

DEMOCRACY, PUBLIC ORDER AND CRISES OF NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

Christopher I. Obiukwu¹ & Ekeledirichukwu C. Njoku²

¹Department of Political Science, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri

²Department of Political Science, Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ideato, Imo State,
chrisobiukwu@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study interrogates the complex nexus between democracy, public order and the enduring crises of nation-building in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Since the transition to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has grappled with the dual challenge of consolidating democratic governance while preserving national unity in the face of persistent political instability, ethnic and sectarian violence, systemic corruption, and fragile institutions. Far from serving solely as a vehicle for inclusion and representation, the Nigerian democratic experience has, at times, deepened existing fractures through electoral malpractice, pervasive insecurity, and elite-driven ethnic politics, thereby undermining public order and eroding social cohesion. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of historical and contemporary political developments, this study asks: How has Nigeria's democratic trajectory simultaneously expanded civic freedoms and intensified the crises of nation-building? The discussion draws on relevant strands of democratic theory and elite theory to illuminate how entrenched elite dominance and weak institutional safeguards shape the democratic-public order nexus. Ultimately, the study argues for a recalibration of Nigeria's democratic practice toward inclusive governance frameworks that not only safeguard public order but also address the centrifugal forces impeding national integration.

Keywords: Democracy, Nation-building, Public Order, Bad Governance, Ethnic Politics

Introduction

Although democracy in Africa is often perceived as a Western import, it has become firmly embedded in the political trajectories of several African states, most notably Nigeria, following the country's transition to civilian rule in 1999 (Oyugi, 1995). The inauguration of Nigeria's Fourth Republic marked a watershed moment in its political history, ending decades of military dictatorship and raising hopes for participatory governance, economic transformation, and sustainable development. Yagboyaju (2011) observed that, despite the inability of previous military regimes to convince Nigerians of democracy's merits, a broad segment of the populace remained optimistic that democratic governance could chart a new path toward national renewal. This optimism was further reinforced by the fact that the Fourth Republic has endured longer than any other democratic experiment since independence (Adebanwi, 2023). The endurance of democratic rule since 1999 has thus become a point of reference for the argument that Nigeria has finally broken free from its historical cycle of military intervention and authoritarian governance.

However, this longevity has not translated into political stability or cohesive nation-building. Instead, the period has been marred by recurrent violent clashes, terrorism, militancy, ethno-religious conflicts, and separatist agitations, particularly in the Northcentral, Southeast, and Southwest regions (Njoku, 2025; Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024; Njoku & Obiukwu, 2025). Despite the institutional framework of democracy, the rule of law remains largely nominal, electoral processes are routinely subverted, and political parties alongside state institutions are manipulated for elite advantage. The enduring gap between democratic form and democratic substance continues to define Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Rather than fulfilling the democratic promise, this period has often deepened societal divisions, fostered political instability, and undermined national integration. The experience of democracy in Nigeria has therefore become paradoxical – while it guarantees periodic elections and constitutional continuity, it also reproduces inequality, corruption, insecurity and political violence.

While Nigeria has sustained over 25 years of uninterrupted democracy with peaceful transfers of power between opposing parties, this stability masks a deeper democratic crisis—one characterised by bad governance, institutional decay, ethicised politics, erosion of national identity, electoral fraud, insecurity, and widespread social disorder. The promise of democracy as a mechanism for collective progress has been replaced by the reality of elite capture, economic exclusion and declining public trust in political institutions. Democratic governance has become an arena of contestation where political elites instrumentalise ethnicity, religion and patronage networks to maintain control, while the majority of citizens experience democracy as a distant and disempowering process. Consequently, the very institutions that should promote inclusivity and stability have become channels through which inequality and marginalisation are reproduced. Growing public disillusionment is reflected in calls for the “Africanisation” of democracy and, in some quarters, for a return to military rule (The Sun, 2024; Onwuka, 2023). These developments raise fundamental questions about the legitimacy and sustainability of Nigeria's democratic system. Can a democracy that consistently fails to deliver order, justice and equity sustain public confidence? Can nation-building succeed in a polity where democratic institutions are widely perceived as corrupt, extractive and unresponsive?

The relationship between democracy and public order is therefore central to Nigeria's postcolonial predicament. Democracy presupposes freedom of expression, assembly, and political participation, but these very freedoms have at times been exercised in ways that threaten state stability. The resurgence of violent protests, separatist agitations, and mass demonstrations such as the #EndSARS movement of 2020 and the recurring IPOB-led sit-at-home orders, illustrate how democratic spaces have become contested arenas between state authority and citizen resistance. Similarly, the proliferation of armed groups in regions such as the Northeast, Niger Delta, and Northwest highlights the fragility of state control and the weakness of democratic governance in maintaining social order. These challenges demonstrate that political liberalisation without effective state institutions and equitable resource distribution can intensify instability rather than mitigate it. The persistence of insecurity and disorder, despite two and a half decades of democracy, underscores the structural contradictions within Nigeria's political system.

Nation-building within this context remains an unfinished project. The colonial legacy of artificial borders and ethnically defined power structures continues to shape Nigeria's political landscape. Successive administrations have pursued varying forms of federalism and constitutional reform, yet the underlying issues of representation, inclusion, and identity remain unresolved. Public order has frequently been maintained through coercive means rather than through consensus and social contract. This reliance on militarised governance, whether in response to insurgency in the North-East, separatism in the South-East, or communal clashes in the Middle Belt, reveals how fragile Nigeria's democratic institutions remain. The contradiction between the rhetoric of civilian rule and the practice of coercive state power further complicates the nation-building process, as it deepens citizens' distrust in both democracy and state authority.

While previous scholarship has examined democracy in Nigeria through the lenses of governance, elections and institutional reforms, there remains a paucity of integrative studies that explicitly analyse the intersection between democracy, public order and the crises of nation-building. In other words, existing works (Suberu, 2001; Omotola, 2010; Osaghae, 2002) often treat these domains in isolation, thereby overlooking the complex ways in which democratic institutions and elite-driven politics shape societal stability and national cohesion. The prevailing focus on electoral processes and governance indicators has tended to obscure the deeper socio-political undercurrents that determine whether democracy consolidates or collapses. This study therefore situates the Nigerian experience within the broader African discourse on democratic consolidation, emphasising that the success of democracy cannot be measured solely by electoral continuity or institutional survival, but by its capacity to maintain social order, promote justice and foster a sense of shared national identity.

