



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



Determinants of voting-related conflict and their implications for democratic consolidation and national development in Southwest Nigeria

Oluwadamilola Kemi Adams *

National Defence College, Nigeria.

International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2025, 16(03), 333–341

Publication history: Received on 26 July 2025; revised on 06 September 2025; accepted on 08 September 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2025.16.3.2537>

Abstract

This paper investigates the determinants of voting-related conflict and their implications for democratic consolidation and national development in Southwest Nigeria. Despite repeated electoral reforms, including the 2010 and 2022 Electoral Acts, violent disruptions continue to undermine political stability and development. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected from political party members, electoral officials, security operatives, media practitioners, and community leaders. A sample of 400 respondents was analyzed with SPSS to identify key conflict drivers.

Findings show that intra-party factionalism (99.5%), socio-economic deprivation (96.75%), and compromised security agencies (88.5%) are the most significant contributors to electoral violence, while ethno-regional competition, elite desperation for state resources, and weak institutions also play secondary roles. These dynamics perpetuate instability across Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, and Ogun States, disrupting commerce, service delivery, and infrastructure development. The study reveals that poverty and unemployment increase youth susceptibility to political manipulation, while partisan security agencies foster impunity and mistrust. Voting-related conflict in the region not only undermines the legitimacy of democratic institutions but also diverts resources from productive sectors, slowing social and economic progress. The persistence of such conflicts highlights a gap between electoral reforms and practical enforcement.

The study concludes that sustainable democratic consolidation requires strengthening internal party democracy, ensuring neutrality of security institutions, and implementing socio-economic interventions that reduce vulnerability to electoral manipulation. Addressing these structural drivers is essential for safeguarding Southwest Nigeria's role as an economic and educational hub and for advancing national development.

Keywords: Voting-Related Conflict; Democratic Consolidation; Intra-Party Factionalism; Socio-Economic Deprivation; Security Agencies; National Development

1. Introduction

The pursuit of representative rule places a core responsibility on authorities to establish trustworthy electoral systems, thereby ensuring the safety and welfare of their people. In nations that practice representative rule commonly called democracy elections are conducted at regular intervals. Yet, in certain democratic states, the administration of elections is influenced by practices that compromise the credibility of the process, often resulting in conflict. Such practices include vote trading, ballot box theft, political thuggery, arson, and even the assassination of opponents, all of which frequently escalate into voting-related conflict that harms the security and welfare of the populace. The damaging consequences of these unlawful practices highlight the pressing need to restrain electoral violence.

* Corresponding author: Oluwadamilola Kemi Adams

Voting related conflict signifies the application of force, threats, intimidation, or any obstructive or coercive measures by persons, groups, or institutions aimed at altering the results of an election. It covers diverse actions such as inflicting harm on voters, vandalizing electoral materials, and assaulting polling centres, among others. Such practices generate political instability, communal friction, and a climate of fear. Frequently, voting related conflict escalates into large-scale disturbances, which in turn disrupt the social and economic structures of a country, thereby jeopardizing democratic consolidation and national development.

Democratic consolidation refers to the process by which a new or fragile democracy matures to a point where its survival becomes highly probable, and the risk of democratic breakdown or reversal into authoritarianism is minimized. It is not simply about conducting regular elections, but about embedding democratic norms, institutions, and practices into the political culture, such that democracy becomes “the only game in town” (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Scholars emphasize that consolidation involves strengthening institutions, promoting political stability, ensuring rule of law, protecting civil liberties, and fostering a political culture where all key actors’ elites, parties, security agencies, and citizens accept democracy as the legitimate framework for political contestation (Diamond, 1999; O’Donnell, 1996). Democratic consolidation also requires effective governance and socio-economic development, since persistent poverty, inequality, and corruption can undermine citizens’ trust in democratic institutions and fuel authoritarian tendencies (Schedler, 2001). Democratic consolidation is the stage where democracy transcends procedural aspects (elections) and becomes substantively rooted in institutions, values, and practices that guarantee its resilience and sustainability.

