FUW-IJMSS
ISSN: 2635-3539 (Print)
2384-6224 (online)
Open Access
Google Scholar

EVALUATION OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA: A STUDY OF INSTITUTIONS, VOTING, AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Udeoba, Catherine Ekenma, Ifeoma Priscilla Udegbunam[2], Dr. Chidi E. Nwokike[3] & Nwosu, Ifeoma Chidimma[4]

[1]Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.[2]Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra state Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences. [3]Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam Campus- Anambra State-Nigeria Department of Public Administration & [4]Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra state, Department of Public Administration Faculty of Management Sciences.
[1]ce.udeoba@unizik.edu.ng, [2]pi.udegbunam@unizik.edu.ng[3]nwokikechidi@gmail.com ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3991-3379; & [4]ic.nwosu@unizik.edu.ng 0009-0008-7553-4441

Abstract:
This study carried out a comparative analysis of the electoral system in Nigeria and South Africa and related it with the goal to offer knowledge that will be useful in informing democracy and democratic governance. It applied a qualitative case study approach to synthesise expert views, draw from extant literature, unravel official documents and analyse press releases to examine the electoral process in both countries. The electoral history of Nigeria is beset with frequent political unrest, military interventions and the malpractices that follow in the wake of the electoral process. In particular, Nigerians continue to raise questions about the independence of the electoral management body in Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which has come under scrutiny without fail since it was formally set up in 1999 by successive administrations. Yet, in recent times, the use of technology in the electoral process has provided respite, even as little has been done to curb the heavy handedness of extra-partisan politicking on the streets. By contrast, though the electoral system in post-apartheid South Africa administered by the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) is not without its own challenges, it stands out for its relative efficiency and transparency. This is owing, in part, to the model of democratic governance that has bolstered or sustained electoral integrity in South Africa. This benchmark is cited as having boosted the nation's democratic power. At the same time, Nigeria, on the back of strides it has made in recent times, continues to grapple with the series of destabilising issues that have impinged on its democratic credentials. And so, while both nations continue to straddle the tightrope that props up electoral integrity – a touchstone of democracy – the study's main findings underscored the fact that there are lessons in how to sustain democratic governance by having in place, a strong, transparent and accountable electoral system. These lessons could also provide pointers to possible reforms for enhancing electoral integrity in both countries. Several recommendations upheld the need for improved, even superior, transparency and accountability

in the electoral process. For Nigeria, the key issues were making INEC more independent and curbing electoral fraud. Meanwhile, the main challenge for South Africa was curbing electoral apathy through the sustained use of civic education to improve participation, especially among the young people. Overall, the study successfully wove the relevant institutions, the electoral mechanism and, above all, the democratic process together and connected them to electoral integrity.

Keywords: Electoral System, Institutions, Voting Mechanisms, Democratic Governance

Introduction

Elections are the cornerstone of any democratic form of government, for it is through elections that the people exercise their sovereign will in choosing representatives to speak for them and manage their affairs (Nwokike, Ezeneme Okafor, 2023; Haxhiu, Alidemaj, 2021). In many African countries, the election process has been problematic, and this is a result of the interplay between historical legacies, institutional structures, and socio-political dynamics (Siegle Cook, 2024). Nigeria and South Africa, the two most populous and economically powerful African countries, provide interesting testing grounds to study the development and operations of electoral systems. They are both nations who have shared a similar destiny of colonial pasts, fights for independence, and later attempts to build a democratic government. However, their electoral systems and democratic practices are very different due to unique political cultures, institutional structures, and socio-economic environments.

They are both countries which have walked a similar path of the colonial past, fought for their freedom and tried to then build democratic statehood. Nonetheless, they each have very different electoral systems and democratic practices as a result of their own political cultures, institutional possibilities and socio-economic voter environments. The journey to the path of stable democratic polity in Nigeria has been accompanied by military interventions and civilian regimes smackdowns (Ohazuruike & Mbanusi Ubiebi, 2020; Haroon Suleiman Date: May 21th, 2024). The credibility of the entire electoral process has been under threat typically by vote rigging, ballot snatching, and disregard for the rule which have led to free-for-all activities during elections (Peter Inokoba 2023). There has been a massive amount of progress, especially since the end of military rule in 1999, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been a key part of it. On the other hand, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has shown an intermittent electoral success (Ibewuike, 2023). South Africa's history of electioneering could scarcely be more distant, a struggle for an end to apartheid and majority rule. The dismantling of apartheid and the move to democracy in 1994 proved to be a watershed moment, as the first multiracial elections ushered in an end to racial segregation and the dawn of representative democracy (Ntshangase Imray, 2024).