To address this gap, the study employs a dual theoretical framework – democratic theory and elite theory, situated within the broader discourse of nation-building, to critically assess Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Democratic theory provides a foundation for examining the ideals and practices of participatory governance, while elite theory illuminates how a small group of political actors dominate state institutions and resources to shape the outcomes of governance and public order. Drawing from these theories, the study interrogates the paradox of a prolonged democratic experiment that has partly fostered civil liberties and entrenched disorder. This study contributes to the ongoing debate on how democracy can serve as a vehicle for nation-building rather than a source of division and instability. It contends that the Nigerian experience demonstrates the limits of procedural democracy in achieving substantive transformation without deep structural reforms. Thus, the study offers fresh insights into how democratic consolidation can be reoriented to strengthen nation-building in a deeply divided polity, while also contributing to the broader African discourse on reconciling participatory governance with the imperatives of state stability, social justice and integration.

Conceptual Clarifications

Democracy

Either as a concept or a system of rule, democracy has become excessively ambiguous in contemporary political analysis (Ajayi & Ojo, 2014). It is a concept that has been subjected to varying definitions, interpretations and contradictory practises. And it is widely embraced by politicians of different aisle as the best form of government. Even military regimes often invoke the concept of democracy to support their rule (Ajayi & Ojo, 2014). This is why Crick (1962) sees democracy as the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs. Despite the foregoing, any meaningful attempt towards explaining the concept of democracy must proceed from its ancient understanding as peoples' rule. *Demos* and *kratia* are two Greek words that mean 'people and rule/authority' respectively. When merged, it means 'rule by the people' (Cammack, 2019). In his 1863 address, Abraham Lincoln gave the most famous definition of democracy as the 'government of the people, by the people and for the people' (Dickson, 2014). Democracy is popular sovereignty. In other words, democracy is often seen as a system of government in which power is vested in the people, either directly or through elected representatives. Its core tenets include the rule of law, popular sovereignty, socio-economic and political equality, protection of individual rights and accountability (Whitehead, 2001).

Democracy entails inclusiveness and competition in the electoral process and allocation and management of public resources for the benefit of all (Onyekpere, 2023). Since Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, the country has conducted regular elections and made efforts to build democratic institutions. However, due to issues such as electoral fraud, social disorder and violence, weak institutions and poor governance, Nigeria's democracy is often called into question because, rather than produce the expected outcome, it has often seen as a curse, giving rise to democratic backsliding, with its attendant negative effects (Keman, 2024). In Nigeria, democratic values, rhetoric and institutions are co-opted in undemocratic pursuits, leading to erosion of national consciousness and social unrest (Akinyetun, 2022). Ajayi & Ojo (2014) believe that democracy and Nigeria are like Siamese twins; though conjoined, they are uncomfortable and under intense pressure that could result in all forms of hurt, even death. In other words, Nigerian democracy has brought poverty and penury rather than prosperity (Asoga-Allen (2016). Being fragile and fluctuating since independence, successive governments have struggled to create a sense of national unity and order (Hoffmann & Wallace, 2023; Njoku, 2025).

Public Order

Public order refers to the general conditions necessary for individuals to enjoy their rights and freedoms (Hadden & Harvey, 1999). It is a condition characterised by the absence of widespread criminal and political violence, such as riots, murder, kidnapping, intimidation and arson (United States Institute of Peace, n/d). In other words, it entails the protection of lives and property, control of civil unrest and enforcement of law and order within a country (Louis-Udeh 2018).

States are responsible for defending or maintaining public order and safety so that citizens are able to move freely without fear of undue harm. Conversely, public disorder exerts destabilising effects, particularly in societies emerging from conflict, as it perpetuates fear, weakens state security institutions and threatens the consolidation of peace. Episodes of criminal and politically motivated violence are frequently accompanied by systematic violations of human rights, including torture, rape, degrading treatment, and arbitrary detention (Paris, 2004). In such contexts, recourse to justice is often limited by the scarcity of police personnel, their history of corruption and abuse, the shortage of judges, and widespread doubts about judicial independence (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). In the absence of public order, confidence in state security structures erodes, compelling citizens to seek protection from alternative actors such as militias and warlords.

Ongoing violence, social and political disorder in Nigeria continues to force people to flee their homes in conflict zones to seek safety in other parts of the country (Jain, 2024). But no zone in Nigeria is safe at the moment. And rather than public order, the Nigerian democracy has brought public disorder which has led to substantial interference with the public peace, constituting significant threat to the safety of life and property of Nigerian citizens. Public disorder in Nigeria takes the form of insurrection, vandalism, rioting, looting, protests, social movements, civil disobedience, violence and arson. Even peaceful protests in Nigeria often times, escalate when armed hoodlums hijack it to provoke violence (Adelaja, 2020; Nathaniel, 2020; Daka, 2020; Adediran, 2020). The breakdown of public order in Nigeria often leads to socio-political instability, violent conflict and displacement. Since 1999, internal population displacement in Nigeria has been caused by various categories of violence such as ethno-religious, political and communal violence (Jain, 2024). Ensuring public order, therefore, requires multifaceted measures, including street patrols, arrests and detention, intelligence gathering, criminal investigations, riot control, dispute resolution, safeguarding critical infrastructure, border security, witness protection and the capacity to manage high-risk arrests related to political violence and extremism (United States Institute of Peace, n/d).

Nation-Building

Nation-building is best understood as the deliberate and often contested process by which the territorial boundaries of the modern state are aligned with the imagined boundaries of the national community, with the overarching goal of achieving national integration (Mylonas, 2020). It represents an attempt to forge a cohesive nation-state often in contexts where such unity has never fully existed or where state structures have historically been fragile (Munro, 2024). In this sense, nation-building is not merely an exercise in political engineering but a multidimensional project encompassing the cultivation of shared identity, the construction of inclusive institutions, and the fostering of civic participation irrespective of ethnic, religious, or regional cleavages.

