwide. The federal elections of 1964 witnessed First Republic politicians fighting for control. As a result, the First Republic's electoral system had serious problems. There was widespread rigging, intimidation, tyranny, violence, and wanton killings because the political parties lacked self-control. The electoral process totally collapsed under these constraints (Abalaka, 2023).

The final nail in the First Republic's coffin was the 1965 Western regional legislature election. The tenuous calm that was in place after this election could no longer be maintained, and the election's wanton fraud made sure that the Republic's downfall was inevitable. The issues and discontent brought forth by the actions of the First Republic politicians led to the nation's first military takeover. This then caused the biggest humanitarian catastrophes the nation has ever experienced and the three-year civil war. The defective electoral system

caused the Republic to collapse, and the military, which seized control, carried the ghost of the crisis with it. In an attempt to strengthen loyalty to the nation as a whole rather than to a specific region, Nigeria chose the Presidential System of government during the 1979 elections. It was believed that an executive presidency would bring the country together. In order to maintain a federal perspective, political parties had to adhere to specific standards and protocols. It was believed that these elements would prevent the problems of regionalism, which led to the First Republic. Voters cast their ballots on August 11, 1979.

This election's outcome was controversial because it became necessary to interpret the meaning of "twelve-two-thirds" of nineteen states because the front-runner failed to receive 25% of the vote in two-thirds of the twelve states and two-thirds of the local governments in the thirteenth state. As a result, the government began operating on a crisis of legitimacy. The 1983 election was one of the most turbulent in the nation's history. The general public believed that the 1983 election was heavily manipulated. The political parties made charges and rebuttals alleging fraud, thuggery, ballot paper manipulation, and intimidation. President Shagari's second term got off to a very unlucky start given the contentious election result. A coup d'etat, however, ended the Third Republic. After more than ten years of military misrule, the nation underwent its longest transition to civil rule. The military regime tampered with the timeline for the transition to democracy. In order to achieve an outcome that the Military had planned, the 1992–1993 elections were repeatedly postponed, canceled, and delayed Ajiteru (2023).

The 2011 election was conducted in accordance with updated legal guidelines, which guaranteed INEC's independence. In fact, there were fewer cases in the tribunals than there had been during the 2007 elections. The tender spot of the violence that broke out at the end of the election process claimed 1,000 lives. The election process was severely damaged by the violence. The majority of the Corps members who worked as Ad-Hoc personnel, particularly in the North, perished in the violence that followed the election, leaving them at a significant disadvantage. Election violence allegations also plagued the 2015 election. These issues with Nigeria's subsequent elections serve as a reminder of the country's unfinished quest for a reliable voting system. For Nigeria's electoral

systems to undergo meaningful and successful reform, the numerous issues related to manual voting systems must be fully recognized and resolved. Sulaiman (2018) discusses these difficulties in the following section.

3. E-voting: Nigeria's answer to electoral fraud.

It has been said that the best way to address Nigeria's issues with inadequate democratic practices is to implement strong IT policies and initiatives. By making the voting process more convenient, electronic voting can lower election expenses and boost civic engagement. According to critics, the absence of a paper trail makes recounts more challenging, could allow for electronic ballot tampering, and could have an impact on election outcomes due to badly written computer code. Various democratic cultures have employed distant electronic voting and polling place electronic voting. The use of electronic voting is in different phases in the US, Australia, Estonia, Japan, Brazil, and India. In its 2014 general election, Namibia became the first nation in Africa to switch to electronic voting Abalaka (2023).

It is clear that electronic voting has advantages over traditional voting methods. One feature of e-voting that improves participation and addresses the indifference connected to conventional voting techniques is convenience. People can express their opinions and cast their ballots more easily using e-voting, which is a crucial requirement for a positive democratic process. Additionally, if e-elections are implemented, badly constructed paper ballots that may have been filled out or counted erroneously will no longer exist (Ajiteru, 2023).

Every citizen has the right to influence how his nation is run, which helps him feel like he belongs. Removing this would be equivalent to depriving him of one of his most fundamental freedoms and human rights. This is a significant harm to that citizen. When elected by the people, governments are more likely to be respected, legitimate, and obedient. When voting rights are restricted, dictatorship and anarchy could result. The protection and guarantee of citizens' fundamental human rights to vote, as guaranteed by democratic constitutions, is a necessary condition for the smooth operation of a democracy. Evidence of the public's active participation and involvement in decision-making is the hallmark of a successful voter engagement campaign. Protecting the constitutional rights of the designated set of individuals is one of the grounds

for using this innovative voting system, in addition to eliminating fraud, rigging, and conserving labor and convenience (Sulaiman, 2023).

