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2019 Nigerian General Elections Were Extremely Expensive

Sulaiman T.H,[1]
Ajiteru,S.A.R,[2]
Abalaka, J.N,[3]

[1] Crown University Intl Chartered Inc. Faculty of Social Science, in USA, official partners' constituent campuses at government regulated universities worldwide and online operation
[2] Crown University Intl Chartered Inc. Faculty of Social Science, in USA, official partners' constituent campuses at government regulated universities worldwide and online operation
[3] Department of Political Science & International Relations Achievers University, Owo, P.M.B.1030 Owo Ondo State Nigeria.
staiwohassan99@yahoo.com
abalaka.james@yahoo.com
ajiterudr.sheriffdeen@gmail.com

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***Corresponding author:**
Sulaiman T.H[1]
staiwohassan99@yahoo.com

Abstract

This article looks at the actual and monetary costs of Nigeria's 2011 general elections. Using data and reports from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as well as reports on the financial operations of political parties, candidates, and other politicians, it examines the legal framework for funding the elections and makes an effort to project the expenses. Since a large portion of democratic political activity depends on financial resources, it makes sense that money and politics are inextricably linked. This essay investigates the consequences of Nigeria's unchecked political spending. Information used in the paper's conceptual and theoretical portions comes from historical and current records on individuals, the economy, and politics. The authors' observations of events and content analyses of reports derived from primary data gathered during the tracking of political funding in Nigeria's previous general elections, especially those of 2019, complement this. The paper employs a blend of the institutional method and structural theory for its analytical framework. According to this estimate, the cost was around N566.2 billion, or 2% of the GDP. Campaign and party funding is not included in this number. The article finds that the cost of the elections was too great for democracy to survive after examining other, non-monetary expenses, such as the destruction of property and lives in the violence that followed the polls. It makes recommendations in the hopes that future elections will be less expensive would be feasible without funding.

Key words: money, politics and culture, political finance management, administrative inefficiency, Nigeria

Introduction

Democracy depends on money, and political finance is "influenced by, and influences, relations between parties, politicians, party membership, and the electorate," according to Walecki (2019, p. 7). Unsettlingly, there is evidence from random surveys that suggests money is nearly always at the center of Nigerian politics. There is very little left over for real political mobilization, which is difficult in and of itself because of the appalling state of the nation's physical infrastructure. Illicit money is used to purchase opponents, garner support, and corrupt the system. Studies by Abalaka (2023) have detailed some of Nigeria's political finance issues. These are to both how it is raised, such as corruption in the public sector and income diversion, and how it is used, primarily to influence the results of elections Sulaiman, (2023).

Other malpractices, such electoral fraud and violence, that contributed to the fall of the First and Second Republics, 1960–1966 and 1979–1983, respectively, were partially explained by abuses related to political finance and democratic procedures. The unchecked use of political financing has become more obvious in the current Fourth Republic, with disastrous repercussions for party primaries, general elections, and even parliamentary votes.

There are many important questions regarding the connection between politics and money.

How, for instance, can money either demobilize, destabilize, and severely corrupt democratic and electoral processes, or it can energize and facilitate democratic growth?

What dangers are linked with money invested in politics in the form of transactions?

How well have Nigeria's Fourth Republic's political financing laws worked?

Political finance has expanded to include the overall cost of election administration in recent years, particularly since the start of the global economic downturn. This is emphasized by the necessity of helping developing nations advance efficient electoral governance in order to hold free and fair elections. Abalaka (2023)

Context of Theory

Three levels of government make up the federation of Nigeria: the federal government, 36 state governments, and 774 local government units. The executive, parliamentary, and judicial branches comprise each tier's three branches of government. A democratically elected president appoints a cabinet to run the nation at the federal level. The Senate, the upper chamber, and the chamber of Representatives, the lower house, comprise the federal parliament. Johari (2017). Three senators each from each of the 36 states and one from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) make up the Senate's 109 members, which are led by the Senate President. The country is divided into 360 constituencies, each of which has 360 elected members in the lower house. Each of the 36 states, including the Federal Capital Territory, has a certain number of representatives depending on proportional representation of its population.

Despite being a federation, Nigeria adheres to administrative federalism rather than fiscal federalism. The federal government has significant political clout because it controls the majority of the nation's resources. The federal government provides the 36 states with monthly fiscal allocations. After losing the 2015 general elections, the PDP held the center from 1999's transition. The PDP was forced out of power by a coalition of three major opposition political parties: the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All-Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and a faction of the All-Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), which united to form the All-Progressives Congress (APC). Because resources are concentrated and easily accessible, politics at the center is more profitable and fiercely competitive. Typically, members of the center-right ruling party are selected to posts like heads of government departments, ministries, and agencies. Because of widespread impunity and corruption, elected and appointed public officials have virtually unrestricted access to public resources. Historically and implicitly, the centrally located dominant party has greater money to conduct party operations, including elections. As a demonstration of its independence, the federal parliament, one of the three branches of government at the center, is well-funded and has its budget pulled as the "first-line charge" from the federation budget (Ajiteru, 2023).