While nation-building is frequently framed as a state-led enterprise, it can equally emerge from bottom-up processes driven by societal actors, civil movements, and cultural initiatives that

strengthen social bonds without direct state intervention (Mylonas, 2020). Walters (2010) emphasises that successful nation-building is shaped not only by legitimate and visionary governments but also by socio-economic and political forces such as religious movements, liberation struggles, and ethnic mobilisation for reform. The durability of a nation ultimately depends on whether its citizens share a sufficient set of values, norms, and narratives, and whether they possess the means to communicate and interact across identity divides.

Historically, regimes have sought to build such cohesion through varied and often contradictory means, including the teaching of a common language, expanding access to education, investing in infrastructure to facilitate mobility, and, in more repressive contexts, through coercion, brute force, or even genocidal violence (Alesina & Reich, 2015). In the post-colonial African context, nation-building is further complicated by the legacies of artificial borders, colonial extractivism, and ethno regional mistrust, which often necessitate balancing the imperatives of unity with the realities of deep societal pluralism. In Nigeria's case, recurrent crises of governance, contested legitimacy, and persistent ethno-religious fault lines underscore both the urgency and fragility of the nation-building project.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study draws on both democratic theory and elite theory to explain the persistent democratic crisis in Nigeria's Fourth Republic within the broader contexts of nation-building and public order. Dahl (1956) contends that there is no singular democratic theory but rather a plurality of democratic theories, each providing distinctive insights into the meaning, scope, and practice of democracy. Rooted in the political experiments of ancient Greece – the birthplace of the earliest democratic institutions in Western history, these theories constitute an established subfield of political thought concerned with defining democracy, clarifying its guiding principles, assessing its challenges, and interrogating its moral and institutional foundations (Laurence, 2018). At their core, democratic theories highlight the primacy of popular participation, economic freedom, political representation, adherence to the rule of law, protection of fundamental rights, and the capacity of ordinary citizens to hold political leaders accountable (Pateman, 1970).

Elections, as Wojtasik (2013) underscores, form the cornerstone of the democratic process that enables the electorate to exercise control over leaders. In Nigeria, the transition from military to civilian rule in 1999 marked a watershed moment in the attempt to institutionalise these democratic ideals. Yet, more than two decades into the Fourth Republic, the consolidation of democracy remains elusive (Njoku, 2025). Systemic corruption, weak institutional capacity, electoral malpractice and entrenched patron–client networks have undermined both accountability, development and public trust (Njoku, Mbionwu & Njoku, 2025).

The fragility of Nigeria's democratic institutions intersects with recurrent crises of public order, manifested in ethno-religious conflicts, separatist agitations, insurgencies, and endemic violence, all of which threaten the project of nation-building. State responses have oscillated between democratic accommodation and coercive repression, producing a paradox where

measures to maintain order sometimes erode democratic freedoms. Consequently, Nigerian democracy operates under a persistent tension between governance legitimacy and security imperatives, raising critical questions about democracy's ability to function as both a governance framework and a vehicle for national integration in a deeply divided polity.

Complementing democratic theory, elite theory – with intellectual origins in the works of Thomas Hobbes, Niccolò Machiavelli, Vilfredo Pareto, Robert Michels, and Gaetano Mosca, offers a critical lens for understanding the distribution and exercise of political power (Pakulski, 2010). Elite theory posits that a small, privileged group controls democratic institutions and often uses them to advance its own interests rather than the collective good. From this perspective, the ideals of egalitarian democracy are more aspirational than attainable, as societal affairs inevitably come under the control of a minority deemed to possess superior resources, influence, or competence (Higley, 2010; Maloy, 2023).

The elitist tradition significantly shaped twentieth-century political analysis, particularly through the model of “democratic elitism,” which framed liberal democracies as systems of institutionalised competition among ruling elites (Damele & Campos, 2022). Within this framework, Pareto's “circulation of elites” thesis (Delican, 2018) holds particular relevance for Nigeria, where political leadership frequently rotates among established power blocs without fundamental transformation in governance culture. This elite continuity sustains a cycle in which democratic processes are manipulated to preserve privilege, exacerbating public disillusionment and disorder.

Elite theory also aligns with Habermas's (1984) Crisis Theory, which posits that societal crises emerge when institutional structures fail to respond effectively to social needs, producing instability and disorder. In Nigeria, this dynamic manifests in governance failures, widening inequality, and insecurity. Political elites often exploit ethnic and religious divisions to consolidate power, further fragmenting the social fabric and undermining nation-building (Njoku, 2025). As such, the intersection of democratic theory and elite theory illuminates the paradox of Nigeria's Fourth Republic: while democratic institutions exist in form, elite capture and structural weaknesses prevent their full realisation, creating fertile ground for recurring crises of public order. This article integrated these theoretical perspectives to provide a comprehensive analytical framework for interrogating Nigeria's democratic crisis. Doing this, it highlighted the interplay between institutional design, elite dominance, societal division, and the ongoing challenge of building a cohesive, secure and democratic nation-state.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research design to interrogate the intersection between democracy, public order and nation-building in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Given the interpretive orientation of the study, qualitative inquiry enables an in-depth exploration of the meanings, perceptions and lived experiences that quantitative indicators cannot capture. The research is guided by the assumption that democracy and public order are socially constructed

phenomena shaped by institutional practices, elite behaviour and citizens' engagement within specific historical and political contexts. Through qualitative analysis, the study seeks to uncover how these interrelated processes manifest in governance dynamics, state-society relations and public attitudes toward legitimacy and nationhood.

The study relies primarily on documentary and interpretive analysis of secondary data drawn from a wide range of sources such as policy documents, government reports, official statements, scholarly publications, media commentaries and civil society reports that address the operation of democracy and issues of public order in Nigeria since 1999. In addition, the study draws upon reports from human rights organisations and election monitoring groups to examine how democratic processes affect social stability and perceptions of governance legitimacy. The data were critically examined to identify recurring discursive patterns, contradictions and representations of how democracy functions in practice within Nigeria's political order. By focusing on textual and narrative evidence, the study goes beyond institutional descriptions to capture the underlying political culture and power relations that sustain or undermine democratic order.