In underdeveloped nations, the majority of ICT development programs and initiatives are met with implementation and maintenance and upkeep difficulty since the social context in which these projects are implemented is not critically assessed. Therefore, it is crucial for developing nations to evaluate their ability to support these concepts, their financial costs, the amount of capital needed, and the intellectual capability of their populace to assimilate and value these imported ideas before adopting western approaches, culture, and technology. Due diligence studies are often infrequently commissioned to evaluate the viability of such alien concepts. Sometimes the outcome is the failure of these concepts in developing nations, along with the loss of the funds allocated for these initiatives. For example, even if a significant sum of money was allocated to the general elections in 2015 in order to purchase the card reader, INEC had to use human verification and accreditation because 41% of the card readers failed. This has emphasized how important it is to deal with the issues brought on by adoption e-elections. The next section of the paper will look at legal issues that need to be recognized and resolved before Nigeria may deploy electronic voting systems in a sustainable manner (Abalaka, 2023).

4. Institutional and Legal Obstacles to Nigeria's Adoption of e-Elections

Many legal issues and difficulties will inevitably arise from Nigeria's adoption of e-elections. There will be questions about whether the elections in question were lawful or not. Now is the moment to get ready for this impending crisis, according to Sulaiman (2023).

The majority of international constitutions recognize the right to vote as an essential human right. This privilege is ingrained in profoundly into any culture that is democratic. Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections, which shall be held by secret ballot and by universal and equal suffrage, ensuring the free expression of the electorate's will, according to Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). According to Article 21 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), "Everyone has the right to participate in his country's government, directly or through representatives who have been freely chosen." Government power will be derived from the will of the people,

which will be reflected in regular, legitimate elections that are held by universal, equal suffrage and will be decided by secret ballot or comparable free-voting methods.

Sections and subsections 77 (2), 117 (2), 132 (5), and 178 (5) of the 1999 Constitution provide the right to vote to each Nigerian citizen who has reached the age of eighteen (although this right is not covered under the section on fundamental human rights). It is clear from the aforementioned laws and international legal documents that enfranchisement is crucial to any discussion of the law. Voting rights are therefore deeply ingrained in these laws. An auxiliary to the right to vote is the right of access to vote; the right of access entails arguments over the inability to vote of some citizens who are willing to vote but are denied the chance because they are unable to do so because they are elderly, disabled, or infirm, or because they are serving their country abroad, as in the case of military personnel. When manual voting is the sole way to exercise the right to vote, these groups of individuals are prevented from carrying out the most significant civic responsibilities, and it is not their fault. The legality of using SCR, harmonization problems, logistical and institutional challenges, technological and infrastructure concerns, and data privacy are the obstacles that e-voting in Nigeria will need to overcome in order to be accepted as a valid election method (Ajiteru, 2023).

5. Election-Related Elements

Elections are a crucial tool and practical way to maintain order in the leadership process in a democracy succession as well as transformation. Every government gains political power and legitimacy as a result. In a democracy, elections are crucial, but their ability to reflect the will of the people, enact political reforms, and validate the legitimacy of the regime is severely limited. According to Schumpeter (2017), democracy is all about holding elections and selecting political leaders since it guarantees that the populace has the chance to accept or reject the persons who will govern them. The basis of political authority, legitimacy, and the responsibilities of citizens are demonstrated by elections, which also guarantee the popularity of a government and expose the social compact between the governed and the govern. Additionally, through reciprocity, it helps to mold and refine political accountability amongst the governors and trade. According to Sandbrook (2018), elections and power

struggles are crucial because they allow the oppressed classes to bring up the issue of alternative ideologies. As such, they are a crucial step in the socialist movement to expand democratic control into the social, economic, and political spheres. Abalaka (2023).

The creation of a clear, capable, largely autonomous, and nonpartisan electoral body that will oversee election administration is necessary for elections to succeed. In order to interpret election rules and make decisions regarding electoral matters, an unbiased judiciary must exist. Together with the police force, mass media free from political control should be established. will assist in overseeing how an election is conducted. According to Ajiteru (2023), electoral laws should govern how elections are conducted, how political parties are organized, how voters register, how candidates are nominated for elective public office, how ballots are counted, and how election results are announced. This will help ensure that elections are successful. Sulaiman (2023).

