



**POLICING SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: A CASE  
OF NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC**

by

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, Joyce Ekanu Olorunnisola student number 22176558, hereby declare that this thesis entitled Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic is my work, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full to any other degree or any other institution for other purposes. Subsequently, all sources used or referred to have been documented and acknowledged accordingly.

**Mrs. J. E. Olorunnisola**  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Electoral violence is a persistent challenge to Nigeria's democratic consolidation, threatening the integrity of the electoral process and national stability. The study investigated the relationship between law enforcement and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It examined the current policing system, identified deficiencies, and proposed measures to mitigate electoral violence. Key objectives include analysing the policing structure, its link to electoral violence, challenges to reform, and recommending effective measures. The study used face-to-face interviews with stakeholders, transcribed and analysed using NVivo 12 software. Thematic analysis revealed significant deficiencies in Nigeria's policing system in managing electoral violence. Recommended reforms include structural changes, capacity building, and enhancing police independence and accountability. Minimising political interference and restoring public trust in law enforcement are crucial for safeguarding democratic processes. The study highlighted the impact of socio-economic grievances on electoral violence and the interplay of weak legal frameworks, inadequate law enforcement, corruption, and impunity. Technological innovations, such as electronic voting systems and digital whistleblowing platforms, are essential for enhancing electoral efficiency and transparency. The study concluded that addressing electoral violence in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach, including structural police reforms, socio-economic development, technological innovations, stringent rules for defaulters, and international cooperation. Comprehensive reforms are necessary to enhance legal and institutional frameworks, ensuring the integrity and stability of Nigeria's electoral processes.

**Keywords: Policing, Electoral, Violence, Fourth Republic**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for the grace and strength bestowed on me throughout this study.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
1.3 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS	5
1.3.1 Electoral violence	5
1.3.2 Policing system	6
1.3.3 Nigeria's fourth republic	6
1.3.4 Qualitative research	6
1.3.5 Participants	7
1.3.6 Free and fair elections	7
1.3.7 Credibility of democratic process	7
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT	7
1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY	10
1.6 STUDY OBJECTIVE	10
1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	11
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	11
1.9 DELIMITATION	13
1.10 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW SECTION	13
1.11 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH	
METHODS AND DESIGN	15
1.12 PILOT STUDY	16
1.13 ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY	17

1.14	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	17
1.15	STRUCTURE	18
1.16	SCOPE OF THE STUDY	19
1.17	CONCLUSION	20
	<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION	21
2.2	ELECTION AND DEMOCRACY	23
2.3	ELECTION AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC	24
2.3.1	1999 General Election	25
2.3.2	2003 General Election	26
2.3.3	2007 General Election	28
2.3.4	2011 General Election	29
2.3.5	2015 General Election	30
2.3.6	2019 General Election	31
2.3.7	2023 General Election	31
2.3.8	The role of the security agencies in the Fourth Republic electoral process	33
2.4	THE EMERGENCE OF ELECTIONEERING PROCESSES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC DEMOCRACY	35
2.4.1	The Constitutional Amendment of the old electioneering processes to the current 1999 constitution	36
2.5	CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA'S ELECTORAL PROCESS	38
2.5.1	Nigeria Electoral System	40
2.6	ELECTION AND POLICING	41
2.6.1	Policing system: A Global View	42
2.6.2	Policing System in Nigeria	44
2.6.3	The Contribution of the policing system to electoral malpractice	45

2.6.4	The contribution of the policing system to electoral violence	47
2.7	ROLES OF EACH STAKEHOLDER	49
2.7.1	INEC and other critical electoral stakeholders	49
2.7.2	The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	50
2.7.3	Political parties	50
2.7.4	Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)	50
2.7.5	Security Agencies	51
2.7.6	International Observers	52
2.7.7	Journalists	52
2.7.8	Traditional Leaders	53
2.7.9	Electoral Adhoc staff	54
2.7.10	Voters	55
2.7.11	Political candidates	55
2.8	ELECTORAL VIOLENCE	56
2.8.1	Types of electoral violence	59
2.8.2	Causes of electoral violence	60
2.8.3	Drivers of electoral violence in Nigeria	62
2.9	ELECTION OBSERVATION, MONITORING AND SUPERVISION	63
2.10	LITERATURE GAP ANALYSIS	66
2.11	CONCLUSION	66

<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>67</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION	67
3.2 INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONALISM THEORY	67
3.2.1 The role of institutions	67
3.2.2 The impact of political and social context	68
3.2.3 The impact of culture and social norms	69
3.2.4 Relevance of theory to the study	70
3.2.5 Issues and challenges	71
3.3 THE STRUCTURAL THEORY OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE	72
3.3.1 Socio-economic inequality	72
3.3.2 Political polarization	73
3.3.3 Ethnic and religious divisions	74
3.3.4 State weakness	74
3.3.5 Relevance of theory to the study	75
3.3.6 Issues and challenges	75
3.3.7 The effects of these theories on the just concluded elections in Nigeria	76
3.3.8 How these theories can be improved	79
3.4 CONCLUSION	81
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN</b>	<b>82</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION	82
4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM/PHILOSOPHY	82
4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH	83
4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN	83
4.5 RESEARCH SETTING	84
4.6 TARGET POPULATION	86
4.7 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES	87
4.7.1 Sampling method	87
4.7.2 Recruitment process	88

4.7.3	Sample size	88
4.7.4	Inclusion and exclusion criteria	91
4.7.5	Research instrument	92
4.8	DATA COLLECTION PROCESS	92
4.8.1	Primary data	93
4.8.2	Secondary data	94
4.9	PILOT STUDY	95
4.10	CREDIBILITY	96
4.11	TRUSTWORTHINESS	96
4.12	DATA ANALYSIS	97
4.13	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	97
4.13.1	Ethical procedure	99
4.13.2	Informed consent	100
4.13.3	Confidentiality and anonymity	100
4.13.4	Data Storage and disposal	100
4.13.5	Beneficence	101
4.14	CONCLUSION	102
	<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b>103</b>
	<b>DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</b>	<b>103</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION	103
5.2	CATEGORIZATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS	104
5.3	OBJECTIVE ONE: STRUCTURE OF THE POLICING SYSTEM IN NIGERIA	107
5.3.1	Theme 1: Effectiveness of Policing System in Preventing Electoral Violence	107
5.3.2	Theme 2: Challenges and Constraints Facing the Policing System	114
5.3.3	Theme 3: Strengths and weaknesses of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security	122
5.3.4	Theme 4: Incidents Highlighting the Need for Police Overhaul	134

5.4	OBJECTIVE TWO: NEXUS BETWEEN THE EXISTING STRUCTURE OF POLICING AND RECURRENT ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC	139
5.4.1	Theme 1: Main factors contributing to electoral violence in Nigeria	140
5.4.2	Theme 2: Patterns and dynamics of electoral violence	147
5.4.3	Theme 3: Role of security agencies in maintaining peace and security during elections	153
5.4.4	Theme 4: Cases of security agencies perceive effectiveness in preventing electoral violence	160
5.5	OBJECTIVE THREE: CHALLENGES MILITATING AGAINST THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE POLICING SYSTEM IN NIGERIA	172
5.5.1	Theme 1: The perceive role of police in ensuring safe and peaceful electoral process	173
5.5.2	Theme 2: Community-led initiatives in reducing electoral violence	180
5.5.3	Theme 3: Impediments to effective electoral policing	194
5.5.4	Theme 4: Are there systemic or structural issues within the police force that hinder their ability to address electoral violence?	211
5.6	OBJECTIVE FOUR: RECOMMENDATION OF POLICING MEASURES TOWARDS EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC	220
5.6.1	Theme 1: Policing measures towards effective prevention of electoral violence	220
5.6.2	Theme 2: Are there successful strategies or interventions from other countries that could be adapted	

to the Nigerian context?	226
5.6.3 Theme 3: Strategies for electoral violence prevention	242
5.6.4 Theme 4: Are there specific initiatives or policies that you think would be particularly effective in this regard?	253
5.7 CONCLUSION	257
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION</b>	<b>259</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION	259
6.2 SUMMARY	259
6.3 FINDINGS PER OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	260
6.3.1 Objective one: Structure of the policing system in Nigeria	260
6.3.2 Objective two: Nexus between the existing structure of policing and recurrent electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic	261
6.3.3 Objective three: Challenges militating against the restructuring of the policing system in Nigeria	265
6.4 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS	271
6.4.1 Practical implications	271
6.4.2 Theoretical implications	271
6.4.3 Policy implications	272
6.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF A MODEL TO IMPROVE POLICING SYSTEM	272
6.6 MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION	275
6.7 STRENGTHS OF STUDY	276
6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS	277
6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY	280
6.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	280
6.11 CONCLUSION	281
REFERENCES	282

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A Ethical clearance letter	308
Appendix B Gate keepers letter	309
Appendix C Letter of information	331
Appendix D Consent letter	333
Appendix E Research ethics evaluation certificate	334
Appendix F Editing certificate	335
Appendix G Plagiarism Report	336
Appendix H Data collection instruments	362

## LIST OF TABLE

Table 4.1:	Breakdown of electoral stakeholders	89
Table 4.2:	Focus group discussion of participants	94
Table 5.1:	Participants	107
Table 5.2:	Effectiveness of policing system in preventing electoral violence	108
Table 5.3:	Challenges and constraints facing the policing system	115
Table 5.4:	Strengths and weaknesses of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security	123
Table 5.5:	Incidents highlighting the need for police overhaul	135
Table 5.6:	Main factors contributing to electoral violence in Nigeria	140
Table 5.7:	Role of security agencies in maintaining peace and security during elections	154
Table 5.8:	Cases of security agencies perceive effectiveness in preventing electoral violence	161
Table 5.9:	The perceive role of police in ensuring safe and peaceful electoral process	172
Table 5.10:	Community-led initiatives in reducing electoral violence	180
Table 5.11:	Impediments to effective electoral policing	194
Table 5.12:	Systemic and structural factors hindering adequate policing during election	211
Table 5.13:	Essential reforms to enhance policing system capacity in the prevention of electoral violence	220
Table 5.14:	Strategies or interventions from other countries that could be adapted to the Nigerian context	227
Table 5.15:	Strategies for electoral violence prevention	243

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

4.1:	Map of Nigeria showing states with casualties	85
4.2:	Tred of election violence in Nigeria 2014 – 2022	86
5.1:	Number of participants by designation	105
5.2:	Age distribution of participants by institutions	106
6.1:	Model to improve policing system	274



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

The chapter emphasises the substantial correlation between electoral violence and numerous phases of the Nigerian electoral process, as discussed by researchers such as (Harish and Toha 2019: 688; Ali and Ali 2022: 3; Laakso 2019: 552; Salihu and Yakubu 2021: 138; Emegha 2020: 52). Numerous stakeholders in Nigeria's electoral system are implicated by electoral violence, which encompasses pre-election manipulation and post-election riots. This hazard to public infrastructure, property, and individuals is significant. Raji, AbdulKarim and Akingbola (2020: 2); Ali and Ali (2022: 4) emphasised, that the effectiveness and credibility of elections are contingent upon the role of law enforcement, particularly the Nigerian Police. Nevertheless, the credibility of the electoral processes is eroded and the persistence of electoral violence is exacerbated by challenges such as decreased voter turnout and deteriorating national security. The diverse forms of electoral violence, such as intimidation by the armed groups of politicians, coercive tactics by incumbents, and subversion of the state security apparatus, are further discussed by Ali and Ali. They support the implementation of comprehensive reforms in Nigeria's judicial and law enforcement systems to prevent political interference. The chapter is situated within the Functionalism theory, which investigates how societal groups and institutions contribute to the transparency of the electoral system and political stability. This theory offers valuable insights into the reduction of electoral violence in Nigeria.

This chapter presents the background of the study. It also presents the research problem, the aim of the study, objectives, research questions and the rationale.

### **1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Starting in 1999, the Fourth Republic of Nigeria represented a turning point in the democratic growth of the nation. Notwithstanding early challenges and political upheavals, the nation has achieved development in building its democratic institutions. But election violence—threatening the validity and stability of the

political system—has always been a challenge for the democratic process of the country. Violence connected to elections is not new in Nigeria. Since the Fourth Republic was established in 1999, there have been several well-publicized cases of electoral violence in the nation; one such incident (post-election violence) in 2011 saw over 800 deaths reported nationally (Oyuru 2023: 69).

Following the return to civilian control in 1999, there have been several accounts of political assassinations, social upheaval in unstable areas, and party strife including internal strife. as the Niger Delta area producing oil (Okoye and Taylor 2021: 40). Linked to 474 electoral violence events between 2006 and 2014, the PDP accounted for about 52% of such events (Albin-Lackey 2007 referenced in Alao 2021: 329). The National Democratic Institute (2007 referenced in Alao 2021: 329) alleges that there were several allegations of ballot stuffing and snatching all over the 2007 elections. Some party members were seen in Ekiti State trying to fill or take ballot boxes in front of voters and election observers. Though they were present, onlookers often noted that security guards did nothing to thwart election tampering. Notwithstanding claims that 6,000 police personnel would be sent to Ogun State, ballot box stuffing and theft took place in the state capital, Abeokuta, allegedly resulting in two deaths on election day.

Christians running for office in the PDP were proclaimed winners of the state elections on November 27 and 28, 2008, but Muslims running in the ANPP challenged the results in Jos East, North, and South. Homes, mosques, and churches were burnt because of the conflict. According to reports, a Muslim charity organisation found around 300 bodies, although Nuhu Gagara, the information commissioner for Plateau state, only counted 200 fatalities. 10,000 people, according to the Nigerian Red Cross, abandoned their houses and set up camp throughout the city. According to Agence France Press, 381 bodies were reportedly put inside a mosque on November 30, 2008. Murtala Sani Hashim, a Muslim administrator at the main mosque, reported 367 bodies on December 1. At least 400 were reported by health officials. Other sources stated that on December 1, 2008, 500 people were

interred in mass graves. To quell the rioting, the police reportedly carried out more than 90 summary executions on December 30, 2008 (Yahaya and Bello 2020: 29). According to Human Rights Watch, at least 130 people were slain by troops and police in the same incident.

In 2015, President Goodluck Jonathan's PDP campaign train was stoned in Bauchi State, and campaign buses were burned. The year 2015 saw fears that violence and personal attacks during the party's primaries could result from the contest for nomination among the contenders. Violence, hate speech, and a poisonous political climate undermined the Peace Accord that political parties and candidates pledged to uphold during the 2019 campaign. According to Situation Room (2019: 36), since the elections began in October 2018, more than 260 Nigerians have lost their lives. The likelihood of future political unrest and elections in Nigeria is largely dependent on its political parties. Compared to the intraparty tensions that marked the 2015 elections, there seem to be more opportunities for intraparty strife in the 2019 elections.

This is akin to the general elections in 2015, which resulted in 64 fatalities. It is challenging to determine the precise number of occurrences and fatalities, and opinions regarding political and electoral violence vary. All Progressive Congress, the main opposition party, brought attention to instances of politicians using ballot box militias to further their political agendas. There were 121 incidents with at least 30 fatalities during the 2015 elections. Parties clashing and criminal attacks on polling places, frequently involving vote box snatching and material theft, were frequent occurrences.

The two major parties, the PDP, and the APC, frequently accused their rivals of violence, intimidation, and vote-rigging. According to numerous reliable accounts of violence and meddling, the issues were most severe in the

states of Rivers and Akwa Ibom (Tsuwa, Agaigbe, and Shaibume 2020: 184).

Primary seasons have always witnessed violence, particularly within the ruling party. In 2018, a member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was shot by some gunmen in Ekiti state, and two thugs were slain in a brawl at a political gathering in Lagos. The leaders of the All Progressive Party (APC) were nearly lynched when thugs invaded their gathering in Nasarawa village, Gwaram Local Government Area, Jigawa State, in November 2018. In the same month, 25 gunmen opened fire on a protest called by local PDP leaders in the Ipo community, Rivers State. In several Nigerian states, civil society organisations have documented incidents of violence against women at political gatherings. Hate speech directed towards women was noted throughout the 2019 election process (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2019). According to reports from the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) for 2019, 145 individuals died in violence related to elections, 84 of them in the South-South region. The credibility of the 2019 election results was damaged by multiple documented instances of electoral violence in Nigeria during the election. In February 2019, 128 individuals were arrested due to violence related to electoral misconduct, including acts such as ballot box snatching, vandalism, voter manipulation, and even homicide (Onimisi and Tinuola 2019: 109).

Furthermore, evaluating the efficiency and legitimacy of law enforcement institutions depends on how the public feels about Nigeria's policing system. Research indicates that an individual's readiness to participate in the electoral process can be significantly shaped by their confidence in the police and their perception of the police's impartiality (Granberg 2023: 2). Therefore, it is crucial to carry out a qualitative study to investigate participants' ideas and perspectives on Nigeria's policing practices and election violence in the context of the Fourth Republic. This study intends to

offer important insights into the strengths and flaws of the current policing system in Nigeria by probing the experiences and viewpoints of those who have witnessed or been affected by election violence.

### **1.3. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS**

#### **1.3.1. Electoral violence**

Electoral violence refers to any form of violent behaviour, actions, or incidents that occur during electoral processes, including political campaigns, voter registration, voting, and post-election periods. This type of violence can involve physical harm, property destruction, intimidation, or any other violent acts aimed at influencing or disrupting the electoral process. Electoral violence, according to Oyoru (2023: 70) is any organised action or threat, whether structural, psychological, or physical, meant to frighten, threaten, or harm politicians and other stakeholders before, during, or following an election, to influence or manipulate the electoral process.

Bayode and Monday (2023: 624) categorise three types of election violence this include structural, psychological, and physical forms of violence. Physical electoral violence, according to Bayode and Monday, is any form of physical abuse that candidates and their followers inflict on one another before, during, and after party conventions, elections, and results announcements. Most of these incidents end in fatalities. Election-related violence affects voting behaviour. There is little evidence of a relationship between voting participation and electoral violence, according to systematic studies. A cross-sectional study found that Nigerian voters were less likely to vote at the polls if they had received threats of violence related to the election (Bayode and Monday 2023: 623). A cross-national study also found the same thing on a global scale (Norris, Frank, and Martinezi 2015: 14).

In 2019, Political enforcers armed with weapons dispersed voters and journalists at Suntulma Gama Primary School, constituting the primary

victims of political and Election Day violence (Abdulazeez Alao 2021: 330). The Situation Room (2019: 33) provides an overview of incidents and fatalities reported during the election season, detailing the number of people killed, incidents, and incidents per zone. When broken down by state, Benue, Borno, Kaduna, Rivers, and Zamfara had the highest casualty figures. Regionally, the Northwest had 20 incidents and 172 fatalities, the South East had 7 incidents and 14 fatalities, the South-South had 59 incidents and 120 fatalities, and the Southwest had 36 incidents and 63 fatalities. Over the 127-day study period, election day accounted for 20% of all fatalities and 15% of all incidents, with 23 incidents and 111 fatalities in the North Central region, and 16 incidents and 146 fatalities in the Northeast (Abdulazeez Alao 2021: 335).

### **1.3.2. Policing system**

The policing system encompasses institutions, rules, guidelines, and practices aimed at maintaining public safety, enforcing laws, and preserving order, particularly during elections (Chinedu and Okey Oparaku 2024: 826). Security agencies play a crucial role in ensuring electoral security, which is essential for credible, free, and fair elections. Their effectiveness in this role fosters public trust in the democratic process, while failure can lead to political instability and the collapse of democracy (Laebens and Lührmann 2021: 17; Lofredo 2020: 12).

### **1.3.3. Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

Nigeria's current democratic era, which started in 1999 following years of military control, marks the Fourth Republic. This is the period when Nigeria returned to civilian governance, characterised by multi-party elections, the adoption of a democratic constitution and the formation of democratic institutions.

### **1.3.4. Qualitative research**

The goal of qualitative research is to comprehend and interpret the meanings, beliefs, experiences, and viewpoints of individuals or groups to understand human behaviour and social phenomena. To acquire knowledge

about the topic of research, it frequently entails in-depth interviews, focus groups, observations, and textual or visual data analysis.

### **1.3.5. Participants**

Participants refer to individuals or groups who are involved in the study and provide their insights, opinions, or experiences related to the research topic. The study participants had first-hand knowledge of electoral violence and the policing system in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, such as voters, election officials, law enforcement personnel, and community members.

### **1.3.6. Free and fair elections**

A free and fair election refers to a democratic electoral process that is conducted without any coercion, intimidation, or fraud, where all eligible citizens can participate and have their votes counted accurately. It implies an electoral system that ensures equal representation and respects the principles of democracy.

### **1.3.7. Credibility of the democratic process**

The credibility of the democratic process refers to the perceived trustworthiness and legitimacy of the electoral system. It involves public confidence in the fairness of elections, the transparency of the voting process, and the integrity of election results. A credible democratic process is essential for maintaining political stability and upholding the democratic principles of governance.

## **1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Olatunji and Ojakorotu (2022: 190) advocate for upholding the rule of law. People will have faith in the judiciary if they know that there will be consequences for anyone caught engaging in electoral violence regardless of their status in society. Election-related violence is a sign of Nigerian politics' structural issues (Zimbalist 2020: 626; Ali and Ali 2022: 2). Over the years, violent activities, acts of lawlessness, impunity, deaths, and wilful destruction of lives and property have characterised most elections in Nigeria (Afolabi 2018: 158). Providing security for all party participants, voters, civil

society organisations (CSOs), and other stakeholders during Nigerian elections is a difficult responsibility for the police and other security services. Nigerian elections have a history of being violent. Elections have been characterised by violence since the switch to democracy in 1999 because of lawlessness (Ezeugwu and Ejeh 2022: 204). Although there were fewer instances of post-election violence in 2019 than there were in 2011, a pattern of violence along these lines nevertheless occurred. According to a report from the Situation Room, a local civil society organisation, 626 people died because of the election process, including the run-up to the actual election (Onapajo and Babalola 2020: 365).

According to Omede and Ngwube (2022: 233), there was violence during the 2015 elections in many parts of Nigeria, which resulted in the deaths of many residents. They further posit that when the results were announced, there were several armed skirmishes. Verjee, Kwaja, and Onubogu (2018: 429) and Chidi and Anikelechi (2022: 200) both argue that voter turnout in Nigerian elections has been low due to voters' fear for their lives. Victor (2022: 17) claims that electoral contests frequently lead to violent clashes in Nigeria that result in the loss of life and destruction of property. Over the years, violence, acts of lawlessness, impunity, deaths, and wilful destruction of lives and property have characterised most elections in Nigeria. The persistent violence that has surrounded Nigeria's elections is a symptom of structural problems that have an impact on both Nigerian and African politics generally.

Additionally, electoral violence exacerbates voters' apathy and disillusionment with the Nigerian electoral process and raises questions about the readiness and efficiency of the security agencies and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the body charged with organising free, credible, and fair elections in the nation (Thompson *et al.* 2023: 119). The importance of security cannot be understated to complete

this enormous undertaking. The performance of the stakeholders (INEC, political parties, election observers, media, and security services) determines whether an election is successful or otherwise. In addition, Thompson *et al.* (2023:120) assert that "the security agencies can affect the results of elections. Security personnel must consequently exhibit the greatest levels of integrity, impartiality, professionalism, and sense of duty. Elections must be credible, free, and fair to preserve law and order and to safeguard voters, officials, ballots, and electoral materials (Mediyanose 2018: 137).

Additionally, election violence has been linked by several studies to the demise of Nigeria's First Republic in 1966 and poses a risk to the stability of the Fourth Republic if it is not swiftly and comprehensively handled. Elections in the Fourth Republic were the same as they were in the past, claim (Anyika and Ani 2022: 27). Election violence plagued the general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019. However, the 1999 election saw very little violence since it was under military supervision (Anyika and Ani 2022: 21). Similarly, the 2003 elections were bloodier and more blatantly rigged than the erroneous 1999 results were (Ayodele 2022: 104). Large-scale electoral violations and severe violence plagued the 2007 elections, which were administered by President Olusegun Obasanjo's departing administration (Anyika and Ani 2022: 21). According to HRW (2011) over 800 deaths were reported in post-election violence in Nigeria, specifically in the states of Bauchi, Kano, Kaduna, Gombe, and Taraba. The only method for political gladiators to profit themselves through democratic leadership in the Nigerian political setting is through electoral violence. The years 2015 and 2019 were not eliminated in the same way. According to Ugbudian (2022: 215), The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) reported that hundreds of people died because of the real violence, danger, and sense of dread that gripped the country during the 2015 election cycle. This incident garnered attention from both domestic and foreign audiences. The 2019 general elections, which took place in February and March, were

hampered by glaring problems, according to Anyika and Ani (2022: 30) as there were several violent occurrences during the voting process.

Even if the Nigerian police play a bigger responsibility in reducing electoral violence, most of the populace believe that the country's security services support the government. The Federal Government must focus on the issues with policing and the justice system, which could affect the upcoming general election in Nigeria. Egobueze and Ojirika (2017: 2), Joab-Peterside (2018: 5), Akpan and Onya (2019: 59), and Obiam (2021: 55) have shown that election violence has been a recurring issue in Nigeria over the years, regrettably, the different approaches taken to stop the threat have not been so effective. Some scholars have argued that the over-centralization of Nigeria's security architecture is one of the problems preventing the country from conducting peaceful elections. Based on these issues, the study advocates for the reorganisation of the security architecture as one of the veritable means of rejigging and repositioning the Nigerian Police and other security agencies to guarantee a transparent and credible electoral system in Nigeria.

### **1.5. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The main of the study is to examine the policing system and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Furthermore, the study aims to identify the challenges and role of the Nigerian Force in addressing electoral offences and providing possible solutions to mitigate electoral violence in future elections.

### **1.6. STUDY OBJECTIVES**

The following are the specific objectives of the proposed study

1. To examine the existing structure of the policing system in Nigeria.
2. To analyse key informants' perceptions on the current design of policing and recurrent electoral violence in Nigeria.

3. To identify the challenges militating against the restructuring of the policing system in Nigeria.
4. To recommend policing measures to mitigate electoral violence in Nigeria.

### **1.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on the research objectives mentioned above, the study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What policing structure is currently in operation in Nigeria?
2. How does Nigeria's reoccurrence of electoral violence relate to its policing system?
3. What are the challenges militating against the restructuring of the policing system in Nigeria?
4. What are the recommendations that can mitigate electoral violence in Nigeria?

### **1.8. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The electoral process in Nigeria is rife with irregularities, including vote-buying, ballot box stealing, violence, and thuggery. The international world is growing more concerned about the country's election process after the presidential and national assembly elections on February 25, 2023, especially considering the high frequency of violence during the polls. If political leaders follow through on their pledges to institutionalise transparency in the nation's voting procedures, it will be a relief. Unfortunately, allegations concerning the politicization of electoral laws and judicial institutions by security agents are common.

Considering this, researchers have questioned the Nigerian government's current policing structure as being ineffective arguing that despite the violence and fatalities that were reported during the most recent elections nationwide, there is little proof that electoral offenders were prosecuted

(Omede and Ngwube 2022: 238; Agunyai and Ikedinma 2022: 67; Onimisi and Tinuola 2019: 111). The pertinent question that needs to be addressed is whether the reform of Nigeria's law enforcement and policing organisations is the crucial piece needed for the country's elections to be free, fair, and peaceful.

The study's recommendations will also assist the Nigerian police and other security agencies in recognising their limitations and difficulties. Consequently, it demonstrates how to carry out their responsibilities more skilfully during the political process to fulfil their function as societal peacekeepers. Politicians and the electorate in Nigeria will benefit from the study since it will enable them to promote democracy and good sportsmanship during elections. Above all, this study will add to the body of knowledge on the necessity of reorganising and reviving the Nigerian security system to reduce electoral violence and inefficient police during an election in Nigeria.

The study's findings shall be significant to Nigeria and other African developing countries, legislatures, policymakers, electoral bodies, and other political stakeholders. The study will highlight the effects of the current structure of policing in Nigeria and the challenges faced by the Nigerian police in maintaining law and order in the society with the current system or structure during elections. Therefore, the findings will undoubtedly enable those concerned to adjust and formulate policies that will result in a more credible, fair, and free electoral process in Nigeria's political system. This will also contribute to the discussions both in academic and policy-making circles towards combating electoral violence which is prevalent in Nigeria and other developing African countries. The study will provide policy guidelines to countries with emerging democratic cultures, especially Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Liberia et cetera.

### **1.9. DELIMITATION**

The respondents may be biased in giving their agency a negative rating or criticising the government because the study's focus is on national security, politics, and the evaluation of public institutions' ability to carry out their legislative mandates. However, by using non-governmental organisations as key informants, this has been resolved.

### **1.10. SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW SECTION**

In Nigeria's democracy, electoral violence has become a recurrent occurrence over time. It is an act of violence committed before, during and after the electoral process by people or organisations to influence the results of their suit. (Olowojolu, Rasak, Ake, Ogundele and Afolayan 2019: 43). This has made it necessary to send out more police officers and other security personnel to ensure that Nigeria's elections are conducted securely. Several authors including, Ajeli (2022: 124); Tobi and Oikhala (2018: 90) and Afolabi (2018: 156) asserted that the deployment of security (police) forces is required to uphold Nigerian law and order, which includes guaranteeing free, legitimate, and widely accepted elections. On the other hand, some argued that unchecked use of security forces (Police, NSCDC, Nigerian Army, DSS, and others) might lead to electoral violence and fraudulent elections. (Adekeye and Chima 2022: 11). This, therefore, necessitated the need to interrogate the issue of policing and general law enforcement in the electoral process and how it should be handled strategically and with utmost care. Several scholars have written on electoral violence (Daxecker, Di-Salvatore and Ruggeri 2019: 2099; Mares and Young 2020: 454; Norris, Frank and Martinez 2015: 6). In his work on the police and electoral process in Nigeria, Afolabi (2018: 155) concluded that the central role of the police is to enforce the electoral laws in Nigeria effectively and efficiently.

Politically, Nigeria is still struggling with a seriously flawed electoral system and its flawed kind of democracy. The Nigerian electoral process lacks the

fundamental elements of a democratic process and is plagued by widespread electoral tampering, violence, influence from incumbents, interference with the process, conflicting court orders, fabricated election results, and compromised election officials, security personnel, and election monitors. Additionally, there are contentious court rulings that force the people to accept the election losers as winners. (Iwuagwu 2021: 69). Tobi and Oikhala (2018: 87) argue that a country's degree of development is determined by the quality of police that is available to it. Regretfully, the Nigerian police force has fallen short of expectations when it comes to offering the country sufficient security. According to Olatunji and Ojakorotu (2022: 190), the absence of law and order culminates in declining participation in the electoral process, marginalisation, and a non-inclusive government.

The need for the execution of justice relating to the prevention, management, and control of violence by security forces and the judicial system appropriately during elections cannot be overemphasised. To achieve this, the Nigerian election laws gave security forces particularly the Nigerian Police, which serves as the principal organisation in charge of overseeing internal security in Nigeria a great deal of authority. Therefore, the study will look at the specifics of Nigeria's strategic policing architecture and structure and how it relates to the widespread electoral violence in the nation, as part of the democratic roles of the Police and other security agencies including ensuring the conduct of free, fair, and transparent elections. Moreover, it was stated that electoral violence was a major factor in the struggle that led to the civil war, which ultimately hampered Nigeria's economic expansion and development between July 6, 1967, and January 15, 1970 (Suleman and Salihu 2022: 3; Cheibub and Hayes 2017:102; Afrika 2021: 38; Matanock 2017: 97). The authors contend that elections are frequently violent events, calling into question the conventional wisdom that democracy promotes social harmony by establishing peaceful channels for power struggles.

Scholars, such as Birch, Daxecker and Höglund (2020: 5) and Onimisi and Omolegbe (2019: 104) also posit that electoral violence at various levels has eaten deep into the Nigerian political landscape. However, there are limited studies examining the challenges facing policing and law enforcement during the electoral process in Nigeria. This is one of the major gaps in the existing literature that this study intends to fill.

#### **1.11. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN**

The study employs a qualitative research design, utilising structured interviews to delve into the experiences and perspectives of key informants concerning Nigeria's Fourth Republic, policing, and electoral violence. Primary data were gathered through interviews, complemented by secondary data sourced from peer-reviewed journals and academic publications.

The qualitative approach aims to elucidate participants' viewpoints on the policing systems and electoral violence in Nigeria. The study population comprises relevant electoral institutions and a diverse array of stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Nigerian Police, politicians, eligible voters, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), political parties, local and international election observers, journalists, and ad hoc staff involved in electoral duties.

The sample size of 45 key informants is determined based on factors, such as the study's scope, resource availability, principles of data saturation, and characteristics of the target population. Purposive sampling is employed to select individuals with the requisite expertise and competence to provide insights pertinent to the research objectives. The inclusion criteria encompass willingness to participate and possession of relevant experience

and expertise, while potential participants unwilling to engage in interviews due to office sensitivity but possessing relevant qualifications are excluded.

Recruitment of key informants involves personal contact initiated by the researcher, including the delivery of introductory and consent letters to participants' offices. Permission from organisations (gatekeepers) was obtained before data collection via in-person and focus group interviews were conducted.

Data collection utilises an interview schedule, comprising questions and instructions addressing the research topics. Employing a single interview schedule for both one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions ensures efficiency and convenience for participants and interviewers alike, while secondary data is obtained through a literature review. Data analysis primarily utilises qualitative methods, specifically thematic analysis to extract meaningful insights from the data collected through interviews.

#### **1.12. PILOTING OF THE STUDY**

The researcher conducted interviews with five respondents as part of the pilot study. These respondents, including a police officer, an INEC official, a member of the NBA, a party leader, and a journalist, were not included in the main study. The purpose of the pre-test was to evaluate the interview questions for applicability and relevance. Following the pre-testing phase, no adjustments were made to the questions before the official commencement of data collection.

Participants in the pre-testing phase were purposively selected and formally invited in writing. The request letters communicated that the pre-testing process would not be part of the actual study and that participation was voluntary, with no compensation offered.

### **1.13. ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

The study closely followed the guidelines for ensuring both anonymity and confidentiality. To uphold these principles, the interview guide refrained from including personal identifiers such as names and gender of participants. Moreover, qualitative data collection was conducted by the researcher in person through in-house interviews and focus group discussions to maintain confidentiality.

Even in situations where complete anonymity was not feasible, efforts were made to prioritise confidentiality, as recommended by Pritha (2021). Throughout the study, all participants' identities were safeguarded before, during, and after data collection. This was achieved by coding all data and restricting access to only the researcher and supervisor. Additionally, a protocol was established to delete all data five years following the completion of the research.

### **1.14. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

According to Toyon (2023: 22), ethical considerations should be considered during the planning phase of a research project. Ethical practices serve to safeguard both the researcher and the participants. Hence, researchers are obliged to secure ethical clearance before initiating their research endeavours.

According to Olsson *et al.* (2022: 2), ethics is what individuals and society believe are morally acceptable. Drolet, Rose-Derouin, Leblanc, Ruest and Williams-Jones (2023: 270) define research ethics as a framework that offers guidance on conducting research in a morally responsible manner. The researchers further assert that fundamental ethical precautions must be taken to ensure the protection of participants from any potential harm.

The researcher strictly adhered to all ethical requirements stipulated by the Durban University of Technology and obtained the necessary ethical

clearance approval. Participants were duly informed that the research would be conducted under the university's ethical framework. Gatekeeper letters and relevant forms are provided, and participants are assured of their right to withdraw from the study if they ever felt that ethical standards were not being upheld by the researcher.

## **1.15. STRUCTURE**

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

This chapter provides the background to the study, the research problem, the aim, the research objectives, the research questions, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the conceptualization of critical terms or words and the thesis structure.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Chapter two reviews the literature that is currently available on Nigeria's security, policing system, and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic; as trends, causes, and effects of the phenomena as they concern Nigeria. Nigerian police officers and their role in electoral processes.

### **Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework**

This chapter presents the Institutional Functionalism Theory and Structural Theory, the relevance of these theories to the work, the strength of the theories, the shortcomings and weaknesses of the theory and the effects of these theories on the just concluded elections in Nigeria.

### **Chapter Four: Research Methodology**

This chapter elucidates the research approach and the framework adopted by the researcher to collect data pertinent to the study's goals. Additionally, it delves into the process of selecting both the overall population and the specific sample, while also providing insights into the employed sampling methods. This chapter thoroughly examines aspects related to ethical considerations, such as confidentiality and anonymity, as well as limitations, reliability, and validity concerns.

## **Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Findings**

This chapter presents results from the KII session, relevant documented trends and patterns by security agencies on electoral violence, and the hurdles confronting law enforcement institutions based on the research objectives.

## **Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter summarises the key findings, contributions to knowledge, recommendations for future research and the conclusion of the study.

### **1.16. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The primary goals of this research are to examine the issue of election violence and evaluate the effectiveness of the policing system in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Specifically, the study aims to analyse instances of electoral violence occurring across various general elections in Nigeria. The research seeks to delve into the views and perceptions of stakeholders, ad hoc staff, party agents, and participants regarding the law enforcement agencies' role in mitigating electoral violence and ensuring a secure environment during the electoral process.

Utilising qualitative research methods, the study aims to uncover the first-hand experiences of individuals who have encountered electoral violence. It also seeks to understand their perspectives on the responsiveness and impartiality of the policing system in addressing such incidents, as well as the adequacy of punishments meted out to offenders. Through this inquiry, the research intends to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the interplay between the policing system and electoral violence in Nigeria.

Ultimately, the study endeavours to provide valuable insights aimed at bolstering the credibility and effectiveness of law enforcement during future elections in the country.

### **1.17. CONCLUSION**

The historical context of electoral violence in Nigeria since the Fourth Republic's inception in 1999 serves as a stark reminder of the persistent challenges the country faces. Instances of violence during elections, both interparty and intraparty, have led to loss of life, destruction of property, and deep social divides. The role of law enforcement, particularly the Nigerian Police, is crucial in ensuring credible and peaceful elections. Legal provisions demand their impartiality and specialised support in maintaining public order during elections. However, the deterioration of national security and subsequent disruptions in election schedules have contributed to a decline in citizen engagement and confidence in the electoral process.

Various forms of electoral violence, from improper use of state apparatus by incumbents to politicians deploying armed thugs for intimidation, underline the pressing need for comprehensive reforms in law enforcement. This violence, often orchestrated by government forces and various stakeholders, inflicts considerable harm on people, property, and public infrastructure. The deeply embedded nature of electoral violence implicates a wide range of actors, suggesting the possibility of active promotion and perpetuation of this phenomenon. The application of the Functionalism theory provides a framework to understand the complex interplay of societal groups and institutions in achieving political stability, transparent electoral systems, and growth. As Nigeria strives for a more peaceful and participatory electoral environment, the findings of this research could guide policymakers and stakeholders in building a safer and more inclusive democracy for the nation's future.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

In Nigeria's democracy, electoral violence has become a recurrent occurrence over time. It is an act of violence committed before, during and after the electoral process by people or organisations to influence the results to their advantage (Olowojolu, Rasak, Ake, Ogundele and Afolayan 2019: 43). This has made it necessary to send out more police officers and other security personnel to ensure that Nigeria's elections are conducted securely. Several authors including, Ajeli (2022: 124); Tobi and Oikhala (2018: 90) and Afolabi (2018: 156) assert that the deployment of security (police) forces is required to uphold Nigerian law and order, which includes guaranteeing free, legitimate, and widely accepted elections. On the other hand, some scholars argue that unchecked use of security forces (Police, NSCDC, Nigerian Army, DSS, and others) might lead to electoral violence and fraudulent elections (Adekeye and Chima 2022: 11). This present study, therefore, attempts to interrogate the issue of policing and general law enforcement in the electoral process in Nigeria and how it should be handled strategically and painstakingly.

Several scholars have written on electoral violence (Daxecker, Di-Salvatore and Ruggeri 2019: 2099; Mares and Young 2020: 454; Norris, Frank and Martinezi 2015: 6). In his work, *The Police and Electoral Process in Nigeria*, Afolabi (2018: 155) emphasised that the central role of the police is to enforce the electoral laws in the country effectively and efficiently.

Unfortunately, Nigeria still struggles with a seriously flawed electoral system and its kind of democracy. The Nigerian electoral process does not adhere to the fundamental principles of democracy and is plagued by widespread electoral tampering, criminal activity, the influence of incumbents, interference in the process, conflicting court orders, fabricated election outcomes, and compromised election officials, security personnel, and

election monitors. Additionally, the courts have issued disputed rulings that force the people to accept the election losers as winners (Iwuagwu 2021: 69).

Tobi and Oikhala (2018: 87) explain how a country's degree of development is determined by the quality of policing that it has access to. On the contrary, the Nigerian police have not done a good enough job of keeping the country safe. According to Ali and Ali (2022: 7), the absence of law and order culminates in declining participation in the electoral process, marginalisation, and non-inclusive government. The need for the execution of justice about the prevention, management, and control of violence by security forces and the judicial system appropriately during elections cannot be overemphasised. To this end, the Nigerian electoral laws vested immense power in security forces, especially the police, as the lead agency in managing internal security in Nigeria. Thus, since guaranteeing free, fair, and transparent elections is one of the responsibilities of the police and other security services, this study examines Nigeria's strategic policing architecture and how it affects the country's widespread electoral violence.

Remarkably, electoral violence was averred to have played a significant role in the conflict that triggered the civil war which eventually destabilised the growth and the economic development of Nigeria from July 6, 1967, to January 15, 1970 (Cheibub and Hayes 2017: 102; Matanock 2017: 97; Harish and Little 2017: 245). The authors challenge the conventional wisdom that democracy promotes social harmony by establishing peaceful channels for power struggles by arguing that elections are frequently violent events. Onimisi and Omolegbe (2019: 104) also posit that electoral violence at various levels is entrenched in the Nigerian political landscape. However, limited studies examine the challenges facing policing and law enforcement during the electoral process in Nigeria. This is one of the significant gaps in the current literature that this study intends to fill.

This chapter reviews the existing literature on various concepts that form the foundation for this research. Some of these concepts are the election, democracy, electoral violence, policing system in Nigeria, electoral system, among others

## **2.2. ELECTION AND DEMOCRACY**

Election enables and shapes democracy. According to Przeworski (2019: 34), because democracy's ideology encourages the will of the people, it is thought to be the finest form of government, hence in a liberal democracy, elections are seen as an essential principle (Przeworski 2019: 34). Remarkably, elections are significant because they empower citizens to express themselves by choosing their leaders. An election is regarded as a post-mortem that examines the record of officeholders whose real performance may have little to do with assurances made when they were formerly elected (Agiri and Morka 2022: 148).

According to Ajayi and Reiner (2018: 33), an electoral democracy refers to a democratic government that operates on a system that permits every citizen to select a candidate from a list of contestants vying for political offices. An eligible voter casts a secret vote based on their choice. It is noteworthy that secret voting is an important element of a democratic system as it promotes fairness, freedom, integrity, and accountability. For an election to qualify for democratic integrity, the process must be adjudged free and fair, devoid of any form of compulsion or bribery schemes, and independent of the incumbents (Yusuf 2019: 44).

Thus, the importance of elections cannot be overemphasised. In any democratic system of government, elections are indispensable as they encourage political participation (Bhalotra, Clots-Figueras and Iyer 2018: 613). Elections enable the inhabitants of a country to easily participate in the process of selecting their political leaders. In addition, the electoral process makes the selection of leaders that would be answerable to the electorate possible.

Besides, the electoral process enables citizens to choose their lawmakers and ward councillors. There is legitimacy and responsibility in the electoral process because the elected leaders have the legitimacy to represent their people and fight for their interests. The electorate through the electoral processes has the choice to select the political party that has sound policies that will be of benefit to them (Layton *et al.* 2021: 25).

An election is a useful tool for gauging a government's popularity, but it also provides insight into the nature of the social compact that underpins governmental legitimacy, power, and citizen responsibilities. According to Julius (2017: 121), elections and power struggles are crucial as the former allow the oppressed classes to put forward the question of alternative principles on the agenda; therefore, they mark a vital stage in the socialist pursuit to spread democratic control to the economic, social, and political sphere. For elections to be successful in a democratic environment, an explicit, capable, somewhat independent, and impartial electoral body must be established to oversee them.

### **2.3. ELECTION AND DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC**

Elections have been taking place in Nigeria since 1959 with diverse political parties. The emergence of electioneering processes in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria is traced back to the transition to democracy in 1999 after decades of military rule. Election procedures have undergone several changes during the Fourth Republic, including the adoption of new electoral laws, the use of cutting-edge technologies like electronic voting machines, and the introduction of independent electoral bodies like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Since then, violence in the Nigerian state has spread beyond the election to include insurgencies, insurgency, and ethno-religious disputes. (Obikaeze, Udoh, Adebogun and Enapeh 2023: 49).

#### **2.3.1. 1999 General Election**

On February 27, 1999, Nigeria held its general election. The People's Democratic Party's candidate, in the person of Olusegun Obasanjo, won the presidential election. The election was crucial because it restored democracy in Nigeria and brought an end to long-running military rule.

Notably, challenges during the electioneering process were accusations of ballot rigging, violence, and intimidation of voters. Consequently, the results of the election were disputed by the main opposition candidate, Chief Samuel Oluyemi Falae of the All-Peoples Party and this led to a legal battle that lasted for several months.

Yusuf (2019: 37) states that there were reports of violence in numerous places in Nigeria during the 1999 general election, especially in the Niger Delta region.

Remarkably, numerous factors contributed to the electoral violence. Some of them are identified thus:

**Political competition:** The election was highly competitive, with many political parties and candidates vying for power. This competition led to tensions and clashes between rival political groups.

**Ethnic and religious tensions:** Nigeria is a diverse country with many ethnic and religious groups. This caused tensions during the election.

**Allegations of election rigging:** The electoral process was marred by allegations of ballot rigging, which led to protests and unrest in some areas.

**Lack of trust in the electoral process:** There were concerns about the credibility of the electoral process, which fuelled suspicions and tensions among different groups.

**Poverty and underdevelopment:** The Niger Delta region has long been plagued by poverty and underdevelopment, and these issues contributed to unrest and violence during the election.

These factors combined to create a highly charged and volatile political environment during the 1999 election in Nigeria, which resulted in violence in some parts of the country.

The Nigerian police were criticised for their poor response to the violence that erupted after the election. The police were criticised for their inability to stop or control the violence and for not taking decisive measures to bring the perpetrators of the violence to justice.

In some instances, it was alleged that the police were backing political organisations, escalating the violence and causing a breakdown of law and order. Additionally, there were claims of police violence, such as the disproportionate use of force against demonstrators and the arbitrary arrest and incarceration of members of the opposition.

Overall, it was widely believed that the security personnel's response during the 1999 election was weak and ineffectual. This lent credence to the claim that the election was not free and fair. The events surrounding the 1999 election highlighted the necessity for Nigeria to restructure its security system and enhance its capacity to successfully handle future election-related violence.

### **2.3.2. 2003 General Election**

The 2003 general election in Nigeria took place on April 19, 2003. The presidential election was won by Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Challenges faced during the electioneering process include ballot rigging, intimidation, political violence, assassination, and the like. According to Pally (2022: 3), in a special report published by Human Rights Watch in 2004, both Nigeria's local government elections in 2004 and the country's federal and state elections in 2003 were plagued by violent episodes that resulted in numerous injuries and fatalities. According to the research, there were several locations where political parties and candidates' goons prevented

elections from happening altogether by intimidating and threatening voters to rig the results.

Widespread criticism was levelled against the security personnel's response to the violence that erupted during the 2003 election. Pally (2022: 3) stresses that any civilisation that lacks security allows for violence and thuggery. Notably, Nigeria has poor law enforcement and order maintenance. During elections, political thugs commit electoral violence with little or no opposition from law enforcement. The police either ignore the myriad offences that political thugs and their paymasters commit, or work in concert with those who recruit them to incite violence during elections. Below are some of the reports on the 2003 election in Nigeria:

**Failure to prevent violence:** The police were criticised for failing to prevent or control the violence that took place during the election; they were also alleged to be complicit in the violence.

**Taking sides:** There were allegations that the police took sides and supported certain political groups, thereby exacerbating the violence and contributing to the breakdown of law and order.

**Police brutality:** There were reports of police brutality, including the use of excessive force against protesters and the arbitrary arrest and detention of opposition supporters.

**Inadequate response:** Overall, the response of the security personnel, particularly the Nigerian police, was widely inadequate and insufficient, contributing to the overall perception that the election was not free and fair.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the election represented the first seamless transition of power from one elected civilian administration to another in Nigerian history, making it unquestionably a step in the right direction for democracy to flourish there.

### 2.3.3. 2007 General Election

Nigeria held its general elections on April 14 and April 21, 2007. The Presidential and National Assembly Elections were held on April 21, 2007, while the State Assembly and Governorship Elections were held on April 14. The very contentious presidential election was won by the late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), who took office on May 29, 2007 (Manea and Rüländ 2020: 165). PDP was victorious in 26 states out of the 32 states. The groups that monitored the election reported that it was not a credible election. An EU observer affirmed that the elections were not credible and did not comply with some basic international standards.

Okolo and Madu (2022: 5) state that political tensions, ethnic and religious rivalries, and competition for wealth and political power were major contributors to the violence that took place during the 2007 election in Nigeria. The following are some of the main reasons for violence during the election:

**Political polarisation:** The 2007 election was marked by a high degree of political polarisation between the ruling party and the opposition. This led to a heated political atmosphere and heightened tensions that eventually culminated in violence.

**Ethnic and religious rivalries:** Nigeria is a culturally and ethnically diverse country, and this diversity often leads to tensions and conflicts, especially during elections. The 2007 election was no exception, with violence erupting in several parts of the country between ethnic and religious groups.

**Competition for resources and political power:** The 2007 election was perceived as an opportunity for different groups to gain control of resources and political power. This led to intense competition and violence, particularly in areas where resources were scarce or contested.

**Failure of security forces:** The security forces, particularly the police, were criticised for failing to prevent and control the violence that occurred during

the 2007 election. The police were accused of being partisan and supporting certain political groups, which contributed to the escalation of violence.

According to Okolo and Madu (2022: 5), the response of security personnel, particularly the Nigerian police, to the violence that occurred during the 2007 election was considered inadequate and ineffectual. The police were also accused of taking sides in the election, fuelling the violence. There were also reports of police brutality during the election, with security personnel using excessive force to disperse crowds and arrest protesters.

Overall, the response of the Nigeria Police was a significant factor in the widespread perception that the 2007 election was not free and fair and contributed to calls for reforms to improve the security situation in future elections. It is worth mentioning that there is limited information and references available on the specific response of the Nigeria Police during the violence of the 2007 election.

#### **2.3.4. 2011 General Election**

April 16th, 2011, the nation held another national legislative election. Surprisingly, since there was a pre-existing custom of switching the presidency between the two religions, there was controversy surrounding the presidential election that took place on April 16, 2011. Following the demise of President Yar'Adua, Christian Goodluck Ebele Jonathan took over as an acting president. There was a lot of electoral violence in Northern Nigeria following the 2011 election (Bature 2018: 79). However, Goodluck was declared the winner of the presidential election on April 19, 2011.

