

A Comparative Analysis of Party Politics and Democratisation in Nigeria and Ghana, 1999-2022

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ABSTRACT

This study compared party politics and democratisation in Nigeria and Ghana, between 1999 and 2022. Utilizing the Marxist theory of the state, longitudinal research design, qualitative method of data collection, and qualitative method of data analysis, the study investigated how the structure of the election management body impacts on intra party democracy, as well as how the ideological base of political parties' impact on the rule of law in Nigeria and Ghana. The study found a weak structure of the election management body to account for more abuses of intra-party democracy in Nigeria relative to Ghana. The study equally observes that the weak ideological base of political parties undermines compliance with the rule of law more in Nigeria than in Ghana. It, therefore, argues that the Nigerian state more than the Ghanaian state is characterized by limited institutional autonomy which undermined the orderly transfer of political power by the ruling political party to the opposition political party with implications for democratization. Among others, the study is of the view that the Independent National Electoral Commission be structurally and institutionally repositioned to strengthen party politics in Nigeria like in Ghana.

Keywords: Party Politics, Democratization, Election Management Bodies, Intra-Party Democracy, Rule of Law

INTRODUCTION

Africa has witnessed the resurgence of domestic pressures for democratization and political reforms following the upsurge of political reforms and democratic change witnessed across the continent in 1990s [1]. Among the consequences of these pressures was the dismantling of previously autocratic regimes and their replacement with constitutionally elected leaders through multi-party politics and periodic elections. With the increase in the number of countries imbibing liberal democracy since then, liberal democratic principles appear to have been accepted as the *sine qua non* to the endemic and protracted political crises in Africa [2]. In West Africa, the rebirth of constitutional rule in the early 1990s was dramatic because it was against the background of repressive military regimes and one-party dictatorships that had held sway in the sub-region. The enthronement of constitutional rule, anchored on broad-based participation, rule of law, multipart, and periodic elections, among others, therefore, created some hope that the time had come for the countries in the sub-region to restore a stable political environment for sustainable development [3, 4]. Unfortunately, the expectations for democracy dividends in the form of a stable political atmosphere, credible elections, smooth political transition, good governance, and nation-building in the region are yet to materialize. Paradoxically, the continent is still characterized by abuse of power, especially by the incumbent, massive electoral malpractice, repression of the opposition parties, and political instability [5]. The numerous challenges attendant to the restoration of constitutional rule in West Africa notwithstanding, some countries in the sub-region appear to have fared better than others about the level and depth of democratic consolidation. For instance, a survey by [6] indicates that while Ghanaians are among the most satisfied with their democracy, Nigerians are among the least satisfied. Again, in the 2015 Freedom House Rating of the countries in the sub-region on political rights, civil liberties, and current freedom status, Ghana was rated as 'free', while Nigeria was rated as 'partly free' [7]. The implication, therefore, is that Nigeria and Ghana, notwithstanding a high degree of political, socio-cultural, and economic affinities, were classified differently in terms of political rights, civil liberties, and freedom status. The practice of multi-party politics in Nigeria and Ghana variously witnessed periods of military interregnum between 1966 and 1998, and the transition from military dictatorship to constitutional rule in the 1990s [8]. The practice of multi-party politics in both countries has been characterized by periodic elections. Thus, Ghana, since 1992, has held six consecutive elections in

December 1993 and 1996 which Lt. Colonel Jerry Rawlings won, in December 2000 and 2004 which John Agyekum Kufour won, in December 2008 in which John A. Mills won and the December 2012 elections, which brought John Mahatma to power, Nigeria, since 1999, has also witnessed four consecutive elections in February 1999; April 2003 both won by Olusegun Obasanjo, in April 2007 elections won by Musa Yar'Adua, the 2011 elections which brought President Goodluck Jonathan and the 2015 general elections which saw the emergence of Muhammadu Buhari [9, 10]. Like their predecessors, the current political parties in Ghana are driven by the core values of democracy. Hence, while some of the political parties had emerged from an old political tradition dating back to the 1950s and subscribed to conservative liberalism, others were entirely new political entities [11]. In 1992, three of these political parties went into alliance with the National Democratic Congress which won both the presidential and parliamentary elections. Six others joined the New Patriotic Party to ally with opposition parties [12, 13]. Four years into constitutional rule, eight of the political parties had survived to contest the 1996 elections. By 2004 the political arena had stabilized enough to allow only the better organized political parties [14]. Ghana has equally witnessed the emergence of two political parties (the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party) dominating the political scene and alternating political power since the outset of the current constitutional democracy in 1992.

Like in Ghana, political parties in Nigeria have played a vital role in the realization of democratic objectives. Indeed, the last fifty years have seen the emergence of various political parties in Nigeria. The enthronement of civil rule in 1999, however, led to a new approach to party politics in Nigeria because the procedure for registering political parties was liberalized, thereby, opening up the political space for mass participation in political activities in the country [15]. But unlike in Ghana, the first fifteen years of civil rule in Nigeria were marred by electoral irregularities and the dominance of one party, despite the existence of over 50 political parties. Members of opposition parties are rarely active after elections to check the excesses of the ruling party and to proffer alternative policies. They either move to the ruling political party to seek accommodation immediately after elections or remain politically inert only to bounce back to life in the next election. Where such opposition parties attempt to remain active to play the role of opposition in democracy, they experience various forms of repression by the incumbent [16]. Given the contradictory trajectories of the Nigerian and Ghanaian experience in party politics and democratization since the restoration of constitutional rule, it has become imperative to study the link between party politics and democratization in Nigeria and Ghana, between 1999 and 2022. Because no systematic attempt has been made to address the foregoing knowledge gap, this study shall attempt to do so in the context of the following research questions:

1. How does the structure of the election management body impact intra-party democracy in Nigeria and Ghana?
2. How does the ideological base of political parties impact the rule of law in Nigeria and Ghana?

Objectives of the Study

Broadly, this study seeks to examine the link between party politics and democratization in Nigeria and Ghana, between 1999 and 2022. The specific objectives are to:

1. Determine how the structure of the election management body impacts intra-party in Nigeria and Ghana.
2. Find out how the ideological base of political parties impacts the rule of law in Nigeria and Ghana.

Hypotheses

The understated hypotheses guided the study:

1. The weak structure of the election management body accounts for abuses of intra-party democracy in Nigeria relative to Ghana.
2. The weak ideological base of political parties undermines compliance with the rule of law more in Nigeria relative to Ghana.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a longitudinal research design. Longitudinal design involves observing several variables for sometimes [17]. In a longitudinal study, the same sample is repeatedly observed over a period. This enables researchers to observe and measure changes in variables over time and associate them with causal factors.