5.1 Techniques for Election Rigging

In Nigeria, election tampering has taken numerous forms. Nigerian elections are rigged in a few ways, according to observers. Ibrahim (2017) notes that the following are some examples of electoral fraud:

1. Voter cards printed illegally;
2. Unlawful ballot box possession;
3. ballot box stuffing;
4. falsifying electoral outcomes;
5. unauthorized ballot paper thumbprinting;
6. Early voting
7. the accumulation of false names on voting lists;
8. Compiling disparate voter lists illegally;
9. Illegal printing of election results collection and declaration forms;
10. Willful denial of electoral materials to specific regions;
11. Declaring the outcome in areas without elections;
12. Unauthorized declaration of election outcomes;
13. Abuse of voters, agents, and candidates;
14. Modification of the electoral officers' list;
15. Figure inflation and box-switching.

In addition to the aforementioned, certain politicians with political clout may advocate for the unlawful arrest and incarceration of their rivals on or before election day in an effort to win an election by any means necessary. This could therefore make voter mobilization more difficult. very little by his opponents. In order to scare away legitimate voters who will then flee for their lives, powerful politicians occasionally employ thugs to rig the streets and shoot intermittently in the air at voting places. This allows the thugs to remove the filled ballot boxes and replace them with empty ones. Ajiteru (2023).

However, sincere voters are afraid that the election will be a do-or-die situation, and peaceful Nigerians would rather stay at home than face any unnecessary harassment. This would give politicians the opportunity to rig the results massively. Last but not least, security personnel are increasingly used to rig elections. Regretfully, security personnel who are meant to represent peace and Order occasionally clashes with certain politicians who manipulate elections. In order to garner more votes for their powerful bosses, Abalaka (2023), they would intimidate voters by making a large-scale arrest at the designated areas.

6. An Examination of Nigerian Election Riggings Throughout History

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country's aspirations to become a nation began to wane, as seen by the way elections were held following the colonial British withdrawal. Democracy was damaged by the two democratic governments of the first and second republics. In the context of Nigeria at the time, democracy was viewed as a misconceived idea that was only examined by the political elites because it served their interests. The election demonstrated this carried out in 1964, when there was widespread electoral tampering and manipulation (Sulaiman, 2023).

6.1 The 1964 General Election and the 1965 Western Election

A new election had to be held in 1965 because of the turmoil caused by the 1964 general election in the west due to various electoral manipulations. In the 1965 Western election, it was discovered that electoral officials were working with the federally supported political party to prevent members of the opposition party from completing their allotted nomination forms. Dudley (2021), Anifowose (2017), and Post and Vickers (2013) summed up the nature of the election rigging as follows: Akintola and his party (NNDP), with the backing of the Federal government, carried out an astoundingly horrifying

rigging mechanism, thuggery, hindrance and punitive control to ensure the NNNDP's resounding triumph. To be honest, Action Group (AG) was the most popular party in this area. The locals decided to support Obafemi Awolowo's party because they considered him to be their political godfather. With the backing of the federal government and a Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNNDP) flagbearer, they organized against Westerner Chief Samuel Akintola, but they engaged in a power struggle with Chief Awolowo. Through extensive rigging, the ruling Northern People's Congress party backed Akintola and ousted Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group (AG). According to Dudley (2017), the NNNDP's deputy leader and western deputy premier had actually stated prior to the elections that whether or not the people cast ballots for the NNNDP, According to Sulaiman (2018), the NNNDP would win the elections. even though the opposition party (Action Group) received a sizable majority of the vote and the public overwhelmingly rejected the administration and Akintola's candidacy. The Akintola government consequently publicly intervened with the election results. According to Ademoyega (2019:20–21), AG candidates who had certificates proving they were legitimately elected in their districts frequently afterward had their names called out as losing candidates in official news outlets. After their attempt to remove Akintola and his party from office failed, AG members were disappointed and turned to widespread violence throughout the country and regions, which led to a military takeover of government on January 15, 1966, ending the first democratic experience in Nigeria Abalaka's (2023).

