

POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY & ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

Research Report
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Conducted by

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MacArthur
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ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	African Action Congress
ACE	Alliance for Credible Election
APC	All Progressives Congress
APGA	All Progressives Grand Alliance
BVAS	Bimodal Voters Accreditation System
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CODE	Connected Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSJ	Centre for Social Justice
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
IEC	materials Information, Education and Communication Materials
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IRev	INEC Results Viewing Portal
IVED	INEC Voter Enrolment Device
KII	Key Informant Interview
LP	Labour Party
NNPP	New Nigeria Peoples Party
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PLAC	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre
PwD	People with Disabilities
TMG	Transition Monitoring Group
YIAGA	Yiaga Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report is based on a study of Political Accountability and the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria, commissioned by the Joinbodi cohort, a group of 17 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) seeking to uphold election integrity as a means of deepening Nigeria's democracy. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches, with Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with CSOs, political party representatives, vulnerable groups, and members of the general public in four states. Additionally, phone interviews were conducted with 1,043 phone-owning adult Nigerians.

The success of any democracy depends on the ability of citizens to hold elected officials accountable and the responsiveness of elected officials to the needs of their constituents. Unfortunately, clientelism has become a significant challenge to political accountability, good governance, and the deepening of democracy in Nigeria.

Clientelism is a widespread practice in Nigeria where politicians offer material goods and services to specific groups of supporters in exchange for political support. It undermines political accountability by creating a system where politicians prioritize the interests of their core constituencies, often to the detriment of the broader public. This contributes to a low level of trust in the electoral system and elected officials, thereby weakening democracy and good governance.

Clientelism in Nigeria takes different forms, including vote buying, the abuse of state resources, and other malpractices that undermine the integrity of the electoral process. Although laws exist to regulate political financing in Nigeria, they lack robust provision for transparency and accountability in political funding. Political parties are not required to disclose their sources of funding. This lack of transparency makes it challenging to monitor and prevent illicit financial flows in the electoral process or to hold elected officials accountable for their actions.

Clientelism and political apathy are interconnected in a vicious cycle that perpetuates the erosion of political accountability and ultimately weakens democracy. When politicians rely on inducement and patronage to win votes, they create a culture that reinforces the idea that voters are entitled to receive something in exchange for their vote. This creates a situation where people feel less responsible for their role in the democratic process and view their vote as a transaction, rather than an opportunity to express their opinion on how the country should be governed.

This not only undermines political accountability but also leads to a sense of disillusionment and disengagement among citizens. When citizens are disengaged, an environment ensues where politicians can exploit their power and resources to maintain their grip on power, perpetuating the cycle of clientelism and apathy. Ultimately, this weakens democracy and hinders the country's progress and development.

Breaking this cycle requires a concerted effort to promote political education, civic engagement, and strong institutions that promote transparency, fairness and accountability.

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KEY FINDINGS:

Vote Buying

The prevalence of vote buying is a major manifestation of clientelism in Nigeria, often targeted towards voters in low economic classes, particularly in rural areas. This practice is frequently accompanied by political intimidation and violence aimed at coercing voters. Despite the fact that a majority of Nigerians find vote buying objectionable and say they will not sell their votes, the practice remains prevalent across the country.

The 2023 elections will see voters being approached with money and gift offers to influence their vote, though 71% of respondents believe their choice of political candidate will not be influenced by such offers. A significant number of Nigerians still feel entitled to these gifts and monetary inducements, regardless of whether it influences their vote or not. Vote buying also plays a significant role in indirect party primaries where delegates are often offered large sums of money to vote for aspirants. While advocacy campaigns by civil society organizations and other stakeholders have been successful in raising political awareness and a sense of responsibility among voters, more needs to be done to address the culture of clientelism among the political elite.

Electoral Laws on Political Financing and Enforcement Mechanisms

The current legal framework on political financing in Nigeria has significant loopholes that make it challenging to address non-compliance by political parties. While the law requires candidates to disclose their campaign contributions and expenditures, this provision is rarely enforced, and candidates are still able to raise and spend large sums of money without being held accountable. Additionally, the lack of transparency in campaign finance allows candidates to receive contributions from anonymous sources or through untraceable means. This makes it difficult to hold them accountable for any corrupt or illegal practices that may occur. Penalties for breaching the Electoral Act on political financing also appear to be inadequate. Only 17% of respondents in the study believed that the current enforcement mechanisms were effective in promoting political accountability.

Political Apathy

Political apathy in Nigeria has been linked to the lack of trust in the electoral system, fear of election-related violence and disappointment of unfulfilled electoral promises. These challenges are a result of the failure of accountability in the electoral process, creating an environment where politicians and other actors can subvert democracy through violence and the misuse of state resources. Despite this, the survey found that young people are increasingly interested and involved in the political process in the lead-up to the 2023 elections. Many are utilizing social media platforms to mobilize support for their preferred candidates and actively participating in political rallies and campaigns. Addressing structural barriers that limit the influence of young people in the political system could motivate a significant portion of the electorate to continue to participate actively in the political process and have their voices heard.

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Issue Based Campaign

Despite an increasing appetite for issue-based campaigns, many respondents in the survey were unable to identify specific issues raised by political candidates, even though they claimed the campaigns were issue-based. Although key officials of political parties understand the importance of issue-based campaigns, some continue to prioritize mobilizing ethno-religious sentiment over discussing policy positions, potentially hindering the development of a truly issues-based campaign culture.

This preference for ethno-religious mobilization may be attributed to several factors. First, too many politicians are focused on winning elections at all costs and identity politics has been shown to be an effective strategy for mobilizing support. Second, discussing policies can be seen as a liability, as it opens candidates to greater scrutiny and critique. Finally, the limited political awareness of a large swath of voters makes it easier for politicians to use ethnic and religious affiliations to appeal to emotions rather than policy. Unfortunately, the continued focus on ethno-religious mobilization can stifle constructive political discourse, undermine accountability, and lead to the neglect of key issues affecting the country.

In order to encourage more issue-based campaigning in Nigeria, it is important to address the root causes of identity-based politics. This includes working to build a more inclusive society that is not defined by ethnic or religious identity, as well as promoting civic education that emphasizes the importance of policy-based politics.

Political Party Laws & Campaign Financing

Political parties in Nigeria are required to abide by the constitutional provisions guiding their operations, which includes their financial activities. The constitutions of the major political parties in Nigeria provide for financial transparency and accountability in their operations, especially during electoral campaigns.

Despite these provisions in the political parties' constitutions, there are still concerns about the lack of financial transparency and accountability during political campaigns in Nigeria.

To improve compliance with constitutional provisions on political financing, political parties need to take proactive steps to strengthen their internal controls and accountability mechanisms. This includes the establishment of independent financial committees, the implementation of regular audits, and the publication of regular financial reports. Strengthening internal party democracy by promoting transparency, accountability, and participation in decision-making can help reduce the influence of money in party politics and ensure that party decisions are made in the best interest of members and the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reforming and enforcing Political Financing Laws

To prevent the exploitation of loopholes in political campaign financing laws, comprehensive reforms must be undertaken and enforced. This includes amending the Electoral Law to close gaps and strengthening enforcement mechanisms. Ideally, political parties should focus on obtaining contributions through goodwill and other legitimate means rather than finding ways to circumvent spending limits. To this end, INEC should collaborate with political parties, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to establish a framework for regulating the cost of party nomination forms and campaign spending. The framework should set clear limits on the cost of nomination forms and campaign spending to promote fairness and reduce the influence of money in politics. It should also be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changing political and economic circumstances.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Cont'd

To ensure political parties comply with these laws and regulations, penalties for non-compliance should be made severe, including the deregistration of political parties and revocation of certificates of return in elections they have won. The establishment of an Electoral Offence Commission must be expedited to investigate potential offenses, such as vote-buying, and impose appropriate sanctions on offenders.

Political Party Laws and Regulations on Political Financing

To improve compliance with constitutional provisions on political financing, political parties in Nigeria must take proactive steps to strengthen their internal controls and accountability mechanisms. This could be achieved through the establishment of independent finance committees, the implementation of regular audits, and the publication of regular financial reports. Additionally, political parties can strengthen internal party democracy by promoting transparency, accountability, and participation in decision-making, which would help reduce the influence of money in party politics and ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of party members and the public.

In order to enforce constitutional provisions on political financing, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should work closely with political parties and monitor their financial activities to ensure compliance. Civil society organizations and the media should also play an active role in monitoring political party financial activities and promoting accountability and transparency in the political process.

To create a culture of financial responsibility and reduce the influence of money in party politics, political parties should prioritize educating their members and supporters about the importance of financial transparency and accountability in political campaigns, and the consequences of non-compliance with constitutional provisions. This will help build trust among voters and create a level playing field for candidates.

Vote Buying in Nigeria Electoral System

To effectively combat vote buying in Nigeria, INEC should collaborate with relevant government agencies and civil society organizations to develop a comprehensive voter education program. The program should sensitize voters on the negative impact of vote buying on democratic processes, the consequences of accepting bribes, and how to identify and report cases of vote buying. The education program should be designed to encourage citizens to participate actively in the electoral process and uphold the principles of free and fair elections.

Civil society organizations, community leaders, and the media should work with INEC to monitor the activities of political parties and candidates during the electoral process. The focus should be on identifying and reporting cases of vote buying, and reporting such cases to the relevant authorities.

To address the root causes of the behavior, penalties for vote buying should target the drivers of the behavior such as political parties, candidates, and other actors who use money to manipulate the electoral process. Penalties should be severe to ensure that the prohibition of vote buying is taken seriously, and to deter future offenders. To enforce these penalties, a special task force could be created to investigate electoral fraud, similar to Brazil's "Electoral Fraud Task Force," which has been effective in identifying and punishing those responsible for election-related offenses.

Voter and Political Party Attitudes towards Issue-Based Campaigning

To encourage issue-based campaigning in Nigeria, political parties must prioritize the discussion of policy positions rather than mobilize ethno-religious sentiments. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should work with political parties and other stakeholders

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Cont'd

to develop guidelines for issue-based campaigns that emphasize the importance of discussing policy positions and how they affect the lives of Nigerians.

INEC should also work to improve its monitoring and enforcement of campaign activities to ensure that political candidates comply with guidelines on issue-based campaigns. This will help to ensure that voters are well-informed about policy positions and are able to make informed choices during elections.

Civil society organizations, the media, and other stakeholders can also play a role in promoting issue-based campaigning. By engaging political candidates in public debates and dialogues that focus on policy issues rather than identity politics, they can help improve political awareness among voters and promote constructive political discourse over the long term.

To address the root causes of identity-based politics, it is important to promote a more inclusive society not defined by ethnic or religious identity. This can be achieved through policies that promote equality, social justice, and diversity. Civic education programs that emphasize the importance of policy-based politics can also help shift the focus away from identity politics.

Voter Apathy

To effectively address political apathy in Nigeria, a multi-pronged approach is required to promote a culture of transparency and accountability in the political and electoral system. This involves enhancing accountability in the electoral process, improving civic education, and encouraging the active participation of all citizens, especially young people.

To enhance accountability in the electoral process, it is important to expedite the establishment of an Electoral Offences Commission as previously highlighted. Prompt prosecution and punishment of electoral violence and other malpractice will be effective in reducing the occurrence of these vices during elections.

The recommendation for the development and implementation of comprehensive voter education programs made earlier can also help address voter apathy by increasing citizen understanding of the importance of their participation in the political process and the significance of free and fair elections.

To encourage the active participation of young people, political parties should prioritize their inclusion in the process by removing structural barriers that limit their participation. This includes creating opportunities for young people to engage in the political process, the establishment of youth advisory councils, or other mechanisms that promote youth participation in decision-making.

Finally, to address political apathy, it is necessary to strengthen the culture of transparency and accountability in politics and governance in Nigeria. This will require the collective effort of all stakeholders, including government, political parties, civil society organizations, and the media, to create an inclusive and participatory political environment that reflects the interests of all citizens.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Political accountability, an essential component of democratic governance, requires elected officials to be responsible and responsive to the citizens they represent. In Nigeria, however, this has been undermined by the culture of clientelism where political support is exchanged for material benefit, leading to widespread corruption, nepotism, and a general lack of trust in the political system.

Since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, elections have been plagued by issues including widespread vote-buying, violence, and ballot box snatching. Despite efforts by civil society organizations and other stakeholders to promote transparent and credible elections, the prevalence of vote-buying and electoral malpractice continues to challenge political accountability. In the 2019 general elections, the International Election Observation Mission's final report highlighted significant cases of vote-buying across the country. The problem of vote-buying persisted in subsequent elections, including the 2022 Osun State gubernatorial election, which witnessed covert vote-buying through coded languages and coupons.

The impact of vote-buying on democratic processes is particularly significant, eroding citizen trust in the electoral process and undermining the democratic system's integrity. The culture of clientelism in Nigeria has made it challenging to hold politicians accountable for their actions, with elected officials often prioritizing the interests of their financial sponsors and political godfathers over the needs and concerns of their constituents. This creates a situation where politicians are not held accountable for campaign promises.

This study, conducted by the ON Nigeria Joinbodi Cohort and NOIPOLLS, offers a significant contribution to ongoing efforts to improve political accountability in Nigeria. Insights provided by this study provide guidance to stakeholders in order to create a political system that prioritizes transparency and accountability.

The study highlighted the laws governing political financing in Nigeria, providing insights that can help stakeholders understand existing laws and regulations. By identifying gaps and/or weaknesses that may be exploited by unscrupulous politicians, stakeholders can take steps to improve and enforce these laws, ensuring that politicians are held accountable for their campaign finance activities.

The study concludes with recommendations to improve political accountability by strengthening issue-based campaigns in Nigeria. These recommendations include prioritizing civic education, encouraging the active participation of young people in the political process, addressing the root causes of identity-based politics, and establishing an independent electoral commission with the power to investigate and sanction electoral offenses.

1.0 INTRODUCTION Cont'd

The effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms for political accountability was also analyzed, highlighting challenges and gaps in enforcement mechanisms. By strengthening these mechanisms, stakeholders can ensure that offenders are brought to book and enhance political accountability.

Moreover, the study shed light on the provisions of political party constitutions regarding financing. With a better understanding of these provisions, stakeholders can identify and address gaps in these provisions, work to strengthen them and ensure that political parties play a more constructive role in promoting political accountability.

Voter attitudes towards political campaign financing were also analyzed. The study identified ways to promote greater awareness and understanding among voters regarding the importance of campaign finance transparency and accountability. The study also explored factors that promote vote-buying and other political financing malpractices. Providing information can help stakeholders develop more effective strategies to combat these malpractices.

The study looked at voter and political party attitudes towards issue-based campaigning. Moving away from a focus on ethnic or religious affiliations will require stakeholders to develop more effective strategies to promote issue-based campaigns.

The study concludes with recommendations to improve political accountability by strengthening issue-based campaigns in Nigeria. These recommendations include prioritizing civic education, encouraging the active participation of young people in the political process, addressing the root causes of identity-based politics, and establishing an independent electoral commission with the power to investigate and sanction electoral offenses. These recommendations can guide stakeholders as they work to improve political accountability by creating a more inclusive and responsive political culture that prioritizes the needs and concerns of Nigerian citizens.

In summary, this study is a significant contribution to ongoing efforts to improve political accountability in Nigeria. The insights provided can guide stakeholders in their efforts to promote transparency and accountability in the political and electoral system, leading to greater citizen participation and ensuring that elected officials are held accountable to the people they represent.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative research techniques were adopted for the survey. In addition, secondary data collection involving desk research was used to gather information on specific project thematic areas. The research design is described in the following paragraphs.

Desk Research

A desk review of the Electoral Act, 2022 was conducted to examine project thematic areas; laws guiding political financing, vote buying, political party accountability etc. Furthermore, an in-depth review and analysis of existing relevant literature was conducted. Information from secondary data gathering (desk research) was analysed with primary data to form survey findings.

Qualitative Research

The qualitative data collection was designed to be exploratory to answer the questions; what, how and why. Opinions of relevant stakeholders and the general public were collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). NOIPolls worked with the cohort to develop a stakeholder list for key informant interviews. Focus group sessions were conducted in urban and rural areas of targeted states. Target states included Oyo, Anambra, Kano and Delta. There were 4 FGDs per state for a total of 16 focus group. The tables below present the KII list and FGD categories.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): KIIs included political parties, CSOs, media, law enforcement agencies, vulnerable groups such as PwDs, youth and women. A total of 19 key Informant Interviews were conducted.