Remarkably, there was a recurrence of security issues in the three main phases of the 2011 general elections. In other words, violence occurred before, during, and after the election. According to the Inspector General of Police, violence following the elections claimed the lives of 520 persons in Kaduna and the Niger States alone. There were two more deaths in Niger State and 518 recorded deaths in Kaduna State, including six police officers. Additionally, according to IGP, 77 people were hurt in Kaduna State. It is

estimated that 22,000 people were displaced because of the crisis in Kaduna State. The IGP further revealed that around 1,435 residences, 157 places of worship, 46 mosques, 437 automobiles, and 219 motorcycles were set ablaze. (Thompson *et al.* 2023: 103)

### **2.3.5. 2015 General Election**

In 2015, the general elections (the Presidential, Senatorial, and House of Representative elections) slated for 14 February were postponed to March 28, 2015 and April 11, 2015, for the conduct of the Governorship and State House of Assembly elections. Ellah (2020: 16) states that Retired General Muhammadu Buhari of the All-Progressives Congress (APC) won the Presidential election to defeat the incumbent president, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the PDP. Thus, the retired general was sworn in as the president on 29 May 2015.

Victor (2022: 23) avers that there was violence in certain areas of Nigeria during both the 2015 general elections and the 2016 supplemental polls. Both further reinforce Ibeh's (2015) assertion that, according to a Nigerian Human Rights Commission study, at least 58 Nigerians perished in pre-election violence before the country's general elections, which were set for March 28 and April 11, 2015. According to the commission's re-election report, in just 50 days, there were 61 instances of pre-election violence in 22 states in Nigeria, resulting in at least 58 fatalities. Interestingly, several pre-election violent incidents directed at specific people in a few states in 2015 were caused by the All-Progressive Congress (APC) being the nation's biggest opposition party. (Ogele 2020: 885).

However, there were no reports of punitive measures against the offenders under the country's law. If any, electoral violators in the nation are treated lightly. When the police arrest them, most of these criminals are released to their principals after they are kept in police custody for some time. Even with the rising frequency of electoral violence in the country, there is arguably no single conviction of any electoral criminal yet by any court since the inception

of the current democratic regime. One such instance is the events in Akwa Ibom State in 2011, which prompted the formation of a presidential investigative team, of which to date, no findings have been made. (Ogele 2020: 885).

### **2.3.6. 2019 General Election**

The 2019 general elections in Nigeria were marred by significant violence and controversy. Originally scheduled for February 16, 2019, the presidential and national assembly elections were postponed to February 23, 2019. State and local elections, initially set for March 2, 2019, were rescheduled to March 9, 2019. President Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected for another term (Angerbrandt and Themnér 2021: 782).

The elections were plagued by extensive violence, resulting in 629 deaths nationwide, according to Human Rights Watch. In Rivers State, there were reports of military overreach and attacks on civilian areas following allegations of electoral rigging. Additionally, there were numerous instances of violence and malfeasance, including abductions, attacks on party agents, and theft of election materials (Ogele 2020: 895).

The Nigerian Police Force, including its Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), faced criticism for their role in the election process. Okechukwu, Chukwuka, and Chikwado (2019: 89) state that police forces were involved in various forms of misconduct, including breaking into collation centres, kidnapping election officials, and committing extrajudicial killings. The police's involvement in these activities undermined the credibility of the elections and contributed to widespread public dissatisfaction.

### **2.3.7. 2023 Elections**

The 2023 general elections in Nigeria which took place on the 25th of February highlighted various faults in the policing system in Nigeria and how the law enforcement framework fuels electoral violence. According to Aghator and Moussa (2023: 29), the 2023 elections were characterised by

widespread irregularities, including ballot-box snatching, voter intimidation, and violence. The police were often unable to prevent or respond effectively to these incidents, despite the deployment of thousands of officers to maintain security and prevent violence and chaos (Doyle 2023). This suggests a lack of adequate training, resources, and coordination on the part of the police. Furthermore, the police were often partisan in their approach, favouring the ruling party and neglecting the opposition (The Punch 2023). This, of course, is a serious concern, as it undermines the principle of impartiality and fairness that is necessary for credible elections. It also raises questions about the independence and neutrality of the policing system in Nigeria. Adichie (2023) further emphasises the little or no role played by the policing system.

The perceived bias towards the ruling party and the failure to act against political thugs and other troublemakers has led to allegations of police complicity in election irregularities, which further eroded public trust in the electoral process (Doyle 2023). The police were also criticised for their lack of preparedness, inadequate security arrangements, and logistical challenges. This affected their ability to respond to incidents and maintain order during the election (Adebowale-Tambe, 2023). The police may have also been overstretched as they were responsible for ensuring security in various parts of the country, including areas with high levels of violence and insecurity. Findings further indicate the inefficiencies of other institutions involved in the election, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the presidency. For instance, INEC faced criticism for its operational difficulties and delays in distributing election materials, and the presidency was charged with manipulating the results of the election by applying pressure on INEC and other organisations (Essien, Dahunsi, Nwachukwu and Aribisala 2023: 4). These problems with the 2023 elections dent the image and legitimacy of the voting process and made it clear that the policing system urgently must be changed to guarantee that elections in the future are transparent, legitimate, and devoid of violence.

### **2.3.8. The role of the security agencies in the Fourth Republic electoral process**

From the 1999 military-conducted election to the 2019 general elections, Nigeria has seen six general elections during the Fourth Republic, and consolidating democracy continues to be hampered by the power holders' tenure, as confirmed by Ogele (2020: 885). Sadly, the democratic process in Nigeria is characterised by electoral fraud, arrogance, racial and tribal chauvinism, incompetent leadership, and a corrupt judiciary. This has led to conflicts, intimidation, violence, identity contestations, mutual mistrust, suspicion, accusations, and counteraccusations, as well as protests and political killings in an unending cycle of violence meant to sabotage the democratic process. According to Kola, Shola and Samuel (2020: 2) violence stands as the shared factor in the electoral process of the Fourth Republic of Nigeria.

According to Amaramiro, Nwocha and Ibezim (2021: 43), the alleged involvement of the police in the 2014 gubernatorial elections in the states of Ekiti and Osun revealed how deeply the institution had become entangled in partisan politics. Officers of the force have been charged with being key participants in the violence that marked elections as affirmed. The Nigerian Armed Forces came under criticism by international and local observers over their conduct in 2015 and particularly in the 2019 general elections, regarding its apparent unprofessional conduct in the gubernatorial elections particularly in Rivers, Ekiti and Osun States.

According to Akpan and Reason (2019: 65), among the complaints in Taraba State was the claim that soldiers stationed there on March 28, 2015, scared and intimidated voters, enabling irregularities. It was claimed that the army was utilised to rig the results in favour of the PDP, not to guarantee free and fair elections. Voters were publicly threatened by the soldiers who were sent to Wukari, Takum, and other areas. Following the state's supplemental election, the APC persisted in its accusations that the PDP had abused the

card readers in a significant portion of the state and that there had been widespread violence, major ballot snatching, and electoral manipulation.

Okoye (2021: 22) states that the Police Service Commission claimed that security organisations were overwhelmed by hooded devils (fake policemen) who terrorised peaceful voters. Okoye further stresses that, perhaps, considering this, the Daily Sun Editorial Newspaper of December 3, 2019, stated that the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu confessed that the police were overpowered by “fake policemen”.

The claim that the police were outnumbered is unfounded because ballot boxes were snatched openly in front of voters and three or four police officers without resistance. Besides, no effort was made to capture the thugs. Okoye maintains that it would be the height of insensitivity and a complete lack of commitment for the police to remain silent in the face of such an overtly violent attack during an election. Who hired the fictitious police officers and outfitted them with sufficient weapons to defeat the genuine police officers is a big question. However, the 2011 elections demonstrated that democracy is a necessary condition for effective governance. Since party politics returned in 1999, Nigeria has managed to maintain a workable schedule of regular and periodic elections, but the political foundations of this achievement are questionable. (Oni, Erameh and Oladejo 2017: 57).

Nigerian election administration is beset with several issues that cast doubt on both the validity and veracity of the process as well as its results. According to Idowu (2021: 179), there have been numerous issues with Nigeria's electoral process for a long time, such as widespread vote tampering, violence, the influence of incumbents, interference with the process, conflicting court orders, election results fabrication, and the corruption of election officials, security personnel, and election observers, in addition to tainted and divisive court rulings. Ogele (2020: 889) further asserts that since the Fourth Republic's founding, over 4,000 people have

died because of electoral violence. Election-related offences have not yet been proven to have resulted in legal action or punishment. Naturally, this has highlighted the extent of impunity that Nigeria's political class enjoys.

#### **2.4. THE EMERGENCE OF ELECTIONEERING PROCESSES IN THE FOURTH REPUBLICAN DEMOCRACY**

A new chapter in the political history of Nigeria began with the establishment of the Fourth Republic of Nigeria in 1999. Following the restoration of democratic administration, the nation implemented institutional and political reforms intending to enhance the electoral process and guarantee free and fair elections. The Fourth Republic's electioneering procedures emerged because of this process. (Franklin 2023: 28).

Several institutional and political reforms were implemented in 1999 along with the return to democratic administration to enhance the electoral process. Among these was the creation of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), whose job was to plan and carry out free and fair elections (Mediayanose 2018: 135). The strengthening of the electoral law, which included passing the Electoral Act and establishing the Electoral Tribunal to settle election-related issues, was another aspect of the reforms (Asamoah 2019: 8).

With millions of Nigerians taking part in the election process, voter turnout increased significantly under the Fourth Republic. This resulted from initiatives taken by INEC to raise public understanding of the election process and from the implementation of policies meant to facilitate voting, like the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC). (Górny 2021: 141). Political campaigns, which are an essential aspect of electioneering processes, became more organised and structured in the Fourth Republic (Egobueze and Ojirika 2017: 7). Political parties, candidates, and their supporters were able to engage in more effective political campaigns, reaching out to voters through a variety of media, such as television, radio, and the internet.

With the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the strengthening of the legal framework for elections, election management improved in the Fourth Republic. The INEC, in collaboration with other stakeholders, developed and implemented measures aimed at ensuring the transparency and accountability of the electoral process, such as the use of biometric voter verification and the deployment of election observers.

#### **2.4.1. The constitutional amendment of the old electioneering processes to the current 1999 constitution**

Compared to the earlier constitutions, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 constitution significantly changed the electioneering process. The formation of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as an independent organisation tasked with supervising and managing national elections was the first amendment added to the 1999 constitution (Mediyanose 2018: 134). This was a major departure from the previous constitution, which placed the responsibility of conducting elections with the government (Egobueze and Ojirika 2017: 9). The main aim of establishing INEC was to guarantee that election results were free from governmental intervention while also advancing justice and transparency in the electoral process (Afolabi 2018: 160). The creation of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as an independent organisation tasked with supervising elections improved election management. Since its founding, INEC has been able to hold several free, fair, and transparent elections. Naturally, this has contributed to the nation's democratic process being strengthened. Another major amendment introduced by the 1999 constitution was the direct election of the governor and president. Previously, the governor and president were elected indirectly through the state and federal assemblies respectively.

The direct election of the governor and the president was aimed at giving the people of Nigeria a greater say in who governs them and ensuring that the elected officials are accountable to the people (Mediyanose 2018: 140).

The 1999 constitution also lowered the minimum age for voting from 21 years to 18 years. This was aimed at increasing the political participation of young people, who are an important demographic in the Nigerian population (Akpan and Reason 2019: 60). The change in the minimum voting age has had a positive impact on the democratic process in Nigeria, as it has encouraged greater political engagement among young people. One important insight is the increased political participation resulting from the direct election of the governor and president, and the lowering of the minimum voting age. These amendments have encouraged greater political engagement among the people of Nigeria, which has helped to deepen the democratic process in the country and increase the accountability of elected officials.

To increase accountability and openness in the political process, the 1999 constitution included restrictions on political party financing. According to the regulations, political parties must keep track of all their financial transactions and reveal the source of their support (Afolabi 2018: 158). The enactment of these laws has contributed to increased accountability and openness in the political process while lessening the impact of money in politics.

Additionally, the 1999 constitution established the Election Petition Tribunal to hear disputes arising from elections and provide a quicker resolution. This was aimed at addressing the issue of election disputes, which had been a major challenge in the previous constitution (Joab-Peterside 2020: 30). The establishment of the Election Petition Tribunal has had a positive impact on the democratic process in Nigeria, as it has helped to ensure that election disputes are resolved quickly and fairly. This has helped to reduce election-related violence (Mediayanose 2018: 136). Disputes arising from elections can now be resolved quickly and fairly, without resorting to violence. This has contributed to the peaceful resolution of election disputes and helped to reduce election-related violence in the country.

## **2.5. CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA'S ELECTORAL PROCESS**

One of the most significant challenges facing Nigeria's electoral process is the issue of rigging. This often takes the form of voter intimidation and manipulation, with political thugs being used to intimidate voters and disrupt the voting process (Idowu 2022: 170). Additionally, incumbency often plays a significant role in the electoral process, with incumbents using their positions of power to influence the outcome of elections (Frantzeskakis and Park 2022: 221).

Another major challenge facing Nigeria's electoral process is the issue of contradictory court injunctions. This often occurs when multiple court rulings are issued on the same issue, leading to confusion and uncertainty about the outcome of the election. Furthermore, the falsification of election results is a common occurrence in Nigeria, with officials often manipulating the results to favour their preferred candidates (Harry and Kalagbor 2021: 145). The compromise of electoral officials, security agents, and election monitors is also a major issue in Nigeria's electoral process. These individuals are often influenced or bribed to skew the results in favour of certain candidates. Afolabi, Teminola and Ojomo (2022: 45) are of the view that vote buying and selling, also known as commercial politics and money politics, is one phenomenon that is gradually taking centre stage in Nigeria's electoral process. Additionally, judicial pronouncements are often compromised and contentious, with the courts sometimes imposing election losers on the people as winners (Frantzeskakis and Park 2022: 213).

Nigeria's electoral process also faces issues such as voter disenfranchisement, lack of access to voter education, and inadequate infrastructure for conducting elections (Idowu 2022: 175). Voter disenfranchisement often occurs when eligible voters are unable to participate in the electoral process due to factors, such as lack of access to voter registration, lack of identification documents, or problems with the voter registration process. Jones (2023: 6) stresses that disenfranchisement may affect an individual, group, community, or race directly or indirectly. Direct

disenfranchisement arises in the case of an express ban placed on a person, a group or a community prohibiting them from voting, being voted for or having their votes counted or being considered. Indirect disenfranchisement manifests through the prescription of certain requirements or criteria that should be satisfied to be eligible to vote or voted for. This can lead to a significant portion of the population being excluded from the democratic process and can also lead to manipulation of the vote by those in power (Harry and Kalagbor 2021: 142).

Harry and Kalagbor (2021: 144) emphasise that the lack of access to voter education is another challenge facing Nigeria's electoral process. This issue can lead to low voter turnout and a lack of understanding of the electoral process among the population. This can also lead to voters being easily swayed by misinformation or propaganda, which can further undermine the integrity of the electoral process. Technology and infrastructure pose significant challenges to Nigeria's electoral process. In areas with poor network coverage and inadequate service, the verification process is affected, leading to delays. This situation creates opportunities for voters to manipulate the process. Many rural areas in Nigeria lack essential infrastructure, such as polling stations and voting materials, which are necessary to conduct fair and efficient elections. This can lead to long lines and delays at polling stations, as well as logistical challenges for electoral officials (Kikelomo, Oguntimehin and Martins 2022: 1).

According to Akpan and Reason (2019: 62), elections in Nigeria's Fourth Republic are erratic and have been successful in escalating voter indifference. This is supported by the observation that several Nigerians stay away from polling places during multiple election cycles. Since the country's current democratic practice began in 1999, most general elections have been held in unproductive environments, according to Akpan and Reason. This is because the biggest obstacle to democracy is the lack of favourable conditions for democratic participation.

### **2.5.1. Nigeria Electoral System**

Nigeria practises a mixed electoral system that incorporates both first-past-the-post and proportional representation. Political parties are given seats in the National Assembly according to the proportion of votes they obtain in each state or region under the proportional representation system. The president and governors, on the other hand, are chosen using the first-past-the-post method. Regardless of whether they obtain most of the votes or not, this system is based on the candidate who receives the most votes. (Ashindorbe 2022: 221).

Critics of this mixed electoral system have argued that it has several flaws that have contributed to the unpredictability and aggravation of electoral apathy in Nigeria. One of the main criticisms is that the proportional representation system does not accurately reflect the will of the people, as it does not consider the number of votes that each candidate or political party receives (Satu *et al.* 2022: 363). This can lead to a situation where a political party that receives a small percentage of the votes can still be allocated many seats in the National Assembly.

The mixed electoral system is also criticised for potentially creating a lack of accountability because elected officials might not feel obligated to represent the interests and viewpoints of their voters. This is because they may have been elected through the proportional representation system, rather than through direct popular vote (Högström and Dahlberg 2023: 263). Additionally, the first-past-the-post system can also lead to a lack of representation for minority groups, as it does not consider the number of votes that each candidate receives (Satu *et al.* 2022: 363). As a result, a candidate who wins a small proportion of the vote from a minority group may nevertheless win, while a candidate who receives a big percentage of the votes from that group may lose. Unarguably, the electoral system used in Nigeria has several flaws that have contributed to the unpredictability and aggravation of electoral apathy in the country. The system does not reflect

the will of the people accurately, and it has led to a lack of accountability and representation for minority groups. Nigeria should consider electoral reform to improve the democratic process and increase voter participation and trust in the system.

## **2.6. ELECTION AND POLICING**

Policing describes how crime is controlled by several organisations mandated to do so. In other words, policing can be described as organised methods of crime investigation, maintenance of order, law enforcement, and peacekeeping, including other methods of investigations and intelligence gathering (Nwosu and Mathias 2023: 2). Policing can also be described as the role played by the police in safeguarding property and the safety of the inhabitants in each nation (Oyemwinmina and Aibieyi 2016: 69). In every nation on earth, the police are the initial point of contact for the criminal justice system. As a result, the police play a crucial part in the criminal justice system. The primary governmental organisation in Nigeria is the police, which is tasked with defending residents' lives and property (Idowu and Nwosu 2021: 22).

Policing is performed by numerous specialised organisations, such as the military, paramilitary agencies, private security organisations, including government agencies with enormous surveillance and investigative powers. Historically, policing or police work was not a paid profession but a noble and principled profession with significant responsibility and peculiarity (Pingeot and Bell 2022: 250). Nonetheless, policing as obtained today passed through three distinctive phases before it developed into a profession. At first, despite its modest size, the populace oversaw upholding law and order. To uphold law and order, justice of the peace eventually emerged to administer justice at the bar, and today, paid professional police were established.

Nwachukwu (2023: 2) states that regrettably, Nigeria's criminal justice and law enforcement systems are incident-driven and reactive. A culture of predatory policing has been established by the Nigerian Police because of

several issues, including inadequate training, subpar working conditions and compensation, a lack of internal accountability, poor communication, and inadequate policing tactics. This culture is evident in the methods used to extract information and evidence from suspects and detainees, including torture, eyewitness testimony, and confessions.

### **2.6.1. Policing system: A global view**

The term police originated from the Greek words '*politeuein*,' and '*polis*'. While *politeuein* means to be a citizen or involved in political activity, *polis* refers to a city or state (Akpunonu and Eze 2022: 82). In other words, police carry out some basic functions, such as the enforcement of the law, maintenance of order, and gathering of information. The police force is the community's first line of defence in times of personal or societal catastrophe. In several countries, the organisation of the police is principally anchored on their history as well as the socio-cultural milieu. For instance, parliamentary democracy has a long history in the United Kingdom, where the public's agreement is the basis for police operations. (Herrington and Schafer 2018: 423). In other countries, the power of policing is vested in the state by law. Apart from their fundamental goals, police forces throughout several nations are fundamentally different from one another. Criminologists have worked to identify commonalities in police systems around the globe based on specific elements, the most notable of which is the command architecture. Consent is the fundamental tenet of police in the United Kingdom. (Seigel 2018: 23).

**In Britain** rather than policing by consent, the current British Police system is more of a reverse process that aims to give the people more authority through the law. This means that law enforcement in the UK is essentially policing by mandate, meaning that police must answer to the public. In the UK, the police force is organised more like a multiple coordinated decentralized force. Instead of having a single national police force, the nation has a network of 43 local police forces, excluding those with special

authority, that are each tasked with policing certain regions, cities, or counties. Over 140,000 police officers, 13,950 volunteer special constables, and 13,000 community support officers make up the 43 forces (Sear and Williamson 2018: 65).

**In the United States of America**, where policing is at either state- or local level, there is no national police force. In the USA, law enforcement is not centralised. There are around 40,000 different police forces in the country, with over 450,000 police personnel, the majority of which are merely one- or two-man sheriff's offices in small towns. (Wilson 2019: 69). Several communities use volunteer sheriffs, special duty policemen, auxiliary police, and full-time police officers in addition to their normal staff. There are about 65 different federal police organisations in the United States. There are police in most US states at the county, municipal, and state levels. There are also notable differences in police structures at the federal, state, and municipal levels. However, local law enforcement is primarily responsible for maintaining public order, whereas state officials are only given specified responsibilities.

**In China**, a singular model Coordinated Centralised police force is practised. Under the State Council, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) is a well-designed institution in charge of national public security operations. Provinces and autonomous districts have departments responsible for maintaining public safety. While public security bureaus are in cities and prefectures, metropolitan public security bureaus are in direct municipalities. (Scoggins 2018: 92).

**In France**, a Multiple Coordinated Centralised police force is operated. Police Nationale and Gendarmerie Nationale are the names of the nation's two national law enforcement agencies. The Sûreté, a citizen force, was the previous name for the Police Nationale. They are under the Ministry of the Interior and function in urban areas (Malochet 2020: 147). Under operational authority and with jurisdiction over military sites and rural areas, the Ministry

of Defence manages the Gendarmerie Nationale. Ellul and Hodges (2019: 17) note that French municipalities with local police, known as the Police municipal or *Garde municipale*, have limited powers because they can only enforce the municipal by-laws. Another law enforcement agency in France is the Direction générale des douanes et droits indirect, a civilian customs service under the Minister of Budget, Public Accounting, and Civil Servants.

**In India**, the model of the police force is decentralised, and multiple unorganised policing is operated. The Indian concept of policing is by law, in contrast to the British concept of consent. Every state has its police force, with Indian Police Service officers operating at the top and providing crucial services. (Skoog 2019: 118). Globally, India tops the number of policemen in countries with over one million police officers. Following India is the USA with more than 900, 000 police officers, while the UK and France follow.

### **2.6.2. Policing system in Nigeria**

The history of police in Nigeria dates to the colonial era. Nigerian policing has always reflected the society that gave rise to it. Ikedinma (2018: 4) claims that the police's main goal during the colonial era was to further the political and economic agenda of the colonialists. The police were complicit in the violent seizure of towns and the repression of anti-colonial resistance in several places. As a result, the police and local communities' relationship became disarticulated when violence and domination were used from the start of colonialism. Since then, Nigerian law enforcement procedures have been characterised by this. (Gulleng 2021: 86). Despite Nigeria's colonial history of policing, the police are at the forefront of the criminal justice system.

As opined by Alemika and Chukwuma (2021: 5) Colonial Nigeria's police forces were established in response to administration policies and concerns. An indirect rule system was adopted to lower the expenses associated with maintaining the colonial bureaucracy. As a result, police units were established under the indirect rule policy. In Western Nigeria's LGAs, the

NPF coexisted with the Native Authorities, and in Northern Nigeria, with the local government police forces. However, the local troops were dissolved because they were partisan political drives, ill-trained, and dishonest. (Chinedu and Okey Oparaku 2024: 827). This dual system of policing, which comprised numerous local forces in addition to a national police force, persisted until 1966.

In March 1966, Major-General Aguyi-Ironsi appointed a Working Party to examine the feasibility of merging the Nigerian Police with the Local Government Police, as well as merging Nigeria's prisons. The Working Party's recommendation to unify Nigeria's police force was adopted by General Yakubu Gowon's administration. The recommendation led to the dissolution of the local police forces whose competent personnel were subsequently absorbed into the Nigerian Police Force. Numerous factors, including low qualifications, inadequate training, bad behaviour, and use of the police as a tool of oppression by politicians, traditional leaders, and local governments, were cited as the causes for the dissolution of the local police forces. (Alemika and Chukwuma 2021: 5).

Since 1979, consecutive Nigerian constitutions have made provision for just the existence of the Nigerian Police Force. The NPF, the Police Council, and the Police Service Commission (PSC) were established by the 1999 Constitution. Thus, the Nigerian government keeps a national police force. There is a federal police command that covers all 36 states in the union as well as the Federal Capital Territory. By 2022, there will be approximately 350,000 people working for the NPF. (Odalonu 2022: 31).

### **2.6.3. The contribution of the policing system to electoral malpractices**

According to Adekeye and Chima (2022: 5), one of the fundamental aspects of democracy involves periodically holding general elections based on the collective choice of the electorate. Samosir (2022: 60) opined that elections constitute a cornerstone of democratic governance, offering citizens the chance to select their representatives and ensure their accountability. A

functional and efficient policing system is essential to guarantee that the electoral process is transparent and equitable and that the results represent the will of the people. On the other hand, occasionally electoral malpractice can be facilitated by the policing system itself, undermining the voting process's integrity. The following describes how election misconduct might be facilitated by the policing system:

- The policing system in place for elections may be inadequately trained or equipped to handle the specific challenges of electoral security, which can lead to malpractice and misconduct by police officers (Ayuk *et al.* 2023: 384).
- The policing system may not have clear protocols and procedures in place for responding to electoral malpractice and maintaining law and order during elections, which can lead to confusion and lack of accountability among police officers (Rowe, 2020: 7).
- The policing system may not have adequate resources, such as personnel and equipment, to effectively secure polling stations and voting materials, making it easier for malpractice to occur (Ajoku and Adigwe 2022: 166).
- The policing system may not have mechanisms in place for accountability and oversight, leading to instances of abuse and misconduct by police officers, which can contribute to malpractice (Akinyetun 2022: 201).
- The policing system may not have effective coordination and communication with other security agencies and the electoral commission, leading to confusion and inefficiencies, which can increase the risk of malpractice.
- The policing system may be impartial and may show bias towards certain political parties or candidates, leading to discrimination and

unequal enforcement of electoral laws and regulations, which can contribute to malpractice (Moruf 2021: 213).

- The policing system may not be independent of political influence, which can lead to manipulation of electoral outcomes and malpractice (Cook and Fortunato 2023: 281).
- The policing system may not have adequate measures to prevent corruption and bribery among police officers, which can lead to electoral malpractice.
- The policing system may fail to protect the rights and safety of voters, journalists and electoral officials, hindering their ability to participate in the election freely and fairly which can lead to malpractice (Ukpong and Udoh 2023: 44).
- The policing system may fail to properly manage and control the crowd, leading to chaos and disruptions during voting, which can lead to malpractice.

#### **2.6.4. The contribution of the policing system to electoral violence**

As a result of violence and other forms of crimes and criminality during elections in Africa, the need for more security agencies cannot be overemphasised. Several security agencies are involved during the conduct of the elections in Nigeria. As a result, the primary internal state agency tasked with upholding law and order throughout the nation is the police. Therefore, to ensure the legitimacy of elections in developing democracies like Nigeria, election security is crucial to their conduct. (Tobi and Oikhala 2018: 85).

Increased deployment of various security agencies is required during election operations due to the rising rate of electoral violence and the need to prevent brigandage, political thuggery, and electoral violence in the nation. This is largely essential to the Nigerian state's ability to continue operating as a democracy. (Tobi and Oikhala 2018: 90).

According to Ali, Dalaram and Dauda (2018: 52), the reason for the deployment of security forces during Nigerian elections is a result of the country's history of widespread violence, including thuggery and other electoral malpractices. Consequently, a typology of conflicts necessitates election security. These conflicts include pre-election identity conflicts that arise during the registration process; pre-election electioneering-related conflicts that arise during campaign rallies; election day-related conflicts that arise on election days as a result of ballot snatching and thumb printing; election day conflicts resulting from the announcement of results; and general elections-related conflicts that arise at pre-, during, or post-elections.

The need for increased deployment of the police during the conduct of elections in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised. It has been averred by Ali, Dalaram and Dauda (2018: 52) that the unrestrained deployment of the police contributes to electoral malpractices and violence. Consequently, there are controversies over the role of the police in elections as it has been argued that the police have been used to scare voters, intimidate the opposition, and equally rig elections for the ruling party when they are expected to safeguard the voters, the voting processes, and election materials. This is corroborated by Ali, Dalaram and Dauda (2018: 42) who believe that elections in Nigeria are generally characterised by violence, gross ballot stuffing, electoral malpractices, and ballot box snatching frequently committed by the politicians, political thugs, and, at times, with the support of the police. As a result, the organisation tasked with the exclusive duty of guaranteeing security for the unhindered holding of elections in Nigeria has been proven to be complicit in lewd acts during that time.

This line of reasoning is also predicated on the idea that security issues were not caused by a total lack of security personnel but rather by inefficient policing, personnel conspiracies, and security agents deviating from their intended goals, particularly election manipulation for candidates from both the ruling and opposition parties. (Ayodeji and Odukoya 2018: 349).

## **2.7. ROLES OF EACH STAKEHOLDER**

### **2.7.1. INEC and other critical electoral stakeholders**

The role of stakeholders in the electoral process cannot be overemphasised. Responsibility for credible elections lies at different levels with all the diverse stakeholders that are engaged in the process. All electoral stakeholders have a vital role to play in the electoral process's success; globally, stakeholders play a critical role in the electoral process (Iswanto and Pamungkas 2023: 58). This role is performed effectively for the success of electoral processes. Achieving sound processes in elections has been linked to various stakeholders; among them are the media, civil society, observers, citizens, and legislature in the management of electoral affairs (Maina 2021: 2). There have been requests lately to involve stakeholders in the electoral process; for instance, the UNDP's work in Lesotho has shown that involving a wide range of stakeholders is essential to guaranteeing credible and peaceful elections (Akwei 2018: 476). Stakeholders can be grouped into internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include electoral authorities such as the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and EDR agencies. Also involved are numerous government agencies, political parties and candidates, civil society organisations, including international and local electoral observers, and the media (Mutie 2022: 23). Electoral authorities respond to institutional, legal, and political circumstances. They do not function in isolation. For a credible election to be conducted, fruitful and positive interaction between government/state agencies as well as electoral authorities is critical. Political parties and candidates equally play a crucial role in guaranteeing a credible election process. In addition to this, civil society organisations and media also play a vital role in ensuring credible elections (Norris 2019: 391).

Several critical electoral stakeholders play important roles in the electoral process in Nigeria, and they include the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Political Parties, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs),

media, security agencies, international observers, voters, political candidates and others.

**2.7.2. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):** This is the primary stakeholder in the electoral process in Nigeria. The INEC is responsible for the management and administration of elections in the country. They are responsible for registering voters, preparing, and distributing voting materials, and announcing election results (Harry and Kalagbor 2021: 145). To guarantee a free, fair, and transparent election process, the full participation of INEC is essential. Additionally, the INEC oversees making sure that the election process is carried out in an impartial and unbiased manner and that all electoral laws and regulations are adhered to (Ukpong and Udoh 2023:39; Nkomah and Kinge 2016: 5). But the INEC has come under fire for lacking accountability, voter education, and transparency during the process.

**2.7.3. Political parties:** The political parties are also key stakeholders in the electoral process, as they are the ones who field candidates for various offices. Political parties play an important role in mobilising supporters, campaigning, and organising their candidates' campaigns. They are also responsible for providing citizens with information about their candidates, their policies, and programmes (Satu 2022: 364). Political parties have a critical role in providing citizens with a choice of candidates to vote for (Poertner, M., 2023: 1519). However, political parties have been criticised for the lack of internal democracy and the use of money and violence during the electoral process.

**2.7.4. Civil society organisations (CSOs):** The CSOs play an important role in monitoring the electoral process and advocating for free, fair, and transparent elections. They may also provide voter education, and provide training to electoral officials, among other things. CSOs are important in checking the excesses of political parties, the electoral commission, and other stakeholders (Mutie 2022: 48). They also serve as the watchdogs of

the electoral process, making certain that the election is carried out in a fair, open, and impartial way. However, some CSOs have been criticised for being partisan and not providing an unbiased assessment of the electoral process (Onimisi 2023: 93).

**2.7.5. Security agencies:** Security agencies play a vital part in upholding law and order throughout the election process. They are responsible for securing polling stations, and voting materials, and ensuring the safety of voters and electoral officials before, during and after the conduct of elections (Ali and Ali 2022: 3). The election process is guaranteed to be calm and well-organised by security services. As per the 2022 Electoral Law, section 91 (1), as amended, "The Commissioner of Police in every state of the federation and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja shall provide sufficient security for the orderly and nonviolent conduct of political gatherings and procedures within their respective jurisdictions, and for this purpose." Civil Defence Corp. might aid the police.

When necessary, the security personnel are to support the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in carrying out its assigned duties by adhering to the norms of engagement. However, security agencies have been criticised for being partisan and not providing equal protection to all citizens during the electoral process. Here are some of how security agencies contribute to the electoral process. According to Tobi and Oikhala (2018: 888), security personnel's primary responsibilities during elections, include but are not limited to the following:

- Security agencies oversee upholding law and order on an election day and throughout the voting process. They secure polling places, disturbances, or violence, and respond to problems that do occur.
- Security agencies are responsible for protecting electoral materials, including ballot papers, voting machines, and other equipment. This is an important aspect of the electoral process, as it ensures that the materials are not tampered with or stolen.

- Security agencies are responsible for preventing electoral fraud, including voter impersonation, ballot stuffing, and other forms of manipulation. Ensuring the fairness and transparency of the electoral process requires doing this.
- Security agencies may provide security for candidates and their supporters during the electoral process. This is particularly important in countries where there is a history of political violence or where candidates may be at risk of physical harm.
- Security agencies are responsible for ensuring public safety during the electoral process. This includes responding to any incidents of violence or unrest and maintaining a peaceful and secure environment for voters to exercise their democratic rights.
- In general, security agencies play a critical role in the electoral process to guarantee that it is carried out in a free, fair, and peaceful manner. It is important to ensure that security agencies act neutrally and professionally and that they are properly trained and equipped to perform their roles effectively. Additionally, security agencies must be accountable to the public and ensure that they act by the law and respect the rights of all citizens.

**2.7.6. International observers:** The international observers are crucial in evaluating how the elections were conducted and provide a dispassionate analysis of the electoral process. International observers help to guarantee that the election process is carried out in a free, fair, and transparent way by offering an objective evaluation of it. (Ukpong and Udoh 2023: 43). However, international observers have been criticised for not being present in all parts of the country and for not being able to provide a comprehensive assessment of the electoral process.

**2.7.7. Journalists:** The Journalists contribute significantly to the electoral process by providing accurate, objective, and timely information to the public. They inform voters about the candidates, their platforms, and the issues at stake in an election, and help hold politicians accountable for their actions

and statements. They inform citizens about the democratic process and facilitate an open, transparent, and informed debate about issues (Dauda, 2018: 2 and Manimaran, 2022: 3).

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) provides training and resources for journalists to help them report on elections accurately and responsibly (Manimaran, 2022: 1).

Overall, journalists have a critical role to play in the electoral process, and their work is essential to the functioning of democratic societies. They help to ensure that voters are informed, engaged, and empowered to make informed decisions at the ballot box.

**2.7.8. Traditional leaders:** The Traditional leaders play a significant role in the electoral process, particularly in countries with a history of traditional or customary governance According to Midzi, (Chibango, Chikakano, Vengesai and Tsunga 2023: 9). Some of the ways traditional leaders can contribute to the electoral process are:

- Traditional leaders often have significant influence over their communities and can use their position to encourage voter registration and participation in the electoral process.
- Traditional leaders can act as mediators in disputes between political parties or candidates, particularly in areas where there is a history of political violence or conflict.
- Traditional leaders can help to create an atmosphere of calm and peaceful participation in the electoral process by promoting peace and encouraging dialogue between political actors.
- Traditional leaders monitor the electoral process, particularly in rural or remote areas where state authorities may not have a strong presence. They can help to prevent fraud, intimidation, or other irregularities in the voting process.

- Traditional leaders have the responsibility to inform their people about the political process, voter rights and obligations, and the value of nonviolent engagement in the democratic process.
- It should be noted that the role of traditional leaders in the electoral process can be both positive and negative. While traditional leaders can promote peaceful and transparent elections, they can also use their influence to manipulate the outcome of an election or advance their interests. Therefore, it is important to ensure that traditional leaders act neutrally and transparently during the electoral process and that their role is clearly defined and regulated by the relevant authorities.

**2.7.9. Electoral Adhoc staff:** The Adhoc staff play a crucial role in the electoral process, particularly in countries where elections are conducted by a temporary workforce rather than permanent electoral officials. Here are some of how electoral ad-hoc staff contribute to the electoral process:

- Adhoc staff are often responsible for registering voters and ensuring that voter rolls are accurate and up to date. This is a crucial aspect of the electoral process, as it determines who is eligible to vote in an election.
- Adhoc staff are responsible for managing polling stations on election Day, ensuring that they are set up correctly, that voting materials are available, and that the voting process is carried out fairly and transparently.
- Adhoc staff are often responsible for educating voters about the electoral process, including how to vote, when to vote, and where to vote. This is an important aspect of the electoral process, as it helps to ensure that voters understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Adhoc staff are responsible for counting votes at the end of the polling period. This is said to be an essential part of the electoral process because it decides the election's outcome and guarantees accurate and transparent results.

- Adhoc staff are responsible for reporting the results of the election to the relevant authorities. This is an important aspect of the electoral process, as it ensures that the outcome of the election is communicated to the public in a timely and transparent manner.
- In general, Adhoc staff play an important role in the electoral overall process, because they make sure that voting is done fairly, openly, and effectively. Numerous crucial facets of the election process, including voter education, voter registration, poll worker management, vote counting, and results reporting, are handled by ad hoc staff. It is crucial to guarantee that ad hoc employees have the necessary training and assistance to carry out their jobs efficiently.

**2.7.10. Voters:** The voters cast the votes that decide the outcome of the election, the voters become the ultimate and the final participants in the electoral process. It is important to have educated and informed voters who can make a fair choice (Onimisi 2015: 57). However, voters have been criticized for being poorly educated, uninformed, and for being susceptible to vote buying and intimidation.

**2.7.11. Political candidates:** These are also critical stakeholders as they are the ones that citizens are voting for. They need to be able to represent their parties or individual views and can communicate them to the citizens (Ihugba and Alfred 2019: 73). However, political candidates have been criticized for being poorly qualified, corrupt, and for engaging in vote buying and intimidation.

All the stakeholders highlighted above play a critical role in the electoral process; however, all of them have their weaknesses and have been criticized for malpractices. To solve these problems and guarantee that the election process is free, fair, transparent, and represents the will of the people, all parties involved must collaborate. This will make it more likely that the election will be legitimate and that all voters will accept the results.

## **2.8. ELECTORAL VIOLENCE**

A lack of trust in an election's fairness or integrity can undermine its status as a legitimate political process. This could encourage various parties to deviate from established institutional norms to achieve their goals, which in turn could set off “electoral violence (Birch, Daxecker and Höglund 2020: 10). Election violence refers to any unplanned or planned act that aims to decide, postpone, or otherwise affect voting procedures through intimidation, blackmail, threats, hate speech, misinformation, physical harm, forced “protection”, or assassination (Obajemu, Memudu, Olukotun and Bayode 2023: 98). From this definition, electoral violence on the part of election organisers and from the wider community are considered. Both internal and external factors, such as the potential for electoral fraud and the escalation of violence because of politicians or other individuals trying to win at any cost, are also considered.

Deinla, Ballar, Refani and Yap (2023: 103) define electoral violence as acts that take place between a voter's registration and the start of a political regime and that are intended to harm, coerce, manipulate, destabilise, decide, expedite, delay, or reverse electoral processes or results. The author emphasised that electoral violence could have an impact on voters' confidence and the validity of the results of the election by being both physical and mental. Jombo and Bamigbose (2023: 3) define electoral violence as any coordinated act or threat, whether physical, psychological, or structural that aims to intimidate, injure, or blackmail a political stakeholder before, during, or following an election to influence, stall, or determine the result. Electoral violence is political violence that occurs during an election and is directed at political opponents. This undermines the objectives of democratic and electoral processes since it uses violence to achieve political power or benefit. (Onimisi 2015: 56). Electoral violence can occur during the registration period and during the ballot-counting process, as well as during the actual election (Ukpong and Udoh 2023: 43).

According to Pally (2022: 2), electoral violence is commonly linked to the time of electoral processes or democratic transition in a country. However, this does not imply that electoral violence is confined to specific seasons or periods. Rather, it tends to occur more frequently during the election period in a country. Due to the features inherent in its procedures, electoral violence has gained significance and become a prominent term in the political discourse. The complexity of electoral violence has drawn the attention of scholars, who have attempted to define it in various ways. Pally further stated that it is challenging to agree on a singular definition of electoral violence. Put differently, there is no universally accepted terminology or definition for violence associated with elections. Ajeli (2022: 125) defined electoral violence as every form of an organised act intended to intimidate, harm, and blackmail a political stakeholder or opponent before, during, and after an election to determine, delay, or influence a political process. Edafenene and Peter (2022: 22) view electoral violence as every sort of unrest, protest, party clashes, political killing, robbing, arson, and kidnapping before, during, and after elections. Obiam (2021: 56) regards electoral violence as a violent act carried out during political activities, especially during the pre- and post-election periods. Additionally, it is argued that employing force to halt political gatherings or voting at polling places, as well as the use of potentially hazardous weapons to intimidate voters and sabotage the election process, are examples of electoral violence.

According to the definitions given above, electoral violence can take the form of coercive intimidation, psychological abuse, and the incitement of fear by one of the competing parties to gain an unfair advantage over the other parties during an election. Physical electoral violence occurs when someone, a location, or property involved directly or indirectly in the electoral process is harmed (Yusuf, Amao and Ambali 2023: 204). There is a thuggish political culture that frequently encourages participants in political contests to use violence and intimidation. Because of the breakdown of the political and social systems within the current political system, violence is now used to

resolve political disputes and manage political conflicts (Birch, Daxecker and Höglund 2020: 12).

The use of physical force against candidates, electoral officials, observers of elections, security personnel, or any other person before, during, or after an election is a hallmark of physical electoral violence (Upkong 2023: 10). Harsh language, physical assaults, the infliction of wounds, and attempted murder are all examples of physical forms of violence. Whenever there are mechanisms in place to prevent certain groups from holding public office, structural electoral violence is more likely to occur. The term 'structural violence' is used to describe the deliberate establishment of a legal or institutional framework to marginalise or eliminate an adversary or target group from any position of power. Indirectly, the legal and institutional frameworks serve to bar those groups from the benefits of holding political office (Cusato 2021: 23).

Since Nigeria's independence, elections in the country have been denoted by electoral violence, extreme electoral malpractices, the use of ethnoreligious division to impact the voting patterns of the electorate and money politics (Harry and Kalagbor 2021: 140). Electoral violence, therefore, is among the strategies Nigerian politicians employ during electioneering campaigns and periods. Politicians who are desperate and power-drunk frequently sponsor jobless youths and illiterates to assault their supposed political antagonists to manipulate the results of the election for their benefit.

According to Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 37), despite the nation's enormous potential, the country has been facing numerous political unrests since the First Republic which was between 1960 and 1966. Between 1967 and 1970, millions of lives were lost in the 30-month-long civil war that raged through the nation. Notably, different military rulers governed Nigeria between 1966 and 1979; as well as between 1983 and 1999. On May 29, 1999, however, the people of Nigeria celebrated the military's capitulation to a democratically elected government led by President Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military

chief of state. To date, the nation has experienced more than 23 years of uninterrupted democratic government. (Olowojolu *et al.* , 2019: 52).

According to Staniland (2021: 552), elections are standard practice globally. However, with elections come violent conflicts as they frequently co-exist. Electoral violence is poorly theorised and undermines empirical and theoretical growth. Staniland emphasises that electoral violence should be given more attention in political study as the fundamental challenge of modern democratisation is changing formal electoral practices to significant political involvement that is free of the gun shadow.

### **2.8.1. Types of electoral violence**

According to Yusuf and Saminu (2024: 40), **pre-electoral violence is a type of electoral violence** that occurs before the election and is usually aimed at intimidating or suppressing political opponents or voters. This can include violence against political rallies, attacks on political party offices, and the use of hate speech or incitement to violence. This kind of violence can foster an atmosphere of distrust and dread, which makes it challenging for voters to engage in the democratic process in a free and fair manner.

**Electoral-related violence** is a type of electoral violence that occurs on election day or in the immediate aftermath of the election. This can include violence at polling stations, attacks on electoral officials or voters, and the burning or destruction of voting materials (Birch, Daxecker and Höglund 2020: 4). This type of violence can disrupt the electoral process, making it difficult for electoral officials to conduct the election and for citizens to vote.

According to Campbell (2022: 3), **post-electoral violence** is a type of electoral violence that occurs after the election and is usually aimed at contesting the results of the election. This can include riots, protests, and civil unrest. This type of violence can undermine the legitimacy of the election and can lead to political instability and economic disruption. Indar, Barrow, Whitaker and Warren (2023: 20) emphasised structural violence as a type of electoral violence, which is a subtler form of violence that is

embedded in the political system, institutions, and cultural norms. This type of violence can include the manipulation of electoral rules and regulations, the use of state resources for electoral purposes, and the marginalisation of certain groups of citizens (Satu Nyor *et al.* 2022: 365). The election of candidates who do not have the backing of most voters might result from this kind of violence, which can also make it harder for some citizen groups to engage in the political process.

- **Cyber Violence** according to Garnett and James (2020: 117), is a type of violence in which digital platforms and technologies are used to spread disinformation, incite violence, or disrupt the electoral process. This can include hacking into electoral databases, spreading false information on social media, and using bots to manipulate public opinion.
- **Voter Intimidation** refers to the use of threats, harassment, or violence to prevent citizens from voting or to influence the way they vote (Cohn-Postar 2021: 172). It is another type of electoral violence as it often includes physical violence against voters, verbal threats, or the use of psychological tactics to intimidate voters.
- **Voter suppression** which refers to the use of tactics to prevent certain groups of citizens from voting is another type of electoral violence (DuBose 2021: 251). This can include voter ID laws, gerrymandering, or manipulating polling locations to make it difficult for certain groups to vote (Shenga and Pereira 2019: 150). The term "voter fraud" describes the deployment of unlawful methods to sway an election's result. This can include multiple voting, ballot stuffing, or manipulating voter registration lists (Ukpong and Udoh 2023: 34).

### **2.8.2. Causes of electoral violence**

Election-related violence has many different root causes, which might change depending on the situation. **Long-standing racial or religious tensions are a major contributing factor to election violence in a nation**

**with multiple religions and ethnic diversity.** In countries where there are significant ethnic or religious differences among citizens, these divisions can be exploited by political actors to incite violence during electoral periods (Sambo, Sule and Tal 2024: 368). This can lead to violence between different ethnic or religious groups and can make it difficult for citizens to participate in the electoral process freely and fairly.

**Another cause of electoral violence is economic inequality.** Citizens in nations where the rich and the poor are significantly apart may get frustrated and resentful as a result. This can be exploited by political actors to incite violence during electoral periods (Shenga and Pereira 2019: 160). In such situations, citizens who feel marginalised and excluded may resort to violent means to express their frustrations. Political exclusion is another cause of electoral violence. In countries where certain groups of citizens are excluded from the political process, this can lead to frustration and resentment (Birch, Daxecker and Höglund 2020: 9). This can be exploited by political actors to incite violence during electoral periods, as those who feel excluded may resort to violent means to express their frustrations.

**A lack of trust in the electoral process is also a cause of electoral violence.** When voters in a nation lack faith in the electoral commission or the electoral process, they may be more inclined to use violence as a form of protest. (Ananti and Madubueze 2018: 92). This may also occur when voters lose faith in the system because they think the election process is unfair, opaque, and unrestricted. Poor governance and weak institutions can also contribute to electoral violence. In countries where there is a lack of transparency, accountability, and the rule of law, this can create an environment in which electoral violence is more likely to occur (Franklin 2023: 40; Ukpong and Udoh 2023: 38). Additionally, poor management of the electoral process by the electoral commission can lead to confusion and mistrust, which can contribute to violence (Franklin 2023: 40).

### **2.8.3. Drivers of electoral violence in Nigeria**

Nigerian electoral violence is an annoying phenomenon that has persisted since the nation returned to civil rule in 1999. Electoral violence has been known to be more evident not only before elections but also during and after the declaration of election results. Most often, electoral violence degenerates into widespread political violence (Yusuf 2019: 38). This present study adopted the causal drivers' framework in analysing electoral violence as developed from his study showed that different but interconnected factors drive violence. In addition to this, the manipulation of elites for personal gains affects the electoral process. This is adduced by the fact that every time Nigerian elites are excluded or disfavoured in power formation, they resort to inciting trouble by appealing to ethnic, religious, or party sentiments and employing violent incentives. According to Yusuf (2019: 45), the significance of the causal drivers' framework in analysing electoral violence is highlighted by the fact that in several African countries, the several conflicts that frequently develop during the process of democratisation are elite-related, which in Nigeria is structured around competing materialistic interests of different sectors in the society. Because the political environment is unfriendly to growth and internal power struggle, this leads to electoral violence.

According to Ewuzie (2022: 460), religious and ethnic differences were most likely the cause of electoral violence in Nigeria's general election of 2019, which took place in a politically charged and volatile environment. The elections as evidenced were held despite the growing insecurity in the country driven by terrorist activities, herder-farmer conflicts, banditry, abductions, and intimidations by the separatist groups. Emeaku (2019: 97) using a conflict theoretical framework found that ethnicity, religion, as well as hate speeches, were the major drivers of electoral violence in Nigeria. Emeaku further reiterated that Nigeria's Third Republic (1993) was hindered due to pre-election violence that led to the rescheduling of the presidential election from 1992 to 1993. The annulment of this election

adjudged as the freest and fairest in the history of the country led to not only violence but instilled fear in the minds of the Igbos' returnees who thought another civil war was imminent. Consequently, the Third Republic was transitory— there was an interim government briefly before military officers seized power through a coup d'état.

As regards the 2019 elections, it was affirmed that the election was increasingly tainted with violence and terrorization. This not only dented the integrity of the electoral process but may prevent future involvement. Reports showed that more than one hundred lives were lost in election-related violence during the campaigns and after the elections. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) offices were attacked with several abductions, mortalities, and sexual assaults against INEC officials. Security agencies were reported to be ineffective at safeguarding the rights of the populace to vote (Oyewole and Omotola 2022: 2395). The non-enforcement of the Electoral Act provisions on the prohibition of the use of violence and electoral malpractices reinforces the pervasive impunity culture that could result in continuous electoral challenges and subsequent voter disillusionment. Steve, Nwocha, and Igwe (2019: 95), highly suggested that an enforcement system be established immediately to deal with situations of malpractice and violence that arise from elections. It is necessary to establish "Constitutional" or "Electoral Offences" courts to deal with malpractice cases to prevent future occurrences.