6.2 The 1979 General Election

After defeating the first republic of 1963 in a coup d'etat led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu in 1966, the second republic brought with it a constitution (1979 constitution) that allowed for different political parties to retake the nation from the military, which had been in place since 1966. Since Nigerians believed that a presidential style of government would be the best option for their nation, this step was made to revive yet another democratic administration. Following a thirteen-year military rule from 1966 to 1979, the 1979 election served as the second direct test of democracy. The Nigerian Peoples Party was one of five

political parties that participated. The first executive president, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, was eventually created by the National Party of Nigeria (NPP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), People's Redemption Party (PRP), Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP), and finally the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). Nevertheless, this election was a rerun of the nation's earlier elections. The ruling military government in this 1979 election had a questionable hand in deciding the vote, manipulated the outcome, and used election manipulation to install an unpopular candidate. Awolowo consequently appealed the election results, but the court dismissed his claim (Sulaiman, 2023).

6.3 The 1983 General Election

Another election was held in 1983, and the incumbent government, the NPN, prevailed by massive election-rigging and violence similar to that in the first Republican elections, which ultimately led to a great deal of bloodshed in the states to justify the military invasion in December 1983 and ultimately ended the second republic. When compared to the 1964–1965 elections, the 1979 election did bring some relief in terms of freedom, but the 1983 election revealed the high standards set by the 1979 election. According to Tijani (2016:19), this argument is supported by the following: A massive collusion between the NPN, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), the police, and some parts of the judiciary had resulted in governments that were unable to claim legitimacy due to even the most basic requirement of a bourgeois democracy. Kurfi (2015) highlights the extent of the election's fraud by pointing out: Various tactics and Various tactics, such as ballot manipulation or "rigging," were used to win the election. Every opposition party made advantage of its local power of incumbency to hold onto power and/or strengthen its position in comparison to other candidates. However, state governors in Anambra, Oyo, Kaduna, Gongola, and Borno states were overthrown by federal force, increasing the number of governorships held by the NPN from seven to twelve. This reversed the power structure that existed prior to the election, when opposition parties held twelve governorships against the NPN's seven (Ajiteru, 2023).

Chief Akin Omoboriowo, a candidate for governor from the National Party of Nigeria, and Chief Michael Ajasin, the flag bearer for the Unity Party of

Nigeria, faced off in Ondo state. The Electoral Commission (FEDECO) proclaimed the former the victor with 1,228,891 votes, but the latter was credited with 1,015,385 votes. The actual results, however, were 1,563,327 votes for Chief Ajasin and 703,592 for Chief Omoboriowo, according to the election count, the Federal Court of Appeal's and the Supreme Court's rulings, and the certificates of results duly signed by the assistant returning officers, party agents, and returning officers' oral witnesses. Chief Omoboriowo's scores were inflated by 523,389 votes, according to evidence from these rulings, whereas Chief Ajasin's ratings decreased by 547,942 votes. According to the report, the deputy returning officer was responsible for fabricating the data. According to Nwabueze (2015), the court ruled that Chief Michael Ajasin was legitimately elected as the governor of State of Ondo. It is said that the 1983 election was one of the most corrupt that Nigeria has ever held. This argument is captioned by Iyayi (2015:19), who claims that election-related issues include high levels of opportunism and consequently low levels of commitment to the various right-wing political ideologies that define the political class, the objectification of politics, the mobilization of ethnic identities as the foundation for determining the legitimacy of claims to political power, the conception and practice of politics as warfare, the lack of continuity in the political platforms used by members of the political class, and massive electoral frauds. Abalaka (2023).

Because of the way politics and political parties operate in the nation, many capable and morally upright men and women just keep apart from national politics. Men of influence who view political party finance as an investment that must pay off make up the majority of political parties. (Nigerian Federal Republic, 1986:348).

3.4 The 1993 General Election

Gen. Ibrahim Badamosi Bhangida's military regime established the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1993. Nigerians flocked to the polls on June 12, 1993, to support the birth of democracy because they believed that these two political parties were their last chance to end military rule in the country's body polity. Since all ethnic interests are forced to make accommodations, the military's decision to implement a two-

party system was a wise one. either of the two parties, and the two parties came to represent all ethnic groups in a significant way. As a result, voters were able to completely express their preferences by selecting candidates based on their qualifications rather than just their ethnicity. Sulaiman (2023).