Table 1: KII Stakeholders

S/N	Stakeholder	Sample Size	Achieved	Category
1	Labour Party (LP)	1	1	Political Parties
2	African Action Congress (AAC)	1	1	Political Parties
3	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	1	1	Political Parties
4	New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)	1	1	Political Parties
5	Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)	1	1	Political Parties
6	All Progressives Congress (APC)	1	1	Political Parties
7	Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)	1	1	CSO
8	Connected Development (CODE)	1	1	CSO
9	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)	1	1	CSO
10	Yiaga Africa (YIAGA)	1	1	CSO
11	ACE	1	0	CSO
12	ACTIONAID	1	0	CSO
13	Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)	1	1	CSO
14	Transition Monitoring Group (TMG)	1	1	CSO
15	Media (OAP Radio Now, formerly with WE fm)	1	1	Electronic/Print
16	Law Enforcement	1	0	Police
17	Vulnerable group (PwDs, youth and women e.g. Ebenebe Women Group).	4	4	Activists
	Total	20	17	

2.0 METHODOLOGY Cont'd

Four (4) focus group discussions were conducted in each state for a total of 16 FGDs across the target states.

Figure 1: Qualitative Survey States

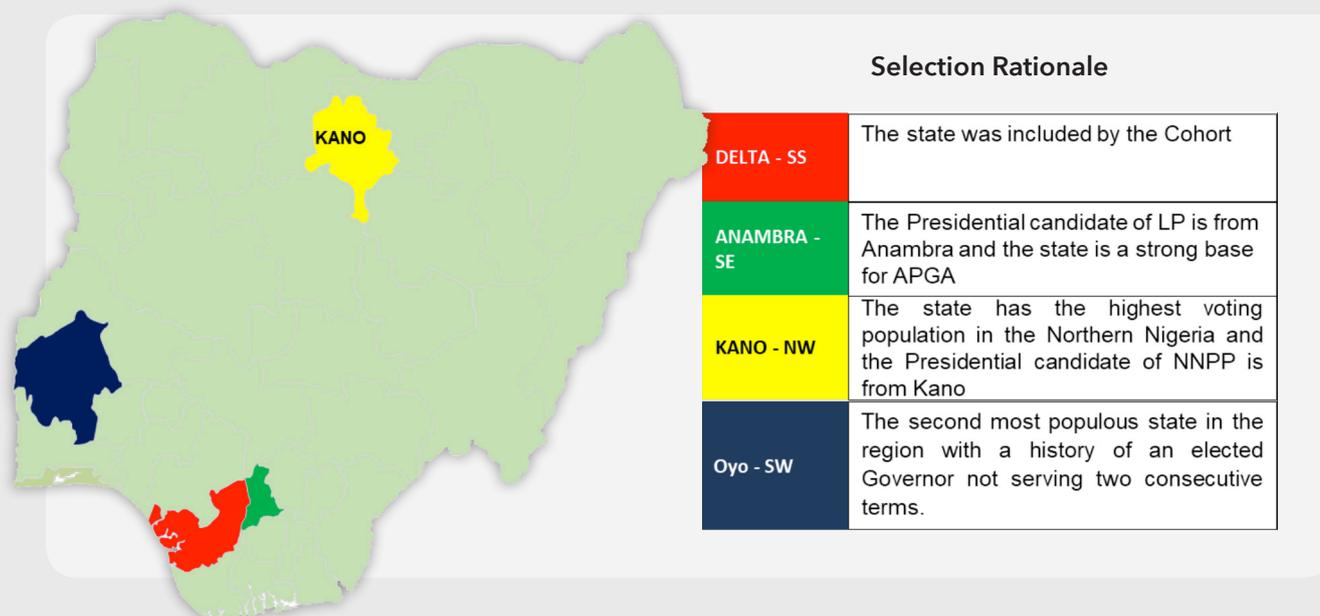


Table 2: Selection Criteria for the Focus Group Discussions

S/N	Focus Group Discussion Demographics
Group 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PVC (voted & never voted) ■ Age 20-35 years ■ Female ■ Urban
Group 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PVC (voted & never voted) ■ Age 20-35 years ■ Male ■ Urban
Group 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PVC (voted & never voted) ■ Age 26-45 years ■ Female ■ Rural
Group 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ PVC (voted & never voted) ■ Age 26-45 years ■ Male ■ Rural

2.0 METHODOLOGY Cont'd

Quantitative Research

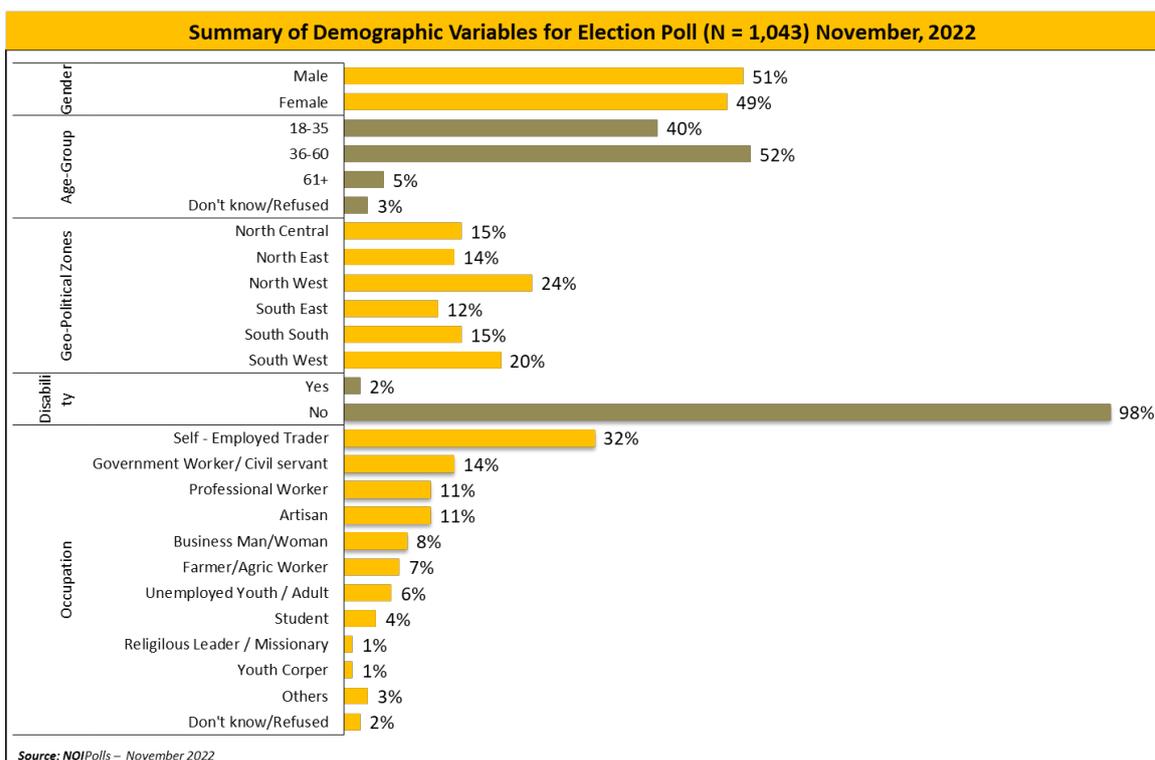
The quantitative aspect of the survey was designed to measure specific thematic areas and support the qualitative data. NOIPolls, conducting public opinion polls in Nigeria since 2007, conducted telephone interviews for the quantitative survey, one of the most effective methods of data collection.

In Nigeria, 71% of the population use mobile phones as a primary platform for communication and accessing the Internet, with 89.79% of the population covered by 2G signal, 62.05% by 3G signal, and 11.04% by 4G signal¹. Nigeria’s tele-density at 97.45% (NCC 2021) makes the telephone interview method appropriate to collect opinion data.

For telephone interviews, NOIPolls uses a combination of Random Digit Dial (RDD) and a proportionate, stratified random sampling design to select respondents. The numbers generated over the years have been used to develop the NOIPolls Number Database (NPND). To select numbers from the NPND, a proportionate, stratified random sampling design was used to select respondents. Stratification is set on several key demographics: gender, age (18+) and country administrative divisions. The current census population figures are used to derive proportionate sample size for specified administrative division. Probability proportionate to size technique was used to derive the required sample size for each administrative division. A total sample size of 1,043 completed interviews was achieved. Quantitative interviews were conducted in Hausa, Yoruba, Pidgin and English across the 36 states and FCT-Abuja. The sample size gives a 95% Confidence Interval and +/- 4.65 margin of error.

Thematic areas included voter attitudes towards political campaign financing, vote-buying and issue-based campaigning, voter apathy, and political party accountability.

Figure 2: Demography of quantitative survey



¹ Assessment of diagnostic gaps and relevant digital health solutions in Nigeria. (2020). [Ebook].

3.0 DESK REVIEW

3.1 Laws Guiding Political Financing in Nigeria

3.1.1 Brief History of the Nigeria Electoral Act

The 2010 Electoral Act is regarded as the principal electoral act in Nigeria. Enacted in August 2010, it was amended subsequently in December 2010² and amended severally through the years. The most recent amendment occurred in February 2022, giving rise to the 2022 Electoral Act.

The electoral law establishes a legal framework to give the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) powers to decide how people vote and how election results are sent, as well as challenge election results that may have been declared under duress. It also legalized the use of technology in elections, and changed what it means to “overvote.” Based on provisions of the new Act, ‘overvoting’ is where votes cast at a polling unit exceed the number of accredited voters - not the number of registered voters as provided in the former Act³. The new Act also empowered INEC to take reasonable steps to help people with disabilities (PWDs) vote. The new law adjusted timelines for political party primaries, campaign duration, and spending limits for political parties and candidates⁴.

Since Nigeria’s return to civilian administration in 1999, campaign financing has been a key issue in the country’s elections, creating an uneven playing field in electoral competition. Certain parties and/or candidates are given an unfair edge by large sums of money, frequently winning races for office, or party nomination. Large financing disparities between parties and candidates limit political competition and tend to disenfranchise opponents⁵. Typically, the unequal playing field is caused by the fact that the ruling party or the incumbent candidate controls the political apparatus and uses it to their benefit and disadvantage challengers⁶.

3.1.2 Political Financing

Political finance is how political parties finance their regular activities, how parties, candidates, and non-contestants raise and spend money for election campaigns, and how this funding and spending is regulated and disclosed. Globally, political finance systems are expected to be open and accountable, resulting in elections being more trustworthy. Political finance includes both official and informal monetary and in-kind political income and expenditures. Furthermore, these transactions may occur during or after the campaign period, or may be unrelated to a campaign.

3.1.3 The Laws Guiding Campaign Financing in Nigeria

Over the years, political financing laws in Nigeria have continued to evolve. Relevant sections of the 2022 Electoral Act that deal with political financing are 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, and 90 under the Part V of the Act.

² <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Key-Provisions-in-the-Electoral-Act-2022.pdf>

³ <https://www.mondaq.com/nigeria/constitutional--administrative-law/1185368/the-electoral-act-2022-key-changes-and-impact-on-the-2023-elections->

⁴ <https://www.ifes.org/our-expertise/anti-corruption-democratic-trust/political-finance>

⁵ Eme, O I & Ayadike, N, ‘Political Financing in Africa: A Comparative Study of Kenya and Nigeria, Proposal for Reform’ [2014] (5)(27), *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 22

⁶ Kura, S Y B, ‘Political Parties and Democracy in Nigeria: Candidate Selection, Campaign and Party Financing in People’s Democratic Party’ [2011] (13)(6), *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 268-298.

Table 3: Breakdown of Laws on Campaign Financing in Electoral Act 2022

S/N	SECTION	SECTION HIGHLIGHT/HEADING
1	Section 85	Offenses relating to the financing of a political party
2	Section 86	Period to be covered in the account statements of political parties
3	Section 87	Power to limit contributions to a political party
4	Section 88	Maximum limits on election expenses and penalties for this violation for candidates and financial officers of political parties
5	Section 89	Election expenses of Political Parties
6	Section 90	Disclosures by political parties

Other than the 2022 Electoral Act the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the ground-norm governing the activities of political parties in Nigeria⁷.

3.1.4 Review of Current Legislation on Campaign financing

The adequacy of any legal framework with respect to political financing must guaranty political accountability. Party finance legislation should include stipulations regulating at least four distinct aspects relating to the transparency of political finance:

1. **Disclosure:** rules that oblige political parties to open up their financial accounts and reveal information on levels of income, including the identity of donors, and expenditure.
2. **Reporting:** regulations stipulating that party accounts be made public and reported to the appropriate institution.
3. **Monitoring:** provisions for an independent body to inspect and control party accounts.
4. **Enforcement:** a legal system of sanctions to ensure that regulations on party financing are not evaded and to impose penalties when the law is breached.

Such legislation can be viewed through the lens used by Ingid Van Biezin (2004). Parameters used to review the laws of a number of European countries included:

- Disclosure and or reporting
- Limits on private donations
- Limits/Ban on corporate donations
- Limits/Ban on foreign donations
- Limits on expenditure

The review revealed that none of the countries have all 5 parameters in their electoral law, suggesting that the 2022 Electoral Law of Nigeria is adequate in terms of its framework for political financing.

⁷ <https://www.mondaq.com/nigeria/constitutional--administrative-law/1186800/some-distinctive-features-of-nigerias-electoral-act-2022>

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Table 4: Analysis of Countries Electoral Laws on Political Financing

Country	Finance law	Disclosure and or reporting	Limits on private donations	Limits/ ban on corporate donations	Limits on foreign donations	Limits on expenditure
Austria	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Belgium	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (ban)	No	Yes (Party/campaign)
France	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (ban)	Yes (limit)	Yes (campaign)
Germany	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes (Limit)	No
Italy	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes (Campaign)
Nigeria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (Limit)	Yes (Limit)	Yes (Party/Campaign)
Switzerland	No	No	No	No	No	No
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes (Campaign)

Source (except Nigeria): Ingrid Van Biezin "Political Parties as Public Utilities" Party politics⁸

3.1.5 Possible Gaps/Loopholes in Legal framework around political financing

The 1999 constitution (as amended) and the 2022 Electoral Act deal explicitly with issues involving the disclosure of sources of funds and expenditures for political parties. Ideally, these provisions are supposed to serve as a check and deterrent to excessive campaign expenditures. The laws are also meant to identify who should be held liable for a breach in order to strengthen political accountability. This review will attempt to look at possible lacunas in current legislation that incentivize political parties, their officers and financiers to avoid legal hurdles in the area of political financing or electoral expenses.

"Electoral Spending" is defined by the Act as "expenses incurred by a political party within the period from the date notice is given by the commission to conduct an election up to and including the polling day in respect of the particular election". This definition itself focuses on the amount of money spent by the Political Party. This does not include its third parties who are mostly hired to fund campaign expenses. The definition of the timeline of focus also offers a gap for political parties to manipulate expenses by incurring expenditures in advance or after the timeline in focus.

- 1. Gaps in Political Financing requirement of the Nigerian Constitution:** The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN), Section 226(1) CFRN (as amended) spells out the procedure political parties must follow in furnishing INEC and the National Assembly with relevant account statements. Section 226(1) of the CFRN (as amended), requires that INEC report to the National Assembly when political parties fail to keep proper books and accounts. The section states that "*INEC, shall in every year prepare and submit to the National Assembly a report on the accounts and balance sheet of every political party*"

Pertinent questions arise. What is the National Assembly expected to do when a political party is found to have contravened provisions of the law? Does INEC or the National Assembly have legal grounds to punish defaulters?

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If a political party is found to have erred by failing to keep proper books and accounts, the Constitution only stipulates that INEC report to the National Assembly. Nothing more. The law is not clear regarding what INEC should do to the erring political party..

2. **Gaps in the Electoral Act 2022 spending limits:** Section 88 (2) - (7) of the 2022 Electoral Act places limitations on Election Expenses of candidates vying for political positions in Nigeria. But this section simply states limits on expenses to be incurred by candidates vying for various types of political offices without mention of expense limits to be incurred by the political parties.
3. **Gaps in Electoral Act 2022 donation limits:** Section 88 (8) states that *No individual or other entity shall donate to a candidate more than N 50,000,000*. Again, the section only dwells on donation limits for candidates and makes no mention of political parties. Section 89-(1) of the 2022 electoral Act defines "election expenses" as the expense incurred by a political party within the period of from the date notice is given by the INEC to conduct an election up to and including, the polling day in respect of the particular election. Undoubtedly, the section needs to make it clear whether expense and donation limits mentioned in section 88 (2)-(8) apply to candidates alone or political parties as well.

3.1.6 Assessment of the adequacy of penalties for breaching Laws on Political Financing

Laws relating to the conduct of elections - especially those regarding political financing - are often disregarded. There are several reasons why this is commonly the case. First, there is often a culture of disregard for law among rival political parties and candidates. If most or all turn a blind eye to regulations, none will wish to initiate a legal challenge against political opponents for fear of retaliatory action. Informal 'non-aggression pacts' between professional campaign organizers of various parties are a common feature of political life.

Secondly, the institutions responsible for electoral administration may not possess an enforcement arm and, therefore, not in a position to initiate inquiries or checks into possible wrongdoing. Breaches of the rules (for instance, concerning limits on permitted campaign spending) may be subtle and hard to detect. Without a qualified and properly staffed 'detective force' the authorities will frequently take no action unless presented with a complaint. They will merely respond, but not initiate inquiries.