With longitudinal studies, changes, trends, and patterns in human behavior are easily described and quantified. Hence, longitudinal research studies the development, and transformation of natural history and course of events. With these advantages, a longitudinal design is regarded as superior to a cross-sectional design. In applying longitudinal design to our study, our verification of hypotheses involved retrospective observation of some relevant variables in party politics and democratization in Nigeria and Ghana and ascertaining how they developed and transformed over time.

Methods of Data Collection

The study relied on documentary methods to generate the relevant secondary data for this study. The documentary method is relevant to the study because the information or data required for the study are already in the public domain. What is needed is to refine, interpret, evaluate, and analyze them. It is not the kind of

information elicited through interviews and questionnaires [18, 19]. The study shall adopt the documentary method because what is required for the analysis of the issues is verifiable data, which are already available in written documents, and not personal opinions of individuals. Relevant secondary data were drawn from official documents to be drawn from the Ghanaian Embassy in Nigeria, Independent National Electoral Commission, Abuja; Electoral Commission, Accra; Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA); The Electoral Institute (TEI), Abuja; and National Democratic Institute (NDI), among others. The study equally relied on secondary data from books, journal articles, conference papers, periodicals, and other relevant articles on party politics and democratization in Nigeria and Ghana.

Methods of Data Analysis

Since the study utilized textual qualitative content analysis rooted in systematic logical deductions. Content analysis was used to organize and synthesize the large volumes of qualitative data we shall generate during this study, search for patterns discern what is relevant and, on that basis, draw our inferences and conclusions. The use of content analysis in this study is apposite because it moves deeper into the sphere of interpretation to comprehend the manifest and the latent content of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Empirical Verification

Structure of Election Management Body and Intra-Party Democracy in Nigeria and Ghana

Structure of Election Management Body in Nigeria and Ghana

a. Funding

To guarantee free, fair, and credible elections, adequate funding of the election management body is needed. Inadequate funding of electoral processes occurs when governments are unable to appropriate sufficient funds or ensure timely disbursement of approved funds [20]. This affects the capacity and operational efficiency of EMBs. In the event of inadequate funding, EMBs have had to grapple with the perennial challenges of how to acquire and successfully deploy new technologies in areas of voter registration, voting, vote counting, and result transmission. The increased emphasis on access issues such as the provision of mobile polling stations, facilities for absentee voting, facilities for voters with disabilities, and multilingual electoral information, has also had financial implications. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the body that conducts and manages elections in Nigeria. INEC came into existence via Section 153 (1) (f) as elaborated by Part 1 of the Third Schedule, Section F of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended). Regarding funding, before the amendment of the 1999 constitution, INEC was funded like other government agencies. Thus, the Commission then would submit its budget to the National Assembly for approval and thereafter would wait for the bureaucratic processes of fund disbursement. The constitutional provisions gave administrative autonomy to INEC but certainly not financial autonomy. With this, the budget of the Commission was strictly regulated by the government, and this seriously affected the planning, coordination and effective execution of the activities of the Commission [21]. For instance, in the build-up to the 2003 and 2007 general elections, the disbursement of funds was a major challenge that led to substantial delays in the electoral process. Disbursement of funds was delayed and as such, voter registration did not begin as scheduled [22]. In effect, the 2003 and 2007 general elections were widely criticized as largely flawed, and the Commission was generally held accountable for several shortcomings, including badly compiled voter register, shoddy preparations for the elections, poor management of results, seeming inability to control the negative actions of political parties [22]. In effect, there were widespread insinuations that the Commission was ill-prepared to conduct credible elections then. For instance, in the course of preparing for the 2003 general elections, INEC cried out three times for funds to enable it to adequately prepare and meaningfully execute its primary responsibilities [23]. Despite the repeated cries of the Commission, the release of funds was avoidably delayed. The delay greatly affected the operations of the Commission and its efficiency to the extent that it severely constrained the over half a million ad-hoc staff of various categories recruited to run the over 120,000 polling stations and collation centres in the country [24]. The same challenge was witnessed in the 2007 and 2011 general elections. In the 2007 elections, the delay in the release of funds to the Commission accounted for the late preparation and training of *ad-hoc* staff, as well as the delay in the distribution of INEC guidelines on the elections to local and foreign observers. In the 2011 general elections, the delay in the release of funds created a major burden on the new Commission to deliver noticeably improved elections in 2011 [25]. However, with the amendment of the 1999 Constitution, INEC is now directly funded by the Consolidated Revenue Fund. In light of this current arrangement, INEC is, at present, funded by the Consolidated Revenue Fund, which ensures that the Commission is not hindered in its operations by the many bureaucratic processes of budgeting and disbursement of funds [22]. With this arrangement, INEC is now able to timely prepare its budget for approval. Thereafter, the approved fund is directly released to the Commission through the INEC fund introduced in 2010 by the Electoral Act. The establishment of the INEC fund enables the Commission to effectively manage the disbursement of its

funds. It therefore makes sense to posit that the amendment of the 1999 Constitution guarantees the financial autonomy of the Commission by enhancing its capacity and independence.

The amendments of the 1999 Constitution notwithstanding, the reliance on the executive arm of government for budget and late release of the allocated funds still constituted one of the major challenges the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) grapples with. For instance, the Chairman of INEC, in the run-up to the 2011 general elections, raised alarm about the negative implications the delay in the release of funds would have for the electoral process [23]. [23], vividly captures the challenges the delay in disbursement of its funds posed to the operational efficiency of INEC in the conduct of the 2011 general elections.

The deduction that can be made from the foregoing is that despite the 2010 amendment of the 1999 Constitution and consequent direct funding from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, INEC was funded like any other government agency in that the Commission is required to submit its budget to the National Assembly for approval, and thereafter awaits the bureaucratic processes of fund disbursement. This substantially delayed the disbursement of funds with implications for the electoral process in the conduct of the 2003, 2007, and 2011 general elections in Nigeria.

In Ghana, the Electoral Commission (EC) is the body that manages elections. The EC is responsible for all public elections in Ghana. The Commission is made up of seven members. The Electoral Commission is provided for by Article 43 (1) of the Constitution. The main functions of the Commission are outlined in the Electoral Commission Act, 1993 (Act 451), as amended by the Electoral Commission (Amendment) Act, 2003. Although the Constitution does assign a lot of responsibilities to the Electoral Commission, it is important to note that all the functions the Commission is required to perform cannot be found in the Constitution itself. Indeed, the Constitution tells us exactly what the Commission will perform. In addition to the functions assigned to the Commission in the Constitution, Parliament may, by law, give the Commission other responsibilities [26].