Moshood (2019) summarized the election rigging in Nigeria as follows: A new phase to election rigging in Nigeria when the military president Ibrahim Babangida, unable to accomplish his mission at the poll, publicly manipulated i.e., rigged people of their interest by annulling the election results considered the most free and fair in history. Regretfully, the election that was considered the end of military dictatorship and a departure from the previous elections conducted still had its negative effects of the election in Nigeria. The annulment of this election's outcome drove Nigeria back into long-standing political unrest and increased military authoritarianism, endangering the nation's political stability and unity. General Ibrahim Babangida resigned and gave the government to an interim government led by Chief Ernest Shonekan amid the political unrest created by the election winner, who threatened to mutiny if not given a mandate in an election he won by a wide margin. However, this was only a ploy to install another military government, as General Sani Abacha, Babangida's second in command, overthrew the interim government and ruled until his death in power (Ajiteru, 2023).

6.4 The 1999 General Election

Three political parties emerged from the 1999 general election: the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the All Peoples Party (APP), and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Together, APP and AD supported Chief Olu Falae, who faced off against PDP candidate and former military head of state Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who ultimately prevailed in the election. The military made numerous transition promises prior to this election, but in the end, they transferred control from one military administration to another. In actuality, the polity had been harmed to the point where people had lost interest in politics because of three.

After decades of military control, the people of South-West (Yoruba) were upset that their son, Abiola, was not given the opportunity to lead the nation in an election held in June 12, 1993. It he won by a wide margin. They viewed it as a tactic used by the federal government to prevent a Yoruba man from

becoming the nation's ruler. In an effort to resolve the aforementioned issues, the departing military freed Obasanjo, who had been detained at the time for a purported coup attempt, and introduced him as the only representative of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Because the military chose Obasanjo to run for office, the Yoruba native did not garner the support of his people. Because of this, his people accused him of speaking for the military elite. Although Olu Falae garnered more support in the South-West, Obasanjo ultimately prevailed in an election that was viewed as a mirage and as a The outcome was not taken seriously. According to Abalaka (2023), Nigerians' indolence toward the polls allowed the military junta to rig the results and give power to the individual the hierarchy desired.

6.5 The 2003 General Election

Because the previous election had transferred authority from a military dictatorship to a civilian one, the 2003 election gave Nigerians new optimism. This time, the game took a different approach because Nigerians were in dire need of a democratic consolidation and a military guarantee that power would be turned over to a civil administration. Many were also desperate for political power after witnessing the type of wealth that comes with politics. This financial pursuit led the incumbents to Hold onto electricity for a longer period of time. Despite the fact that international observers deemed the elections to be seriously flawed, Aina (2016) notes that they marked the first peaceful civilian transition in Nigerian history. However, based on the information acquired, there was some election tampering. The European Commission, which monitors widespread election-related irregularities in several Middle Eastern, South-South, and Middle Belt states (European Commission, 2015:42). Stuart Mole, a Commonwealth Election Observer who witnessed the Niger Delta, claims that the election results were rigged. He points out that numerous polling places had extremely low voter attendance for the April 2015 elections, with some polling places closing before 2:00 p.m. The election results announced for the majority of seats at 5:00 p.m. showed a 90–100% voter turnout (Mole, 2015:427). Furthermore, the most remarkable aspect of this seemingly fictitious election was the remarkably high turnout, which was typically over 90%. A remarkable 99.6 percent of voters turned out in Tai district, where we had seen

few voters and where the polls had only been open for a few hours. The PDP's share of the vote was 99.2 percent. Massive electoral fraud has obviously been accompanied by extensive voter intimidation. Ibid. One aspect of the 2015 election was different from the 2003 elections, according to Ogunsanwo (2015:19) (Ajiteru, 2023).

In reality, the Independent National Electoral Commission had no authority. Human Rights Watch, which kept an eye on the election and said that: intimidation, violence, and rigging were so widespread and so openly displayed that they humiliated the electoral process. Many people did not cast ballots in places where voting was not conducted. A pre-election period during which over 100 people were killed in violence related to the election scared them away. The death toll exceeded 300 by the end of the election (Human Rights Watch, 2003). Iyayi (2017) mentioned in his speech that the Transition Monitoring Group had described the 2003 election as follows: "The results announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) have been rejected by 29 registered political parties that either contested or did not contest, claiming that the results are fraudulent." a few political parties and their While some candidates chose to take "mass action" to force a government without a popular candidate to resign, others chose to contest portions of the results before the various election petition tribunals and have since done so. Abubarkar Momoh called the current Nigerian democracy "presidential authoritarianism" after it was damaged by rigged elections and other manipulations. According to him, it is debatable if the elections that took place in 1999 and 2019 could legitimately be classified as elections rather than selections or, better still, the distribution of positions (Sulaiman, 2023).