Third, when legal challenges are left to aggrieved individuals or parties (for instance, candidates who feel they have been unfairly defeated), the costs of initiating such an action may prove prohibitive.

Internationally, breaches vary greatly. For example, regulations concerning campaign financing in Britain relate mainly to individual candidates and their agents. At worst, successful candidates stand to forfeit their parliamentary seats if serious breaches are proved. However, this penalty of the loss of particular seats in the legislature will be inappropriate and difficult to conceive for systems of proportional representation. Under these systems, it is the party, rather than the individual candidate that presents itself to the electors.

To give another example, where political parties receive public funding, withdrawal of such funding as a penalty is possible. Needless to say, such a penalty will not be available in countries where parties receive no public funding in the first place⁹.

⁹ <https://aceproject.org/main/english/pc/pcf.htm>

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3.1.7 Types of Penalties

The most common penalties are:

- forfeiture of contributions obtained in contravention to laws or regulations,
- forfeiture by a political party to part or all of its entitlement to public funding,
- fines,
- imprisonment,
- temporary loss of right to sit and vote in the legislature by successful candidates who have failed to submit a return of expenses on time,
- forfeiture of seat in the legislature by a successful candidate later found guilty of a serious offence,
- Loss of civil rights by those found guilty of offences. This may include a loss of the right to vote for a certain period of time, the loss of the right to stand as a candidate for office in the electoral district in which the offence has taken place, the loss of the right to stand as a candidate in any electoral district.

While most of these penalties apply in the Nigerian context, the laws, especially components on political financing are hardly enforced. Two very different reactions are possible to the fact that penalties of breaches of electoral laws are rarely imposed. One approach is to advocate relatively light penalties, such as small or medium-sized fines. The rationale is that if penalties are moderate, there will be an added incentive for electoral authorities to seek to enforce them. If the penalty for a breach of the law is too heavy - such as forfeiture of a seat in the legislature - those accused of contraventions will fight extra hard to avoid being found guilty. Enforcement will become especially costly, and, due to this, will become rare.

The opposite approach is that, since enforcement is likely to be irregular, it is all the more important that penalties for proven and significant breaches should be severe.

Policy around the severity of penalties is influenced by another factor, namely the possibility of legal breaches that arise out of genuine error rather than intention or a plan to break the law. The problem about exceedingly severe penalties is that they may unduly damage new and relatively inexperienced parties and candidates and deter new actors from entering the electoral arena. Established parties, which are likely to know the law better as well as the most effective ways around the law, will be less impacted. Because of this, electoral law in Britain permits candidates found guilty of breaching the law (for instance, concerning campaign spending limits) to appeal to the Court for 'relief' from the heaviest penalties on the ground that the breach has been minor or unintentional¹⁰.

3.1.8 Who should the Law Hold Accountable for Breaching Electoral Laws

Who then takes responsibility for breaches of the law? Who should be held accountable if a campaign worker disobeys the law on behalf of his party or his candidate? Does it penalize candidates for actions taken on their behalf but without their authorization? A device was introduced in Britain in the nineteenth century to deal with this problem and adopted in other countries as the 'Westminster Model'. Since candidates cannot be expected to deal with details of campaign organization and spending, focusing their time making speeches and meeting electors, candidates may delegate the task of managing the campaign, as well as the expenditure of money, to an agent¹¹.

¹⁰ <https://aceproject.org/main/english/pc/pcf.htm>

¹¹ <https://aceproject.org/main/english/pc/pcf.htm>

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3.2 Review of Enforcement Mechanisms for Political Accountability

The key enforcement mechanism for political accountability includes:

1. The Electoral Law and other Laws of the land
2. Regulatory and enforcement powers of Electoral Authorities and its affiliate's
3. Activities of Civil Society Organizations and Media e.g., Peace accords, regular monitoring and leveraging freedom of information.
4. Recruitment process of members of political parties
5. Internal Democracy in party's

Where there is a special electoral authority, it may have certain enforcement responsibilities. For example, the United States Federal Election Commission is permitted to reach agreement with those accused of breaches of campaign finance laws and if willing to come to agreement, they will not normally face prosecution before the Courts.

A conciliation agreement between the Federal Election Commission and the person against whom a legal complaint has been filed consists of three elements:

- A description of the facts.
- An admission by the accused of a violation of the law,
- A financial penalty.

In 1991, the Canadian Royal Commission for Electoral Reform and Party Financing made the case for administrative, rather than criminal, enforcement:

...the designation 'criminal offences' should be reserved for violations of society's most fundamental values. An individual should be convicted of a crime and subjected to the corresponding stigma and punishment only where it can be demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that the prohibited conduct was carried out intentionally, knowingly or purposively. Most election violations do not fall under this rubric. Rather, they are primarily administrative or regulatory in nature...

We propose that all violations under the Canada Elections Act be defined as either infractions or offences. Infractions would be either procedural, administrative or regulatory and would involve less severe penalties. They would be adjudicated exclusively by the Canada Elections Commission, with the possibility of judicial review by the Federal Court of Canada. The second category of violations would be the more serious, involving some element of wilful misconduct. These violations could result in severe penalties, including higher fines, imprisonment or the loss of certain rights under the Canada Elections Act.

In some countries, apart from electoral commissions and courts of law, enforcement of electoral laws is a responsibility of the president or speaker of the legislature (as in Germany and Greece).

3.3 Political Party Laws and Regulations on Political Financing

Money is a fundamental and critical element of politics. Political campaigns are expensive, subsequent court cases have become the norm, sustaining the activities of political parties such as paying rent and conducting internal elections cost money. Political parties in Nigeria whose membership is open to Nigerians above the age of eighteen, are typically funded through subscription fees, levies & dues and donations.¹² But these dues are not substantial enough even if collected, thus making political parties beholden to big donors. It was in a bid to make political parties less beholden to money bags that the government of Ibrahim Babangida sought to sponsor political parties in the nineties¹³. But this also meant that political parties were dependent upon government. The current system of political parties being reliant on money bags and political godfathers who call the shots has grossly affected internal democracy and often resulted in splinter groups and factions at the state and local government

¹² See Political parties' constitution as published by INEC in the Appendix section

¹³ Oji, R.O; Eme, O.I; Nwoba, H.A. Political party funding in Nigeria: A Case of People's Democratic Party Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review Vol. 2, No.11, 2014.

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level. This is because in many instances, these big donors would want to determine the outcome of the process which is often at variance with the internal elections (Eme and Anyadike, 2014)¹⁴.

The Electoral Act, 2022 requires that political parties submit their audited reports to INEC, in addition to their election expenses report and elections contribution report. This requirement is not new as it was contained in earlier iteration of the law. Although several parties did not submit their reports, INEC, through tracking, was able to determine that the APC and PDP spent three times more than what the law permitted at the 2019 elections. The same was also observed in various states at gubernatorial elections. But there have also been complaints from various quarters about INEC's culpability in not reprimanding erring parties. These are some of the challenges experienced with regards to political party regulations on political financing.

3.4 Voter and Political Party Attitudes towards Issue-Based Campaigning

Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999 and has witnessed six elections: 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. The next election will hold in 2023. All previous elections have been characterized by degrees of hate speech. Hate speech is universally used to describe any communication that denigrates a particular person or group on the basis of race, colour, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, or other characteristics. The 2015 and 2019 election campaigns, monitored by the Nigeria civil society situation room, documented hate speech. (Nigeria Situation Room, 2015 & 2019)^{17,18}.

Non-governmental organisations, academicians, and political pundits have expressed the need for political campaigns in Nigeria to be issue-based and devoid of hate speech. Tagged as inane by political pundits (Amadi 2013), campaigns continue to deploy elements of divisive language. According to the Nigeria civil society situation room, issue based campaigns present the antithesis of hate speech. Instead of mudslinging, bigotry and insults, politicians are expected to campaign around various questions of public policy.

Issue based campaigns require politicians to focus on matters of public policy and allow voters to compare respective priorities against their own personal belief systems before deciding whom to vote for. They also provide the electorate with key facts to hold political candidates accountable when they assume office. According to Osakwe (2011), accountability in politics means that a political party or candidate must be able to deliver on election promises (Vittal 2001). Failure to deliver disappoints the electorate who in turn have the moral obligation to vote out the elected politician in the next election.¹⁹

The United States and countries in Western Europe feature democracies refined over many decades, with political party manifestos tested by think tanks, journalists and a well-informed electorate. Amadi (2013) presented the history of refining an electorate for democratic participation. Europeans deemed that human beings were not equally endowed and sought to ensure that intellectually-inferior citizens were kept out of democratic processes. Citizens denied the right to vote included "manual labourers, persons preoccupied with the soil, with crafts and small trade" (Habermas, p. 276). The policy which "prevented women from voting in the United States until the 1920s" (Horton & Leslie, 1976, p. 224) had roots in the European policy that denied the voting right to subordinated persons.

¹⁴ Eme, O. and Anyadike, N.O. Political Financing in Africa: A Comparative Study of Kenya and Nigeria: Proposal for Reform Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences 5(27): 22-34.

¹⁵ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/556940-campaign-finance-inec-fails-to-sanction-apc-pdp-others-for-violating-nigerias-laws.html?tztc=1>

¹⁶ Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, Vol.2 No.1, Election Update, Hate speech, Issue based Campaign and the 2015 General Elections

¹⁷ Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, Vol.2 No.1, Election Update, Hate speech, Issue based Campaign and the 2015 General Elections

¹⁸ Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, Report of Nigeria's 2019 General Elections

¹⁹ Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room, Vol.2 No.1, Election Update, Hate speech, Issue based Campaign and the 2015 General Elections

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Horton & Leslie (1976) highlighted how the extension of the voting right to every 18 year-old in a democratic process compares with allowing public opinion of the masses to determine who rules. European founding fathers believed that extending voting rights at a fledgling stage in a democratic experiment had the potential of contaminating the experiment. They therefore restricted the franchise to a small number they considered competent enough to participate in a democratic process. Those who pioneered democratic rule in Europe did not relax the restriction on voting-rights until they were satisfied that the insights of the mentally fit had purified the electoral process to a point where the uninformed passion of the masses would no longer corrupt the process. The initial restriction of voting rights alerted the media to the fact that the electorate know their rights and would punish any media organization perceived as playing a “guard dog” instead of a “watch dog” role (Berger, 2000, p. 84).

Nigeria is in her 24th year of uninterrupted democracy and the democratic experiment has developed from the infancy stage. The 2023 presidential election has seen the emergence of four presidential candidate front-runners, a diversion from previous elections characterized by only one or two major front-runners.

3.5 Voter Inducement and Vote Buying

Voter inducement and particularly vote buying have been a fairly common practice in Nigeria since the return to democracy in 1999. Other common electoral crimes include ballot box snatching and submission and reporting of altered votes. However, with the introduction of new technology by the electoral umpire, INEC, it has become more difficult to engage in those practices so may increase the desperation for vote buying in order to influence the outcome of elections²⁰.

Recent data suggests that a considerable number of voters in the country are still willing to sell their votes. According to a national poll conducted in November 2022, approximately 30% of registered voters in Nigeria indicated they would be willing to accept a gift or favor during an election in exchange for their vote²¹. Of this 30%, almost 1 in 2 (45%) indicated they would be willing to accept money, and as many as 1 in 4 (26%) revealed that such a gift would influence their decision to vote for a political party or candidate. This indicates the market opportunity for vote-selling and vote-buying that presently exists ahead of the 2023 general elections. In addition, the proportion of Nigerians who admitted to be willing to sell their votes may be conservative, as many would not want to be identified with vote-buying due to its negative connotations. The data provides the electoral umpire an estimated population when working to curb vote-buying.

Despite the alarming number of voters who admitted to being willing to sell their votes, there is still hope for the integrity of Nigeria's electoral process. The poll revealed that the majority of voters, about 70%, expressed a strong desire to not sell their votes. A clear demonstration of this was seen during the recent elections in Anambra, where a viral video showed the women of Ebenebe, a relatively poor town in Anambra, boldly rejecting cash gifts offered to induce them to vote for a particular candidate. This incident serves as a beacon of hope that not all Nigerians are willing to compromise the integrity of their votes or the electoral process.

²⁰ Votes for Cash: The significance of vote buying in Nigeria's democracy. 2022. <https://theconversation.com/votes-for-cash-the-significance-of-vote-buying-in-nigerias-democracy-186159>

²¹ Vote buying Poll Report. 2022. <https://noi-polls.com/vote-buying-poll-elections-poll/>

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3.5.1 Monetization of Party Primaries

In Nigeria, vote buying occurs at two critical stages in the election process - the delegate level and the electorate level. At the delegate level, the transaction takes place between a party delegate and a politician vying for a party ticket. The delegate is offered financial or other material incentives in exchange for their support.²²

This is a crucial stage in the election process because it determines candidates for a particular party. The practice of vote buying at this level has been a major contributor to the emergence of weak and compromised candidates who are not necessarily best fit for the position.

The Electoral Act provides political parties with three methods for selecting candidates for elections: direct primaries involving all members of the party in the designated constituency, indirect primaries involving delegates, and the consensus option involving the agreement of contenders to select one aspirant. The consensus option has been widely abused, as seen in the conventions of leading parties, resulting in the imposition of candidates when aspirants are forced to withdraw from the race.

The delegate option is the foundation for the ongoing monetization crisis in Nigeria. Ideally, delegates emerge from a direct election by party members. However, available reports indicate that godfathers and big men simply dictate who will serve as delegates, in contempt of the popular will of party members. This leads to impunity, illegality, and a lack of democratic credentials.

The monetization of political party primaries is not limited to the presidential primaries. From the State House of Assembly to the House of Representatives and the Senate, to the gubernatorial primaries, the resources required to capture a candidacy increase based on the position being sought and the resources controlled by the office in the event the candidate becomes successful at the general election. In essence, the monetization of political party primaries undermines the principle of democracy, where candidates should be chosen based on their competence, rather than their financial resources.²³

3.5.2 Factors that promote vote buying and other electoral malpractices in Nigeria

Vote buying continues to be a prevalent scourge in Nigeria due to a combination of factors. First, politics is often viewed as an investment by politicians rather than a public service, creating a situation where the end justifies the means. Additionally, the value placed on state power is immeasurably high, leading to a situation where politicians are willing to use any means necessary to achieve their goal. This is compounded by the desperation of the political elite to maintain or gain power.

Moreover, socio-economic conditions create an environment where vote buying can thrive. Poverty and illiteracy, for example, make people more susceptible to material inducement. Until there is a significant shift in the way politics is perceived and conducted in Nigeria, and improvement in socio-economic conditions, vote buying will continue to be a challenge in the country.

3.5.3 Possible ways to minimize vote buying in Nigeria

In order to effectively address the issue of vote buying in Nigeria, a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach targeting the root causes of the problem is required. This involves strengthening democratic institutions and political processes, promoting transparency and accountability in political financing, and prioritizing education and poverty reduction.

One key recommendation is the development of a voter education program that sensitizes voters to the negative impacts of vote buying, the consequences of accepting bribes, and how to identify and report cases of vote buying. This program should be implemented through a collaborative

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effort involving the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), relevant government agencies, civil society organizations, and the media.

To enforce penalties for vote buying, a special task force should be created to investigate electoral fraud, similar to Brazil's "Electoral Fraud Task Force." Penalties for vote buying should target the drivers of the behavior, such as political parties, candidates, and other actors who use money to manipulate the electoral process. These penalties should be severe to ensure that the prohibition of vote buying is taken seriously and to deter future offenders.

In addition, the privileges and perquisites associated with public office should be significantly reduced. This would discourage individuals from seeking political positions solely for personal gain and reduce the premium placed on state power.

Political parties must control the abusive influence of money in their candidate selection processes. This will help shift the perception of politics from a business venture to a public service, making it less likely for politicians to engage in unethical practices.

Furthermore, the electoral commission must ensure that the way in which polls are set up supports secret ballot voting, which will help to protect the voter's right to vote in secret. This will prevent individuals from being coerced or intimidated into voting a certain way.

By implementing these recommendations, it will be possible to address the underlying conditions that make vote buying attractive, promote greater citizen participation, ensure that elected officials are held accountable to the people they represent, and enhance the overall democratic process in Nigeria.

3.6 Factors Responsible for Increase of Political Apathy in Nigeria

Political apathy in the Nigerian political system has persisted over many decades and is likely to remain a continuum if proper measures are not taken..

Political apathy can be due to inefficient and non-representative bureaucracies resulting in voter fatigue. In this case the voters are not prevented from engaging the political process but are psychologically averse due to disappointment, emotional discouragement and political disengagement. They believe their actions will change very little or nothing. Factors that may fuel political apathy in voters include²⁴:

1. Polarised Electoral Systems or Corrupt Electoral Processes:

Corrupt electoral process and polarised systems are indicators of non-inclusiveness in decision making processes. When voters feel that their votes will not count, that the winners of the electoral process have been established and the elections have "already been won" before votes are cast, voter apathy sets in and voters feel that it is not worth their while to involve themselves in political processes.