Data were analysed using a thematic analysis (TA) which is suitable for organising and interpreting qualitative material around central concepts and recurring motifs. The thematic framework enabled the study to organise findings around major themes such as democracy and the crisis of public order, elite domination and institutional capture, democracy, identity politics and nation-building and institutional fragility and the erosion of democratic legitimacy. The analysis followed an iterative process involving data familiarisation, coding, theme identification and interpretation. During the initial phase, relevant texts and reports were read repeatedly to identify key patterns that reflected the lived realities of Nigeria's democratic practice. Codes were then developed inductively, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than being imposed *a priori*. This process ensured that the findings were grounded in empirical evidence and reflective of the contextual nuances of Nigeria's political landscape.

Nigeria's Fourth Republic in Historical Context

The term 'Fourth Republic' was coined to symbolise Nigeria's fourth attempt at democratisation after incessant military interference in the country's politics (Sule & Sambo, 2024). The Fourth Republic of Nigeria started in 1999 after about three decades of military dominance of the political landscape. Nigeria's first experiment with democracy during the First and Second Republics was short-lived due to military coups, civil war, and political instability (Joseph, 1991). Similarly, the Third Republic, which was meant to mark Nigeria's return to civilian rule in the early 1990s, was aborted after the annulment of the 12 June 1993 election by the Ibrahim Babangida military-led junta. Following the death of General Sani Abacha in 1998, his successor – General Abdulsalami Abubakar initiated the transition which heralded Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999.

As a result, political prisoners were released from detention facilities, the ban on political

activities was lifted and political parties such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) were formed. In the widely monitored 1999 election, former military ruler Olusegun Obasanjo was elected on the platform of the PDP and was sworn in as the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1999. After two terms (1999 to 2007), Umaru Yar'Adua of the same PDP, was elected Nigeria's president. The death of Yar'Adua in 2010 led to the emergence of Goodluck Jonathan's presidency, who also won the election the following year. After the PDP's sixteen years (1999–2015) rule, Muhammadu Buhari, under the All People's Congress, became the first opposition candidate to defeat a sitting president in Nigeria's election (Sieff, 2015; BBC, 2015). Despite allegations of fraudulent polls, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, on the platform of the APC, succeeded Buhari after the 2023 presidential election on 29 May 2023.

It is necessary to note that the eventual transition to Nigeria's Fourth Republic was necessitated by several factors such as widespread and popular demand for democratic governance, failures of authoritarianism, international pressure and economic decline under military rule. Similarly, strong civil society activism from groups such as the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Pro-Democracy organisation – Campaign for Democracy (CD) played pivotal roles in agitating for democracy in Nigeria. Yagboyaju (2011) sees institutions which pretend to be democratic but lack the basic ingredients of democracy, political elites who can no longer empathise with the electorate and despondent citizens who are increasingly forced into sycophancy and higher criminalities because of poverty and intolerable standards of living as persistent threats confronting Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

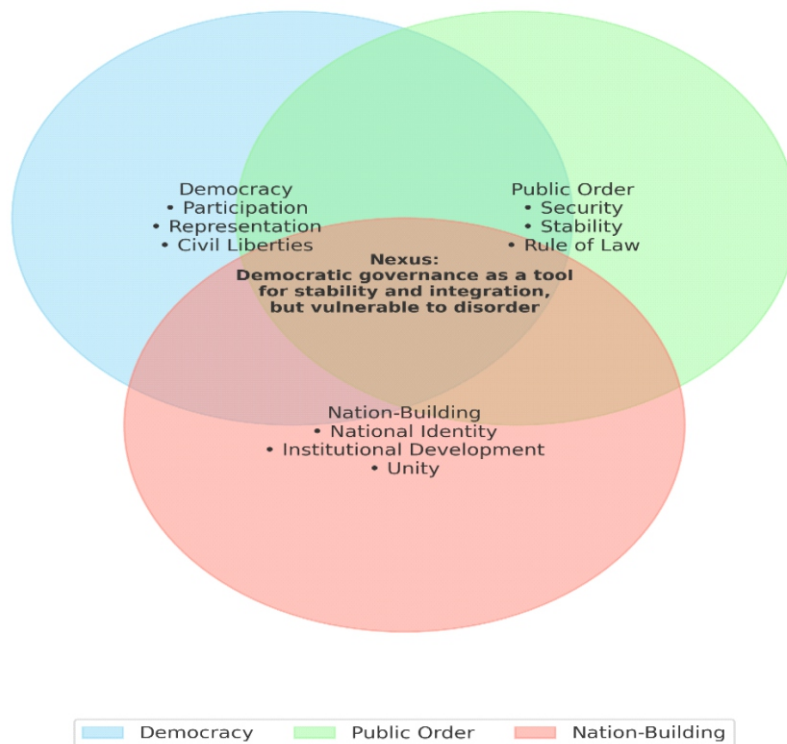
Discussion of Findings

The Nexus between Democracy, Public Order and Nation Building in Nigeria

Nigeria's democratic experience in the Fourth Republic has struggled to effectively address the challenges of internal security management and the maintenance of public order (Onuoha, Alumona, & Oshita, 2019). Prominent instances of movements and violent protests that have disrupted public order include Boko Haram terrorism in the Northeast, armed banditry in the Northwest, farmer–herder clashes involving Fulani herdsmen in the Northcentral region, the 2012 petroleum subsidy removal protests, separatist agitations by the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and its splinter group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast, the Yoruba Nation movement in the Southwest, and the militant insurgency in the Niger Delta which led to the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission, the Amnesty Programme, and the Ministry of Niger Delta. More recent manifestations include the nationwide #EndSARS demonstrations and the 'Days of Rage' protests (Adediran, 2020; Ajayi, 2020; Njoku, 2025; Njoku & Sidhu, 2017, 2021; Ojo, 2024). These incidents, compounded by the activities of non-state armed actors who target civilians, have triggered recurrent public disorder, undermined public safety, and eroded the foundations of nation-building (Onuoha, Alumona, & Oshita, 2019).

Since the return to democratic governance in 1999, Nigerians have witnessed an upsurge in public disorder that threatens peaceful coexistence. Paradoxically, rather than serving as a stabilising force, Nigeria's democracy has, in many respects, enabled the entrenchment of disorder by failing to address the structural drivers of unrest. The nexus between democracy, public order, and nation-building becomes evident when democratic governance—intended to promote participation, inclusion, and stability—struggles to mediate ethno-political grievances, thereby weakening national integration efforts. Conversely, persistent public disorder disrupts state functions, delegitimises democratic institutions, and impedes the cultivation of a shared national identity.