Ghana has a long-standing tradition of electoral management bodies independent of the government. The current Electoral Commission in Ghana, which has been in operation since the restoration of democracy in the early 1990s, is an heir to the EMB tradition [27]. The EC has a remarkably wide mandate, with powers that extend beyond the conduct of general elections, to policing the activities of political parties. In the performance of its responsibilities, In Ghana, the Electoral Commission is independent and financially and functionally autonomous and this is recognised by almost all players in the country's electoral process. This explains the wonderful performance of the EC as well as its contribution to deepening and domesticating democracy in Ghana as evidenced by the successful conduct of general elections since 2000 [27].

As regards funding, the Electoral Commission of Ghana receives its revenue allocation from a first-line charge and has nothing to do with either the President of Ghana or the executive branch of government regarding funding. What this implies is that the EC, like in Nigeria before the amendment of the 1999 Constitution in 2010, is not funded like any other government agency. Again, if donor agencies and foreign countries make donations to the Electoral Commission, what happens is that the amount donated is subtracted from the budget and the Electoral Commission collects only the balance from the country's treasury. The implication of this is that the EC carries out its responsibilities in a transparent manner.

Aside from its transparency, the EC autonomously determines its budget and manages its financial resources. It decides the budget required for an election before submitting it to the executive, which cannot make amendments without consulting the Commission. The point being made is that though both INEC and EC are constitutionally constituted by the President, the EC has demonstrated some reasonable measure of independence, competence, and legitimacy more than the INEC. Unlike the INEC, the EC has grown in independence, professionalism, and assertiveness with every successive election since 1992 [28].

Aside from its independence and assertiveness, the EC enjoys the support of other institutional actors in the democratization process. This to a large extent has aided the Commission in the performance of its functions. This is in sharp contrast to the Nigeria experience, where the INEC, until 2011, was the butt of main political actors, including opposition parties, civil society, the international community, and the generality of the people. Then INEC was widely seen as not being independent, impartial, effective, and professional [28]. One important point to note is that, unlike Nigeria's INEC, Ghana's EC is less dependent on the executive arm of government for funding. This is responsible for the then challenges of INEC which include: abuse of the rule of law, poor preparations for elections, and inability to guarantee a level playing field for all parties and candidates, among others [29]. Based on these shortcomings, Ghana's EC is seen to enjoy a higher level of credibility and social trust than Nigeria's INEC. This was evident in a study carried out by [27] in which no fewer than 453 (95.16%) of the respondents boldly stated that they had no trust in the capability of INEC to successfully conduct elections in Nigeria in contrast to the Ghanaian case, where no fewer than 402 (98.62%) of the respondents expressed strong confidence and societal trust in the capability of the EC to conduct credible elections. INEC's massive dismissal by the respondents due to abysmal conduct of general elections in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007 stems from its perennial problems of lack of independence attendant to its composition and funding by the executive branch, poor

quality of its leadership and its corrupt dispositions then [30]. In conclusion, the Electoral Commission in Ghana in comparison to the Independent Electoral Commission in Nigeria exhibited a higher level of financial autonomy within the period under study.

Appointment and Turnover of Members of EMBs in Nigeria and Ghana

To maintain a high level of integrity required to effectively and efficiently perform their core responsibilities, members of election management bodies should possess a high level of management skills and commitment. In this regard, members of EMB should exhibit a wide range of skills to perform their functions creditably. Public confidence in EMB is enhanced where the electoral framework contains (1) qualifications for appointment of members of EMB that are clearly defined and appropriate for the complex task of managing electoral processes impartially and, (2) selection and appointment mechanisms that are transparent and based on the candidates' merits [31]. In Nigeria, members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) which consists of the Chairman, who is the Chief Electoral Commissioner, and twelve National Electoral Commissioners are carefully selected to represent the six geo-political zones of the country. The thirty-seven Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) are drawn from each of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Abuja. All these officials of INEC are appointed by the President of the Federation, subject to confirmation by the Senate. In the past, the appointment of Resident Electoral Commissioners, to whom INEC may delegate any of its powers, was solely a presidential prerogative. However, following the amendment of the 1999 Constitution in 2010, a presidential appointment of a Resident Electoral Commissioner requires Senate confirmation. Similarly, the removal of the chairperson is harder to accomplish. To do so, the President needs the support of a two-thirds majority of the Senate (See the 1999 Constitution as Amended). As regards the tenure of INEC Chairperson and Commissioners, the Independent National Electoral Commission Decree (1998) Part 1 Section 3 (1) provides that "the Chairman and members of the Commission shall each hold office for five years and on such terms and conditions as may be specified in their letters of appointment." What the provision of this section suggests is that INEC Chairperson and Commissioners are to be appointed every five years. Based on this provision, the election management body in Nigeria is characterised by period dissolutions, constitutions, and reconstitutions of its top echelon [22]. Table 1 which vividly presents the Chairmen of Electoral Commissions in Nigeria from 1960 to date is instructive in this regard.

Table 1: Electoral Commissions and their Chairmen in Nigeria, 1960-tii Date

Republic	Electoral Commission	Chairman	Tenure
First Republic	Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN)	1. Sir Kofu Abayomi 2. Chief E.E. Esua	1960-1964 1964-1966
Second Republic	Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)	3. Chief Michael Ani 4. Justice Ovie-whiskey	1979-1983 1983-1983
Third Republic	National Electoral Commission (NEC)	5. Prof. Eme Awa 6. Prof. Humphrey Nwosu 7. Prof. Okon Uya 8. Chief Sumner Dagogo-Jack	1987-1989 1989- 1993 1993-1994 1994-1998
Fourth Republic	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	9. Justice Ephraim Akpata 10. Dr. Abel Guobadia 11. Prof Maurice Iwu 12. Prof. Attahiru Jega 13. Prof. Mahmood Yakubu	1999-2000 2000-2005 2005-2010 2010-2015 2015-till date

Sources: [22]. A critical evaluation of electoral management bodies in Nigeria and the perennial problem of electoral management since independence in 1960. *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research (IJPAMR)*, 2 (5), 51.