## **2.9. ELECTION OBSERVATION, MONITORING AND SUPERVISION**

Elections conducted in Nigeria over the past years were flawed by controversies, with election monitors and observers who evaluated the quality of elections constantly interrogating their integrity (Harry and Kalagbor 2021: 140). In a democratic process, impartial, independent, and thorough observation of the electoral process is significant. This is because it contributes to the reliability and neutrality of elections by providing data about the electoral process. Election observation and monitoring not only

build the confidence of voters in the integrity of the process but also the integrity of the election management body (EMB) (Udeuhele and Ibiam 2020: 95). In elections, the presence of observers and monitors discourages or exposes any form of violence or terrorisation in addition to cheating or manipulation of the votes or results. Udeuhele and Ibiam went on to state that having foreign observers around could discourage attempts to sabotage or interfere with the voting process, as most nations have a widespread belief that on election day, foreign observers will be able to detect fraud.

Election monitoring and observation is a process through which the election is analysed and assessed to determine its neutrality in terms of supervision and organisation. Udeuhele and Ibiam (2020: 94) encompass the positioning of independent officials, missions, or individuals who represent international or local groups for a specified period in a nation that is in the process of conducting a national election with a directive to meticulously observe and pronounce on the whole process and outcome.

The terms observation and monitoring frequently used interchangeably do not have the same meaning. Besides, supervision and monitoring differ from observation. Election observation entails gathering data on an electoral process to make informed recommendations about the conduct of the elections. This is usually done as regards the evidence collected by individuals who are not fundamentally accredited to intervene in the electoral process (Udeuhele and Ibiam 2020: 92). Election monitoring encompasses the cautious scrutiny and evaluation of an election to determine its neutrality in terms of organisation and supervision. In addition, it comprises an appraisal of the process and definite formulation of electoral laws as well as the role of security agencies (Eneasato 2019: 10). Election supervision involves verifying the legitimacy of all or part of the election process, steps before or following the election. (Eneasato 2019: 4).

Election observers are individuals (citizens or foreigners) who partake in the electoral process of a given country, not as voters but as evaluators of the

electoral process. Election observers are permitted to do so by the appropriate authorities of the given country. Nhamirre (2022: 12) underlined this in response to the recent Angolan elections, which were not well-observed by both local and foreign observers. The UN participated in the first election in 1992, the US Embassy participated in the second election in 2008, and the EU participated in the third election. Notably, the Angolan government no longer extended invitations to them, hence they were not present in the nation in 2012 or 2017. But the Southern Africa Report 52 | August 2022, published by the African Union, Angola is a member of 13 economic groups, including SADC and ECCAS, of which it was asked to observe. Election monitors are individuals who hold formal authority over the conduct of elections and the candidates running for office. Supervisors of elections have far more power than observers. Due to their greater authority, supervisors are typically subject to stricter regulations of behaviour than observers during elections (Eneasato 2019: 5).

Election observation and monitoring enhance confidence in the objectivity of the electoral process and aid in preventing fraud in the balloting and counting processes (Macdonald and Molony 2023: 2). Additionally, election monitoring and observation assist in reporting to the country's populace and international communities on the general integrity of the elections. Election observers can also mediate clashes between opposing political groups based on request and, if suitable, to lessen tensions before, during, and after elections (Eneasato 2019: 7).

Election observation is supposed to include all activities conducted throughout the election process, as elections are processes rather than events. Election monitoring in Nigeria is restricted to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and its legally accredited personnel. To observe elections following INEC's criteria, election observers must be accredited by the organisation sponsoring them. Local or international organisations can fund an observer. Any individual who is not a member of or connected to an organisation is not accepted as an observer by INEC.

Local and foreign observers are the two categories into which observers can be divided. International observers, on the other hand, are sent by or under the control of international agencies, international organisations, and other non-governmental organisations that are not based in Nigeria, whereas local observers are supported by civil society organisations (CSOs) located in Nigeria and whose operations are governed by Nigerian law. (Macdonald and Molony 2023: 3).

You could cut your literature to half of all you wrote here because it is mostly repetition.

## **2.10. LITERATURE GAP ANALYSIS**

Even while the amount of literature on electoral violence in Nigeria is increasing, there is a shortage of empirical studies that focus specifically on the policing system and its role in preventing electoral violence. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult to understand the specific challenges and limitations faced by the policing system in preventing electoral violence in Nigeria. Research has explored the link between Nigeria's policing system and electoral violence, but empirical studies on the specific mechanisms involved are limited (Ali and Ali 2022: 4; Ewuzie 2022: 461; Victor 2022: 19). Due to this knowledge gap, it become very challenging to create focused and successful initiatives to eradicate election violence.

By bridging these gaps, the researcher hopes to advance the creation of focused and successful interventions that can eradicate election violence while advancing national stability and growth.

## **2.11. CONCLUSION**

This chapter reviews various concepts that lay the foundation for the topic under study. It discusses the concept of electoral violence, policing system as well as other pertinent concepts related to the study. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Since theories direct research, researchers ought to be completely aware of the setting in which their work will be carried out. Theoretically, the framework also defines restrictions for research; hence, it is the duty of the researcher to ensure that the study stays within those constraints. It also provides a guide for establishing and maintaining the research (Zina 2021: 89). This chapter deals with the theoretical foundations of the research. Although other theories have been suggested to explain policing system and electoral violence, this study will concentrate on only two: the Structural Theory of Electoral Violence and the Institutional Functionalism Theory.

#### **3.2. INSTITUTIONAL FUNCTIONALISM THEORY**

Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist, developed the theory in the 19th century. The theory- established the fundamental framework for the Functionalism model. Talcott Parsons expanded the viewpoint into a more dynamic breakdown of the social system. The term "institutional functionalism theory" refers to the academic perspectives on the roles that all institutions, political structures, hierarchies, and groups should play in a society. The theory also evaluates how a particular social structure supports, encourages, or hinders the maintenance of a system (Gómez-Diago 2020: 2).

##### **3.2.1. The role of institutions**

Institutional functionalism emphasises the importance of well-functioning institutions such as the policing system, electoral commission, and laws that regulate the electoral process in maintaining political stability and preventing electoral violence (Ogunode and Onakoya 2024: 38). The theory of institutional functionalism explains the instability of a nation's political system and the citizens' active participation in it by emphasising the role of

institutions in shaping political behaviour and outcomes. According to this theory, political stability and citizen participation depend on the strength and effectiveness of a country's institutional framework. This theory argues that institutions such as the constitution, laws, and political parties provide the necessary framework for a stable political system (Passarelli 2020: 91). These institutions provide the procedures for settling disputes and reaching decisions, as well as the rules of the game and the obligations of the many players. When these institutions are well-functioning, they can help prevent political instability and promote citizen participation by providing a clear and predictable framework for political behaviour. However, if these institutions are weak, ineffective, or manipulated, they can contribute to political instability and discourage citizen participation. For example, if the constitution is weak or easily manipulated, this can lead to a lack of stability in the political system. Similarly, if the laws are not enforced or are used to benefit certain groups, this can lead to inequality and a lack of trust in the political system.

This study tends to assess the strength and effectiveness of these institutions in the country and how they shape the incidence of electoral violence.

### **3.2.2. The impact of political and social context**

The significance of considering the larger political and social context in which the policing system and other institutions function is another point made by the institutional functionalism theory. According to Musa *et al.* (2024: 195), political instability is more common in cultures where there is a high degree of political engagement but a sluggish or ineffective institutionalisation process. Moreover, institutional functionalism establishes the connection between the frequency of violence and weak states (Onimisi 2023: 94). Violence is more likely to occur in regions where the state fails to address citizen concerns and where deep poverty persists. In weak states, the inadequacy of state institutions in protecting citizens and their property is a significant issue. Therefore, when violence erupts during competitive

multiparty elections, it directly reflects the state's weaknesses and deficiencies in institutional functionality.

When inequality and underdevelopment coexist, according to Kleinfeld (2021: 160) violence may happen to express rage, frustration, and fear. The likelihood of such violence increases if the state lacks institutions for resolving disputes, and it is even more pronounced during election seasons when the possibility of overturning the status quo exists. When economic unrest or poverty are coupled with insufficient state institutions that cannot address legitimate complaints resulting from, for example, unfair resource distribution or lack of access to formal processes, fragility may result. (Shenga and Pereira 2019: 150). In essence, this means that in weak political institutions, societal conflicts that arise naturally cannot be effectively managed. This fragility will be noticeable whenever changes are made to socio-economic and political processes.

According to the institutional functionalism theory, civil unrest can erupt when authorities like the police, courts, and election commission are unable to effectively address citizens' complaints. Election-related disputes in Nigeria are typically brought to the attention of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the police, or the judicial system for resolution. When these institutions do not perform their responsibilities as expected, it might lead to violence between the parties who were wronged.

To understand how many factors shape the incidence of electoral violence in the nation, this study takes into account factors including political polarisation, ethnic or religious divisions, a lack of trust in the electoral process, bad governance, weak institutions, and a history of electoral violence.

### **3.2.3. The impact of culture and social norms**

Institutional functionalism theory also emphasises that a country's culture, social norms, and historical background must be taken into consideration when analysing the effectiveness of institutions in preventing electoral

violence. This study must consider how cultural and social norms in the country shape the incidence of electoral violence and how they affect the effectiveness of the policing system and other institutions in preventing it.

#### **3.2.4. Relevance of theory to the study**

This theory was found to be relevant to the study because the violence that characterised the Nigerian electoral processes is frequently blamed on political leaders' decisions to maintain their hold on power. Political parties, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigerian Army, the Department of State Security (DSS), and the courts are different parts of the society referred to by functionalists as social institutions.

It is also relevant to the study because it gives the policing institutions in the Nigerian electoral environment liberty on how they apply the statutes and electoral laws governing election administration. The functionalist model is built on the principle of discretion because election security agents have the freedom to exercise discretion while performing their duties. The study will gain from this theory as it will demonstrate that security personnel are crucial for ensuring a free and fair election in the nation. The functionalism model can also be used to demonstrate how security personnel affect election turnout. Skeoch (2022: 9) and Wilson (2020: 283) two critics claim that because the model presupposes that change is inherent in security officers' actions, it is challenging to use the model to measure change. However, the theory is still appropriate because it looks at how these security personnel behaved while an election was being conducted rather than measuring change.

Furthermore, the theory of institutional functionalism emphasises how crucial it is to take a nation's culture and social context into account to comprehend the reasons behind electoral violence. This theory emphasises that a country's culture, social norms, and historical background must be taken into

consideration when analysing the effectiveness of institutions such as the policing system in preventing electoral violence.

### **3.2.5. Issues and challenges**

When used as a framework for a study of electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the institutional functionalism theory can provide important insights into the role of the policing system in preventing and managing electoral violence. However, the theory also faces several challenges that need to be addressed.

Institutional functionalism tends to simplify the complex nature of political and social systems by assuming that institutions perform specific functions that are necessary for stability and order. This oversimplification may overlook important factors that contribute to electoral violence, such as the influence of cultural and historical factors. The theory also tends to ignore the power dynamics that exist within institutions, including the policing system. This neglects the fact that institutions are not neutral and that they may be used to reinforce existing power structures and perpetuate social inequality. Institutional functionalism theory assumes that institutions, including the policing system, perform their intended functions. However, this assumption fails to account for the fact that institutions may fail to perform their intended functions, leading to instability and conflict.

To address the issues and challenges of the institutional functionalism theory, the researcher would use a multi-level analysis that considers the influence of cultural, historical, and power dynamics on the policing system and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. This approach would include the examination of the role of political, economic, and cultural factors in shaping the functioning of the policing system, as well as the examination of the power dynamics that exist within the policing system.

### **3.3. THE STRUCTURAL THEORY OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE**

The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence is a framework that explains how certain structural factors in society can contribute to the incidence of electoral violence (Birch, Daxecker and Höglund 2020: 10). This theory is based on the idea that electoral violence is not a random or irrational event, but rather a product of specific structural conditions in society. The theory further goes on to state that because political economics impacts society and politics, it is one of the primary causes of electoral violence.

#### **3.3.1. Socio-economic inequality**

The structural theory emphasises that socio-economic inequality can be a major contributor to electoral violence (Tadjoeddin *et al.*, 2021: 571). Kalmoe and Mason (2022: 10) argue that when large segments of a population are denied equal access to the economic and political life of their state, violence is an inevitable response. A state becomes more fragile because of exclusion. This takes place in a society where inequality of opportunity is evident (where "the have-nots" outnumber "the haves"), and discrimination and marginalisation are pervasive. For instance, a study by Ismail and Olonisakin (2021: 381) discovered that people are more prone to use electoral violence as a form of protest in nations with high rates of poverty and inequality. This is because certain social groups may get so frustrated and desperate because of poverty and inequality that they may believe using violence is their only option.

According to Arriola *et al.* (2022: 512), the stakes are even higher when it is assumed that a politician in charge of those resources is a member of the group that will likely benefit from the resources being channeled to them. Those in charge will attempt to maintain their position of power at all costs, including through unethical means. On the other hand, those outside power will use any means necessary, including violence, to seize it if they have long been shut out of the mainstream state political power and economy.

It is pertinent to assess the level of socio-economic inequality in the country and how it contributes to electoral violence. This could be done through analysing data on poverty, unemployment, and access to basic services, as well as through quality research methods such as in-house interviews and focus group discussions.

### **3.3.2. Political polarisation**

The structural theory emphasises that political polarisation can also contribute to electoral violence (Piazza, 2023: 477). These circumstances typically occur when the electoral system is biased in favour of the winner-take-all principle. Here, the winning party is established to form the government, hold power over the nation's resources, and rule the populace, while the losing parties are excluded from the system of government (Birch, Daxecker and Höglund 2020: 13). Currently in Nigeria, the government operates under a system where the victorious party in a general election seizes power, sidelining other political contenders. This results in a "winner take all" scenario. The expectation of perpetual defeat or marginalisation in elections, especially leading to the status of "permanent minorities," significantly contributes to incidents of violence. When a politically insecure group believes it will be routinely shut out of political power, violence may be used to either force their way into office or to disrupt elections altogether.

A society where inequality of opportunity is evident, and discrimination and marginalisation are pervasive is more likely to resort to violence when trying to right its wrongs. Furthermore, a debatable election may spark electoral violence, but its underlying factors could be historical marginalisation and alienation. Once more, in multiparty competitive elections between the "included" and the "excluded," the stakes of violence are elevated to the point that, should either faction fail, crises if not bloodshed is likely to ensue.

According to a study by Piazza (2023: 477), high levels of political polarisation can create a climate of mistrust and hostility between different political groups, which can increase the likelihood of violence during

elections. It is pertinent to assess the level of political polarisation in the country and how it contributes to electoral violence. This could be done through analysing data on poverty, unemployment, and access to basic services, as well as through quality research methods such as in-house interviews and focus group discussions.

### **3.3.3. Ethnic and religious divisions**

The structural theory emphasises that Ethnic and religious divisions can also contribute to electoral violence (Bulutgil and Prasad 2023: 621). Bulutgil and Prasad observed that citizens are more prone to resort to electoral violence as a form of voicing their complaints in nations with significant degrees of ethnic or religious separation. This is because ethnic and religious divisions can create a context of mistrust and hostility between different groups, which can increase the likelihood of violence during elections (Musya 2023: vii). It is pertinent to assess the level of ethnic and religious divisions in the country and how they contribute to electoral violence. This could be done through analysing data on poverty, unemployment, and access to basic services, as well as through quality research methods such as in-house interviews and focus group discussions.

### **3.3.4. State weakness**

Weak state institutions can also contribute to electoral violence. A study by Birch, Daxecker and Höglund (2020: 9) found that in countries with weak state institutions, such as a weak judiciary, ineffective police, and corrupt electoral commission, political actors are more prone to use violence to drive home their objectives without worrying about the consequences.

By critically discussing these subheadings of the structural theory of electoral violence and linking them with the research under study, gaining a thorough grasp of the fundamental structural elements that contribute to the prevalence of electoral violence in the nation is feasible. Furthermore, it helps in identifying specific areas where interventions can be made to address these structural factors and prevent electoral violence in the future.

### **3.3.5. Relevance of theory to the study**

The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence is highly relevant to the study of "Analysis of the Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic." This theory provides a framework for understanding the underlying structural factors that contribute to the incidence of electoral violence in the country. By focusing on key variables such as socio-economic inequality, political polarisation, ethnic and religious divisions, state weakness, and historical legacies of violence, the theory can help to identify specific areas where interventions can be made to address these structural factors and prevent electoral violence in the future.

The theory also helps to understand the relationship between the policing system and electoral violence by highlighting how weak state institutions can contribute to electoral violence by creating an environment in which political actors can use violence to achieve their goals without fear of repercussions. Therefore, this theory also provides a way to evaluate the effectiveness of the policing system in preventing electoral violence and maintaining the integrity of the electoral process in Nigeria.

This theory provides a comprehensive understanding of the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria and informs policies and strategies aimed at preventing it, including the role of the policing system.

### **3.3.6. Issues and challenges**

This theory suggests that when the political and economic systems are not inclusive and do not provide equal opportunities for all citizens, the marginalised and excluded groups are more likely to engage in violent behaviour. The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence when utilised as a study framework, has its setbacks despite its potential to offer significant insights into the underlying causes of electoral violence.

The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence lacks clear and specific indicators that can be used to measure the structural factors that contribute

to electoral violence. This makes it difficult to operationalise the theory and determine its validity. The theory focuses exclusively on the structural factors that contribute to electoral violence and does not consider the role of individual and group behaviour in the violence. This limits the scope of the theory and makes it difficult to fully understand the complex nature of electoral violence. The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence does not consider the fact that different countries have different political and economic systems and that electoral violence can occur even in countries that have inclusive systems. This makes it difficult to explain the variation in electoral violence across countries and regions.

To address the issues and challenges of the Structural Theory of Electoral Violence, the researcher would use a multidisciplinary approach that integrates 2 different theories and approaches to study electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. This approach would include the analysis of historical and cultural factors, as well as the examination of individual and group behaviour. In addition to the points mentioned, a more thorough knowledge of the underlying causes of election violence in Nigeria would be possible through the application of a qualitative research approach.

Another solution is to pay more attention to the part played by the policing system in preventing and managing electoral violence. This would include the examination of the effectiveness of the police in responding to violence, as well as their ability to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. This approach would provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the policing system in Nigeria and could help to identify areas for improvement.

### **3.3.7. The effects of these theories on the just concluded elections in Nigeria**

The institutional functionalism theory and structural theory of electoral violence offer valuable insights into the factors contributing to the incidence of electoral violence in Nigeria's recent elections. The institutional

functionalism theory emphasises the necessity of well-functioning institutions like the police, electoral commission, and court to preserve political stability and prevent electoral violence. However, issues regarding these organisations' competence and independence have cast doubt on their ability to provide a free and fair electoral process. According to the argument, a strong and neutral policing system is critical for preventing electoral violence. The police should be impartial in maintaining election security and should not be used to intimidate opposing parties or suppress voters. Nonetheless, there have been claims of police prejudice, intimidation, and cooperation in electoral violence in Nigeria in the past (Okoye 2021: 3).

Political polarisation, ethnic and religious conflicts, and socio-economic disparity characterize Nigeria's political and social backdrop. When elections are hotly contested and the stakes are high, the danger of electoral violence increases as parties and supporters battle for power (Idam and Emeh 2022: 39). These characteristics create an environment conducive to election violence since many factions may resort to violence to assert their interests and concerns. Politicians that use ethnic or religious divisions for political advantage can cause tension and violence between different groups (Idam and Emeh 2022: 36). Cultural and social norms in Nigeria may also play a role in shaping the incidence of electoral violence, with deep-seated rivalries between political parties and groups and a history of electoral violence perpetuating a cycle of violence during elections. Weak state institutions, notably the police, have been a major source of concern during Nigerian elections, with the security forces' incapacity to adequately handle people's grievances and secure voter safety leading to the persistence of electoral violence. The structural theory of electoral violence identifies numerous structural elements that may have led to the recent electoral violence in Nigeria.

The institutional functionalism theory and structural theory are two sociological theories that can be used to explain electoral violence in Nigeria. Institutional functionalism theory posits that societies are made up of

different institutions that work together to maintain order and stability. When these institutions are weak or dysfunctional, it can lead to social unrest and violence. In the context of electoral violence, this theory would suggest that violence is more likely to occur in societies where the electoral institutions are weak or corrupt. Contrarily, the structural theory contends that societal structures like class, ethnicity, and religion can foster violent behaviour. This argument would imply that violence is more likely to occur in civilizations where there are significant social differences, such as those based on ethnicity or religion, in the setting of election violence.

There were a few isolated incidents of violence during the 2023 elections in Nigeria, but mostly the process was peaceful. For instance, there have been reports of violence in the states of Rivers, Lagos, Kogi, Kaduna, and Plateau. It is impossible to say with certainty whether the electoral violence in Nigeria in 2023 is better explained by institutional functionalism theory or structural theory. However, both points of view likely had an impact. Violence is facilitated by Nigeria's weak state institutions and widespread social divisions. Deep-seated socio-economic divisions in Nigeria have historically been a cause of conflict, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been condemned for being corrupt and ineffective. These divisions could have been a factor in the unrest that marred the 2023 elections. The stakes for numerous political parties and their followers increased during the most controversial elections in Nigerian history in 2023. Moreover, \$1 billion was spent on the election, making it the most expensive in Nigerian history. This suggests that there was a lot of money on the line, which might have persuaded some individuals to resort to violence to sway the outcome of the election. The election was marred by several anomalies, including voter disenfranchisement and the use of violence to intimidate voters. These abnormalities might have exacerbated the anger and frustration that led to the acts of violence. Ultimately, both institutional functionalism and structural theory are likely to have had a part in the election violence in Nigeria in 2023. The electoral process's flaws, including

corruption and voter disenfranchisement, may have contributed to the frustration and fury that resulted in violence. The underlying social and economic systems in Nigeria, such as high levels of inequality and poverty, may have also fostered violence.

### **3.3.8. How these theories can be improved**

The Institutional Functionalism Theory emphasises the value of well-functioning institutions, political structures, hierarchies, and groupings in society and focuses on how these institutions help, promote, or obstruct the upkeep of a stable system. It emphasises the function of institutions like the legal system, policing system, and election commission in preserving political stability and averting electoral violence. While the Institutional Functionalism Theory places a strong emphasis on the role that institutions play in influencing political conduct, it should also consider the impact that cultural and historical factors have on electoral violence. The importance of cultural and historical legacies in influencing political violence in many contexts has recently come to light in studies (An, Sharp and shaw, 2021: 231).

The main aim of this study is to examine the strength and efficacy of these institutions in Nigeria, as well as how they influence the occurrence of electoral violence. It also emphasises the importance of considering the broader political and social context in which institutions operate. Political disorder is more common in nations with high political engagement but little political institutionalisation. The research must investigate how political polarisation, ethnic or religious divisions, a lack of trust in the electoral process, poor governance, and a history of electoral violence all contribute to electoral violence in Nigeria.

The Structural Theory of Electoral Violence posits that electoral violence is not a random event but a product of specific structural conditions in society. The theory highlights several key structural factors that can contribute to electoral violence, including socio-economic inequality, political polarisation, ethnic and religious divisions, and state weakness. The study must examine

the role of state weakness in facilitating electoral violence in Nigeria. The theory should address the power dynamics within institutions, including the policing system, as this can influence their effectiveness in preventing electoral violence. Recent studies have emphasised the role of power struggles within institutions in contributing to political violence (Birch, Daxecker and Höglund 2020: 8). The influence of social media, digital communication, and technology on electoral violence should be considered in the current period. Election-related violence may be exacerbated by the rise of online hate speech and disinformation (Hunter 2023: 1042).

Both theories are highly relevant to the study as they provide frameworks for understanding the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria and the role of the policing system in preventing and managing it. The Institutional Functionalism Theory highlights the importance of effective institutions in maintaining political stability and preventing violence, while the Structural Theory of Electoral Violence focuses on the underlying structural factors that contribute to electoral violence. Although the Institutional Functionalism Theory places a lot of attention on how institutions affect political behaviour, it should also include how cultural and historical factors affect electoral violence. Studies have recently highlighted the significance of cultural and historical legacies in influencing political violence in numerous situations (An, Sharp and Shaw 2021: 231). The theory should consider how structural variables and gender aspects interact to affect electoral violence. Election-related gender-based violence is a growing problem (Schneider and Carroll 2020: 6). Transnational influences may have an impact on election violence because of globalisation. Research needs to examine how specific external factors and international actors can make election violence worse (Musa *et al.* 2024:193). Nevertheless, there are challenges facing both ideas, including the possibility of oversimplifying the complexity of social and political systems.

### **3.4. CONCLUSION**

The prevalence of electoral violence in developing countries, primarily in Africa, may be explained by institutional functionalism and structural theories. Most African nations suffer from poor economic growth, high unemployment, and a lack of reliable government. Most of these nations' political institutions have not kept pace with the rapid pace of social and economic change. Election violence, according to Esaiasson, Arnesen and Werner (2023: 601) is frequently caused by the extremely high stakes involved in winning and losing highly prized political positions, particularly in circumstances of extreme scarcity and underdevelopment. Consequently, when a group of people feels marginalised and left out of the decision-making process in a community or a state, they are likely to use violence to enforce their demands. Electoral violence can be fuelled by a lack of access to Socio-economic and political resources that would enable people to participate more fully in the democratic process. This typically occurs when marginalised groups believe they are permanently locked out of the state's benefits system.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The research methodology was a well-structured and systematic framework that encompassed a multitude of essential procedures involved in acquiring, organising, and interpreting data throughout the course of the study. This chapter delved deeply into the research technique and design implemented, with a special focus on key aspects such as the research methodology, the research paradigm, the research approach, the identified target population, sample selection, the rationale behind determining the sample size, the incorporation of quantitative research methods, and the diligent consideration of ethical aspects and how they were resolved.

This chapter discussed the painstaking data coding and data processing techniques used to ensure that the gathered data was successfully converted into insightful knowledge. The researcher also examined the steps taken to ensure the consistency and correctness of the data, which increased the study's overall dependability and trustworthiness. By thoroughly addressing these aspects, the study offered a comprehensive understanding of the topic examined.

#### **4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM/PHILOSOPHY**

The research adopted a qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research was particularly suited to exploring complex social phenomena, such as electoral violence and policing systems, from the perspective of the individuals and stakeholders involved. It allowed for an in-depth understanding of the subject matter, capturing the nuances, experiences, and contextual factors that quantitative approaches might not fully address (Bonache and Festing 2020:104). The investigation employed a qualitative approach, utilising Face-to-Face (FTF) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) methods for data collection. While FTF facilitated in-depth discussions and

offered a greater potential for insights, FGD allowed participants to share perspectives and potential disagreements (Guest, Namey, O'Regan, Godwin, and Taylor 2020: 6; Ochieng, Wilson, Derrick, and Mukherjee 2018: 21). Consequently, the chosen methodology enabled a comprehensive exploration of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences. It also aided in interpreting the meanings behind observed actions and provided insights into potential relationships in information processing (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2019: 179; Creswell 2018: 257).

#### **4.3. RESEARCH APPROACH**

Within the qualitative research paradigm, the study employed a case study research approach to explore the factors contributing to electoral violence within Nigeria's Fourth Republic (Saunders *et al.* , 2019:179). The approach facilitated the examination of electoral violence and policing systems within a diverse context, enabling the generation of rich and context-specific insights. The data sources for the study, interviews, and artefacts strengthened the validity of the findings through triangulation.

#### **4.4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design provides the logical framework guiding an investigator in addressing issues and answering research questions (SAGE 2021:19). This study adopted a phenomenological design, which involved gathering qualitative data and posited that human beings derive meaning from the world through personal experience (Creswell 2018:50; Alhazmi and Kaufmann 2022:1; Gasparyan 2021; Hourigan and Edgar 2020). Alhazmi and Kaufmann (2022:1) further noted that phenomenology allows researchers to engage in activities that help describe and understand complex human social experiences.

The choice of a phenomenological design was appropriate as the key informants—police officers, INCE members, NYSC participants, traditional rulers, party leaders, and NGOs—possessed valuable expertise and

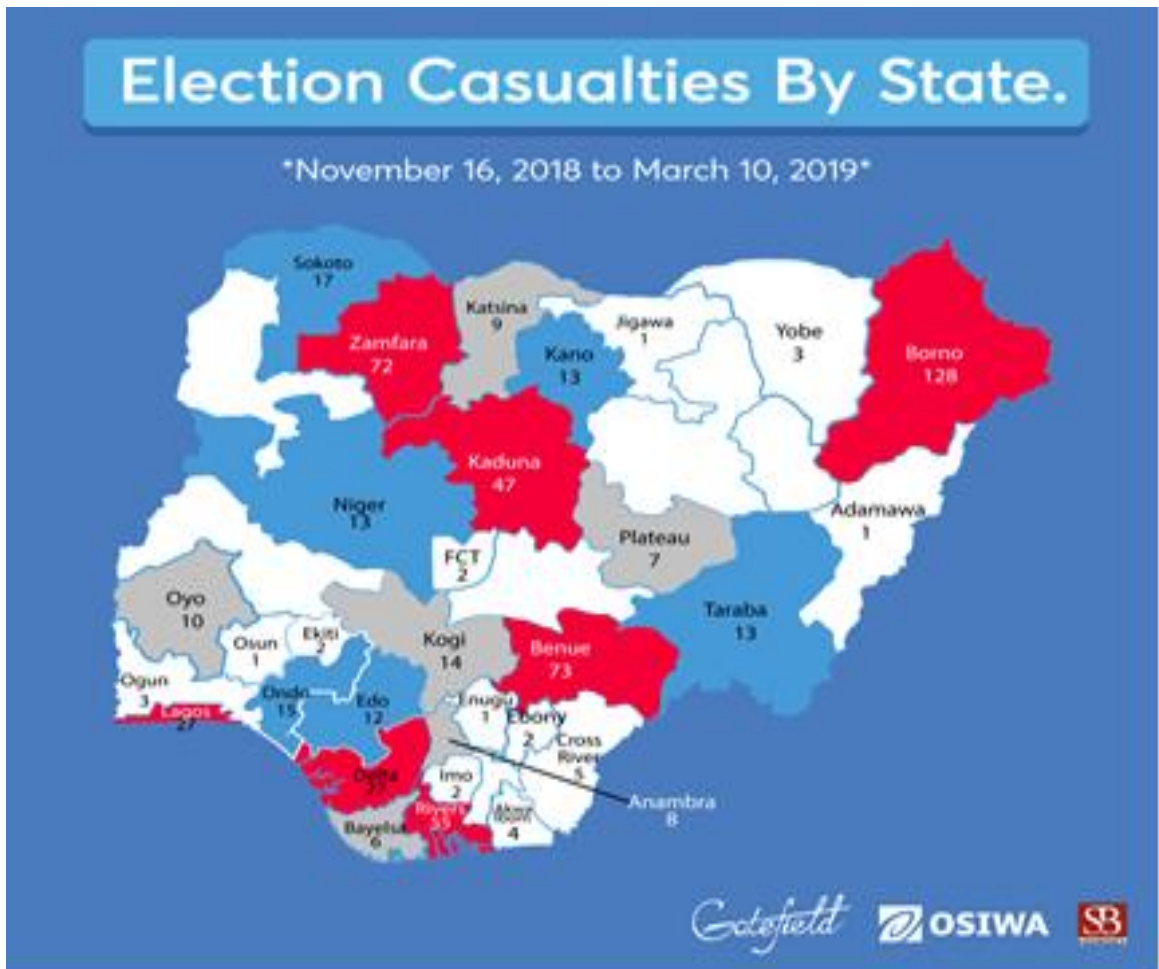
experiences relevant to the research topic. Structured interviews with the key informants were undertaken to acquire in-depth insights into their experiences and viewpoints on issues related to Nigeria's Fourth Republic, policing, and electoral violence. The interview questions were used to collect the primary data, while secondary data was gathered through peer-reviewed publications and other academic resources.

#### **4.5. RESEARCH SETTING**

The research setting, encompassing the policing system and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, is a complex and multifaceted environment characterized by political, social, and institutional dynamics. Nigeria's Fourth Republic, which began in 1999, has witnessed multiple electoral cycles, each presenting unique challenges related to electoral violence and the policing system.

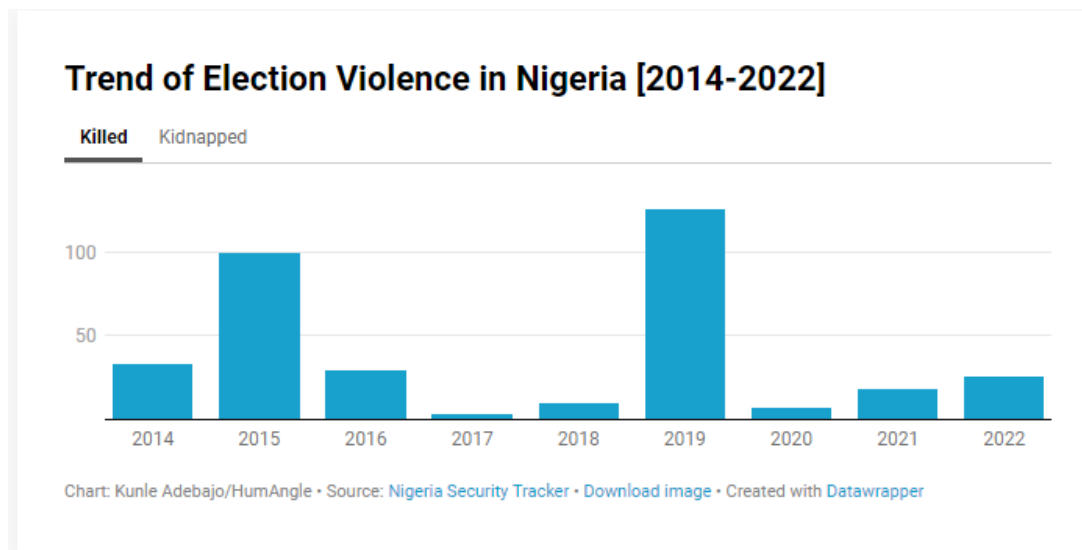
The geographical context of Nigeria, being a diverse nation with over 200 million people, is divided into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Each state has unique political, cultural, and socio-economic contexts that influence electoral processes and the incidence of violence.

The map below shows the number of states with various casualties across the nation



**Figure 4.1: Map of Nigeria showing states with casualties**

These states exhibit a high concentration of casualties, reflecting intense political tensions and conflicts during election periods. Visualising this data allows policymakers and stakeholders to better understand the geographical distribution of electoral violence, enabling them to develop targeted strategies to address the root causes and enhance the overall electoral process in Nigeria.



**Figure 4.2: Trend of Election Violence in Nigeria 2014-2022**

The statistics align with figures from the International Crisis Group and the European Union Election Observation Mission regarding the national elections of 2015 and 2019.

#### **4.6. TARGET POPULATION**

According to Pritha (2020), the concept of a population in research encompasses an entire group that forms the basis for conclusions. Contrary to popular belief, a population does not solely refer to human beings; rather, it can encompass various entities or elements under study. These elements may include not just individuals but also objects, events, institutions, organisations, countries, species, organisms, and more. In essence, the term "population" in research is not limited to people but extends to any defined group of elements relevant to the study at hand.

As described by Arbale and Mutisya (2024: 12), the target population represents a vast group of individuals or objects that serve as the primary focus of a scientific inquiry. The target population consists of the pertinent electoral agencies and other stakeholders as listed in Table 1 below, from which a sample is drawn. These entities form the central group from which a sample was drawn for data collection. In essence, the study gathered data

directly from these relevant agencies to gain insights into the subject of research.

## **4.7. RESEARCH TECHNIQUES**

### **4.7.1. Sampling method**

Albaum and Smith (2012: 182) define a sampling method, explaining it as a systematic approach to testing a subset of the entire population. According to the authors, sampling methods can be categorised into probability and non-probability sampling methods. The researcher adopted a purposive non-probability sampling method. Sharma (2017: 749) describes non-probability sampling as involving subjective selection by the researcher, rather than giving each member of the population an equal chance of being chosen.

The decision to use a purposive sampling method is supported by several scholars, including Johnson, Adkins, and Chauvin (2021: 141) and Stockemer and Stockemer (2019: 63). They argue that purposefully selecting participants for a study ensures that they possess valuable and insightful data, making them more relevant and useful for the research. Oribhabor and Anyanwu (2019: 47) further reinforce the suitability of purposive sampling, particularly in interviews where reaching a sampled population quickly is essential and proportional representation is not a primary concern. The focus was on the competence and ability of the sampled individuals to provide informed perspectives on the subject matter.

Considering the nature of the study and the phenomenon under investigation, the chosen sampling method was appropriate. The researcher targeted individuals who possessed specific knowledge and experience related to the challenges of interest, the researcher gained valuable insights from the informants. Thus, from the electoral stakeholder population, comprising nine institutions, 45 participants were selected using the purposive non-probability sampling approach (refer to Table 1 below). The researcher carefully considered methods of recruitment, informed consent

procedures, the timing of interviews concerning experience or emotion, safeguards for participant anonymity and confidentiality, interview location, and techniques for capturing and transcribing the data to avoid biases that could impact the study's result quality.

#### **4.7.2. Recruitment process**

The recruitment process included identifying individuals with valuable insights on various aspects of the research topic. It was conducted personally by the researcher, who initiated contact with the participants by delivering an introductory letter to their respective offices and securing an interview appointment. Additionally, a consent letter was provided, and permission from the organisation (Gatekeeper's letter) was obtained before commencing data collection through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions.

#### **4.7.3. Sample size**

As described by Rajput, Wang, and Chen (2023: 2), sample size refers to the number of observations used to make approximations about a specific population. When selecting a suitable sampling strategy, researchers had a wide range of options to consider, which were influenced by factors such as population size and accessibility (Obilor 2023: 5). The sample size consisted of 45 key informants carefully chosen from relevant institutions and stakeholders. As shown in Table 1 below, these were drawn from the institutions and stakeholders forming the target population (Lakens 2022: 2; Kovacs et al. 2022: 2; Adhikari 2021: 19; Andrade 2020: 103).

The researcher emphasises the importance of adhering to principles such as saturation and pragmatic considerations rather than relying on a fixed numerical threshold (Hennink and Kaiser 2022: 7; Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, and Young 2018). Considering these factors, the researcher concluded that a sample size of 45 was deemed sufficient for achieving adequate representation in the study.

**Table 4.1: Breakdown of Electoral Stakeholders**

Institutions	Total Population	Portfolio Profiles	Number of Potentials Participants	Justification for Selection
INEC	16,000 Daily Post 2018 <a href="https://dailypost.ng/2018/07/20/2019-inec-reveals-number-workers-needs-nigeria-election/">https://dailypost.ng/2018/07/20/2019-inec-reveals-number-workers-needs-nigeria-election/</a> (Accessed 29/1/2024)	Electoral Officers (EOs) Presiding Officers Polling Clerks Ad-hoc Staff (such as Collation Officers, Returning Officers, and Supervisory Presiding Officers)	2  1 1 1	They offer a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the electoral landscape, the role of the police and potential areas for improvement in the electoral process.
Nigeria Police	350,000 Interpol, <a href="https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Member-countries/Africa/NIGERIA">https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/Member-countries/Africa/NIGERIA</a> (Accessed 13/3/2023)	Commissioners of Police (CP) Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACP) Superintendence of Police Divisional Police Officers	1  2 2 5	They provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, strategies and impact of policing during the election.  They also contribute to a more nuanced analysis of the dynamics between law enforcement and the electoral process, informing potential improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the policing system
Nigerian Bar Association	140,000 Nigerian Bar Association website, 2023. <a href="https://www.nigerianbar.org.ng/">https://www.nigerianbar.org.ng/</a> (Accessed 13/3/2023)	Lawyers	4	They provide a legal, human rights-focused and advocacy-oriented perspective on the policing system and electoral violence.  Their insights contribute to a more holistic understanding of the legal framework, human rights implications and potential avenues for reform in the context of Nigeria's Fourth Republic.
NGOs The Gender	24,000 Vanguard Newspaper 1 August 2019. A coalition of	Director	1	Engaging with these organisations will provide valuable, unbiased insights

Mobile Initiative  Atunluse Initiative	NGOs report on the 2019 presidential election  <a href="https://businessday.ng/politics/article/ondo-call-apc-led-government-to-order-now-group-urges-religious-traditional-leaders/">https://businessday.ng/politics/article/ondo-call-apc-led-government-to-order-now-group-urges-religious-traditional-leaders/</a> (Accessed 1/2/2024)		1	into the dynamics of the policing system during elections. It can shed light on potential human rights abuses, instances of violence and the broader impact on the rights of individuals involved in the electoral process.
Party leaders NNPP and APC	648 Kwen J. 2020. Business day  <a href="https://businessday.ng/politics/article/inec-de-registers-74-political-parties-retains-apc-pdp-apga-others/">https://businessday.ng/politics/article/inec-de-registers-74-political-parties-retains-apc-pdp-apga-others/</a> (Accessed 13/3/2023)	Party chairman  Party Secretary	2  2	Their experiences, perceptions and recommendations will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in the relationship between political parties and law enforcement during elections. Their views can also contribute to understanding whether the policing system is perceived as impartial or influenced by political considerations.
Journalists	35,000 <i>LeVan, and Patrick (2018)</i>	Reporters	4	Their experiences, documentation and insights will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the role of law enforcement in the electoral process and its impact on various stakeholders.
Traditional leaders	<a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24492437">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24492437</a> (Accessed 1/2/2024)	Kings	2	They provide a community-centric, culturally informed, and locally grounded perspective on the policing system and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Their experiences, roles, and insights contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay

				<p>between traditional institutions, law enforcement, and the electoral process.</p> <p>They actively work towards preventing conflicts and promoting peace within their domains. Understanding their role in preventing electoral violence and their expectations from the policing system can inform recommendations for improving conflict prevention strategies.</p>
Electoral Adhoc staff (NYSC members)	<p>Sodiq, O. 2023. NYSC Deploys 200,000 Corp Members for 2023 General Elections. The Guardian.</p> <p><a href="https://guardian.ng/news/nysc-deploys-200000-corp-members-for-2023-general-elections/">https://guardian.ng/news/nysc-deploys-200000-corp-members-for-2023-general-elections/</a></p>	Corps Members	14	<p>Deployment During Elections: The NYSC plays a crucial role in the deployment of youth corps members to various parts of the country, including during elections. Corps members are often involved in election-related activities, such as serving as ad hoc staff at polling units.</p> <p>Their experiences provide firsthand insights into the interactions between law enforcement, electoral processes, and potential instances of violence.</p>
Total			45	

**Table 4.1. self-generated by the researcher**

#### **4.7.4. Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Patino and Ferreira (2018: 1) define inclusion criteria as the main features possessed by the target population that the investigator used to answer the research questions, while exclusion criteria are the features of potential participants who met the inclusion criteria but presented with additional characteristics capable of increasing the risks of the study for an unfavourable conclusion. Inclusion criteria included demographics such as

age, gender, level of education, work experience, race, and occupational characteristics, as well as geographical features like the name and location of participants.

### **Inclusion criteria**

Inclusion criteria were established to interview potential key informants who demonstrated willingness to engage in the interviews and possessed relevant experience, knowledge, and expertise pertinent to the research topic.

### **Exclusion criteria**

Additionally, individuals were excluded from participation as they were unwilling to engage in the interview due to the sensitivity of their position, despite possessing the necessary experience, knowledge, and expertise related to the research topic.

#### **4.7.5. Research instruments**

Interview structures were used as the research tool for this project. Face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were conducted and were digitally recorded. The study relied on pertinent electoral laws, governmental papers, court judgments, election tribunal injunctions, press reports, and police officers' data on electoral violence in Nigeria to create the interview discussion guide.

### **4.8. DATA COLLECTION PROCESS**

Data collection in research involves the process of gathering and analysing data on relevant factors, utilising methods such as interviews and surveys (SAGE 2019). Utibe (2019: 2) emphasises the use of various strategies, instruments, or methodologies, including interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), surveys, telephone interviews, field notes, taped social interaction, or questionnaires, to collect data. Research instruments, as defined by Sahoo (2022: 1) are diverse tools for gathering, measuring, and analysing

data, playing an essential role in the research process. Examples of research instruments include surveys, interviews, observation, and reading, and it is crucial for the researcher to ensure the validity and reliability of the selected instrument.

The primary data was collected using an interview schedule. Using a single interview schedule for both one-on-one interviews and the focus group discussions (FGD) which is efficient and convenient for both participants and interviewers, saving time and key information is effectively obtained. While secondary data was derived from a literature review (Utibe 2019: 18; Billups 2019; Pedersen *et al.* 2016: 631; Yayeh 2021: 55).

#### **4.8.1. Primary data**

##### **Face-to-Face**

Saarijärvi and Bratt (2021: 2) define face-to-face data gathering as a process involving direct, one-on-one interactions between the researcher and the participant. This method allows the interviewer to interpret body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal social cues. The FTF sessions involved 31 participants. An interview schedule was employed, consisting of fifteen (15) open-ended questions. Part 1 covers the participants' general background information, while Part 2 delves into the objectives of the research. The interviews conducted by the researcher lasted between 30 and 45 minutes each. The data recorded and shared are exclusive to the researcher, and the information is stored securely in the DUT cloud for five years, after which it will be permanently erased by the supervisor.

Participants received an informed consent form and interview guide before the interview was conducted. The interviews were conducted in English and transcribed verbatim for subsequent data analysis.

## Focus Group Discussion

Yayeh (2021: 54) characterizes focus group discussion as a method where a researcher gathers a group of people to discuss a specific subject, aiming to gather personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes through controlled interaction. The researcher conducted FGDs with the remaining 14 participants, forming a total of 2 focus groups (A and B) as outlined in Table 2 below. The group sizes are considered appropriate based on recommendations by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009: 467) and Liu *et al.* (2020: 13) indicating that a focus group of 6–8 participants is adequate for eliciting information on a specific topic.

Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) was strictly adhered to. Data collection involved face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher. Each FGD scheduled lasted for 35 to 40 minutes, with the interviews recorded with participants' approval.

**Table 4.2: Focus Group Discussion of Participants**

<b>2 Focus groups</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
A	7
B	7
	<b>Total = 14</b>

### 4.8.2. Secondary data

According to Yayeh (2021: 55), secondary data refers to information that has already been collected and subjected to statistical processing. The primary method of acquiring secondary data is through compilation. Ghauri, Gronhaug, and Strange (2020: 153) highlight the advantage of utilising secondary data, emphasising that it is readily available since it has already been collected.

#### **4.9. PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study, as described by Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger (2020: 7), is a preliminary approach where a subset of respondents is selected before the main study to identify weaknesses associated with the survey instrument. It serves as a small-scale test to assess the feasibility of the proposed research before conducting the larger study (Simkus 2022). Typically conducted to ensure the validity of the research instrument, the pilot test acts as a pre-test version of the instrument before the actual study (Gani, Rathakrishnan, and Krishnasamy 2020: 141).

In qualitative studies, a pilot study plays a crucial role in ensuring that interview questions are appropriate for gathering context-specific information and preparing for the main study. This practice allows researchers to familiarise themselves with the interview procedures and make necessary adjustments. Unlike quantitative research, where the sample size is determined by predetermined calculations, qualitative research does not have strict rules or fixed numbers of respondents. Instead, factors like research purpose, credibility, participant willingness, available resources, and time constraints influence the sample size. The data saturation point is considered when determining the number of participants (Gani, Rathakrishnan and Krishnasamy 2020: 141).

There are various steps involved in conducting a qualitative interview pilot test. First, to evaluate the study's concepts, the researcher crafts specific interview questions. The language, wording, and relevance of these questions are then examined by experts. Following that, volunteers are chosen using standards that mirror those for the primary study. These individuals help test the interviews. Any modifications to the original design that are made must be thoroughly documented (Mohd Aliff *et al.* 2017: 1075).

Five randomly chosen respondents participated in the pilot study, comprising a police officer, an INEC official, an NBA member, a party leader

and a journalist to test the interview questions and these respondents were not part of the main study. The instrument was administered personally by the researcher and face-to-face interviews were conducted. Based on the findings of the pilot study, it shows that there is clarity of the questions, the grammar where clear, the participants have a clear understanding of the questions and therefore, there were no modifications made to the research questions.

#### **4.10. CREDIBILITY**

The credibility of the study was enhanced through the demonstration of honesty and integrity in everything that pertains to the study by communicating, being transparent, and exhibiting professionalism. Also, persistent observation and member checks are used to increase the credibility of the findings.

#### **4.11. TRUSTWORTHINESS**

To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research, the study adheres to the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as an essential framework for assessing qualitative research (Hussain et al 2020: 447). **Transferability** was supported by providing a thorough description of the research context and methods which allowed for potential applicability to similar settings. A thorough and rich description of the research activities such as an adequate description of the site, participants, methods used to collect data during the study, and the number and duration of data collection sessions were considered. **Dependability** was assured by maintaining a transparent and systematic record of data collection and analysis processes, enabling an external audit of the study's findings. **Confirmability** was achieved by maintaining a neutral stance and documenting any potential biases or subjectivity. The data obtained accurately reflect the participants' experiences and are free from researcher bias (Rahmani et al., 2020). The

results were presented objectively, ensuring the data speaks for itself by incorporating verbatim quotes from the participants.

#### **4.12. DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis utilised qualitative methods, specifically thematic analysis, to extract meaningful insights from the data collected through interviews. Thematic analysis is a systematic approach to identifying, organising, and interpreting recurring themes, patterns, and viewpoints present in qualitative data (Braun and Clarke 2019: 594). The analysis process was summarised in several key steps:

**Data Preparation:** Initially, the interview transcripts were carefully reviewed and cleaned to ensure accuracy and completeness. Identifying information that could compromise participants' anonymity was removed.

**Familiarisation with Data:** The researcher and the analysis team immersed themselves in the data, gaining a deep understanding of the content through multiple readings of the transcripts. This step helped them become familiar with the nuances and intricacies of the data.

**Generation of Initial Codes:** During the initial coding phase, meaningful units of text (phrases or sentences) were identified and assigned descriptive codes. These codes captured the essence of the content and related to specific research objectives and emerging themes.

**Theme Development:** Codes were grouped into broader themes. This process involved searching for commonalities, patterns, and connections among the codes. Themes were developed by organising related codes into meaningful categories that represented key aspects of the data.

**Review and Refinement:** The identified themes and their relationships went through a review process to ensure they accurately reflected the data's content. This iterative process involved revisiting the transcripts and adjusting the themes and sub-themes as needed.

**Data Interpretation:** The final step involved interpreting the themes within the context of the research objectives and existing literature. The researcher analysed how these themes contributed to answering the research questions and generating insights.

Throughout the thematic analysis, transparency and rigour were maintained by documenting the decision-making process, including coding procedures and the rationale behind theme development. The analysis was conducted manually, ensuring a deep engagement with the data. Findings were presented using illustrative quotes to support the themes identified (Braun and Clarke 2022: 16).