National development refers to the overall progress and advancement of a country in its political, social, and economic spheres, which is often hindered when political unrest undermines stability and governance. Voting-related conflict disrupts democratic processes, weakens public trust in institutions, diverts resources from productive sectors to security concerns, and creates an atmosphere of fear and division. As a result, it slows economic growth, obstructs social cohesion, and diminishes the capacity of the state to deliver public goods, thereby impeding sustainable national development.

Voting related conflict in Southwest Nigeria has historically impeded national development by destabilizing governance, eroding public trust, and stalling socio-economic progress. During the First Republic (1960–1966), the dominance struggles within the Action Group centred in the Western Region culminated in violent episodes such as “Operation Wetie,” characterized by arson and brutal assaults on political figures. Concurrently, the 1965 Western Region elections were marred by widespread rigging, intimidation, and assassinations, prompting political turbulence that disrupted both education and commerce, undermined infrastructure expansion, and shattered communal harmony (Adele, 2012; Olauyi, 2019). These events severely hindered developmental prospects in the region and, by extension, the nation's growth trajectory.

In more recent years, the Southwest has remained a hotspot for voting related conflict, notably during the 1983 general elections in Ondo and Oyo States. The crisis, sparked by perceived manipulation favouring the National Party of Nigeria over the Unity Party of Nigeria, triggered violent protests, property destruction, and mob killings including the burning of homes and public buildings leading to a near breakdown of civil order (Alemika, 2011; Olauyi, 2019). These disturbances massively disrupted economic activities and investments in critical sectors, significantly undermining the region’s and thus the country’s developmental capacity.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has undertaken multiple strategies to curb voting-related unrest and, in doing so, foster sustainable national development particularly in the Southwest region. A cornerstone of these efforts was the passage of the 2010 Electoral Act (and subsequent amendments), designed to regulate political party behaviour, enforce compliance with ethical standards, and introduce penalties for violent electoral practices. In parallel, The Electoral Institute (TEI) established in 2005 and revamped in 2012 has been instrumental in enhancing institutional capacity through the training of electoral officials, security operatives, and party agents, alongside voter education initiatives aimed at peaceful citizen participation (Ibeanu, 2022).

Moreover, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was directed to provide comprehensive guidelines to political parties, discouraging members from engaging in or promoting voting-related violence (INEC, 2022). Complementing these measures, the National Peace Committee (NPC), formed in 2014, has played a mediatory role in election periods, culminating in adoption of peace agreements such as the peace accord signed ahead of the 2023 general election cycle (National Peace Committee, 2023). Collectively, these institutional reforms and peace-building efforts have not only curbed violence but also nurtured stability, enabling socioeconomic advancements critical to national development.

In Southwest Nigeria, the outcomes of these reforms have manifested in stronger democratic practices and enhanced regional development. For instance, the enforcement of the 2010 Electoral Act coincided with a marked decrease in voter intimidation and violent disturbances, thereby allowing states like Lagos, Oyo, and Ogun to continue functioning as engines of commerce and innovation without being interrupted by voting related conflict (Igwe, 2012). TEI's localized voter education campaigns in Oyo State (in Ibadan) have particularly improved citizens' understanding of their civic rights and responsibilities, resulting in increased voter turnout and reduced voters' intimidation (Igwe, 2012). These positive developments have reinforced investor confidence, improved governance effectiveness, and strengthened institutional legitimacy ultimately contributing to infrastructure growth, improved public services, and human capital development across the Southwest region.

1.1. Statement of the research problem

Despite the FGN's efforts to regulate the conduct of political parties, voting-related conflicts have persisted, undermining national development, particularly in the Southwest region. For example, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) documented over 60 violent disruptions during the 2015 general elections, many of which occurred in urban centers like Lagos and Ibadan, disrupting economic activity and weakening investor confidence (Goldsmith, 2015). Similarly, the European Union Election Observation Mission (2019) noted that intra-party disputes during the 2019 elections resulted in fatalities that destabilized communities and obstructed service delivery. More recently, during the 2023 general elections, over 200 violent incidents were recorded, including property destruction and voter intimidation, which had adverse implications for the region's commerce and infrastructure growth (International Centre for Investigative Reporting, 2023). The Centre for Democracy and Development (2023) further reported that over half of these incidents were linked to party-affiliated groups, illustrating how partisan interests continue to obstruct developmental progress. These recurring conflicts divert resources from education, healthcare, and infrastructural expansion sectors central to the advancement of Southwest Nigeria.