2. Lack of Trust in the Electoral Umpire (INEC)

INEC has the responsibility of facilitating the electoral process. Factors that could lead to an erosion of trust in INEC include; a preponderance of issues related to poor logistics on election day, inefficiencies with the distribution of voters' cards, poor provision of security at polling units as well as a shortage of well-trained and experienced registration officers.

3. Role of Politicians and Political Parties

Most politicians are desperate to attain power by any means necessary. Campaigns are fraught with rhetorical manifestoes which they hardly fulfil. Voter inducements abound, whether with

²⁴ Chioma, G., (2014, November 15). Permanent voters cards, PVCs: how INEC failed Nigerians. Vanguard Newspaper, politics, p. 21. Retrieved from <http://www.dailypost.com/2014/14/inecbeginsecondphaseofdistribution/> June 10, 2015.

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cash or in-kind. Unfortunately, this desperation to seize power has adverse effects on political and electoral apathy because it creates disillusionment within the electorate. Past governments have been characterised with bad roads, low levels of employment, poor economic development, increasing levels of inflation, increasingly devalued currency and so more^{25 26}.

Similarly, party primaries are known to have been characterized by god-fatherism, voter-inducement, violence and rigging, particularly with indirect primaries. This leads to a feeling of an imposed candidate being thrust upon the party who may not be the popular choice. If voters feel disenchanting with their 'imposed' candidates, they are unlikely to go through the rigorous process of voting at the general election²⁷.

3.6.1 Factors Responsible for Electoral Apathy

Alienation is defined as, "the sense that voters feel the political system does not work for them and any attempt to influence it will be a fruitless exercise." This could be due to many factors. One is the lack of education. According to a study done by Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, the director of CIRCLE, nearly 20% of youth did not feel that they knew enough to vote. Additionally, the study found that many youths had glaring misconceptions about the voting process with several in the study thinking they could not vote due to relatively minor violations (such as driving under the influence). This 20% is especially significant when juxtaposed with the 20% total youth turnout in the 2018 midterms.

Voter fatigue is defined in political science as, "the apathy that the electorate can experience under certain circumstances, one of which could be that they are required to vote too often." Another is the barrage of political messages through the internet (especially social media). With the large amount of exposure to political messages year-round, potential voters turn away from the voting process. Along with these two main causes, apathy can result from being uncomfortable with the possible choices, unable to vote due to legal or logistical barriers, overwhelmed by personal issues, or encountering registration problems.

3.6.2 Difference between Electoral Apathy and Political Apathy

Electoral apathy or lack of interest is often cited as a cause of low turnout among eligible voters in jurisdictions where voting is optional or where voting is compulsory. This phenomenon occurs to some extent across all countries or entities. Electoral apathy has led to increased concern in representative democracies because election results do not encompass the entire population who are eligible to vote. Voter fatigue describes a possible cause of voter apathy when elections are held too frequently. Political alienation may be confused with voter apathy. Sometimes, alienated voters do care about an election, but feel estranged or disaffected from the system or somehow left out of the political process.

Political apathy can be categorized as the indifference of an individual and a lack of interest in participating in political activities. This includes lack of interest in elections, political events, public meetings, and voting. Collective political apathy can lower voter turnout. It is often found among younger voters, the poor, and minority groups. The Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE) breaks down youth into different groups, Broadly Engaged (19%), Political Specialists (19%) and Only Voted (18%), with the rest clustered into Civically Alienated (16%), Politically Marginalized (14%) and Engaged Non-Voters (14%).

²⁵ The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), (2011). Voter apathy and the 2011 election in Nigeria. A research report, Abuja, Nigeria. Thisday Live, (2015, March 16). The card reader controversy. Retrieved April 20, 2015. <http://www.thisdaylive.ng/editorial/politics/thecardreadercontroversy/>

²⁶ Gbenga, A., (2015, April 05). Nigeria's 2015 elections; why states recorded low turnout. The Guardian Newspaper, politics, p. 17

²⁷ <https://africandevdevelopmentchoices.org/political-apathy/>

<https://africandevdevelopmentchoices.org/the-story-of-adc-and-founder-moses-tai/>

<https://afrobarometer.org/publications/voting-and-democratic-citizenship-africa>

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At the dawn of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria in 1999, 58 million citizens registered to vote in the general elections. However, only 30 million voted. This represented 52% voter turnout. (Ebenezer: 2018, P.68). The 1999 elections in South-Africa fared better with 18 million registered to vote and 16 million having voted. This represented 89% voter turnout. This was also similar to the increased political participation recorded in Nigeria in 2003, where 42 million of registered voters of 60 million, voted, representing 70% voter turnout (Ebenezer, 2018; Morais, 2019). There was however, a decline in voter participation in the electoral process in South-Africa in the 2004 national elections, as 16 million of 21 million of registered voters voted in the elections. This represented 77% voter turnout and a decline of 12% turnout rate from the previous elections in 1999.

Political apathy represents a lack of psychological involvement in public affairs, emotional detachment from civic engagements and obligations, abstention from political activity and general lack of passion in the electoral process (INEC and FES, 2011; Ebenezer, 2018). The difficulty in measuring general political apathy in a political system and process led political scientists to focus on the electoral process and citizen participation in elections. This research addresses the comparative analysis of political apathy in national elections in Nigeria and South-Africa, using statistical tools to measure voter turnout in the 2019 national elections in both countries. An active political system with citizen political engagement in political discourse, civic obligation and public policy inclusiveness without a requisite increase in voter participation in the electoral process, especially in voting during national elections, still exhibits citizens political apathy.

Table 5: Trend in Voter Participation in Nigerian Electoral History

Year	Voter Turnout	Total vote	Registration	VAP	Voting age population	Population	Invalid votes	Compulsory votes
2019	32.14%	26,468,211	82,344,107	24.86%	106,490,312	208,679,114		No
2015	43.65%	29,432,083	67,422,005	32.11%	91,669,312	181,562,056		No
2011	28.66%	21,074,621	73,528,040	25.80%	81,691,751	155,215,573		No
2007			61,567,036		71,004,507	131,859,731	3.20%	No
2003	49.32%	29,995,171	60,823,022	46.63%	64,319,246	129,934,911	2.40%	No
1999	40.69%	23,573,407	57,938,945	44.65%	52,792,781	108,258,359		No
1983	38.90%	25,400,000	65,300,000	58.23%	43,620,780	89,022,000	4.00%	No
1979	32.34%	15,686,514	48,499,091	41.13%	38,142,090	77,841,000		No
1959	79.52%	7,185,555	9,036,083	43.46%	16,532,640	34,443,000		No

Source: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/231/40>

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

4.1 Laws and Enforcement Mechanisms for Political Accountability and Campaign Financing

4.1.1 Awareness of the Provisions of the 2022 Electoral Act and Its Key Provisions

On February 25, 2022, President Muhammadu Buhari ratified the 2022 Electoral Act Amendment Bill. The new electoral legislation makes a number of significant reforms, including creating a legislative framework that provides INEC the authority to determine how people vote, how election results are announced, and how to investigate results that are announced under duress. The law also makes legal the use of technology in the electoral process. The introduction of technological innovations such as the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS), INEC Voter Enrolment Device (IVED), and INEC Results Viewing Portal (IRev) will, among other things, influence the credibility of the upcoming 2023 general elections. (Premium Times 2023)

While the law has been well understood by key political actors and stakeholders, this study discovered that the general public has a poor understanding of the provisions of the new Electoral Act. The study found that only young male adults living in urban areas could recall the new technological innovations introduced by the law. This highlights the need for greater public sensitization to educate citizens on provisions of the new Electoral Act.

Increased public awareness of the key reforms made to Nigeria's 2022 Electoral Act will have numerous implications for stakeholders involved in upcoming electoral processes. For instance, it will give citizens a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities when it comes to voting, as well as provide more transparency and clarity when it comes to the rules and regulations surrounding campaigns, candidates, and procedures during elections.

Furthermore, such knowledge will enable political actors and stakeholders to act professionally, efficiently, and ethically with regard to their respective roles. It will also help build confidence in the electoral process among citizens by demonstrating that Nigerian politics is following the rule of law. Lastly, greater awareness about the act can lead to reduced post-election tension by providing citizens with an accurate understanding of the laws governing elections and their results.

4.1.2 Laws Guiding the Nigerian Electoral Process and How They Can Act In the Best Interest of the Society

Nigerian elections have been characterised by numerous challenges, including low voter turnout due to insecurity, ballot box snatching, hate speech, election cheating and vote buying. Despite the many efforts put in place by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other national security agencies to address these challenges, activities of political parties and their candidates, in their desperation to win elections, have continued to pose serious threats to the electoral processes and undermined efforts of the electoral body to conduct competitive, free, fair, and credible elections.

The survey concludes that the laws guiding the Nigerian Electoral Process and their implementation regarding INEC, Security Agencies and Political Parties have improved with the new electoral laws. A number of respondents believe the introduction of technology will eliminate manual accreditation and voting, and further strengthen the electoral process in the country, making the work of INEC, Security agencies and other stakeholders easier before, during and after the elections. They also said the adoption of technological innovations will reduce the possibility of election rigging in the country.

Most respondents however, were of the opinion that the presence of the laws and activities of relevant agencies were inconsequential in determining the outcome of elections as the outcome is pre-determined by a few corrupt political leaders. They also expressed strong concerns about

INEC’s capability to monitor the implementation of the electoral act. The survey found that for the new electoral law to be effective, there is need for the establishment of an independent body empowered by the law to monitor and track campaign spending of every candidate who has secured the nomination ticket for their party.

QUALITATIVE QUOTES:

*“Yes the passage of the new Electoral Act has strengthened some aspects of this law. We can see some improvements from the INEC trying to bring the anti-corruption agency to be involved in trying to combat some of these electoral offenses but who is responsible? INEC cannot be the only one trying to do everything and that is why we have the Electoral Offences Bill before the National Assembly; although, the Bill has not passed for second review. Once the Electoral Offences Bill is passed, we will see a better implementation of some of all these things.,, The establishment of electoral offense commission “ **KII with CDD***

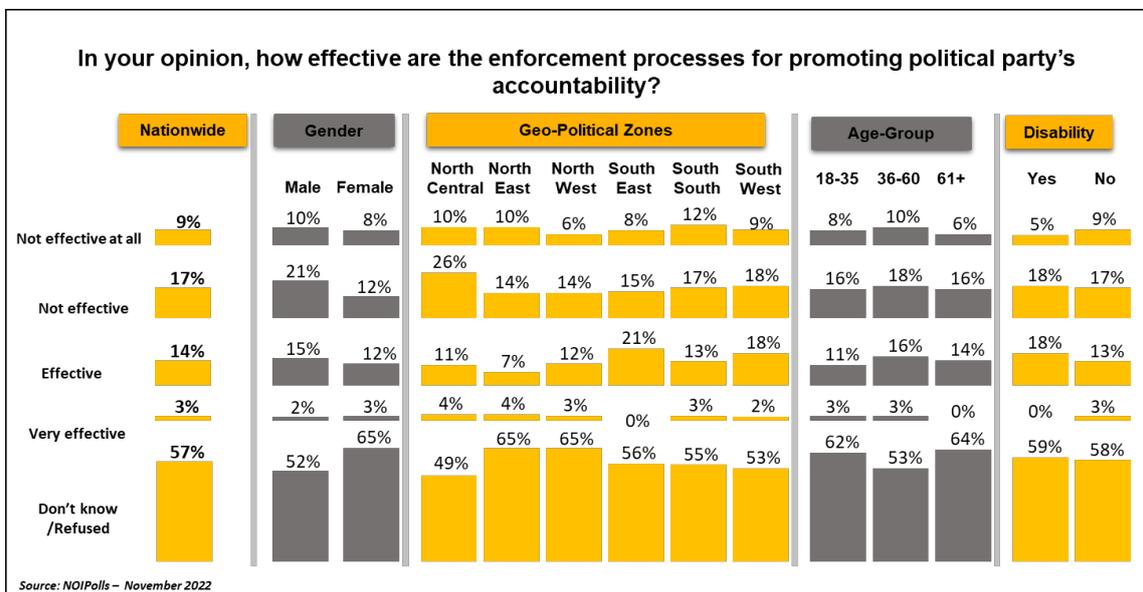
*“I think from all indications and from all observation in the country the challenge has not always been about the lack of the law but the political will to go through and implement the laws” **KII, with YIAGA***

*“there is no law; those laws are just something for documentation. If Nigerians want to tell themselves the truth, laws are not really enforced in this country. For me, there is no law” **FGD, Urban, Asaba***

*“Well, from my own point of view I believe that the law will clamp down on political parties if the law is carried out to the latter. But these political parties we are talking about are so powerful; our president belongs to a political party, other big wigs belong to political parties, so they are the ones that run the law, but naturally the law will be helpful if it will be seen to the letter, that is what I believe. There is no bad law, it is just its implementers that will determine if the law is bad or good, that’s my opinion.” **FGD Male Urban Oyo State***

Most respondents (57%) of the quantitative survey do not know or attest to the effectiveness of the law and its enforcement in promoting political accountability. While 26% believe the law is not effective and only 17% believe the law is effective.

Figure 2: Opinion on effectiveness of enforcement processes for promoting political party’s accountability

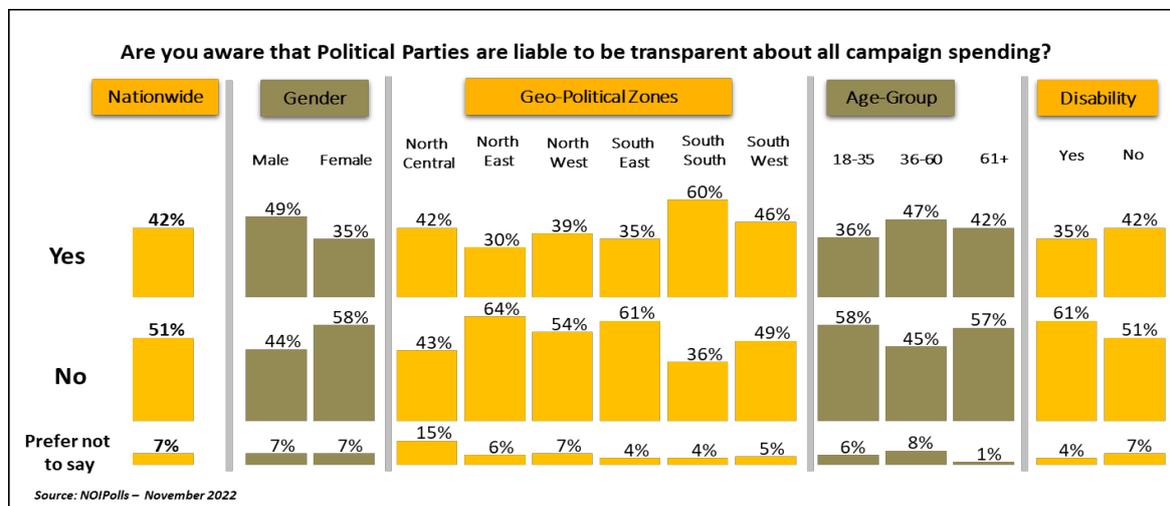


4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

4.1.3 Voter Attitude towards Campaign Spending Limit

There were mixed feelings among respondents regarding the upward review of the maximum election expenses to be incurred by candidates and political parties. Some said the amount is enormous and has priced elections beyond the reach of the average Nigerian. Others said the amount is not enough compared to what candidates and political parties actually spend in the electoral cycle, emphasizing that the ceiling is not realistic considering inflationary trends and devaluation of the naira and the extension of the campaign period from the previously 90 days to 150 days as indicated in the new electoral law. Furthermore, respondents were of the opinion that the upward review of the campaign expenditure ceiling could lead to increased possibilities of vote buying.