Frequent turnover of members of the Independent National Electoral Commission has impacted negatively on the regulation of political parties and the conduct of credible elections in Nigeria. For instance, the bulk of INEC members who conducted the 2011 general elections came into office in June 2010 and assumed duty officially in the first week of July 2010. Given the subsisting legal framework for conducting elections in Nigeria then, this meant that the Commission had barely six months to prepare for the general elections, which had to be held by January 2011. It took the demands of stakeholders to amend the law to ensure that the Commission had adequate time to conduct the 2011 general elections. The elections finally took place in April 2011. In Ghana, the Electoral Commission is the official body responsible for all public elections. The Electoral Commission is made up of seven members. There are two Deputy Chairmen and four other members [26]. The current Commission was established by the Electoral Commission Act (Act 451) of 1993 [26]. The 1969 (Article 30(2)) and the 1979

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(Article 37(2)) Constitutions provide that the President shall, acting on the advice of the Council of State, appoint the Chairman, Deputy Chairmen, and other members of the Electoral Commission. The plain meaning of the provisions of the constitution is that the President is obliged to act on the advice of the Council of State in appointing the Chairman and members of the EC. The framers of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana did not break any new grounds in the process of appointing the Chairman and members of the EC and intended the meaning of advice as employed in the prior Constitutions [32]. The Chairman and commissioners of EC in Ghana, unlike members of Nigeria's INEC, are appointed for life and are accorded the same privileges as justices of the Superior Courts (Ghana Constitution 1992 Article 44). The relative independence of the EC, which has aided its electoral professional performance, relates to the fact that the Chairman of the EC and the two deputies have the same terms and conditions of service as Justices of the Court of Appeal, which means they cannot be removed arbitrarily but have to retire on attainment of statutory age limit [33]. The security of the job conferred on the leadership of the EC by this provision makes members of the EC have more stakes in the electoral process and to secure it more than the people because if they mess up the process, they may lose their 'secured' position (Interview in Ghana/November 2021). This has ensured a higher level of stability and continuity in membership of Ghana's Electoral Commission than Nigeria's INEC (Table 2).

Table 2: Present and Past Members of Ghana's Electoral Commissions

Office	Name	Term
Chairman	Jean Adukwei Mensa	August 2018 – present
Deputy Chairman	Eric Asare Bossman	August 2018 – present
Deputy Chairman	Samuel Tettey	August 2018 – present
Member	Mrs. Paulina Adobea Dadzawa	February 2004 – present
Member	Ebenezer Aggrey Fynn	March 2004 – present
Member	Sa-Adatu Maida	November 2010 – present
Member	Rebecca Kabukie Adjalo	November 2010 – present
Member	Adwoa Asuama Abrefa	August 2018 – present
Past Chairman		
Chairman	Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan	1993 – June 2015
Chairman	Charlotte Osei	June 2015 – June 2018
Past Deputy Chairman		
Deputy Chairman	Kwame Afreh	1992 – 1994
Deputy Chairman	David Azey Adeenze-Kangah	1993 – April 2012
Deputy Chairman	Kwadwo Sarfo-Kantanka	1993 – April 2013
Deputy Chairman	Sulley Amadu	May 2012 – June 2018
Deputy Chairman	Georgina Opoku Amankwaa	July 2013 – June 2018
Past Members		
Member	Dr. M.K. Puni	? – June 1995
Member	Elizabeth Solomon	? – February 2004
Member	Theresa Cole	? – February 2004
Member	Ernest Dumor	? – February 2004
Member	Nana Amba Eyiiba I, Efutuhemaa	February 2004 – 2010
Member	Eunice Akweley Roberts	February 2004 – 2010

Source: Electoral Commission of Ghana. www.ghanaweb.com. Retrieved 25 February 2023.

Table 2 clearly shows that unlike election management bodies in Nigeria that witnessed the emergence of seven chairpersons between 1993 and 2015, Ghana's Electoral Commission only witnessed the emergence of two chairpersons within the same period. This is because, since the early 1990s, only very few have left the Commission until they attained the mandatory retirement age.

Abuses of Intra-Party Democracy in Nigeria and Ghana

Intra-party democracy refers to the level of including party members in the decision-making and deliberation within the party structure [34]. The aim is to develop more democratic, transparent, and effective political parties. The absence of intra-party democracy in the affairs of political parties denies the society competent, diligent, and transparent leadership. There are at least two approaches to promoting intra-party democracy in political parties; one is advocacy, and the second is legal or regulatory [35]. Political parties adopt different methods of selecting candidates to compete in elections. Be that as it may, the method(s) political parties adopt in candidate selections

or nominations ultimately has implications on the candidates selected, nominated, or elected. This determines how they behave in both party affairs and public office [36]. Methods political parties adopt in candidate selection include internal party elections, consensus, centralization, and primaries (either restricted to party caucuses only or extended to ordinary party members) [37]. What is pertinent from the foregoing is that there are some extant institutional frameworks guiding the process of selecting and nominating candidates by the PDP. Unfortunately, the process often turns out chaotic and quarrelsome. Oftentimes, the process culminates in violent conflict resulting in participants sustaining serious injuries and even loss of lives. The reason for this ugly phenomenon is not far-fetched; the institutional frameworks in the PDP which are supposed to entrench and foster internal democracy are disregarded. The drama that was displayed by PDP on December 16, 2006, at Eagle's Square, Abuja during the presidential primaries is a shining example in this regard. It was reported that days before the primaries, it was common knowledge that Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the then Governor of Katsina State and late entrant for the presidential race for the party would emerge a winner. This was not unconnected with the alleged 'behind-the-scene' deals that played out before the primaries. As a result of this unpleasant development, other aspirants to the exalted position like Peter Odili, Donald Duke, and Sam Egwu were compelled to suddenly withdraw from the race. Anyhow, the party submitted that it only adopted a 'consensus' approach at the eleventh hour. But consensus exists only when people agree on something and they are more likely to agree when they share the same facts, assumptions, raw materials, methods, conclusions, and rules for arriving at those conclusions or inferences [38].

The same 'behind-the-scene' deals also characterized the conduct of the Ward and LGA congresses on 15th October 2005 by PDP. The lists of executives were drawn up from Abuja and given to the various local chapters for affirmation. With this, teeming members of PDP at the grassroots levels were denied the opportunity to exercise their right to vote. In this regard, [39] contends that the wider implication of the decision of the PDP to impose lists of executives on the local chapters was to curtail the influence of some notable members of the party, especially the Vice President and his loyalists. Further insight into the pattern of the conduct of the exercise showed that guidelines for the congress were not even approved by NEC as provided for in the Constitution and the voice-vote method was adopted instead of balloting. This led to the outbreak of violence in Taraba, Adamawa, Kano, Plateau, Rivers, Edo, Lagos, Anambra and Oyo states, among others. The same instances of violence were recorded in virtually all states, particularly Delta, Bayelsa, Oyo, Nasarawa, and so on, where the congresses were conducted. In fact, in Delta State, the congress did not even take place, but results were still presented. Not only were the results of the congress contentious, but at least three people were reported dead in Taraba state, and six in Degema LGA of Rivers State over disagreement of who controlled certain wards in the area [39, 37]. In short, the conduct of the congresses left much to be desired as they were undemocratic and non-transparent.