#### **4.13. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In conducting the study, various ethical aspects were carefully considered, encompassing several broad areas such as voluntary participation, ensuring the well-being of the participants, maintaining confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, communicating the results responsibly, and ensuring anonymity, as emphasised by Pritha (2021). Ethical considerations in research represent a set of fundamental principles that guide the designs and practices of investigations. For scientists and researchers, adhering to a specific code of conduct when gathering data from individuals is imperative. Human research endeavours often aim to gain insights into real-life phenomena, explore effective treatments, analyse behaviours, and seek ways to enhance lives. The decisions made about what to research and how to conduct that research involve critical ethical considerations that play a crucial role in the research process. These ethical considerations serve several important purposes.

- **Protecting the Rights of Research Participants:** The rights, privacy, and dignity of those who take part in the study were protected by ethical rules and procedures. Participants were respected and their well-being was given priority.

- **Enhancing Research Validity:** The dependability and trustworthiness of the study findings are influenced by ethical practices. The reliability and accuracy of the study findings were improved by following ethical guidelines.
- **Maintaining Scientific Integrity:** Transparency and honesty in the research process are promoted by ethical conduct, which builds confidence between the researchers and the larger scientific community. In turn, this improves the scientific enterprise's credibility and integrity of the research work.

#### **4.13.1. Ethical procedure**

The researcher received training in the DUT-required ethical procedure as well as a certificate in introduction to research ethics. The researcher carried out the research by ethical standards. According to Surmiak (2020: 4465) and Kumari *et. al.* (2023: 47), participants were given enough information (informational letter: appendix A) and guaranteed consent to participate in the study (appendix B) without coercion.

Participants have the right to their freedom, and the right to be fully informed about the research's objective, its advantages, and its potential drawbacks. Potential volunteers must be made aware of their right to choose whether to participate in the study, as well as the fact that doing so will not have any negative consequences. Participants had the chance to ask the researcher questions and the capacity to comprehend those queries. Additionally, the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions was disclosed by the researcher (Pietrzykowski and Smilowska 2021: 7). To address ethical concerns in this research, a letter of information was sent to participants, the letter included all the information that was required, such as the topic and the goal of the research procedure that will be used to collect data, as well as information that the study carries no potential risk in terms of psychological, social, physical, or economic harm and that there was no reward for participating.

Additionally, the letter allowed participants to know that their involvement in the study was optional and that, even if they agreed to participate, they could stop participating or leave the conversation at any moment without suffering any consequences. Interviewees were made aware that their conversation would be captured electronically and was played back by the researcher to catch any views that could have been overlooked in the minutes. Written consent was given by study participants who consented to participate.

#### **4.13.2. Informed consent**

Informed consent, according to Arellano, Alcubilla and Leguízamo (2023: 1), is the voluntary agreement on a person's participation in a research project following complete disclosure. Informed consent was used to raise the likelihood that a participant would be more engaged in the study. The American Psychological Association's ethics code mandates that researchers disclose the purpose, methodology, risks, and advantages of their studies. Information from respondents was treated as having been collected with their informed consent throughout the investigation, which is a condition of ethical research. As a result, everyone who takes part does so voluntarily. The enclosed letter of information and consent (Appendices A and B).

#### **4.13.3. Confidentiality and Anonymity**

All participants' anonymity was ensured throughout the process and after the research. This was achieved through data coded and only accessible to the researcher and the supervisor. All participants had a right to privacy, so their data were protected for as long as it is stored. Anonymously, confidentiality was secured during data collection (Pritha 2020).

#### **4.13.4. Data Storage and disposal**

Ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of participants' data is paramount in this research. All collected data were carefully coded to detach it from individual participants, and access was restricted solely to the researcher

and the supervisor, in line with ethical data handling practices (Pritha 2021). To further safeguard participants' anonymity, stringent data security measures were implemented during storage. Electronic data were encrypted and stored on password-protected devices and servers. Physical copies are securely stored in locked cabinets.

Regarding data disposal, a clear protocol was established to adhere to ethical guidelines. After the research was completed, all data, both electronic and physical, were retained for a period of 5 years, as recommended (Pritha 2021). After this retention period, the data will be irreversibly deleted or destroyed to ensure that it cannot be retrieved or reconstructed. This rigorous approach to data storage and disposal guarantees the protection of participants' personal information and maintains the highest standards of ethical conduct throughout the research process.

#### **4.13.5. Beneficence**

According to Nneoma *et al.* (2023: 133), the beneficence principle directs the researchers to do what is right and good. This desire to "do good" makes an ethical viewpoint and possible solution to an ethical problem acceptable. According to Christine (2021), research should be conducted on something that will be helpful to most people. Hence, the researcher prioritised the interests and well-being of all participants by ensuring they were fully informed about the research, its potential impacts, and their rights. Ethical guidelines were followed to promote participant welfare, including obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and providing ongoing support. Measures were taken to minimise potential risks or discomforts, such as designing the study to avoid physical or psychological harm and addressing any concerns that arose during the research.

#### **4.14. CONCLUSION**

Chapter Four has outlined the research methodology employed in this study, focusing on a qualitative research design and the engagement of 45 key informants. This approach was selected to gain in-depth insights into the research topic by capturing a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

The chapter detailed the steps taken to ensure a rigorous and ethical research process. Key aspects included the selection of participants based on their relevant expertise and experience, the use of a phenomenological approach to explore their perspectives, and the application of ethical guidelines to safeguard participant well-being. Structured interviews were conducted to gather detailed qualitative data, which were then analysed to identify themes and patterns that provide a deeper understanding of the research issues.

The chosen qualitative design, with its emphasis on detailed, context-rich data, has allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter. The involvement of 45 key informants ensured a diverse range of viewpoints, contributing to the robustness of the findings. This methodological approach has set the stage for the subsequent analysis and discussion of the results in the following chapters, aiming to offer valuable insights and contributions to the field of study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

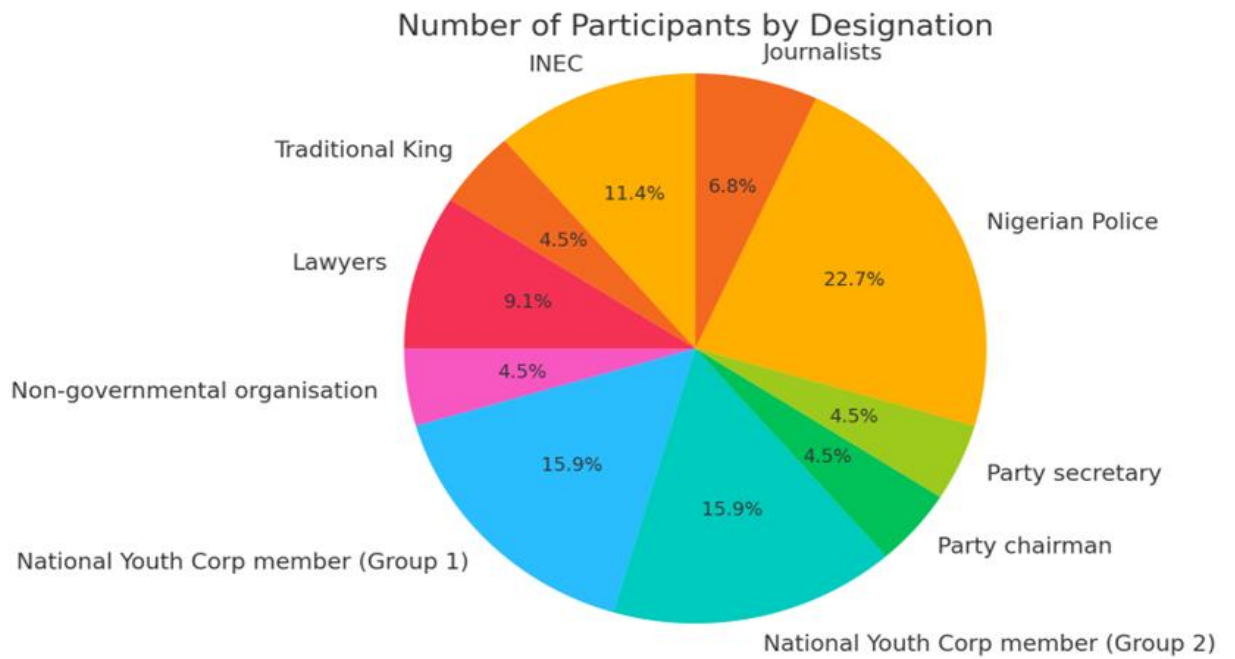
A constant obstacle to Nigeria's democratic consolidation, election violence seriously compromises the integrity of the voting system and the stability of the country. To investigate the policing system and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, this part describes the data analytic technique used in this study. Moreover, the study aims to pinpoint the difficulties and responsibility of the Nigerian Police Force in handling electoral crimes as well as potential remedies to minimize electoral violence in next elections. The researcher personally interviewed participants, then electronically documented their observations. NVivo 12 tools were then used for transcribing and analysis of these recordings. NVivo enabled theme analysis, which was selected for its methodical, flexible character and capacity to group data into relevant themes and subthemes. This methodology let data organization be organized methodically yet dynamically. The personally conducted interviews guaranteed the gathering of reliable, high-quality data. To honor the integrity of the material acquired, electronic voice recordings of the interviews were created. Then these tapes were verbatim transcribed. To expedite the study, the transcriptions were imported into QSR NVivo 12. By means of topic and subthemes extracted from the interview guide, NVivo helped to organize the coded data, therefore enabling efficient data management and classification. Following the study questions, the analysis consisted in objective comparisons of the data. This process followed Elgendy, Elragal, and Päiväranta (2022: 351) guidelines for qualitative research, which underline established theoretical models and notions stressing harmonizing data-driven insights with In line with Declercq and van Poppel's (2023: 8) recommendation, the research questions of the study helped to define a temporary list of codes. As so, the main topics of the study were determined deductively; subthemes developed inductively during the phases of data collecting and analysis.

Capturing both expected and unexpected themes, this combined deductive and inductive approach guaranteed a thorough awareness of the dynamics of electoral violence is vital not only for safeguarding democratic values but also for promoting peace and stability in Nigeria by the participants. revoked

## **5.2. CATEGORISATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

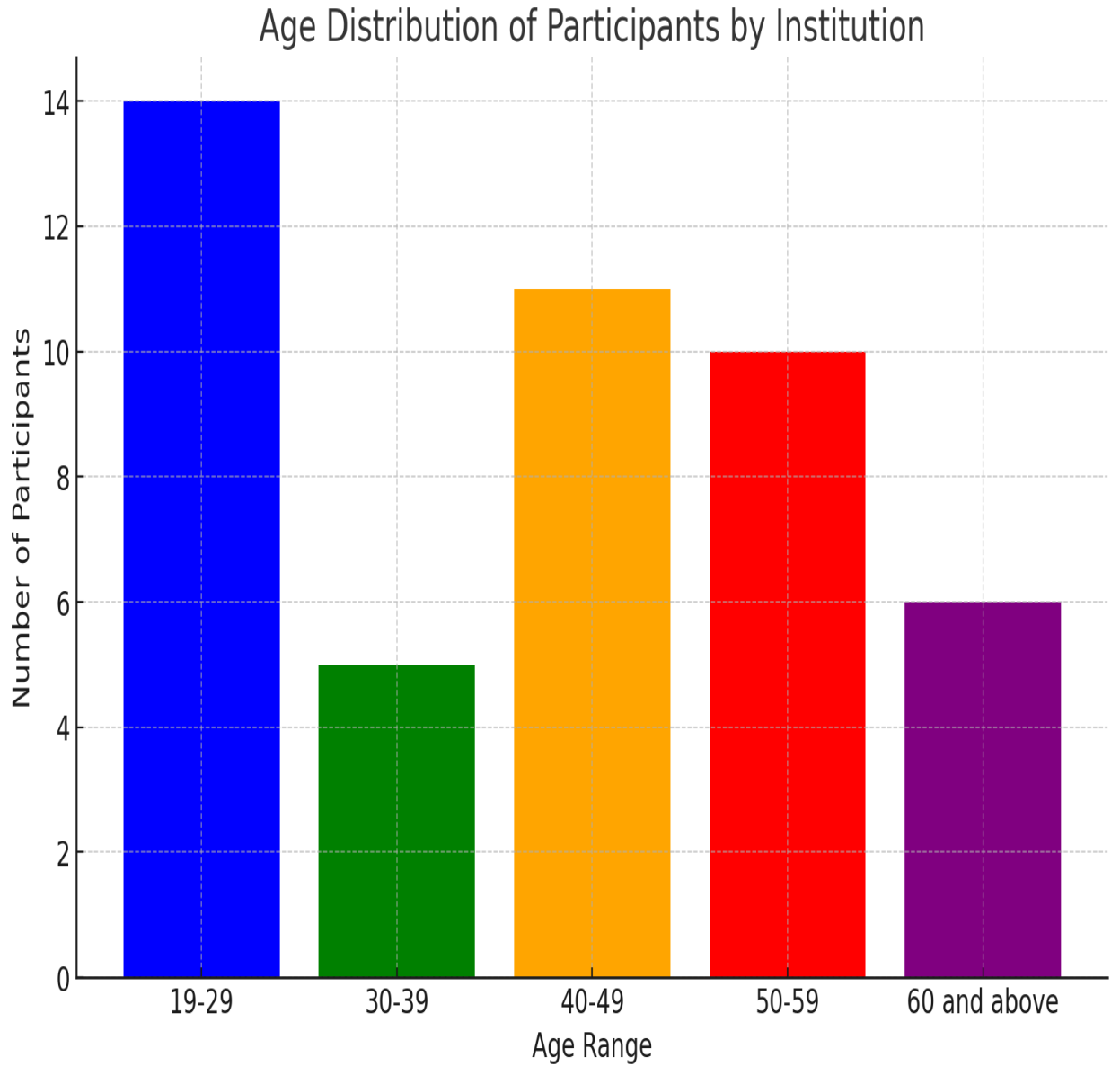
Figure 5.1 shows the number of participants and their different designations. To ensure anonymity, the participants' names were replaced in codes. The transcribe obtained from the interview was used verbatim to support the argument in line with the research questions.

1. What policing structure is currently in operation in Nigeria?
2. How does Nigeria's reoccurrence of electoral violence relate to its policing system?
3. What are the challenges militating against the restructuring of the policing system in Nigeria?
4. What are the recommendations that can mitigate electoral violence in Nigeria?



**Figure 5.1: Number of participants by designation**

The pie chart showing the number of participants by designation. Each segment represents a different group, with the size of the segment corresponding to the number of participants in that group.



**Figure 5.2: Age distribution of participants by institution**

Figure 5.2 shows the age distribution of the 45 participants across different institutions. Each bar represents the number of participants in a specific age range.

**Table 5.1: Participants**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Code</b>
INEC	5	IN
Traditional King	2	K
Lawyers	4	L
Non-governmental organisation	2	NG
National Youth Corp member (Group 1)	7	NYF1
National Youth Corp member (Group 2)	7	NYF2
Party chairman	2	PL
Party secretary	2	PS
Nigerian Police	10	P
Journalists	3	J

### **5.3. OBJECTIVE ONE: STRUCTURE OF THE POLICING SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

#### **5.3.1. Theme 1: Effectiveness of policing system in preventing electoral violence**

According to Kola, Shola and Samuel (2020: 2), violence stands as the shared factor in the electoral process of the Nigeria Fourth Republic. Therefore, it is important to state the roles of the security agencies, particularly the Nigerian Police in the overall violence and vote irregularities

in the Nigeria Fourth Republic. The police and other security services have faced a barrage of accusations that they have mistreated national institutions as stated by Akpan and Reason (2019: 65), for example, officers and men of the police force have been accused of crass partisanship, turning the force into the enforcement arm of the ruling party, being wantonly used to tilt and occasionally thwart the will of the people, or generally acting in a way that negates their constitutional mandate of maintaining law and order like shielding those who engage in violence. Considering this, theme 1 explores the effectiveness of the policing system in preventing electoral violence.

**Table 5.2: Effectiveness of policing system in preventing electoral violence**

<b>Primary Subthemes</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Inadequacies of the Policing System	Absence of a Functional Policing System Ineffectiveness in Violence Prevention Lack of Independence and Accountability Concerns about Political Interference	6	IN1, NY5F1, J3, L3, L4
Improvement of Policing System	Training and Capacity Building Collaboration and Coordination Specialised Units and Rapid Response Teams. Community Engagement and Awareness Campaigns	7	IN2, IN3, IN4, IN5, L1, L2, J4

Calls for Reform within the policing system	Need for Improvement Advocacy for State Police Building Public Trust Implementation of Early Warning Systems	8	K1, NG1, PS1, P2, P8, P9, L3, L4
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### **Subtheme 1.1: Inadequacies of the policing system**

The subtheme of policing system inadequacies reveals significant shortcomings in Nigeria's law enforcement apparatus concerning its ability to effectively manage electoral violence. Two key critical concerns emerged from the policing system during elections in Nigeria.

#### **a) Absence of a functional policing system**

Firstly, the assertion that the policing system is practically non-existent (IN1) painted a stark picture of the state of law enforcement during elections in Nigeria. This suggests a fundamental failure of the authorities to provide adequate security measures to safeguard the electoral process.

*“Policing system practically non-existent, with security officials unwilling to protect” (IN1).*

Moreover, the reported advice from security officials to surrender in case of trouble (NY5F1) further underscores the lack of willingness or capability to protect citizens during periods of heightened political tension. Such a situation not only compromises the integrity of elections but also leaves voters and candidates vulnerable to violence and intimidation, undermining the very foundations of democratic governance.

*“Policing system practically non-existent, with security officials advising surrender in case of trouble” (NY5F1).*

### **(b) Ineffectiveness in violence prevention**

Another concern in the inadequacy of policing system is attributable to ineffectiveness in violence prevention during elections. The reports of increased violence despite the presence of security forces. Participant J3 highlighted the ineffectiveness of law enforcement in preventing electoral violence. Despite the purported role of security agencies in maintaining law and order, their inability to deter violence during elections suggests systemic inadequacies in their approach. This failure not only jeopardises the safety and security of voters and candidates but also erodes public trust in the ability of law enforcement to uphold the rule of law and protect democratic processes.

*“Policing system ineffective in preventing violence during elections, leading to an increase in violence” (J3).*

### **(c) Lack of independence and accountability**

On the assertion that the lack of independence and accountability hampers effectiveness, Participant PS1 reflected broader concerns about institutional governance and oversight within Nigeria's law enforcement agencies. Instances of political interference and undue influence undermine public confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the police force, eroding trust and hindering its ability to fulfil its mandate effectively.

*“Lack of independence and accountability hampers effectiveness” (PS1).*

### **(d) Concerns about political interference**

Concerns about political interference compromising impartiality Participant P2 highlighted the complex interplay between law enforcement and political actors in Nigeria's electoral landscape. The politicization of security forces and the instrumentalization of law enforcement agencies for partisan interests pose significant challenges to the neutrality and professionalism of policing efforts during elections, risking the erosion of public trust and the legitimacy of electoral outcomes.

*“Concerns about political interference compromising impartiality” (P2).*

### **Subtheme 1.2: Improvement of policing systems**

The subtheme highlights efforts aimed at enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of Nigeria's law enforcement agencies in addressing electoral violence. Several key areas where improvements have been observed were uncovered from the data gathered. They are identified thus:

#### **(a) Training and Capacity Building**

The statement indicating significant improvements in training and capacity-building initiatives by Participant IN2 suggested a recognition of the need to equip law enforcement personnel with the skills and knowledge necessary to handle electoral violence effectively. Such initiatives may include specialized training programmes focused on conflict resolution, crowd control, and election security protocols.

*“Significant improvements in training and capacity building initiatives” (IN2).*

#### **(b) Collaboration and coordination**

Enhanced collaboration and coordination between law enforcement agencies and stakeholders (Participant IN3) are critical for ensuring a unified and coherent approach to election security. By forging partnerships with relevant actors, including political parties, civil society organisations, and election management bodies, law enforcement agencies can leverage collective expertise and resources to mitigate the risk of violence and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. This aligns with Olowojolu et al. (2019) who stress on the importance of collaboration between law enforcement agencies and stakeholders in addressing electoral violence.

*“Enhanced collaboration and coordination between law enforcement agencies and stakeholders” (IN3).*

**(c) Specialised units and rapid response teams**

The establishment of specialised units and rapid response teams in hotspot areas (Participant IN4) reflects a targeted approach to addressing localised instances of electoral violence. Specialised units may focus on intelligence gathering, crowd management, and de-escalation techniques, while rapid response teams are tasked with providing immediate assistance in crises. Emeaku (2019: 94) highlights the role of specialised units in responding to electoral violence, suggesting that targeted interventions in hotspot areas can help prevent the escalation of conflicts and ensure the safety of voters and candidates. Such proactive measures can help deter perpetrators and reassure the public of law enforcement's commitment to ensuring a peaceful electoral process.

*“Establishment of specialised units and rapid response teams in hotspot areas” (IN4).*

**(d) Community engagement and awareness campaigns**

Awareness campaigns aimed at educating the public about their rights and responsibilities during elections can help prevent misunderstandings and reduce tensions. Udeuhele and Ibiam (2020: 95) highlight the significance of community engagement and awareness campaigns in enhancing public trust and cooperation with law enforcement agencies, emphasising the importance of proactive outreach initiatives in promoting peace and security during elections. This position is supported by one of the participants interviewed emphasising community engagement and awareness campaigns (Participant IN5) as essential for building trust and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Moreover, this can mobilise grassroots support for their initiatives and enhance their legitimacy by involving communities in efforts to promote peace and security, and law enforcement agencies.

*“Emphasis on community engagement and awareness campaigns” (Participant IN5).*

### **Subtheme 1.3: Calls for reform within the policing system**

According to Omede and Ngwube (2022: 226), there is a need for reforms to address institutional shortcomings within Nigeria's policing system, emphasising the importance of enhancing independence, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs. Considering this, subtheme 1.3 underscores the recognition of existing shortcomings within Nigeria's policing system regarding its ability to effectively prevent and respond to electoral violence. The statements uncovered from the transcribed data highlight various areas where reforms are deemed necessary thus:

#### **(a) Need for improvement**

The statement emphasising the prevention of violence and the need for improvement (Participant K1) reflects a broader acknowledgement of the imperative to address systemic weaknesses in Nigeria's law enforcement framework. By prioritising proactive measures aimed at pre-empting conflicts and enhancing institutional effectiveness, stakeholders signal a commitment to fostering a more secure electoral environment.

*“Emphasis on prevention of violence and need for improvement” (Participant K1).*

#### **(b) Advocacy for state police**

Advocacy for the establishment of state police to enhance local relevance and accountability, as emphasised by Participant NG1, underscores concern regarding the centralised nature of Nigeria's policing system. Proponents argue that devolving policing powers to the state level could improve responsiveness to local needs and promote greater accountability by increasing community oversight. However, such proposals also raise questions about potential challenges related to coordination and standardization across different jurisdictions.

*“Advocacy for state police to enhance local relevance and accountability” (Participant NG1).*

### **(c) Building public trust**

Recognising the centrality of public trust in the effectiveness of law enforcement, the statement emphasising the crucial need to build public trust in the police force (Participant P8) underscores the importance of restoring confidence in Nigeria's policing institutions. Transparency, accountability, and adherence to professional standards are essential for rebuilding trust and fostering constructive engagement between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

*“Building public trust in the police force is crucial for effectiveness” (Participant P8).*

### **(d) Implementation of early warning systems**

The suggestion to implement early warning systems for proactive response (Participant P9) reflected a recognition of the value of predictive analytics and data-driven approaches in anticipating and mitigating electoral violence. The suggestion resonated with Steve, Nwocha and Igwe (2019: 95) who advocate for the establishment of early warning systems to facilitate proactive responses to electoral violence, citing examples of successful implementations in other contexts and their potential applicability to Nigeria's electoral landscape.

*“The implementation of early warning systems to identify and respond to potential sources of electoral violence has been suggested as a strategy to improve the proactive capabilities of the police force” (Participant P9).*

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges and constraints facing the policing system**

From the literature review, it was uncovered that the problem of election rigging is one of the biggest obstacles that Nigeria's electoral process is now confronting. This frequently manifests as voter manipulation and intimidation, as political goons are deployed to scare voters and sabotage the electoral process (Idowu, 2022: 170). Additionally, incumbency often plays a significant role in the electoral process, with incumbents using their positions

of power to influence the outcome of elections (Frantzeskakis and Park 2022: 221). Considering this, it was critical to know the challenges and constraints the police face in safeguarding the election process. This theme captures the diverse perspectives on the current state of Nigeria's policing system, especially the challenges and constraints facing the policing system.

**Table 5.3: Challenges and constraints facing the policing system**

Primary Subthemes	Number	Participants
Structural and Resource Challenges	7	NG2, PL1, PL2, P1, P6, PS2,
Training and Professionalism	3	NY2F2, NY3F2, P3
Accountability and Corruption	2	PS2, P5
Legal and Governance Issues	2	P7, NY1F2
Perception and Legacy	3	K2, J1, J2

### **Subtheme 2.1: Structural and resource challenges**

Participant (NG2) described the current state of the policing system in Nigeria as lacking independence, accountability, and resources. The identification of challenges related to the lack of independence, accountability, and resources within the policing system highlights systemic issues that impede its effectiveness in preventing electoral violence. These challenges suggest fundamental shortcomings that undermine the ability of law enforcement agencies to act impartially and respond effectively to incidents of violence during elections.

*“The current state of the policing system in Nigeria, particularly regarding its effectiveness in preventing electoral violence, can be described as facing several challenges such as lack of independence, Lack of accountability and transparency, lastly one could say resource constraints” (Participant NG2).*

Participant P1 echoed similar sentiments by noting that challenges related to inadequate funding, manpower, and equipment represent tangible barriers to the operational capacity of law enforcement agencies. Insufficient resources limit their ability to deploy personnel and equipment effectively, thereby hampering their ability to respond promptly and decisively to incidents of electoral violence.

*“The Nigerian police force often faces challenges related to inadequate funding, insufficient manpower, and outdated equipment, which can hamper its ability to effectively prevent electoral violence” (Participant P1).*

Yusuf (2019: 38) discusses the detrimental impact of political interference on law enforcement agencies, emphasising how the lack of independence and accountability can compromise their ability to maintain neutrality during elections. This aligns with the identified challenge of the lack of independence within the policing system.

Participant PL1 believed that the current state of the policing system in Nigeria presents challenges in preventing electoral violence.

*“The current state of the policing system in Nigeria presents significant challenges in preventing electoral violence” (Participant PL1).*

The recognition of significant challenges in preventing electoral violence underscores the multifaceted nature of the issues facing law enforcement agencies. These challenges may include factors such as political interference, social tensions, and organisational constraints, all of which contribute to the difficulty of maintaining peace and order during electoral processes. Emeaku (2019: 97) emphasises the complexities involved in preventing electoral violence, highlighting the numerous challenges faced by law enforcement agencies. These challenges may range from inadequate resources and manpower to political interference and social unrest, all of which pose significant obstacles to maintaining security during elections.

Participants questioned the effectiveness of the current policing system in preventing electoral violence and thus called for urgent reforms.

*“The effectiveness of the policing system in curbing electoral violence is questionable, requiring urgent reforms to enhance its performance” (Participant PL2).*

The acknowledgement of the questionable effectiveness of the policing system in preventing electoral violence underscores the need for urgent reforms to address systemic deficiencies. Without prompt action, the ability of law enforcement agencies to fulfil their mandate of ensuring the safety and security of elections remains compromised, posing risks to democratic stability and public trust in electoral processes. Omede and Ngwube (2022: 235) highlight the need for urgent reforms within the policing system to address the challenges hindering its effectiveness in preventing electoral violence. They emphasise the importance of implementing measures to enhance accountability, transparency, and resource allocation within law enforcement agencies to improve their ability to respond effectively to incidents of violence during elections.

Besides, the perceived interagency rivalries and a lack of coordination among different law enforcement bodies further compound the challenges faced in preventing electoral violence. This lack of synergy not only hinders collaborative efforts but also leads to inefficiencies and overlaps in resource allocation, ultimately undermining the effectiveness of law enforcement responses during elections.

*“Collaborative efforts between the police force and other security agencies, such as the military and the Department of State Services, are essential for effective election security but may be hindered by interagency rivalries or lack of coordination” (Participant P6).*

## **Subtheme 2.2: Training and professionalism**

Participants emphasised the necessity to bolster both the capacity and professionalism within Nigeria's policing system, particularly concerning their effectiveness in mitigating electoral violence. There is a widespread sentiment calling for heightened training efforts and an elevation of the current standard of professionalism among law enforcement officers. For instance, participants NYZF2 called for enhanced professionalism in the police system.

*“There is a need to improve their capacity and professionalism” (Participant NY2F2).*

Participants among the police force (P3) and National Youth Corp member (NY3F2) stressed on the need for more training.

*“Ridiculous, they need more training” (Participant NY3F2).*

While there are ongoing efforts to improve training within the police force, there is a lingering concern that these initiatives may not be adequate. Enhancing training is crucial, but it must be comprehensive and targeted to address the specific challenges posed by electoral violence.

*“Enhance the training and capacity building of police officers in conflict resolution, crowd control, and election security have been ongoing but may not be sufficient to address the scale of the challenges” (Participant P3).*

The above narratives underscore the consensus among participants regarding the imperative to enhance both training and professionalism within Nigeria's policing system. The sentiment is that without adequate training and professionalism, law enforcement officers may struggle to effectively prevent and address incidents of electoral violence. However, there is also a recognition of the need for targeted and comprehensive training initiatives to address the specific challenges posed by electoral violence effectively.

### **Subtheme 2.3: Accountability and corruption**

Participants highlighted the critical issues of accountability and corruption within Nigeria's policing system, particularly in the context of addressing electoral violence. They emphasised that resource constraints and corruption undermine the system's ability to effectively prevent and respond to incidents of violence during elections. When officers are susceptible to bribery or manipulation by political actors, their ability to prevent violence impartially is compromised. This undermines public trust in the police and erodes their legitimacy as guardians of law and order.

*“Corruption within the police force remains a significant challenge, as some officers may be susceptible to bribery or manipulation by political actors, compromising their ability to prevent electoral violence impartially” (Participant P5).*

In addition to pervasive corruption, resource constrain was revealed to hamper the ability of enforcement agencies to address electoral violence effectively. Without adequate resources, including funding, manpower, and equipment, the police struggle to maintain security and respond promptly to incidents.

*“Resource constraints significantly hamper the ability of law enforcement agencies to address electoral violence effectively” (Participant PS2).*

The challenges of resource constraints and corruption within Nigeria's policing system have been widely documented in the literature. For example, Yusuf (2019: 38) explores the challenges of political interference in law enforcement agencies and its implications for electoral integrity, highlighting the role of institutional corruption in compromising the effectiveness of policing efforts. Similarly, Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 37) discuss the impact of corruption within the police force on electoral processes, emphasising the need for reforms to enhance accountability and transparency. These studies underscore the critical importance of addressing issues of accountability and

corruption within Nigeria's policing system to strengthen its effectiveness in preventing electoral violence.

#### **Subtheme 2.4: Legal and governance issues**

Given the perceived lack of accountability, Participant P7 drew attention to the legal and governance issues that contributed to the challenges of preventing electoral violence in Nigeria. The participant emphasised the need for a stronger legal framework to deter violence and ensure accountability for those involved in electoral malpractices.

*“The legal framework governing election security and the prosecution of electoral offenders may need to be strengthened to deter violence and ensure accountability for those involved in electoral malpractices” (Participant P7).*

From the above statement, one could draw out that a robust legal framework is essential to deter violence and ensure accountability for those engaged in electoral malpractices. Without effective legal mechanisms, perpetrators may act with impunity, undermining the integrity of the electoral process. As such, Participant NY5F2 advocated for reform stemming from the perceived lack of accountability within the existing legal and governance structures. Without mechanisms in place to hold individuals and institutions accountable for their actions, there is little incentive to adhere to democratic norms and principles. Strengthening accountability mechanisms is crucial to fostering transparency and integrity in the electoral process.

*“Partially effective. There is a need for reform” (NY5F2).*

The literature supports the participants' concerns regarding the legal and governance issues surrounding electoral violence in Nigeria. Yusuf (2019: 38) discusses the challenges of political interference in law enforcement agencies and emphasises the importance of a strong legal framework to ensure accountability and transparency in electoral processes. Similarly, Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 52) highlight the need for reforms to strengthen

governance structures and enhance accountability in the context of electoral violence. These studies underscore the critical role of legal and governance frameworks in deterring electoral violence and upholding democratic principles.

### **Subtheme 2.5: Perception and Legacy**

Participants expressed varying perceptions of the policing system in Nigeria, influenced by historical legacies and cultural contexts. They highlighted the need for localised policing to ensure cultural relevance and advocate for modernisation to address perceived shortcomings. Participant K2's advocacy for localised policing reflects the recognition of cultural relevance in law enforcement. By aligning policing strategies with local customs and traditions, authorities can better address community needs and enhance trust between law enforcement agencies and the public.

*“Policy is said to be local. We are currently operating a unitary system all over, you know. The police are controlled by the inspector general of police from Abuja. Now, somebody came from Kanfacha; he doesn't know our culture and that's something. So, I think we need to have this state police. You know in many civilised countries, universities have their own. There are different levels of police system, such as the metropolitan police, the Sheriff and the canty police in these countries. If somebody comes from Ikere to this community as a police officer and misbehaves, he can go away with it. It shouldn't be so! The traditional system of law and order in the Yoruba land helps us to know who your family is and where you came from” (Participant K2).*

Participant J1's perceptions of an archaic policing system indicate a widespread sentiment regarding the need for modernisation. Historical legacies shape current policing practices, and there is a consensus that reforms are necessary to address deficiencies and adapt to contemporary challenges.

*“The policing system is archaic and needs modern upgrading” (J1).*

Participant J2 noted that the historical context of colonial legacy looms large in discussions about the policing system. Colonial policies have left a lasting imprint on law enforcement practices, often characterised by oppression and misuse of power. Understanding this legacy is essential for contextualising current policing dynamics and informing reform efforts.

*“The foundation of policing in Nigeria today can be traced to colonial legacy. Colonial policies subjugated the existing traditional informal law enforcement order and forcefully imposed the Western idea of policing. Thus, policing within the context of oppression and gross misuse of power has been linked to Western orientation” (Participant J2).*

The literature corroborates participants' observations regarding perceptions and historical legacies shaping the policing system in Nigeria. Yusuf (2019: 37) discusses the challenges of political interference in law enforcement agencies and its implications for electoral integrity, highlighting the role of institutional legacies in shaping current policing practices. Similarly, Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 52) emphasise the need for reforms to address structural deficiencies in the policing system and enhance public trust. These studies underscore the complex interplay between historical legacies, cultural contexts, and perceptions of the policing system, highlighting the importance of localized approaches and modernisation efforts in improving law enforcement effectiveness and legitimacy.

### **5.3.3. Theme 3: strengths and weaknesses of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security**

Theme 3 explores the strengths and weaknesses of the Nigerian police force. The theme is discussed under the subthemes highlighted in Table 5.4

**Table 5.4: strengths and weaknesses of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Primary subtheme</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Participants</b>
	<b>Strengths of Nigerian Police</b>	Visible Presence and Deterrence	3	IN1, NY2F1, J3
		Training and Collaboration	7	IN3, IN5, IN7, PS1, P4, P8, P9
		Legal Framework and Accountability	2	IN9, P6
		Public Trust and Cooperation	2	P5, P10
	<b>Weaknesses of Nigerian Police</b>	External Pressure and Interference	5	IN2, K1, NY6F1, PS2, J1
		Resource Constraints and Corruption	9	IN4, K1, L2, L4, NG2, J3, NY2F2, NY7F2, J2
		Communication and Coordination	2	IN8, P7
		Training and Professionalism	3	NY2F2, NY7F2, J2
		Public Perception	3	NY1F1, NY4F1, J4

### **Subtheme 3.1: Strengths of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security**

The subthemes capture the strengths and weaknesses of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security, as expressed by the respondents.

#### **(a) Visible presence and deterrence**

Participants emphasised the importance of a visible police presence during elections as a deterrent to potential troublemakers. They highlighted the deployment of personnel to polling stations and the availability of police personnel as key factors in maintaining law and order during electoral processes. Participant IN1) noted that the Nigerian police maintaining a visible presence during elections is crucial to deter troublemakers and ensure the safety of voters and election officials. By being visible in the community, the police signal their readiness to intervene, if necessary, thereby discouraging acts of violence or intimidation.

*“The Nigerian police force maintains a visible presence during elections, which can deter potential troublemakers and reassure voters of their safety” (Participant IN1).*

Participants NY6F1 and J3 echoed similar views by pointing out that the deployment of personnel to polling stations creates a visible presence of law enforcement, which can reassure voters and deter potential disruptors. This proactive approach helps maintain order and instil confidence in the electoral process.

*“The police typically deploy officers to polling stations to maintain order and security during elections” (Participant NY6F1).*

*“Availability of police personnel during elections” (Participant J3).*

The literature supports the importance of a visible police presence in deterring electoral violence. Yusuf (2019: 38) discusses the role of law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and order during elections,

emphasising the need for visible patrols and presence at polling stations. Similarly, Emeaku (2019: 97) highlights the significance of police deployment to hotspot areas to prevent electoral violence and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. These studies underscore the proactive role of law enforcement in deterring troublemakers and maintaining public safety during elections, aligning with participants' observations of the importance of visible policing.

### **(b) Training and collaboration**

Participants highlighted the importance of training police personnel in election security procedures and collaborating with other agencies and stakeholders to ensure effective security measures during elections. They emphasised the role of specialised units equipped to respond swiftly to security threats, empowering them to enforce electoral laws and serve as a deterrent to potential disruptors. Participant IN3, for example, perceived the efforts to train police personnel in election security procedures as a strength of the Nigerian police force. These efforts are essential for ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle security challenges effectively during elections. Training programmes can help enhance their understanding of electoral laws and procedures, improving their ability to maintain peace and order.

*“There have been efforts to train police personnel in election security procedures, including crowd control, conflict resolution, and electoral laws, enhancing their ability to handle security challenges during elections” (Participant IN3).*

Participants IN5 and P5 revealed that the Nigerian police force collaborates with other security agencies to coordinate security efforts during elections. Collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders is critical for ensuring effective security measures during elections. By working together, law enforcement agencies can share intelligence, resources, and expertise,

leading to better coordination and a more comprehensive approach to election security.

*“The police force collaborates with other security agencies and INEC to coordinate security efforts, share intelligence, and deploy resources effectively, improving overall security coordination during elections” (Participant IN5).*

*“Collaborating with other security agencies and election stakeholders, the police force coordinates security efforts and addresses emerging threats during elections” (P4).*

In addition to the inter-security agencies coordination, it was revealed that the Nigerian police force has specialised units that are equipped to respond swiftly to security threats.

*“Specialised units within the police force, such as the Mobile Police Force (MOPOL) and the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), are equipped to respond swiftly to security threats during elections, ensuring timely intervention and containment of violence.” (IN7)*

*“Specialised units within the police force, such as the Police Mobile Force (PMF) and the Rapid Response Squad (RRS), are entrusted with swiftly and precisely addressing election-related incidents” (P8).*

Besides, the Nigerian police force is empowered to enforce electoral laws and regulations. This is highly essential for maintaining the integrity of the electoral process. By entrusting them with the authority to address election-related incidents, they can serve as a deterrent to individuals or groups attempting to disrupt or manipulate the electoral process.

*“The Nigerian police force is empowered to enforce electoral laws and regulations, thereby discouraging potential violence and misconduct” (PS1).*

*“Endowed with the legal mandate to enforce election laws, investigate electoral offences, and apprehend wrongdoers, the police establish a framework for upholding order during elections” (P6).*

*“The police force operates within a legal framework that provides guidelines for their conduct during elections, including the Electoral Act and other relevant laws, which helps ensure accountability and adherence to due process” (IN9).*

The literature supports the importance of training and collaboration in ensuring effective election security. Yusuf (2019: 38) discussed the role of training programmes in equipping law enforcement personnel with the skills and knowledge necessary to handle security challenges during elections. Additionally, Omede and Ngwube (2022: 234) emphasise the significance of collaboration between law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders in ensuring a comprehensive approach to election security. These studies highlight the importance of specialized units and collaborative efforts in maintaining peace and order during electoral processes, aligning with participants' observations.

### **(c) Public trust and cooperation**

Participants stressed the importance of public trust and cooperation in facilitating effective policing during elections. They highlighted the role of the police in commanding a degree of public trust, which in turn encourages cooperation from the community. Participant P5 hinted that the police force commands a degree of public trust, which facilitates cooperation from the community during elections. When citizens have confidence in the police to maintain law and order, they are more likely to cooperate with security measures and report any suspicious activities, contributing to a safer electoral environment.

*“Despite prevailing challenges, the police force still commands a degree of public trust, which can facilitate cooperation with communities in upholding peace and security during elections” (Participant P5).*

Additionally, collaboration with international partners is mentioned to build capacity and enhance effectiveness in election security. Participant P10 pointed out the collaboration with international partners as evidence of trust in the Nigerian police force. This is essential for building capacity and enhancing effectiveness in election security. By working with international organisations and receiving support for capacity-building initiatives, the police force can improve its capabilities and implement best practices in electoral policing.

*“The Nigerian police force may benefit from assistance and training provided by international partners, bolstering their capacity to address electoral security challenges” (Participant 10).*

The literature supports the importance of public trust and cooperation in election security. Studies by Yusuf (2019: 37) and Omede and Ngwube (2022: 236) reveal the role of public trust in facilitating cooperation with law enforcement agencies during elections. Additionally, Macdonald and Molony (2023: 2) highlight the significance of collaboration with international partners for capacity building and knowledge sharing in election security. These findings align with the observations of participants, emphasising the critical role of public trust and international collaboration in ensuring effective policing during electoral processes.

### **Subtheme 3.2: Weaknesses of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security**

#### **(a) External pressure and interference**

Participants highlighted the challenges posed by external pressure and interference in the policing system, particularly during electoral periods. They discussed instances where political actors exert influence or pressure on law enforcement agencies, compromising their impartiality and effectiveness. Additionally, concerns are raised about the susceptibility of police personnel to bribery and corruption, further undermining their ability to uphold the rule of law. According to the views of Participant IN2, law enforcement agencies

often face pressure or interference from political actors seeking to influence election outcomes. This external pressure can compromise the impartiality of the police force and hinder their ability to enforce electoral laws fairly.

*“The Nigerian police force sometimes faces pressure or interference from political actors, compromising their impartiality and effectiveness in handling electoral security” (Participant IN2).*

Participants K1 and NY6F1 reiterated similar positions by pointing out allegations of bias and partisanship within the policing system, which can compromise its impartiality during elections. When law enforcement agencies are perceived to favour certain political parties or candidates, it undermines public trust and confidence in the electoral process.

*“Weakness could be the allegations of bias and partisanship among some members of the police force, which undermines their ability to enforce the law impartially during elections” (Participant K1).*

*“But the police force is susceptible to political influence, which can compromise its ability to act impartially and enforce the law during elections” (Participants NY6F1).*

According to Participant PS2 external pressures, such as political interference, can lead to insufficient coordination and communication among law enforcement agencies. When police personnel are influenced by external forces, it can disrupt the effectiveness of collaborative efforts to maintain security during elections.

*“Insufficient coordination and communication between the police force and electoral stakeholders lead to gaps in security planning and response strategies, undermining the effectiveness of electoral security measures” (Participant PS2).*

Yusuf (2019: 38) explores the challenges of political interference in law enforcement agencies and its implications for electoral integrity, highlighting the role of institutional independence in safeguarding impartiality.

Additionally, studies by Nwocha and Igwe (2019: 95) and Oyewole and Omotola (2022: 2395) emphasise the susceptibility of police personnel to political influence and corruption, which can compromise their effectiveness in preventing electoral violence. These findings align with the observations of participants, underscoring the impact of external pressure and interference on the policing system during electoral processes.

**(b) Resource constraints and corruption**

Participants expressed concerns about the inadequate resources within the policing system, including shortages of personnel and outdated equipment. Additionally, there are allegations of corruption and a low level of technological capabilities, further exacerbating the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in effectively preventing electoral violence.

Participant IN4 revealed that the policing system lacks adequate resources, including personnel and equipment, to effectively address the complex challenges associated with preventing electoral violence. Without sufficient manpower and modern equipment, law enforcement agencies may struggle to respond swiftly to security threats during elections.

*“The police force often lacks adequate resources, including personnel, equipment, and training facilities, which can hamper their ability to effectively secure elections, especially in remote or volatile areas” (Participant IN4).*

Participants K1 echoed similar sentiments, there is a low level of technology within the policing system, which hampers their ability to prevent electoral violence effectively.

*“The major weakness, from my point of view, is the low level of technology at their disposal and their strength is in the importance given to them as a major stakeholder in the electoral process” (Participant K1).*

Similarly, Participant L2 revealed that poor funding and a lack of modern policing equipment contribute to the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in preventing electoral violence. Additionally, corruption within the

policing system further exacerbates these challenges, undermining the effectiveness of law enforcement efforts.

*“Poor funding, lack of modern policing equipment, technologies, corruption, lack of professionalism, poor training in handling electoral processes and in combating electoral violence and prosecution of electoral offences” (Participant L2).*

Studies by Yusuf (2019: 38) and Oyewole and Omotola (2022: 2395) highlight the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in Nigeria, including inadequate resources and allegations of corruption. Additionally, research by Emeaku (2019: 97) and Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 52) explore the impact of poor funding and outdated equipment on the effectiveness of the policing system. These findings align with the observations of participants, underscoring the multifaceted challenges posed by resource constraints and corruption within the policing system.

### **(c) Poor communication and coordination**

Participants highlighted challenges related to communication and coordination within the policing system, as well as concerns about training and professionalism. These issues, such as lapses in communication, allegations of partisan policing, and insufficient personnel, pose significant obstacles to effectively preventing electoral violence.

Participant IN8 revealed that the lapses in communication and coordination between different units within the policing system can hinder their ability to respond swiftly and effectively to incidents of electoral violence. Without effective communication channels, law enforcement agencies may struggle to coordinate their efforts and deploy resources efficiently during elections.

*“There may be lapses in communication and coordination between different units or levels of the police force, leading to inefficiencies or delays in responding to security threats during elections” (Participant IN8).*

Similar sentiment was echoed by Participant P7 who confirmed that inadequate communication channels within the policing system can hamper the timely response to incidents of electoral violence.

*“Inadequate communication channels between the police force, election stakeholders, and the public may impede efforts to disseminate timely information and address concerns proactively” (Participant P7).*

The above might have also contributed to the allegation of partisanship during the election. For instance, Participant NY2F2 noted that the Nigerian police force is being alleged to be partisan during the election. This is concerning as the allegations of partisan policing and negligence undermine public trust and confidence in the professionalism of law enforcement agencies. Without impartiality and professionalism, law enforcement agencies may struggle to enforce electoral laws effectively and prevent incidents of violence during elections.

*“Partisan policing occurs when officers allegedly favour certain political parties or candidates” (Participant NY2F2).*

Participant J2 attributed the weakness in policing during the election to the insufficient personnel based on citizen ratio. This is critical as insufficient personnel within the policing system, relative to the size of the population, can strain law enforcement resources and hinder their ability to prevent electoral violence effectively. Without adequate manpower, law enforcement agencies may struggle to maintain public order and respond to security threats during elections.

*“Nigeria's current police strength is just over 370,000 officers, which is insufficient based on a ratio of one police officer to approximately 600 citizens” (Participant J2).*

Research by Yusuf (2019: 38) and Emeaku (2019: 97) focuses on the challenges of communication and coordination within the policing system in Nigeria, highlighting the need for improved mechanisms to facilitate effective

response to electoral violence. Additionally, studies by Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 52) and Egobueze and Ojirika (2017: 7) address the concerns about training and professionalism within the policing system, emphasising the importance of impartiality and accountability in maintaining public trust. These findings resonate with the observations of participants, underscoring the critical role of communication, coordination, and professionalism in preventing electoral violence.

**(d) Negative public perception**

Participants expressed concerns about the public perception of the policing system, particularly regarding its perceived ineffectiveness and susceptibility to corruption. These perceptions can undermine public trust and confidence in law enforcement agencies, impacting their ability to prevent electoral violence effectively.

According to the views of Participant NY1F1, there is a perception among the public that law enforcement agencies are complicit in electoral violence and malpractices. This perception may stem from instances of corruption and embezzlement of funds within the policing system, which erode public trust and confidence in their ability to maintain law and order during elections.

*“The police have no strength and are part of electoral violence and malpractices” (Participant NY1F1).*

The above view is corroborated by Participant NY4F1 that the weaknesses in addressing corruption and embezzlement of funds within the policing system contribute to negative perceptions among the public. When law enforcement agencies are perceived as corrupt or inefficient, it undermines public trust and confidence in their ability to prevent electoral violence and uphold the rule of law.

*“Their weaknesses are corruption and embezzlement of government funds.” (Participant NY4F1)*

More so, there is a perception among the public that law enforcement agencies are ineffective in addressing election violence, leading to a lack of confidence in their ability to maintain security during elections. This perception of being a 'toothless dog' during election violence further undermines public trust and confidence in the policing system.

*“Perception of being a toothless dog during election violence” (Participant J4).*

Studies by Yusuf (2019: 37) and Emeaku (2019: 97) discuss the challenges of corruption and inefficiency within the policing system, highlighting their impact on public perception. Additionally, research by Olowojolu et al. (2019: 92) and Egobueze and Ojirika (2017: 7) address concerns about the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in preventing electoral violence, resonating with the observations of participants. These findings underscore the importance of addressing public perceptions and building trust in the policing system to enhance its effectiveness in preventing electoral violence.

#### **5.3.4. Theme 4: Incidents highlighting the need for police overhaul**

Participants highlighted various aspects of corruption, misconduct, and inadequacies within the police force, which contribute to challenges in preventing electoral violence. These include instances of police brutality, bias, discrimination, and a lack of accountability, exacerbated by security threats such as election violence and insurgency (Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5: Incidents highlighting the need for police overhaul**

Primary Subtheme	Number of Respondents	Respondents
Corruption and Misconduct	5	IN1, L2, NY7F1, PL1, P1
Police Brutality and Excessive Use of Force	7	IN2, L1, L3, NY1F1, PL1, PL2, P3
Inadequate Training and Capacity	7	IN3, L4, NY5F2, NY6F2, P2, P5, PS1
Bias and Discrimination	5	IN4, L4, NY1F2, NY4F2, P6
Lack of Accountability	5	IN5, L2, L3, P4, P7
Security Challenges	4	K1, K2, NG1, NG2
Election-related Incidents	4	NY3F1, NY4F1, NY7F1, J3
Political Interference	3	NY1F2, PL2, PS2
Cybercrime and Gender-based Violence	2	P7, P9

#### **Subtheme 4.1: Corruption and Misconduct**

Some of the participants revealed that numerous reports and incidents are exposing widespread corruption within the police force. This undermines public trust and confidence in law enforcement agencies and can lead to inefficiencies in preventing electoral violence.