The developmental costs of such conflicts become clearer when considering how electoral instability disrupts processes that should promote inclusivity and democratic growth. Ideally, activities such as voter registration, party primaries, and candidate selection ought to be transparent, credible, and violence-free, thereby enabling stronger democratic representation (Akinola, 2022). However, in practice, frequent violations of these processes have weakened trust in governance and limited opportunities for equitable development. For instance, Human Rights Watch (2011) estimated that over 800 people lost their lives in election-related unrest in 2011, creating long-term social dislocations and discouraging developmental investments. In the Southwest, states like Ekiti and Ondo have frequently experienced ballot snatching and voter intimidation, which not only distort democratic outcomes but also delay infrastructural projects and reduce agricultural productivity (Ojo, 2021). These disruptions, coupled with violent attacks on political actors and party offices, have compounded communal tensions and created an environment of uncertainty that undermines developmental planning.

To address these challenges, the FGN has implemented reforms such as the 2022 Electoral Act, which introduced the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the Election Viewing Portal to increase transparency (INEC, 2022). The National Peace Committee (NPC) has also encouraged political actors to sign peace accords prior to elections, with some success in promoting peaceful campaigns (Francis, 2024). In Southwest Nigeria, these reforms have shown promise: Lagos State, for example, reported fewer violent incidents during the 2023 elections compared to 2019, allowing uninterrupted business operations and improved urban development outcomes (CDD, 2023). Yet, the persistence of party-linked thuggery and intimidation reveals that more work is needed to fully align democratic consolidation with sustainable national development. Ultimately, minimizing voting-related conflict in the Southwest is essential to safeguarding the region's role as Nigeria's commercial and educational hub and to ensuring broader developmental progress nationwide.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to assess the determinants of voting-related conflict and their implications for democratic consolidation and national development in Southwest Nigeria.

2. Review of voting-related conflict and their implications for national development in southwest Nigeria

The history of voting-related conflict in Nigeria can be traced back to the pre-independence period, with incidents documented as early as the 1950s. The 1959 elections, organized in preparation for independence, exposed the rivalry among the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG), and the National Council of Nigeria and the

Cameroons (NCNC). This competition resulted in widespread violence that claimed more than 100 lives and caused severe property destruction (Kirk-Greene, 1971). In the Southwest, the AG's dominance contributed to tensions that escalated into voting related conflict, particularly during the 1965 Western Region elections, which disrupted educational institutions, trade, and infrastructure projects (Osaghae, 1998). While electoral reforms were introduced through the Acts of 1962, 1982, 1998, and later 2001, 2006, and 2010, weak enforcement and lack of specialized institutions to address electoral offences limited their impact on development outcomes (Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart, 2010). More recently, the 2022 Electoral Act has drawn criticism for insufficient penalties, making it difficult to deter voting related conflict, which continues to undermine the developmental potential of key Southwest states such as Lagos and Oyo (Itodo, 2025).

The return to democratic rule in 1999 did not eliminate electoral conflict. Over 150 cases of voting-related clashes were reported, many of which occurred in Southwestern cities with high political competition, disrupting markets and local governance systems (International Crisis Group, 1999). Similar patterns persisted in the 2003 and 2007 elections, where reports indicated that more than 400 lives were lost nationally, with significant unrest in Lagos, Ondo, and Ekiti States (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2007). Ojo (2006) attributes this to the absence of intra-party factionalism, where imposition of candidates often resulted in defections and retaliatory violence. Such dynamics have a direct impact on development, as political instability discourages investment and undermines institutional efficiency in Southwest Nigeria. The 2011 general elections represented a major turning point. Post-election protests left more than 800 people dead and displaced about 65,000 citizens across 10 states, particularly Lagos, Ondo and Ogun states (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