A look at the triumphs and tribulations of Nigeria and South Africa can provide valuable understanding into the overall struggle for democratic rule in Africa. This work not only emphasises the centrality of robust election systems and practices but also demonstrates the continued necessity of innovation and reform in order to meet the challenges that may arise. From studying the cases of these two countries, policy makers, scholars, and practitioners can hopefully learn and thus better appreciate the intricacies of election processes, ultimately working to further the cause of democracy throughout the continent.

Research Method

This research, however, took a qualitative route in order to give a more in-depth analysis of the electoral systems in Nigeria and South Africa. The research utilized literature reviews, document analysis, and content analysis of press releases, in order to determine and explain the salient issues emerging from the electoral processes in both Nigeria and South Africa. This strategy enabled us to develop a deeper understanding of the processes and patterns involved in these systems, and the specific dynamics and crises of electoral politics in Nigeria and South Africa.

Review of Literature

Electoral System

According to Ortona (2017), the electoral system is the set of rules and procedures that structure the process of electing a representative body from the preferences of voters. This is a structure that describes how the votes are cast, how they are counted, and how they are in turn, converted into seats for representatives. This includes the type of ballot, the way votes are translated into seats (proportional representation, first-past-the-post, etc), district magnitude, the shape and structure of electoral districts, and the legal and regulatory framework for free and fair elections. An electoral system and how it is designed and employed plays a significant role in what type of political representation occurs and how a democracy functions, because it ultimately decides how well the electorate's wishes are represented by the elected. The rules and laws, of course, that govern the election, and the way in which the votes of the people are tallied in order to elect the winner are all important factors in any election. These rules and laws are the basis for the whole election process, guaranteeing fairness, openness, and honesty (Mash, 2017). These rules cover everything from voter qualifications to the actual casting and tallying of ballots to the procedures for addressing disputes and irregularities. And then there's the whole tallying of votes to see who wins that. Electoral systems all work to translate individual votes into seats or offices, but employ different techniques. Such as in a plurality or first-past-the-post system, where whoever gets the most votes in a single member district wins. Proportional Representation systems on the other hand, give out seats according to the percentage of votes each party gets, trying to more accurately represent the general population's support. These factors influence not only the outcomes of elections but also the behavior of candidates, political parties, and voters. Clear, well-defined electoral laws and transparent vote aggregation methods help build public trust in the electoral process, encourage voter participation, and ensure that election results are accepted as legitimate.

Ware (2015) stated that an electoral system is a detailed set of rules that regulates the conduct of elections. This system is analyzed through three primary components. The first is the ballot structure, which determines how votes are cast and what the vote represents. It includes aspects such as the design of the ballot paper and the voting methods used, whether voters select individual candidates or party lists. The second component is the constituency structure, which involves the organization of the electorate into geographically defined constituencies. The way this is structured is by single member constituencies (each area elects a single representative) or multi member constituencies (each area elects multiple representatives. Lastly, the electoral formula is the mathematical way in which votes are transformed into seats in an assembly. This includes everything from simple plurality systems (where whoever gets the most votes wins) to proportional representation systems (where the number of seats that each party gets is proportional to the number of votes they receive), to mixed electoral systems that combine elements of both. Combined they make up the essence of electoral representation and the democratic process in general.

Democratic Governance

The UN Mission in Timor-Leste (2024) stressed that democratic Governance is a key factor in building a stable democracy. This sustainability is based on several things that create a strong democratic structure. At the heart of this is the lasting ability for separation of powers and independence of branches of government. So that each branch of government (executive, legislative, and judiciary) performs its functions without improper interference from the other branches, the system of checks and balances is maintained. Democratic governance is a cornerstone of a functioning democracy, as it ensures that all members of society have a meaningful role in shaping decisions that affect their lives. It's not even just the right to vote, but the ideas of transparency and accountability throughout public institutions and private business (Center for International Private Enterprise, 2024). When governance processes are open and participatory, they better address the needs and concerns of both citizens and businesses. This leads to the formulation of policies that are not only more effective but also more equitable, as they reflect a diverse range of perspectives and interests.