The ward and local government congresses of 15th October 2005, and the 2006 congresses and convention ended in chaos, confusion, and defections. The governorship primaries of the PDP resulted in several litigations. Aside from this, not a few candidates that had participated and emerged during the 2006 congresses were later changed by the party. In Lagos State, for instance, Mrs H. Williams won the primary election, but Senator Musliu Obanikoro was officially declared the candidate. The then Speaker of Rivers State House of Assembly, Rotimi Amaechi was declared the winner of governorship primaries only to be expelled from the party. In Imo State, Charles Ugwu, who came last in the election, was used to replace Senator Ifeanyi Ararume who won the primary election. Piqued by this ugly development, Senator Ararume took his case to the Supreme Court, which overturned the decision of PDP and held that the party abused democratic processes and violated its constitution in replacing Ararume. The court thus declared Ararume remained the candidate of the party. Dissatisfied with Ararume's action, the NWC expelled him just two days before the election [40, 37]. The same ugly scenario was evident in Oyo, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Katsina, among others. In Imo and Rivers States, the party was left without gubernatorial candidates.

Again, political parties are required to notify the INEC at least 21 days in advance of holding a primary, and the INEC is mandated to attend, monitor, and report on these internal polls. INEC often sets the deadlines for the conduct of all party primaries, following which parties were required to submit to INEC their final lists of candidates at least 60 days before election day. The deadline for withdrawal or substitution of candidates was 45 days before the election [41]. Despite these minimum standards, candidates for office in all parties were often chosen opaquely by party elites. Cases abound of questionable substitution, disqualification, and reversal of nomination of previously screened and cleared candidates by an interplay of party intrigues, naked power display, culture of impunity, and disregard for fair play and internal democracy. All these anomalies generally characterized the conduct of the 2003 and 2007 general elections in Nigeria. What is evident in the foregoing is that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) then was widely involved in unnecessary distractions, bordering primarily on litigation against candidates of opposition political parties in a bid to screen and disqualify them. For example, INEC attempted to stop Alhaji Atiku Abubakar – then Vice-President and presidential candidate of Action Congress (AC), a leading opposition party, from contesting the post of resident in

2003, despite that the electoral law made it clear that INEC does not have such powers [42]. Questionable substitution, disqualification, and reversal of nomination of previously screened and cleared candidates perpetrated by the PDP gave rise to several election tribunals and court cases. The most relevant example relates to the manipulation of party primaries to pave the way for anointed candidates of the godfathers, especially within the ruling PDP [43]. Where this failed, the party hierarchy, at the instance of the presidency, resorted to elimination by substituting the names of the preferred candidates for those who won the primaries. Although the 2011 primaries were adjudged better than the 2003 and 2007 primaries, INEC officials, the media, civil society, and party members reported that many were not conducted in conformity with the extant laws. The national conventions of all major parties were held without significant problems, but there were numerous allegations that delegates were offered financial inducements in exchange for votes. Similarly, state-level primaries were marred by allegations of misconduct and several violent incidents. For instance, rival party members were killed in Edo and Oyo States. Several parties acknowledged improper conduct in their primaries and committed to re-run them but could not do so before the deadline of January 15. Where primaries were rerun after the deadline, INEC challenged their validity in court. In some states, INEC's challenges were upheld; in others, judges ruled that the reruns were valid [41, 44]. For example, just three days before the re-scheduled National Assembly elections, the Federal High Court nullified PDP's primary election for Kogi West senatorial district and ordered that it be re-held. The most contentious primaries were related to the selection of PDP candidates, but other parties also experienced internal disputes and public protests. Aggrieved aspirants turned to courts and submitted complaints to INEC. In several states, several individuals campaigned for the same position on the same party ticket, which created confusion among the electorate. A case in point was two different CPC candidates contested the gubernatorial election in Kano and three in Taraba, [41, 45].

Sometimes parties submitted candidates who were not the individuals reported as having won party primaries by INEC staff who monitored those polls. In some cases, parties held credible primaries but later illegally substituted or withdrew their candidates. Several candidates alleged that their parties had illegally substituted them by forging their signatures on withdrawal documents. Some stakeholders criticized INEC's handling of the candidate nomination process. It is pertinent to state that the 2010 Electoral Act as Amended contains conflicting provisions about the process. Whereas Section 31 gives parties the power to submit names of candidates and mandates INEC to accept the candidate a party nominates, section 87 stipulates the procedure for candidates to be considered eligible. Thus, INEC's actions were based on candidates' failure to meet the eligibility criteria. To this end, it is obvious following the contention of [46], that the provisions of the extant law dilute INEC's ability to enforce internal party democracy. Although in the preparations for the 2011 general elections, the then INEC Chairman, Professor Jega had warned that aspirants whose names were not on INEC's official list should not campaign until court cases were resolved, his calls were usually unheeded. Therefore, abundant legal complications surrounding the selection of candidates – particularly for state and National Assembly races – meant that INEC was still not sure of the lists of candidates even after primary elections were conducted. To avoid a delay in printing ballots, INEC decided that ballots would show only party names and symbols and not candidate names [41]. Having examined internal democracy in the selection of candidates by political parties in Nigeria, we now proceed to evaluate what was obtained in Ghana. The kind of candidate a party chooses largely determines its competitive profile against its competitors during national elections and the loyalty of its members and supporters. How democratic was the process used by political parties to choose their candidates and leaders in Ghana and how did it differ from that of Nigeria? The constitutions of the NPP and NDC have legitimized elections as the only means for choosing leaders and nominating candidates to compete in national elections. At every level of the parties' organizations, that is, national, regional, and constituency, periodic elections are convoked to fill vacant positions. While the NPP elects its leaders every four years to manage the polling station, constituency, and regional and national organizations, every two years, the NDC chooses its constituency, regional, and national executives [47, 48].

However, unlike the most open and inclusive form of leadership and candidate selection is the direct ballot system where eligible party members pre-select party candidates and leaders through direct elections as used in Nigeria, the Ghanaian parties followed the registered membership model of the Western democracies even though the NPP and NDC lacked a well-developed membership registration policy. For instance, the Constitution of the NPP (1992) stipulates that in Polling Station Executive elections, all card-bearing and paid-up members in good standing in the Polling Station Area shall vote. In the case of the NDC, the registered members within the designated branches were directed to elect all nine branch executive members at a special branch meeting. Thus, the majority of the respondents in Ghana generally admitted that all the registered members of the parties were encouraged to participate in the election of their leaders even though a few of those eligible voted. To this extent, the processes for choosing the parties' leaders and candidates involved some of the rank-and-file members. Therefore, a good number of the respondents believed that the parties practiced democracy in their internal affairs.