Figure 1. The nexus between Democracy, Public Order and Nation-building in Nigeria



Source: Created by authors.

Nation-building, at its core, involves constructing a political community that aligns with the territorial boundaries of the state, grounded in shared principles, norms, rules, and a common sense of citizenship. It entails developing robust institutions such as the civil service, judiciary, economy, educational systems, and civil society organisations. Gambari (2008) underscores that nation-building also requires fostering a collective imagination of belonging, a shared sense of purpose, and a vision of a common destiny. In post-colonial states like Nigeria, this task is particularly challenging due to artificial colonial borders that amalgamated heterogeneous ethnic groups with divergent historical, cultural, and religious identities (Okorn, 2019).

The greatest challenge since independence has been to forge a unified national entity from disparate ethnic communities whose primary loyalties often lie with sub-national identities (Okorn, 2019). In the Fourth Republic, this challenge has been compounded by entrenched ethno-religious divisions, elite-driven politics, and recurrent political instability. These dynamics have hindered the emergence of a cohesive national identity and perpetuated the recurrent crises of nation-building – crises that are both shaped by and, in turn, exacerbate the fragility of public order in Nigeria's democratic system.

Democracy in Nigeria: A Blessing Turned Curse?

Nigeria's democracy demonstrates many of the problems that plague much of Africa's stability and progress. Although democracy is a universal concept, its practice differs significantly from one country to another, hence British democracy, American democracy and so on (Ajayi & Ojo, 2014). Like many democracies, it can be argued that Nigerian democracy was established by undemocratic means (Whitehead, 2001) with prominent features such as nepotism, corruption, ethnic politics, violent conflict and disorder. It is also characterised by poverty, socio-economic and political inequality that have widened the gap between the haves and have-nots. While democracy is synonymous with growth and holistic development in some countries, it is the representation of deprivation, deceit and bad governance in Nigeria (Njoku, 2025; Allen, 2024; Njoku & Ndom, 2025). In other words, some countries practice democracy for the socio-economic benefit of the generality of the people while Nigeria's democracy is of the elites, by the elites and for the elites.

Mazrui (1982) argues that while the greatest friend of African nationalism is race-consciousness, the greatest enemy of African nationhood is ethnic-consciousness. Put differently, modern African nationalism prospered under the stimulation of racial solidarity, but the struggle for viable modern nations within Africa is significantly undermined by acute ethnic cleavages, often separating Igbo from Yoruba, Efik from Ijaw, Kanuri from Hausa and the likes, creating identity crises Nigeria (Mazrui, 1982). One of the key indicators of a successful nation is the presence of a shared national identity that transcends ethnic, religious, and regional differences. However, in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, democracy has failed to foster a strong sense of national identity. Instead, ethnic and religious divisions have deepened, as political leaders exploit these divisions for their own gain. The absence of a unified national identity has hindered efforts to build a cohesive and stable nation as Nigerians often identify more strongly with their ethnic group than

with the state. This lack of national unity has contributed to the emergence of secessionist movements, such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Yoruba Nation in the Southwest (Ojo, 2023; Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024).

Similarly, Nigeria's democracy compels citizens to provide for themselves those basic social amenities the state should normally provide for them – citizens generate their own power, patronise privately-owned hospitals and schools and make personal security arrangements. Similarly, the less privileged rural dwellers drink all sorts of contaminated water and live in darkness (Ajayi & Ojo, 2014). Others are constantly harassed or killed by either security forces or non-state actors. Nigeria's democratic governance has also produce over 18 million out-of-school children (UNICEF, 2022; Agwam, 2024; Umar, 2024). Adedokun (2013) captured the practice of democracy in Nigeria when he noted that:

Today, Nigeria is literally bleeding. There is too much violence. We have bred enough Frankenstein monsters to haunt us. We feed them red meat each time they cry for blood. Those who are not killed by Boko Haram are killed by the Joint Task Force. Those who escape the JTF fall into the hands of mind-bending illiteracy. Those who manage to escape all those are consumed by road accidents. Some die in poorly equipped hospitals. Those lucky to bypass all of the above are either killed by hunger, poverty, or frustration practically turns them to the living dead.

Pointing out the paradoxical relationship between democracy and development in Nigeria, Edigheji (2020) strongly argued that the over twenty-five years of democracy in Nigeria has resulted in increased inequality, poverty, unemployment and insecurity, adding that the hopes of Nigerian citizens that democratic governance would lead to improved living standards have been dashed. Inclusive sustainable development and social justice have also eluded Nigerians. The Nigerian political science association (NPSA), the umbrella organisation representing Political Scientists in the country, recently faulted Nigeria's democracy as the cause of the challenges facing Nigeria over the years (Azeez, 2024).

Nigeria's democracy in the Fourth Republic has been rattled by all forms of violence, communal conflict, violent protests, insurgency, armed banditry and secessionist movements, resulting in public disorder (Ojo, Oyewole & Aina, 2023; Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024). For instance, electoral violence has emerged as a troubling aspect of Nigeria's democratic experiment. Armed gangs, often backed by political candidates, regularly disrupt polling places, intimidate voters, and target rival politicians. Such violence not only undermines the legitimacy of elections but also raises significant concerns regarding the integrity of the democratic system. Post-election violence in 2011 resulted in the killing of over 800 people (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Pre and post-election violence of 2015 and 2019 claimed more than 100 and 150 lives respectively (Campbell, 2019). And government's response to citizens' insistent demand for good governance has been violent and repressive (Iwuoha & Aniche, 2022; United States Institute of Peace, 2020). Instead of reinforcing democratic principles, elections in Nigeria often intensify pre-existing societal tensions, turning democratic processes into triggers for conflict rather than facilitating peaceful transitions of authority. In Nigeria's democracy, leaders emerge through imposition by political parties and fraudulent elections, raising the question of legitimacy.