*“Numerous reports and incidents continue to expose widespread corruption within the Nigerian police force, undermining public trust and confidence in its ability to maintain law and order impartially during elections” (Participant IN1).*

*“Corruption within the police force remains widespread, with officers frequently engaging in extortion, bribery, and other forms of misconduct.*

*Citizens often report being harassed and coerced into paying bribes to avoid arrest or secure release from police custody. These incidents erode public trust in law enforcement and highlight the need for measures to combat corruption and promote accountability within the police force” (L2).*

#### **Subtheme 4.2: Police brutality and excessive use of force**

The response of Participant 2 suggested that police brutality and excessive force against civilians, including peaceful protesters and electoral participants are prevalent. This not only violates human rights but also fuels resentment and mistrust towards the police, potentially escalating tensions during elections.

*“Instances of police brutality and excessive use of force against civilians, including peaceful protesters and electoral participants, have sparked outrage and raised concerns about the need for comprehensive reform to address systemic issues within the police force” (Participant IN2).*

Corroborating the incidence of police brutality and excessive use of force against citizens, Participant L2 narrated the conduct of the police during the infamous End SARS incident.

*“There have been numerous reports of police officers using excessive force against civilians, resulting in injuries and fatalities. Incidents such as the End SARS protests in 2020, where security forces used live ammunition and tear gas against peaceful demonstrators, underscore the need for reforms to address police brutality and ensure respect for human rights.” (Participant L2).*

Besides, Participant L3 revealed that there has been an incidence of extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests by the Nigerian police force. The participant therefore calls for reforms to ensure adherence and due process, particularly the rule of law.

*“There have been numerous cases of extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests perpetrated by the police, particularly targeting marginalised*

*communities and individuals perceived as criminals. The lack of accountability for these abuses perpetuates a culture of impunity within the police force and underscores the need for reforms to ensure adherence to due process and the rule of law” (Participant L3).*

#### **Subtheme 4.3: Inadequate training and capacity**

Another incidence suggesting the overhaul of the police force was attributed to concern about inadequate training and capacity to address electoral violence. Participant IN3 revealed that despite the efforts to enhance training and capacity, the Nigerian police force still faces challenges in effectively addressing modern security threats stemming from outdated training methods and inadequate resources within the police force. Without proper training and resources, law enforcement agencies may struggle to respond effectively to incidents of electoral violence.

*“Despite efforts to enhance training and capacity building, the Nigerian police force still faces significant challenges in effectively addressing modern security threats, including electoral violence, due to outdated training methods and inadequate resources” (Participant IN3).*

Participant L4 echoed similar sentiments, which suggests that lack of adequate training, equipment, and resources to effectively perform their duties. The consequence of this may be connected to perceived inefficiency in addressing electoral violence.

*“Many police officers in Nigeria lack adequate training, equipment, and resources to effectively perform their duties. This lack of capacity contributes to instances of incompetence, misconduct, and ineffective law enforcement. Investments in training, infrastructure, and technology are needed to enhance the professionalism and effectiveness of the police force” (Participant L4).*

#### **Subtheme 4.4: Bias and discrimination**

The reports of ethnic and religious bias within the police force contributed to discriminatory practices and unequal treatment. This erodes trust in law enforcement agencies and exacerbates social tensions, potentially leading to further violence during elections.

*“Reports of ethnic and religious bias within the police force, leading to discriminatory practices and unequal treatment of citizens, exacerbate tensions and undermine social cohesion, necessitating reforms to promote diversity, inclusivity, and professionalism” (Participant IN4).*

#### **Subtheme 4.5: Lack of accountability**

Participant IN5 revealed that a pervasive lack of accountability within the police force means few officers are held accountable for misconduct or human rights abuses. This impunity further undermines public trust and confidence in law enforcement agencies, perpetuating a cycle of violence and impunity.

*“There is a pervasive lack of accountability within the Nigerian police force, with few officers held to task for misconduct or human rights abuses. This culture of impunity erodes public confidence in the rule of law and underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms to ensure transparency, accountability, and adherence to human rights standards” (Participant IN5).*

A similar view is shared by Participant L2 suggesting that there is a lack of accountability and abuses by the Nigerian police force.

*“The lack of accountability for these abuses perpetuates a culture of impunity within the police force and underscores the need for reforms to ensure adherence to due process and the rule of law” (Participant L2).*

#### **Subtheme 4.6: Security challenges**

Participants (K1, K2) pointed out that the various security challenges, including election violence, insurgency, banditry, and communal violence,

highlight the need for a more efficient security apparatus. Without addressing these challenges, law enforcement agencies may struggle to prevent electoral violence effectively.

*“The increasing rate of incidents of election violence, especially ballot box snatching and harassment of potential voters” (Participant K1).*

*“Nigeria continues to grapple with various security challenges, including insurgency, banditry, kidnapping, and communal violence. The inability of the police to effectively address these threats highlights the need for a more robust and efficient security apparatus” (Participant K2).*

The incidents and concerns outlined by the respondents underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive overhaul of Nigeria's police architecture. Widespread corruption, police brutality, inadequate training and capacity, bias and discrimination, lack of accountability, and various security challenges all contribute to the call for reform. Research by Yusuf (2019: 38) and Emeaku (2019: 97) explore the challenges of corruption and misconduct within the police force, while Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 52) and Egobueze and Ojirika (2017: 7) discuss instances of police brutality and bias contributing to electoral violence. Additionally, studies by Macdonald and Molony (2023: 2) and Udeuhele and Ibiam (2020: 95) address the issues of accountability and training inadequacies within law enforcement agencies. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of challenges within the policing system and their impact on preventing electoral violence.

#### **5.4. OBJECTIVE TWO: TO ANALYSE KEY INFORMANTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE CURRENT DESIGN OF POLICING AND RECURRENT ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA**

### 5.4.1. Theme 1: Main factors contributing to electoral violence in Nigeria

This categorisation helps identify the key factors contributing to electoral violence in Nigeria and provides insights into the complex dynamics involved.

**Table 5.6: Main factors contributing to electoral violence in Nigeria**

Primary subtheme	Categories	Number of Respondents	Participants
Main factors contributing to electoral violence in Nigeria	Political Competition and Desperation	2	IN1, K1
	Socio-economic Factors	2	IN4, K1
	Weak Law Enforcement and Institutional Capacity	2	IN9, P6
	Ethno-Religious Manipulation	2	IN2, L4
	Corruption and Impunity	1	NG1
	Youth Vulnerability and Recruitment	2	NG2, NYIF2
	External Interference	1	P10
	Patterns and dynamics of electoral violence	Change in Tactics of Electoral Violence	6
Weaponization of ethnic and religious identities		9	IN3, PL1
Expansion of actors involved in electoral violence		2	IN4, NY7F1
Persistence of Historical Patterns		3	NY2F2, NY7F2, J2
Public Perception		3	NY1F1, NY4F1, J4

## **Subtheme 1.1: Drivers and Manifestations of Electoral Violence**

### **(a) Political competition and desperation**

Participants highlighted the intense competition among political parties and candidates for power and resources as a key driver of electoral violence. This competition often leads to heightened tensions and desperation among political actors, increasing the likelihood of violence erupting during the electoral process.

Participant IN1 revealed that intense competition among political parties and candidates for power and resources often leads to heightened tensions and animosity. As parties and candidates vie for control, the stakes become higher, and the potential for conflict escalates.

*“Intense competition among political parties and candidates for power and resources often leads to heightened tensions and animosity, fuelling electoral violence as a means to gain advantage or undermine opponents” (Participant IN1).*

Participant K1 accentuated a similar position by stating that the main factor contributing to electoral violence is the desperation of some political players to win elections. When candidates and parties feel threatened or disadvantaged, they may resort to violence as a means of gaining an advantage or intimidating opponents.

*“The main factor contributing to electoral violence is the desperation of some political players to win the election” (Participant K1).*

The fierce competition among political actors to gain power and resources creates tension and desperation, leading to potential violence. Studies by Okolo and Madu (2022: 5) and Sule (2023: 16) examine the intense competition among political parties and candidates for power and resources, highlighting its role in exacerbating tensions and increasing the risk of electoral violence. Additionally, Okolo and Madu address the desperation of political players to win elections and the potential for this desperation to

manifest in violence. These studies underscore the need for measures to mitigate political competition and promote peaceful electoral processes.

**(b) Socio-economic factors**

Participants identified socio-economic factors, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services as significant contributors to electoral violence. These challenges exacerbate social tensions and create fertile ground for political manipulation and recruitment by political actors. According to the views of Participant IN4, widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services exacerbate social tensions. When people feel marginalised and disenfranchised, they may become more susceptible to manipulation by political actors seeking to exploit their grievances for their gain.

*“Widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services exacerbate social tensions and create fertile ground for recruitment by political thugs and criminal elements, who exploit disenchantment with the system to perpetrate violence during elections” (Participant IN4).*

Participant K1 also shared similar views as others that high levels of poverty and youth unemployment create a fertile ground for political manipulation and recruitment by political thugs. Desperate for economic opportunities, many young people may be lured into engaging in violence or other illicit activities in exchange for financial incentives.

*“High levels of poverty and youth unemployment create a fertile ground for political manipulation and recruitment by political thugs” (Participant K1).*

From the above narratives, one could draw out that socio-economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment provide fertile ground for manipulation and recruitment by political actors. Mene (2024: 146) explored the relationship between socio-economic factors such as poverty unemployment and electoral violence, highlighting how these challenges contribute to social tensions and political manipulation. Additionally, studies

by Shulika and Shafiei (2024: 5) and AIL-Kubaisi *et al.* (2024: 855) highlight the role of socio-economic factors in creating conditions conducive to electoral violence, underscoring the need for comprehensive strategies to address poverty and promote social inclusion.

**(c) Weak law enforcement and institutional capacity**

Participants highlighted the role of weak law enforcement and institutional capacity in facilitating electoral violence. They argued that inadequate enforcement of laws and weak institutional structures create an environment of impunity, where individuals feel emboldened to engage in violence without fear of consequences. Participant IN3 stressed that inadequate law enforcement and weak institutional capacity create an environment of impunity. When perpetrators of electoral violence believe they can act without facing repercussions, they are more likely to engage in violent behaviour.

*“Inadequate law enforcement and weak institutional capacity to prevent, investigate, and prosecute electoral offenders create an environment of impunity, where individuals feel emboldened to engage in violence and electoral malpractice without fear of consequences” (Participant IN3).*

The above suggests weakness in the electoral institution as perpetrators of violence feel emboldened to engage in violence and electoral malpractice without fear of consequences. This assertion is supported by Participant K1 who averred that weaknesses in Nigeria's electoral institutions contribute to electoral violence. The lack of effective enforcement mechanisms and institutional capacity undermines the rule of law and allows for the perpetuation of violence during elections.

*“Weaknesses in Nigeria's electoral institutions contribute to electoral violence” (Participant K1).*

In summary, the lack of effective law enforcement and institutional capacity allows for impunity, where individuals engage in violence without fear of

consequences. Yusuf (2019: 37) examines the role of weak law enforcement and institutional capacity in perpetuating electoral violence in Nigeria. They highlighted how deficiencies in enforcement mechanisms and institutional structures contribute to impunity and undermine the integrity of the electoral process. Additionally, research by Adeyinka and Lawal (2023: 3) addresses the challenges facing Nigeria's electoral institutions and the need for reforms to strengthen law enforcement and institutional capacity.

**(d) Ethno-religious manipulation**

Participants suggested that Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious landscape is often exploited by politicians to mobilize support along identity lines, leading to ethno-religious manipulation in electoral processes. Participant IN2 noted that Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious landscape can be exploited by politicians to mobilise support along identity lines. This manipulation fuels ethnic and religious tensions, leading to violence and conflict during electoral processes.

*“Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious landscape can be exploited by politicians to mobilize support along identity lines, leading to polarisation and conflicts during elections, especially in areas where these fault lines intersect with political affiliations” (Participant IN2).*

The above view was reiterated by Participant (L4) who claimed that Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious composition often intersects with political allegiances. Politicians may exploit these identities to rally support for their campaigns, exacerbating ethnic and religious tensions.

*“Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious composition often intersects with political allegiances, leading to the mobilization of support along ethnic or religious lines during elections” (Participant L4).*

Politicians exploit ethnic and religious differences to mobilize support, leading to polarisation and conflicts during elections. Research by Ezeonwuka (2023: 62) and Akinrinde, Lawal and Aliu (2024: 9) examine the

role of ethno-religious manipulation in Nigerian politics, highlighting how politicians use ethnic and religious identities to mobilise voters and gain electoral advantages. Additionally, Yahaya and Bello (2020: 28) and Akinrinde, Lawal and Aliu (2024: 9) investigate the implications of ethno-religious manipulation for electoral violence in Nigeria, emphasising the need for inclusive and identity-blind electoral processes.

#### **(e) Corruption and impunity**

Participants emphasised the role of corruption and impunity in perpetuating electoral violence. They argued that corrupt practices and the lack of accountability contribute to a culture where perpetrators of violence face little to no consequences for their actions, thereby reinforcing cycles of violence. According to the testament of Participant NG1, perpetrators of electoral violence often go unpunished due to a weak rule of law and a culture of impunity. When individuals believe they can act with impunity, they are more likely to engage in corrupt practices and violence during elections.

*“Perpetrators of electoral violence often go unpunished due to weak rule of law and a culture of impunity. Failure to hold individuals and groups accountable for their actions reinforces cycles of violence and undermines confidence in the electoral process” (Participant NG1).*

For Participant NY1F1, corruption and tribalism play significant roles in fuelling electoral violence. The existence of corrupt practices and tribal loyalties undermines the integrity of the electoral process and perpetuates cycles of violence.

*“Corruption and tribalism” (Participant NY1F1).*

Corruption and impunity contribute to electoral violence as perpetrators often go unpunished, reinforcing cycles of violence. Research by Osaghae (2024: 11) and Ilelah *et al.* (2023: 184) explore the link between corruption, impunity, and electoral violence in Nigeria. They highlighted how corrupt practices and the lack of accountability within institutions contribute to

electoral violence by creating an environment where perpetrators can act without fear of consequences. Additionally, Ilelah, Ab Halim, Ismail and Nor discuss the impact of corruption and tribalism on Nigeria's political landscape and the challenges they pose to democratic governance and electoral integrity in a report by Transparency International.

**(f) Youth vulnerability and recruitment**

Participants highlighted the vulnerability of youth in the context of electoral violence, pointing to high levels of unemployment and poverty as contributing factors. They suggested that these conditions make young people susceptible to manipulation and recruitment by political actors, who may exploit their disenfranchisement and lack of economic opportunities for their ends.

Participant NG2 stated that high levels of youth unemployment and poverty create conditions ripe for manipulation and recruitment. When young people lack economic opportunities, they may become disillusioned with the political process and more susceptible to manipulation by political actors seeking to exploit their vulnerabilities.

*"High levels of youth unemployment and poverty create conditions ripe for manipulation and recruitment" (Participant NG2).*

Sharing similar views, Participant NY1F2 noted that youth unemployment, weak institutions, and a lack of accountability exacerbate the vulnerability of young people to manipulation and recruitment by political actors. Without access to economic opportunities or strong institutions to support them, young people may be easily swayed by promises of financial gain or political influence.

*"Youth unemployment, weak institutions, and a lack of accountability" (Participant NY1F2).*

Young people, disenfranchised and lacking economic opportunities, are vulnerable to manipulation and recruitment by political actors. Studies by

Awofeso and Irabor (2022: 41) and Mene (2024: 146) examine the impact of youth unemployment and poverty on political behaviour in Nigeria, highlighting how these factors contribute to vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation by political actors. Additionally, research by Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 52) and Transparency International (2020) centred on the role of weak institutions and lack of accountability in exacerbating youth vulnerability to recruitment and exploitation in the context of electoral violence.

#### **(g) External interference**

Participant P10 suggested that external interference by foreign countries and international organisations may exacerbate existing tensions and fuel electoral violence in Nigeria. They highlighted the potential role of external actors in meddling with Nigerian elections, contributing to the complex dynamics of electoral violence.

*"External actors may meddle in Nigerian elections, exacerbating existing tensions and fuelling violence" (Participant P10).*

External actors, including neighbouring countries and international organisations, may exacerbate tensions and contribute to electoral violence. Research by Addison, and Roe (2024: 16) explores the role of external actors in Nigerian elections, examining how foreign countries and international organisations may influence electoral outcomes through various means. Additionally, studies by Musa *et al.* (2024: 193) and Ibrahim (2021: 27) investigate the impact of external interference on electoral processes and its potential contribution to electoral violence in Nigeria.

#### **5.4.2. Theme 2: Patterns and dynamics of electoral violence**

How have you observed the patterns and dynamics of electoral violence evolving over the years in the Fourth Republic?

**(a) Change in tactics of electoral violence**

Participants observed a shift in the tactics employed by perpetrators of electoral violence, noting a combination of traditional and more sophisticated methods. They also highlighted variations in the intensity and form of electoral violence across different regions of Nigeria. Additionally, the proliferation of technology, particularly social media platforms, has emerged as a tool used to spread misinformation and incite violence during elections.

Participants (IN1) and (L1) indicated that while traditional forms of violence persist, there has been an increase in the use of more sophisticated tactics, potentially reflecting changes in the political and social environment.

*"There has been a shift in the tactics employed by perpetrators of electoral violence, from overt physical intimidation and coercion to more covert methods such as vote buying, manipulation of results, and dissemination of fake news and hate speech through social media platforms" (Participant IN1).*

*"While traditional forms of violence such as physical assaults, ballot box snatching, and voter intimidation persist, there has been an increase in the use of more sophisticated tactics, including weaponisation of social media, cyber-attacks, and targeted disinformation campaigns" (Participant L1).*

Participants (IN2) and (L2) noted variations in the intensity and form of electoral violence across Nigeria's diverse regions. These variations may stem from differences in socio-economic conditions, political dynamics, and historical factors, highlighting the complex nature of electoral violence in the country.

*"Electoral violence tends to vary in intensity and form across different regions of Nigeria, with some areas experiencing more frequent and severe incidents due to localized factors such as historical grievances, ethno-religious tensions, and the presence of armed groups or criminal syndicates" (Participant IN2).*

*“Electoral violence manifests differently across Nigeria's diverse regions, reflecting local dynamics, historical grievances, and political contexts” (Participant L2).*

The role of technology, particularly social media platforms, is emphasised by participants (IN5) and (NY7F2). They suggested that the proliferation of technology has both facilitated and exacerbated electoral violence by enabling the rapid spread of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech, which can incite violence and deepen social divisions.

*“The proliferation of technology, particularly social media platforms and digital communication channels, has amplified the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech, exacerbating social tensions and facilitating the coordination of violent acts during elections” (Participant IN5).*

*“The proliferation of technology, particularly social media, has both facilitated and exacerbated electoral violence” (Participant NY7F2).*

Participants assumed that perpetrators of electoral violence have adapted their tactics over time, incorporating both traditional methods such as physical assaults and ballot box snatching, as well as more modern and sophisticated approaches. This shift reflects a dynamic landscape of electoral violence, influenced by factors such as technological advancements, political dynamics, and regional differences. Research by Akinyetun (2021: 73) and Ogele (2020: 886) discuss the evolving tactics of electoral violence in Nigeria, highlighting the use of both traditional and modern methods by perpetrators. Mene (2024: 148) and Hassan (2023: 8) examine regional variations in electoral violence, emphasising the influence of local dynamics and socio-political contexts. Additionally, works by Mene (2024: 135) and Hunter (2023: 1042) explored the impact of technology, particularly social media, on electoral violence, underscoring its role in amplifying conflicts and misinformation.

## **(b) Weaponisation of ethnic and religious identities**

Participants highlight the weaponisation of ethnic and religious identities by political actors as a significant factor fuelling electoral violence in Nigeria. They observe that these identities are increasingly used to mobilise support and incite violence during elections.

Participants (IN3) and (PL1) drew attention to the deliberate manipulation of ethnic and religious identities by political actors for electoral gain. This strategy involves exploiting existing social divisions and historical grievances to mobilize support along ethnic and religious lines, thereby exacerbating tensions and fuelling violence.

*“Political actors increasingly weaponise ethnic and religious identities to mobilize support and incite violence along communal lines, exploiting existing fault lines within society to polarise communities and undermine electoral processes” (Participant IN3).*

*“Electoral violence has increasingly been fuelled by the weaponisation of ethnic and religious identities” (Participant PL1).*

The weaponisation of ethnic and religious identities is a longstanding issue in Nigerian politics, rooted in historical and socio-economic factors. By framing electoral contests in ethnic or religious terms, politicians seek to rally support from groups while demonising others, thereby deepening divisions and increasing the likelihood of violence. The use of inflammatory rhetoric, hate speech, and propaganda targeting specific ethnic or religious groups further exacerbates tensions and fosters a climate of hostility and mistrust. This can create fertile ground for electoral violence, as communities become polarised and perceive electoral outcomes as existential threats to their identity and interests.

Okolo and Madu (2022: 5) and Sambo, Sule and Tal (2024: 368) explore the weaponization of ethnic and religious identities in Nigerian politics, highlighting its role in exacerbating social tensions and fuelling electoral

violence. The historical and socio-political roots of ethnic and religious identity politics in Nigeria, shedding light on its persistence and impact on electoral dynamics. Additionally, according to Harry and Kalagbor (2021: 140), the use of hate speech and propaganda as tools for manipulating ethnic and religious sentiments during elections underscores their contribution to violence and instability.

**(c) Expansion of actors involved in electoral violence.**

Participants observed an expansion in the range of actors involved in electoral violence in Nigeria, noting the involvement of not only political parties and their supporters but also well-funded political actors, hired thugs, and elements of state security agencies. Participants (IN4) and (NY7F1) highlighted a concerning trend where electoral violence is no longer solely perpetrated by political parties and their supporters. Instead, there is evidence of more sophisticated and organised violence involving multiple actors with diverse motivations and resources.

*"While political parties and their supporters remain key perpetrators of electoral violence, there has been an expansion in the range of actors involved, including state-sponsored militias, youth gangs, and criminal organisations, each with their agendas and interests" (Participant IN4).*

*"Electoral violence has become more sophisticated and organised, involving well-funded political actors, hired thugs, and sometimes even elements of state security agencies" (Participant NY7F1).*

The involvement of well-funded political actors suggests that electoral violence may be orchestrated and financed by individuals or groups seeking to influence election outcomes for their benefit. These actors may employ various tactics, including the recruitment and deployment of hired thugs, the use of propaganda and misinformation, and the manipulation of state institutions to intimidate opponents and manipulate electoral processes. The participation of elements of state security agencies in electoral violence raises serious concerns about the neutrality and professionalism of law

enforcement and security institutions. When state actors are implicated in violence or partisan activities, it undermines public trust in the electoral process and erodes democratic principles.

The expansion of actors involved in electoral violence complicates efforts to address and prevent such incidents. Traditional approaches that focus solely on political parties and their supporters may be inadequate in the face of more sophisticated and multi-faceted forms of violence. Olowojolu *et al.* (2019: 37) discuss the involvement of well-funded political actors and hired thugs in electoral violence in Nigeria, highlighting the role of money and resources in fuelling violence. Research by Lake (2022: 864) and Mene (2024: 147) examine the complicity of state security agencies in electoral violence, pointing to systemic challenges in law enforcement and security sector governance. Additionally, reports by international organisations such as the International Crisis Group and Human Rights Watch document instances of state-sponsored violence and partisan policing during elections, corroborating the observations made by participants.

#### **(d) Persistence of historical patterns**

Participants noted the persistence of historical patterns in electoral violence in Nigeria, suggesting that while specific tactics and strategies may change, the underlying patterns of violence remain consistent over time. The continuity of electoral violence patterns underscores the need for comprehensive and sustained efforts to address the root causes of violence and build more resilient democratic institutions. Merely addressing surface-level manifestations of electoral violence without addressing the underlying drivers is unlikely to result in lasting change.

Participants (NY1F1), (NY3F2), and (J1) observed that despite changes in electoral dynamics and strategies employed by perpetrators, the fundamental patterns of electoral violence in Nigeria remain unchanged. This suggests that deep-rooted factors drive electoral violence that have not been adequately addressed or resolved.

*"The story seems to be the same over the years, just the strategies changing" (Participant NY1F1).*

*"They are of similar patterns" (Participant J1).*

*"The same throughout the years" (Participant NY3F2).*

These responses reflect the multifaceted nature of electoral violence in Nigeria, highlighting the evolution of tactics, the role of identity politics, changes in perpetrator dynamics, the persistence of historical patterns, and the influence of Socio-economic factors. Historical patterns of electoral violence may be influenced by various factors, including political competition, ethno-religious tensions, Socio-economic inequalities, and weaknesses in governance and law enforcement. These underlying drivers shape the context in which electoral violence occurs and contribute to its persistence over time. Mene (2024: 133) and Lake (2022: 869) discuss the historical context of electoral violence in Nigeria, highlighting recurring patterns and trends over time. Ezeonwuka (2023:62) and Akinrinde, Lawal and Aliu (2024: 9) examine the underlying drivers of electoral violence, including political competition, ethno-religious tensions, and governance challenges. Additionally, reports by organisations such as the National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems provide insights into historical patterns of electoral violence and recommendations for addressing them.

#### **5.4.3. Theme 3: Role of security agencies in maintaining peace and security during elections**

This identifies the roles of security agencies in maintaining peace and security of lives and property of citizens during elections.

**Table 5.7: Role of security agencies in maintaining peace and security during elections**

Primary subthemes	Number of Respondents	Respondents
Responsibilities of Security Agencies	8	IN1, IN3, IN4, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7
Perception of Effectiveness	7	K1, NG2, NY1F2, PS1, PS2, P10, L3
Criticisms and Challenges	6	L2, NG1, NY1F1, NY2F2, NY5F2, J4
Collaboration and Coordination	2	IN5, NY7F2
Challenges in Enforcement	2	NY5F2, NG1

### **Subtheme 3.1: Responsibilities of Security Agencies**

Participants emphasised the critical role of security agencies, particularly the police, in ensuring the safety and integrity of electoral processes in Nigeria. They outline various responsibilities entrusted to these agencies, including maintaining public order, facilitating the smooth conduct of elections, and enforcing electoral laws and regulations.

Participants (IN1), (IN3), and (IN4) highlighted the multifaceted responsibilities of security agencies during elections. These responsibilities range from maintaining public order and safety at polling stations and collation centres to facilitating the movement of electoral materials and enforcing electoral laws.

*"Security agencies, especially the police, are responsible for maintaining public order and safety at polling stations, collation centres, and other election-related venues" (Participant IN1).*

*"Security agencies assist in facilitating the smooth conduct of elections by providing security escorts for electoral materials, election officials, and observers" (Participant IN3).*

*"Security agencies are responsible for enforcing electoral laws and regulations, including maintaining order at campaign rallies and ensuring compliance with electoral guidelines" (Participant IN4).*

From the above statements, one could draw out that the presence of security agencies is essential for instilling confidence in voters and deterring potential acts of violence or intimidation. By ensuring a secure environment, security agencies contribute to the credibility and legitimacy of the electoral process, thereby safeguarding democracy. However, the effectiveness of security agencies in fulfilling their responsibilities depends on various factors, including adequate training, resources, and impartiality. Challenges such as political interference, inadequate capacity, and corruption within security agencies can undermine their ability to perform effectively and impartially. Research by Yusuf (2019: 38) explores the challenges of political interference in law enforcement agencies and its implications for electoral integrity, highlighting the role of institutional reforms in addressing these challenges. Yusuf (2019: 39) and Lake (2022: 860) examine the responsibilities of security agencies in maintaining peace and security during elections and the factors influencing their effectiveness. Additionally, reports by organisations such as the National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems provide insights into the role of security agencies in electoral processes and recommendations for improving their performance.

### **Subtheme 3.2: Perception of effectiveness**

Participants expressed varying perceptions of the effectiveness of security agencies in managing electoral violence and ensuring the smooth conduct of elections in Nigeria. While some acknowledge their efforts despite resource

constraints, others highlight instances where security agencies have been effective in preventing violence and resolving electoral disputes.

Participants (K1) and (NG2) recognised the challenges faced by security agencies, including limited resources, yet commend their efforts in maintaining peace and security during elections. Despite resource constraints, security agencies are often tasked with managing complex security situations and safeguarding electoral processes.

*"They are trying their best in the face of limited resources at their disposal" (Participant K1).*

*"In some instances, security agencies have been effective in preventing electoral violence, protecting electoral materials, and facilitating voter participation" (Participant NG2).*

However, the effectiveness of security agencies is not uniform across all instances. While they may succeed in preventing electoral violence and protecting electoral materials in some cases, there are also instances where their response may fall short or be perceived as inadequate. Participant (NY1F2) highlighted the role of security agencies in crisis management and conflict resolution during electoral disputes. In such situations, security agencies play a crucial role in de-escalating tensions and facilitating peaceful resolution, thereby contributing to the overall stability of the electoral process.

*"In the event of electoral crises or disputes, security agencies provide crisis management and conflict resolution support to de-escalate tensions and promote peaceful resolution" (Participant NY1F2).*

Perceptions of security agency effectiveness can be influenced by various factors, including electoral violence, the timeliness and appropriateness of their response, and their ability to maintain impartiality and professionalism. Addressing these perceptions requires ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity, accountability, and transparency of security agencies. Eneasato

(2019: 10) and Bothe, Ronzitti and Rosas (2023: 20) explore the role of security agencies in crisis management and conflict resolution, highlighting the importance of their engagement in de-escalating tensions and preventing violence. Additionally, reports by organisations such as the National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems provide insights into the perceptions of security agency effectiveness in electoral processes and recommendations for improvement.

### **Subtheme 3.3: Collaboration and coordination**

Participants emphasised the importance of collaboration and coordination among security agencies and other stakeholders in Nigeria's electoral processes. They highlighted the need for joint efforts to address security challenges and ensure a comprehensive approach to electoral security.

Participant (IN5) acknowledged the collaborative efforts of security agencies with various stakeholders, including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, civil society organisations, and international observers. This collaboration enables the sharing of information, resources, and expertise to develop effective security arrangements and respond to emerging threats during elections.

*"Security agencies collaborate closely with other stakeholders, including INEC, political parties, civil society organisations, and international observers, to coordinate security arrangements and address emerging security threats effectively" (Participant IN5).*

Participant (NY7F2) underscored the coordination between security agencies and other government bodies, such as the military, intelligence services, and electoral management bodies. This collaboration ensures a unified and integrated approach to electoral security, leveraging the capabilities and resources of different agencies to address security challenges comprehensively.

*"They coordinate with other government agencies, including the military, intelligence services, and electoral management bodies, to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to electoral security" (Participant NY7F2).*

Collaboration and coordination among security agencies and other stakeholders are essential for enhancing the effectiveness and legitimacy of security interventions during elections. By working together, stakeholders can leverage their strengths and resources to mitigate security risks, maintain public order, and safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. Omede and Ngwube (2022: 233) explore the importance of collaboration and coordination among security agencies and other stakeholders in ensuring effective electoral security in Nigeria. Reports by international organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union Election Observation Mission provide insights into best practices and recommendations for enhancing collaboration and coordination in electoral security efforts. Additionally, academic literature on conflict resolution and peacebuilding emphasises the role of collaborative approaches in addressing security challenges and promoting peace and stability in electoral contexts.

#### **Subtheme 3.4: Criticisms and challenges**

Participants highlighted various criticisms and challenges faced by security agencies in Nigeria regarding their role in preventing electoral violence. These criticisms include allegations of partisanship, perceived ineffectiveness in curbing violence, lack of presence, inadequate equipment, and issues related to command structure and independence. Participant (L2) raised concerns about allegations of partisanship, bias, and excessive use of force by security personnel, which erode public confidence in their neutrality and impartiality. Such perceptions can undermine the legitimacy of security agency interventions during elections and contribute to tensions among political actors and the public.

*"Allegations of partisanship, bias, and excessive use of force have been levelled against security personnel, undermining public confidence in their neutrality and impartiality" (Participant L2).*

Participant (NY1F1) expressed dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of security agencies in curbing electoral violence. This perception reflects the need for improvement in the strategies and capabilities of security agencies to prevent and respond to incidents of violence during elections effectively.

*"Their effectiveness to curb electoral violence is not good enough" (Participant NY1F1).*

Participant (J4) suggested that the role of security agencies may not be adequately felt during electoral processes, implying a lack of visible presence or meaningful intervention to deter or address instances of violence. This perception underscores the importance of enhancing the visibility and responsiveness of security agencies to reassure the public and deter potential perpetrators.

*"Their role is not felt at all, it's as good as not having them at all" (Participant J4).*

Participant (NY5F2) highlighted the impact of inadequate equipment on the effectiveness of security agencies, leading to instances where officers retreat from danger rather than intervene. Insufficient resources and equipment hinder the ability of security agencies to carry out their duties effectively and protect electoral processes from violence and intimidation.

*"Many officers retreat from the danger posed by hoodlums due to inadequate equipment, hindering their ability to intervene effectively" (Participant NY5F2).*

Participant (NG1) raised concerns about the command structure of security agencies, emphasising the need for restructuring to ensure greater autonomy and independence in decision-making. Addressing issues related to command structure and accountability is essential for enhancing the

effectiveness and credibility of security agencies in preventing electoral violence.

*"They take instructions from the top, which ought not to be. There is the need for restructuring" (Participant NG1).*

Chinedu and Okey Oparaku (2024: 825) and Mene (2024: 150) examine allegations of partisanship and bias among security personnel during elections in Nigeria, highlighting the impact on public confidence and electoral integrity. Mochta and Afkar (2022: 72) and Chinedu and Okey Oparaku (2024: 831) explore the challenges faced by security agencies in maintaining neutrality and effectiveness in preventing electoral violence. Reports by international organisations such as the International Crisis Group and Amnesty International provide insights into the operational challenges and shortcomings of security agencies in Nigeria's electoral processes.

In summary, the role of security agencies, particularly the police, in maintaining peace and security during elections is perceived with a mix of appreciation for their responsibilities and criticisms regarding their effectiveness and impartiality. While security agencies are tasked with ensuring public safety, preventing violence, and enforcing electoral laws, challenges such as inadequate resources, allegations of bias, and limitations in enforcement capabilities hinder their effectiveness. Collaboration with other stakeholders and coordination among different agencies is considered essential for addressing security threats comprehensively. However, there are calls for reforms to enhance accountability, professionalism, and neutrality within security agencies to improve their effectiveness in ensuring peaceful and credible elections.

#### **5.4.4. Theme 4: Cases of security agencies perceive effectiveness in preventing electoral violence**

This theme helps in identifying the key factors that help the security agencies to be effective in preventing electoral violence.

**Table 5.8: Security agencies perceive effectiveness in preventing electoral violence**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Police Intervention</b>	<b>References</b>
2015	General elections	Nigeria	Increased deployment of personnel, strategic patrolling, proactive measures	IN1, L2, PL1
2016	Governorship elections	Rivers	Containment of violence, prevention of disruptions	P6
2018	Governorship elections	Ekiti	Maintaining order, dissuading troublemakers, addressing violent incidents	K1, P3, J2
2019	Governorship election	Osun	Effective response to violent incidents, containing clashes	IN2, PL2, P7
2019	Governorship election	Kogi	Prevention of violence, swift response, maintaining order	P8
2019	Governorship election	Bayelsa	Security deployment, ensuring the safety of voters and materials	P9, J3
2019	Presidential election	Nigeria	Responding to security threats, preventing violence	L3, PS1, P2
2020	Governorship elections	Edo	Prevention of violence, robust presence, quick response	IN3, L4, PS2
2020	Governorship elections	Ondo	Prevention and response to violence, proactive measures	IN4, P5
2021	Governorship election	Anambra	Prevention of violence, collaborative efforts, effective strategies	IN5, K2, NG2
2023	Governorship elections	Ekiti	Distribution of sensitive materials, maintaining peace	L1

**Subtheme 4.1: General Elections in 2015**

Participants reflected on the role of security agencies during Nigeria's general elections in 2015, highlighting their efforts in preventing widespread violence and maintaining peace throughout the electoral process. They emphasised the proactive measures taken by security forces, such as increased deployment of personnel and strategic patrolling, which contributed to the successful conduct of the elections.

Participants (IN1, L2, and PL1) collectively acknowledged the crucial role played by security agencies during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. They highlighted the effectiveness of security measures, including the deployment of personnel to strategic locations, proactive patrols, and collaboration with other stakeholders. These efforts were instrumental in deterring potential troublemakers and ensuring the safety of voters, electoral materials, and election officials.

*“During the 2015 general elections, security agencies played a crucial role in preventing widespread violence and ensuring relative peace across the country. Their proactive measures, including increased deployment of personnel and strategic patrolling of hotspot areas, helped deter potential troublemakers and maintain order during the electoral process” (IN1).*

*“During the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, security agencies implemented robust measures to prevent electoral violence and ensure the safety of voters and electoral materials. The deployment of security personnel to strategic locations, proactive patrols, and collaboration with other stakeholders contributed to a relatively peaceful electoral process” (Participant L2).*

*“Yes, during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, security agencies played a significant role in preventing widespread violence and ensuring a relatively peaceful electoral process. Through increased deployment of security personnel, effective coordination among different agencies, and proactive measures to deter potential troublemakers, security forces helped to maintain order and security at polling stations across the country. Their*

*efforts contributed to the successful conduct of the elections and the peaceful transfer of power from one administration to another” (PL1).*

The proactive stance adopted by security agencies during the 2015 elections reflects a commitment to maintaining law and order and upholding the integrity of the electoral process. By implementing robust security measures and coordinating effectively with other agencies, security forces helped to create an environment conducive to free, fair, and peaceful elections. The successful conduct of the 2015 general elections and the peaceful transfer of power underscore the importance of effective security interventions in ensuring electoral integrity and democratic stability. The experiences of the 2015 elections serve as valuable lessons for future electoral processes, emphasising the need for continued collaboration and proactive security measures to safeguard democracy in Nigeria. This underscores the significance of effective security measures in fostering confidence among voters and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process (Mene 2024: 145).

#### **Subtheme 4.2: Governorship Elections in 2016**

Participant P6 reflected on the 2016 governorship elections in Rivers State, acknowledging the challenges faced by the police but emphasising their effectiveness in containing violence during the rerun elections. Despite the difficulties encountered, the presence of the police contributed to preventing major disruptions and maintaining relative order during the electoral process.

*“Despite challenges, the police managed to contain violence during the rerun elections in Rivers State in 2016. Their presence helped to prevent major disruptions and ensure that the electoral process proceeded relatively smoothly” (Participant 6).*

Participant P6's perspective clarified the dynamics of the 2016 governorship elections in Rivers State, particularly regarding the role of the police in managing electoral violence. The acknowledgement of challenges suggests that the security situation during the elections was complex and fraught with tensions. However, despite these challenges, the police were able to exert

control and contain violence, thus preventing significant disruptions to the electoral process. The finding highlights the need for sustained efforts in conflict prevention and resolution (Campbell 2022: 9).

#### **Subtheme 4.3: Governorship Elections in 2018**

Participants K1 and P3 provided positive perspectives on the security arrangements during the 2018 governorship elections in Ekiti State, highlighting the proactive measures taken by security agencies to maintain order and prevent widespread violence. They emphasised the active presence of security personnel and their swift response to incidents, which contributed to a relatively peaceful electoral process.

*“In the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State, security agencies were dispatched to maintain order. Their active presence dissuaded potential troublemakers, and they swiftly addressed isolated incidents of violence, thereby facilitating a relatively peaceful electoral process” (Participant K1).*

*“The police successfully prevented widespread violence during the governorship election in Ekiti State in 2018. Their swift response to reported incidents and proactive measures contributed to a relatively peaceful electoral process” (Participant P3).*

In contrast, Participant J2 recounted a firsthand experience of electoral violence during the same elections, highlighting the failure of security forces to effectively intervene and prevent disruptions to the electoral process.

*“In 2018, during the general election, I was the SPO of a ward in Ifaki Ekiti, Ido-Osi Local Government, the hoodlums attacked the polling units in the presence of Police and nothing was done, all the 13 polling units were scattered and ballot boxes were burnt, the presiding officers had to run for their lives and take refuge with the military including myself” (Participant J2).*

Overall, the divergent perspectives on the security situation during the 2018 governorship elections in Ekiti State underscore the complexity of security dynamics and the challenges faced by security agencies in ensuring

peaceful electoral processes. While some participants commend the efforts of security forces in maintaining order, others highlight instances of violence and the failure of security intervention, highlighting the need for continuous improvement in security arrangements to safeguard electoral integrity (Amao 2022: 48).

#### **Subtheme 4.4: Governorship Elections in 2019**

The accounts provided by participants offer positive perspectives on the role of security agencies during the 2019 governorship elections in various states. They highlight the effectiveness of security personnel in responding to incidents of electoral violence, maintaining peace, and ensuring the smooth conduct of the electoral process. Despite the tense political atmosphere in some states, security agencies demonstrated proactive measures, visible presence, and swift response to reported incidents, contributing to largely peaceful electoral exercises. The narratives provided by participants reflect the diverse experiences across different states during the 2019 governorship elections in Nigeria. In Osun State, security agencies, particularly the police, are credited with effectively responding to incidents of electoral violence, containing clashes between rival political factions, and ensuring a smooth electoral process.

*“Security agencies, particularly the police, were effective in responding to incidents of electoral violence during the 2019 governorship election in Osun State. Prompt intervention by security personnel helped contain clashes between rival political factions and ensure the smooth conduct of the election” (Participant IN2).*

*“The police were instrumental in maintaining peace and security during the governorship election in Osun State in 2019 their proactive measures, including the deployment of personnel and enforcement of security protocols, contributed to a largely peaceful electoral exercise” (Participant P7).*

Similarly, in Edo, Kogi, and Bayelsa States, security agencies were praised for their visible presence, proactive measures, and swift response to maintain peace and security during the elections.

*“I can say in the 2019 gubernatorial elections in Edo State, security agencies demonstrated effectiveness in responding to potential violence and maintaining peace throughout the electoral process” (Participant PL2).*

*“Despite tense political atmosphere, the police effectively prevented widespread violence during the governorship election in Kogi State in 2019. Their visible presence and swift response to reported incidents helped to maintain order and ensure the safety of voters and electoral materials” (Participant P8).*

*“The police deployed significant resources to ensure the security of voters and electoral materials during the governorship election in Bayelsa State in 2019. Their efforts contributed to a relatively peaceful electoral process despite some isolated incidents of violence” (Participant P9).*

The above accounts suggest that security agencies were able to address security challenges and uphold the integrity of the electoral process in various states. The deployment of significant resources, proactive measures, and enforcement of security protocols contributed to the overall peaceful conduct of the elections. Despite some isolated incidents of violence, the efforts of security personnel helped to mitigate potential disruptions and ensure the safety of voters and electoral materials. These experiences underscore the importance of security agencies in upholding democratic processes and ensuring the safety of voters and electoral materials (Amao, Ambali and Araba 2022: 53).

#### **Subtheme 4.5: Presidential Elections in 2019**

The participants' accounts highlight the effectiveness of security agencies during the 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria. They emphasise the successful prevention and response to electoral violence, the implementation

of proactive measures, and the overall maintenance of peace and order during the electoral process.

*“In the 2019 presidential election, security agencies were effective in responding to security threats and preventing major incidents of violence” (Participant L3).*

*“During the 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria, security agencies effectively prevented and responded to electoral violence across various regions. Employing proactive measures such as increased patrols, surveillance of potential flashpoints, and prompt reaction to security threats, security personnel upheld peace and order during the electoral proceedings” (PS1).*

*“Despite some isolated incidents of violence, the police effectively managed security during Nigeria's 2019 general elections. Their presence at polling stations and strategic deployment helped to contain potential conflicts and maintain order throughout the electoral period” (Participant P2).*

The narratives provided by the participants underscore the crucial role played by security agencies in ensuring the security and integrity of the 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria. Despite the potential for heightened tensions and security threats, security personnel were able to effectively prevent and respond to incidents of violence, thereby contributing to a relatively peaceful electoral process.

The accounts suggest that security agencies employed various proactive measures, including increased patrols, surveillance of potential flashpoints, and prompt reaction to security threats, to uphold peace and order across different regions during the elections. Their visible presence at polling stations and strategic deployment helped to deter potential conflicts and maintain a conducive environment for voters to exercise their franchise. While acknowledging the presence of isolated incidents of violence, the participants overall commend the police for their management of security during the 2019 general elections. The successful outcomes reported by the

participants reflect positively on the efforts of security agencies in safeguarding the electoral process and upholding democratic principles. This highlights the pivotal role of security agencies in safeguarding the electoral process and maintaining public safety (Mene 2024: 136).

#### **Subtheme 4.6: Governorship Elections in 2020**

The participants' accounts highlight the effectiveness of security agencies in preventing electoral violence during the 2020 governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States. They emphasise the robust presence, quick response to security threats, proactive measures, and coordinated efforts of security personnel, which contributed to maintaining a peaceful electoral atmosphere and allowing voters to cast their ballots without major incidents of violence.

*“Security agencies demonstrated effectiveness in preventing electoral violence during the 2020 governorship election in Edo State. Their robust presence and quick response to security threats contributed to a relatively peaceful electoral atmosphere, allowing voters to cast their ballots without major incidents of violence” (Participant IN3).*

*“Security agencies, including the police and other law enforcement agencies, were successful in preventing and responding to electoral violence during the 2020 governorship election in Ondo State. Their proactive measures, such as pre-election security assessments and targeted deployment of personnel, helped deter potential disruptors and maintain order throughout the electoral process” (Participant IN4).*

*“Security agencies demonstrated effectiveness in preventing electoral violence during the 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State” (Participant L4).*

*“In the 2020 gubernatorial election in Edo State, security agencies played a pivotal role in averting electoral violence and ensuring a serene voting environment” (Participant PS2).*

*“The police officers collaborated effectively to prevent electoral violence during the governorship election in Ondo State in 2020. Their coordinated efforts, including intelligence gathering and proactive patrols, contributed to a peaceful electoral exercise” (Participant P5).*

The narratives provided by the participants underscore the crucial role played by security agencies in ensuring the security and integrity of the 2020 governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States. Despite the potential for tensions and security threats, security personnel were able to effectively prevent and respond to incidents of violence, thereby contributing to relatively peaceful electoral processes. The accounts suggest that security agencies in both states employed various proactive measures, including pre-election security assessments, targeted deployment of personnel, intelligence gathering, and proactive patrols, to deter potential disruptors and maintain order throughout the electoral process. The effective collaboration and coordinated efforts of police officers further enhanced their ability to prevent electoral violence and ensure a serene voting environment.

The successful outcomes reported by the participants reflect positively on the efforts of security agencies in safeguarding the electoral processes in Edo and Ondo States during the 2020 governorship elections. Their proactive and coordinated approach to security management contributed to upholding democratic principles and facilitating the peaceful exercise of electoral rights by citizens.

#### **Subtheme 4.7: Governorship Elections in 2021**

The participants' accounts highlight the critical role of security agencies in preventing electoral violence during the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. They emphasise the collaborative efforts between security agencies, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and other stakeholders, as well as the proactive measures implemented by security personnel to maintain peace throughout the electoral process.

*“Security agencies played a critical role in preventing electoral violence during the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. Their collaborative efforts with INEC and other stakeholders, coupled with effective security strategies and deployment of personnel, contributed to a peaceful electoral environment and successful conduct of the election” (Participant IN5).*

*“In the gubernatorial election held in Anambra State in 2021, security agencies were proactive in preventing electoral violence. They implemented robust security measures, including the deployment of personnel to strategic locations, which helped maintain peace throughout the election period” (Participant K2).*

*“Security agencies effectively prevented electoral violence during the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State and the joint operations involving multiple security agencies, such as the Police, Army, and Department of State Services (DSS), have been successful in preventing electoral violence in various states across Nigeria” (Participant NG2).*

The narratives provided by the participants underscore the effectiveness of security agencies in ensuring the security and integrity of the 2021 governorship election in Anambra State. Despite the potential for heightened tensions and security threats, security personnel were able to effectively prevent and respond to incidents of electoral violence, thereby contributing to a peaceful electoral environment and the successful conduct of the election.

The accounts suggest that security agencies in Anambra State implemented robust security measures, including the strategic deployment of personnel to key locations, which helped deter potential disruptors and maintain peace throughout the election period. Additionally, the collaborative efforts between security agencies, INEC, and other stakeholders facilitated coordination and information sharing, enhancing the overall security posture during the election.

The successful outcomes reported by the participants reflect positively on the proactive and coordinated approach adopted by security agencies in

Anambra State to prevent electoral violence and ensure a peaceful electoral process. The joint operations involving multiple security agencies further demonstrate the effectiveness of interagency collaboration in maintaining security and order during elections.

#### **Subtheme 4.8: Governorship elections in 2023**

The accounts provided by the participants highlight the conduct of the 2023 governorship elections in Ekiti and Bayelsa States. In Ekiti State, the police and security agencies are credited with performing well during the distribution of electoral materials and throughout the election day, with no reports of violence.

*“The police and security agencies performed creditably during the distribution of our electoral sensitive materials and during the election of 2nd December 2023. There was no single report of any violence throughout Ekiti State” (Participant L1).*

In Bayelsa State, the gubernatorial election took place, resulting in the re-election of the incumbent PDP Governor Douye Diri.

*“The 2023 Bayelsa State gubernatorial election took place on 11 November 2023 to elect the Governor of Bayelsa State. Incumbent PDP Governor Douye Diri won re-election” (Participant J3).*

The narratives depict a picture of successful and peaceful governorship elections in both Ekiti and Bayelsa States in 2023. In Ekiti State, the absence of any reports of violence during the distribution of electoral materials and on election day suggests effective security measures and the proactive intervention of the police and security agencies. This outcome reflects positively on the security arrangements and the overall conduct of the electoral process, contributing to public confidence in the integrity of the election outcomes.

Similarly, in Bayelsa State, the re-election of the incumbent governor signifies the continuation of governance under an existing administration,

possibly indicating stability and confidence in the leadership. While the narrative does not provide specific details about security measures or incidents during the election in Bayelsa, the absence of notable reports may suggest a relatively smooth electoral process.

Overall, the accounts suggest that security agencies played a crucial role in maintaining peace and security during the 2023 governorship elections in Ekiti and Bayelsa States. Their proactive measures and effective deployment likely contributed to the peaceful conduct of the elections and the absence of significant security incidents.

In summary, the events surrounding various elections in Nigeria highlight the critical role of security agencies in ensuring the integrity and peaceful conduct of electoral processes. While challenges persist, such as isolated incidents of violence and disruptions, proactive measures, collaboration among stakeholders, and continuous improvement in security protocols are essential for fostering confidence in democratic institutions and upholding the principles of free and fair elections (Mene 2024 135).