Outside the polling station/branch levels, the parties adopted the Electoral College system to select their leaders. This is a form of party caucus in which representatives from the lower branch/constituency levels meet at the national level to formulate and enact rules to guide the party into the future and elect the leaders and candidates. In 2002 and 2006, the Constituency Executive Members (CEMs) of the NPP were elected by the Polling Station Executives at a constituency delegates' conference. Also, the RECs were elected by two delegates chosen by the Constituency Delegates' Conference and all the CEC members [48]. At the national level, the NEC was elected by a body, which comprised two delegates from each constituency, members of the National Council, representatives of patrons, founding members, and overseas branches, among others. In the case of the presidential candidates, a larger Electoral College which was made up of ten delegates from each constituency, representatives of patrons and founding members in each region, and overseas branches elected the flag-bearer at the National Delegates Conference (face-to-face interview with a member of NPP, 2014). Similarly, the NDC also adopted the Electoral College method to choose its leaders and presidential candidates. At the regional level, five delegates were chosen from the CEC and a small number of political appointees such as the Ministers and MPs elected the RECs. The NEC and the presidential candidates of the NDC were respectively elected by representatives from the constituencies, regions, affiliated organs, regional parliamentary groups, and overseas branches [48]. Our findings are in line with the outcome of a study carried out by [48]. The study revealed that parties widely advertised vacant positions through the parties' internal structures for aspirants to file their nominations to contest elective positions. The parties' constitutions articulated the rules and procedures for delegates to the parties' congresses/conferences to 'scrutinize' the contestants. The study further reported that even incumbent candidates faced strict scrutiny from the parties' scrutinizers. The transparent and objective manner in which the vetting proceeded ensured that even party stalwarts such as Kwame Mpianin who failed the test were disqualified by the NPP scrutinizers in 1996 [48]. In sum, although intra-party democracy and the process of selection of candidates and leaders by political parties in Nigeria and Ghana were far from being democratic and transparent, it is obvious that in Nigeria, party/political elites were much more involved in determining who gets what and when than in Ghana. Thus, cases abound in Nigeria of questionable substitution, disqualification, and reversal of nomination of previously screened and cleared candidates, naked power display, culture of impunity, and disregard for fair play and internal democracy more than in Ghana.

Ideological Base of Political Parties and Compliance to the Rule of Law in Nigeria and Ghana

Ideology and Party Programmes in Nigeria and Ghana

The weak ideological base of political parties is manifested in the inability of political parties in Nigeria to create distinct and recognizable party programmes which are more endemic in Nigeria as compared to Ghana. This is demonstrated in the following subsections. The liberalization of political parties for the return to civil rule in 1999 led to the resurgence of party politics in Nigeria beginning with just about three political parties due to the tight regulation by INEC. However, the Supreme Court judgment of November 8, 2002, voided INEC's guidelines which prevented the registration of more parties and declared that "INEC had no power to make guidelines on how an association can become a political party in so far as the constitution has covered the field in section 222...to restrict the formation of political parties weakens the democratic culture". This judgment further opened up the space for the registration of 27 more political parties by INEC. As a result, in the fourth republic, Nigeria has witnessed the emergence and operation of weak political parties. Many political parties operate as political properties of godfathers with no room for meaningful membership. Arising from the above, there has been a proliferation of political parties which lack distinct political party programmes based on recognizable ideology. As of the sixth round of general elections conducted by INEC in 2019, there were 91 registered parties in Nigeria ahead of the 2019 election, but national elections were contested between the two largest political parties - PDP and APC. Both parties also dominated the state elections, although some of the smaller parties were represented in the state assemblies. The parties were also dependent on regional strongmen who could be more powerful than national politicians and had no distinct programmes based on recognizable ideologies for mass mobilization. This can be seen from the aims and objectives of the two major political parties based on the analysis of their constitution. The incidence of vote buying (that is, exchange of "cash" or "gifts" for votes) has been on the increase during elections in Nigeria. Although vote buying is an offense under the Nigeria Electoral Act 2010, it still takes place at various stages of the election. During the party primaries, party delegates receive money from aspirants who want to be voted as party flag bearers. During the general elections proper, voters are given money and gifts by political parties to vote for their party candidates or even sell their voter's cards to some party agents. During the July 14 2018 gubernatorial elections in Ekiti State, there were reports of widespread vote buying across several polling units. Polling booths and ballot boxes were reported to have been positioned in a manner that undermined the secrecy of voting and aided vote buying [49]. This incidence of vote buying threatens the consolidation of democracy and may reverse the country's progress in the area of clean elections.

Political parties in Nigeria also adopt a combined strategy of vote-buying and violence to secure electoral victory given their failure to articulate compelling ideologies attractive to the electorates. Usually, when elections are

competitive, causing violence in opposition strongholds has been a strategy adopted by politicians to buy time and concentrate resources for supplementary elections. Political thugs are used to attacking collation centres in stronghold areas of the leading candidate, forcing the INEC officials to cancel the election process in those areas. A good example was Kano State where the elections were suspended when the opposition candidate was leading with 26 000 votes. In urban areas with strong opposition support, thugs invaded collation centres, which forced election officials to terminate the election process in parts of 28 different districts. Since the margin of the lead was smaller than the number of registered voters, a supplementary election was held two weeks later. In the interim, the governor targeted affected districts with development projects such as digging boreholes and rehabilitating clinics to boost his chances [50].

During the July 2018 Ekiti gubernatorial election, YIAGA Africa's Watching the Vote project recorded that 8 percent of the polling units they sampled experienced incidents of vote buying on election day. Similarly, citizen observer groups reported vote buying in the September 2018 Osun gubernatorial election by political parties as well as in preparation for the 2019 polls. In its fourth pre-election report released in January 2019, YIAGA Africa's observers witnessed the distribution of money or gift items in at least one LGA in each of Nigeria's 36 states and Abuja. Throughout the campaign period, citizen observer groups noted more vote buying, including political parties buying PVCs, presumably to suppress voter turnout in certain areas. During the Feb. 23 and March 9 polls 2019, IRI/NDI observers witnessed vote buying at polling units as well as party agents assisting voters in marking their ballots and violating secrecy. In Ghana, however, the formation of political parties is based on the constitutional provisions on freedom of association, movement, and political participation. This means that political parties in Ghana draw their strength from both the 1992 Constitution and other legislations relevant legislations in Ghana. Ghana's 1992 Constitution has elaborate space for multiparty politics. The liberal Constitution guarantees the right to form political parties. Article 55 (3) of the Constitution permits 'every Ghanaian citizen of 18 years and above the right to join political parties of his/her choice.