In a similar vein, it can be argued that Nigerian democracy is synonymous with ethnic politics, which is a critical challenge to Nigeria's efforts at nation-building. With over 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria's democracy, rather than fostering national unity, has often deepened ethnic divides (Njoku, 2025). And politicians tend to manipulate ethnic affiliations to garner political support, thereby entrenching divisions rather than encouraging inclusivity. In a multi-ethnic country like Nigeria, a shared sense of belonging across ethnic divides is the beginning of unity, stability and nation building. However, through skewed and lopsided appointments that favour his ethnic group against other groups, former president Buhari was accused of deliberate exclusion and marginalisation of the Southeast when he appointed no military chief or any top government official from the zone in his 8 years in office. Similarly, president Tinubu is toeing the same line by appointing majority of his cabinet members from his Yoruba ethnic group (Obiukwu & Njoku, 2024).

According to Egbujo (2024), a “Yoruba is the Inspector General of Police, a Yoruba is the EFCC Chairman, a Yoruba is the Head of the Department of State Services (DSS), a Yoruba is the Attorney General of the Federation and a Yoruba is the Chief Justice of the Federation (CJN).” In addition, a Yoruba is the Governor Nigeria's Central Bank (CBN), a Yoruba heads the Ministry of Marine & Blue Economy, a Yoruba is the Minister of Finance, a Yoruba heads the Ministry of Interior, a Yoruba heads the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, a Yoruba is the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment and many others. In total disregard to the Federal Character principle, in Tinubu's October 2024 cabinet reshuffle, four ministers come from Ogun state while only 5 are from the Southeast (Agbakwuru & Ajayi, 2024; Dania et al., 2024). Thus, a democracy that allows the President and the entire criminal justice system in the hands of one ethnic group cannot maintain public order or foster nation building. In this situation, the notion of a unified Nigerian identity diminishes and gives way to a fragmented society where group interest overshadows national priorities. Since assuming office two years ago, President Tinubu's pattern of appointments has been criticised for failing to reflect Nigeria's constitutionally required diversity. The distribution of positions within his Presidency has disproportionately favoured his South-West ethnic nationality and selected northern zones, while other geo-political zones such as the South-East and South-South, have been conspicuously underrepresented. This tendency suggests a consolidation of power within his immediate regional network. The controversy was reignited following the inauguration of an eight-member National Housing and Census Committee, in which five of the appointees hail from the South-West, further reinforcing perceptions of regional bias (Shuaibu, Clement & Aliyu, 2026).

In search for national integration, such concepts as Quota system, Federal Character and Zoning Formula have all been introduced to create sense of belonging and address feelings of alienation in Nigeria (Okeke, Nnamani & Akajife, 2022). Despite these efforts, the democratic governance in Nigeria has created bitterness, rancour, ethnic division and undermined nation building efforts (Njoku, 2025). On 1st October, Nigeria marked its 64th independence anniversary amidst widespread protests fuelled by increasing public anger over rising inflation, worsening insecurity and soaring fuel prices (Odeniyi, Angbulu & Tolu-Kolawole, 2024). Likewise, in August 2024, violent protests erupted in multiple cities across Nigeria as frustrated citizens took

to the streets, voicing their anger over economic hardship and bad governance occasioned by anti-people policies (Aljazeera, 2024; Njoku & Mmougbo, 2025). These protests reflect increasing public discontent over the failure of democracy to protect lives and provide basic welfare (Princewill & Busari, 2024). When these fundamental functions are neglected, it signals a breakdown in social order. With high unemployment rates, Nigerian youths are at the forefront of discontent as they grapple with economic uncertainty. This corroborates a study by Afrobarometer (2024) that over 70 percent of Nigerians are dissatisfied with the current state of democracy in Nigeria. This widening gap between democratic expectations and reality underscores the need to re-evaluate democratic governance in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's democratic experience has remained fragile since independence. This is partly due to the colonial legacy of arbitrarily drawn borders that merged over 250 ethnic nationalities into a single political entity. Despite adopting a democratic constitution and a federal system, the country's governance framework has been undermined by weak democratic institutions, elite capture, and persistent ethno-regional divisions. At 64 years of statehood, national discourse remains polarised between advocates for unity and proponents of fragmentation. While democracy is widely recognised as a vehicle for peace, stability, and development, the trajectory of Nigeria's Fourth Republic demonstrates that democratic practice can exacerbate public disorder and weaken nation-building efforts when poorly institutionalised.

A democracy that fails to deliver tangible socio-economic benefits and foster a shared national identity risk degenerating into an empty ritual, akin to authoritarian rule. To reverse this trajectory, Nigeria must prioritise reforms that strengthen the independence, transparency, and capacity of democratic institutions, particularly the electoral commission, judiciary, and anti-corruption agencies, to uphold the rule of law and ensure credible electoral processes. Governance must be more inclusive, guaranteeing equitable political representation and resource allocation to all ethnic, religious, and regional groups in order to reduce grievances and foster a sense of belonging. Expanding nationwide civic education programmes that promote democratic values, tolerance, and national identity, especially among the youth, will be essential to creating a politically conscious citizenry.

Moreover, embedding permanent mechanisms for inter-ethnic dialogue, conflict prevention, and community-based peacebuilding can help address public disorder before it escalates into violence. Prioritising social investments in education, healthcare, and job creation will address the socio-economic inequalities that fuel unrest, while reforming the security sector to professionalise its operations and ensure respect for human rights will reduce the militarisation of public order. By embedding these measures within Nigeria's democratic framework, governance can shift from being a source of instability to a catalyst for national integration, public order, and sustainable development. Only a democracy that delivers both political inclusion and socio-economic dividends can strengthen the fragile bonds of nationhood and secure Nigeria's stability in the long term.