According to Pareto's typology, political finances can be divided into three groups based on their likely motivations (Sulaiman, 2023). These are social, seeking social honors, relevance, attention, or access; financial, pursuing material benefits like government land allocations, import and other commercial licenses, and trade; and idealistic or ideological, suggesting financial or material support from those who share the ideas, beliefs, or ideology of a political party as well as government contracts, economic waivers, concessions, and supply. The necessity of regulating the use of money in politics and the efficacy of such rules have been discussed in historical and current debates on political finance and party funding. Research Examples from the nineteenth century in England, the twentieth century in France, and the twenty-first century in Africa and Latin America have been cited by Abalaka (2023). Analysis reveals a concerning discrepancy between "legal requirements and the political practice of funding politics" in spite of laws. Ajiteru (2023). Political campaign funds, political party funds, grants to elected officials, political organization funds, pressure and interest group funds, political lobbying funds, litigation funds in politically significant cases, partisan media funds, and corrupt political influence are some of the political finance-related activities listed in Vilfredo Pareto's typology (1848–1923) finances; unofficial payments to elected officials; unofficial payments to public servants; unofficial payments to the mass media; and payments intended to modify or improve the election process as a whole Sulaiman, (2018). This typology and several international studies Despite its misuse, Abalaka (2015) highlights the significance of money in politics.

Outlook: The Cost of Politics in General

Members of Parliament frequently have to deal with constituent demands. MPs are acknowledged by the public as their representatives in the federal parliament, and they feel that one of their duties, whether direct or indirect, is to address their issues, including private ones. Officially, the MPs are supposed to hold constituency offices, for which the federal government provides funding. They must also attend known-your-constituency meetings and to encourage constituent feedback on bills and to determine urgent needs to be taken into account for projects in the constituency that get direct federal funding. Nonetheless, residents frequently urge MPs to back and participate in neighborhood development initiatives. MPs must use their personal incomes to cover these expenses.

For a number of reasons, including elections, MPs are frequently obliged to donate to political parties. The APC asked elected party members, including Members of Parliament, to donate to President Muhammadu Buhari's campaign ahead of the 2015 elections, while the PDP did the same for former President Goodluck Jonathan's reelection campaign. Despite the fact that MP donations were not disclosed, 21 governors reportedly contributed N50 million apiece to the PDP (Vanguard, 2019). The APC anticipated that N40 billion would be contributed by its elected representatives, which included governors, members of the federal parliament, and state parliaments. Professor Moses Aluaigba claims that the "inclusion of APC state governors, federal and state MPs as donors to the parties' campaign funds raises questions about the party's compliance with the 1999 constitution, which prohibits elected public office holders from contributing to political parties, and the Electoral Act of 2010." Ajiteru (2023). Despite this, PMs have come up with creative ways to handle constituents' constant requests, especially from young people. Programs for skill acquisition are designed to give both male and female participants the abilities and ability to participate in in lucrative, successful, and revenue-producing occupations. Two MPs from the Niger Delta, where the practice of giving away free money is common, recently arranged training for young people in solar electronics installation and repairs, hair styling, and smartphone repair. The fundamental idea is that young people will become less reliant on government assistance, which will lessen their need on MPs. In the end, this will help lower the expense of politics, especially in parliament.

The expense of politics is on the rise, according to the data that is currently available. Speaking with former politicians gave the impression that politics in the first republic was relatively inexpensive since Nigerians were more focused on the policies, strategies, and reputation of political parties and candidates for the benefit of the nation and its residents. This has changed because voters are now more focused on their own advantages than on leaders' reputations. In this situation, money is more important than the message or specifics of the programs that candidates run on. A party's and its candidate's chances of winning an election increase with the amount of money they can raise. In order to provide a clear explanation for the rise in election costs, political parties regrettably rarely maintain paper records of all their expenditures (Ajiteru, 2023).

Officially, candidates now have to pay significantly more to indicate their interest in running for office. In the 2007 general elections, candidates running for president on the PDP's platform had to Pay N5 million for nomination forms and N10,000 for expression of interest forms. In the same year, a candidate for the House of Representatives had to pay N500,000 for nomination papers and N10,000 for expressions of interest. However, presidential contenders had to pay N20 million for nomination papers and N2 million for expressions of interest in order to run in the 2015 general elections. Currently, candidates for the House of Representatives must pay N2 million for nomination papers and N500,000 for expressions of interest. The trend of growing political expenses is demonstrated by comparing the fees of obtaining the PDP nomination form for the presidential candidate in 2007 and 2015. The PDP charged N5 million for nomination forms for its presidential contenders in 2007, while to get the identical form in 2015, the presidential contender had to pay N20 million, which was 300% more than what they had paid in 2007.

Year in View	Opposition	PDP
2011	N2,041,075,906.00 [4]	N5,015,614,851.00
2015	N2,915,846,737.00[5]	N8,749,685,296.00
% Increase in media expenses in 2015	**42.86%**	**74.45%**
Well above N1billion total legal spending for Presidential Candidates by	**191.58%**	**774.97%**

Table 5: Total Traceable Spending of APC and PDP Presidential Candidates

Additionally, the expense of waging presidential elections for both the government and opposition parties increased significantly between 2011 and 2015. The PDP and opposition parties' total traceable campaign spending in 2011 nearly doubled in 2015, as seen in the table below. In the same year, the PDP's total traceable expenses came to just over N5 billion, while the combined expenses of the three opposition parties—the ACN, APGA, and CPC—were just over N2 billion. Nonetheless, the PDP's total traceable expenditures rose to about N9 billion in 2015. It was 74.75 7% more than its 2011 media expenditures and 777.4% of the N1 billion allotted for presidential contenders. The opposition parties' media expenditures rose by 42.86 percent and 191.58 percent of the election limit for presidential candidates, respectively, as the APC spent nearly N3 billion in the same year, nearly a billion naira more than the three opposition parties spent for the 2011 elections (Abalaka, 2023).