Figure 3: Awareness of campaign spending transparency



Qualitative Quotes:

"My opinion on this is that there is really big problem concerning this because for instance the previous times it was 1 billion and there was issue of vote buying where political parties buy people's votes at 5,000 naira and the new one is giving an opportunity of 5 billion that means they are giving the political parties more advantage of getting more voters to buy at a higher price; the same goes to the state government that has been given opportunity to remove money to buy voters to get their votes. For me, this is a really wrong decision made by the government." **FGD Male Urban, Kano State**

"The amendment of the law is more like they made it to favour themselves from 1 billion to 5 billion. To me, I think the initial amount was okay. Another thing is not just placing such a limit but how they are going to checkmate the expenditure." **FGD Male Urban, Anambra State**

"I think it's not a useful law, I don't think that there should be a threshold for spending in an election, I think there should be a requirement for reporting, so long as people are contributing to my campaign why does it matter to you how much I am spending, so if Obama raises a billion dollar he spends a billion dollars there's no ceiling, if a senator raises two million dollars he spends his two million dollars ... What does it matter to you if they're beholden to, so what we want is reporting, we want to know those they are beholden to, we want to know those they collected money from, so in America they know that you can't control such so they allow people to set up a super packs companies have a threshold they can give candidate, but people can set up an action committee and still give more money to them to support any

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

course they believe in, so they are going around and the system recognizes it and allows it and just say don't give the money to the candidate you can spend it on advert, on radio but you can't give it to the candidate, so we need to have visibility about who's spending what money, but sometimes putting all this threshold makes it you know." **KII with PDP**

"I think the only thing that has happened in this 2022 new Electoral Act is that it asked for people to step down from office before they contest, and we saw that happened with the ministers and even though some of them try to sneak themselves back into running for office, but yes I think that's to the extent to which it disassociate political appointees from government office but there's no express thing that meet their spending of money for instance the cost of forms, you will be asking where someone is getting 100 million as an office holder to buy form, so there's nothing, and there are ways and loopholes to which they can get around it and spend the money" **KII, PLAC**

4.1.4 Enforcement Mechanisms for the 2022 Electoral Act

Though previous general elections seem to have deepened democratic practices and strengthened the possibility of continuous civilian rule in the country, the future of democracy in Nigeria has too often been marred by activities and events that happen before, during, and after the elections. It was found that criminal proceedings are rarely undertaken in response to what political parties and their candidates do or say during election campaigns, especially in contravening provisions of the electoral laws. Most respondents recommend proportionate sanctions for electoral officials who violate essential elements within the electoral laws targeted at hampering or interfering with the electoral process.

For the candidates vying for political post, respondents from the qualitative survey recommend the possibility of administrative and/or criminal sanctions as a result of the violation of laws. Among these sanctions was the naming of the candidates who violated the laws as well as disqualification from participating in future elections. Conducting public trials of electoral offenses and monitoring the proceedings were largely said to be critical in promoting judicial professionalism and impartiality. Stakeholders suggested the need for adequate monitoring of the trial of electoral offenders. The monitoring should ensure that persons or institutions found guilty of violating electoral laws are punished and that the punishment is proportionate to the offenses.

"The laws are tidy up, but then the execution I keep on repeating is a major problem, like for example now, if you accuse somebody unlawfully, and then you're supposed to be fined, but those who are supposed to execute it that's why we are asking for the bonding of INEC for security measures, those who are supposed to do the effects of punishment are not up and doing" **KII, Labour Party**

"...the provisions of the law is to the effect that it limits the sort of amount that political party candidates will spend the overall essence of that provision is to try to create a level playing field for the candidate for the political parties so that at the end the money bags do not have undue advantage over the people that do not have the same level of financial muscles so you don't come with financial muscle and or to do all out play people so the spirit is to create as much level playing field" **KII, TMG**

"If the INEC does not follow the laws that is signed into law they will spoil the entire election that might lead to the cancellation of election and the consequences can be protest rising from all areas, insecurity." **FGD Male Urban, Kano State**

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

"The question is stating the obvious is it really possible for a child to discipline his father? Is it really possible; it is not!" FGD Female Urban, Delta State.

This implies that there are no punitive consequences for challenging INEC actions in the court of law because nothing substantial will come out of the process.

One area of electoral regulations that most clearly shows the need for public control of equal opportunities is the finances of the political parties during an electoral campaign. According to section 95 (2) of the new Act, state apparatus (money, vehicles, personnel, aircraft, public buildings) including the media shall not be employed to the advantage or disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election. Interviews with most Nigerians show a general belief that the president, governors and local government chairpersons often violate this section of the law. State resources are often believed to have been used to favour candidates and political parties during election campaigns.

There were concerns about political parties' consistent failure to publish their financial reports. For example, it was reported that only a few political parties had submitted their 2019 audited financial report to INEC as at 2022 and since 2019 elections INEC has not published the accounts of political parties as expected by law²⁸.

The survey highlights the need for civil society organizations, the media and other critical stakeholders to demand audited financial reports of political parties using the provision of the Freedom of Information Act.

Qualitative Quotes:

"Right now in our party, before you get your ticket for the party, it is already certain that you are up to the task financially. So, there is no way the party or the governor will now say let us support this person. No; you know there are some clicks (groups) in the party that will say we will buy form for this person or support this person. All these things he terminated. You are on your own and with this kind of innovation he's trying to let you know that let there be limit to some financial muscles, let there be limit to the level we go in terms of resources" KII, with APGA

"INEC is supposed to also publish the campaign expenses of political parties, so people are able to see how transparent the process is or whether or not the Board read their expenses, but I am not sure that has been done. The last time I checked when parties submitted the list of their candidates, only two parties actually submitted their financial records alongside the list of their candidates" KII, with YIAGA

"Now if you go to, I think, section 87 or so, there's a part that talks about the candidate and what they should spend in an election. A candidate is not supposed to spend for presidency more than five million of their own money, and then if they're getting any support from an individual the support should not exceed 50 million naira, now this is where the challenge is, I as a candidate will not spend more than five million naira, but there is no limit to how much the party can spend" KII, with YIAGA

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

4.1.5 Adequacy of Penalties in the Electoral Act With Respect to Political Campaign Financing

Government authorities are primarily responsible for ensuring the successful conduct of elections. Given that elections are highly political, it is crucial that government participation in the electoral process be neutral and not seen as favouring any party or candidate. Some respondents indicated that activities of government and a number of political parties and candidates often give rise to integrity problems because of their interest in the outcome of elections. The study revealed that political parties/candidates often bypass the electoral laws and regulations. Respondents also highlighted incidences of monopolization and preferential media treatment as well as misuse of government resources and facilities for campaign purposes in the previous elections.

Qualitative Quotes:

*"we have seen that in some state where certain political parties are in government they sort of use government resources, government facilities and basically using power to intimidate and frustrate the effort of opposition political parties and that's not supposed to happen, **KII, TMG***

*"...the law specifies no campaigns for instance in churches, penalties are there, even when using public space, campaigns should be in neutral ground not in government sort of facilities in our case in Nigeria for instance by our kind of definition places like public schools and all of that..." **KII, YIAGA***

*"we are seeing high handedness on the part of some government officials, take the case of the Rivers State for instance where government is coming up with outrageous amount for anybody that wants to use public space and with the idea that people have to apply before they get to use those spaces, to some extent we hear that even when a party applies there's no guarantee that the party will get that space, in other states you hear that no posters for instance across public spaces, but then if I understand the definition of a public space I guess I could post campaign posters even in places that I could do my own campaign, so these are the kinds of things that we see happen but it's specified in the electoral ACT". **KII, YIAGA***

4.1.6 Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms with Respect to Campaign Financing

With regard to what CSOs are doing to improve transparency and accountability of political campaign financing, the study showed that CSOs often engage in civic education and policy briefs to key stakeholders on the need for improved campaign financing mechanisms and processes. Beyond sensitizing the public on the dangers of vote buying, civil society organizations and the international community were recommended to expand their constructive contributions in civic spaces, drawing on their substantial experiences in promoting citizen participation in elections.

Qualitative Quotes:

*"One thing I know we are doing is the civic education campaign and media literacy campaign on disinformation and misinformation. We are trying to educate people on misinformation... We are looking to push out peace messages on radios and televisions to citizens not to be induced by financial incentives ahead of the elections" **KII with CDD***

*The centre just like we said we do policy briefs we also do advocacy like we have a coalition of CSOs like the situation room we are part of the coalition we do advocacy visits we also do rallies we also do, like during the last election in 2019 we published a review of exco party finances. We get the spending's of the parties and review it like against the provisions of the law and published it as a book not just as a policy book - **KII with CSJ***

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

*“So what we do for every election is that we do a lot of voters education both the physical voters education, but we also do long time engagement on Radio, sensitizing voters about the need to vote right and also not to engage in those vices, but the challenge there’s a lot of ignorance about this, ignorance of the law shouldn’t be an excuse because in the case of vote buying for instance, both the person that is giving and the person that is taking, if any of them is caught, both of them are supposed to be punished, so those are the kinds of educations that we are providing through our social Media pages, through engagement like this, through conferences at every point we try to keep providing that,” **KII, with YIAGA***

4.2 Political Party Laws and Regulations on Political Financing

Key Findings:

- Most political parties in Nigeria have provisions in their constitution guiding their operations, including their financial activities.
- The constitutions of the major political parties in Nigeria provide for financial transparency and accountability in their operations, especially during electoral campaigns.
- For example, the constitution of the All Progressives Congress (APC) provides for the establishment of a Financial Committee, which is responsible for overseeing the financial activities of the party. The committee is required to provide a detailed report of the party’s income and expenditure to the National Executive Committee (NEC) on a monthly basis. The constitution also prohibits the acceptance of donations from anonymous sources or donors with questionable reputations.
- Similarly, the constitution of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) mandates the party to keep proper financial records and make them available for scrutiny by authorized auditors. The constitution also requires the party to maintain separate accounts for all donations and contributions received for campaign purposes.
- The Labour Party’s constitution requires that the party’s finances be managed transparently, and that all donations and contributions be reported to the party’s National Executive Council (NEC) and relevant regulatory authorities. The constitution also requires the party to maintain separate accounts for all donations and contributions received for campaign purposes.
- Despite these provisions in political party constitutions, there are still concerns about the lack of financial transparency and accountability during political campaigns in Nigeria. Many political actors are able to evade regulations and operate outside of the law by using loopholes in the system or by exploiting weak enforcement mechanisms.
- For most political parties, funds acquired through constitutionally prescribed means are not sufficient to fund their activities. As a result, they often resort to selling their nomination forms at exorbitant rates. In most cases, these forms are purchased not by the candidates themselves, but by lobby groups.
- The new Electoral Act (2022) and the previous Electoral Act (2010) requires political parties to submit their annual reports (detailing assets, liabilities, etc.), contribution reports, and election expenses report. Although most political parties did not submit reports in 2019, INEC was able to deduce that major political parties such as the APC and the PDP expended at least three times more than the law permits. Yet there were no punitive measures taken.
- The Electoral Law has provision to track party and candidates’ expenditures and third-party spending on behalf of a party or candidate but creates a loophole in tracking party or candidate expenditure. This could distort the real analysis on party expenditures and allow undue advantages to money bags which could have untold effects and influences on political outcomes.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Concerning what organizations are currently doing to improve transparency and accountability in political campaign financing leading to the 2023 election, the study showed that political parties in general were not specific about what they were doing to improve transparency and accountability in the electoral process. However, some political parties appear to have taken steps to improve transparency and accountability by re-building the philosophy of volunteerism through encouraging supporters to volunteer willingly for party activities as opposed to engaging in activities for monetary gain.

*"In terms of cash flows between candidates and supporters in whatever they're doing, but our party is trying to change that outlook from transactional commercial engagement to volunteer engagement, so when it is volunteer engagement the supporters will not be expected to look out for immediate things in terms of cash for whatever he or she is doing, and normally that's where money goes to, so we are trying to rebuild the philosophy of volunteerism in our party members" **KII with APC***

4.2.1 Political Party Financing

In Nigeria, political parties are permitted to raise funds to support their activities and candidates. According to key informant interviews, membership dues, investments, funding practices, and sponsorships are popular methods of financial support. However, there have also been reported cases of the sitting government using state funds and facilities to promote their party's agenda. Respondents expressed concern about the use of godfathers and state funds to finance political parties and candidates. They suggested that political parties should rely on fundraising activities rather than these questionable methods of financing.

Additionally, respondents highlighted a lack of adherence to legal processes in financing political parties. They were sceptical about the effectiveness of financial limitations on political parties. The low levels of enforcement of financial limitations could have negative consequences for local citizens and could compromise the integrity of the democratic process. Overall, respondents believed that more stringent enforcement of financial limitations on political parties is necessary in Nigeria, but also acknowledged the challenges in implementing such measures in the country's political climate.

Qualitative Quotes:

*"It ought to have been through payment of membership dues, investment by the political parties into positive making businesses so that party can be financed, and then soliciting for fund raising within the provisions of the law, and then they should not give room for individuals to sponsor more than what is required of others"-**KII with Labour Party***

*"Political parties should be financed like many of the countries with similar democracy like ours which is through clearly transferring donations, fundraising activities and so on and so forth" - **KII with Media Personality***

*"Every member of the party should have a due to be paid either annually or bi-annually. The finances of the party should come from party membership dues. It should be the basis of contesting positions in the party." **KII with APC***

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

4.3 Vote Buying In Nigeria Electoral System; Issues, Drivers, Effects, and Solutions

Key Findings on Vote Buying

- Support for credible elections is high across all demographic groups. Direct primaries are viewed as the most credible form of primary election as they increase the number of people who decide the candidate and reduce the possibility of delegate inducement.
- Vote buying is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas, according to both qualitative and quantitative findings.
- There is an increased level of political consciousness among young people in both urban and rural areas, with 71% of respondents in the quantitative interviews believing their choice of political candidate during the 2023 elections will not be influenced by money or gift offers.
- Law enforcement agencies including the EFCC, ICPC, and Police are not adequately involved in monitoring the activities of political parties as it relates to vote-buying, according to qualitative interviews.
- A substantial number of participants in qualitative interviews are not confident their ballots will be secret in the 2023 elections and fear that vote buyers will come up with ways to track how people voted.
- Campaigns against vote buying, local outreach programs, and advocacies by key organizations like CSOs are strategies employed to curb vote buying.

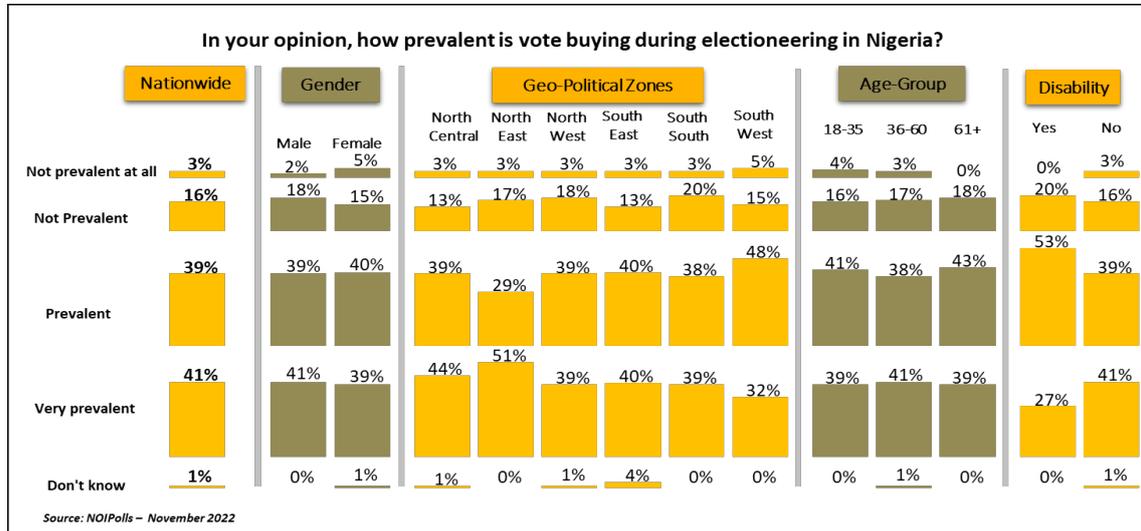
The rising levels of political consciousness among the youth have been linked to campaigns on social media. These efforts should be extended to local communities where vote buying and inducements are highly prevalent.