According to International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2021), democratic governance means to govern well today and, at the same time, to continuously construct the rules of a democracy in motion, in line with the emerging and future demands of society. It expresses the ability to adapt to new realities (such as the one emerging with the pandemic) that arise from an increasingly demanding and participatory society. Democratic governance refers to a dynamic process where institutions and leaders not only address current needs effectively but also anticipate and incorporate the expectations of all citizens. This required a dynamic and adaptive policy and governing process that could keep the democratic structures and practices a vibrant, viable force in the midst of social, economic and technological change. An example of this would be the COVID-19 pandemic, where the world's governments had to quickly adjust to unparalleled problems, trying to weigh the issues of public health, economic stability, and civil liberties.

Democratic governance consists of those principles that ensure the fair and efficient operation of government (Stubbergaard Uhlin, 2018). These included the rule of law, where law is superior to all individuals and institutions, and applied equally to all. Public participation is a vital part of government because it allows the people to take an active role in the decision-making process, either directly or through their representatives, who are elected to do the will of the people. Accountability is defined as being answerable to someone and in this case to the public and stakeholders for the actions and decisions of government officials and institutions. Transparency is the idea of having the government, its actions, decisions, and processes, all out in the open for the public to see so that there is a trust and that the public is always informed. Responsiveness is a government that actually listens to and cares about the wants and needs of its people, and then creates and delivers policies and services that truly cater to the population's wants and needs. Efficiency means that government institutions and processes do their jobs well, make the most out of the resources available to them, and actually implement policies in a way that they are successful. Equitable service delivery is the idea that every citizen has equal access to services and resources provided by the government, that every effort is made to minimize inequities and reach all segments of society, especially the poor and vulnerable. These precepts combine to form a system of government that is fair and just, and allows for the progression and happiness of society as a whole.

Historical Overview of Electoral System in Nigeria and South Africa

Nigeria's electoral history is a drama of promise and obstacle, a narrative inscribed with the texture of its deeply divided and complex socio-politics. Nigeria's journey to democratic status has been bumpy, with periods of military and civilian governance alternating (Haroon Suleiman 2024). Nigeria's politics of the ballot box has its roots in the colonial era, when the British colonial administration introduced limited electoral procedures as part of a series of political reforms. Nigeria's electoral politics emerged with the Clifford Constitution of 1922, but on a restricted franchise in Lagos and Calabar (Hoffmann Wallace, 2022; Olamide, 2016). This period also saw the first elected legislative council, which opened the way for further political change. Independent Nigeria, declared in 1960, set out on the road to democratic statemaking. But those first two years were marred by political upheaval, ethnic unrest and electoral chicanery. Yet the First Republic (1960-66) saw much electoral conflict, culminating in the military coup of 1966. Subsequent military regimes also shut down the democratic process for more than a decade (Mordi, 2018). The Second Republic, which brought civilian rule back in 1979, did not last long. Election rigging and political killing fuelled the general election of 1983, which led to the second military coup (Ediagbonya Aluko 2020). Only in 1999, after decades of military governments, did Nigeria enter its present Fourth Republic. The establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was a significant step in this direction since it oversaw the elections (Egbe Muhammad, 2024). Since 1999, Nigeria has been trying to recover its democracy through a succession of general elections. And even with all this effort, trouble continues to ferment, from electoral fraud and voter intimidation to logistical failure. The most hotly contested were the general elections of 2007, which were engulfed in accusations of electoral fraud. Elections since have led to incremental improvement, the 2015 elections featuring a relatively bloodless handover of power and a grudging acceptance of the results by the major players. But the 2019 and 2023 elections were also held amid widespread electoral malpractice, ranging from voter intimidation and ballot box snatching to thuggery and vote count discrepancies. There is no question that the electoral umpire (INEC) and candidates themselves engaged in these practices, and the ubiquity of this form of malfeasance raised questions of the legitimacy of the electoral process and the imperative for fundamental reform to restore public confidence in democratic governance (Nwokike, Ezeneme Okafor 2023).