When INEC examined the legal restrictions on election expenses, it saw this growing tendency. The Electoral Act of 2010 increased the amounts set forth in the Electoral Act of 2006. For example, the Electoral Act of 2006 set a N500 million cap on presidential candidates' campaign expenditures. This was raised to N1 billion under the Electoral Act of 2010. Given the actual costs expended by political parties who ran in the 2015 general elections, the current restrictions are completely unrealistic, even though this rise may have been justified by the seeming high cost of politics.

Nigerian Political Funding

In Nigeria, campaign expenses include food arrangements, including drinks and sometimes hard drugs for political thugs; spiritual protection, including juju (charms/amulets), hiring marabouts and prayer warriors; funding for mobilization and movement; campaign venue and decoration; hiring entertainers and cultural workers; publicity issues, including radio and TV advertisements, posters, and pasting; and security costs, including both formal and informal security coverage (Ajiteru, 2023).

Political financing and party funding in Nigeria have raised concerns, especially after the Second Republic of the country. This relates to how political parties are funded and the implications for their independence as well as their role in promoting true democratic participation (Sulaiman, 2018). It is feared that if political party funding is not properly managed and controlled, affluent people, foreign governments and corporations, and others with the financial means to overwhelm the system could take control of political parties by paying party operations and candidates. Local powerbrokers, ward chiefs, community leaders, and even local government chairmen, who also want to be politically relevant, have fewer resources, according to examples of abuses from Nigeria's First and Second

Republics. The meetings mentioned above have produced three main recommendations on the funding of political party activities: government funding of political parties, which is still practiced in Nigeria, according to this paper's analysis, despite the lack of any recognized regulations; funding by corporations; and funding by individual supporters and members.

Factors Affecting Election Campaign Costs

Campaign mediatization

The mediatization of election campaigns is a significant aspect that affects election costs. To reach as many people as possible, political parties and candidates use both public and private electronic media. Prime time on radio and television stations is typically in great demand during election seasons, which drives up pricing. With partisan jingles, documentaries, and ads fighting for airtime, funds are allocated for live coverage of rallies and other political events. Pricey billboards are placed in strategic locations throughout the community to draw interest. Paid advertisements for candidates, party slogans, and activities abound in print media. According to an analysis of the 2015 presidential election, the APC and PDP candidates spent enormous sums of money on their media campaigns—far more than the entire legal limit. An overview of the massive amount of money spent on candidate media campaigns can be seen in Table 4, which breaks out the media expenditures of the top two presidential contenders in the 2015 elections. According to Abalaka (2023), the PDP and APC spent eight times and three times as much on the media alone as was permitted by law to run the full presidential campaign.

Inadequate legal systems

During the 1960s–1966 first republic, there was no clear laws governing campaign money. Election-related expenses were to be covered by political parties and candidates. Sharp procedures and behavior that bordered on corruption were documented. For example, it was claimed that the NCNC and Action Group funded their campaigns with state investments and resources. Additionally, the 1979 constitution of the second republic, which lasted from 1979 to 1983, contained legal regulations governing campaign money.

S/no	Description of media expenses	PDP/Goodluck Jonathan	APC/Muhammadu Buhari
	Campaigns and Rallies	N1,280,374,879.00	N671,062,200.00
	Expenses on Billboard	N473,160,000.00	N190,380,000.00
	Electronic Media Campaign	N532,100,000.00	N410,050,000.00
	Electronic Media Adverts	N3,988,822,125.00	N1,064,706,850.00
	Print Media Campaign	N2,475,228,301.00	N579,647,687.00
Total		**N8,789,685,296.00**	**N2,915,846,737.00**

Table 4: PDP and APC media expenses for the 2015 elections (source: Centre for Social Justice)

These included: giving political parties yearly grants; allowing political parties to accept donations from private citizens and businesses, with the exception of foreign donors; and prohibiting associations other than political parties from supporting candidates' campaigns or funding their campaigns and election expenses (Ajiteru, 2023). But the limit It was unclear how much money parties and candidates could get from private citizens and business entities. Candidates and political parties took advantage of this weakness. Parties and, by extension, political campaigns were heavily funded by private persons. According to Abalaka (2015), this resulted in the rise of the money-bag phenomena in Nigerian politics and the subsequent fall of the second republic. The 1993 elections, which would have returned the nation to democratic rule, followed the same storyline. The transition process ended because there were no guidelines to control campaign money, even if the program was well-planned (Sulaiman, 2023).