Although the 2015 elections were relatively more peaceful due to President Jonathan's concession, incidents of violence persisted, with 58 fatalities recorded nationwide (INEC, 2015). The Southwest experienced localized clashes, particularly in Lagos and Ogun, which disrupted community life and delayed infrastructural projects. Omotola (2016) and Nwankwo (2017) argue that the slow judicial process and the failure to prosecute offenders reinforced impunity, perpetuating a cycle of conflict that diverts resources away from pressing development priorities such as education, health, and transportation infrastructure.

During the 2023 elections, voting-related conflict resurfaced with over 600 cases and more than 140 deaths recorded. In the Southwest, economic hardship and youth unemployment provided fertile ground for recruitment into political thuggery, particularly in Lagos and Osun (Adamu, 2019). Such conditions weaken governance capacity and exacerbate poverty, further stalling developmental goals. Taken together, issues such as intra-party factionalism and socio-economic deprivation amongst others highlight the complex ways in which voting-related conflict undermines national development in Southwest Nigeria.

3. Methodology of the study

Data for the investigation were sourced from both primary and secondary materials. Primary information was gathered from registered members of political parties, officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), personnel from security agencies, members of the judiciary, media practitioners, and community leaders. Secondary information was drawn from published and unpublished books, seminar and conference papers, academic journals and lecture notes. The study population encompasses Southwest Nigeria's entire estimated population of 42 million people as of 2025 (Ayobami, 2025). The Taro Yamane formula was applied in determining the sample size which was computed to be 400. A simple random sampling method was employed, combined with purposive sampling to identify respondents in the field for questionnaire administration, thereby reducing bias. This approach was necessary to ensure every individual in the broader population had an equal chance of selection. The principal instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, which consisted mainly of multiple-choice questions. Responses from the completed questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. Descriptive statistics was employed to interpret the findings. The results were presented using descriptive and explanatory methods, with a table included to enhance clarity and simplify the presentation of data.

Table 1 Respondent's Views on The Determinants of Voting-Related Conflict in Southwest Nigeria

Determinants of Voting-Related Conflict in Southwest Nigeria	Frequency	Percentage
Intra-party factionalism	398	99.5
Socio-economic deprivation	387	96.75
Compromised security agencies	354	88.5
Ethno-regional competition	178	44.5
Desperation for access to state resources	121	30.25
Weakness of electoral institutions	23	5.75

4. Intra-party factionalism

Intra-party factionalism significantly undermines internal party democracy, thereby jeopardizing democratic consolidation and exacerbating voting-related conflicts in Southwest Nigeria. In 2020, for instance, the APC in Ondo State was engulfed in voting-related conflict over the governorship primaries, where disputes between incumbent Governor Rotimi Akeredolu and party rivals led to parallel congresses, defections, and pre-election violence (Premium Times, 2020). Similarly, Ekiti State witnessed intense factionalism in 2018, when divisions between Kayode Fayemi's faction and other aspirants triggered violent clashes and deepened mistrust among party members (Vanguard, 2018).

Factional disputes have also destabilized Lagos State, where long-standing godfatherism has generated recurrent conflicts within the APC, particularly during candidate selection processes (The Cable, 2019). In Oyo State, the PDP was torn apart in 2019 when disagreements over zoning arrangements and imposition of candidates forced defections and weakened the party's electoral strength (Punch, 2019). Osun State similarly recorded intra-party battles in 2022 between Governor Gboyega Oyetola's camp and that of former governor Rauf Aregbesola, leading to parallel primaries that fractured the APC and created widespread discontent (Premium Times, 2022).

Institutional deficiencies at the ward level amplify these tensions. Research shows that many party offices in the Southwest are skeletal or only activated during election cycles, undermining grassroots inclusivity and voting-related conflict prevention capabilities (Itodo, 2024). Financial misallocation further exacerbates these problems. Reports indicate that funds within dominant parties are often funnelled into short-term campaigns rather than long-term organizational development, thereby encouraging the recruitment of thugs instead of legitimate mobilizers (Akhere, 2015).