South Africa's electoral history is fundamentally shaped by its long struggle against apartheid and the quest for enthronement of black majority rule. South Africa's democratic transition, in contrast to Nigeria's, was the product of a long and bitter fight for racial equality and political representation (Seo, 2008). The colonial era and the apartheid that followed it were defined by the exclusion of the black majority from political life. The apartheid government, codified in 1948, maintained a system of racial segregation that deprived non-whites of fundamental rights, including suffrage. According to South Africa History Online (2022), apartheid was 'a strategy of separate development for distinct racial groupings in South Africa'. Though the strategy purported to promote equal growth and cultural freedom, in actuality it contradicted both. Apartheid laws enshrined racial segregation, mandating the separate living and development of the races. But this division was not shared equally; it created large inequities and inequalities, and non-white populations suffered under systemic disadvantage and oppression. Not only did these policies make racial discrimination legal, but they constituted a form of maintaining

'white supremacy' and 'white control' over the economic, social and political life of the nation. At this period, the electoral system, in Mhlongo's (2021) words, was restricted to the white minority and, consequently, the political order was de facto undemocratic. In 1994, apartheid was abolished and a democratic administration was established, marking a watershed moment in South African election history. According to South African Government (n.d.), an online platform, the country held its first democratic election in April 1994 under an interim constitution. This election was historic because it was the first election in which all races were allowed to vote, therefore ending apartheid; it was a watershed moment for the country. The African National Congress (ANC) emerged as the dominating party with a 62% majority, making Nelson Mandela South Africa's first Black president. This incident paved the way for a new democratic rule: equitable justice for all under the law. The first multiracial elections. According to Accord (2019), the youth of South Africa are very apathetic and feel very alienated. This feeling of being put on the back burner usually manifests itself in a general cynicism and mistrust of political parties and politicians. That kind of atmosphere of distrust and disillusionment is a big obstacle to the youths' full, effective, and active participation in political/electoral processes. This apathy comes from the belief that the institutions of politics are not only unresponsive but also do not represent their interests or concerns. Thus, this disengagement ultimately weakens the colorfulness and openness of the democratic system itself, for a very important sector of the society stands on the outside looking in at political life. However, many people still regard South Africa's electoral process as a shining example of democratic leadership in Africa. Which demonstrates the institutions' strength and determination to safeguard democratic processes. According to Sasria Communications (2024), since the historic elections on April 27, 1994, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) has conducted elections with absolute honesty and unquestionable capacity. They claim that as a result, the outcomes have become universally regarded as the people's will.

Comparative Analysis of Electoral System in Nigeria and South Africa

The comparative analysis of electoral processes in Nigeria and South Africa reveals distinct differences and commonalities, shaped by their unique historical contexts and socio-political environments.

Institutional Frameworks

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the country's electoral commission, holds absolute power over every aspect of the election, from voter registration to election monitoring to the announcement of the results. That body is essential to the maintenance of democracy, and to the holding of honest, free elections. Yet, for all its centrality, INEC has been dogged by a litany of problems that have hampered its effectiveness and legitimacy. Allegations of bias are one of the most common charges against INEC. 'The work of the commission has on occasion been marred by partisanship, which may erode public confidence in the electoral process' (Okocha, 2024; Nwokike, Ezeneme & Okafor, 2023). Added to that, logistical failures — from late delivery of election materials to voter accreditation issues — have plagued the commission's work. But INEC has done excellent work in reforming itself. Another major recent innovation is voter registration through technology. Biometric voter registration and electronic voting machines have been adopted in an effort to secure the integrity of voter rolls and expedite voting. And all this tech modernisation makes elections more efficient and transparent. Yet the

introduction of technology to results collation has been less successful, although improved. The 2023 presidential election highlighted this issue, as the commission faced challenges in effectively using technology to collate and transmit election results. The failure in the collation of results not only slowed down the process but also created questions about the fairness of the election (Sibe Kaunert, 2023). Failure to implement and incorporate technology across this vital area of election management has become a bone of contention and has at times undermined public confidence in election results.