References

- Adebanwi, W. (2023). Chronology of the Fourth Republic. In Author (Ed.) *Democracy and Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Governance, Political Economy, and Party Politics 1999-2023*, (pp. xviii–xxxiii). Chronology, Boydell & Brewer.
- Adediran, I. (2020). How hoodlums took advantage of #EndSARS, wreaked havoc in Lagos, *Premium Times*, 25 October. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/422983-how-hoodlums-took-advantage-of-endsars-wreaked-havoc-in-lagos.html?tztc=1>
- Adelaja, B. (2020). Hoodlums hijack #EndSARS protests in Lagos. *Vanguard*, 24 October. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/10/hoodlums-hijack-endsars-protests-in-lagos/>
- Adelakun, A. (2013). “The Story of Cain, Abel and Nigeria,” in Ajayi, A. T. and Ojo E.O. (2014). Democracy in Nigeria: Practice, Problems and Prospects. *Developing Country Studies*, 4 (2).
- Afrobarometer (2024). African insights 2024: Democracy at risk – the people's perspective. Accra: Ghana. https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Afrobarometer_FlagshipReport2024_English.pdf
- Agbakwuru, J. and Ajayi, O. (2024). Cabinet rejig: Tinubu sacks 6, appoints 7 ministers, *Vanguard*, 24th October <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/10/cabinet-rejig-tinubu-sacks-6-appoints-7-ministers/>
- Agwam, C. (2024). Nigeria's out-of-school children now 18.3m – UNICEF, *Vanguard*, May 9. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/05/nigerias-out-of-school-children-now-18-3m-unicef/>
- Ajayi, A. T. and Ojo E.O. (2014). Democracy in Nigeria: Practice, Problems and Prospects. *Developing Country Studies*, 4 (2), 107-125.
- Ajayi, O. (2020). Leadership vacuum led to hijack of #EndSARS protests — PGF DG, *Vanguard*, 8 November, <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2020/11/leadership-vacuum-led-to-hijack-of-endsars-protests-%E2%80%95-pgf-dg/>
- Akinyetun, T. S. (2022). Democratic Backsliding in Africa: Understanding the Current Challenges, *Social Science Research Council*, 20 September. <https://kujengamani.ssrc.org/2022/09/20/democratic-backsliding-in-africa-understanding-the-current-challenges/>
- Alemika, E. E. O., & Chukwuma, I. C. (2000). *Police-Community Violence in Nigeria*. Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN).
- Alesina, A. and Reich, B. (2015). Nation-building. https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/alesina/files/nation_building_feb_2015_0.pdf
- Aljazeera, (2024). Hundreds protest across Nigeria over soaring cost of living, fuel prices, 1 August. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/1/hundreds-protest-across-nigeria-over-soaring-cost-of-living-fuel-prices>
- Asoga-Allen, K. (2016). Nigerian Democracy and Democratic Experience: An Historical,

- Political, Economic, Social and Religious Analysis. CreateSpace Independent Publishing.
- Azeez, B. (2024). Political scientists fault Nigeria's liberal democracy. *Nigerian Tribune*, 25 October. <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/political-scientists-fault-nigerias-liberal-democracy/>
- BBC. (2015). Nigeria election: Muhammadu Buhari wins presidency <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32139858> 1 April.
- Busari, S. and Princewill, N. (2024). Violence erupts as Nigerians protest hunger across the nation, *CNN*, 1 August. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/01/africa/nigeria-mass-protests-against-hunger-intl/index.html>
- Cammack, D. (2019). The Dēmos in Dēmokratia. *The Classical Quarterly*, 69 (1), 42–61.
- Campbell, J. (2019). Tracking Election Violence in Nigeria. *Council on Foreign Relations*, 15 February. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/tracking-election-violence-nigeria>
- Crick, B. (1962). Defense of Politics. in Flinders, Matthew, 'A Defence of Politics against Itself', *Defending Politics: Why Democracy Matters in the 21st Century Oxford Academic*, 10 Feb. 2015
- Dahl, R. A. (1956). *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. University of Chicago Press.
- Damele, G. Campos, AS (2022). Introduction. *Elite Theory: Philosophical Challenges*. Topoi (Dordr). 41(1):1-5.
- Dania, O. et al. (2024). Cabinet reshuffle: Presidency defends Tinubu as FG slashes ministers' vehicles, aides, *Punch*, 25th October.
- Delican, M. (2018). Elite Theories of Pa Reto, Mosca and Michels. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323664537_elite_theories_of_pa_reto_mosca_and_michels
- Dickson, D. (2014). *The People's Government: An Introduction to Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Edigheji, O. (2020). *Nigeria Democracy Without Development: How to fix it: Lagos: A'lime Media Limited*.
- Egbujo, U. (2024). Is Tinubu settling scores? *Vanguard*, 26th October <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/10/is-tinubu-setting-scores/>
- Ekeh, P. (1975). Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17(1), 91-112.
- Gambari, A. I. (2008). The Challenge of Nations: The Case of Nigeria. A Lecture Delivered at the First Year Anniversary of Mustapha Akani Foundation, Sharaton Hotel, Abuja. 17 February.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Beacon Press.
- Hadden, T. and Harvey C. (1999). The Law of Internal Crisis and Conflict. *International Review*

of the Red Cross. 81(833); 119-33.

Higley, J. (2010). Elite Theory and Elites. In: Leicht, K.T., Jenkins, J.C. (eds) *Handbook of Politics. Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research*. Springer.

Hoffmann, L.K. and Wallace, J. (2023). Democracy in Nigeria. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/06/democracy-nigeria>.

Human Rights Watch (2011). Nigeria: Post-Election Violence Killed 800. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/05/16/nigeria-post-election-violence-killed-800>

Iwuoha, V. C., & Aniche, E. T. (2022). Protests and blood on the streets: repressive state, police brutality and #EndSARS protest in Nigeria. *Security Journal*, 35 (4), 1102–1124.

Jain, A. (2024). Can we end forced displacement in Nigeria? United Nations Refugee Agency, 20 June.

Joseph, R. (1991). *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*. Cambridge University Press.

Keman, H. (2024). *Democracies in Peril? Waves of Backsliding*. Routledge.

Komolafe, A. (2023). The Nature of Democracy in Nigeria. *This Day*, 26 February.

Lewis, P. (2006). *Growing Apart: Oil, Politics, and Economic Change in Indonesia and Nigeria*. University of Michigan Press.

Lichbach, M. I. (2013). *Democratic Theory and Causal Methodology in Comparative Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Louis-Udeh, C. (2018). Right to Life and Property in Nigeria: A Failed Reality. *Alliances for Africa*, 3 July.