Hence, the right to establish political parties is reinforced by the Political Parties Act, of 2000 (Act 574). This legislation abolished the restrictions on the formation of political parties which was imposed by the Political Parties Law (PNDC Law 281) 1992. The law promotes the organization of political parties beyond primordial sentiments and stresses that political parties must have a national character. For instance, Article 55 (7b) of Act 574 insisted that "... a political party shall have branches in all the regions of Ghana and be organised in not less than two-thirds of the districts in each region" [51]. The high standards set for parties are reflected in the democratic value of inclusiveness in the major political parties in Ghana. To this end, members of the national executive committee are expected to be chosen from all the regions of Ghana, and membership of parties is not to be 'based on ethnic, religious, regional or other sectional divisions'. A salient feature of the legislative provision is the emphasis on internal party democracy. While parties were allowed to participate in national elections, they were prohibited from local government elections. In Article 55(3), political parties were prevented from contesting 'elections to District Assemblies or local government units'. Consequently, a look at the core values and aims of the top three political parties in the Fourth Republic shows remarkable distinctions among the parties. For instance, the Rawlings-led NDC adopted the social democracy philosophy. Its core values are equality and egalitarianism. Therefore, the NDC believes in the equal treatment of all persons irrespective of their social, cultural, educational, political, religious, and economic relations in a multi-party environment. While affirming market economy, the party promotes special policy interventions to mitigate the effects of capitalist-oriented markets on the vulnerable. Hence there is a heavy concentration of the ideals of redistribution, which takes money from the rich to the poor. Structurally, the party has a well-developed organizational structure that extends from the national to the branch level. The party's organized is structured along hierarchical lines such that at the apex, there is the National office followed by the Regional, Constituency, and Branch offices. Each of the offices is run by Executive Officers. The campaigns of the party are often framed around the party's philosophy. Given, that the party is ideologically connected to Social Democracy, its policy stands are underpinned by the ideals of Social Democracy while also drawing inspiration from socially-minded international associations such as the Socialist International (SI), an international association of parties that share in the socialist ideology [52]. On the other hand, the NPP belongs to the liberal-conservative tradition and therefore believes in the supreme dignity of man and common brotherhood of all persons including freedom of conscience, association, and expression. These ideals sprang from the UGCC era in the 1940s, the United Party (UP) in the aftermath of independence, and the Progress Party (PP) in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As a liberal-conservative party, the NPP's ideological position is center-right, which focuses on development in freedom, efficient economic management, free-market economy, open media, vigorous participation by citizens in economic activities within a climate in which free enterprise thrives for wealth creation, and prosperity for the citizens (well-captured as property-owning democracy). Structurally, the NPP is hierarchically organized with power flowing from top-down, namely national, regional, constituency, electoral area, and polling station levels. The party has overseas branches and special organs such as the youth and women's wings, tertiary institution (TESCON), and NASARA (Zongo)

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wings. The structure of the party ensures a close relationship between the headquarters, the region, and the constituency levels [52]. The PNC is a socialist party that grew from the ashes of Nkrumah's CPP, the party is ideologically center-left. The party believes in policies that will help reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. Accordingly, the party looks forward to implementing some social intervention policies that will help in achieving this goal. It claims that the NHIS implemented by the NPP under the Kufour administration was the brainchild of the PNC. The party believes in maintaining a high level of transparency and accountability in governance. The party leans on the ideals of Kwame Nkrumah which has the vision to deliver inclusive and sustainable development to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and promote equity, social justice, and self-determination for Ghanaians. It believes that all citizens should have equal opportunities for personal security, employment, self-fulfillment, and human dignity. It is a party for the poor and marginalized and inclusiveness that is premised on its core values of honesty, integrity, social justice, and accountability. The party observes internal democracy. All party leaders are elected at every level. The party has eight national leaders who are all elected [52]. Furthermore, unlike the campaign of calumny by political parties in Nigeria, campaigns by the major political parties in Ghana were issue based. For instance, the administration of Akufo-Addo-led NPP was accused of corruption. Claims were made in both cases that prominent Ghanaians with family and friendship ties to Akufo-Addo had tried to use these connections to gain control of the strategic sectors of power and minerals at the expense of the larger interests of Ghanaians. Akufo-Addo fought back during his 2020 campaign by presenting some of his government's flagship policy changes, particularly the Free Senior High School policy. He stressed that by July 2020, GH¢3.2 billion (over US\$ 5 billion) had been spent on the implementation of the SHS, the largest investment in a new policy introduced by the NPP government. The NDC under Mahama ran a campaign dubbed "The Rescue Mission". Hence, the 2020 NDC campaign manifesto sought to position the party as more welfare-orientated than the NPP, underscoring how important material security imperatives had become for Ghana's elections. The NDC responded to the NPP's education policy boast by raising the education promises of the NDC stating that, if it became the next administration, 50 percent of tertiary-level study fees would be absorbed by the government. The 2020 election results showed that the NPP lost its 63-seat majority in the Ghanaian Parliament and the party was left with only one seat more than the NDC. Akufo-Addo received 467,165 fewer votes than in 2016, bringing his winning margin down to 517,405 votes [53]. This is a clear demonstration of influencing the electorates with issue-based political campaigns by the top political parties in Ghana unlike the campaign of calumny experienced in Nigeria.

Suppression of Political Opponents in Ghana and Nigeria

Suppression of political opponents is another practice by incumbent political parties that is prevalent in Nigeria. To retain power, the PDP employed all forms of repressive strategies to frustrate the political activities of the opposition political parties which included the orchestration of structural violence against the opposition, the use of state security apparatus like the police, military, and EFCC to intimidate and harass members and supporters of the opposition parties. For instance, with regards to access to the state-owned media like the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). Again, the anti-corruption agencies of the state, particularly the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), were being used as a political weapon by the then-ruling PDP to harass, intimidate and frustrate the opposition out of politics. A good example was the experience of Atiku Abubakar, the AC presidential candidate who was indicted for corruption without a fair hearing by the EFCC. This indictment by the EFCC formed the basis for his disqualification from contesting the election. Again, the 2014 gubernatorial elections in Ekiti and Osun states were characterized by massive deployment of security personnel who intimidated, harassed, and arrested some members of the opposition political parties. In Ekiti alone, over 12,000 troops including soldiers, men of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, State Security Service, and police officers were deployed during the election. The then Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mohammed Abubakar attested to this deployment when he stated that the police alone had deployed three helicopters for surveillance in the three senatorial districts in the state with one Assistant Inspector General of Police and four commissioners of police for effective coordination of security operations as early as one week to the election. The police chief added that the number of troops, armoured tanks, and helicopters deployed in Ekiti was the highest ever to be deployed in any state in Nigeria for electioneering purposes. With the aid of the security personnel, members of the opposition like the Rivers State governor, Rotimi Amaechi, Edo state governor Adams Oshiomhole, and Kano State governor Rabiu Kwankwaso were denied entry into Ekiti State as they attempted to attend the last APC mega rally. Other opposition members like Imo State governor, Rochas Okorocha, and former governor of Lagos State Bola Tinubu were also barred from taking off at the Akure airport after the rally thereby forcing them to travel by road. As a result of the activities of the security personnel during the Ekiti elections, Adams Oshiomhole argued that the decision by Nigeria's security agencies to prevent him and other senior members of his party from attending the political rally was instigated by the ruling PDP. Similarly, during the August 9, 2014, gubernatorial elections in Osun, a total of 73,000 men comprising the

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army, police, and civil defense were deployed for the election in the state. The security personnel were also alleged to have been used to harass and intimidate members of the opposition.