However, following the country's 1999 transition to civil rule, political funding regulations have been defined and amended numerous times, and as a result, the Electoral Acts of 2002, 2006, and 2010. However, there are still gaps. For example, although section 91(9) stipulates that "no individual or other entity shall donate more than one million naira (N1, 000,000.00) to any candidate," section 93(2)(b) requires political parties to keep track of and record "the name and address of any person or entity which contributes any money or assets which exceeds N1,000,000.00," while also giving them the power to receive an unlimited amount above the threshold. As a result, by moving the additional funds to their party, politicians may theoretically go beyond. Second, the clause was used by donors, who used it to send billions of dollars in donations on behalf of a number of anonymous pals. This kept happening during the PDP fundraiser for President Goodluck Jonathan, reelection campaign which saw donations of over N21 billion (Vanguard, 2019). The APC, on the other hand, tried to engage regular Nigerians in supporting its presidential candidate through five platforms: donations made through designated bank accounts; an electronic donation platform aimed at tech-savvy youth; texting a maximum of N100 to designated numbers each time; purchasing the party ringtone, which deducted N100 each time; and using scratch cards, which allowed supporters to donate between N100 and N1,500 each (Times, 2015). The APC hoped to raise N10 billion from these direct contributions. However, the party anticipated receiving N40 billion in contributions from its state and federal elected officials tiers, with the goal of collecting N50 billion in donations overall. According to Ajiteru (2020), this is several billions of naira more than the one billion naira cap per presidential contender, which is against regulatory regulations and raises concerns about the donation and expenditure caps set forth in the Electoral Act of 2010.

Legal Opinion

A variety of political finance-related topics are covered under Sections 88–93 of Nigeria's 2010 Electoral Act (as amended), including expenditure caps, donations, disclosure by political parties, INEC's authority to examine party accounts, and sanctions for infractions or non-compliance. Currently, the greatest level of office-seeking in Nigeria is the presidential race, with a spending cap of N1 billion (about $3 million in 2019 currency rates). The lowest level of office-seeking is the local government. The N1 million (about $3 000 at the 2019 currency rate) limit for (LG) councilors is shown in Table 1 below. Regarding the cap on individual contributions, the Electoral Act's Section 91(a) states that no person or organization may provide more than N1 million to a candidate. This aims to deter money politics and stop a small number of affluent people from controlling political parties and the political system. Because of the risks of money laundering and drug dealers infiltrating the system, this is done with more caution in nations known for their drug and other illegal business activities. Sulaiman (2018) claims that those who donate dirty or illegal funds might establish a "creditor relationship with their recipients" in his work on political finance in Latin America In a way, "the party or candidate becomes owned."

In fact, the World Bank listed "illegal political finance" as one of the six aspects of the state capture phenomena in a survey on Central and Eastern European transition countries (World Bank 2000). State capture also refers to the practice of bribing lawmakers and policymakers generally to not enact laws and regulations that serve the interests of the vast majority of the populace. Political parties should report their profits for tax purposes in accordance with other profit-making organizations when it comes to taxation procedures for those parties engaged in profit-generating enterprises.

The Electoral Finance Regulatory Framework

Global Experience

Democratic systems from Western Europe and North America's more developed nations to Latin America's less developed Money in politics must be controlled in America, Asia, and Africa. Uncontrolled political spending poses a number of challenges to contemporary liberal democracies. For instance, it makes it challenging for candidates and parties to compete fairly with one another. In an unregulated setting, political rivalry is like "inviting two people to participate in a race, with one participant turning up with a bicycle and the other with a sports car," claims Abalaka (2023). Many actions pertaining to political finance can be broadly classified as sanctions, subventions, and prohibitions in order to prevent this and other issues related to money politics. The majority of democracies impose restrictions by limiting contributions or outlawing specific private donation sources. The goal of restriction is to keep politicians and parties from committing to commercial interests, sanctions are deterrents, and subventions are government and donor agency support. To minimize money politics, a few nations—Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, and Uruguay—ban payments to political parties during non-campaign times. Abalaka (2023). These restrictions, along with others such as direct public funding in Uruguay, Costa Rica, Argentina, Nicaragua, and Mexico, aim to guarantee more equitable involvement in politics and to stop some funders from exerting excessive influence. There have been policies pertaining to the taxation of business-oriented political parties in regions of central and eastern Europe where oligarchs have created their own political parties and client groups. Political parties like the Social Democratic Party (United),

In addition to controlling major businesses in the country, Union, Party Labour Ukraine, Party of the Regions (PR), Ukraine's Green Party, and Batkivshchyna had a clear majority in the Ukrainian parliament. According to Sulaiman (2018), these parties also controlled "most of national media, including major TV channels and the national newspapers." International examples of the penalties meted out to those who violate political finance regulations and related offenses include:

- Former Brazilian President Lula da Silva, who was sentenced to 12 years in April 2018 despite his acknowledged stellar performance in office, and Park Guen-Hye was impeached as South
- In March 2018, the Korean president was found guilty and given a 24-year prison term.
- Alfonso's successor as Guatemala's president, Otto Perez, was arrested in 2015 and put on trial in 2018.
- The former Peruvian president, Ollanta Humala, was indicted after serving 18 months in prison in 2017.
- In 2016, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert was sentenced to 27 months in prison.

- In 2015, Vlad Filat, the former prime minister of Moldovia, was arrested in parliament and sentenced to nine years in prison.
- In 2014, former Portuguese prime minister Jose Socrates was sentenced to prison.