In contrast, South Africa's Electoral Commission (IEC) is widely commended for its efficiency and independence. Free and fair elections, of the kind conducted by the IEC, have played a stabilising role in South African democracy (Sasria Communications, 2024; African Union Election Observation Mission, 2024) In both countries, institutional foundations emphasize the importance of free, well-resourced electoral commissions in maintaining election integrity. The IEC's success is due to a variety of causes. First, it operates by remaining neutral and independent of politics, ensuring that decisions made are unbiased and agreeable to all. Third, the IEC can create the hardware, software, and voter education programs it will require. This financial autonomy gives the Commission the space to properly address the complexities of the electoral process, ranging from voter registration to final count (Matatu 2023). In addition, the IEC is highly transparent and accountable. It routinely engages with political parties, civil society organisations and citizens to help foster confidence and trust in the election process. Through public consultations and open communication, the IEC aims to make its process transparent and acceptable to voters.

Voting Mechanisms

Even Nigeria and South Africa have radically different voting systems. Nigeria's electoral system is a hybrid, incorporating direct and indirect elections. For the President, Governors, and members of the National Assembly, direct election is the most prevalent (Ndeche, Iroye Okolo, 2023). They are held under the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, which means that the most votes go to the winner. The presidential and gubernatorial elections require the candidate to secure an outright majority of votes and at least 25 per cent of the votes in two-thirds of Nigeria's states (The Republic, 2023). The House of Reps is the FPTP system, where every district sends one person. Primary elections are rarely used, except for indirect voting (caucus), which is usually only applied to Senate elections, and some internal party machinery (party primaries, party leadership. Nigeria has proportional representation in the Senate (every state is divided into senatorial districts and each district elects a senator). Many party primaries make use of delegates, party members elected from local units of government or wards, who vote at state or national conventions to choose candidates. This unusual hybrid system of direct and indirect elections, with elements of first-past-the-post and proportional representation, is intended to balance representation and equity in Nigeria's democratic experiment.

In the case of South Africa, for national and provincial elections it was a system based on proportional representation (Mhlongo 2021; Civics Academy, 2014). The system has been praised for being inclusive and also ensuring that minorities get a say in parliamentary affairs. This process of allocating seats in Parliament by virtue of the %age vote share to each party is instrumental for plurality views relevant from point view representing political spectrum. It ensures that no one faction becomes powerful and the political landscape is far more evenhanded as well as substantially a lot closer to reflect any public. Proportional

representation also improve public confidence in election because it is simpler and all votes are equal. It ensures that voters do by large understand how they are getting represented and there is not a lot of confusion or contention over the system being unrepresentative. And as an added bonus, when the method for counting votes is clearly simple and intuitive like this vote counts one / that vote doesn't then election results scream believability from all corners of civilization because it gives people higher levels of confidence in election outcomes. Therefore, South Africa's electoral system is often referred to other countries wanting a more cohesive and plausible democratic configuration.

Democratic Governance

The election process has great implications for democratic rule in both Nigeria and South Africa. Elections in Nigeria have frequently been accompanied by post-election violence and they sap public confidence (both domestically and internationally) in the country's democracy. Regrettably, the conduct of elections in Nigeria has always been problematic characterised by gross irregularities including but not limited to massive ballot stuffing, threat and intimidation of voters, vote buyiand ng etc. These have in most cases resulted into postelection violence with effects that not only threaten the peace of society but also to undermine the legitimacy of democratic process (Oduola,2020). The election process has admittedly proven to be a reform that is moving slowly but on the right track, so maybe there could still be hope for democratization through presidential and parliamentary elections. In the past few years, various reforms introduced by INEC, through the introduction of technological interventions like electronic voting machines and elevated international/domestic monitoring have resulted in fairer elections. The result has been a reduction in the scale and scope of electoral malpractices, while greater strain is imposed on free and fair elections. The initiatives have translated into a few declines in election mal-practices and provided an atmosphere conducive for free fair elections. For example, the 2015 and 2019 general elections witnessed a considerable enhancement regarding the election process. The concession in Nigeria which saw an incumbent president defeated, was a hallmark moment for the democratic experience of Nigeria. But the 2023 elections proved different from the 2015 and 2019 elections in several striking ways. While both the 2015 and 2019 elections have been notable for the relative absence of violence and optimism about Nigeria's democratic struggle, the 2023 elections were plagued with critical issues (Ojukwu Umeifekwem, 2023). Reports in the media spoke of increasing violence, intimidation and allegations of systematic tampering and fraud at the ballot box. 'Logistical and other major glitches that characterised this voting process and that frustrated a lot of voters' (YIAGA Africa, 2023).