### **5.5. OBJECTIVE THREE: CHALLENGES MILITATING AGAINST THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE POLICING SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

**Table 5.9: The perceive role of police in ensuring safe and peaceful electoral**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Examples of Effectiveness by Security Agencies	Success in Maintaining Peace	25	IN1, IN2, IN3, IN4, IN5, K1, K2, L1, L2, L3, L4, NG2, PL1, PL2, PS1, PS2, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10
	Challenges and Criticisms	15	NY2F1, NY3F1, NY4F1, NY5F1, NY6F1, NY7F1,

	Faced by Security Agencies		NY1F2, NY2F2, NY3F2, NY4F2, NY5F2, NY6F2, NY7F2, J1, J2
Collaboration and Coordination Efforts	Success through Collaboration	6	NG2, PL1, PL2, PS1, PS2, P10

### 5.5.1. Theme 1: The perceived role of police in ensuring a safe and peaceful electoral process

#### Subtheme 1.1: Trust and confidence in the police

##### (a) Protectors of Democracy

Participant IN1 highlighted that many communities view the police as essential guardians of democracy, responsible for maintaining law and order during elections. This reflects a broader societal trust in law enforcement to uphold democratic values and ensure the electoral process's integrity.

*"Many communities view the police as essential guardians of democracy, responsible for maintaining law and order during elections" (Participant IN1).*

The perception of the police as protectors of democracy underscores the critical function of law enforcement in electoral contexts. In many democracies, the police are entrusted with maintaining public order, safeguarding electoral materials, and ensuring the safety of voters and electoral officials. This role is particularly significant in fragile democracies where the risk of electoral violence and malpractices is high. According to Njoku and Nwangeneh (2024: 119), the role of police during elections is fundamental to ensuring a free and fair process. The presence of police can deter electoral fraud and violence, providing a secure environment for voters to exercise their rights. Similarly, Haruna (2023: 261) emphasises that

effective policing during elections is crucial for upholding the rule of law and democratic principles.

**(b) Positive perception of police efficacy**

Participant IN2 mentioned that some communities express trust and confidence in the police's ability to ensure a safe and peaceful electoral process.

*"Some communities express trust and confidence in the police's ability to ensure a safe and peaceful electoral process" (Participant IN2).*

Participant K1 added that the presence of law enforcement personnel helps deter potential troublemakers and instils a sense of security among voters. These observations underscore the importance of effective policing in fostering a secure and trustworthy electoral environment.

*"The presence of police officers is a source of confidence to the people during the polls" (Participant K1).*

The perception of police efficacy in managing elections positively impacts voter turnout and public trust in the electoral process. When communities believe that law enforcement can effectively prevent violence and malpractices, they are more likely to participate in elections, thereby strengthening democratic governance. The deterrent effect of police presence is also vital in reducing the incidence of electoral fraud and violence. Studies such as those by Amao, Ambali and Araba (2022: 53) indicate that public confidence in police effectiveness is linked to higher voter turnout and more robust democratic engagement. Effective policing during elections is essential for maintaining public order and protecting the integrity of the electoral process.

The above narratives highlight the critical role of the police in maintaining democratic integrity during elections. The perception of the police as protectors of democracy and the positive perception of their efficacy is essential for fostering public trust and ensuring the smooth conduct of

electoral processes. Effective and trusted law enforcement is thus fundamental to the health and stability of democratic systems.

### **Subtheme 1.2: Mixed feelings and scepticism**

While some communities recognise the importance of police presence in deterring electoral violence, there are mixed feelings about their conduct. Concerns about police brutality, bias, and potential collusion with political actors undermine trust in the police's impartiality and effectiveness during elections.

*“Other communities have mixed feelings about the police's role in electoral security. While they acknowledge the importance of police presence in deterring violence, they also express concerns about instances of police brutality, bias, or collusion with political actors, which undermine their trust in the police's impartiality and effectiveness” (Participant IN3).*

*“The police have been trying their best in ensuring a safe peaceful electoral process. Nevertheless, they are sometimes biased in their actions during the election” (Participant L1).*

*“Communities hardly trust the police to effectively protect the process” (Participant NY1F1).*

*“Some communities harbour deep-seated distrust and scepticism towards the police's impartiality and effectiveness in ensuring a safe and peaceful electoral process. They perceive the police force as being politicised or biased towards certain political parties or candidates, leading to allegations of selective enforcement, intimidation of opposition supporters, or failure to respond adequately to instances of electoral violence” (PL1).*

*“There are also communities that harbour scepticism and distrust towards the police, particularly due to concerns about bias, corruption, and excessive use of force. They perceive the police as being influenced by political interests or as being ineffective in addressing security challenges during elections” (Participant K2).*

The scepticism surrounding police conduct during elections is a significant issue in many democracies, especially in countries with a history of electoral violence and political instability. While the presence of law enforcement is crucial for maintaining order, reports of police misconduct can erode public trust and confidence in the electoral process. This dual perception of recognising the necessity of police presence while simultaneously distrusting their actions reflects the complex relationship between the police and the communities they serve. The mixed feelings and scepticism towards police conduct during elections highlight the need for substantial reforms within law enforcement agencies to enhance their credibility and impartiality. Addressing issues of brutality, bias, and political collusion is crucial for rebuilding public trust and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. Research by Human Rights Watch (2019) highlights the prevalence of police misconduct in many countries, particularly during high-stakes electoral periods. Instances of police brutality and collusion with political actors can significantly undermine the legitimacy of elections and the broader democratic process. Additionally, Mene (2024: 150) discusses how the police's role in maintaining order can be compromised by corruption and partiality, leading to public distrust.

### **Subtheme 1.3: Perception of Ineffectiveness and Lack of Trust**

Some of the participants also claimed that certain communities perceive the police as ineffective in ensuring a safe and peaceful electoral process, leading to a lack of trust and confidence in their ability to maintain law and order. This perception is fuelled by instances of police brutality, bias, or collusion with political actors, which undermine their credibility and effectiveness in the eyes of the public.

*"They perceive their roles as very weak and ineffective" (Participant J1).*

*"The communities no longer have a trust in them" (Participant J2).*

*"Negative, lack of trust in the police" (Participant J3).*

The above statements highlight the scepticism and lack of confidence that certain communities have towards the police, reflecting a broader issue of perceived ineffectiveness and trust deficits. The perception of police ineffectiveness and lack of trust among communities is a significant challenge for maintaining electoral security. When communities view the police as weak and ineffective, it not only undermines the authority of law enforcement but also emboldens potential perpetrators of electoral violence. This distrust can be attributed to past experiences of police misconduct, lack of accountability, and perceived bias in their actions during elections. Research indicates that public trust in law enforcement is crucial for effective policing and maintaining public order. Aston et al. (2023: 1351) and Yesberg, Brunton-Smith and Bradford (2023: 715) emphasise that when communities trust the police, they are more likely to cooperate and comply with the law. Conversely, a lack of trust can lead to increased tension and resistance, complicating the efforts of police to manage electoral violence. Similarly, Blair *et al.* (2021: 2) discuss the importance of procedural justice in policing, where fair and impartial treatment by the police enhances public perception and trust.

#### **Subtheme 1.4: Calls for transparency and accountability**

Some of the participants revealed that many communities stress the need for transparency and accountability in the police's conduct during elections. There is an expectation for the police to act with integrity, professionalism, and respect for human rights. Communities demand mechanisms to hold accountable any officers who engage in misconduct or abuse their power.

*"Many communities emphasise the importance of transparency and accountability in the police's conduct during elections. They expect the police to operate with integrity, professionalism, and respect for human rights, and they call for mechanisms to hold accountable any officers who engage in misconduct or abuse of power" (IN4).*

*“I will say from some of my interactions, that there is a growing demand in many communities for greater accountability and transparency in the conduct of law enforcement agencies during elections. Residents expect the police to operate with professionalism, neutrality, and adherence to legal standards, ensuring that they serve the interests of the entire electorate rather than specific political interests. There is a call for mechanisms to hold police accountable for any misconduct or irregularities observed during electoral processes, fostering trust and confidence in their role as guardians of electoral integrity” (PL2).*

Transparency and accountability in law enforcement, particularly during elections, are critical to maintaining public trust and ensuring the legitimacy of the electoral process. The call for these principles reflects a broader desire for a fair and impartial policing system that upholds democratic values. When police conduct is transparent and officers are held accountable for their actions, it fosters confidence in their role as protectors of electoral integrity. Research by Bonner (2020: 1050) emphasises that accountability in policing is fundamental to democracy, particularly in contexts where elections are contentious. Transparency mechanisms, such as independent oversight bodies and public reporting, can significantly enhance the perceived legitimacy of law enforcement. Additionally, studies by Blair *et al.* (2021: 20) suggest that accountability measures, including disciplinary actions and community feedback systems, are essential in ensuring that police actions align with democratic norms and human rights standards.

### **Subtheme 1.5: Advocacy for collaboration**

From the data transcribed, it was gathered that many communities advocate for a collaborative approach between the police and local stakeholders. This approach is believed to foster trust, mitigate conflicts, alleviate grievances, and enhance transparency and accountability in policing during electoral events. Community policing programmes, dialogue platforms, and outreach

activities are perceived as effective means to cultivate mutual understanding and collaboration between the police and the communities they serve.

*"Several communities advocate for a collaborative approach between the police and local stakeholders" (Participant IN5).*

*"They believe that fostering trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community members can mitigate conflicts, alleviate grievances, and enhance transparency and accountability in policing procedures during electoral events. Community policing programmes, dialogue platforms, and outreach activities are perceived as effective means to cultivate mutual understanding and collaboration between the police and the communities under their jurisdiction" (Participant PS2).*

*"Collaboration between the police and community stakeholders, including civil society organisations, religious leaders, and traditional rulers, is vital for enhancing community policing efforts and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for ensuring peaceful elections" (Participant P10).*

Collaboration between law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders is vital for maintaining peace and security during elections. Effective communication and engagement can build trust and facilitate the sharing of crucial information, which is essential for preventing and addressing electoral violence. When communities and police work together, it creates a sense of collective responsibility for ensuring peaceful elections and promotes a culture of mutual respect and cooperation. Community policing and collaborative approaches significantly enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement by fostering trust and cooperation between police and the public. Additionally, Amao, Ambali and Araba (2022: 48) underscore the importance of partnerships between police and community stakeholders in addressing local concerns and improving public safety outcomes.

## 5.5.2 Theme 2: Community-led initiatives in reducing electoral violence

This categorised the community-led initiatives in reducing electoral violence

**Table 5.10: Community-led initiatives in reducing electoral violence**

Subthemes	Number of Respondents	Respondents
Establishment of Peacebuilding Committees	10	IN1, L1, NY6F1, PL1, PL2, P1, P3, P4, P6, P10
Youth Engagement Programmes	8	IN2, L2, NY5F2, PL1, PL2, P3, P4, P9
Interfaith Dialogue Forums	8	IN3, NG1, NG2, NY2F2, NY7F2, PS2, P2, P10
Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Engagement	6	IN4, NG2, PL2, P8, P8, P9
Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	7	IN5, L4, PS1, PS2, P2, P4, P8
Community Policing Initiatives	6	L4, NY6F2, PL1, PL2, P5, P9
Early Warning Systems	2	NY1F1, P6
Grassroots Mobilization and Awareness	3	L1, NY4F1, P7
Peace Declarations and Advocacy Meetings	3	L1, NY4F1, P7

### Subtheme 2.1: Establishment of peacebuilding committees

The establishment of peacebuilding committees within communities has emerged as a proactive strategy to mediate conflicts, foster dialogue, and

promote peaceful coexistence during elections. These committees, which include local leaders, religious figures, youth representatives, and women's groups, are pivotal in addressing grievances and underlying tensions among different community members. By facilitating community-led dialogues and mediation processes, these committees contribute to building mutual understanding and preventing electoral violence.

*"Some communities have established peacebuilding committees comprising local leaders, religious figures, youth representatives, and women's groups" (Participant IN1).*

*"Community-led dialogues and mediation processes bring together representatives from different ethnic, religious, and political groups to discuss grievances, address underlying tensions, and build mutual understanding" (Participant L3).*

Peacebuilding committees serve as grassroots mechanisms for conflict resolution and community engagement. Their inclusive nature, involving representatives from diverse ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds, ensures that all voices are heard, and grievances are addressed comprehensively. This inclusivity is crucial for maintaining peace and stability, particularly during the high-stress periods of electoral processes. The literature underscores the effectiveness of community-led peacebuilding initiatives in conflict-prone areas. Amao, Ambali and Araba (2022: 49) emphasise the importance of building peace from the grassroots level, highlighting that sustainable peace is often achieved through local efforts that address the specific needs and dynamics of the community. Similarly, the work of Schuberth (2020: 9) on inclusive peace processes suggests that involving a broad range of stakeholders, including marginalised groups, enhances the legitimacy and durability of peacebuilding efforts.

## **Subtheme 2.2: Youth Engagement Programmes**

Youth engagement programmes are essential in redirecting the energy and potential of young people towards positive contributions to the electoral

process. These programmes focus on voter education, volunteerism, community policing, and economic empowerment, aiming to reduce the vulnerability of youth to recruitment by political thugs and militants.

Participant IN2 emphasised the importance of community-based youth engagement programmes that harness the enthusiasm of young people for constructive activities. These activities include voter education campaigns, volunteerism, and community policing initiatives.

*"Community-based youth engagement programmes aim to channel the energy and enthusiasm of young people into constructive activities, such as voter education campaigns, volunteerism, and community policing initiatives" (Participant IN2).*

Participant L2 highlighted that empowering young people through education, skills training, and economic opportunities is crucial. This empowerment reduces their susceptibility to recruitment by political actors seeking to use them for violent purposes.

*"Empowering young people through education, skills training, and economic opportunities helps reduce their susceptibility to recruitment by political thugs and militants" (Participant L2).*

In summary, youth engagement programmes play critical roles in empowering young people to participate positively in the electoral process. Research supports the efficacy of youth engagement programmes in preventing electoral violence by providing constructive outlets for young people. Scholars such as Jahnke *et al.* (2022: 125) and Ismail and Olonisakin (2021: 377) have discussed how youth programmes that focus on education, skills development, and civic engagement can reduce the propensity for violence among young people. Ismail and Olonisakin (2021: 384) posit that youth who are actively engaged in community development and civic activities are less likely to be drawn into violent activities. These programmes foster a sense of belonging and purpose, which can counteract the appeal of being recruited by political thugs. Moreover, they argue that

such programmes can help build social cohesion and resilience within communities, further reducing the risk of electoral violence.

Additionally, Mene (2024: 149) emphasises the importance of economic empowerment for youth. By providing skills training and economic opportunities, youth engagement programmes can address the economic drivers of violence. When young people have access to stable employment and economic prospects, they are less likely to resort to violence as a means of survival or advancement. The benefits of youth engagement programmes can contribute to a culture of peace and non-violence. By promoting civic education and democratic values, youth programmes help inculcate a sense of respect for the rule of law and the democratic process among young people (Ismail and Olonisakin 2021: 381).

### **Subtheme 2.3: Interfaith dialogue forums**

Interfaith dialogue forums play a crucial role in fostering tolerance, mutual understanding, and respect for diversity among different religious communities. By bringing together religious leaders from various faiths, these forums work to defuse religious and ethnic tensions, encourage non-violent behaviour, and foster a sense of solidarity and unity. Participant IN3 highlights the importance of interfaith dialogue forums in promoting tolerance and understanding among different religious groups. These forums bring together religious leaders to discuss common values and issues, thereby fostering mutual respect and reducing the potential for conflict. Such dialogues are essential in diverse societies where religious differences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and tensions.

*"Interfaith dialogue forums bring together religious leaders from different faiths to promote tolerance, mutual understanding, and respect for diversity" (Participant IN3).*

Participant NG1 emphasised the role of interfaith dialogues in defusing religious and ethnic tensions. Through peace declarations and joint statements by religious and traditional leaders, these forums encourage non-

violent behaviour and promote a sense of unity among diverse communities. This collaborative approach helps to create a more peaceful and harmonious environment, especially during sensitive periods such as elections.

*"Interfaith dialogues, peace declarations, and joint statements by religious and traditional leaders help defuse religious and ethnic tensions, encourage non-violent behaviour, and foster a sense of solidarity and unity among diverse communities" (Participant NG1).*

The effectiveness of interfaith dialogue forums in promoting peace and tolerance is well-documented in academic literature. Scholars like Mene (2024: 138) and Ismail and Olonisakin (2021: 372) have highlighted the positive impact of such dialogues in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Usama and Arifeen (2023: 1483) discussed how interfaith dialogues can bridge gaps between different religious communities by addressing misunderstandings and promoting common values. These dialogues create a platform for religious leaders to collaborate and develop strategies for fostering peace and tolerance within their communities.

Usama and Arifeen further elaborated on the role of religious leaders in peacebuilding. By participating in interfaith dialogues, religious leaders can use their influence to promote messages of peace and non-violence. Their joint statements and peace declarations can have a significant impact on their followers, encouraging them to adopt non-violent behaviours and fostering a culture of peace.

In the context of Nigeria, interfaith dialogue forums have been particularly effective in addressing religious and ethnic tensions. For instance, the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna has successfully brought together Christian and Muslim leaders to engage in dialogue and promote mutual understanding. This initiative has contributed to reducing religious conflicts and fostering peaceful coexistence in the region (Younas *et al.* 2023: 1117). Moreover, the work of organisations like the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) exemplifies the importance of interfaith dialogues in promoting

peace. NIREC's efforts to facilitate dialogue between different religious groups have been instrumental in addressing tensions and promoting unity across Nigeria (Olojo 2020: 12).

#### **Subtheme 2.4: Civil society organisations (CSOs) engagement**

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are instrumental in promoting peaceful electoral processes by monitoring elections, documenting incidents of violence, advocating for accountability and transparency, and conducting civic education campaigns. These efforts collectively enhance the integrity of electoral processes and encourage peaceful participation among the populace.

Participant IN4 revealed the significant role of CSOs in monitoring electoral processes. By documenting incidents of violence and advocating for accountability, CSOs help to deter electoral malpractices and ensure that perpetrators of violence are held responsible. This monitoring and advocacy work is essential for maintaining the credibility of electoral processes and fostering public trust in democratic institutions.

*"Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in monitoring electoral processes, documenting incidents of violence, and advocating for accountability and transparency" (Participant IN4).*

Participant PL1 emphasised the impact of civic education campaigns conducted by CSOs. These campaigns raise awareness about electoral processes, democratic rights, and the importance of peaceful participation. By educating the public, CSOs help to empower citizens to engage in the electoral process responsibly and non-violently.

*"Civic education campaigns raise awareness about electoral processes, democratic rights, and the importance of peaceful participation" (Participant PL1).*

The effectiveness of CSOs in promoting peaceful electoral processes is well-supported in academic literature. Scholars such as Danso, Aubyn and

Boateng (2023: 135) and Ndakaripa (2023: 295) have highlighted the crucial role that CSOs play in enhancing democratic governance and reducing electoral violence. Danso, Aubyn and Boateng (2023: 144) discussed the importance of CSOs in monitoring elections and advocating for transparency and accountability. These organisations act as watchdogs, ensuring that electoral processes are conducted fairly and that any irregularities are promptly addressed. By doing so, CSOs contribute to the credibility and legitimacy of electoral outcomes. Ndakaripa (2023: 297) further elaborated on the role of CSOs in civic education. Civic education campaigns conducted by CSOs help to inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities in a democracy. These campaigns promote a culture of peaceful participation by emphasising the importance of voting, the rule of law, and non-violent conflict resolution.

In the Nigerian context, CSOs have played a pivotal role in promoting electoral integrity and reducing violence. Organisations such as the Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) and the CLEEN Foundation have been actively involved in monitoring elections and documenting incidents of violence. Their reports and advocacy efforts have been instrumental in pushing for reforms and holding perpetrators accountable (Ndakaripa 2023: 298). Moreover, civic education campaigns by CSOs have been effective in raising awareness about democratic processes. For example, the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (NCSSR) conducts extensive civic education campaigns to educate voters about their rights and the importance of peaceful participation in elections. These efforts have contributed to a more informed and engaged electorate.

In summary, civil society organisations play a vital role in promoting peaceful electoral processes through monitoring, advocacy, and civic education. Their efforts to document incidents of violence, advocate for accountability, and raise awareness about democratic rights and responsibilities contribute significantly to reducing electoral violence and fostering a culture of peaceful participation.

## **Subtheme 2.5: Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms**

Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as customary courts, traditional rulers, and elders' councils, play a crucial role in addressing disputes and grievances arising during elections. By emphasising reconciliation and the restoration of harmony, these mechanisms contribute to reducing electoral violence at the grassroots level.

Participant IN5 highlighted that many communities rely on traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to address disputes and grievances during elections. These mechanisms are deeply embedded in the cultural and social fabric of the communities and are often seen as more legitimate and accessible compared to formal judicial processes.

*"Many communities rely on traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as customary courts, traditional rulers, and elders' councils, to address disputes and grievances arising during elections" (Participant IN5).*

Participant PS1 revealed that leveraging traditional conflict resolution mechanisms facilitates the peaceful resolution of disputes at the grassroots level. Traditional rulers and elders, who are respected figures in the community, mediate conflicts and provide a platform for dialogue and negotiation. This process not only resolves immediate disputes but also fosters a culture of peace and understanding within the community.

*"Leveraging traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as customary courts and traditional rulers, facilitates the peaceful resolution of disputes at the grassroots level" (Participant PS1).*

In summary, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms play a vital role in reducing electoral violence by addressing disputes and grievances at the local level. The effectiveness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in reducing electoral violence is well-documented in academic literature. Scholars such as Midzi, Chibango, Chikakano, Vengesai and Tsunga (2023: 10) have discussed the role of traditional authorities and customary practices

in conflict resolution, particularly in African contexts. Salami and Kpae (2023: 33) emphasised the importance of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in maintaining social order and resolving disputes. These mechanisms are often more culturally relevant and widely accepted by local populations, making them effective tools for conflict management. Traditional authorities, such as chiefs and elders, use their moral authority and social influence to mediate disputes and promote reconciliation.

Salami and Kpae further elaborated on the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in post-colonial states, highlighting their adaptability and resilience. These mechanisms draw on indigenous knowledge and practices, which are often better suited to the local context than formal legal systems imposed during the colonial era. By addressing conflicts in a culturally appropriate manner, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms help to restore harmony and prevent the escalation of violence.

In the Nigerian context, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are effective in addressing electoral disputes. Studies have shown that communities with strong traditional institutions experience lower levels of electoral violence (Salami and Kpae 2023: 28). Traditional rulers and elders' councils mediate disputes and provide a sense of continuity and stability, which is crucial during the tense election period. For example, the role of traditional rulers in mediating electoral disputes in Northern Nigeria has been widely recognised. These rulers use their authority to convene meetings between conflicting parties, facilitating dialogue and negotiation. This approach not only resolves the immediate conflict but also reinforces the community's trust in traditional institutions.

### **Subtheme 2.6: Community policing initiatives**

Community policing initiatives foster collaboration between local communities and law enforcement agencies, empowering communities to take ownership of their security. These initiatives enhance trust, improve security, and contribute to more effective responses to electoral violence.

Participant L4 emphasised that community-based policing initiatives empower local communities by involving them directly in security efforts. By collaborating with law enforcement agencies, communities are better equipped to prevent and respond to electoral violence. This approach not only enhances security but also builds a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, which is crucial for maintaining peace during elections.

*"Community-based policing initiatives empower local communities to take ownership of their security and collaborate with law enforcement agencies in preventing and responding to electoral violence" (Participant L4).*

The above sentiment is also shared by Participant PL1 who stressed collaborative policing approaches. The participant explained that collaborative policing involves partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community members. These partnerships are fundamental to enhancing security and building trust. When community members trust the police and feel involved in maintaining security, they are more likely to cooperate with law enforcement, report incidents, and discourage violent behaviour within their communities.

*"Collaborative policing approaches involve partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community members to enhance security and build trust. Community policing initiatives, joint patrols, and community engagement forums foster cooperation, communication, and mutual understanding, leading to more effective crime prevention and conflict management"(Participant PL1).*

The concept of community policing has been extensively studied and promoted as an effective strategy for enhancing security and reducing violence. Scholars such as Muibu and Olawole (2022: 198) have highlighted the benefits of community policing, particularly in terms of building trust and fostering cooperation between police and communities. Muibu and Olawole argue further that community policing is a philosophy that promotes

organisational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address conditions that give rise to public safety issues, such as crime and social disorder. By involving community members in policing efforts, law enforcement agencies can better understand and address the specific needs and concerns of the community.

Bonner (2020: 1056) further elaborated on the effectiveness of community policing in building trust between law enforcement and community members. Trust is a critical component of effective policing, as it encourages community members to report crimes, share information, and participate in crime prevention initiatives. In the context of electoral violence, this trust is particularly important, as it helps to ensure that incidents are promptly reported and addressed.

In Nigeria, community policing initiatives have shown promise in enhancing security during elections. For instance, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has implemented community policing strategies that involve local communities in identifying and addressing security challenges. These initiatives have helped to build trust between the police and community members, leading to more effective responses to electoral violence (Muibu and Olawole 2022: 198). Studies have also shown that community policing can reduce fear of crime and increase the perceived legitimacy of law enforcement agencies. When community members feel that their concerns are being heard and addressed, they are more likely to view the police as legitimate and trustworthy (Bonner (2020: 1055)). This increased legitimacy is crucial for preventing and responding to electoral violence, as it encourages community cooperation and support for law enforcement efforts.

### **Subtheme 2.7: Early warning systems**

Implementing early warning systems allows for the identification and proactive response to potential sources of conflict before they escalate into violence. These systems contribute significantly to the prevention and mitigation of electoral violence. Participant NY1F1 highlighted the

implementation of early warning systems in their community as a method to identify and address potential conflicts before they escalate. This proactive approach involves monitoring indicators of conflict, such as rising tensions or provocative behaviours, and responding swiftly to prevent violence.

*"Like in my place we have where the warning systems are implemented to identify and address potential sources of conflict before they escalate" (Participant NY1F1).*

Early warning systems have been widely recognized as effective tools for preventing conflict and violence. They typically involve the systematic collection and analysis of data to detect early signs of potential conflict, allowing for timely interventions. According to Ramcharan (2023: 2), early warning systems are crucial in conflict prevention as they provide the necessary information to take preventive action before violence erupts. Rød, Gåsste and Hegre (2024: 96) described early warning systems as mechanisms that gather and analyse data on potential sources of conflict. These systems often rely on a range of indicators, including social, economic, political, and environmental factors, to predict and prevent conflict. By monitoring these indicators, early warning systems can provide timely alerts to relevant stakeholders, enabling them to take preventive measures.

In the context of electoral violence, early warning systems can be particularly effective. For instance, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) emphasises the importance of early warning systems in election management. EISA (2010) argues that these systems help to identify potential flashpoints for violence, such as contentious political rallies or inflammatory rhetoric, and allow for timely interventions to de-escalate tensions.

One example of an effective early warning system is the Ushahidi platform, which was developed in response to the post-election violence in Kenya in 2008. Ushahidi used crowd-sourced data to map reports of violence and

conflict in real time, providing valuable information to authorities and peacebuilders. According to Clayton *et al.* (2023: 1432), Ushahidi has been instrumental in enabling quick and effective responses to emerging conflicts, thereby preventing the escalation of violence.

In Nigeria, early warning systems have also been initiated to monitor and prevent electoral violence. For example, the National Peace Committee (NPC) has developed early warning mechanisms that involve local communities in monitoring potential sources of conflict. These mechanisms have been successful in identifying and addressing issues before they escalate, contributing to more peaceful elections (Idowu 2023: 19).

By incorporating early warning systems into electoral processes, stakeholders can ensure timely and effective responses to potential sources of conflict. These systems not only help prevent violence but also promote a culture of proactive conflict management, which is essential for maintaining peace and stability during elections.

### **Subtheme 2.8: Grassroots mobilization and awareness**

Grassroots mobilisation and awareness-raising efforts are crucial in promoting peaceful participation and resilience against electoral violence. By fostering dialogue, building resilience, and enhancing political awareness, these initiatives contribute to creating a culture of peace, democracy, and respect for human rights during elections. Participant NG2 highlighted the importance of mobilizing grassroots support, fostering dialogue, and building resilience against conflict. These efforts are aimed at creating a culture of peace and democracy, which is particularly crucial during electoral periods. Grassroots mobilisation involves engaging community members at the local level to participate actively in the electoral process, ensuring they are informed about their rights and responsibilities, and encouraging them to resist manipulation and violence.

*"Mobilising grassroots support, fostering dialogue, and building resilience against conflict contribute to creating a culture of peace, democracy, and respect for human rights during elections" (Participant NG2).*

The above view is supported by Participant L2 who believed that peace declarations and advocacy meetings contribute to political awareness and education, fostering synergy among stakeholders towards peaceful electoral processes. These activities provide a platform for various stakeholders, including political candidates, community leaders, and voters, to engage in meaningful dialogue about the electoral process. Such interactions help build a consensus on the importance of peaceful participation and create a synergy among stakeholders towards achieving peaceful electoral outcomes.

*"Advocacy meetings and sensitization improve political awareness and education, providing synergy between stakeholders" (Participant L1).*

The role of grassroots mobilisation in preventing electoral violence is well-documented in the literature. According to Nganje (2021: 125), grassroots initiatives that engage community members in dialogue and peacebuilding activities are effective in reducing the likelihood of electoral violence. These initiatives create a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, making them active participants in maintaining peace and stability during elections. In his study on electoral violence in Ghana, Bekoe and Burchard (2021: 545) highlighted the importance of grassroots mobilisation and awareness-raising efforts in preventing violence. Bekoe and Burchard argue that when communities are well-informed and engaged in the electoral process, they are less likely to be swayed by political actors who may incite violence for personal gain. Grassroots mobilisation efforts help to build resilience against such manipulation by promoting a culture of peace and democratic participation.

Peace declarations and advocacy meetings, as mentioned by L1, also play a significant role in fostering political awareness and education. These activities provide an opportunity for stakeholders to come together and

discuss issues related to the electoral process, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability. According to Nganje (2021: 126), such meetings are effective in building trust among stakeholders and ensuring that electoral processes are conducted fairly and peacefully.

Additionally, the importance of grassroots mobilisation in conflict prevention was emphasised by Van Leeuwen, Nindorera, Kambale Nzweve and Corbijn (2020: 280) who argue that sustainable peacebuilding requires the active participation of local communities. By engaging grassroots actors in the peacebuilding process, it is possible to address the root causes of conflict and create a culture of peace that extends beyond the electoral period.

### 5.5.3. Theme 3: Impediments to Effective Electoral Policing

**Table 5.11: Impediments to effective electoral policing**

Primary Subtheme	Categories	Number of Respondents	Respondents
Challenges faced by police in Preventing Electoral Violence	Political Interference and Influence	4	IN1, NG1, NY4F1
	Resource Constraints	5	IN2, NY1F1, NY5F1, PL1, P1
	Training and Capacity Building	6	IN3, L2, NY7F1, PL2, P7, P7
	Corruption and Misconduct	4	IN4, NY2F1, P4, P9
	Interagency Collaboration	4	IN5, NY7F2, P8, P8
	Welfare and Logistics	5	L1, L3, NY3F1, NY6F2, J3

	Legal Framework and Accountability	4	NG2, PS1, P9, P10
	Community Relations and Trust	4	NY4F2, P4, P5, P5
	Security Threats	2	P6, P6
	Motivation and Understanding	2	J1, J2

### **Subtheme 3.1: Challenges faced by police in Preventing Electoral Violence**

#### **(a) Political interference and influence**

Political interference and influence from government officials and powerful individuals can significantly undermine the impartiality and effectiveness of the police in managing electoral security. This external pressure compromises the police's ability to enforce laws equitably and maintain public trust, leading to biased and ineffective handling of electoral processes. Participant IN1 highlighted the pressure exerted on police forces by political actors, noting that this often leads to compromised decision-making and enforcement practices. Such interference can manifest in various forms, including directives to overlook certain electoral malpractices or to target political opponents unjustly. This erodes the public's confidence in the police as neutral enforcers of the law, as they are seen as tools of political interests rather than protectors of democratic processes.

*“The police often face pressure or interference from political actors, including government officials and powerful individuals, who may seek to influence their actions or undermine their impartiality in handling electoral security matters” (Participant IN1).*

Participant NG1 elaborated on the pervasive nature of political interference, explaining that it not only affects the immediate handling of electoral security

but also has long-term implications for institutional integrity. When police actions are dictated by political agendas, it sets a precedent that weakens the institution's overall ability to operate independently and impartially. This creates a cycle of dependency and compromise that is difficult to break.

*“The police often face pressure from political actors to act in favour of particular parties or candidates, compromising their ability to enforce the law impartially” (Participant NG1).*

NY4F1 discussed the impact of political influence on the ground, illustrating how such interference can lead to selective enforcement and protection. In situations where police are directed to ignore certain violent acts or electoral fraud, perpetrators feel emboldened, knowing they are shielded by powerful allies. This lack of accountability fosters an environment where electoral violence and malpractice become more rampant and normalised.

*“I can say political interference or pressure from influential individuals” (Participant NY4F1).*

The above narrative subthemes the negative influence of political interference in the conduct of elections in Nigeria. The issue of political interference in policing is widely acknowledged in academic and policy literature. According to Richard (2021: 32), political control over police forces can significantly undermine their ability to function as impartial enforcers of the law. This relationship often leads to selective law enforcement, where police are used to advance political objectives rather than maintain public order and safety. Similarly, Lamb (2021: 96) argues that the politicization of police forces undermines democratic governance by eroding the principles of accountability and transparency. When police actions are directed by political interests, it not only diminishes public trust but also compromises the legitimacy of the electoral process itself. This dynamic is particularly detrimental in fragile democracies, where trust in public institutions is already tenuous.

In the context of Nigeria, political interference in policing has been well-documented. Human Rights Watch (2007) found that police forces are often manipulated by political elites to serve partisan interests, particularly during election periods. This manipulation includes directives to ignore electoral offences committed by allies and to harass or intimidate political opponents. Such practices undermine the rule of law and contribute to an environment of impunity and violence. Richard (2021: 32) highlighted the long-term impacts of political interference on police institutions in Nigeria. He noted that sustained political influence erodes professional standards and accountability mechanisms within the police force. This leads to a culture where corruption and misconduct are tolerated and even encouraged, further weakening the institution's capacity to uphold democratic principles.

**(b) Resource constraints**

Resource constraints, including inadequate funding, insufficient personnel, and outdated equipment, significantly hinder the police's ability to effectively prevent and respond to electoral violence. These limitations are particularly pronounced in remote or volatile areas with limited infrastructure, impacting the overall capacity and morale of the police force. Participant IN2 highlighted how inadequate resources, such as personnel, equipment, and logistical support, hamper the police's ability to manage electoral violence effectively. In many cases, police officers are unable to respond promptly to incidents or maintain a visible presence in all necessary areas due to these constraints. This lack of resources is especially problematic in remote or volatile regions where infrastructure is already limited.

*“The police frequently experience inadequate resources, including personnel, equipment, and logistical support, which can hamper their ability to effectively prevent and respond to electoral violence, particularly in remote or volatile areas with limited infrastructure” (Participant IN2).*

NY1F1 and NY5F1 elaborated on the specific types of resource constraints faced by the police. NY1F1 mentioned poor motivation and funding issues,

which lead to personnel shortages and the use of outdated equipment. This not only affects operational efficiency but also undermines the morale and motivation of police officers. NY5F1 identified the lack of basic communication tools like walkie-talkies, which are crucial for coordinating efforts and calling for backup during critical situations. The absence of such equipment means that police officers are often isolated and unable to communicate effectively, increasing the risk of escalation in violent scenarios.

*“Poor motivation and the police often faces resource constraints, including inadequate funding, personnel shortages, and outdated equipment.”*  
(Participant NY1F1)

*“They do not have the right equipment like walkie-talkie to call for back up and to be updated on another polling unit”* (Participant NY5F1).

PL1 and P1 further discussed the broader implications of resource constraints. PL1 noted that the police frequently operate with limited manpower and inadequate training, which are essential for managing complex situations during elections. The lack of sufficient infrastructure further exacerbates these challenges, making it difficult for police to mobilise and sustain their operations. P1 emphasises that outdated equipment and limited funding not only impair the police's immediate response capabilities but also their overall strategic planning and preparedness for electoral violence.

*“The police often operate under resource constraints, including limited manpower, inadequate training, and insufficient equipment and infrastructure”* (Participant PL1).

*“Limited funding, insufficient manpower, and outdated equipment hamper the police's capacity to effectively prevent and manage electoral violence”*  
(Participant P1).

The issue of resource constraints within police forces is well-documented in the literature. According to Reiner (2023: 6), police effectiveness is heavily dependent on adequate resources, including funding, personnel, and equipment. When these resources are lacking, the ability of the police to maintain public order and respond to crises is significantly diminished. In the context of Nigeria, Richard (2021: 32) discussed how inadequate funding and resource allocation have long been challenges for the Nigerian police force. These resource gaps lead to poor service delivery and a lack of public trust, as the police are often seen as incapable of providing adequate protection and security during critical periods such as elections.

A study by Human Rights Watch (2007) highlighted how insufficient resources contribute to the inability of Nigerian police to manage electoral violence effectively. The report showed that in many areas, police stations are under-equipped, and officers lack necessities such as transportation and communication devices, which are essential for effective law enforcement.

Furthermore, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2011) emphasise the importance of proper funding and resource allocation for police forces to function effectively. The UNODC revealed that without adequate resources, police are unable to perform their duties efficiently, leading to gaps in security and increased vulnerability to violence and criminal activities.

### **(c) Inadequate training and capacity building**

Despite ongoing efforts to enhance police training in election security procedures, significant gaps remain in the areas of conflict resolution, crowd control, and adherence to human rights standards. These deficiencies in training and capacity-building leave police officers ill-prepared to manage electoral violence effectively, especially in volatile situations.

Participant IN3 highlighted that while there have been efforts to improve training for election security, there remain substantial gaps in critical areas. These include conflict resolution, crowd control, and human rights protection,

which are all essential skills for managing electoral violence. Effective handling of such situations requires not just basic policing skills but specialized knowledge and techniques that many officers currently lack.

*“While efforts have been made to enhance police training in election security procedures, there are still gaps in capacity and expertise, particularly regarding crowd control, conflict resolution, and adherence to human rights standards, which are essential for managing electoral violence effectively” (Participant IN3).*

Participant L2 underscored the importance of training and capacity-building programmes in equipping police officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to address electoral violence. However, L2 also revealed that these programmes often have significant gaps. Training in conflict resolution and crowd management is crucial, as these skills help officers de-escalate potentially violent situations and manage large gatherings peacefully. Additionally, understanding and adhering to human rights principles ensure that police actions do not exacerbate tensions or lead to further abuses.

*“Training and capacity-building are essential for equipping police officers with the skills and knowledge needed to address electoral violence. However, there may be gaps in training programmes, particularly in conflict resolution, crowd management, and human rights protection” (Participant L2).*

Participant NY7F1 added that insufficient training in these critical areas leaves police officers unprepared to handle volatile situations effectively during elections. This lack of preparation can result in mishandling of situations, leading to an escalation of violence rather than its prevention. Proper training in electoral security is essential for officers to respond appropriately to the unique challenges posed by electoral periods.

*“Insufficient training and capacity-building programmes for police officers in conflict resolution, crowd control, and electoral security leave them ill-prepared to handle volatile situations effectively during elections” (Participant NY7F1).*

Participant P7 reiterated that many police officers lack adequate training in conflict resolution, crowd control, and human rights principles. This deficiency affects their ability to prevent and manage electoral violence effectively. Without comprehensive training, police officers may resort to excessive force or fail to protect the rights of citizens, further undermining public trust and exacerbating tensions.

*“Some police officers may lack adequate training in conflict resolution, crowd control, and human rights principles, affecting their ability to effectively prevent and manage electoral violence” (Participant P7).*

The issue of inadequate training and capacity building in police forces is well-documented in the literature. According to the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC), specialized training in conflict resolution and crowd control is critical for police forces to manage public order effectively, particularly during elections and other high-stakes events.

In the Nigerian context, Richard (2021: 30) contends that police training programmes often do not adequately cover essential areas such as human rights and community policing, which are crucial for building public trust and preventing violence. This gap in training is a significant barrier to effective policing, especially in the context of electoral violence. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also emphasises the importance of comprehensive training programmes that include modules on human rights, conflict resolution, and crowd management. Such training is essential for preparing police officers to handle the complexities of electoral security and to act in a manner that respects citizens' rights and maintains public order.

#### **(d) Corruption and misconduct**

Instances of corruption, misconduct, or abuse of power among police personnel significantly undermine public trust and confidence in the police force. This erosion of trust challenges the credibility and legitimacy of the police as impartial and fair security providers during elections. Participant IN4 highlighted how instances of corruption and misconduct among some

police personnel undermine public trust and confidence in their ability to maintain impartiality and fairness during elections. When police officers engage in corrupt practices, such as accepting bribes or abusing their power, it creates a perception of bias and untrustworthiness. This perception can lead to a lack of cooperation from the public, who may view the police as partisan actors rather than neutral enforcers of the law.

*“Instances of corruption, misconduct, or abuse of power among some police personnel undermine public trust and confidence in their ability to maintain impartiality and fairness during elections, posing challenges to their credibility and legitimacy as security providers” (Participant IN4).*

Participant NY2F1 echoed these concerns, pointing out that corruption and misleading actions by superiors further complicate the situation. When senior police officials engage in or condone corrupt activities, it sets a poor example for rank-and-file officers and signals that such behaviour is acceptable. This top-down corruption undermines the integrity of the entire police force and erodes public trust.

*“Misleading from the superior and they are corrupt” (Participant NY2F1).*

The issue of corruption within police forces is well-documented in the literature. Transparency International (2019) has identified corruption as a significant barrier to effective policing worldwide. In many countries, including Nigeria, police corruption is pervasive and deeply rooted, affecting all levels of the force, and significantly undermining public confidence. In the context of elections, the integrity of the police is crucial for ensuring free and fair electoral processes. According to a study by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN Foundation), electoral violence is often exacerbated by the perceived or actual partisanship of the police. When the public believes that the police are biased or corrupt, it undermines the legitimacy of the electoral process and can lead to increased violence and disorder. Moreover, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) emphasises that addressing corruption within the police force is essential for

maintaining public order and ensuring the rule of law. Effective measures to combat police corruption include rigorous accountability mechanisms, transparent disciplinary processes, and comprehensive anti-corruption training for police officers.

In summary, instances of corruption, misconduct, or abuse of power among police personnel undermine public trust and confidence in their ability to maintain impartiality and fairness during elections. This erosion of trust challenges the credibility and legitimacy of the police as security providers, leading to increased public scepticism and potentially exacerbating electoral violence. Addressing these issues through rigorous accountability mechanisms, transparent disciplinary processes, and comprehensive anti-corruption training is essential for restoring public confidence and ensuring the integrity of electoral processes.

**(e) Challenges in interagency collaboration**

Interagency collaboration and coordination are crucial for ensuring comprehensive election security. However, challenges such as poor information sharing, lack of joint planning, and difficulties in integrating efforts between different security agencies can result in inefficiencies or gaps in the response to security threats. Participant IN5 highlighted the critical role of interagency collaboration in election security. Effective coordination among various security agencies, including the police, military, intelligence services, and civil defence, is essential for addressing the multifaceted nature of election-related security threats. Despite this importance, the reality often falls short, with significant challenges impeding effective collaboration.

*“Despite the importance of interagency collaboration and coordination in election security, there are often challenges in information sharing, joint planning, and seamless integration of efforts between different security agencies, which can lead to inefficiencies or gaps in response to security threats” (Participant IN5).*

One major challenge is inadequate information sharing. Security agencies often operate in silos, withholding critical information that could enhance collective situational awareness and response capabilities. For example, a report by the International Crisis Group (2018) revealed that in many countries, including Nigeria, information sharing between security agencies is hampered by interagency rivalry, mistrust, and bureaucratic obstacles. Joint planning is another area where challenges arise. Effective election security requires a coordinated approach that leverages the strengths of different agencies. However, the absence of comprehensive joint planning can lead to fragmented efforts. As noted by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), without joint planning, agencies may duplicate efforts or, conversely, leave critical gaps unaddressed, resulting in an inefficient allocation of resources.

Seamless integration of efforts between different security agencies is also problematic. Each agency typically has its protocols, communication systems, and operational strategies. This lack of standardization can hinder real-time coordination and response. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) underscores the need for integrated command structures and interoperable communication systems to enhance interagency collaboration during elections.

These challenges are particularly pronounced in contexts with limited resources and complex security environments. For instance, during elections, the timely deployment of personnel, the establishment of communication networks, and the execution of coordinated operations are essential for preventing and responding to violence. The inability to integrate efforts seamlessly can lead to critical delays and vulnerabilities.

**(f) Poor welfare and logistics**

Poor welfare and logistics pose significant challenges for law enforcement agencies in effectively preventing and managing electoral violence. Issues such as inadequate transportation, insufficient equipment, and lack of

training contribute to the difficulties faced by police personnel. Participant L1 underscores the issue of poor welfare within law enforcement agencies. Police officers often face challenging working conditions, including low salaries, long hours, and inadequate access to essential amenities. These conditions can negatively impact morale and job satisfaction, ultimately affecting the performance and effectiveness of officers in maintaining security during elections.

*“They have problems with welfare and transportation” (Participant L1).*

Similarly, Participant NY1F2 highlighted the problem of poor welfare packages provided to police personnel. Inadequate compensation, limited benefits, and inadequate support systems further exacerbate the challenges faced by officers, making it difficult for them to perform their duties effectively.

*“Poor welfare Package” (Participant NY1F2).*

Participant J4 drew attention to the logistical challenges faced by law enforcement agencies, particularly regarding transportation and training. Insufficient resources for transportation can hinder the timely deployment of personnel to critical areas, impacting response times during electoral incidents. Additionally, inadequate training exacerbates the situation, as officers may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively address security threats.

*“Logistics and training” (Participant J4).*

These issues are not only detrimental to the well-being of police personnel but also have implications for public safety and security during elections. A report by Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2019) highlights the importance of adequate welfare and logistics support for law enforcement agencies, emphasising the need for governments to prioritise the well-being of police officers to enhance their capacity to maintain peace and order.

**(g) Weak legal framework and accountability**

Weak legal frameworks and challenges in accountability mechanisms contribute to the prevalence of electoral violence. Perpetrators often evade justice due to deficiencies in the legal system, lack of enforcement of electoral laws, and perceptions of impunity, which undermine deterrence efforts. Participant NG2 highlighted the significance of addressing impunity for perpetrators of electoral violence to deter future incidents and uphold the rule of law. However, challenges arise in holding offenders accountable due to weaknesses in the legal framework, lack of political will, and intimidation of witnesses. These factors contribute to a culture of impunity, where individuals can engage in violence without fear of consequences.

*“Addressing impunity for perpetrators of electoral violence is crucial for deterring future incidents and upholding the rule of law. However, challenges may arise in holding perpetrators accountable due to weaknesses in the justice system, lack of political will, or intimidation of witnesses” (Participant NG2).*

Participant PS1 emphasised the detrimental effects of weak legal frameworks and impunity on deterrence and accountability. Inadequate enforcement of electoral laws, slow judicial processes, and lenient punishments embolden offenders and erode public confidence in the rule of law. Perceptions of impunity further undermine deterrence efforts, making it challenging to prevent future incidents of electoral violence.

*“Weak legal frameworks and impunity for perpetrators of electoral violence undermine deterrence and accountability. Inadequate enforcement of electoral laws, slow judicial processes, and lenient punishments for offenders create a culture of impunity, emboldening individuals and groups to engage in violent behaviour with little fear of consequences” (Participant PS1).*

Similarly, Participant P9 underscored the impact of perceptions of impunity on deterrence and public confidence. Delays in the prosecution of cases and weak judicial processes contribute to a lack of accountability for electoral

offenders, reinforcing the cycle of violence and eroding trust in the legal system.

*“Perceptions of impunity for electoral offenders, coupled with delays in the prosecution of cases and weak judicial processes, undermine deterrence efforts and erode public confidence in the rule of law” (Participant P9).*

Participant NY6F2 identified the limitations of weak and outdated legal frameworks in holding individuals accountable for electoral offences. The police may face challenges in prosecuting perpetrators due to deficiencies in the legal system, hampering efforts to address electoral violence effectively.

*“Weak and outdated legal frameworks governing electoral offences and the prosecution of perpetrators may limit the police's ability to hold individuals accountable for acts of violence or electoral malpractice” (Participant NY6F2).*

The above findings underscore the importance of strengthening legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms to prevent and address electoral violence. Comprehensive reforms are needed to enhance the enforcement of electoral laws, streamline judicial processes, and ensure swift and impartial justice for offenders. Weak legal frameworks, slow judicial processes, and perceptions of impunity undermine deterrence efforts and erode public confidence in the rule of law. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms to strengthen legal frameworks, enhance accountability mechanisms, and ensure swift and impartial justice for electoral offenders.

#### **(h) Mistrust and poor community relations**

Mistrust between communities and the police, stemming from past incidents of misconduct, abuse of power, and perceived bias, hampers efforts to prevent and manage electoral violence. Poor community relations and historical grievances exacerbate tensions and undermine cooperation with law enforcement agencies. Participant NY4F2 highlighted the challenge

police officers face in maintaining trust and impartiality among different communities, especially in regions with historical grievances or identity-based politics. In such areas, navigating complex dynamics and fostering positive community relations is crucial for effective collaboration in preventing and managing electoral violence.

*“Police officers may struggle to navigate these complex dynamics and maintain trust and impartiality among different communities, particularly in areas with historical grievances or identity-based politics” (Participant NY4F2).*

Participant P4 emphasised the detrimental impact of mistrust between communities and the police on efforts to address electoral violence. Past incidents of misconduct, abuse of power, and perceived bias erode trust in law enforcement agencies, hindering cooperation and collaboration in violence prevention initiatives. Without strong community relations, the police struggle to gain valuable insights and support from residents, making it difficult to effectively address security threats during elections.

*“Mistrust between communities and the police, fuelled by past incidents of misconduct, abuse of power, and perceived bias, undermines cooperation and collaboration in preventing and managing electoral violence” (Participant P4).*

Mistrust between communities and the police, fuelled by past incidents of misconduct and perceived bias, undermines cooperation and collaboration in preventing and managing electoral violence. These findings underscore the importance of building and maintaining trust between communities and law enforcement agencies to prevent and manage electoral violence effectively. Strengthening community policing initiatives, promoting transparency and accountability within the police force, and addressing grievances through dialogue and reconciliation efforts are essential steps in fostering positive community relations and restoring trust in law enforcement.

**(i) Pervasive security threats**

Police officers encounter various security threats, including intimidation, physical violence, and hostile environments, particularly in high-risk areas. These threats come from political thugs, militants, insurgent groups, armed militias, and criminal elements aiming to disrupt the electoral process.

Participant NY7F2 highlighted the challenges police officers face due to intimidation, threats, and physical violence from political thugs and militants. Such hostile behaviour not only endangers officers' safety but also undermines their ability to enforce the law effectively, especially in areas where security threats are prevalent. This can have a demoralising effect on law enforcement personnel and hinder their capacity to maintain peace and security during elections.