The Nigerian Police and the so-called Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are used by the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) to distribute votes among candidates. Godfather's candidates were only imposed on the party during the primaries. After that, they were assigned INEC's votes (Momoh, 2015.51). 3.7 The 2007 General Election In the history of Nigerian elections, the 2017 election was the first to have a third straight presidential election and the first time that an elected leader had followed another. The country was engulfed in tensions, such as the National Assembly's delay in reviewing the constitution to grant the electoral commission real

autonomy, Obasanjo and his vice Atiku accusing one another of corruption, southern politicians demanding more tenures while northern politicians insisted that power return to their region, or the Niger Delta militants' persistent disruptions to control some oil wells in their states. Numerous political parties have registered, and the contest for control As the administration gathered steam, it created space for a number of presidential candidates who wanted to use every possible tactic to unseat the PDP's leadership. After losing his attempt for a third term, President Obasanjo personally selected his successor, the late President Umaru Musa Yar Adua, during a PDP convention, disappointing other candidates for the same position. Prior to this, some PDP members who intended to run defected to other parties, making the election much more intense than the murder of political rival Mount Abalaka (2023).

Since it was a carryover from the 2019 election, which used various forms of election rigging, this obviously did not end without it. The 2019 election was close to the last one Nigerian election were held. This time, the electoral boards set electronic voting as the standard, and the election rigging became scientific. The local and foreign monitoring teams declared the election to be rigged, calling it the most damning election ever held anywhere in the world, despite the INEC chairman's assurance that it would be free and fair. Iyayi (2019) observes in his speech that the general elections held in April of 2019 were more fraudulent, violent, rigged, criminal, and complicit in the electoral farce than those held in 2018 and 2019. According to a Human Rights Watch assessment, "the Nigerian government failed totally in several major states in its responsibilities to conduct free and elections that are fair. The first three stages of Nigeria's elections on April 14 and April 21 fell short of the standards established by both international and prior Nigerian elections, according to the 59-member International Republican Institute. The resolution of election issues in the courts and election tribunals was the final step in the electoral process. Some of the election results have been challenged and overturned, and new elections have been called in a number of states, including Ekiti, Edo, Oyo, Benue, and others. On October 15, 2010, Adekunle Jimoh of The Nation, one of Nigeria's top publications, revealed that Dr. Kayode Fayemi, a candidate for governor who campaigned in 2007, was rigged out and returned to his position

as governor of Ekiti State. Olusegun Oni, who manipulated the election through election tampering, won a re-election with 105,631 votes to 95,176, and this also affected numerous other states with instances of election tampering (Ajiteru, 2023).

7. Nigeria's Democratic Consolidation Is Doomed by Election Rigging

The majority controls the government. Abraham Lincoln's widely accepted concept of democracy makes this clear. "The government of the people, by the people, and for the people is democracy." referring to a system of governance in which the majority governs. In Nigeria, everybody who is 18 years of age or older has the civic right to engage in electioneering because of this conceptual notion. Consolidation of democracy is possible if there is public participation. When these participants' votes count, participation is significant, but not when the interests of a select few are used to sway their votes. An oligarchy, or government of the few, is what happens when the majority does not have a say in who should represent them. Elections that are manipulated by a select few do not reflect democracy, and it is extremely challenging to strengthen democracy in such a setting. Nigeria's aspirations for a cohesive democracy have been postponed since the country's independence in 1960 due to election manipulation. The legitimacy of the ruling government is essential to the consolidation of democracy. According to Dahrendorf (2016), legitimacy is the public's conviction that the government, the ruling system, and its policies are proper and right. The people have the right to provide legitimacy; the ruling government cannot do so by using force can strip governments of their legitimacy (Nwosu, 1976:6), and this fluctuates periodically based on the level of satisfaction that the populace has with the ruling government (Dare, 2015). Election tampering in Nigeria has not resulted in a government that the people will accept. This is because, although being the people's choice, the odds of genuine candidates winning the election were hampered by the fact that some of the leaders who won her elections, as we examined in this study, ended up in the halls of power through various sorts of manipulation. The electorate will be reluctant to accept this unpopular candidate's leadership because they believe it is a stolen mandate. Any administration that takes power in defiance of the majority vote lacks the moral authority and credibility enjoyed by popular mandate. A government established without the consent of the people will fail,

and democracy cannot be strengthened when a candidate is forced against the will of the people. Abalaka (2023).