There are many pertinent examples, such as:

- Michael Cohen is being prosecuted in the United States for a number of felonies and other crimes related to the campaign finance of President Donald Trump (www.apnews.com; www.washingtonpost.com).
- This substituteFormer Brazilian President Lula da Silva, who was sentenced to 12 years in April 2018 despite his acknowledged stellar performance in office, and Park Guen-Hye was impeached as South
- of Rudolf Scharping, Germany's defense minister, in 2002, following a report by the national magazine Stern that the minister had accepted DM 140 000 from a public relations consultant with ties to the armaments business named Mortiz Hunzinger.
- After it was discovered that he had earned almost $2.1 million from Mitsubishi Trust and Banking Corporation between 1989 and 1994, Kimitaka Kuze, the head of the Japanese Financial Reconstruction Commission, was forced to resign in July 2000.A videotape captured Vladimiro Montesinos, the head of Peru's National Intelligence Service, allegedly engaging in vote-buying in mid-September 2000 by giving opposition congressman Luis Alberto Kuri about $15,000 in order to switch sides and give the government a majority in the parliament (Ajiteru, 2023).

However, there are still noticeable issues with attempts to manage political worldwide finance. To combat illicit funding of political parties and political activities in general, for instance, the majority of recently formed democracies, including Nigeria, are sluggish to encourage the specialization of the police, courts, and other enforcement agencies. These issues in the specific instance of Nigeria are caused by the incapacity to implement existing restrictions rather than by a lack of them. This should not, however, minimize the issues brought on by vague, inconsistent, and poorly thought-out regulations. A lack of accurate and transparent information that results in estimates rather than precise statistics is another issue. Additionally, INEC and other organizations tasked with these duties do not effectively monitor, track, or report on these activities, as explained below.

The Experience in Nigeria

Provisions in Nigeria's Political financing is addressed from the perspective of limitations, subventions, and sanctions under the 1999 Constitution, the Electoral Act, the CAMA, and other documents. While some of these were previously cited, others are included in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sanctions and limitations on candidate spending caps

S/No	Position	Spending Limit	Sanction

1.	Presidential candidate	₦1 billion (approx. $3.18 million)	Fine of ₦1 million (approx. $2 747- or 12-month's imprisonment or both)
2.	Governorship candidate	₦200 million (approx. $636 700)	Fine of ₦800 000 (approx. $2 197- or 9-month's imprisonment or both)
3.	Senatorial candidate	₦40 million (approx. $127 300)	Fine of ₦600 000 (approx. $1 647- or 6-month's imprisonment or both)
4.	Member, House of Representatives (MHR)	₦20 million (approx. $63 700)	Fine of ₦500 000 (approx. $1 373- or 5-month's imprisonment or both)
5.	Member, State Assembly	₦10 million (approx. $31 800)	Fine of ₦300 000 (approx. $824- or 3-month's imprisonment or both)
6.	LG chairmanship candidate	₦10 million (approx. $31 800)	Fine of ₦300 000 (approx. $824- or 3-month's imprisonment or both)
7.	LG councillorship	₦1 million (approx. $3 180)	Fine of ₦100 000 (approx. $274- or 1-month's imprisonment or both)

Source: 2010 Electoral Act (as amended); US dollar conversion based on the rate of ₦360: $1 in 2019.

The NRC and SDP, which were founded by the government, popularized government funding of political parties in Nigeria, a trend that continued throughout the early years of the Fourth Republic. For instance, the National Assembly is authorized by Section 228(c) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) to give INEC yearly grants that would be distributed to political parties. In the April 2003 elections, a budget of N600 million was allocated, of which N6 million went to each of the 30 registered political parties. This was in accordance with the Electoral Act 2002's Section 80(2)(a), which permitted political parties to split 30% of the grant for each election year. Seven political parties received the remaining N420 million from INEC in line with Section 80(2)(b) of the Act, as per the parliamentary or They had secured executive seats. The Alliance for Democracy (AD), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), National Democratic Party (NDP), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), and United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP) were among them. The grants did not considerably improve the conduct and results of their primary elections, for instance, and they hardly stopped corruption and corrupt practices in the operations of the majority of political parties. While Sarah Jibril, the Progressive Action Congress (PAC) presidential candidate, petitioned the party's leadership over alleged misappropriation of funds, the Transition Monitoring Group's (TMG) report on the January 2003 conduct of the PDP, ANPP, UNPP, and NDP primaries

(cited in Adetula 2008, pp. xix–xx) revealed abuses like bribing delegates
the INEC grants. The next section contains in-depth assessments of this, with a focus on political parties' noncompliance with accounting standards regarding the grants. Political parties and other interest groups, including the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), have pushed for the continuation of the Electoral Act 2010 (as modified), which was mute on the subject of funding. The debate is still going on, but some things to think about are the growing number of political parties—91 in 2019—the effectiveness and viability of fewer than a dozen of these parties, and the government's diminishing financial resources in the face of conflicting obligations, all of which demand financial support. Nonetheless, political parties that hold sway over several tiers of the government can nonetheless obtain government assistance, but informally and without a formalized regulation. For instance, the APGA controls state governments, while the PDP and APC control the federal government. They are also more visible than the other parties that do not control any governments (Ajiteru, 2023).

Inadequate ability to enforce

Even if Nigeria's political financing laws are more stringent now than they were in the past, INEC lacks the ability and inclination to police them. Among its many duties, INEC is tasked with registering and overseeing political parties as well as keeping an eye on their funds, expenditures, primaries, and campaigns. The commission appears to be overburdened with the responsibilities of monitoring the financial activities of political parties and the election expenditures of candidates.