South African elections have been not only more frequent, but also free of electoral fraud, which has helped to solidify the democratic system of governance, and political stability and peaceful transitions of power (Sasria Communications, 2024; African Union Election Observation Mission, 2024). Election as an institutional process has been the cornerstone of sustaining democracy in word and deed but the battle is far from over, and social and economic inequality and political corruption are the final frontiers. The perpetual elections, however, have kept the voice of the people and, the trust in the system, by extension. And there are the democratic, free and fair elections that have also attracted a lot of positive international attention, helping to restore South Africa's image as a democratic country. However, the country still faces significant hurdles. Yet socio-economic inequality is still widespread, poverty and unemployment are endemic, and they

destabilise society (Mokoena, 2020). Not to mention the persistence of political corruption, which erodes confidence in the state and the legitimacy of its rule. However, the dedication of South Africa to democratic process, and the strength of its electoral system, seem to secure the country's continued march to more democratic governance and a resolution of the underlying socio-economic and political problems.

Concluding Remarks

This contrast between the electoral systems of Nigeria and South Africa only emphasised the fact that the two countries have followed very different paths toward democratic governance. For all their common African roots and historical subjugation, the election rounds in Nigeria and South Africa could hardly be further apart, a reflection of their distinct political cultures and institutions, as well as their socioeconomic realities. Nigeria's journey to a consistent and democratic electoral cycle has been bumpy. The independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been criticised for inefficiency, partiality and logistical incompetence. Things are getting better (ie, the use of technology in voter registration) but there are so many hurdles. The continuing problems of electoral fraud, voter intimidation and logistical shortcomings represent the challenge to establish a fully open and credible electoral system. This gradual reform, and the new sense of accountability, suggests an optimistic (but guarded) feeling that maybe Nigeria would never stop progressing along its democratic path. South Africa's post-apartheid election, in contrast, using the electoral commission of South Africa (IEC), has been widely lauded for its efficiency, and for its transparency. South Africa has a proportional representation system, and that ensures that every political party that gained sufficient votes is represented in the legislature. Although there have been problems such as voter apathy and political violence, the IEC's consistent institutional structure and devotion to democratic ideals have earned it the public's trust in the election process. South Africa's experience offered some valuable lessons about how to build a more inclusive and legitimate democracy, and just how much an adequately resourced and independent electoral commission can accomplish its set goals.

Both countries' experience underscored the importance of institutional integrity, transparency and continuous reform in the execution of democratic rule. And when it comes to Nigeria, that future is in finally burying the old, ancient, intractable problems, and in building the institutions that can. The South African experiment illustrates that a democratic society can be created through a free and fair election, and that public confidence must be maintained through the regular and reliable conduct of elections. Such comparative evidence can be used to reveal the maturity of election systems and democracy. Nigeria and South Africa teach us from the experience of what worked and did not work, and from that policymakers and other actors throughout the continent can learn not only how to shore up electoral processes but also how to build more resilient democratic institutions. Such understanding is critical to the evolution of enduring democratic governance, and to the potential of electoral processes to be a true and fair expression of the will of the people.

Recommendations

The researchers therefore recommend the following:

1. Prioritize transparency and accountability to foster public confidence in the electoral processes of both Nigeria and South Africa.

2. Nigeria should focus on reforms that strengthen the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), ensuring its independence from political influence.
3. Address electoral fraud in Nigeria by implementing measures that guarantee free, fair, and credible elections to restore voter confidence.
4. South Africa should continue efforts to emphasize transparency and accountability in its Electoral Commission (IEC), maintaining the current high level of public trust.
5. Tackle voter apathy in South Africa through greater civic education and continuous voter engagement, particularly among the youth, to sustain the nation's democratic achievements.