Although Nigeria's constitutional provisions and party constitutions ostensibly support internal democracy (Akhere, 2015), implementation is weak. For example, the APC Constitution prescribes national, zonal, and ward-level structures alongside institutional organs such as the National Executive Committee (NEC) and National Working Committee (NWC). Yet, Southwest cases illustrate how these structures are often bypassed in favour of elite imposition and patronage. INEC has made regulatory efforts to curb these practices. The deregistration of 28 political parties in 2015 and the exclusion of 124 in 2019 for non-compliance with internal democracy requirements highlight institutional attempts to restore order (Olorok and Ajaja, 2022). The Electoral Act (2022) further mandates credible primaries and internal grievance systems. After the 2023 elections, both APC and PDP established internal dispute resolution mechanisms, although their outcomes remain uneven (Muhammed, 2025). Zoning disputes within the PDP ahead of the 2023 elections further destabilized the party in the Southwest. Prominent defections and internal sabotage weakened its electoral performance, with many aggrieved members shifting allegiance or working against the party's interest (Yusuf, 2023; Raji, 2023). These recurrent cases of intra-party factionalism in Ondo, Ekiti, Lagos, Oyo, Osun, and Ogun States not only fuel voting-related conflict but also undermine democratic consolidation and broader development in Southwest Nigeria.

5. Socioeconomic deprivation arising from institutional governance deficiencies

Socio-economic deprivation plays a critical role in shaping voting-related conflict in Southwest Nigeria because widespread poverty, unemployment, and inequality make citizens, particularly youths, vulnerable to political manipulation. The United Nations Development Programme (2021) highlights that societies with deep income disparities are prone to electoral crises, as marginalized populations are often exploited by political elites, and this

reality is evident in Nigeria where persistent hardship provides fertile ground for conflict during elections. In 2022, 47% of Nigerians lived below the poverty line, unemployment stood at 5.3%, and inflation at 21.34% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), while by 2025, poverty rose to 67%, unemployment to 12.6%, and inflation to 34.8% (International Monetary Fund, 2025; Mbachu, 2025), conditions that intensified the vulnerability of impoverished youths to financial inducements by political actors. This vulnerability manifested during the 2023 presidential elections in Lagos State, where armed groups attacked voters in opposition strongholds, destroying materials and undermining electoral integrity (Angalapu, 2023), while in the 2018 Ekiti governorship election, unemployed youths were mobilized as political thugs in violent clashes between party supporters (Vanguard, 2018). Studies confirm that unemployment strongly correlates with electoral unrest, as Awofeso and Irabor (2021) found that states with over 30% unemployment experience three times more electoral violence than others, a trend reflected in Lagos, Ondo and Osun States where politicians distributed money and incentives to recruit thugs during primaries (Premium Times, 2022). Although the Federal Government introduced programs such as N-Power, TraderMoni, and the Special Public Works Programme to reduce youth unemployment (Sule et al., 2019), and the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (2023) provided training and entrepreneurship financing, these interventions have been weakened by corruption, policy inconsistency, and politicization. For instance, the YOUWIN initiative fell short of its targets before being discontinued, while mismanagement of SURE-P funds led to a ₦664 million forfeiture in 2018 (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2014; EFCC, 2018), and in 2025, NELFUND faced allegations of ₦100 billion misappropriation (ICPC, 2025), highlighting governance deficits that sustain deprivation. Consequently, poverty-driven recruitment of youths for electoral disruption persists in the Southwest, eroding electoral integrity, weakening democratic institutions, discouraging investment in hubs like Lagos and Ibadan, entrenching cycles of youth disempowerment, and undermining regional cohesion, thereby impeding the prospects of democratic consolidation and sustainable national development.