More than a year has passed Despite apparent incidents, no one has been investigated, arrested, or prosecuted for violating campaign financing laws in the year following the 2015 elections. Several billions of dollars were donated to the PDP by elected politicians, party members, and current governors. Although corporate entities gave money to the illegal party, INEC did not raise the alarm. It has not yet been shown that the APC's presidential campaign was mostly financed by exiting governors, like as those of Lagos and Rivers. Section 221 of the constitution forbids any group from campaigning for votes for any candidate or contributing to the money and election expenses of political parties, as was seen in the actions of the Transition Ambassadors of Nigeria (TAN). TAN extensively and publicly exhibited posters and images of President Goodluck Jonathan in an effort to rally support. Without any restrictions, TAN essentially conducted a parallel presidential campaign for President Jonathan (Sulaiman, 2023).

The violation of finance restrictions was linked to elections at other levels as well, not just the presidential race. For example, Vice-President Atiku Abubakar gave Adamawa State Governor Alhaji Muhammed Umaru Jubrilla a N500 million donation, which he publicly acknowledged helped him become governor and persuaded him to turn away from his previous boss, Murtala Nyako. As anticipated, the governor's public admission of the unlawful donation has not resulted in any legal action or potential penalties. The fact that INEC has not brought any charges against anyone for infringement shows that there is no deterrent One of the main causes of Nigeria's growing election expenses is the restrictions on political finance after the 1999 transition elections (Abalaka, 2023).

Impunity and corruption

The general laxity of the nation's rule of law is an issue closely linked to a lack of enforcement capacity. Notably, Nigeria had a low score (50.8/100) for rule of law enforcement in a number of surveys, including the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's 2015 Index on African Governance. Nigeria received a very low rule of law rating from 2011 to 2014 in the survey, which was carried out between 2000 and 2014 (Foundation, 2015). Corruption, impunity, and lawlessness increased to extraordinary levels during this time. People with a lot of connections got away with committing any kind of crime or breaking the law in the society with little to no repercussions. As a result, political parties and candidates were encouraged to act carelessly and with impunity, which led to the misuse of party funding laws. Prosecution was nearly impossible when the criminals were members of the ruling party. As a result, elected officials did not perceive any issues with using public monies for personal expenses or to finance political campaigns and parties. Without the change of administration, it is quite likely that the ongoing discoveries from the ONSA investigation would not have been feasible. Because Nigerian politics is characterized by a culture of lawlessness and corruption, the cost of politics can only soar above the residents' reach.

The winner takes everything syndrome

Elections can only be a do-or-die situation because political parties and candidates spend unthinkable sums of money on the process. Desperate to control or sabotage the process, both contestants and supporters turn to unlawful methods. Unlike other systems that provide for proportional representation, the first-past-the-post system offers winners all the advantages. In order to prevent opposition political parties and candidates from completely losing out in elections, calls have been made at multiple meetings to overhaul the current Nigerian system. This is because they will be less likely to cross the law if they are confident that their efforts will result in some sort of outcome, regardless of the election's results electoral benefits.

Understanding Nigeria's Exorbitant Electricity Costs

By all measures, Nigeria is a sizable democracy. It is the most populated Black nation in the world, with an estimated 170 million people living there. Given the size of the geographical mass, the cost of holding elections in the nation will be greatly impacted. Nigeria is a post-conflict civilization and a nation in transition, with low-intensity violence and flashpoints in many regions. After more than thirty years of military dictatorship that undermined many of the liberal norms of the nation, democracy is still in its infancy. Election-related violence is frequent because of the lack of a liberal society and the fierce struggle for state authority, which raises the expense of elections. Indeed, a significant negative aspect of Nigeria's democratic experience has been the country's incapacity to hold free, fair, and credible elections. Each of the four elections since the nation's return to democracy has required a new registration process in an effort to improve the election process. The goal was to provide a strong foundation for democratic consolidation through thorough, accurate, and trustworthy biometric coverage of all eligible voters in the nation, even if Jega's insistence on a new registration drive for the 2011 elections was expensive. The election's expenses were greatly raised by the registration drive.

The fact that the elections were spaced out is another factor contributing to the high expense.

This was due to numerous factors.

Among them are the elevated degree of Nigerian voters' lack of literacy, which would make it difficult for them to tell one ballot from another if they were asked to cast ballots for multiple offices at once; INEC's incapacity to handle the logistics of holding all the elections on the same day; the nation's

inadequate infrastructure and the requirement to thwart attempts at election tampering. It is common for elections to be postponed nationwide or in specific regions due to one or a combination of these circumstances. For instance, INEC's logistical issues and, more significantly, the necessity to stop politicians from manipulating the vote caused the 2011 general elections to be postponed. Experts estimate that this delay has had
cost the country over N76 billion. Last but certainly not least, a significant amount of the election's direct expenses roughly 40% were related to the employment of cutting-edge technology, especially in the voter registration procedure (Ajiteru, 2023).