4.3.1 Prevalence and Causes of Vote Buying

- Findings show that 80% of respondents identified the issue of vote buying as prevalent or very prevalent (41% + 39%) in Nigeria. This finding was consistently high across all regions. The survey revealed that incentives or gifts are often offered to voters by political candidates and their agents to influence election outcomes and the umpire body has not prosecuted or sanctioned any party or candidate found guilty of this offence.
- Respondents from the qualitative interviews revealed that vote buying was not considered to occur only at the general elections, but as early as when party primaries are conducted.
- Respondents gave the range for which votes were sold to be between N200 – N25,000 or more. Other inducements include food items, clothing, etc. Further analysis of the survey results by region shows that the issue of vote buying is most prevalent in the North-Central (83%). This is followed by the North-East, South-East, and South-West at 80% respectively. The North-West had 78% prevalence, while the South-South had 77% prevalence. Conclusively, this result showed that 8 in 10 Nigerians say that the problem of vote buying is prevalent.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Figure 3b: How prevalent is vote buying during electioneering



Qualitative Quotes:

"Vote buying doesn't take place in one day, and even the idea of making people remain in office while they're running makes it easy for them to buy vote, you can buy vote way before election day, you can go and mop up PVCs from poor people and hide them with one person to get your massive thumb print on election day" KII with AAC

"Like now if i want to go and vote for a particular candidate and reaching there maybe because of hunger and everything happening in this Nigeria maybe another party will tell you we are voting for 5000 naira and this people are voting for 1000 maybe something if you're not determine to vote for that person, you can change your mind because of the money." FGD Male Rural Anambra State

4.3.2 Patterns of Vote Buying In Nigeria

- The study found that in typical vote buying structures in Nigeria, the voters are the sellers, the political parties and their agents are the buyers while money, cloths and food items are often the instrument of exchange. Proceeds from vote selling are often paid in cash to the sellers before or after casting of votes. Vote buying happens in various ways either before or during elections
- Voters are often mandated to provide evidence that votes have been cast in favour of the candidates. Common evidence includes pictures of thumb prints snapped with voter's mobile phones or show of ballot papers.
- The survey found that vote buying in states or national elections maintain a certain structure across the states. The structure often adopts a pyramid model which extends from a top-level agent to a pyramid-based agent in charge of providing money/goods directly to voters at local levels.
- Those who engage in vote buying often take advantage of poor ballot secrecy as powerful people tend to find out how they voted in elections. People are forced to vote against their personal will due to fear of becoming a victim of political intimidation or violence.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Qualitative Quotes:

“Like the way things are looking now, I think people will collect money from political parties and still vote for those they want to vote for. **FGD Male Urban Kano State**

“I am not sure that people are really interested in collecting incentives from political parties. People will really vote their conscience and they want to really vote for the best candidate. But only a few people that are still in ignorance will still collect money to vote for the wrong candidate.” **FGD Male Urban Delta State**

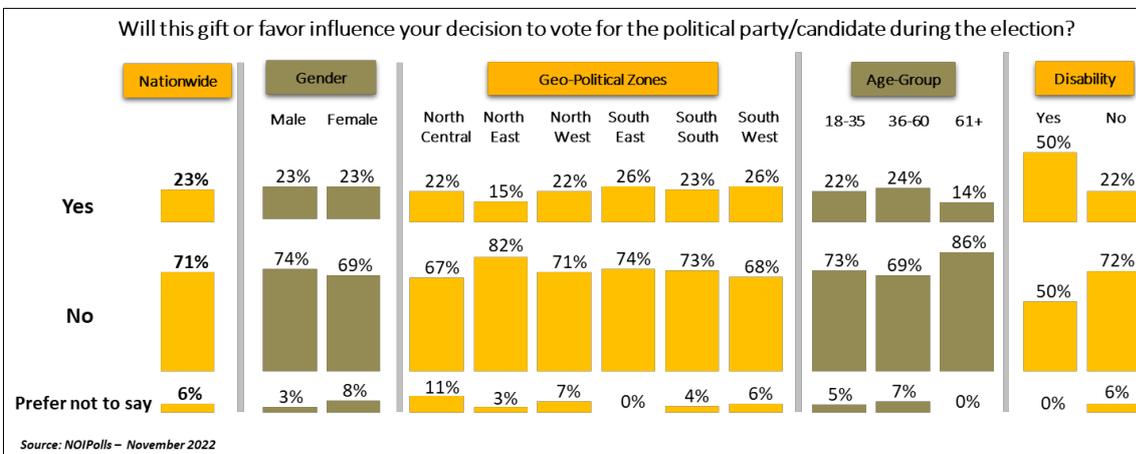
“What I know is that party agents collect money from the candidates, they ask the electorates where is your PVC, take 5,000 and vote for APC, PDP will say take 10,000 and vote for us, another party will offer 15,000, that is how I know they run it” **FGD Male Urban Oyo State**

“There is a way to which they buy votes again because when i was still in the Islamic school then two months before the election they will bring some women that will be cooking food and be giving to us every day and telling the people who is responsible for all the support we were receiving before you will know people fall in love with the candidate and vote for him” **FGD Female Urban Kano State.**

4.3.3 Attitude toward Vote Buying In 2023 Elections

- Even though vote buying was said to be prevalent across the states, Nigerians were asked if they will accept incentives, gifts and other monetary values in exchange for their votes in the 2023 elections. A majority of respondents (69%) stated they will not sell their votes. The finding cuts across the geopolitical zones (northeast 77%, South-South 75%, North-Central 71%) connoting a departure from the old way.
- Nigerians between 36-60 years of age constitute the larger proportion of citizens (70%) who opined that they will not take incentives or gifts in exchange for their votes. On the contrary, 31% said they will accept incentives. However, some participants in the FGDs stated they will collect incentives, but such incentives would not influence their decision at the ballot.

Figure 4: Influence of gift or favour to vote for the political party/candidate



4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

A majority (86%) of respondents between the ages of 61 and above will not allow political parties to influence votes with favours and gifts. Similarly, a striking 82% of respondents from North East Nigeria claim that their votes will not be bought. To further examine the power of incentives on the results of votes, a total of 71% of respondents claim they will not be influenced into selling their votes for incentives. This simply tells us that incentives are not likely to heavily influence the outcome of votes in the 2023 elections. This outcome may be as a result of increased political consciousness amongst citizens. Conclusions on factors influencing results can be drawn from these quotes.

4.3.4 Drivers of Vote Buying

The survey found there are three categories of actors involved in vote buying activities during elections in Nigeria. They are: candidates, voters, and agents. This has often affected the choice of political party candidate selection. Identification of these three categories informed the considered solutions.

- **Economic issues:** Respondents confirm that vote-buying practices emerged from the economic potential of contestants. Also, the high rate of unemployment, insecurity, literacy level etc. were among reasons people identified to incentivize their votes.
- **High rate of poverty:** Vote buying exists largely because of the existence of wide-spread poverty
- **False sense of entitlement:** There is a false sense of entitlement among the electorate that monies shared during elections belong to the masses. This is often triggered by monetized party primaries.
- **Educational factors:** The study found that the lower the education of persons, the more vulnerable and tolerant they will be towards vote buying during general elections. Poor and uneducated people, especially the populated rural communities and villages, lack adequate information on the laws and policies guiding the electoral process.
- **Lack of trust in the electoral process:** Some respondents believed their votes would not count because of the perceived corruption in the electoral process and poor service delivery by elected leaders. Most respondents believe that elected leaders often do not act in the interest of the public.

Qualitative Quotes:

"I personally believe that the roles of the delegates during primary elections is detrimental to the general election because it is the choice of the delegates that the general public has to vote on whether the candidates are credible or not." **FGD Male Urban Delta State**

"To me, we don't have problems in this country despite our diverse ethnicity. The problem that we have is the delegates. They are selected amongst many to represent the electorates. The delegate that I know had knowledge of the candidate that the people wanted but because of the money that they were given, they chose whom they wanted. The masses back home decided that they will not vote. This happened close to where I reside. During that period, nobody came to the polling unit there, but a result was announced before p.m." **FGD Women Urban Delta State**

"This money issue is bringing out candidates that are not competent because he will use his money to buy the voice of the delegates and the delegate will present him to the people knowing well that he is not competent to give results and people because they are loyal to the party, they will just vote for the candidate". **FGD Male, Urban Kano State**

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

4.3.5 Effects of Vote Buying on Electorates

The study found a number of negative impacts of vote buying as cited by the respondents. The impacts of vote-buying are viewed from two lenses; before the elections and after the elections. All of these may influence the perceived credibility of the upcoming election, but perhaps the most important factor will be how freely and safely voters feel they can cast their votes for the candidates of their choice.

4.3.6 Effect of Vote Buying Before Elections Contest

- It was found that voters often do not reject money offered to them for votes because refusal to collect money from candidates and their delegates will be interpreted as being in opposition to their candidates. Those who received money and later went against the agreement often face security threats and proceeds are sometimes retrieved.
- It was also found that the vote-buying phenomena not only produces social tension in localities, but also triggers violence during and after the elections.
- Monetization of Party Primaries: In the qualitative interviews, respondents explained that the activities of party delegates during primaries puts a dent in the credibility of the process due to heavy monetization of the primaries. In other words, only a few opportune members of political parties are allowed to decide who the party presents as political candidates for the general elections. The result of primaries streamlines the choices of whom to vote for in the main election.
- Vote buying mitigates the idea of democracy, breeds a poor leadership structure, increases corruption, and promotes bad leadership. Money is needed by political parties and candidates for logistics during political campaigns and rallies, printing of posters and manifestoes, production of party emblems etc. The concern, however, is the noticeable corrupting influence of money and their negative impact on good governance in Nigeria.

4.3.7 Effect of Vote Buying After Election Contest

- It was found that elected leaders who engaged in vote-buying often tend to be corrupt and do not often make good leaders. Respondents opined that elections with a number of vote-buying cases tend to produce leaders that invest less in the basic sector of the economy.
- The study found that political parties that condone vote buying often experience an erosion of trust and respect and may have led to increased support for third and fourth forces in the lead up to the 2023 general election in Nigeria.
- Inaction or failure of the law enforcement agencies such as Police, ICPC, EFCC to act when vote buying occurs during elections have continued to have a damaging effect on the public perception of those agencies. Most citizens believe that every time an election was held, institutions such as Police, ICPC, EFCC and other security agencies witness vote buying in progress but refuse to act or arrest perpetrators.
- To some politicians, vote buying is a continual and strategic activity that must be done to win elections. Vote buying and vote selling has led to the emergence of leaders whom the electorate often do not have the power to question when campaign promises are not fulfilled.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Qualitative Quotes:

"if we cherish the narrative of voter education to the point that it will increase voter turnout I don't think any political party will have the resources to bribe everybody or to buy everybody that will go to cast their votes, and what we are beginning to see also is the resistance on the part of citizens and that is the part we should amplify. we saw in Anambra in 2021 that some women rejected money that was given to them by politicians; we saw that also in Ekiti that some of the citizens also rejected money, so I think it is working but is going to be gradual"
- KII with YIAGA

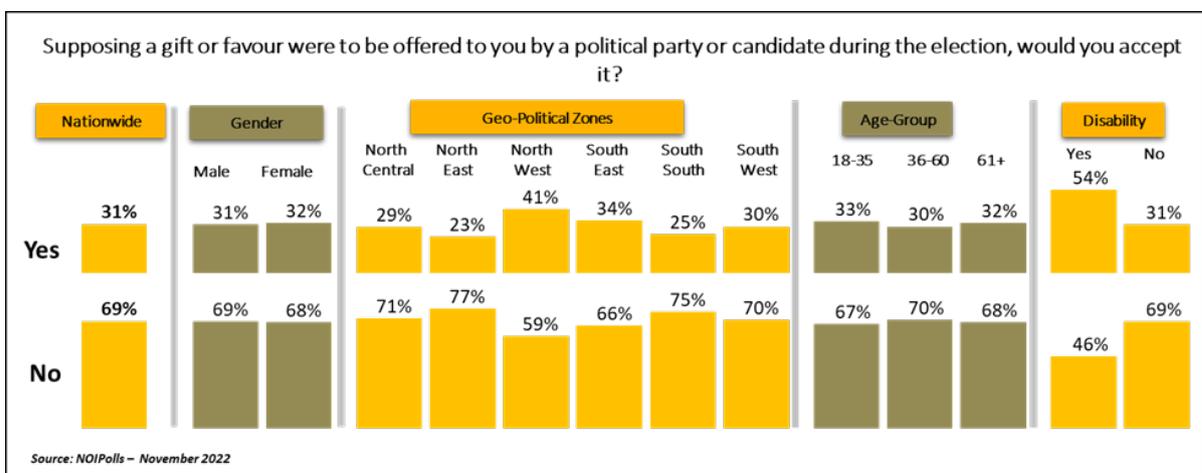
"Well, I think it is to also increase the awareness of the political process because the mistake we had done in the past is that we limit this engagement to election day, and most times we don't even see the choices of the candidates" **- KII with YIAGA**

"Another reason I feel people sell their votes is people have given up on the electoral system of Nigeria. Past leaders have all failed, we voted in good conscience with the hope that they will perform well. Since they are going there for their own interest, let me collect whatever they offer me because even if I do not collect the leader will still not perform well."
FGD Male, urban, Oyo State

"To me the reason why people sell their votes is in three phases: number one is people think even when they vote, the candidate of their choice will not win, they would rather make money with their votes; secondly, there's bribery and corruption in the electoral process. Finally loss of trust for the INEC officials." **FGD Male, urban, Kano State**

"People feel that their votes do not count when they vote. So, they just have the mind set that the person that will win regardless of the votes. They just want to collect what is on ground and move because they will still do what they will do" **- FGD Female, Rural Delta State**

Figure 5: Acceptance of gift or favour from a political candidate



4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Qualitative Quotes:

"I think this time around if we are going to be talking about the forthcoming election i don't think it is going to be like that because now people are out for if you like to give us money, we will eat your money and still vote for who we want to vote for i think that is my take." **FGD Female Rural Anambra State**

"With the new electoral law (if the rules are followed), it'd be found out that this 2023 election will be a different election from the previous ones. There are provisions that have made vote buying somewhat irrelevant. That is why you are seeing some political parties engaging in door-to-door (mosquito) campaigns because it will not be business as usual with this present law. So, I believe that 2023 will be slightly different and vote buying might not have too much effect on the result of the election - **FGD Males Urban Delta State**

"We do advocacy, we do social Media campaigns like recently we are holding a Twitter space on this same particular issue, so we get to call speakers non-partisan people like stakeholders who are democracy activists to speak on it." - **KII with CSJ**

"Strategically in our programs we are holding now, leading up to the election, in all our governance programs we emphasize these things, so the best method we are engaging in is via our town halls and outreaches" - **KII with CODE**

"Our first commitment is never to buy votes, and we are open to supporting realistic laws or goals of advocacy to stop vote buying" - **KII with AAC**

Rejection of Vote Buying

The quotes below show responses from women groups in Anambra who rejected monies offered to them for their votes.

"Vote buying starts from home, because we have canvassers, ... as I am speaking to you they are going round talking, visiting people, saying one or two things. Some even promise to build a houses for widow, which they know they will not complete it, but because they want to make a good impression." - **KII with Women Leader, Ebenebe New Face.**

"You know that we voted Soludo not because he gives money, Soludo didn't spend [on vote-buying]. Do you understand? Like the women of Ebenebe didn't collect money before voting Soludo, but because of his good character ... he promised us - we told him that it is not money that we want, that we want road, and honestly as I am talking to you now they have already started working on it." - **KII with Women Leader, Ebenebe New Face.**

"I can only tell them to vote wisely, because if you collect N20,000 you will spend it completely in a week. Whoever you collect money from will not do anything. Do you understand? And we use people like the Governor as an example, assuming we had sold our conscience by now maybe Soludo will not work on our road. " - **KII Women Leader, Ebenebe New Face.**

"In fact I can boast of somebody like Ferdinand Onwuzue, he is the one that is coming out for House of Assembly. At least he has been a former Chairman of Awka North and ... as he is coming out not for House of Representatives he is not spending and everybody will vote for him because of what he did when he was Chairman, when he was counsellor, do you understand? Even when somebody is doing this, and doing that, it doesn't impress our villages ... because Ferdinand has done such before coming to do campaign. In fact he doesn't even have a poster - **KII with Women Leader, Ebenebe New Face.**

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

4.4 Attitudes towards Issue-Based Campaigning

4.4.1 Understanding of Issue-Based Campaigns

The qualitative interviews showed that most stakeholders had a good understanding of issue-based campaigns. In their general opinion, issue-based campaigns mean that candidates for political office in Nigeria should show how informed they are about the issues facing the country and how they intend to address them if elected.

Interviews with key officials of political parties showed there is an understanding of what is expected of the party and their political candidates in terms of issue-based campaigns. However, the politics of religion and ethnicity are considered issues to be discussed during campaigns by some party stakeholders. In addition, issues relating to integrity of candidates, backed with evidence, can qualify as an issue-based campaign.

Findings from the focus group discussion indicated that participants had different levels of understanding of the meaning of issue-based campaign. Some participants were of the opinion that when political candidates attack each other based on negative characteristic can be considered issue-based campaigning. Those participants who had a fair understanding of issue-based campaigns focused on politicians stating the issues they want to address. It is also necessary to probe further to know how candidates will proffer solutions to identified issues.