One disturbing dimension of the use of security apparatus to intimidate members of the opposition as seen in Osun State was the use of hooded security operatives whose identity became difficult to know. Some members of the opposition were arrested by masked security personnel. This arrest of the opposition members by masked security personnel was reported by the Civil Society Group.

Incumbent's Disregard for Court Orders in Ghana and Nigeria

Generally, disregard for court orders is a practice by the incumbent across many African states in a bid to retain political advantage. However, this practice is more prevalent in Nigeria than in Ghana as experienced in the Fourth Republic. The Nigerian Fourth Republic has been characterized by the flagrant disregard for court orders by the incumbent as demonstrated in various cases where the court has issued a judgment that does not favour the incumbent. A good case is that of the former National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki who is facing multiple charges for alleged diversion of \$2.1 billion and illegal possession of firearms. Mr. Dasuki has been granted bail on at least six different occasions by various courts, but the Nigerian government has persistently refused to comply with the court orders. The Federal High Court in Abuja presided over by Justice Adeniyi Ademola in 2015 ordered the release of Mr. Dasuki's passport and permitted him to travel abroad for three weeks on medical grounds. Despite the order, the SSS refused to release Mr. Dasuki. Following the refusal of the administration to obey Nigerian courts, Mr. Dasuki approached a Court of the Economic Community of West Africa, ECOWAS, for international mediation on the matter. The ECOWAS court on October 4, 2016, ordered the Nigerian government to pay N15 million to the defendant as damages for his 'illegal and arbitrary detention'. Instead of obeying the court order, the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, remarked that the government was not under any obligation to respect that court order. Further, on January 17, 2021, the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court stressed that the fact of the said orders was indisputable. On April 6, 2021, the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court affirmed the decision to release Mr. Dasuki. Another example where the government has disregarded court order is in the case of Mr. El-Zakzaky who has been in detention without any trial for many months. Mr. El-Zakzaky was arrested by the military on December 14, 2015, after a clash between his IMN and officers of the Nigerian Army. At least 347 members of the group were killed during the clash. On December 2, 2016, the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court ordered the release of El-Zakzaky and berated the Nigerian government for violating his rights. The court ordered the release of Mr. El-Zakzaky and his wife and also asked that a fine of N50 million be paid to the detainees, while an accommodation be provided for them and their families. Despite warnings by the court that the Nigerian government would face further sanctions if it refused to abide by the order for the release of Mr. El-Zakzaky and his wife, that decision was not complied with. Instead, the federal government filed an appeal against the court ruling 10 days after the expiration of the deadline for Mr. El-Zakzaky's release. Several rallies have been held by members of the Shiite group demanding the release of their leader and his wife. Also, the government has yet to accuse him of any crime or file any charges against him. Data from the Global State of Democracy (GSoD) documented by [54], demonstrates that Ghana scored higher than Nigeria on indicators of fundamental human rights in the last 20 years from 2000 to 2020. The data as presented in Figure 6.1 showed that on a scale of 0 to 1, Nigeria has never scored up to 0.6 like its Ghanaian counterpart within the period the trend showed a decline for Nigeria which declined from a score of 0.57 in 2000 to 0.54 in 2020.



Figure 1: Source: International IDEA, (2022) Data Base Available online at <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/global-state-democracy-indices> accessed March 20, 2022.

Unlike the case in Nigeria, there is higher regards for rule of law in Ghana by the incumbent under the fourth republic. A lot of factors account for this. First, the 1992 general elections were significant for the openings they gave to the extra-parliamentary opposition led by leaders of the NPP to attack some of the existing obnoxious laws that restricted the rights of people and created the erroneous impression that the democratic transition had no impact on draconian legislation, whose existence was in direct conflict with the 1992 Constitution. The opposition used the courts in the struggle for a freer society under a democratic dispensation. Three of the numerous constitutional cases the NPP brought against the government demonstrated instances of respect for the rule of law in Ghana.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the link between party politics and democratization in Nigeria and Ghana, between 1999 and 2022 with a specific focus on the link between the weak structure of election management body and intra-party democracy by political parties in Nigeria and Ghana; as well as ideological base of political parties and compliance to the rule of law in Nigeria and Ghana. In light of the evidence articulated, the study demonstrated that the weak structure of the election management body accounts for more abuses of intra-party democracy in Nigeria relative to Ghana. The study equally showed that weak ideological base of political parties and undermine compliance to the rule of law more in Nigeria than in Ghana. The inability of political parties to create distinct and recognizable programmatic platforms for elections was evident. Thus, the will of money bag overrides the rules of political parties as primitive accumulation of votes and preponderance of machine politics reign supreme. This led to a decline in the rule of the less in Ghana than in Nigeria as evident in the suppression of press freedom and dissenting voices by the incumbent political party, arbitrary arrest and detention of political opponents, and flagrant disregard for court orders by the incumbent. In the light of this, we accepted our third hypothesis. The study, therefore, contends that the Nigerian state more than the Ghanaian state is characterized by limited institutional autonomy and an adverse political environment which adversely affect party politics and by so doing undermine democratisation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, we put forward the following recommendations:

1. The Independent National Electoral Commission should be structurally and institutionally repositioned to regulate the activities of political parties and other important stakeholders effectively and efficiently on the one hand and to conduct free, fair, and credible elections in Nigeria as in Ghana on the other.
2. State institutions, especially the security apparatus, need to be strengthened to enhance a level playing ground and fair competition between the party in power and the opposition. This is with a view to strengthening party politics and guaranteeing that the votes of the electorates count

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CITE AS: Ogbodo Stephen O. (2023). A Comparative Analysis of Party Politics and Democratisation in Nigeria and Ghana, 1999-2022. RESEARCH INVENTION JOURNAL OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 2(1):13-28.