Materials and Methods

Semi-structured interviews with current and former members of Parliament as well as civil society professionals with expertise in this field were the main source of information for this report. Respondents were given the assurance that no remarks would be explicitly ascribed to them in order to elicit objective responses. The factors that contribute to Nigerian politics' high cost were also the subject of desk study. It is extremely difficult to do political finance research in Nigeria because monies are primarily paid for informally and with cash. This makes it challenging to identify or statistically validate trends in spending or income patterns. For example, candidates rarely maintain or disclose records of the amount spent on their campaigns. As a result, academics lack reliable reporting on campaign spending, spending categories, and candidate finance tactics, as well as information on significant party contributors (Adeyi, 2019).

During one-on-one interviews, key questions intended to extract useful information from respondents were discussed. Those who were unavailable for in-person interviews opted to reply to the questions via email. The questions looked at Nigeria's campaign funding history and how it affected earlier parliamentary elections. Important forces behind Parliamentary election electoral costs were determined. Interviewees provided preliminary estimates of the cost of running for office, despite the dearth of official data on the subject and the apparent reluctance to disclose the precise amount spent. Additionally, the study made an effort to determine if parliamentary campaigns were funded by political parties or by private individuals. It was examined how the expense of parliamentary politics affected the involvement of citizens, especially women. Lastly, the questions looked at the potential for future increases or decreases in the price of parliamentary politics (Ajiteru, 2023).

Results and Discussion

The majority of the data in the INEC document content-analyzed below are based on estimation, which suggests that there may be aspects of either overestimation or underestimating. It should be emphasized that the ADP, LM, AGA, and YP filed audited returns, which are not included in the paper, since the data pertains to the 2019 general elections. Because of this, no party that complies has been

questioned about spending caps or other elements of the nation's political financing laws. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and the 36 States are included in the report. In the following studies, challenges/limitations and infringements are the two main areas of focus. The observed restrictions, which include political parties' inadequate record keeping, are taken from a list of comparable issues and grievances from throughout the nation; failing to reveal the funds allotted to the mobilizers and canvassers in charge of campaigns and rallies
and election-day responsibilities; the inaccessibility of challenging terrain, including the Niger Delta region's creeks, certain rural local government districts, and, in Borno State, towns and villages vulnerable to insurgent attacks; and the challenges faced by the monitors for night rallies. Inadequate funding and political violence also emerged as significant obstacles in the reports from other jurisdictions. Abalaka (2023).

Although Nigeria's primary grievances of insufficiency and delay are not new, they become more severe in 2019. For instance, "disagreement over the mandatory use of the Smart Card Readers and the electronic transmission of election results" and the steep rise in the cost of the Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2018 were the main causes of the National Assembly's deadlock elections. A PowerPoint presentation mimeo has been created that outlines the contributing elements to the increase in the expected cost of N189.2 billion (US$526m) for the 2019 elections as opposed to the N122.8 billion (US$341m) cost of the 2015 exercise (Kuna, 2017). About 60%, or N66.3 billion, was the anticipated increase. Less than four months prior to the start of the 2019 elections in February, the National Assembly approved INEC's budget in October 2018. This analysis must account for the typical time lag in Nigeria between budget approval, release, and execution. While inadequate money is the clearest justification for the Commission's decision to monitor and account for the late start of INEC monitors' duties, this delay also contributed to the monitors' complaints.

In each state, the Federal Capital Territory, and at the presidential level, only three parties' finances are reported: the ruling party, the main opposition, and a third party. As a result, in every state except the one where the governorship election had already taken place, the PDP was the only party mentioned in the reports. Due to the internal turmoil in Rivers State, the APC was unable to field candidates for both the governorship and legislative elections in 2019, with the exception of states where governorship elections were not held. In all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, however, there were reports on the presidential candidates' financial positions. The reports from Abia, Anambra, Lagos, and Rivers States mentioned the All-Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). The Alliance for Action (AA) the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Kowa Party were only included in the Lagos State Sulaiman (2023) report, however the Allied People's Movement (APM) was mentioned in Imo and Ogun States. Only four political parties filed their audited reports in accordance with the report, which contained the election finances of seven parties. Without INEC's oversight, it's probable that none of the seven parties in the Commission's report would adhere to the constitutional criteria, which would mean that only four of the 91 registered parties' financial information would be available. This only amounts to 4% compliance, which alone suggests subpar performance and a breach of the rule. The focus on other observable violations is on spending limit compliance. Since they are the most noticeable The APC and PDP are the two parties chosen for examination in the report, along with their presidential candidates. There are also references to other cases of governorship candidates spending excessively. An estimated N4 600 047 886 and N2 865 066 886, respectively, can be linked to the APC and PDP presidential campaigns. This does not include the states of Abia, Kaduna, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Sokoto, where no information was included in the study. The report Abalaka (2023) did not distinguish between estimates of campaign finance for the governorship and presidential elections in Oyo State.

According to the figures, the APC and PDP spent over four times as much as the presidential campaign spending cap, or 360% and 186%, respectively. Additionally, there are cases of excessive spending by a few of the report's governorship contenders. These include the candidates of the APC in the states of Akwa Ibom, Delta, Kebbi, Kwara, Niger, and Lagos, however the PDP candidates in the states of Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Rivers disregarded this same rule. For the APC and PDP, respectively, the Delta and Rivers instances must be isolated. This is due to the fact that the campaign finances linked to each of these candidates total almost N1 billion, which is 400% more than the permitted amount for a governorship candidate and four times the amount for a presidential contender. The APC candidate in Lagos State, the highest in this category, has around 50% more than his peers in the APC and PDP in Delta respectively, Rivers State and Ajiteru (2023).