References

Accord. (2019, November 27). Political fatalism and youth apathy in South Africa. *Conflict Trends 2019/3*. https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/political-fatalism-and-youth-apathy-in-south-africa/

African Union Election Observation Mission. (2024, May 31). *Preliminary statement: African Union Election Observation Mission to the 29 May 2024 general elections - Johannesburg, 31 May 2024*. Peace and Security Department, African Union. https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/preliminary-statement-african-union-election-observation-mission-to-the-29-may-2024-general-elections-johannesburg-31-may-2024-preliminary-statement

Center for International Private Enterprise (2024). *Democratic governance*. https://www.cipe.org/what-we-do/democratic-governance/

Civics Academy (2024). How does the Electoral System work? https://civicsacademy.co.za/how-does-the-electoral-system-work-coming-soon/

Ediagbonya, M., & Aluko, Y. E. (2020). The fall of the Second Republic of Nigeria, 1979–1983: A lesson for the future. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Engineering Development, 3*(2), 807-827

Egbe, O. D. J., & Muhammad, A. A. (Eds.). (2024). *Nigeria's democracy in the Fourth Republic*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-5275-5620-1-sample.pdf

Gouws, A. & Mitchell, P. (2006). South Africa: One Party Dominance Despite Perfect Proportionality', in Michael Gallagher, and Paul Mitchell (eds), *The Politics of Electoral Systems* (Oxford, 2005; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Feb. 2006), https://doi.org/10.1093/0199257566.003.0017, accessed 22 July 2024.

Haroon, B. N., & Suleiman, Y. (2024). The role of the military in Nigeria's political evolution and security landscape. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Multidisciplinary Studies (IJARMS)*, 4(1), 182-190.

Haroon, B. N., & Suleiman, Y. (2024). The role of the military in Nigeria's political evolution and security landscape. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Multidisciplinary Studies (IJARMS)*, 4(1), 182-190.

Haxhiu, S., & Alidemaj, A. H. (2021). Representative democracy: Its meaning and basic principles. *Acta Universitatis Danubius: Juridica*, 17(2), 97-112.

Hoffmann, L. K. & Wallace, J. (2022, December 20). *Democracy in Nigeria: Explaining the history of Africa's largest democracy and the influence of the military, ethnicity, and religious belief*. Chatham House. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/06/democracy-nigeria

Ibewuike, C. (2023, April 20). The many sins of INEC: How the 2023 elections exposed INEC's incompetence. *The Republic*. https://republic.com.ng/april-may-2023/2023-election-inec-incompetence/

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. (2021). *Democratic governance as an effective and enduring response to the challenges facing Latin America*. https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/democratic-governance-effective-and-enduring-response.pdf

Liwewe, K. (2023, March 7). National Congress has violated everything he stood for: The anti-apartheid icon's hope for a 'better life for all' has been decimated by the party he once led. *New Lines Magazine*. https://newlinesmag.com/argument/nelson-mandelas-african-national-congress-has-violated-everything-he-stood-for/

Maganoe, S. (2024). The impact of the South African electoral system on legislative oversight. *Obiter*. https://obiter.mandela.ac.za/article/download/ 15910/21230/111642

Mash, A. (2017). *Elections, electoral systems, and party systems: A resource guide*. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. https://www.idea.int/gsod-2017/files/IDEA-GSOD-2017-RESOURCE-GUIDE-ELECTIONS.pdf

Matatu, N. (2023, November). *Protecting electoral integrity: The case of South Africa*. International IDEA. https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/2023-11/protecting-electoral-integrity-the-case-of-south-africa.pdf

Matatu, N. (2023, November). *Protecting electoral integrity: The case of South Africa* (Case Study). International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/2023-11/protecting-electoral-integrity-the-case-of-south-africa.pdf

Mhlongo, L. (2021). A critical analysis of South Africa's system of government: From a disjunctive system to a synergistic system of government. *Obiter, 41*(2). https://scielo.org.za/ scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1682-58532020000200004

Mokoena, S. (2020, March 2). *Biggest threats to social cohesion are inequality, poverty, and unemployment*. Parliament of South Africa. https://www.parliament.gov.za/news/biggest-threats-social-cohesion-are-inequality-poverty-and-unemployment-dr-nkabane

Mordi, E. N. (2018). The role of the press in the democratic process: The example of Nigeria's First Republic, 1960-1966. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 26*(3), 2037-2062.