Election tampering has sparked the rise of dishonest politicians who will stop at nothing to gain power. These politicians will do everything in their power to win the election, and their installation leads to corruption and wealth accumulation. According to Obia (2016), the implication is as follows: It has been argued that electoral fraud caused voters to lose faith in opposition parties and the political process in general. Enforcing government accountability and responsibility is one of the main goals of elections.

However, electoral fraud deprives elections of their fundamental function as a means of holding elected officials responsible to the people. A government that has manipulated its way into power without any moral basis for its actions, thus it has no incentive to appease anyone. A government is established to uphold fundamental human rights, but democratic consolidation suffers when it prioritizes the accumulation of private wealth over the welfare of its constituents. This is because the government's accountability to the electorate would have been rendered meaningless. According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy exists for the people. This implies that without the people, government is impossible. Regrettably, over the years, election manipulation has contributed to the infringement of the fundamental human rights principle, which Every citizen born in a nation has the right to life, according to A.V. Dicey. Election tampering has given rise to numerous political disputes in Nigeria that have contested citizens' rights to life. This fact is captioned by Osaghae (2018: 45), who claims that the parties used violent tactics, occasionally involving the physical removal of opposition candidates. This was evident during the 1964 elections, when opposition candidates faced harassment, were barred from running for office, and were even denied the opportunity to submit nomination papers. In the midst of intense political rivalry, more of these events were recorded from the northern and western provinces. Assassins have been employed by some political godfathers to kill their rivals. Many Nigerians have lost their lives in the fight to suppress vote boxes at some polling places. When we take into consideration how lax the law is in checking the actions of individuals who violate human rights (right to life) in the name of election rigging, we find that the rules that guide the principles

of a democratic government have been distorted rather than consolidated (Abalaka, 2023).

8. Conclusion and Suggestions

The tenets of free and fair elections are participation and voting freedom, leadership responsiveness, accountability, and legitimacy. In an environment where elections are free and fair, the populace will value democracy. In Nigeria, we see inadequate leadership responsiveness, accountability, and legitimacy, as well as the imposition of unsuitable candidates on the people's right to select the candidates of their choosing and a lack of public involvement. These elements have intensified calls for the establishment of an electoral body that will examine into election fraud. The government established election petition tribunals to review and render decisions on certain election petitions after the 2007 election results were widely rejected. Their experience has demonstrated that this reform has failed to achieve its intended outcome because the same criminals who first stole the electorate's mandate will return with even more pressure to perfect their deception when a new election is held in lieu of the one that was canceled. Despite this, there have been some positive outcomes from the body's introduction, such as the removal of a candidate who dubious assumed a leadership role and the installation of the appropriate candidate. The case can be used to provide examples in states like Edo State, Anambra State, Oyo State, Benue State, and most recently, Ekiti State, Dr. Kayode Fayemi was reinstated as the state's governor after his re-election was rigged. Some politicians continue to rig elections in spite of the public's dedication to achieving the aforementioned goals. Election tampering has been a danger to democracy since 1964 till 2007. Regretfully, several politicians who engaged in this heinous act have escaped punishment. In Nigerian politics, election rigging is unavoidable since politicians who have failed at manipulating elections in the past continue to re-strategize manipulations for future elections (Sulaiman, 2023).

In April 2011, Nigerians still have an opportunity to make amends as another. there will be a general election. Given the detrimental impacts of election rigging on our political system, forums must be established to reorient voters toward the necessity of adopting a political culture that would aid in the eradication of all forms of election fraud. Nigeria belongs to us, and we must

do everything in our power to safeguard her interests. It is past time that we stopped hiding from exercising our civic rights. In order for the people to obey the law, respect the rights of others, accept traditional forms of political participation, and—above all—accept the values and ideals of democracy, we need a free and fair election that will install a candidate who is widely accepted by the public and choose our representatives in a free and fair contest democratic ideals that will formalize the consolidation of democracy.

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