6. Compromised security agencies

In Southwest Nigeria, compromised security agencies play a significant role in fuelling voting-related conflicts. The perception and reality of bias, partisanship, and inefficiency among security operatives have often undermined the credibility of elections and contributed to violence in the region. The security forces, particularly the Nigeria Police Force, are tasked with maintaining law and order during elections, yet their actions frequently raise suspicions of collusion with political actors. One-way compromised security agencies lead to electoral violence through selective enforcement of the law. For instance, in Lagos State, during the 2019 general elections, there were widespread reports of political thugs intimidating voters in opposition strongholds, while security personnel were accused of looking the other way or even colluding with the perpetrators (Premium Times, 2019). This failure to act not only emboldened political thugs but also provoked resistance from affected communities, leading to clashes. Similarly, in Osun State, the 2018 gubernatorial rerun election was marred by heavy-handed tactics of security forces, who were accused of preventing accredited observers and opposition supporters from accessing polling units (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019). The partiality displayed by security operatives deepened mistrust in the electoral process and triggered violent confrontations between rival party supporters. In Ekiti State, the 2014 gubernatorial election highlighted another dimension of compromised security agencies. Reports indicated that security forces were deployed in an intimidating manner, with allegations that they were used by the federal government to weaken the opposition through arbitrary arrests and harassment (Omilusi, 2015). This militarization of the electoral process created tension and undermined confidence in democratic governance.

Furthermore, in Oyo State, electoral violence has often been linked to the inability of security operatives to act impartially. During the 2007 elections, there were accounts of police officers ignoring ballot box snatching incidents allegedly perpetrated by ruling party loyalists, which led to violent clashes between opposition groups and state-backed actors (Ibrahim and Egwu, 2005). Such scenarios reinforce the belief that security agencies serve the interests of incumbent powers rather than protecting democratic values.

The overarching effect of compromised security agencies is that they erode public trust in the electoral system. When citizens perceive that security forces side with ruling elites, they often resort to violence either as a form of retaliation or as a mechanism to protect their votes. This vicious cycle perpetuates electoral crises in Southwest Nigeria and hinders democratic consolidation. Compromised security agencies exacerbate voting-related conflict in Southwest Nigeria through selective enforcement, collusion with political thugs, and outright intimidation of opposition supporters. Examples from Lagos, Osun, Ekiti, and Oyo States reveal a troubling pattern of partisan security practices that contribute to electoral violence. Strengthening the neutrality, professionalism, and accountability of security institutions remains vital to reducing electoral conflict and safeguarding democracy in the region.

7. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that voting-related conflict in Southwest Nigeria is a deeply entrenched challenge with far-reaching implications for democratic consolidation and sustainable national development. The findings highlight intra-party factionalism, socio-economic deprivation, and compromised security agencies as the primary drivers of electoral unrest, while ethno-regional rivalries, elite desperation for state resources, and weak institutions play complementary roles in perpetuating instability. These structural and systemic issues collectively undermine public trust in democratic processes, weaken institutional legitimacy, and divert scarce resources away from essential developmental priorities such as education, health, and infrastructure.

The historical evidence presented in this study from the turbulence of the First Republic through recurring unrest in subsequent electoral cycles illustrates that electoral conflict is neither new nor isolated. Instead, it reflects long-standing governance deficits and entrenched political culture in which violence and manipulation are normalized tools of competition. More recent experiences, particularly the 2019 and 2023 general elections, confirm that despite commendable reforms such as the 2010 and 2022 Electoral Acts, electoral disputes and violence persist due to weak enforcement mechanisms, partisan security practices, and unaddressed socio-economic inequalities.

The implications of these conflicts are profound. They disrupt commerce and investment, discourage innovation, and weaken regional cohesion in a part of the country that serves as Nigeria's economic and educational hub. More importantly, they erode the legitimacy of democratic institutions, creating a vicious cycle of instability, underdevelopment, and disempowerment. If left unresolved, these dynamics threaten not only the democratic trajectory of the Southwest but also the broader prospects for national stability and growth.