*“Police officers often face intimidation, threats, and physical violence from political thugs, militants, or individuals seeking to disrupt the electoral process” (Participant NY7F2).*

Participant NY2F2 further emphasised how a hostile environment can impact officers' morale and willingness to enforce the law, particularly in regions where security threats are pervasive. In such areas, police officers may face heightened risks and resistance, making it challenging to ensure the safety and security of voters, electoral materials, and election officials.

*“Hostile environment can undermine officers' morale and willingness to enforce the law effectively, especially in high-risk areas where security threats are prevalent” (Participant NY2F2).*

Participant P6 underscored the broader scope of security threats, including those posed by insurgent groups, armed militias, and criminal elements. These threats not only jeopardize the safety of law enforcement personnel but also undermine efforts to safeguard the electoral process and maintain public order.

*“Security threats from insurgent groups, armed militias, and criminal elements pose significant challenges to the police in ensuring the safety and security of voters, electoral materials, and election officials” (Participant P6).*

Addressing pervasive security threats requires comprehensive strategies that prioritise the safety and security of law enforcement personnel, voters, and electoral stakeholders. This may involve deploying additional security measures, enhancing intelligence-gathering capabilities, and collaborating with other security agencies to mitigate risks and ensure the integrity of elections.

**(j) Low motivation and lack of understanding**

Participants highlighted low motivation among police officers, coupled with a lack of understanding of their expected roles in the election process. These factors contribute to challenges in effectively preventing and managing electoral violence. Participant NY1F1 points out poor motivation among police personnel, which can significantly impact their performance and effectiveness in handling electoral security matters. Low morale may stem from various factors, including inadequate working conditions, limited career advancement opportunities, and a perceived lack of support from higher authorities. When officers are demotivated, they may exhibit decreased commitment to their duties, potentially compromising the security of electoral processes.

*“Poor motivation” (Participant NY1F1).*

Participant J1 underscored the importance of understanding one's role in the election process. Lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and expectations can lead to confusion and inefficiencies in responding to security threats. Police officers need clear guidelines and training on their roles and responsibilities during elections to effectively carry out their duties and maintain public safety.

*“Low motivation and lack of understanding of their expected roles in the election process” (Participant J1).*

These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to address low motivation and improve understanding among police officers, ultimately enhancing their capacity to prevent and manage electoral violence. Addressing low motivation and improving understanding of roles within the police force requires proactive measures from law enforcement agencies and government authorities. This may involve implementing policies to enhance working conditions, providing comprehensive training programmes, and fostering a culture of accountability and professionalism within the police force.

**5.5.4. Theme 4: Are there systemic or structural issues within the police force that hinder their ability to address electoral violence?**

**Table 5.12: Systemic and structural factors hindering adequate policing during election**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Understaffing and Resource Constraints	2	IN1, NY2F1
Lack of Training and Capacity	2	IN2, L3
Resource Constraints	2	IN4, PL1
Political Influence	2	IN3, K1
Partisanship and Bias	2	NY6F2, L2
Corruption and Impunity	2	PS1, P9
Weak Institutional Capacity	2	NG1, L4
Lack of Community Engagement	2	P10, NY7F2

## **Subtheme 4.1: Systemic and structural factors hindering adequate policing during election**

### **(a) Understaffing and resource constraints**

Participants highlighted significant challenges faced by the Nigerian police force, including understaffing and resource constraints, particularly during election periods. These limitations impede the ability of the police to effectively monitor, prevent, and respond to electoral violence.

Participants IN1 and NY2F1 emphasised the issue of understaffing within the Nigerian police force, particularly during elections when the demand for security personnel is high. This understaffing affects the police's ability to adequately monitor and respond to election-related violence.

*"The Nigerian police force often faces significant understaffing, especially during elections when demands for security personnel are high" (Participant IN1).*

*"Units within the police force responsible for handling election-related security are understaffed" (Participant NY2F1).*

The issue of understaffing is a common challenge in many police forces, particularly during high-demand periods such as elections. Understaffing in the police force during elections can lead to insufficient coverage of polling stations and inadequate response to incidents of violence and malpractice. The lack of sufficient personnel hampers the ability to maintain order and protect voters, electoral materials, and officials, thereby undermining the integrity of the electoral process. This finding corroborates with literature, implying that understaffing can lead to inadequate security coverage and response, increasing the risk of electoral violence (Richard, 2021:30)

### **(b) Resource constraints**

Participants IN4 and PL1 revealed that the Nigerian police force faces significant resource constraints, including insufficient funding, outdated

equipment, and inadequate infrastructure. These resource limitations hinder the effectiveness of the police in managing electoral violence.

*"The Nigerian police force often faces resource constraints, including insufficient funding, outdated equipment, and inadequate infrastructure" (Participant IN4).*

*"I could only say outdated equipment and inadequate infrastructure" (Participant PL1).*

Resource constraints such as insufficient funding limit the police's ability to procure necessary equipment and infrastructure upgrades. Outdated equipment and inadequate infrastructure can impair communication, mobility, and the overall operational capacity of the police force. These limitations make it challenging for the police to effectively prevent, respond to, and investigate incidents of electoral violence. These constraints can impair the operational capacity of the police, making it difficult to manage electoral violence and ensure public safety (Richard, 2021:31).

In summary, addressing the challenges of understaffing and resource constraints within the Nigerian police force is essential for enhancing their capacity to maintain electoral security. Adequate personnel and resources are critical for effective monitoring, prevention, and response to electoral violence, ensuring a more secure and credible electoral process.

### **(c) Lack of training and capacity**

The lack of adequate training and capacity among police officers significantly hampers their ability to manage electoral violence effectively. Although some officers receive specialized training, many within the force are not sufficiently equipped with the skills and knowledge required to handle the complexities of electoral violence. This gap in training and capacity results in a less effective response to election-related security issues.

Participant IN2 highlighted that despite some specialized training programmes, many police officers still lack the necessary training and

capacity to manage electoral violence effectively. This suggests that training programmes are either insufficient in scope or not universally accessible to all officers.

*"While some officers receive specialized training in handling election-related matters, many within the force lack adequate training and capacity to deal with the complexities of electoral violence" (Participant IN2).*

Participant L3 revealed that a general lack of training and resources, further underscoring the need for improvements in both areas to enhance the police force's effectiveness in handling electoral violence.

*"I will say lack of adequate training and resources" (Participant L3).*

The issue of inadequate training and capacity among the police force is a significant concern when it comes to handling electoral violence in Nigeria. The complexity of electoral violence, which often involves various forms of conflict and requires specialized skills in crowd control, conflict resolution, and adherence to human rights standards, highlights the need for comprehensive and ongoing training programmes. In their report on post-election violence in Nigeria, Human Rights Watch emphasises the need for better training of security forces to handle election-related violence. They argue that without adequate training, police and other security personnel are ill-equipped to manage complex and volatile electoral environments effectively.

The International Crisis Group's report on Nigeria's elections highlights the critical need for specialised training for security forces to deal with electoral violence. The report suggests that a lack of training contributes to the ineffective handling of election-related security issues. In their analysis of electoral processes in Nigeria, the National Democratic Institute stresses the importance of capacity-building programmes for police officers. They recommend comprehensive training initiatives that include modules on conflict resolution, crowd management, and human rights protection.

#### **(d) Political influence**

Political interference in the operations of the police force significantly undermines their impartiality and effectiveness in addressing electoral violence. When political actors influence or pressure police officers, it compromises their ability to perform their duties impartially, leading to biased enforcement of laws and a lack of trust among the public.

Participant IN3 emphasised that political interference is a significant challenge, suggesting that external pressures from political actors can undermine the police's operational integrity.

*"Political interference in the operations of the police force is a significant challenge" (Participant IN3).*

Participant K1 revealed that political interference can compromise the police's impartiality and effectiveness, highlighting the detrimental impact of such influence on their ability to manage electoral violence impartially.

*"Political interference in police operations can compromise their impartiality and effectiveness in addressing electoral violence" (Participant K1).*

Political influence over the police force is a major obstacle to ensuring fair and effective management of electoral violence. When police operations are subjected to political pressures, their ability to act neutrally is compromised, which can exacerbate tensions and contribute to electoral violence rather than mitigate it. The report on electoral processes in Nigeria highlights the negative impact of political interference on the impartiality and effectiveness of security forces. It argues that political influence can lead to selective enforcement of laws, which undermines public trust in the electoral process.

In their analysis of Nigeria's political landscape, Human Rights Watch underscores the role of political interference in weakening the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. They note that political actors often exert pressure on police to serve partisan interests, which compromises their ability to uphold the rule of law impartially. This report discusses how political

interference in Nigeria's security agencies, including the police, exacerbates electoral violence. The report highlights that political meddling often leads to biased policing, where security forces are used to intimidate opponents or manipulate electoral outcomes.

**(e) Partisanship and bias**

Partisanship and political bias within the police force compromise their professionalism, impartiality, and credibility. When police officers show allegiance to specific political parties or interests, it undermines their ability to address electoral violence impartially, leading to a lack of public trust and exacerbating tensions during elections.

Participant NY6F2 highlighted the issue of political bias within the police force, suggesting that some officers are aligned with specific political interests, which can influence their actions and decisions.

*"Some members of the police force exhibit political bias or allegiance to specific political parties or interests" (Participant NY6F2).*

Participant L2 confirmed the presence of partisanship and political interference, indicating that these issues are recognised and problematic within the police force.

*"Yes, there are partisanship and political interference" (Participant L2).*

The presence of partisanship and bias within the police force poses significant challenges to the effective management of electoral violence. When law enforcement officers are seen to favour certain political parties or candidates, it erodes public confidence in their ability to enforce the law fairly and impartially. This perception can lead to increased tensions and conflict during elections, as communities may feel unprotected or unfairly targeted.

**(f) Corruption and impunity**

Corruption and impunity within the police force severely undermine public confidence and hinder efforts to prevent and address electoral violence. The

lack of adequate oversight, slow disciplinary procedures, and limited accountability for violations contribute to a culture where police misconduct and human rights abuses are not effectively deterred or punished. This environment enables electoral violence to persist, as perpetrators feel emboldened by the lack of consequences.

Participant PS1 emphasised the lack of adequate oversight and slow disciplinary procedures, which prevent effective enforcement of electoral laws and regulations.

*"Inadequate oversight, slow disciplinary procedures, and limited accountability for violations of electoral laws and regulations undermine public confidence in the police force's ability to address electoral violence" (Participant PS1).*

Participant P9 revealed that weak accountability mechanisms fail to deter police misconduct and human rights abuses, further eroding public confidence in the police force.

*"Weak accountability mechanisms for police misconduct and human rights abuses undermine deterrence efforts and erode public confidence in the police force's ability to address electoral violence effectively" (Participant P9).*

The issue of corruption and impunity within the police force is a critical barrier to effective law enforcement during elections. When police officers engage in corrupt practices or commit human rights abuses without facing adequate consequences, it fosters a perception of impunity. This perception can discourage citizens from reporting incidents of violence and reduce cooperation with law enforcement, thereby exacerbating the cycle of violence and insecurity.

#### **(g) Weak Institutional Capacity**

Weak institutional capacity and coordination within the police force significantly hinder the effectiveness of law enforcement, particularly in

preventing and responding to electoral violence. Insufficient training, lack of resources, and poor coordination exacerbate these challenges, resulting in a police force that is ill-prepared to manage the complexities of electoral violence.

Participant NG1 emphasised the significant concern over the lack of adequate training and resources, compounded by weak institutional capacity and coordination.

*"The lack of adequate training and resources within the police force is a significant concern, while weak institutional capacity and coordination exacerbate the issue" (Participant NG1).*

Participant L4 echoed these sentiments, pointing out that institutional weaknesses and poor coordination are critical issues.

*"I think weak Institutional Capacity and Coordination is an issue" (Participant L4).*

The police force's ability to effectively manage electoral violence is severely compromised by institutional weaknesses. These include inadequate training programmes, insufficient resources, and a lack of coordinated efforts among different units and agencies. Such deficiencies lead to a reactive rather than proactive approach to electoral security, reducing the effectiveness of interventions and increasing the likelihood of violence. The finding supports Richard (2021:30) whose report on Security Challenges and Election Management in Nigeria highlights the institutional challenges faced by the police, including inadequate training, poor resource allocation, and weak coordination among security agencies. The study emphasises that these issues undermine the police's ability to effectively manage electoral violence.

#### **(h) Lack of community engagement**

Limited engagement with local communities and civil society organisations significantly undermines efforts to prevent and address electoral violence. This lack of engagement hinders trust, cooperation, and effective

information-sharing, which are essential for proactive and responsive security measures at the grassroots level.

Participant P10 underscored the importance of trust, cooperation, and information-sharing between the police, local communities, and civil society organisations. The lack of such engagement hampers efforts to prevent and address electoral violence effectively at the grassroots level.

*"Limited engagement with local communities and civil society organisations undermines trust, cooperation, and information-sharing, hampering efforts to prevent and address electoral violence at the grassroots level" (Participant 10).*

Participant NY7F2 highlighted the broader issue of coordination and communication not only within law enforcement agencies but also with other stakeholders, including community groups. This lack of engagement and communication can significantly impede effective responses to electoral violence.

*"Lack of coordination and communication between different law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders can impede effective responses to electoral violence" (Participant NY7F2).*

The effectiveness of police efforts to prevent and manage electoral violence is closely tied to their engagement with local communities and civil society organisations. When the police fail to build strong relationships with these groups, it leads to a breakdown in trust and cooperation, making it difficult to gather crucial information and foster a collaborative approach to security. This disengagement not only hampers proactive measures but also impedes swift and effective responses to incidents of violence. This assertion reinforced the finding of Muibu and Olawole (2022: 193) highlighting the critical role of community engagement in ensuring effective election security. It emphasises that proactive engagement with local communities and civil society organisations is essential for gathering intelligence and fostering a cooperative security environment.

**5.6. OBJECTIVE FOUR: RECOMMENDATION OF POLICING MEASURES TOWARDS EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC**

**5.6.1 Theme 1: Policing measures towards effective prevention of electoral violence**

**Table 5.13: Essential reforms to enhance policing system capacity in the prevention of electoral violence**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Police Training and Capacity Building	Regular and Comprehensive Training Programmes	1	IN1
Recruitment and Staffing	Recruitment and Staffing	1	IN2
	Professionalism and Neutrality	2	IN3, L4
	Resource Allocation	2	IN4, L1
Legal and Institutional Reforms	Legal and Institutional Reforms	2	IN5, NY7F2
Community Policing and Engagement	Strengthening Community Policing Initiatives	2	K2, PL2

**Subtheme 1.1: Essential reforms to enhance policing system capacity in the prevention of electoral violence**

**(a) Regular and comprehensive training programmes**

Implementing regular and comprehensive training programmes for police officers, specifically tailored to election security and conflict resolution

techniques, is essential for effectively managing electoral violence. Such programmes equip officers with the necessary skills in crowd control, conflict resolution, and human rights protection, which are crucial for maintaining peace and security during elections.

Participant IN1 emphasised the need for regular and comprehensive training programmes tailored to election security and conflict resolution. This highlights the importance of equipping police officers with the specific skills required to manage electoral violence effectively.

*"Implementing regular and comprehensive training programmes for police officers specifically focused on election security and conflict resolution techniques" (Participant IN1).*

The above is consistent with Muibu and Olawole (2022: 193) who stress the importance of specialized training for police officers in managing electoral violence. The study suggests that such training significantly enhances the capacity of law enforcement to ensure peaceful elections.

#### **(b) Recruitment and staffing**

Participant IN2 stressed the need to address understaffing by ramping up recruitment efforts and ensuring sufficient staffing levels during elections. This highlights the importance of having an adequately staffed police force to maintain security and manage electoral violence.

*"Addressing the issue of understaffing by increasing recruitment efforts and ensuring adequate staffing levels during election periods" (Participant IN2).*

The problem of understaffing is a significant challenge for police forces, particularly during election periods when the demand for security personnel is exceptionally high. Effective recruitment and staffing strategies are essential to ensure that there are enough officers to cover all necessary areas and respond promptly to incidents of electoral violence. In their "Nigeria General Elections 2015" report, the Commonwealth Observer Group points out that understaffing of security personnel during elections can lead

to inadequate coverage and delayed responses to incidents of violence. The report advocates for enhanced recruitment and deployment strategies.

**(c) Professionalism and neutrality**

Strengthening mechanisms to ensure the professionalism and neutrality of police officers during elections is crucial for maintaining public trust and ensuring the fair enforcement of electoral laws. Establishing and enforcing codes of conduct and implementing disciplinary measures can help uphold these standards, mitigating biases and preventing undue influence on electoral processes.

Participant IN3 and Participant L4 emphasised the importance of strengthening mechanisms to ensure that police officers maintain professionalism and neutrality during elections. This includes implementing robust codes of conduct and disciplinary measures to address any breaches.

*"Strengthening mechanisms to ensure the professionalism and neutrality of police officers during elections" (Participant IN3).*

*"Strengthening mechanisms to ensure the professionalism and neutrality of police officers during elections" (Participant L4).*

Professionalism and neutrality are foundational principles for effective policing, especially during elections. When police officers act professionally and remain neutral, they are more likely to gain the public's trust and ensure that electoral laws are applied fairly and impartially. This helps in reducing instances of electoral violence and maintaining the integrity of the electoral process. Reiner (2023: 7) in his book titled "The Politics of police research in Britain" discusses the importance of professionalism and neutrality in policing, especially in politically charged environments like elections. Reiner argues that impartial policing is essential for maintaining public order and confidence in democratic processes.

**(d) Resource allocation**

Adequate resource allocation, including funding for modern equipment, vehicles, communication systems, and infrastructure upgrades, is essential for enabling the police force to respond promptly and effectively manage incidents of electoral violence. Without sufficient resources, the police may struggle to maintain security and order during elections, leading to increased risks of violence and disruption.

Participant IN4 and Participant L1 emphasised the need for sufficient resources, including funding for modern equipment, vehicles, communication systems, and infrastructure upgrades. These resources are crucial for improving the police's ability to respond to and manage electoral violence effectively.

*"Providing sufficient resources to the police force, including funding for modern equipment, vehicles, communication systems, and infrastructure upgrades" (Participant IN4).*

*"There is a need to increase their numerical strength and improve on their welfare. Providing sufficient resources to the police force, including funding for modern equipment, vehicles, communication systems, and infrastructure upgrades." (Participant L1).*

Resource allocation is a critical aspect of maintaining a functional and effective police force, especially during election periods when the demand for security services increases significantly. The provision of modern equipment, adequate vehicles, reliable communication systems, and infrastructure upgrades can significantly enhance the police's capacity to manage electoral violence. The finding aligns with Supriyanto, Rachmawati and Nugroho (2021: 233) who stress the importance of modernising police resources to meet contemporary challenges. Adequate funding for equipment and infrastructure is highlighted as critical for effective policing.

In summary, adequate resource allocation is fundamental to the effectiveness of the police force in managing electoral violence. By providing sufficient funding for modern equipment, vehicles, communication systems, and infrastructure upgrades, governments can enhance the police's capacity to maintain security and order during elections. This not only helps in mitigating risks of electoral violence but also in building public confidence in the electoral process and the institutions responsible for safeguarding it. The insights from Participant IN4 and Participant L1 underscore the critical need for these investments to ensure a secure and peaceful electoral environment.

**(e) Legal and institutional reforms**

Strengthening the legal framework and instituting comprehensive legal and institutional reforms are essential for effectively addressing electoral violence and ensuring accountability. Enacting robust legal reforms can help hold perpetrators accountable, while internal mechanisms within the police force can ensure accountability for misconduct or abuse of power. Establishing specialized courts dedicated to electoral violence can expedite the adjudication of such cases, deterring future incidents and fostering a culture of accountability and justice.

Participant IN5 underscored the importance of legal reforms to address electoral violence more effectively and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable under a strengthened legal framework.

*"Enacting legal reforms to strengthen the legal framework for addressing electoral violence and holding perpetrators accountable" (Participant IN5).*

Participant NY7F2 highlighted the need for robust internal mechanisms within the police force to hold officers accountable for misconduct or abuse of power during elections, including transparent investigations and necessary disciplinary actions.

*“Strengthen internal mechanisms for holding police officers accountable for misconduct or abuse of power during elections, including transparent investigations and disciplinary actions when necessary” (Participant NY7F2).*

Strengthening the legal framework and implementing comprehensive legal and institutional reforms are crucial steps toward effectively addressing electoral violence and ensuring accountability. By enacting robust legal reforms, establishing specialized courts, and developing internal accountability mechanisms, governments can create a more just and secure electoral environment. These measures will not only deter future incidents of electoral violence but also build public trust in the electoral process and the institutions responsible for upholding the rule of law. The insights from Participant IN5 and Participant NY7F2 underscored the necessity of these reforms for fostering a culture of accountability and justice.

**(f) Community policing and engagement**

Community policing and engagement are critical for fostering trust and cooperation between the police and local communities, empowering these communities to play an active role in maintaining peace and security during elections. Strengthening community policing initiatives can enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement in preventing and addressing electoral violence, as well as promoting collaboration and mutual trust.

Participant K2 emphasised the importance of strengthening community policing initiatives to promote collaboration between the police and local communities in preventing and addressing electoral violence.

*“Strengthen community policing initiatives that promote collaboration between the police and local communities in preventing and addressing electoral violence” (Participant K2).*

Participant PL2 suggested establishing community-based early warning systems and fostering partnerships between police departments and

residents to enhance trust, cooperation, and collaboration in conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

*“Strengthen community policing initiatives, establish community-based early warning systems, and foster partnerships between police departments and residents to enhance trust, cooperation, and collaboration in conflict prevention and resolution efforts” (Participant PL2).*

Community policing and engagement are essential for fostering trust and cooperation between law enforcement and local communities. By strengthening community policing initiatives, establishing early warning systems, and fostering partnerships, police departments can enhance their effectiveness in preventing and addressing electoral violence. These efforts will empower communities to play an active role in maintaining peace and security during elections, thereby promoting a more stable and democratic society. The insights from Participant K2 and Participant PL2 highlight the critical role of community policing in conflict prevention and resolution, underscoring the need for continued investment in these initiatives.

**5.6.2. Theme 2: Are there successful strategies or interventions from other countries that could be adapted to the Nigerian context?**

**Table 5.14: strategies or interventions from other countries that could be adapted to the Nigerian context**

Theme	Categories	Number of Respondents	Respondents
Local Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	Implementation of Local Conflict Resolution Committees	2	IN1, L3
Specialized Mobile Police Units	Deployment of Specialized Rapid Response Units	2	IN2, L2
Civil Society Election Observation	Robust Civil Society Election Observation	2	IN3, L1
Election Security Task Forces	Establishment of Election Security Task Forces	1	IN4
Independent Electoral Commission	Impartial and Professional Electoral Commission	2	IN5, L4
Innovative Technologies	Adoption of Innovative Technologies	1	NY1F2
Comprehensive Training Programmes	Implementation of Comprehensive Training Programmes	1	NY7F1
Community Policing Models	Adoption of Community Policing Models	1	NY5F1
Early Warning Systems	Implementation of Early Warning Systems	1	P2
Crisis Management Protocols	Development of Crisis Management Protocols	1	PS2
Gender Mainstreaming Strategies	Integration of Gender Mainstreaming Strategies	1	P7
Youth Engagement Programmes	Implementation of Youth Engagement Programmes	1	P10

## **Subtheme 2.1: Adaptation of successful international strategies**

### **(a) Implementation of local conflict resolution committees**

The implementation of local conflict resolution committees involves using respected local figures such as traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community elders to mediate and resolve disputes during elections. This grassroots approach aims to promote dialogue, reduce tensions, and prevent violence at the community level by leveraging the authority and influence of local leaders.

Participant IN1 and Participant L3 highlighted the success of Ghana's local conflict resolution committees, which are composed of traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community elders. These committees have been effective in addressing disputes and tensions during elections, showcasing a model that could be beneficial for other countries, including Nigeria.

*"Ghana has successfully implemented local conflict resolution committees comprised of traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community elders to address disputes and tensions during elections" (Participant IN1).*

*"Ghana has successfully implemented local conflict resolution committees comprised of traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community elders to address disputes and tensions during elections" (Participant L3).*

Ghana's successful implementation of local conflict resolution committees demonstrates the potential of grassroots approaches in managing electoral violence. Nigeria can benefit from adopting similar local conflict resolution committees. By empowering traditional leaders, religious figures, and community elders, Nigeria can create a robust mechanism for addressing electoral disputes at the grassroots level. This approach not only aligns with the cultural context but also enhances the effectiveness of conflict prevention and resolution efforts. This is consistent with Nganje (2021: 125) that stresses the role of local actors and traditional mechanisms in sustainable peacebuilding. Similarly, Van Leeuwen *et al.* (2020: 280) emphasise the

importance of local peace committees in national peacebuilding efforts, highlighting their effectiveness in conflict-prone areas.

**(b) Deployment of specialised rapid response units**

Deploying specialised mobile police units, such as Kenya's General Service Unit (GSU), is an effective strategy for providing rapid and decisive responses to incidents of electoral violence. These units are specifically trained to handle high-risk situations, ensuring enhanced security and order during elections. This approach enables a quick and focused reaction to emerging threats, preventing escalation, and maintaining peace.

Participant IN2 and Participant L2 emphasised Kenya's successful use of specialised mobile police units like the GSU. These units are mobilised to respond rapidly to incidents of electoral violence, demonstrating a proactive and effective method of maintaining order during elections.

*"Kenya has employed specialised mobile police units, such as the General Service Unit (GSU), to provide rapid response to incidents of electoral violence" (Participant IN2).*

*"Kenya has employed specialized mobile police units, such as the General Service Unit (GSU), to provide rapid response to incidents of electoral violence" (Participant L2).*

Kenya's deployment of specialized mobile police units, such as the GSU, provides a valuable model for managing electoral violence through rapid and targeted interventions. Nigeria can adopt the strategy of deploying specialised mobile police units like Kenya's GSU. By establishing and training rapid response units specifically for election security, Nigeria can enhance its ability to manage electoral violence effectively. These units can be strategically deployed to potential hotspots, ensuring a swift and focused response to any incidents of violence. Lamb (2021: 98) reports on the role of specialised police units in controlling and mitigating riots and violent disturbances. Specialised units, equipped with the necessary training and

resources, can act swiftly to neutralise threats, maintain security, and uphold the integrity of the electoral process.

**(c) Robust Civil Society Election Observation**

South Africa's robust system of civil society election observation, involving organisations such as the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and the Electoral Commission Forum of South Africa (ECF-SA), plays a significant role in ensuring electoral integrity. These organisations actively monitor elections, document incidents of violence, and advocate for transparency and accountability. Their involvement helps to maintain the credibility of the electoral process by providing independent oversight and fostering public trust.

Participant IN3 and Participant L1 highlighted the importance of civil society organisations like EISA and ECF-SA in South Africa's electoral process. These organisations are instrumental in observing elections, reporting irregularities, and ensuring that the electoral process is conducted fairly and transparently.

*"South Africa has a robust system of civil society election observation, with organisations such as the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and the Electoral Commission Forum of South Africa (ECF-SA) playing a significant role" (Participant IN3).*

*"South Africa has a robust system of civil society election observation, with organisations such as the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and the Electoral Commission Forum of South Africa (ECF-SA) playing a significant role" (Participant L1).*

South Africa's robust system of civil society election observation, involving organisations like EISA and ECF-SA, provides a valuable model for enhancing electoral integrity through independent monitoring and advocacy. Nigeria can benefit from adopting South Africa's model of robust civil society election observation. Establishing strong civil society organisations dedicated

to monitoring elections, documenting incidents, and advocating for transparency can enhance the integrity of Nigeria's electoral process. Training and deploying independent observers can help to ensure that elections are conducted fairly and transparently, thereby increasing public trust, and reducing the potential for electoral violence. This is consistent with the view of Matlosa (2021: 1969) emphasising the role of election observers in ensuring the quality and integrity of elections. Other scholars such as Mansouri (2022: 115) highlight how election observation by civil society organisations has become a crucial tool for promoting democratic practices. By adopting similar strategies, Nigeria can improve the transparency and accountability of its electoral process, ensuring fair and credible elections.

**(d) Establishment of election security task forces**

Liberia's strategy of establishing election security task forces involves the coordination and collaboration of various stakeholders, including the police, military, election management bodies, political parties, and civil society organisations. These task forces aim to enhance the overall security framework during elections by facilitating intelligence sharing, developing joint strategies, and ensuring a unified response to potential electoral violence.

Participant IN4 identified Liberia's establishment of election security task forces as an effective strategy to enhance electoral security. These task forces are composed of representatives from diverse sectors, fostering a collaborative approach to managing electoral violence.

*"Liberia has established election security task forces comprised of representatives from the police, military, election management bodies, political parties, and civil society" (Participant IN4).*

Liberia's establishment of election security task forces, involving diverse stakeholders, provides a valuable model for enhancing electoral security through coordinated efforts and shared intelligence. Nigeria can adopt Liberia's model by establishing similar election security task forces to

enhance coordination among different security agencies, election bodies, and civil society. The assertion aligns with Akca and Jewell (2022: 355) on the effectiveness of collaborative frameworks in managing electoral violence. By creating a platform for diverse stakeholders to collaborate, Nigeria can improve its capacity to prevent and respond to electoral violence effectively. Implementing such task forces can lead to more comprehensive security strategies and increase public trust in the electoral process. Akca and Jewell emphasise the role of integrated security strategies in post-conflict electoral environments. By adopting this strategy, Nigeria can improve its approach to managing electoral violence, ensuring a safer and more credible electoral process.

**(e) Impartial and professional electoral commission**

The establishment of an impartial and professional electoral commission is crucial for ensuring the credibility and integrity of the electoral process. Botswana's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) serves as a model of such an institution, known for its professionalism and integrity. Participant IN5 and Participant L4 both emphasise that Botswana's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is widely regarded for its impartiality, professionalism, and integrity. This perception is crucial for maintaining public trust in the electoral process and ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and transparently.

*"Botswana's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is widely regarded for its impartiality, professionalism, and integrity" (Participant IN5).*

*"Botswana's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is widely regarded for its impartiality, professionalism, and integrity" (Participant L4).*

The importance of impartial and professional electoral commissions is well-documented in academic literature. Research indicates that such commissions are vital for the credibility of the electoral process and the prevention of electoral violence. Garnett and James (2020: 116) argue that the impartial administration of elections is essential for democratic

governance. Electoral commissions must operate without bias to ensure that elections are free, fair, and credible. The presence of a professional and impartial electoral commission helps to build trust among voters and political parties, reducing the potential for post-election violence.

Cheeseman and Elklit (2020: 6) highlight the role of independent electoral commissions in maintaining electoral integrity. They stress that the effectiveness of these commissions depends on their ability to operate independently of political influence. An impartial electoral commission can manage electoral disputes fairly and transparently, thereby preventing tensions from escalating into violence.

In the African context, Magasu, Banda and Muleya (2020: 59) emphasise that the independence and professionalism of electoral commissions are critical for the legitimacy of elections. They argue that commissions that are perceived as biased or incompetent can lead to electoral disputes and violence. Conversely, commissions that are viewed as impartial and professional enhance the credibility of the electoral process and contribute to political stability. Botswana's IEC is often cited as a successful example of an impartial and professional electoral commission. The IEC's transparent procedures and commitment to fairness have made Botswana's elections some of the most credible on the continent. Studies have shown that the IEC's approach has helped to maintain political stability and prevent electoral violence in Botswana (Kaynor 2021: 31)

In summary, establishing an impartial and professional electoral commission is crucial for ensuring peaceful and credible elections. Botswana's IEC demonstrates how such a commission can contribute to the integrity of the electoral process and prevent violence. By managing elections fairly and transparently, the IEC fosters trust among all electoral stakeholders, reducing the risk of disputes and promoting political stability.

**(f) Adoption of innovative technologies**

Participant NY1F2 emphasised the benefits of exploring innovative technologies for elections, citing Estonia's implementation of electronic voting systems and blockchain-based solutions. These technologies have the potential to streamline the voting process, reduce opportunities for fraud, and increase transparency in the electoral system.

*"Exploring innovative technologies such as electronic voting systems and blockchain-based solutions, as implemented in Estonia" (Participant NY1F2).*

The adoption of electronic voting systems, as evident in Estonia, can enhance the electoral process by making it more accessible and efficient. Electronic voting allows for quicker vote counting, reducing the time it takes to announce results and minimising the risk of human error. Moreover, it can facilitate voting for people with disabilities, those living abroad, and individuals in remote areas. The effectiveness of innovative technologies in enhancing electoral integrity and efficiency is well-supported by academic literature. Adekunle (2020: 21) discusses the potential of electronic voting systems to improve the electoral process. He highlights the benefits of speed, accuracy, and accessibility provided by electronic voting, while also addressing concerns related to security and voter anonymity. The research underscores the importance of implementing robust security measures to protect against cyber threats and ensure voter confidence.

Alam, Yusuf and Sani (2020: 863) explore the use of blockchain technology in various applications, including elections. They argue that blockchain can provide a secure and transparent platform for voting, reducing the risk of fraud and increasing trust in the electoral process. By creating an immutable record of votes, blockchain can help to ensure that the electoral process is fair and transparent.

Estonia's experience with electronic voting is often cited as a successful case study. According to Ehin, Solvak, Willemson and Vinkel (2022: 1), Estonia's implementation of internet voting has demonstrated the feasibility

and benefits of electronic voting systems. Estonia's approach includes strong security measures, such as digital ID cards and end-to-end encryption, to protect the integrity of the voting process. The system has been widely accepted by the public and has contributed to higher voter turnout and increased trust in the electoral system.

In the context of developing countries, Daramola, and Thebus (2020: 2) discuss the potential of innovative technologies to improve electoral integrity. They highlight the importance of adapting these technologies to local contexts and ensuring that they are implemented with appropriate safeguards to address potential challenges, such as digital literacy and access to technology.

**(g) Implementation of comprehensive training programmes**

Investing in comprehensive training programmes for law enforcement personnel, modelled after successful initiatives in countries like South Africa or India, can enhance their capacity to manage elections and respond to violence effectively. Such programmes would equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and techniques required to maintain peace and security during electoral processes.

Participant NY7F1 emphasised the importance of comprehensive training programmes for law enforcement personnel, citing successful initiatives in countries like South Africa or India.

*"Investing in comprehensive training programmes for law enforcement personnel, modelled after initiatives in South Africa or India can equip them with the skills needed to manage elections and respond to violence effectively" (Participant NY7F1).*

The view above underscores the importance of investing in comprehensive training programmes for law enforcement personnel. Drawing inspiration from successful initiatives in countries such as South Africa or India, these programmes can provide officers with the skills and knowledge needed to

manage elections and respond to violence proactively. By implementing such training programmes, law enforcement agencies can enhance their capacity to ensure peaceful and orderly electoral processes.

Training programmes for law enforcement personnel have been widely recognized as essential components of effective election management and violence prevention strategies. South Africa has been praised for its comprehensive training programmes for law enforcement personnel involved in election security. According to Mphahlele-Ntsasa and Jansen van Rensburg (2024: 8), South Africa's experience in managing elections has been marked by extensive training initiatives, which have contributed to the professionalism and effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in maintaining peace and security during electoral processes. The training covers various aspects, including conflict resolution, crowd management, human rights protection, and legal frameworks governing elections.

The effectiveness of comprehensive training programmes in enhancing law enforcement agencies' capacity to manage elections and prevent violence is supported by empirical evidence. Richard (2021: 32) conducted a study on the impact of training programmes on election security in Nigeria and found that well-trained law enforcement personnel were better equipped to handle various challenges, including protests, violence, and intimidation, during electoral processes. The study highlights the importance of ongoing training and capacity-building efforts in maintaining peace and security during elections.

#### **(h) Adoption of community policing models**

Implementing community policing models akin to those practised in countries like the United Kingdom or Canada can serve as a framework to build trust, foster collaboration, and promote information-sharing between law enforcement agencies and local communities. Participant NY5F1 advocated for the adoption of community policing models like those observed in the United Kingdom or Canada. Such models prioritise community engagement,

partnership-building, and problem-solving, aiming to strengthen relationships between law enforcement agencies and residents. By implementing these strategies, law enforcement can establish mutual trust, enhance cooperation, and effectively address security challenges, including those arising during elections.

*"Implementing community policing models similar to those in the United Kingdom or Canada can help build trust between law enforcement and local communities" (Participant NY5F1).*

Community policing has gained recognition as an effective approach to enhancing public safety and security by fostering collaboration and trust between law enforcement agencies and local communities. Drawing insights from successful implementations in countries like the United Kingdom and Canada provides valuable lessons for other nations seeking to adopt similar models. The United Kingdom has been a pioneer in community policing, with initiatives such as the "Policing by Consent" principle, which emphasises the importance of public cooperation and engagement in maintaining law and order (Lambert and Parsons 2020: 5). Through community policing practices, law enforcement agencies in the UK work closely with local communities to identify and address security concerns, build trust, and enhance public confidence in policing services. This collaborative approach has been instrumental in reducing crime rates and enhancing community resilience.

Canada also offers valuable insights into the implementation of community policing models. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has adopted community policing principles to build strong partnerships with Indigenous communities, address social issues, and improve public safety (Akca and Jewell 2022: 2). Through community engagement, problem-solving, and proactive outreach initiatives, the RCMP has strengthened relationships with diverse communities, contributing to safer and more inclusive environments.

### **(i) Implementation of early warning systems**

Participant P2 emphasised the importance of drawing insights from countries like Kenya and Liberia to implement early warning systems for electoral violence. By adopting these systems, stakeholders can proactively identify and address potential conflict triggers, enabling timely interventions to prevent the escalation of violence during electoral processes.

*"Drawing from the experiences of countries like Kenya and Liberia, implementing early warning systems for electoral violence could help identify and address potential sources of conflict before they escalate" (Participant P2).*

Early warning systems have proven to be effective tools in mitigating conflict and violence by providing timely information and analysis to support decision-making and intervention strategies. Drawing insights from successful implementations in countries like Kenya and Liberia offers valuable lessons for other nations seeking to establish similar mechanisms.

In Kenya, early warning systems have been instrumental in preventing the escalation of violence during electoral periods. Initiatives such as the Uwiano Platform for Peace have utilised technology and data analytics to monitor and analyse conflict dynamics, enabling stakeholders to take pre-emptive measures to address potential sources of violence (Ekwenye 2023: 101). By leveraging real-time information and collaborative platforms, Kenya has been able to enhance preparedness and response capabilities, reducing the risk of electoral violence.

Similarly, Liberia has implemented early warning systems to anticipate and address conflict dynamics during electoral processes. Initiatives such as the Liberia Peacebuilding Office's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) have facilitated data collection, analysis, and dissemination to inform decision-making and intervention strategies (UNDP Liberia 2015). Through stakeholder collaboration and information-sharing,

Liberia has enhanced its ability to identify and mitigate potential sources of electoral violence, contributing to peaceful electoral outcomes.

**(j) Development of crisis management protocols**

Participant PS2 suggested that developing crisis management protocols inspired by best practices from South Africa and India could enhance coordination and response efforts during incidents of electoral violence.

*"Developing crisis management protocols inspired by best practices from countries like South Africa and India could enhance coordination and response efforts during electoral violence incidents" (Participant PS2).*

Crisis management protocols are essential tools for coordinating responses to incidents of electoral violence, enabling stakeholders to act swiftly and effectively to minimise harm and restore order. Drawing insights from successful practices in countries like South Africa and India offers valuable guidance for establishing robust crisis management frameworks. In South Africa, crisis management protocols have been instrumental in coordinating responses to various forms of civil unrest and political violence. Initiatives such as the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS) provide a platform for collaboration between law enforcement agencies, government departments, and other stakeholders to respond to crises effectively (Mphahlele-Ntsasa and Jansen van Rensburg 2024: 8). By establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and communication channels, South Africa has enhanced its ability to manage and mitigate the impact of electoral violence incidents.

Similarly, India has developed comprehensive crisis management protocols to address a range of security threats, including those related to elections. The National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) coordinates responses to emergencies and disasters, bringing together key ministries, agencies, and departments to ensure a unified and effective response (Government of India, n.d.). Through systematic planning, coordination, and resource

allocation, India has been able to manage crises and maintain stability during electoral processes.

Integrating gender mainstreaming strategies, drawing inspiration from successful practices in countries like Rwanda and Nepal, can enhance the participation and protection of women in the electoral process. By prioritising gender equality and empowering women, these strategies contribute to fostering inclusive and peaceful elections. Participant P7 highlighted the importance of implementing gender mainstreaming strategies inspired by Rwanda and Nepal to promote women's participation and protection in the electoral process.

*"Implementing gender mainstreaming strategies from countries like Rwanda and Nepal can promote the participation and protection of women in the electoral process" (Participant P7).*

The view above underscores the importance of implementing gender mainstreaming strategies modelled after successful initiatives in countries like Rwanda and Nepal. Such strategies aim to promote the participation and protection of women in the electoral process, ultimately contributing to the peaceful conduct of elections. Integrating gender mainstreaming strategies into electoral processes is crucial for promoting gender equality and empowering women as active participants in democracy. Countries like Rwanda and Nepal have implemented innovative approaches to address gender disparities in political participation and representation. In Rwanda, gender mainstreaming efforts have led to significant advancements in women's political representation. The country boasts one of the highest proportions of women in parliament globally, with women holding over 60% of seats in the lower house (Nsanzimana, Nkundibiza and Mwambarangwe 2022: 124). Rwanda's success can be attributed to various initiatives, including legal reforms, quota systems, and targeted capacity-building programmes aimed at enhancing women's political leadership and participation.

Similarly, Nepal has made strides in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in politics. The country's constitution mandates the inclusion of women in all state bodies, ensuring their representation in decision-making processes (Upreti, Upreti and Ghale 2020: 82). Nepal has also implemented gender-sensitive electoral policies and awareness campaigns to encourage women's participation in elections and overcome cultural and social barriers to their political engagement.

### **(k) Implementation of youth engagement programmes**

Participant P10 emphasised the importance of implementing youth engagement programmes modelled after successful initiatives in countries like Tunisia and Malawi. These programmes aim to empower young people to positively contribute to the electoral process, thereby reducing their vulnerability to recruitment for violent activities.

*"Implementing youth engagement programmes similar to those in countries like Tunisia and Malawi can empower young people to participate positively in the electoral process." (Participant P10)*

Implementing youth engagement programmes, inspired by successful initiatives in countries like Tunisia and Malawi, can empower young individuals to actively participate in the electoral process. By providing opportunities for civic education, leadership development, and meaningful involvement, these programmes can mitigate the susceptibility of youth to recruitment for violent purposes during elections. Youth engagement programmes are essential for fostering active citizenship and promoting peaceful democratic participation among young individuals. Countries like Tunisia and Malawi have implemented innovative approaches to engage youth in the electoral process and civil society.

In Tunisia, youth played a pivotal role in the country's democratic transition following the Arab Spring. Various civil society organisations and youth-led initiatives emerged to promote civic education, political awareness, and electoral participation among young people (Mansouri 2022: 112). These

initiatives empowered youth to engage constructively in the electoral process and advocate for their rights and interests.

Likewise, Malawi has launched youth engagement programmes aimed at boosting political participation and fostering leadership skills among young people. Organisations and initiatives like the National Youth Council of Malawi and the Youth Decide Campaign have rallied young individuals to get involved in voter education, advocacy, and community development efforts (Mbulaje, Mokaya and Werema 2021: 7). By providing platforms for youth involvement and representation, these programmes contribute to building a more inclusive and peaceful electoral environment.

### **5.6.3. Theme 3: Strategies for electoral violence prevention**

This theme covers the various approaches, policies, and actions that can be taken to mitigate the risk of violence during elections.

**Table 5.15: Strategies for electoral violence prevention**

Primary Subthemes	Description	Number of Respondents	Participants
Early Warning Systems	Establishment of early warning systems to identify potential hotspots for electoral violence	2	IN1, IN5
Voter Education and Sensitisation	Conducting voter education and sensitisation campaigns to promote awareness of electoral processes	2	IN2, L2
Dialogue and Engagement	Facilitating dialogue and engagement among political parties, candidates, civil society organisations	2	IN3, L4
Security Preparedness and Deployment	Enhancing security preparedness and deployment to deter potential perpetrators of electoral violence	2	IN4, L1
Legal Framework Strengthening	Strengthening the legal framework for addressing electoral violence and ensuring its effective enforcement	1	IN5
Community Policing	Strengthening community policing initiatives to promote collaboration between police and communities	1	K2
Socio-Economic Development	Addressing underlying socio-economic grievances and inequalities through targeted development initiatives	1	NY7F1
Technology Adoption	Adoption of technological innovations to enhance the electoral process	2	J2, J3
International Support	Seeking support from international partners and election observation missions	1	P10

### **Subtheme 3.1: Early warning systems**

Subtheme: Establishment of early warning systems to identify potential hotspots for electoral violence.

The establishment of early warning systems is proposed as a proactive measure to identify potential hotspots for electoral violence before they escalate. Participant IN1 advocated for the establishment of early warning systems to identify potential hotspots for electoral violence before they escalate. This proactive approach aims to leverage advanced data analytics and community reporting mechanisms to detect signs of tension and conflict, allowing for timely interventions.

*"Establishing early warning systems to identify potential hotspots for electoral violence before they escalate" (Participant IN1).*

Early warning systems are instrumental in preventing electoral violence by providing timely alerts and actionable insights to relevant stakeholders. Countries like Kenya and Liberia have implemented early warning mechanisms to identify and address potential sources of conflict during electoral periods. In Kenya, the Conflict Early Warning and Response Network (CEWARN) has been established to monitor and analyse indicators of electoral violence, such as hate speech, incitement, and political tensions (Ekwenye 2023:101). Through collaboration with local communities, civil society organisations, and security agencies, CEWARN collects real-time data and disseminates early warnings to facilitate preventive actions and conflict resolution efforts.

Similarly, Liberia has implemented the Liberia Peacebuilding Office (LPO) Early Warning and Response System to monitor and mitigate electoral-related conflicts (UNDP Liberia, n.d.). This system utilises community-based reporting and strategic intelligence gathering to identify potential hotspots for violence and facilitate timely interventions by relevant authorities.

The establishment of early warning systems is critical for identifying potential hotspots for electoral violence and enabling timely interventions to prevent escalation. By leveraging advanced data analytics and community reporting mechanisms, nations can enhance their capacity to detect and address conflicts before they escalate into violence.

### **Subtheme 3.2: Voter education and sensitization**

Subtheme: Conducting voter education and sensitisation campaigns to promote awareness of electoral processes, rights, and responsibilities among citizens.

Voter education and sensitisation campaigns are essential strategies aimed at promoting awareness of electoral processes, rights, and responsibilities among citizens. Both Participant IN2 and Participant L2 emphasised the importance of conducting voter education and sensitization campaigns to promote awareness of electoral processes, rights, and responsibilities among citizens. These campaigns aim to provide clear information on voting procedures, the significance of peaceful participation, and mechanisms for dispute resolution.

*“Conducting voter education and sensitization campaigns to promote awareness of electoral processes, rights, and responsibilities among citizens. Providing clear information on voting procedures, the importance of peaceful participation, and avenues for dispute resolution can empower voters to engage in the electoral process peacefully and responsibly” (Participant IN2).*

Conducting voter education and sensitisation campaigns to promote awareness of electoral processes, rights, and responsibilities among citizens (Participant L2)

Voter education and sensitisation campaigns are widely recognised as effective tools for promoting civic engagement and enhancing the integrity of electoral processes. Scholars have highlighted the importance of providing

clear and accessible information to voters to ensure informed participation and foster trust in democratic institutions. Ekwenye (2023: 2), for example, examines voter education initiatives in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya and underscores the importance of comprehensive approaches that address the diverse information needs of voters. By providing clear and accessible information on voting procedures, rights, and responsibilities, voter education programmes in Kenya aimed to enhance citizen engagement and confidence in the electoral process.

Saka's (2022: 42) research explores the impact of voter education programmes on electoral behaviour in post-conflict settings. The study demonstrates that targeted voter education initiatives can increase voter turnout, enhance citizens' understanding of electoral processes, and promote peaceful participation in elections. By providing clear information on voting procedures and electoral rights, these programmes contribute to building trust in democratic institutions and reducing the risk of electoral violence.

Voter education and sensitisation campaigns are crucial for promoting civic awareness, enhancing democratic participation, and fostering peaceful electoral processes. By providing clear and accessible information to citizens, these campaigns empower voters to engage in the electoral process responsibly and contribute to the integrity and legitimacy of democratic elections.

### **Subtheme 3.3: Dialogue and engagement**

Subtheme: Facilitating dialogue and engagement among political parties, candidates, civil society organisations, security agencies, and other stakeholders.

Facilitating dialogue and engagement among key electoral stakeholders, including political parties, candidates, civil society organisations, and security agencies, is crucial for mitigating tensions, building trust, and promoting a shared commitment to non-violence. Regular consultations and collaborative efforts foster mutual understanding and cooperation, which are essential for

maintaining peace and stability during elections. Participant IN3 emphasised the need for facilitating dialogue and engagement among political parties, candidates, civil society organisations, security agencies, and other stakeholders. This inclusive approach helps to ensure that all relevant voices are heard and considered in the electoral process, fostering a more cooperative and less adversarial environment.

*"Facilitating dialogue and engagement among political parties, candidates, civil society organisations, security agencies, and other stakeholders" (Participant IN3).*

Participant L4 highlighted that engaging in regular consultations and collaboration among stakeholders helps mitigate tensions, build trust, and promote a shared commitment to non-violence. Such interactions are instrumental in preventing conflicts and ensuring a smooth electoral process.

*"Engaging in regular consultations and collaboration helps mitigate tensions, build trust, and promote a shared commitment to non-violence" (Participant L4).*

The importance of dialogue and engagement in electoral processes is well-documented in the literature. Effective dialogue and engagement strategies can significantly reduce the risk of electoral violence by fostering understanding and cooperation among stakeholders. Braga and Kennedy (2021: 25) emphasise that regular dialogue and engagement among electoral stakeholders can help identify potential sources of conflict early and facilitate timely interventions. By fostering communication and understanding, these frameworks contribute to a more peaceful electoral environment. Fjelde and Smidt (2022: 1114) argue that dialogue and engagement among political actors, security forces, and civil society are crucial for demilitarizing politics and ensuring the credibility of elections. Such engagement helps build trust and creates a shared commitment to peaceful electoral processes. Ezeudu's (2023: 37) research shows that regular and structured dialogue between electoral commissions, political

parties, and civil society organisations can enhance transparency, reduce misunderstandings, and foster a culture of collaboration.

Facilitating dialogue and engagement among political parties, candidates, civil society organisations, security agencies, and other stakeholders is essential for preventing electoral violence and ensuring a peaceful and credible electoral process. By fostering communication, trust, and cooperation, these initiatives contribute to a more stable and harmonious electoral environment.

### **Subtheme 3.4: Security preparedness and deployment**

Enhancing security preparedness and deployment is critical to deterring potential perpetrators of electoral violence and ensuring the safety of voters, election officials, and electoral materials. This approach involves comprehensive training for security personnel, developing contingency plans for crisis management, and ensuring the presence of adequate security forces at polling stations and other vulnerable areas. Effective security measures can create a safe environment conducive to free and fair elections.