Qualitative Quotes:

'... most people know that the presidential candidate should give knowledge and understanding of the current challenges that is facing Nigeria and clearly set and discuss how they will tackle them if elected...' **KII with NNPP**

"... is staying on what your messages are, your manifesto, devoid from issues of hate speech, devoid from name-calling and name swindling... stay on the issue let people get your message or what you will do when you get into power, how you will ensure to bring about development how you will ensure to cater for the welfare of citizens those are the issues that should preoccupy a campaign" **KII with TMG**

"Well just like I said, issue is issue, so we can go away from it, issues are those elements in the political, economic, social, security and all that environment that impact the citizenry, so politicians are expected, or people seeking to occupy office are expected to talk to those issues in terms of understanding the challenges and the solutions that can be applied..." **KII with APC**

"The reality is that whatever it is that is distracting us from an issue is an issue so whether it is ethnicity, whether it's religion, whether it's a sense of we versus them it's an issue, everywhere in the world identity politics is happening, religious politics is happening " **KII with PDP**

"Well it means the campaign relating to issue.....and it should not be misunderstood to mean that because it's issue-based campaign that the person is limited to some issues, for instance on the issue-based campaign anytime you talk on the character of a particular candidate and you say let's go back to issue-based campaign, if a candidate is crooked and doesn't have integrity, and another candidate talks about.... that's issue-based campaign as long as they have evidence to show" **KII with AAC**

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

“Issue-based campaign from my own understanding is campaign based on the need of the people, on what can transform our society rather than insulting the other party and all those dramas they perform, for example, mentioning health, roads, education etc.” FGD Female, Urban Oyo State

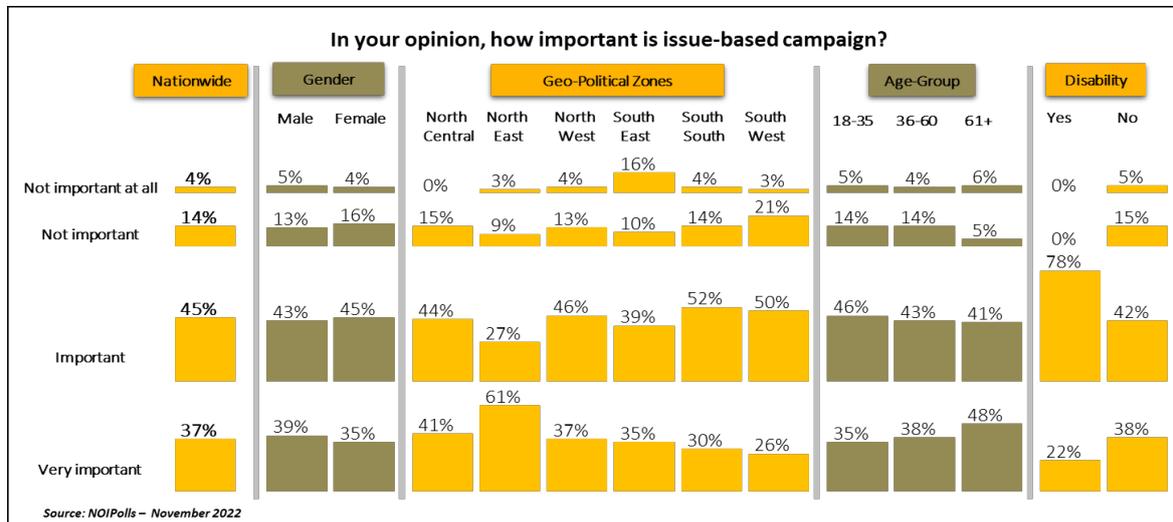
“To me it’s all fake promises that the Politicians make and end up not fulfill them instead things gets worse.” FGD Male, Urban Kano State

“It can be seen when parties dig out negative things about each other in the quest to bring themselves down.” FGD Female, Urban Delta State

4.4.2 Voter Attitudes towards Issue Based Campaigning

The general public was asked a series of questions to examine how important issue based campaigns are to voters, voter assessment of on-going political campaigns, burning issues for voters during political campaigns and how election campaigns can be issue based. Questions were asked using qualitative and quantitative interviews. The study shows that 82% of Nigerians think issue-based campaigns are important and should be given the most attention during campaigns.

Figure 7: Opinions on importance of Issue-based campaigns



Findings from the qualitative interviews shows voters want politicians to inform them as to what they want to achieve when they are elected into political office. Participants also opined that if an elected politician “promised and failed” there would be no importance in advocating for issue-based campaigning. Participants affirmed that issue-based campaigns would enable voters to hold elected political officers accountable for their campaign promises.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Qualitative Quotes:

"I feel the issue based is very important because you should be able to tell Nigerian what you are going to do for them what you have to offer when you become the president of Nigeria." **FGD Male, Urban, Anambra State**

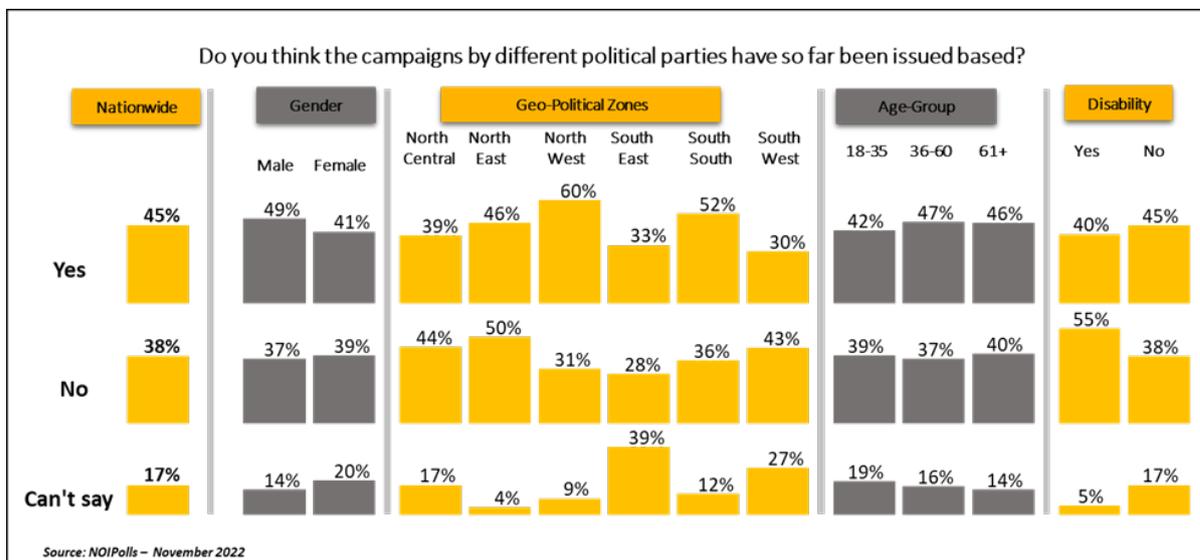
"Yes the voters want it provided that the candidate will do what he says but if on a contrary he will end up not doing all his promises then i see no importance in carrying out the issue-based campaigning." **FGD Male, Rural, Kano State**

"Our elections should be about what you will offer us, what do you want to do?." **FGD Male, Urban, Oyo State**

4.4.3 Public Perception of 2023 Elections Campaigns

Campaigns by various political parties in the run up to the 2023 general elections at the time of this survey were observed to have been issue-based by 45% of the general public interviewed. However, 38% of respondents were of the opinion that the campaigns had not been issue-based. The North East region has the highest percentage of respondents who believe the campaigns have so far not been issue-based. Survey findings further show a significant percentage (17%) of respondents indifferent on whether the political campaigns have been issue-based or not. Data further indicates that the South East has the highest percentage (39%) of respondents who remained indifferent on the subject.

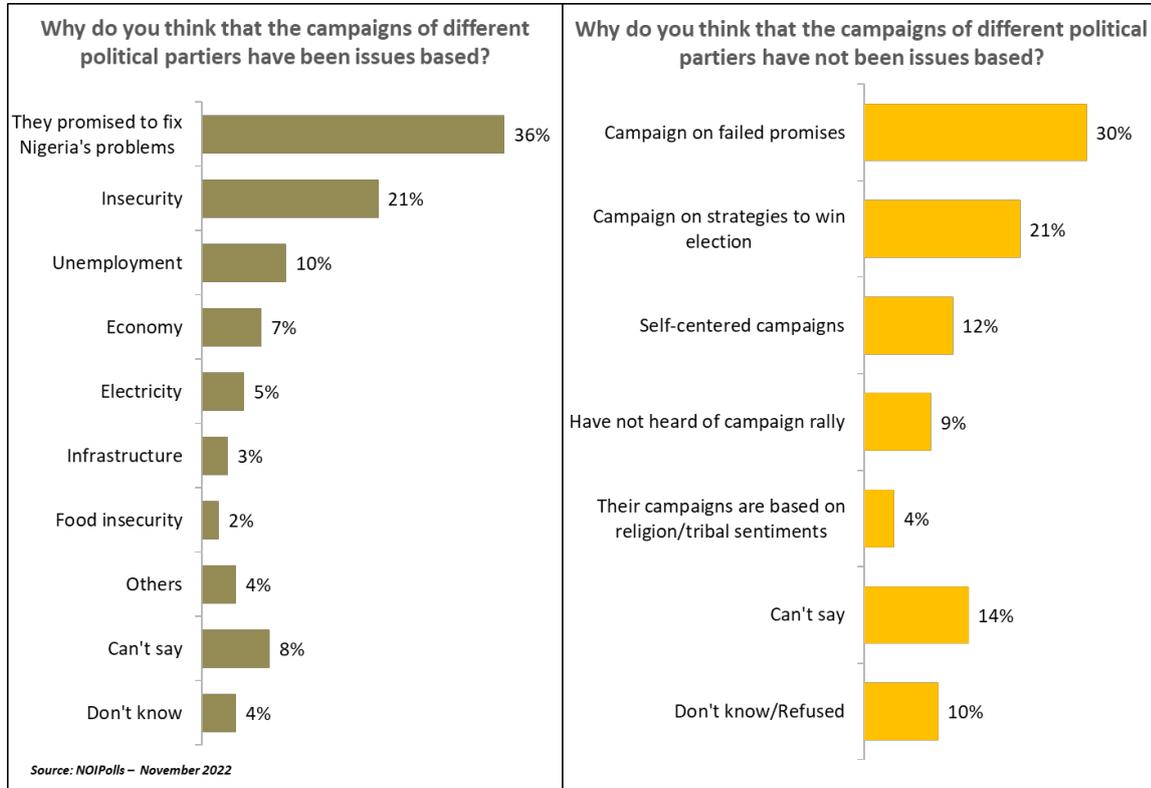
Figure 8: Opinions on election campaigns been issue based



Furthermore, respondents were asked to state reasons for their opinions. For those respondents who affirmed that the on-going political campaigns were issue-based, a majority of respondents (38%) believed campaigns were issue-based because candidates promised to fix Nigeria's problems. This opinion indicates that most respondents (who said yes) do not have a clear understanding of issue-based campaigning. On the other hand, respondents who believed the campaigns were not issued-based (30%) believed campaigns are based on failed promises.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

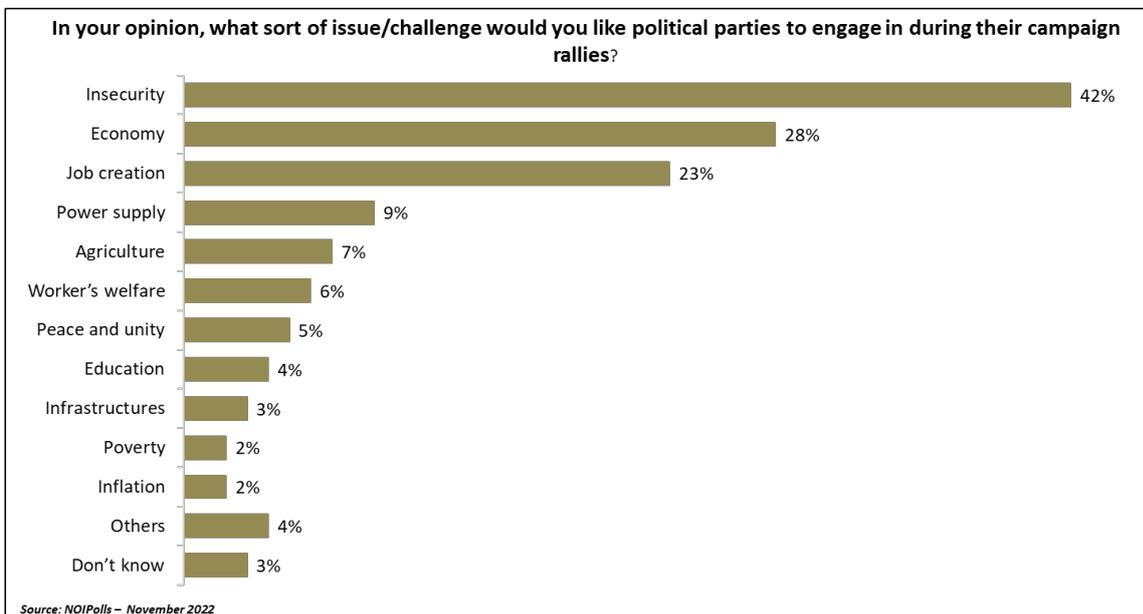
Figure 9: Reasons why Campaigns have been Issue-based or why campaigns have not been issue-based



4.4.4 Hierarchy of Issues

The study found that political parties and their candidates in the 2023 election should focus on explaining how they would address key national issues that affect the public. Issues mentioned included: Insecurity (42%), "the economy" (28%), "job creation" (23%), "power supply" (9%) and "agriculture" (7%) etc.

Figure 9: Opinions on issues/challenges political candidates should engage in during rallies



Others: Fixing bad health system, Corruption, Bad governance, Fulfilling campaign promises

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

4.4.5 Political Parties Attitudes towards Issue-Based Campaigning

Political parties stated their actions to promote issue-based campaigning during qualitative interviews, offering publication of party manifestos and their encouragement for party candidates to focus on governance issues in line with the party manifesto. Engaging the opposition party's candidates in debates was a plan mentioned by a political party stakeholder to drive issue-based campaigning. Another strategy claimed by a political party is to develop a paradigm political philosophy that would distinguish the party's approach to governance from other political parties. The party's candidate would campaign based on the party's ideology on governance issues. In addition, some parties expressed that their campaigns are focused on only issues their candidate can accomplish when elected into office. Their candidates can be held accountable for promises made during election campaigns.

Qualitative Quotes:

"We are the only party with a clear manifesto. We are the ones that have been talking about unifying the country, security, education, we are talking about restructuring and issues that we will handle when we get to government, so our party is basically issue-based in their campaign or in this campaign" **KII with PDP**

"We encourage all of our candidates to focus on issue-based campaigning and to look at what progressive governance is, and on the platform of that amplified and articulated what program governance is all about, we are trying as much as possible to build a paradigm political philosophy in the space, and overtime there will be that differentiation so that at the end people will be able to tell the difference between the APC and other political parties" **KII with APC**

"Well we make our documents more public, and our activities more public so that there will be inclusiveness and understanding by the public of what we intend to do." **KII with Labour Party**

"We understand that all the promises that our candidate states, he will make sure he will be able to implement them" **KII with NNPP**

"Civic awareness is what we are doing at Radio and Television, and of course info graphics we share photos in social media, and we are supporting town hall debate or conversations with candidates". **KII with PLAC**

4.4.6 Factors Affecting Issue-Based Campaigns

Qualitative interviews with stakeholders asked questions to understand what inducements would prevent an issue-based campaign in the coming election. Survey findings revealed ethnic and identity politics, religion, geopolitical zoning of candidates, tribalism and corruption as factors that could prevent issue-based campaigns.

The level of education of the electorate was identified as a contributing factor to voters being distracted with the aforementioned sentiments. Political campaigns are not adequately interrogated by the general public during elections campaign. Political party candidates do not receive stringent demands from the electorate regarding their solutions to governance issues in the country. This gap allows opportunities for political parties to explore the religious, ethnic and identity politics during election campaigns. The electorate would not be able to hold elected political officers accountable because their campaigns do not identify governance issues they are committed to solve. Furthermore, the 2022 electoral act makes provision for penalties for offences relating to campaigning or broadcasting based on religious, tribal, or sectional reason.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Political parties and their candidates were believed by some stakeholders to use propaganda to amplify fault lines among the citizenry. This approach is intended to distract the public from focusing on governance issues during campaigns. The focus on political sentiments such as ethnic and identity politics, religion, geopolitical zoning of candidates and tribalism, in addition to the level of civic awareness and engagement by the public contributes to the level of civic consciousness political actors exhibit when engaging with the public.