To move forward, deliberate and sustained interventions are required. Strengthening internal party democracy is essential to mitigate factionalism and reduce the imposition of candidates, which often fuels violence. Security agencies must be insulated from partisan manipulation and equipped to act impartially, ensuring that electoral offenders face credible sanctions. Equally important are socio-economic reforms that address widespread poverty, unemployment, and inequality—conditions that make citizens, particularly youths, vulnerable to manipulation by political elites. Only when these structural drivers are systematically addressed will reforms such as the Electoral Act and the efforts of the National Peace Committee achieve lasting impact.

Ultimately, democratic consolidation in Southwest Nigeria demands more than periodic elections; it requires embedding a political culture of fairness, inclusivity, and accountability. Sustainable national development hinges on this transformation, as stable governance is the foundation upon which economic growth, social cohesion, and human capital advancement are built. The lessons drawn from this study therefore point to the urgent need for a holistic approach one that combines institutional reform, socio-economic empowerment, and civic education to secure the democratic future of the Southwest and by extension, Nigeria as a whole.

References

- [1] Adele, O. (2012). Election rigging and violence in Ondo State in 1983 general elections. In E. Michael (Ed.), *Election rigging and violence in Nigeria in historical perspective: A case study of 1959, 1964, 1965 and 1983 elections* (IJMRA, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 34–35). IJMRA. Semantic Scholar
- [2] Akhere, F. (2015). Internal democracy and party politics in Nigeria. *Journal of Political Studies*, 12(2), 44–59.
- [3] Akinola, A. O. (2022). Electoral reforms and democratic consolidation in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges. *African Journal of Political Science*, 11(2), 45–62.
- [4] Alemika, E. O. (2011). Violent protest and rigging during the 1983 elections in the Western Region. In E. Michael (Ed.), *Election rigging and violence in Nigeria in historical perspective: A case study of 1959, 1964, 1965 and 1983 elections* (IJMRA, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 34–35). IJMRA. Semantic Scholar
- [5] Angalapu, C. (2023, February 26). Lagos elections: Armed thugs attack polling units in opposition strongholds. Channels Television. <https://www.channelsstv.com>
- [6] Awofeso, O., and Irabor, F. (2021). Electoral violence and unemployment in Nigeria: A structural analysis. *Journal of African Elections*, 20(2), 45–63.
- [7] Ayobami, O. (2025). Nigeria population growth insights. Medium. Retrieved 2025, from article discussing geopolitical zone populations, including South-West at over 42 million.