Maloy, J. S. (2023, October 28). elite theory. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/elite-theory>

Nwachukwu, J.O. (2020). Benin Prison: End SARS protests have been hijacked, many raped, killed – Philip Shaibu cries out. *Daily Post*, 20 October.

Njoku, E.C. (2025). The 'un-palliating' Palliative: The Politicization of Food Palliative in Nigeria. *University of Jos Journal of Political Science*, 2(1); 207-222.

Njoku, E. C. (2025). Democracy, Ethnic Politics and Nation Building in Nigeria, 2015 – 2024, *Journal of Nation-Building and Policy Studies*, 9(1). 53-73.

Njoku, E. C. and Ndom, D.A. (2025). The Politics of food Palliative: Analysis of the nexus between food palliative administration and bad governance in Nigeria. *Abuja journal of Peace & Development Studies*. 1(1). 99-114

Njoku, E. C. and Mmougbo, C. C. (2025). Assessing The Impact of the 2023 Fuel Subsidy Removal on Low-Income Families in Nigeria. *Alvan Journal of Social Sciences*, 2 (1), 1-18

- Njoku, E. C. & Sidhu, J.S. (2021). Beyond Religious Fundamentalism: Multidimensional Poverty and Boko Haram's Appeal Among Northern Nigerian Youths. *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*. 9 (1). 68-87
- Njoku, E.C., Mbionwu, O, K. & Njoku, S.C. (2025). The Political Economy of Corruption and Sustainable Development in Nigeria, 2015–2024. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, IX (Vii). 2135- 2147
- Njoku, E. C., & Sidhu, J. S. (2017). Fighting Boko Haram: Military offensive or socio-economic solution? *Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, 5(1), 89–97. <https://doi.org/10.22452/mjir.vol5no1.7>
- Njoku, E. C. (2025). The IPOB Question: Separatist Agitation and State Repression in Southeast Nigeria. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 15(6). 2306-2321.
- Njoku, E.C., & Obiukwu, C.I. (2025). The Nexus Between Insurgency, Armed Banditry and Secessionist Movements: Revisiting Nigeria's Indivisibility. *Journal of Security Management Policy and Administration*. 2(1). 185-197.
- Nwankpa, M. (2023). *Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2021: A Militarised Democracy*. Routledge.
- Nwokedi, M. and Ngwu, E., (2018). The Challenges of Nationhood and State-building in Nigeria's "Fourth" Republic, *African Heritage Institution*.
- Obi, C. I. (2005). "The Oil Paradox: Reflections on Oil, State and Accumulation in Nigeria and Angola." *Africa Development*, 30(4), 1-24.
- Obiukwu, C. I., & Njoku, E. C. (2024). Social Movements and National Security in Nigeria: A Study of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). *African Quarterly Social Science Review*, 1(3), 95-108.
- Ojo, J. S. (2023). Transforming Pacifists into Warmongers? Separatist Movement, State Repression, and the Politics of Framing Terrorism in Nigeria: Evidence from IPOB and Yoruba Nation's Freedom Frontiers. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 19(3), 377–412.
- Ojo, J. S., Oyewole, S., & Aina, F. (2023). Forces of Terror: Armed Banditry and Insecurity in North-west Nigeria. *Democracy and Security*, 19(4), 319–346.
- Okeke, M.I., Nnamani, D.O. and Akajife, E.L. (2022). Federal Character Principle and Nation Building in Nigeria: Focus on Federal Civil Service Recruitment, *Nnadiabube Journal of Religion, Culture & Society*, 2(1). 1-18
- Okorn, N.D. (2019). The Challenges of Nation-Building in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Research*. 9 (9): 565-568.
- Omotola, J.S. (2010). Elections and democratic transition in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic. *African Affairs*, 109 (437), 535–553.
- Onuoha, F. C., Alumona I. M., Oshita, O.O. (2019). *Internal Security Management in Nigeria:*

Perspectives, Challenges and Lessons. Springer Nature.

- Onwuka, A. (2023). Democracy is not Nigeria's problem. *Punch*, 28 November. <https://punchng.com/democracy-is-not-nigerias-problem/>
- Onyekpere, E. (2023). Giving democracy a bad name. *Punch*, 4th September. <https://punchng.com/giving-democracy-a-bad-name/>
- Osaghae, E. E. (2002). *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*. Indiana University Press.
- Oyugi, W.O. (1995). *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa*. East African Educational Publishers.
- Pakulski, J. (2018). *The Development of Elite Theory*. In: Best, H., Higley, J. (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Paris, R. (2004). *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pateman, C. (1970). *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sieff, K. (2015). Nigeria opposition candidate wins presidency in historic race. *The Washington Post*.
- Shuaibu, F. Clement, P.S & Aliyu, A. (2026). CENSUS: Criticisms trail composition of census committee. *Daily Trust*, 18 April.
- Suberu, R. T. (2001). *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Sule, B., Sambo, U. (2024). *Historical Background of Nigeria's Fourth Republic*. In: Presidential Elections in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Palgrave Studies in Presidential Politics. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Allen, F. (2024). Nigeria has a democracy deficit – corruption and a lack of welfare policies are to blame. *The Conversation*, 24 January.
- Okafor, D. (2024). We've had years of unbroken civil rule, not democracy-Elochukwu, *The Sun*, 27th July. <https://thesun.ng/weve-had-years-of-unbroken-civil-rule-not-democracy-elochukwu/>
- Umar, A. (2024). One in Three Nigerian Children Out of School, Says UNICEF. *Channels*, 27 June.
- UNICEF Nigeria, (2022). UNICEF warns of Nigerian education crisis as world celebrates International Day of Education amid COVID-19 concerns. 24 January.
- United States Institute of Peace Press. (n/d) Public Order. <https://www.usip.org/guiding-principles-stabilization-and-reconstruction-the-web-version/rule-law/public-order>
- United States Institute of Peace. (2020). Protests Test Nigeria's Democracy and its Leadership in Africa, 22 October. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/10/protests-test-nigerias-democracy-and-its-leadership-africa>

- Walters, S. (2010). International Encyclopedia of Education (Third Edition). Elsevier, 198-203.
- Whitehead, L. (2001). *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas*. Oxford University Press.
- Wojtasik, W. (2013). Functions of Elections in Democratic Systems, *Political Preferences*, 4, 25-38.