Qualitative Quotes:

*"There are a lot of things, ethnic politics distracts, and then influence of religion when people vote, then violence and trace of violence they distract from issue-based campaign, and then of course propaganda they just want to hoodwink the citizens and then amplified the fault lines and all of that, so this are things that appears what should be the issues, yeah propaganda, half-truths by political parties ,and we have to accept that these things are engineered by political parties not people by the side or citizens, it's political parties that engineered people by the side to cause this noise, distract citizens from the real issues because they know that is not areas of their strength or what they are committed to doing so they whip up this sentiment across the people and pollute the space" **KII with CODE***

*"We already have religion, and ethnicity, geopolitical zoning of candidates, you know whether at the State level or federal level..." **KII with PLAC***

*"so I see it that the factors inhibiting issue-based politics in Nigeria today is education and civic awareness, when we have great education and civic awareness people with transient identities and those distractions to focus on ok what will you do for me what will you do for us when you become president or governor or local government chairman" **KII with PDP***

*"Insecurity, extreme poverty, institutional skill public services and corruption and fragile unity all this things can distract they can bring about the distraction which we are already into it now" **KII with NNPP***

4.4.7 Political Accountability and Issue-Based Campaigning

Political campaigns in Nigeria are not centred on solving governance issues affecting the electorate. Politicians take advantage of the ill-informed electorate by practicing hate speech instead of offering issue-based campaigns. The few instances in which political campaigns mentioned issues that affect the country, feature simplified statements such as "I will provide electricity" without stating coherently how the problem will be solved. Some political party stakeholders interviewed claim their party manifestos and political candidates are focused on delivering issue-based campaign. In reality manifestos may have identified the issues but not all of them detail how the issues would be addressed. Although the electorate has indicated issue-based campaigning to be important to them, the electorate requires political pundits to adequately interrogate political candidate's campaign manifestos. This would provide much-needed information for civic awareness and engagement.

Further findings from the qualitative interviews showed that political accountability could be achieved through political candidate public declarations of income during election campaigns. There should be civic activism not only during election campaigns but also after elections. This could drive political accountability. INEC should make arrests of offenders of election campaign laws. The study found that civil society organisations support issue-based politics by using television and radio platforms to spread civic awareness about issue-based politics.

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

This approach would provide opportunities for the electorate to acquire the knowledge that is absent. Issue-based campaigns should lead to issue-based voting and the electorate should hold political candidates accountable for their campaign statements by voting based on fulfilled promises.

Qualitative Quotes:

“Public declaration of your account income and expenditures publicly for people to scrutinized and see, that open up the system and make people to believe you’re accountable to them “ KII with Labour Party

“Civic activism, the public is so interested in elections and then not interested in governance I find that strange, everybody is talking about election and candidates but nobody discusses governance, once the elections are over there is absolutely no discussion about what the people are doing, so I think is civic engagement “ KII with PDP

“I think the biggest issue we have is the inability to make arrests, in a lot of places making laws goes side by side with enforcement “ KII with PLAC

4.5 Factors Responsible For Increased Political Apathy in Nigeria

The participation of voters in elections is highly dependent on their trust in the credibility and capacity of the election management body. As the agency responsible for conducting elections in Nigeria, INEC must be seen as efficient and capable by the public. The success of INEC in conducting credible elections hinges on the level of trust voters have in its ability to curb electoral malpractices. If this trust is lost, INEC’s role is nullified.

According to survey results, 39% of respondents lack confidence in INEC’s capacity to ensure successful electoral processes. This lack of confidence is influenced by the high levels of insecurity that affect the voting process, as well as the recurring poor performance of elected officials. Survey results also show that 24% of respondents attribute political apathy to recurring cases of thuggery, while 14% blame unfulfilled campaign promises.

Dwindling trust in the electoral and political process increases lack of interest in all political activities in the country, a phenomenon that must be discouraged. 11% of respondents were of the opinion that the main reason for low turn-out during elections results from a lack of interest in politics.

Figure 8: Reasons for low voter turnout

In your opinion, what do you think is the main reason for low voters’ turnout in your State during elections?

	Total	Gender		Geo-Political Zones						Age-Group			Disability	
		Male	Female	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	18-35	36-60	61+	Yes	No
Lack of trust in the election system/INEC	39%	38%	37%	40%	29%	32%	34%	46%	48%	40%	37%	37%	40%	38%
Fear of thuggery	24%	24%	24%	23%	15%	23%	35%	24%	26%	25%	24%	26%	18%	24%
Serial unfulfilled campaign promises	14%	16%	12%	16%	38%	8%	14%	14%	4%	12%	16%	13%	26%	14%
Lack of interest in politics	11%	11%	12%	11%	8%	14%	8%	9%	15%	11%	12%	8%	8%	12%
Stress	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	1%	4%	1%	3%	2%	0%	4%	2%
Others	2%	4%	5%	0%	1%	14%	2%	0%	1%	4%	4%	7%	4%	4%
Don't know/Refused	6%	4%	8%	6%	6%	7%	6%	3%	5%	5%	5%	9%	0%	6%

4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

The issues reiterated in the quotes below include; lack of trust in the election system/INEC, fear of thuggery and serial unfulfilled campaign promises.

Qualitative Quotes:

"The challenges that result in the low turnout of people is because people feel their votes will not count like Kano election that was declared inconclusive". FGD Male, Urban, Kano State

"I had an experience back then in my state. We went to vote and their Thugs came with guns. Before we got to where to cast our vote, they were telling us the party that they wanted us to vote for. Most of us decided to go back home as a result." FGD Female, Urban, Delta State

"The youths already have the mind set that their votes don't count. And some of our candidates and leaders can tell you pop and plain that they don't need your votes to win; they will say that they will still win with or without you. They have made the youths to believe that their votes don't count. But by the special grace of God and the laws that have been made, the votes will count come 2023 election." FGD Male Urban, Delta State

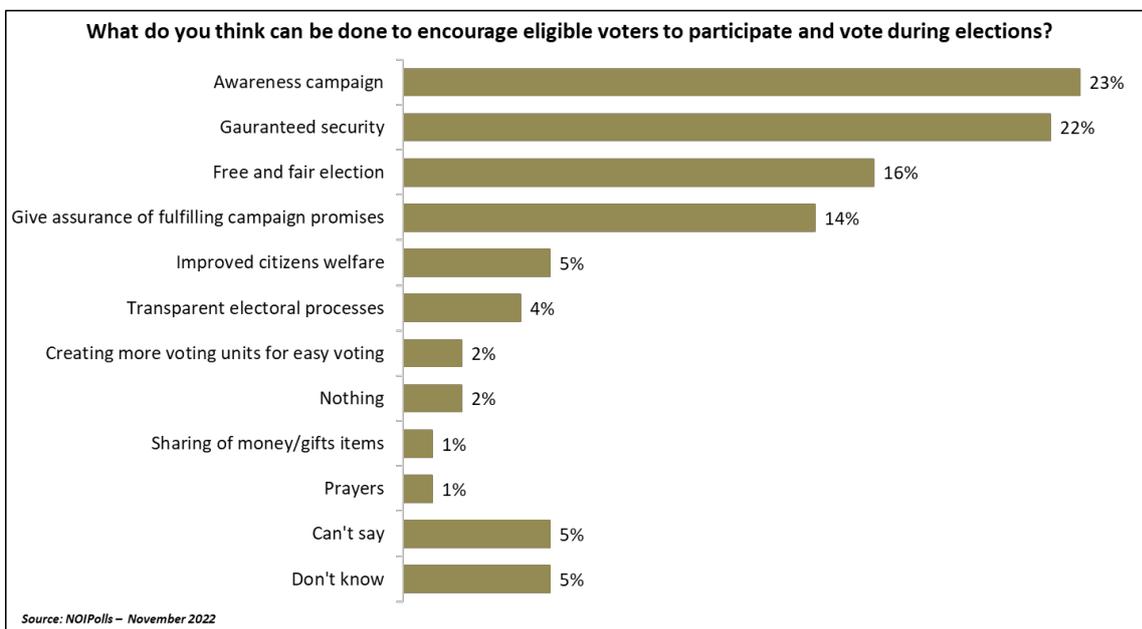
"We have incidences where people want to come out and vote and some people will come and tell you that they said people that are going to come out to vote will be killed. How will you go when you know that the country, we are living in has no security? If someone tells you that if you come out for this election, they are going to kill people and you are sure that the country has these insecurity challenges you will lose your confidence to go and vote." FGD Female Rural, Anambra State

"The person they want to vote for might not deliver on their electoral promises, so why bother." FGD Female Rural, Oyo State

4.5.1 Improving Voter Turnout during Elections

With regard to what can be done to encourage voter turnout, the survey showed that the top four suggestions were: awareness campaign at 23%, guaranteed security at 22%, free & fair elections at 16%, and giving assurance of fulfilling campaign promises at 14%.

Figure 9: Opinions for improving voter turnout



4.0 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS Cont'd

Participants from qualitative interviews suggested the need for greater awareness of stakeholders regarding the importance of citizen participation in the electoral process. Elections must be seen by voters as free and fair, the voting steps should be simplified and stress free. In the area of security, the study found that provision of adequate security during elections would enable voters to come out freely. In addition, there were suggestions regarding the need for media election literacy campaigns to encourage people to come out and exercise their civic right. On the part of political parties, respondents have identified violence during political campaigns as a deterrent for people to vote. In the bid to improve voter turnout during elections, political parties were said to have been working to ensure violence free campaigns.

Qualitative Quotes:

"What will make more people get interested is when there is more awareness of the importance of participating in the election and secondly if there's a free and fair election. If this is done in subsequent elections, it will give the people confidence to go out and vote."

FGD Male, Urban, Kano State

"Aside from the security issues, INEC should do their homework well. They should bring out all the necessary materials needed to have a very successful election. They should make them available on time to avoid wasting people's time or making voters go back home without voting."

FGD Female, Urban, Delta State

"Yes. And another thing is the process of voting. If people know that it's going to be transparent. One thing that will make people not to come out is after all they will not count my vote even if they vote but with this new electoral voting, people will come out."

FGD Female, Urban, Anambra State

"Sensitization, let people know that their vote counts they will be interested and if they don't vote they would not get a good result."

FGD Male, Urban, Oyo State

"I feel they should make the system not too difficult, in the sense that on the day of election, people go through stressful processes, accreditation etc. it should be simplified and stress free, people will come out willingly to vote."

FGD Male, Urban, Oyo State

"We are beginning to build voters confidence towards the 2023 elections, build confidence for INEC which is important through voters sensitization and awareness campaigns..."

KII with TMG

"Well, overtime I can say for sure that the major challenge for people coming out is violence. When violence occurs during campaigns, it has impact on the motivation to come out for voting on Election Day, but we are seeing a more peaceful campaign period now compared to what we use to have in the past. Secondly, we are trying as much as possible as a party to be focus on issues."

KII with APC

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

REFORMING AND ENFORCING POLITICAL FINANCING LAWS

The 2022 Electoral Act was an improvement to Nigeria's electoral process, but it still has loopholes in political financing, particularly in distinguishing between political parties and individuals or hands behind the scenes. Furthermore, political financing laws are not strictly enforced, and penalties for breaching them are not severe enough to deter political parties from non-compliance.

For the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):

- Implement more transparent, accountable, and accessible campaign finance monitoring, tracking, and reporting mechanisms in line with international best practices.
- Create a central database that tracks all political donations and expenditures made by political parties and their candidates, which is accessible to the public. Parties and candidates should be required to regularly update their contributions and expenditure reports.
- Monitor, investigate, and enforce compliance with the electoral laws, including the political financing regulations.
- Impose stricter penalties for non-compliance, including de-registration of political parties, fines, and sanctions on individuals involved in electoral malpractice, particularly political financing violations.

For Political Parties:

- Establish internal controls to ensure transparency, accountability, and proper management of political donations and expenditures.
- Submit financial reports regularly and in a timely manner, detailing their donations and expenditures.
- Consider more contributions in kind to minimize spending on campaign financing and reduce the incentive to engage in corrupt practices.

For the Government:

- Increase funding for INEC to enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- Regulate the prices of nomination forms and reduce the cost of running for office, which would reduce the incentive to engage in corrupt practices.
- Review the Electoral Act to include clear guidelines and regulations on third-party spending in line with international best practices.
- Establish an Electoral Offence Commission to investigate, prosecute, and punish electoral offenders in political financing, vote buying, etc.

For the Civil Society Organizations:

- Collaborate with INEC to monitor political financing activities and report violations to the appropriate authorities.
- Engage in sustained public sensitization on the dangers of political financing violations and advocate for the implementation of transparent, accountable and accessible campaign finance monitoring, tracking and reporting mechanisms.
- Establish an Electoral Offences Watch to monitor political financing violations and report them to the relevant authorities.

For the Media:

- Play a more active role in investigating and reporting on political financing violations, in addition to just reporting on campaign activities.
- Report the source of funding for political advertisements to promote transparency and accountability.
- Provide in-depth analysis and scrutiny of campaign financing reports submitted by political parties and their candidates.
- Collaborate with CSOs and INEC to monitor campaign financing activities and report violations to the appropriate authorities.
- Conduct regular public education campaigns on political financing regulations, including highlighting the negative consequences of violations for the democratic process.

COMBATING VOTE BUYING AND OTHER FORMS OF CLIENTELISM

For Civil Society Organizations:

- Conduct targeted public sensitization on the negative effects of vote buying and clientelism on the democratic process, and educate the public on the importance of issue-based voting.
- Partner with INEC to promote voter education programs that encourage voters to reject vote buying and other forms of clientelism.
- Amplify the stories of voters who resist money from political party agents during elections as part of the narrative during voter education to curb vote selling.
- Educate voters on the requirement of ballot secrecy in voting, and inform them that secrecy in voting protects them from persecution, intimidation and helps to curb vote buying.

For the General Public, Especially the Youth:

- Take up the responsibility by declaring a war against vote buying behaviour in villages, communities, and towns in Nigeria.
- Increase awareness of the political process amongst the electorate, especially those in the rural areas.
- Use social media and other platforms to encourage youths to participate in the political process and provide them with a voice in the political process.

For Law Enforcement Agencies:

- Monitor the activities of political parties and their candidates, especially during party primaries, to detect and prevent buying of delegates.
- Partner with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to monitor the pyramid of cash flow from banks to individuals, especially in the weeks leading to the primaries or general elections.
- Investigate, prosecute and punish electoral offenders involved in vote buying and other forms of clientelism.

For the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):

- Ensure that polling units are set up to support secret ballot voting, which will help protect the confidentiality of the voter's choice.
- Incorporate content in voter education programs that sensitize voters on the negative impact of vote buying and other forms of clientelism on democratic processes and the consequences of accepting bribes.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS Cont'd

For Political Parties:

- Focus on issue-based campaigning rather than patronage-based campaigning to address the culture of clientelism.
- Make primary elections more open and prohibit the use of illicit funds during campaigns.
- Reduce the cost of running for office, which would reduce the incentive to engage in corrupt practices.

For the Nigerian Government:

- Develop and implement policies and programs to promote education and poverty reduction to reduce the vulnerability of citizens to patronage-based politics.
- Regulate the prices of nomination forms and reduce the cost of running for office, which would reduce the incentive to engage in corrupt practices.
- Establish an Electoral Offence Commission to investigate, prosecute, and punish electoral offenders in vote buying and other forms of clientelism

ADDRESSING ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL APATHY

For the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):

- Collaborate with civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to create voter education and civic engagement programs to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities as voters.
- Establish year-round voter registration and education centres in communities, especially in rural areas, to increase access to voter education and registration.
- Collaborate with the media to promote public awareness and civic education to inform the public about the electoral process and their role in it.
- Work to build trust with the public by implementing transparent and accountable electoral processes, including by making sure that electoral results are promptly published, and that anomalies are addressed and corrected through an open and fair process.

For Political Parties:

- Engage in issue-based campaigning, which will focus on policy discussions, rather than ethno-religious sentiments. This will attract more voters who are interested in issues and policy-based politics.
- Encourage and incentivize youth and women's political participation by creating opportunities for them to take up leadership positions and engage them in the political process.
- Work towards internal party democracy, ensuring that party members have a say in candidate selection processes and policy-making.
- Desist from the use of thugs and other violent actors to disrupt the electoral process.
- Build trust with the electorate by fulfilling campaign promises and delivering on their commitments to the people.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS Cont'd

For the Government:

- Increase funding for security agencies to provide adequate security during elections and ensure the safety of voters.
- Fulfill obligation to the people by delivering on promises and creating an environment that promotes trust and confidence in the electoral process.
- Provide adequate funding for INEC to carry out voter education and civic engagement programs in communities, especially in rural areas.
- Increase the representation of youths and women in politics by adopting affirmative action policies and supporting their political aspirations.
- Establish policies to promote a free and independent media to contribute to civic education and awareness.

For Civil Society Organizations:

- Engage in voter education and civic engagement programs to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities as voters.
- Collaborate with INEC to increase access to voter registration and education centers in communities, especially in rural areas.
- Promote youth and women's political participation.

For the Media:

- Promoting public awareness and civic education to inform the public about the electoral process and their role in it.
- Increase coverage to issue-based campaigning and policy discussions to encourage voters' interest in policy-based politics.

For Educational Institutions:

- Include civic education in their curriculum to teach students about their rights and responsibilities as citizens and voters.
- Create platforms for political engagement to encourage students to participate in the political process and be active citizens.
- Engage in voter education programs and civic engagement activities to promote political awareness and participation among their students.

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Community Life Project
EMPOWERING THE GRASSROOTS



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2. Africa Centre for Media & Information Literacy (AFRICMIL)
3. Arewa Research & Development Project (ARDP)
4. Social Development Integrated Centre (Social Action)
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