- [8] Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD). (2023). Post-election report: Nigeria's 2023 general elections. CDD.
- [9] Diamond, L. (1999). *Developing democracy: Toward consolidation*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- [10] Economic and Financial Crimes Commission [EFCC]. (2018, March 15). Court orders forfeiture of ₦664 million linked to SURE-P fund. EFCC Nigeria. <https://efccnigeria.org>
- [11] Electoral Act (2022). Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- [12] European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM). (2019). Final report: Nigeria 2019 elections. European Union External Action Service.
- [13] European Union Election Observation Mission. (2019). Nigeria Final Report: General Elections 2019. EU EOM.
- [14] Francis, D. J. (2024). Building peace through elections: The role of Nigeria's National Peace Committee. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 19(1), 22–39.
- [15] Goldsmith, A. (2015). Nigeria's 2015 elections: Post-election assessment. International Republican Institute.
- [16] Human Rights Watch. (2011). Nigeria: Post-election violence killed 800. HRW.
- [17] Ibeanu, O. (2022). Enhancing electoral integrity through institutional capacity building: Lessons from TEI. *Journal of Electoral Studies in Africa*, 14(2), 187–205.
- [18] Ibrahim, J., and Egwu, S. (2005). Nigeria's 2007 Elections: The Election Violence Prevention and Mitigation Report. Human Rights Monitor.
- [19] Igwe, D. O. (2012). The perception of electoral violence and democratization in Ibadan, Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria. *Democracy and Security*, 8(1), 51–71.
- [20] Independent Corrupt Practices Commission [ICPC]. (2025, May 10). NELFUND embroiled in ₦100 billion misappropriation scandal. ICPC Nigeria. <https://icpc.gov.ng>
- [21] Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). (2022). Electoral Act 2022 and innovations in election management. INEC.
- [22] INEC. (2022). Guidelines for registered political parties on conduct during elections. Independent National Electoral Commission.
- [23] International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR). (2023). Tracking electoral violence during the 2023 general elections. ICIR.
- [24] International Monetary Fund [IMF]. (2025). Nigeria: Country report on economic outlook. IMF. <https://imf.org>
- [25] Itodo, S. (2024). Party structures and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Centre for Democracy and Development.
- [26] Lagos State Employment Trust Fund [LSETF]. (2023). Annual impact report 2023. LSETF. <https://lsetf.ng>
- [27] Linz, J. J., and Stepan, A. (1996). *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- [28] Mbachu, C. (2025, April 3). Inflation, unemployment, and poverty worsen Nigeria's economy. Bloomberg Africa. <https://www.bloomberg.com>
- [29] Muhammed, A. (2025, May 12). PDP inaugurates Saraki-led dispute resolution committee. Daily Trust.
- [30] National Bureau of Statistics [NBS]. (2022). Poverty and unemployment report 2022. NBS. <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng>
- [31] National Peace Committee. (2023). Peace accord for the 2023 general elections. National Peace Committee.
- [32] Nwanegbo, C. J., and Odigbo, J. (2014). Corruption and governance in Nigeria: SURE-P as a case study. *African Journal of Public Policy*, 8(1), 33–47.
- [33] O'Donnell, G. (1996). Illusions about consolidation. *Journal of Democracy*, 7(2), 34–51. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1996.0034>
- [34] Ojo, J. S. (2021). Electoral conflict and governance challenges in Southwest Nigeria. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 39(4), 612–629.

- [35] Olayi, I. (2019). The political turbulence of the 1983 general election in Ondo State. In E. Michael (Ed.), *Election rigging and violence in Nigeria in historical perspective: A case study of 1959, 1964, 1965 and 1983 elections* (IJMRA, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 33–34). IJMRA. Semantic Scholar
- [36] Olorok, F., and Ajaja, T. (2022, February 8). INEC deregisters 28 parties, excludes 124 from 2019 elections. *Punch*.
- [37] Omilusi, M. (2015). Democratic Governance and Political Participation in Nigeria, 1999–2014. *Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs*, 3(1), 1-7.
- [38] Operation Wetie. (n.d.). Operation Wetie. In Wikipedia. Retrieved August 2025, from Operation Wetie page.
- [39] Premium Times. (2019, February 24). Lagos elections: Thugs invade polling units, snatch ballot boxes. *Premium Times*.
- [40] Premium Times. (2020, July 21). Ondo APC primaries marred by violence. *Premium Times Nigeria*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>
- [41] Premium Times. (2022, February 20). Osun APC crisis deepens as factions hold parallel congresses. *Premium Times Nigeria*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>
- [42] Premium Times. (2022, February 20). Osun APC crisis deepens as factions clash over primaries. *Premium Times Nigeria*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>
- [43] *Punch*. (2019, March 4). PDP crisis rocks Oyo over zoning arrangement. *Punch Nigeria*. <https://punchng.com>
- [44] Raji, R. (2023, March 2). How APC won presidential election with 36.61% votes. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com>
- [45] Schedler, A. (2001). What is democratic consolidation? In L. Diamond and M. F. Plattner (Eds.), *The global divergence of democracies* (pp. 149–165). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- [46] Sule, I., Musa, H., and Adekunle, T. (2019). Social protection and poverty alleviation in Nigeria: An evaluation of government programmes. *Nigerian Journal of Social Policy*, 6(1), 14–27.
- [47] United Nations Development Programmed [UNDP]. (2021). Human development report 2021/2022: Uncertain times, unsettled lives. UNDP. <https://hdr.undp.org> Vanguard. (2018, July 15). Violence mars governorship election in Ekiti. *Vanguard Nigeria*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com>