In contrast, the price of several election campaign components decreased between 2015 and 2019. The PDP and APC's 2015 media expenditures are contrasted with their respective 2019 presidential campaigns in Table 2 below (Sulaiman, 2023).

Table 2: Comparison of APC and PDP media expenditures in 2015 and their respective presidential campaigns in 2019

Description of Expenses	PDP (Jonathan/Atiku)	APC (Buhari)
Media Expenses (2015)	₦8 789 685 296.00 (Jonathan)	₦2 915 846 737.00
Presidential Campaigns (2019)	₦2 865 066 886.00 (Atiku)	₦4 600 047 886.00

Sources: Centre for Social Justice (2015) and INEC Office (2019)

According to the table, the PDP and APC spent eight and three times as much on media alone in 2015 (electronic, print, and billboards), respectively, as the legal maximum for each party's entire presidential campaign. Given Nigeria's low literacy rate, media coverage of campaigns has been prevalent in the 20-year-old Fourth Republic. According to INEC and other estimates, the media is one of the obvious causes of the high cost of politics. The price of candidate nomination forms and parties' expressions of interest are additional variables that are subject to examination (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: Expense of the Candidate Nomination Form and Parties' Expression of Interest (2015 & 2019 Elections)

Party	Office in View	2015	2019
APC	Presidency	₦27.5m	₦45m
	Governorship	₦5.5m	₦22.5m
	Senate	₦3.3m	₦7m
	House of Reps.	₦2.2m	₦3.85m
	State Assembly	₦.55m	₦.85m
PDP	Presidency	₦22m	₦12m
	Governorship	₦5.5m	₦6m
	Senate	₦4.5m	₦3.5m
	House of Reps.	₦2.4m	₦1.5m
	State Assembly	₦1.2m	₦.6m

Sources: www.thenationonline.net; www.premiumtimesng.com; www.legit.ng

As seen in Table 3 (above), fees for the other offices were lowered from roughly 22% to 50%, with the exception of the total cost for the PDP's governorship ticket, which increased from N5.5 million in 2015 to N6 million in 2019, or a 9% rise. However, the fees for PDP governorship hopefuls to indicate interest, submit a nomination form, and pledge allegiance to the party rose from N6 million to N24 million prior to the end of 2019, particularly during the Kogi and Bayelsa State governorship elections. This is a 300% increase. Prior to the 2019 general elections, the APC raised fees for every post by 70% to 300%. The exorbitant expense of Nigerian politics is increased by these fees.

Sums for crowd renting and mobilization are examples of hidden drivers at rallies, as previously mentioned, and unreported gifts, such those provided to prominent political officials, community leaders, traditional rulers, and organizations for women, youth, and the community. In Nigeria and many traditional African contexts, these are common customs, but they can be exploited in ways such as electoral clientelism, political patronage, and other ways. Abalaka (2023). The political regimes that Nigeria has had since the First Republic serve as examples. Among these are the substantial quantities of money connected to President Jonathan in 2015. Nigeria's anti-graft agency (EFCC) received complaints just before the 2019 presidential election regarding a video purportedly showing two bulletproof money trucks in a well-known politician's Lagos residence (The Punch 2019), which has not yet been examined by the relevant authorities, according to Ajiteru (2023).

Conclusion

Because of its strategic role as the electoral arbiter, INEC is vulnerable to political class capture. Section 153(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) acknowledges INEC as a federal executive body in addition to its independence. By designating the Commission's Chairman and Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) and allocating funds to it, the administration is impliedly able to control the Commission's operations. The election management body's financial and administrative independence is not ensured by this. Originally reserved for the police to uphold law and order during the colonial era, the function of security services has evolved over time and can be used to further partisan agendas. Orderlies and security escorts of high-ranking government officials have reportedly intimidated voters and even on-duty electoral officials.

The nation's election management bodies have been held accountable in reports by special commissions and committees, such as the 1983 Commission of Inquiry, which was headed by Justice BO Babalakin, and the 2018 Election Reform Committee (ERC), which was headed by Justice ML Uwais (Awa 2017; Roberts 2020). According to the Babalin Commission, which was mentioned in Awa 1997, p. 127, the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) was held accountable in 1983 for "its management lapses, especially its inability to resolve its own internal conflicts." Evidence of governmental misconduct and, in certain cases, collusion during the 2007 general elections, which justified the setting Ajiteru (2023) contains the ERC's setup. The high degree of approval of the 2015 election results was influenced by the deployment of advanced technology, the incumbent president's acceptance of defeat, and widespread praise, particularly from both domestic and foreign observers. However, INEC's readiness and ability are called into question due to the postponement of three planned general elections between 2010 and 2019: in 2011 and 2019 for operational and logistical concerns, and in 2015 for security reasons. Given its complexity and relative novelty, monitoring and reporting political money is an even more difficult undertaking.

The ongoing issue of political corruption and scandals is one consequence of the inefficiency of regulatory mechanisms, especially when it comes to monitoring and disclosing political money

which, in Nigeria, have gone mostly unpunished. Negative effects on the nation result from a decline in trust in the system and the exclusion of women, young people, and those who cannot afford the kind of financial resources that Nigerian politics requires.

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