Ndeche, O., Iroye, S. O., & Okolo, P. O. (2023). The direct primaries option in the Nigerian electoral process 2015-2023: A perspective. *The Journal of Development Studies, 7*(1), 123-141.

Ntshangase, N., & Imray, G. (2024, April 27). It's 30 years since apartheid ended. South Africa's celebrations are set against growing discontent. *AP News*. https://apnews.com/article/south-africa-apartheid-freedom-democracy-election-d9269650c2d2c813e9794fda145ef22d

Nwokike, J. N., Ezeneme, C. E., & Okafor, E. V. (2023). Electoral violence in the 2023 presidential election and the future of democracy in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic and Applied Research (IJAAR), 7*(6), 72-77.

Oduola, S. O. (2023, July 20). *Voter suppression and electoral integrity crisis in Nigeria's 2023 general elections*. Kujenga Amani. https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2023/07/20/voter-suppression-and-electoral-integrity-crisis-in-nigerias-2023-general-elections/

Ohazuruike, K., Mbanusi, E. C., & Ubiebi, K. (2020). Political economy of military intervention in politics and political development in Nigeria. *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS), 13*(1), 96-110.

Ojukwu, U. G., & Umeifekwem, U. (2023). Democracy and 2023 General Elections in Nigeria: Retrospect and Prospects. *Direct Research Journal of Social Science and Educational Studies, 11*(4), 54-66. https://doi.org/10.26765/DRJSSES918734361

Okocha, C. (2024, May 4). *Yiaga reports decline in public trust in Nigerian elections, calls for electoral reforms.* AriseNews. https://www.arise.tv/yiaga-reports-decline-in-public-trust-in-nigerian-elections-calls-for-electoral-reforms/

Olamide, O. (2016). *History of Nigerian constitutional development*. DJET Lawyer. https://djetlawyer.com/history-nigerian-constitutional-development/

Ortona, G. (2017). Electoral Systems. In: Marciano, A., Ramello, G. (eds) Encyclopedia of Law and Economics. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-7883-6_733-1

Peter, T. O., & Inokoba, P. K. (2023). Electoral technology and credible elections in Nigeria: A study of the 2023 presidential election. *Kenneth Dike Journal of African Studies, 2*(1), 56-71.

Sasria Communications (2024, June 29). *Championing Resilience and Democracy in South Africa*. Sasria SOC Ltd. https://sasria.co.za/championing-resilience-and-democracy-in-south-africa/

Seo, S.-H. (2008). *A study on democratic transition in South Africa: Democracy through compromise and institutional choice* (Doctoral thesis, University of South Africa). https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/3401/thesis_seo_s.pdf?sequence=1

Sibe, R. T., & Kaunert, C. (2023). Technology, cyber security and the 2023 elections in Nigeria: Prospects, challenges and opportunities. *Journal of African Elections, 22*(2), 69-96. https://doi.org/10.20940/JAE/2023/v22i2a4

Siegle, J., & Cook, C. (2024, January 17). *Africa's 2024 elections: Challenges and opportunities to regain democratic momentum*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. https://africacenter.org/spotlight/2024-elections/

South Africa History Online (2022, April 5). *A history of Apartheid in South Africa*. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-apartheid-south-africa

South African Government. (n.d.). History. https://www.gov.za/about-sa/history

Stubbergaard, Y. & Uhlin, A. (2018). Democratic governance in developing nations. In: Farazmand, A. (eds) Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20928-9_2469

The Republic (2023, February/March). How do we determine who wins the elections? The Republic. https://republic.com.ng/february-march-2023/who-wins-the-elections/

United Nations Mission in Timor-Leste (2024). Democratic governance. https://unmit.unmissions.org/democratic-governance

Ware, A. (2015). Electoral systems. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioural sciences* (2nd ed., pp. 349-352). Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.93038-1

YIAGA Africa (2023 25 February). Mid-day Situational Statement on the 2023 Presidential Election Saturday, February 25th, 2023 Delivered at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja. https://yiaga.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Mid-day-SituationalStatement-2023-Presidential-Election.pdf