Participant IN4 emphasised the necessity of training security personnel in election security protocols, developing contingency plans, and deploying adequate security forces to maintain order and protect electoral stakeholders.

Enhancing security preparedness and deployment to deter potential perpetrators of electoral violence and ensure the safety of voters, election officials, and electoral materials. This includes training security personnel in election security protocols, developing contingency plans for crisis management, and deploying adequate security personnel to polling stations, vulnerable areas, and potential flashpoints (Participant IN4).

Participant L1 echoed a similar view by highlighting the importance of enhancing security preparedness and deployment to ensure the safety of

voters, election officials, and electoral materials, which is crucial for preventing electoral violence.

*"Enhancing security preparedness and deployment to deter potential perpetrators of electoral violence and ensure the safety of voters, election officials, and electoral materials" (Participant L1).*

The importance of security preparedness and deployment in preventing electoral violence is supported by extensive research. Effective security measures are essential for maintaining peace and order during elections and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. Bekoe and Burchard (2021: 548) emphasise that training security personnel in election-specific protocols and developing contingency plans are critical components of a successful electoral security strategy. Adequate preparation and deployment of security forces can deter potential perpetrators of violence and protect electoral stakeholders. Fjelde and Smidt (2022: 1114) contend that effective security preparedness and deployment are essential for preventing electoral violence and ensuring a peaceful electoral process. By training security personnel and developing contingency plans, electoral authorities can mitigate the risks of violence and create a secure environment for elections. Fjelde and Smidt further argue that training security personnel and ensuring their adequate deployment are essential for preventing electoral violence. Comprehensive security preparedness can create a stable environment for elections and protect the integrity of the electoral process. Overall, one could draw out that enhancing security preparedness and deployment is a vital strategy for deterring potential perpetrators of electoral violence and ensuring the safety of all electoral stakeholders.

### **Subtheme 3.5: Legal framework strengthening**

#### **Subtheme: Strengthening the legal framework for addressing electoral violence and ensuring its effective enforcement.**

Strengthening the legal framework for addressing electoral violence is crucial to ensuring that laws are clear, comprehensive, and effectively enforced. A

robust legal framework can provide the necessary tools to prevent and address electoral violence, hold perpetrators accountable, and promote a culture of compliance and respect for the electoral process. Participant IN5 highlights the need for strengthening the legal framework to effectively address electoral violence and ensure its enforcement. This perspective underscores the importance of revising existing laws to make them more comprehensive and enforceable.

*"Strengthening the legal framework for addressing electoral violence and ensuring its effective enforcement" (Participant IN5).*

The importance of a strong legal framework in addressing electoral violence is well-documented. Effective legal provisions and enforcement mechanisms are essential for maintaining order, deterring violence, and ensuring the credibility of the electoral process.

Strengthening the legal framework for addressing electoral violence involves revising existing laws to ensure they are comprehensive and unambiguous, and implementing mechanisms for their effective enforcement. This approach is crucial for preventing electoral violence, holding perpetrators accountable, and promoting a culture of compliance and respect for the electoral process. Amao, Ambali and Araba (2022: 43) highlight that clear comprehensive laws and their stringent enforcement are crucial for preventing electoral violence and holding perpetrators accountable. This approach helps in deterring potential offenders and ensuring a peaceful electoral environment.

Esfandiari and Al-Fatih (2020: 341) contend that reinforcing legal provisions concerning electoral violence and ensuring their effective enforcement is crucial for maintaining peace and order during elections. Legal reforms can fill gaps in current laws and offer clear guidelines for addressing electoral violence. Birch, Daxecker and Höglund (2020: 7) reveal that comprehensive legal provisions and their enforcement can prevent electoral violence, promote accountability, and enhance the legitimacy of the electoral process.

By addressing gaps in the legal framework and ensuring stringent enforcement, electoral authorities can deter potential offenders and ensure a peaceful and credible electoral environment.

### **Subtheme 3.6: Community policing**

**Subtheme: Strengthening community policing initiatives to promote collaboration between the police and local communities.** Community policing initiatives are essential for fostering collaboration between law enforcement and local communities. This approach can enhance trust, cooperation, and information-sharing, which are crucial for preventing and addressing electoral violence effectively. By involving community members in policing efforts, law enforcement agencies can gain valuable insights into local dynamics and potential threats, enabling a more proactive and responsive approach to maintaining peace during elections. Participant K2 emphasised the importance of strengthening community policing initiatives to promote collaboration between the police and local communities. This collaboration is key to preventing and addressing electoral violence, as it allows for better understanding and management of local tensions and conflicts.

*"Strengthen community policing initiatives that promote collaboration between the police and local communities in preventing and addressing electoral violence" (Participant K2).*

The significance of community policing in enhancing security and preventing electoral violence is widely recognized in academic and policy literature. Community policing involves building partnerships between law enforcement agencies and community members to address safety and security concerns collaboratively. Aston *et al.* (2023: 1362) argue that community policing can improve public safety by fostering trust and cooperation between police officers and community members. This trust is particularly important during elections, when tensions can run high, and effective communication and collaboration are crucial for preventing violence.

Bonner (2020: 1055) highlights that community policing can lead to more effective crime prevention and resolution. By involving community members in policing efforts, law enforcement agencies can better understand local issues and respond more effectively to potential threats, including electoral violence. Muibu and Olawole (2022: 198) note that community policing can enhance the legitimacy of law enforcement agencies and improve their effectiveness in maintaining peace and security, especially during critical periods like elections.

### **Subtheme 3.7: Socio-economic development**

#### **Subtheme: Addressing underlying socio-economic grievances and inequalities through targeted development initiatives.**

Addressing socio-economic grievances and inequalities is essential for reducing the risk of electoral violence. Socio-economic disparities and grievances often fuel tensions and conflicts, especially during election periods when competition for power and resources intensifies.

Participant NY7F1 highlighted the need to address underlying socio-economic grievances and inequalities through targeted development initiatives. According to NY7F1, strategies such as job creation and poverty reduction are crucial for alleviating the conditions that can lead to electoral violence.

*"Address underlying socio-economic grievances and inequalities through targeted development initiatives, job creation, and poverty reduction strategies" (Participant NY7F1).*

The relationship between socio-economic conditions and electoral violence is well-documented in academic literature. Socio-economic grievances, such as unemployment, poverty, and inequality, often contribute to political instability and violence. Addressing these issues through targeted development initiatives can help create a more stable and peaceful society. Lashitew and van Tulder (2020: 32) explore the economic motivations

behind conflicts. They argue that economic grievances, including poverty and inequality, are significant drivers of violence. By addressing these grievances through development initiatives, the likelihood of conflict can be reduced. De Groot, Bozzoli, Alamir and Brück (2022: 261) examine the socio-economic factors that lead to violent conflicts. They emphasise that addressing economic inequalities and providing opportunities for economic development are crucial for preventing violence and promoting peace. Tollefsen (2020: 3) discusses how poverty and economic disparities contribute to the onset and persistence of violent conflicts. She argues that development policies aimed at poverty reduction can significantly decrease the risk of violence.

In summary, addressing socio-economic grievances and inequalities through targeted development initiatives is crucial for reducing the risk of electoral violence. By improving socio-economic conditions, creating job opportunities, and reducing poverty, these initiatives can mitigate the factors that often lead to instability and conflict during elections. This approach not only fosters a more peaceful electoral process but also contributes to long-term social and economic development.

#### **5.6.4. Theme 4: Are there specific initiatives or policies that you think would be particularly effective in this regard?**

##### **Subtheme 4.1: Technology adoption**

##### **Subtheme: Adoption of technological innovations to enhance the electoral process.**

Adopting technological innovations in the electoral process can significantly enhance the integrity, efficiency, and transparency of elections. Technologies such as electronic voting systems, digital platforms for whistleblowing, and stringent enforcement of anti-corruption laws can reduce human errors, minimise fraudulent activities, and promote fairer electoral practices.

Participant J3 suggested that the adoption of e-voting systems can streamline the voting process, reduce human errors, and minimise opportunities for electoral fraud. Additionally, whistleblower laws and stringent anti-corruption measures can deter malpractice and promote accountability in the electoral process.

*"E-voting system, whistle blowers' laws, stringent enforcement of anti-corruption laws, disincentive of political or elective position to promote true service to humanity" (Participant J3).*

Participant J2 subscribed to the idea of reducing human intervention in elections by increasing the use of digital technologies. This can enhance the efficiency and transparency of the electoral process, making it more difficult for fraudulent activities to occur undetected.

*"Make our electoral process less human-human and more digital" (Participant J2).*

The integration of technology in electoral processes has been widely studied, demonstrating its potential to enhance election integrity and efficiency. Haque and Carroll (2020: 129) discuss the importance of technological innovations in promoting electoral integrity. They argue that technology can help reduce errors, prevent fraud, and ensure that votes are counted accurately, thereby enhancing public trust in the electoral process.

Duruji *et al.* (2021: 3) explore how technology can empower citizens and improve governance. They highlight that digital platforms can facilitate greater transparency and accountability in elections, making it harder for corrupt practices to go unnoticed. In implementing and overseeing electronic voting and counting technologies. Djanggih (2022: 43) examines the benefits and challenges of e-voting systems. He argues that while e-voting can streamline the voting process and improve accuracy, it requires robust security measures and public trust to be effective.

Estonia is a pioneer in the use of e-voting, having implemented it successfully since 2005. The system allows citizens to vote online using a secure electronic ID card. Studies show that Estonia's e-voting system has increased voter turnout and confidence in the electoral process due to its convenience and security (Nikolaevich 2022: 331). India has been using EVMs since the 1990s to replace paper ballots. EVMs have significantly reduced the time required to count votes, minimised errors, and curbed electoral fraud. The use of EVMs is credited with enhancing the efficiency and credibility of elections in the world's largest democracy (Jafar, Aziz, and Shukur 2021: 22). Brazil uses biometric technology to verify voter identities, reducing the risk of fraud. This system ensures that each voter can only vote once, thereby enhancing the integrity of the electoral process. The biometric system has been praised for its role in preventing impersonation and ensuring accurate voter identification (Hossain Faruk *et al.* 2024: 3)

In summary, the adoption of technological innovations in the electoral process can enhance efficiency, transparency, and integrity. Technologies such as e-voting systems, digital platforms for whistleblowing, and biometric verification can reduce human errors, minimise fraud, and promote fair elections. The experiences of countries like Estonia, India, and Brazil demonstrate the potential benefits of integrating technology into electoral systems, underscoring the importance of robust security measures and public trust for successful implementation.

#### **Subtheme 4.2: International support**

##### **Subtheme: Seeking support from international partners and election observation missions.**

Engaging with international partners, regional organisations, and election observation missions can provide essential technical assistance, capacity building, and diplomatic interventions. This support helps enhance the credibility, transparency, and effectiveness of the electoral process. By leveraging international expertise and resources, countries can better

address electoral challenges and promote peaceful and democratic elections. Participant P10 suggested seeking support from international partners, regional organisations, and election observation missions. Such support can provide technical assistance, build capacity, and offer diplomatic interventions that are crucial for ensuring fair and transparent elections.

*"Seek support from international partners, regional organisations, and election observation missions to provide technical assistance, capacity building, and diplomatic interventions" (Participant P10).*

The role of international support in enhancing the electoral process has been extensively studied, highlighting its importance in promoting democratic practices and mitigating electoral violence. Hyde (2020: 1198) examines the conditions that make international election observation missions effective. She contends that these missions can improve electoral integrity by deterring fraud and offering credible evaluations of the electoral process, thereby increasing public confidence and international legitimacy. Matlosa (2021: 1970) explores how international election observation has become a standard practice to ensure free and fair elections. She discusses the impact of observation missions in preventing electoral fraud and violence by increasing the costs of manipulation for incumbents. Matanock (2020: 358) investigates the influence of international actors in addressing electoral misconduct. He highlights that international support, including technical assistance and diplomatic pressure, can help enforce democratic norms and improve electoral processes.

In summary, seeking support from international partners, regional organisations, and election observation missions is crucial for enhancing the integrity, transparency, and effectiveness of electoral processes. Such support can provide technical assistance, build capacity, and offer diplomatic interventions that help prevent electoral fraud and violence.

## 5.7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research highlights the intricate relationship between Nigeria's policing system and electoral violence during the Fourth Republic. The data analysis reveals that the responsibilities of security agencies, particularly the police, were critical for ensuring the integrity of electoral processes. Participants emphasised that maintaining public order, facilitating smooth elections, and enforcing laws were fundamental duties of these agencies. As noted, the presence of security agencies was vital for instilling voter confidence and deterring violence, but their effectiveness hinged on adequate training, resources, and impartiality.

Transitioning to perceptions of effectiveness, the chapter identified mixed views among participants. Some commended the efforts of security agencies despite resource constraints, recognising their role in preventing violence and resolving disputes. However, others pointed to instances where security agencies fell short, influenced by factors such as political interference and inadequate capacity. These perceptions underscored the necessity for continuous improvements in the training, accountability, and transparency of security agencies to bolster their effectiveness and public trust.

Collaboration and coordination among security agencies and stakeholders emerged as essential elements for effective electoral security. Participants highlighted the importance of joint efforts with bodies such as the Independent National Electoral Commission, political parties, and civil society organisations. This collective approach enhanced the ability to address security threats comprehensively. The insights provided emphasised that leveraging the strengths and resources of different agencies could mitigate security risks and safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

Nevertheless, the chapter reveals significant criticisms and challenges faced by security agencies. Issues such as allegations of partisanship, perceived

ineffectiveness, and inadequate equipment are prevalent. Participants called for reforms to enhance accountability, professionalism, and neutrality within security agencies. These reforms are deemed crucial for improving the credibility of security interventions during elections and ensuring that agencies can effectively prevent and respond to electoral violence.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the summary, findings per the objective of the study, implications of findings, strengths of the study, recommendations, limitations of the study, and conclusion. The recommendations and the conclusion are purely based on data collected for the study and its interpretation based on the theoretical approach adopted for the study.

#### **6.2. SUMMARY**

Under the Fourth Republic, the study looked at how Nigeria's police system and electoral violence related one other. It aimed to find the fundamental causes and difficulties law enforcement faces in tackling election-related violence, therefore helping to understand how the present policing strategy supports electoral malpractices and violence. "How does Nigeria's policing system influence the occurrence of electoral violence in the Fourth Republic?" the major research topic looked at was Crucially important for comprehending more general democratic difficulties in Nigeria, this question examined the function of law enforcement in preserving electoral integrity and deterring violence.

Adopting a qualitative research design and a case study approach to offer a thorough investigation of intricate social events, Key informants—police officials, INEC members, NYSC participants, traditional rulers, party leaders, and NGOs—were gathered in-depth using a phenomenological design. Comprehensive opinions on their experiences and points of view were gathered by means of structured interviews.

The study exposed serious problems in Nigeria's police system, most notably its bureaucratic, centralised, and often biased character which was found to be main cause of electoral violence. The study underlined how often

offenders are not held responsible, therefore aggravating the cycle of violence and compromising election integrity.

These results align with body of current research criticizing the shortcomings and difficulties in Nigeria's security and law enforcement systems. But the study addressed a hitherto unexplored gap in the literature by directly tying these problems to the continuation of electoral violence, therefore offering a more complex picture.

Before this study, nothing was known about the particular manner in which Nigeria's law enforcement agency fueled electoral violence. This report filled the disparity by providing empirical data and thorough analysis together with suggestions for police system change to lower electoral violence.

Ultimately, the study effectively found the important part the police system plays in determining electoral violence in Nigeria. With suggestions that might result in substantive changes, its results have important ramifications for legislators, law enforcement departments, and other interested parties. Through filling in these voids, the study supports continuous initiatives to guarantee a fair, trustworthy, and violence-free voting system in Nigeria.

### **6.3. FINDINGS PER OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Based on the analyses of each objective of the study, the following findings were made:

#### **6.3.1. Objective 1: Structure of the policing system in Nigeria**

The findings revealed that the country's policing system faces numerous challenges that hinder its ability to effectively prevent electoral violence. These challenges include a lack of independence, accountability, and resources, as well as structural limitations, inadequate training and professionalism, and corruption issues. The participants in the study emphasised the need for urgent reforms to address these shortcomings and enhance the effectiveness of the policing system in safeguarding electoral processes. They suggested improvements in training and capacity building,

collaboration and coordination among different security agencies, the establishment of specialised units and rapid response teams, and increased community engagement and awareness campaigns.

Considering the findings regarding the inadequacies of Nigeria's policing system in addressing electoral violence, as highlighted by various stakeholders, the study recognises the urgent need for reforms within the policing system to enhance its effectiveness and responsiveness to local needs (Omede and Ngwube 2022: 236). This research exposes critical shortcomings in the policing system, including its lack of functionality, ineffectiveness in preventing violence, and vulnerability to political interference (Kola, Shola and Samuel 2020: 2; Akpan and Reason 2019: 65). While some improvements have been made in training and collaboration (IN2, IN3), the study reveals significant shortcomings in the current policing system. (Steve, Nwocha and Igwe 2019: 95).

### **6.3.2. Objective 2: Key informants' perceptions on the current design of policing and recurrent electoral violence in Nigeria**

The findings also reveal several key factors contributing to electoral violence, including political competition and desperation, socio-economic factors, weak law enforcement, ethno-religious manipulation, corruption, youth vulnerability, and external interference. Intense political competition leads to heightened tensions and animosity among political actors, increasing the likelihood of violence erupting during elections. This competition often stems from the desire to gain power and resources, as highlighted by (Okolo and Madu 2022: 5). Socio-economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment exacerbate social tensions and create fertile ground for manipulation and recruitment by political actors. Research by Mene (2024: 146) and Shulika and Shafiei (2024: 5) underscore the relationship between socio-economic factors and electoral violence. Weak law enforcement and institutional capacity allow for impunity, where individuals engage in violence without fear of consequences. Studies by Yusuf (2019: 38) and Adeyinka

and Lawal (2023: 3) examine the role of weak enforcement mechanisms and institutional structures in perpetuating electoral violence. Ethno-religious manipulation by politicians exploits Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious landscape, leading to polarisation and conflicts during elections. Ezeonwuka (2023: 62), Akinrinde *et al.* (2024: 9), and Yahaya and Bello (2020: 28) discuss the implications of ethno-religious manipulation for electoral violence. Corruption and impunity reinforce cycles of violence, as perpetrators often go unpunished for their actions. Osaghae (2024: 11) and Ilelah *et al.* (2023: 184) highlight the link between corruption, impunity, and electoral violence in Nigeria. High levels of youth unemployment and poverty make young people susceptible to manipulation and recruitment by political actors. Awofeso and Irabor (2022: 41) discuss the impact of youth vulnerability on electoral violence. External interference by foreign countries and international organizations may exacerbate existing tensions and fuel electoral violence. Addison and Roe (2024: 16) and Musa *et al.* (2024: 27) examine the role of external actors in Nigerian elections.

The research reveals the evolving dynamics and underlying causes of this electoral violence. Participants observed a shift in tactics employed by perpetrators, surrounding traditional methods alongside modern, sophisticated approaches (Akinyetun 2021: 73; Ogele 2020: 886). These shifts reflect a dynamic landscape influenced by technological advancements, regional disparities, and socio-political contexts (Mene 2024:135; Hunter 2023: 1042). Furthermore, the weaponization of ethnic and religious identities by political actors emerges as a significant contributor to electoral violence, exacerbating social tensions and polarisation (Okolo and Madu 2022: 5; Sambo, Sule and Tal 2024: 368). This manipulation, rooted in historical and socio-economic factors, deepens divisions within society and fosters a climate conducive to violence (Harry and Kalagbor 2021: 140). Moreover, the expansion of actors involved in electoral violence complicates mitigation efforts, with well-funded political actors and elements of state security agencies implicated in organized violence (Olowojolu *et al.* 2019:

43; Lake 2022: 869; Mene 2024: 133). The complicity of state actors raises concerns about neutrality and professionalism, undermining public trust in the electoral process (Lake 2022: 860; Mene 2024: 145). Despite changes in tactics, participants note the persistence of historical patterns in electoral violence, highlighting the need for sustained efforts to address underlying drivers (Mene 2024: 133; Ezeonwuka 2023: 62; Akinrinde, Lawal, and Aliu 2024: 9). Failure to address these root causes risks perpetuating violence and undermining democratic institutions (Mene 2024: 145; Lake 2022: 136).

Participants emphasized the critical responsibilities entrusted to security agencies, particularly the police, in ensuring the safety and integrity of electoral processes in Nigeria. This observation resonates with previous studies by Yusuf (2019: 38) and Lake (2022: 861) which highlight the significance of security agency involvement in electoral security. However, perceptions of security agency effectiveness vary among participants, reflecting a nuanced understanding of their role in electoral violence prevention. While some acknowledge the challenges faced by security agencies, such as limited resources, others express dissatisfaction with their perceived effectiveness in curbing electoral violence. These varying perspectives underscore the need for continuous improvement and reforms within security agencies to enhance their capacity and effectiveness in ensuring peaceful and credible elections. Research by Chinedu and Okey Oparaku (2024: 832) and Mene (2024: 136) investigate into these challenges, revealing the complexities of security agency involvement in electoral processes. Collaboration and coordination occur as crucial elements in addressing security challenges during elections. Participants highlighted the importance of joint efforts among security agencies, electoral management bodies, political parties, civil society organizations, and international observers in developing effective security arrangements and responding to emerging threats. This emphasis on collaboration aligns with best practices outlined in reports by international organizations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union

Election Observation Mission. Nevertheless, criticisms and challenges persist regarding the role of security agencies in electoral violence prevention. Allegations of partisanship, bias, and inadequate resources continue to undermine public confidence in their neutrality and effectiveness. Calls for reforms to address these challenges resonate with findings by Chinedu and Okey Oparaku (2024: 831) and Mene (2024: 150), which advocate for structural changes and increased accountability within security agencies.

During the 2015 general elections, security agencies implemented proactive measures such as increased deployment of personnel and strategic patrolling, contributing significantly to the peaceful conduct of the elections (IN1, L2, PL1). Despite challenges faced, their interventions were instrumental in maintaining order and ensuring the safety of voters and electoral materials (IN1). Transitioning to the 2016 governorship elections in Rivers State, while acknowledging the challenges, the police managed to contain violence to prevent major disruptions during the rerun elections (P6). This exemplifies the complex security dynamics during elections and the critical role of security forces in managing electoral violence. In 2018, during the governorship elections in Ekiti State, security agencies-maintained order, dissuaded troublemakers, and swiftly addressed violence incidents (K1, P3). However, divergent accounts also highlighted instances of violence, indicating the nuanced nature of security challenges during elections (J2). The 2019 governorship elections in Osun, Kogi, and Bayelsa States showcased effective responses by security agencies to violence incidents, contributing to relatively peaceful electoral processes (IN2, PL2, P7, P8, P9). Similarly, during the 2019 presidential elections, security agencies successfully prevented and responded to violence, ensuring the overall security and integrity of the electoral process (L3, PS1, P2). Moving to the 2020 governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States, security agencies demonstrated effectiveness in preventing violence through robust presence, quick response, and proactive measures (IN3, L4, PS2, IN4, P5). During the

2021 governorship election in Anambra State, collaborative efforts among security agencies, INEC, and stakeholders, coupled with proactive measures, ensured a peaceful electoral environment (IN5, K2, NG2). In 2023, the governorship elections in Ekiti and Bayelsa States were conducted smoothly, with minimal to no reports of violence, attributing the success to the effective performance of security agencies (L1, J3).

### **6.3.3. Objective 3: Challenges militating against the restructuring of the policing system in Nigeria**

The findings reveal various perceptions and challenges surrounding the police's involvement in electoral security, reflecting a complex interplay of trust, scepticism, and calls for transparency and accountability (Afolabi 2018: 160; Olowojolu *et al.* 2019: 37). While some communities view the police as essential guardians of democracy, entrusted with upholding law and order during elections, others express mixed feelings and scepticism about their conduct, citing concerns about bias, brutality, and collusion with political actors (IN2; PL1; K2). These contrasting perceptions emphasize the difficult relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve, stressing the need for substantial reforms to enhance police credibility and impartiality (Human Rights Watch 2019; Tyler 2006; Blair *et al.* 2021: 20).

Participants advocated for collaborative approaches between law enforcement agencies and local stakeholders as a means to mitigate conflicts and enhance transparency during electoral events (Amao, Ambali and Araba 2022: 48). Community policing programs and dialogue platforms emerge as effective tools to foster mutual understanding and collaboration (Amao *et al.* 2022: 48). Youth engagement programs are identified as crucial in redirecting young people's energy towards constructive contributions to the electoral process (Jahnke, Abad Borger and Beelmann 2022: 125). These programs, focusing on education, skills training, and economic empowerment, aim to reduce youth susceptibility to recruitment by political actors for violent purposes (Ismail and Olonisakin 2021: 377).

Interfaith dialogue forums play a pivotal role in promoting tolerance and understanding among different religious communities (Mene 2024: 138). By bringing together religious leaders to address common values and issues, these forums contribute to reducing religious tensions and fostering a sense of solidarity (Usama and Arifeen 2023: 1483).

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) arise as pivotal actors, contributing significantly to promoting peaceful electoral processes through monitoring, advocacy, and civic education (Ndakaripa 2023: 295). These organizations play a vital role in documenting incidents of violence, advocating for accountability, and raising awareness about democratic rights and responsibilities, thus reducing electoral violence and fostering a culture of peaceful participation (Danso, Aubyn and Boateng 2023: 144). Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms also play a crucial role in mitigating electoral violence by addressing disputes and grievances at the grassroots level. Leveraging customary courts, traditional rulers, and elders' councils facilitates the peaceful resolution of conflicts, contributing to stability during elections (Salami and Kpae 2023: 33). These mechanisms draw on indigenous knowledge and practices, offering culturally relevant approaches to conflict management and reconciliation. Furthermore, Community Policing Initiatives emerge as effective strategies for reducing electoral violence by fostering collaboration between local communities and law enforcement agencies. Community-based policing empowers communities to take ownership of their security, enhancing trust and cooperation between police and community members (Muibu and Olawole 2022: 198). Through joint patrols, community engagement forums, and collaborative policing approaches, law enforcement agencies work alongside communities to prevent and respond to electoral violence, thereby ensuring a safer electoral environment. Early warning systems, as highlighted by Participant NY1F1, offer proactive measures to identify and address potential conflict triggers before they escalate (Ramcharan 2023: 2; Rød *et al.* 2024: 96). This preventive approach aligns with recommendations from the Electoral

Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) and exemplified by platforms like Ushahidi (Clayton *et al.* 2023). Furthermore, grassroots mobilization and awareness-raising initiatives, as emphasized by Participant NG2 and supported by Participant L2, play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of peace, democracy, and respect for human rights during elections. These efforts, backed by studies from Nganje (2021: 127) and Bekoe and Burchard (2021: 548) empower communities to actively engage in the electoral process, resist manipulation, and build resilience against violence.

Political interference also appears as a significant impediment to effective policing during elections. Government officials and powerful individuals exert pressure on the police, compromising their impartiality and undermining public trust. This interference manifests in directives to overlook electoral malpractices or target political opponents unjustly, eroding the credibility of the police as neutral enforcers of the law (IN1; NG1; NY4F1). This aligns with findings from Richard (2021: 31) who highlight the detrimental effects of political control on police impartiality and democratic governance. Resource constraints stand another formidable challenge for the police in managing electoral violence. Inadequate funding, personnel shortages, and outdated equipment hinder their capacity to respond effectively to security threats. These limitations, particularly pronounced in remote or volatile areas, compromise operational efficiency and morale within the police force (IN2; NY1F1; NY5F1; PL1; P1). Reiner (2023: 6) and Richard (2021: 32) revealed the crucial role of adequate resources in maintaining police effectiveness and public trust. Furthermore, inadequate training and capacity-building exacerbate the challenges faced by the police during elections. Despite efforts to enhance training programs, significant gaps persist in critical areas such as conflict resolution, crowd control, and human rights protection. This leaves police officers ill-prepared to manage electoral violence effectively, resulting in mishandling of situations and escalation of violence (IN3; L2; NY7F1; P7). The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime and Richard (2021: 30) accentuate the importance of comprehensive training for

police readiness and maintaining public order. Corruption and misconduct among police personnel further erode public trust and confidence in the police force. Instances of bribery, abuse of power, and misleading actions undermine the integrity of law enforcement, posing challenges to the credibility and legitimacy of the police as security providers. Addressing these issues through rigorous accountability mechanisms and anti-corruption measures is essential for restoring public confidence and ensuring the integrity of electoral processes (IN4; NY2F1; Transparency International, 2019; CLEEN Foundation; UNODC).

The analysis also reveals that despite the crucial role of interagency collaboration in ensuring comprehensive election security, challenges such as poor information sharing, lack of joint planning, and difficulties in integrating efforts hinder effective response to security threats (Participant IN5). In addition, inadequate welfare, transportation, and training for police personnel pose significant obstacles in preventing and managing electoral violence (Participant L1). Weak legal frameworks and deficiencies in accountability mechanisms contribute to the prevalence of electoral violence, as perpetrators often evade justice due to perceived impunity and lack of enforcement of electoral laws (Participant NG2). Moreover, mistrust between communities and law enforcement agencies, fuelled by past incidents of misconduct and perceived bias, undermines cooperation and collaboration in violence prevention initiatives (Participant NY4F2). The pervasive security threats faced by police officers, including intimidation, physical violence, and hostile environments, pose significant challenges in maintaining peace and security during elections (Participant NY7F2). Low motivation among police officers, coupled with a lack of understanding of their roles in the election process, further exacerbates challenges in effectively preventing and managing electoral violence (Participant NY1F1).

Understaffing and resource constraints pose considerable obstacles during elections, impacting the police's ability to effectively monitor, prevent, and respond to electoral violence (Richard 2021: 31). This issue is compounded

by inadequate training and capacity among police officers, hindering their ability to manage the complexities of electoral violence. Furthermore, political interference and partisanship within the police force compromise their impartiality and effectiveness, leading to a lack of public trust (Richard 2021: 31). Corruption and impunity further undermine public confidence and deterrence efforts, perpetuating a cycle of violence and insecurity (Richard 2021: 31). Weak institutional capacity and coordination exacerbate these challenges, resulting in a reactive approach to electoral security (Richard 2021: 30). Limited engagement with local communities and civil society organizations hampers trust, cooperation, and information-sharing, impeding proactive and responsive security measures (Muibu and Olawole 2022: 193).

Participants stressed the importance of regular and comprehensive training programs tailored to election security and conflict resolution, as highlighted by IN1. Muibu and Olawole (2022: 198) support this, emphasizing the impact of specialized training on enhancing law enforcement's capacity. Addressing understaffing through increased recruitment efforts, as advocated by IN2, is crucial for maintaining security during elections. The Commonwealth Observer Group's report on the "Nigeria General Elections 2015" underscores the importance of enhanced recruitment strategies during election periods. Maintaining professionalism and neutrality among police officers, as suggested by IN3 and L4, is essential for upholding public trust and ensuring fair enforcement of electoral laws. Reiner (2023: 7) stresses the significance of impartial policing in politically charged environments like elections. Adequate resource allocation, including funding for modern equipment and infrastructure upgrades, is vital for effective management of electoral violence, as noted by IN4 and L1. Supriyanto, Rachmawati and Nugroho (2021: 236) highlight the importance of modernizing police resources for addressing contemporary challenges. Legal reforms to strengthen the legal framework and internal mechanisms within the police force for accountability, as recommended by IN5 and NY7F2, are crucial for addressing electoral violence. These reforms are necessary for fostering a

culture of accountability and justice, as emphasized by Participant IN5 and Participant NY7F2. Community policing initiatives, as proposed by K2 and PL2, play a vital role in preventing and addressing electoral violence by fostering trust and collaboration between law enforcement and local communities. Continued investment in these initiatives is essential for promoting stability and democracy, as highlighted by Participant K2 and Participant PL2.

The enhancement of security preparedness and deployment, crucial for deterring potential perpetrators of violence and safeguarding electoral stakeholders is of outmost importance. Participant IN4 stresses the importance of comprehensive training for security personnel, contingency planning, and strategic deployment to maintain order and protect electoral processes. This perspective is supported by Bekoe and Burchard (2021: 545) and Fjelde and Smidt (2022: 1114) which emphasises the role of security measures in preserving electoral integrity. Similarly, strengthening the legal framework for addressing electoral violence emerges as a vital strategy, ensuring clarity, comprehensiveness, and effective enforcement of laws. Participant IN5 emphasizes the necessity of revising existing laws to prevent violence, hold perpetrators accountable, and foster respect for the electoral process. Amao, Ambali and Araba (2022: 49) and Birch, Daxecker and Höglund (2020: 10) support this perspective, highlighting the importance of legal reforms in promoting peaceful and credible elections. Lastly, community policing initiatives are highlighted as essential for fostering collaboration between law enforcement agencies and local communities. Participant K2 emphasizes the significance of community partnerships in preventing and addressing electoral violence by enhancing trust, cooperation, and information-sharing. This approach is echoed by Aston *et al.* (2023: 1362), Bonner (2020: 1058) and Muibu and Olawole (2022: 193) emphasising the role of community policing in maintaining peace and security during critical periods like elections.

## **6.4. IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS**

The findings on political electoral violence provide valuable insights into practical, theoretical, and policy dimensions, each with significant implications for real-world applications. Electoral violence poses a major threat to democratic processes and social stability. A robust and proactive policing system is crucial in mitigating such violence. The proposed model emphasises enhancing the policing system through comprehensive measures aimed at preventing, managing, and responding to electoral violence.

### **6.4.1. Practical implications**

The findings highlight the urgent need for practical interventions to address electoral violence effectively. Training and capacity-building initiatives emerge as crucial, ensuring law enforcement personnel are equipped with the necessary skills to handle such incidents. Additionally, fostering collaboration and coordination between law enforcement agencies and stakeholders is vital, as it ensures a unified approach to election security. Establishing specialized units and rapid response teams in areas prone to violence can provide targeted interventions during crises. Moreover, community engagement and awareness campaigns play a pivotal role in building trust and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and communities, ultimately fostering a safer electoral environment.

### **6.4.2. Theoretical implications**

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings contribute significantly to existing knowledge by shedding light on the underlying dynamics of electoral violence. They emphasise the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing such violence and underscore the crucial role played by law enforcement in safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process. Furthermore, the findings highlight the significance of transparency, professionalism, and respect for human rights in police conduct during electoral processes. They also stress the need for accountability

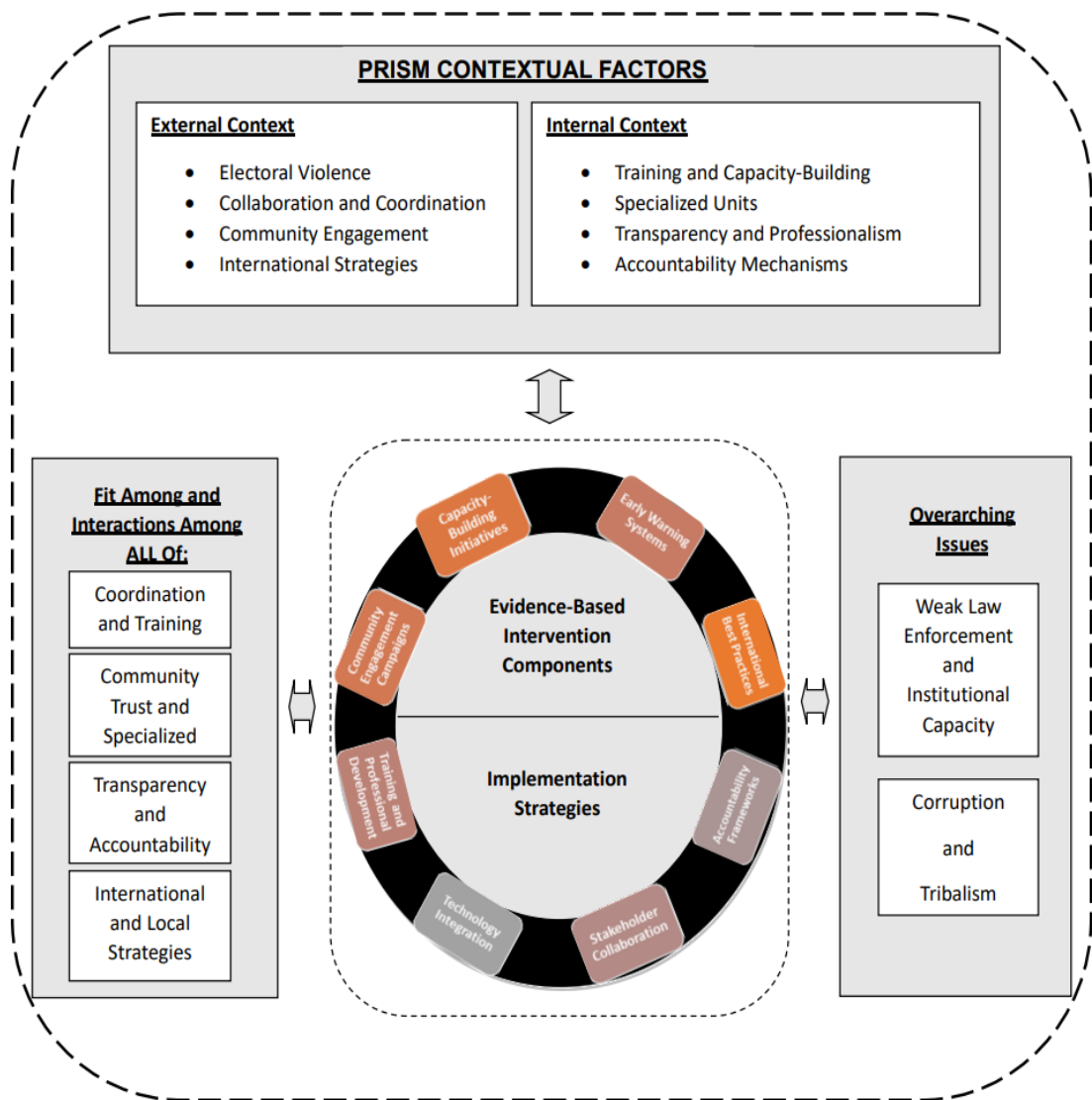
mechanisms to hold officers responsible for misconduct or abuse of power, thereby enhancing trust and confidence in law enforcement agencies.

#### **6.4.3. Policy implications**

Key recommendations include prioritising reforms to strengthen the capacity and autonomy of the Nigerian police force, ensuring adequate funding, modernization of equipment, and tailored training programmes for electoral security. Strengthening inter-agency collaboration, establishing effective communication channels, and fostering professionalism and accountability within law enforcement agencies are essential for successful implementation. Moreover, adopting international best practices, such as establishing local conflict resolution committees, deploying specialized rapid response units, and leveraging innovative technologies, can significantly improve electoral processes and maintain peace during elections.

#### **6.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF A MODEL TO IMPROVE POLICING SYSTEM**

Conceptual framework for improving the policing system to help prevent electoral violence in Nigeria, the customise PRISM (Pragmatic Robust Implementation and Sustainability Model) was adapted as shown in the image below.



Self-generated by the researcher.

Figure 6.1: Model to improve policing system

1. Community Policing and Engagement

- **Community Outreach Programmes:** Establish programmes that engage with community leaders, civil society organisations, and citizens to build trust and cooperation.

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct campaigns to educate the public about the importance of peaceful elections and the consequences of electoral violence.

## 2. Intelligence Gathering and Analysis

- **Establish Intelligence Units:** Create specialized units within the police force dedicated to gathering and analysing intelligence related to potential electoral violence.
- **Collaboration with Other Agencies:** Work closely with other security agencies, election bodies, and international organisations to share intelligence and coordinate efforts.

## 3. Training and Capacity Building

- **Specialized Training Programmes:** Develop and implement training programmes focused on handling electoral violence, crowd control, and conflict de-escalation techniques.
- **Simulation Exercises:** Conduct regular simulation exercises to prepare police officers for potential scenarios of electoral violence.

## 4. Deployment and Resource Allocation

- **Strategic Deployment:** Ensure strategic deployment of police forces to identified hotspots and sensitive areas during election periods.
- **Adequate Resources:** Allocate necessary resources, including non-lethal crowd control equipment and communication tools, to manage large crowds and potential conflicts.

## 5. Legal and Policy Framework

- **Strengthen Legal Provisions:** Advocate for the strengthening of legal provisions related to electoral violence, ensuring strict penalties for offenders.

- **Clear Protocols and Guidelines:** Develop clear protocols and guidelines for police officers on handling electoral violence, ensuring adherence to human rights standards.

## 6. Technology and Innovation

- **Surveillance Systems:** Utilise advanced surveillance systems, including CCTV and drones, to monitor election activities and identify potential threats.
- **Data Analytics:** Employ data analytics to predict and prevent incidents of electoral violence based on historical data and real-time information.

## 7. Crisis Response and Management

- **Rapid Response Teams:** Form rapid response teams equipped to quickly address and contain incidents of electoral violence.
- **Crisis Communication:** Establish a crisis communication plan to provide timely and accurate information to the public and media during incidents of electoral violence.

## 6.6. MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### 1. Policy Reform and Advocacy

- Engage with policymakers to advocate for necessary reforms and the allocation of adequate resources for the proposed model.

### 2. Capacity Building Workshops

- Organise workshops and seminars for police officers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to build capacity and foster collaboration.

### 3. **Public-Private Partnerships**

- Establish partnerships with private sector entities to support funding, technology, and logistical needs for implementing the model.

### 4. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Set up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the implemented measures and make necessary adjustments.

### 5. **Community Feedback Mechanism**

- Create a feedback mechanism for communities to report concerns and provide suggestions on improving the policing system related to electoral violence.

Implementing this comprehensive model necessitates coordinated efforts from law enforcement agencies, government bodies, and community stakeholders. The intersection of these components is crucial: by emphasising community engagement, intelligence gathering, training, resource allocation, legal frameworks, technology, and crisis management, the policing system can effectively reduce electoral violence and promote peaceful and fair elections.

## 6.7. **STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

- **Data Collection Method:** The study employed face-to-face interviews, which enabled a thorough exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences concerning electoral violence. This phenomenological approach was successful in capturing the nuanced and personal insights of individuals directly affected by or involved in the electoral process.
- **High-Quality Data:** Interviews were recorded electronically to ensure accurate capture of participants' responses, contributing to the reliability and credibility of the data.

- **Thematic Analysis Using NVivo:** The use of NVivo 12 software facilitated systematic data analysis, enabling the identification of key themes and subthemes in an organised manner.
- **Structured Approach to Analysis:** Thematic analysis provided a structured yet flexible framework for organising and interpreting the data, ensuring comprehensive coverage of relevant topics.
- **Balanced Data-driven Insights:** The analysis process balanced data-driven insights with structured theoretical models and concepts, enhancing the validity of the findings (Elgendy, Elragal and Päiväranta 2022: 351).
- **Integration of Deductive and Inductive Approaches:** The study employed a combined deductive and inductive approach to theme development, allowing for the exploration of both anticipated and unexpected themes (Declercq and van Poppel 2023: 9).

## 6.8. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

To improve Nigeria's policing system and mitigate electoral violence, the recommendations derived from the study's findings are multifaceted.

Firstly, significant enhancements in training and capacity-building initiatives are crucial to adequately equip law enforcement personnel. This recommendation aligns with previous research advocating for reforms aimed at enhancing the capacity and autonomy of the Nigerian police force.

Secondly, enhancing collaboration and coordination between law enforcement agencies and stakeholders is essential to ensure a unified approach to election security. Additionally, establishing specialized units and rapid response teams in hotspot areas is crucial for providing targeted interventions during crises. Moreover, community engagement and awareness campaigns are vital for fostering trust and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and communities.

Thirdly, the importance of transparency, professionalism, and respect for human rights in police conduct during elections should be upheld. Communities stress the need for mechanisms to hold officers accountable for misconduct, which aligns with broader efforts to strengthen democratic governance and uphold the rule of law. Additionally, integrating early warning systems into electoral processes and scaling up grassroots mobilization efforts are recommended. These measures can significantly contribute to preventing electoral violence and promoting peaceful democratic transitions. Leveraging early warning systems and grassroots mobilization strategies holds promise in addressing electoral violence and fostering a culture of peace and democracy.

Fourthly, the recommendations advocate for adopting successful international strategies to address electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Measures include establishing local conflict resolution committees, similar to Ghana's successful implementation, which leverage local leaders' authority to mediate disputes and reduce grassroots tensions. Deploying specialized rapid response units, inspired by Kenya's General Service Unit, can enable swift and targeted responses to incidents of electoral violence, enhancing security and maintaining peace during elections. Moreover, robust civil society election observation, akin to South Africa's model, can ensure transparency and accountability in the electoral process, fostering public trust and reducing potential violence. Establishing election security task forces, as seen in Liberia, facilitates collaboration among stakeholders to enhance the overall security framework during elections.

Additionally, adopting innovative technologies, such as electronic voting systems and blockchain-based solutions, can streamline the voting process and increase transparency. Comprehensive training programs for law enforcement personnel, like those in South Africa, are essential for equipping them with the skills needed to manage elections and respond to violence effectively. Implementing community policing models, observed in the United Kingdom and Canada, can build trust and promote collaboration between

law enforcement agencies and local communities. Early warning systems, drawn from experiences in Kenya and Liberia, enable proactive identification and mitigation of potential sources of conflict before they escalate.

Moreover, the development of crisis management protocols, inspired by best practices from South Africa and India, enhances coordination and response efforts during incidents of electoral violence. Integrating gender mainstreaming strategies, as seen in Rwanda and Nepal, promotes women's participation and protection in the electoral process, fostering inclusive and peaceful elections.

Lastly, implementing youth engagement programs, modelled after successful initiatives in Tunisia and Malawi, empowers young people to contribute positively to the electoral process, reducing their vulnerability to recruitment for violent activities.

To address the issue of electoral violence in Nigeria, it is crucial to strengthen law enforcement and institutional capacity. Participants have highlighted that weak law enforcement and institutional weaknesses create an environment of impunity, emboldening individuals to engage in violence without fear of consequences. These deficiencies within Nigeria's electoral institutions are key contributors to electoral violence. To mitigate this, reforms are needed to enhance enforcement mechanisms and institutional capacity, thereby upholding the rule of law and reducing violence during elections.

In summary, the recommendations for improving Nigeria's policing system and mitigating electoral violence encompass a broad spectrum of strategies. These include enhancing training and capacity-building initiatives, fostering collaboration and coordination among stakeholders, establishing specialized units, enhancing community engagement, adopting successful international strategies, applying stringent punishments to violators, and leveraging innovative technologies. Implementing these recommendations can contribute to fostering a conducive environment for free, fair, and peaceful

elections, safeguarding the integrity of Nigeria's democratic processes, and promoting stability and progress within the nation.

#### **6.9. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDY**

- **Expanded Sample Size:** Future research could benefit from a larger and more diverse sample size to enhance the generalizability of findings across different contexts and populations.
- **Mixed Methods Approach:** Incorporating quantitative data alongside qualitative analysis could provide a more comprehensive understanding of electoral violence and its determinants.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Longitudinal studies tracking changes in electoral violence over time could offer insights into the effectiveness of interventions and policy measures.
- **Comparative Studies:** Comparative research across different countries or regions could illuminate variations in the dynamics and drivers of electoral violence, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.
- **Community-Based Research:** Engaging local communities in the research process could foster trust and cooperation, yielding more nuanced insights into the social dynamics of electoral violence.

#### **6.10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The research focused on Nigeria's Fourth Republic, limiting its scope to this specific period, because of the constraints posed by time and available resources. The Fourth Republic, being a crucial and significant time frame, serves as the contextual boundary within which the investigation takes place. This decision ensures that the study remains manageable and feasible, allowing for a more in-depth and focused analysis of the chosen subject matter.

- **Limited Generalizability:** The findings of the study may not be generalizable to the entire population due to the small sample size

and specific focus on a particular context (Nigeria's Fourth Republic).

- **Potential Bias:** The reliance on face-to-face interviews may introduce bias, as participants may be influenced by social desirability or hesitant to disclose sensitive information.
- **Time and Resource Constraints:** Constraints in time and resources may have limited the depth and breadth of data collection and analysis, potentially overlooking certain aspects of the phenomenon under study.
- **Subjectivity in Analysis:** Despite efforts to maintain objectivity, the interpretive nature of thematic analysis may introduce subjectivity in the identification and interpretation of themes.
- **Potential for Interviewer Influence:** The presence and conduct of the interviewer during face-to-face interviews may have influenced participants' responses, affecting the data collected.

## 6.11. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, addressing electoral violence in Nigeria necessitates an inclusive method that covers socio-economic development, technological innovation, and international cooperation. Such efforts are vital for fostering a peaceful and democratic electoral environment, ultimately contributing to the stability and progress of the nation. The study will make a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge on political electoral violence in Nigeria. By revealing the root causes, consequences, and potential solutions, the researcher has provided valuable understandings that can inform policymaking, academic research, and practical interventions in the field. Moving forward, it is essential to build on these findings and continue working towards creating a more peaceful and democratic electoral environment for all Nigerians. Implementing the recommendations derived from research can foster a conducive environment for free, fair, and peaceful elections, ultimately contributing to the stability and progress of the nation.

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## Appendix A Ethical clearance letter



**TRREE**

# Zertifikat Certificat Certificado Certificate

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale  
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

**Certificat de formation - Training Certificate**  
Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that  
**JOYCE OLORUNNISOLA**  
a complété avec succès - has successfully completed  
**Introduction to Research Ethics**  
du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche  
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

Release Date: 2022/01/25  
CID : d.174hoog

Professeur Dominique Sprumont  
Coordonateur TRREE Coordinator

APPROVED BY



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Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS/ASSM/SANWF) ([www.sams.ch](http://www.sams.ch)) - Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries ([www.3pdc.ch](http://www.3pdc.ch))

(R3V - 20220217)

## Appendix B Gatekeepers letter



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Afe Babalola University  
**Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State**

8th January, 2024

The Resident Electoral Commissioner  
Independent National Electoral  
Commission (INEC) Ekiti State

Dear Sir/Ma,

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few members of staff.

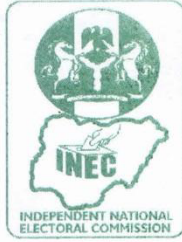
My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing the role of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



# INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

New Iyin Road,  
P.M.B. 5324,  
Ado-Ekiti,  
Ekiti State.

Tel:

INEC/EK/ADM/80/IV/706  
Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

25th Jan; 2024  
Date:.....

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwana,  
Dept Of Public Administration,  
Durban University of Technology,  
South Africa.

## **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Sequel to your request, I am pleased to inform you that the Independent National Electoral Commission Ekiti state has approved your request to conduct your Masters Degree research in our organisation.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Ekiti State wishes Olorunnisola Joyce a successful conduct of the research work.

Please accept the assurances of my esteemed regards.

**Akanmu Temitope Olukunmi**  
Head, Voter Education and Publicity  
For: Hon. Resident Electoral Commissioner  
Ekiti State.



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Commissioner  
Nigerian Police Force  
Ekiti State Command Ado-Ekiti

Dear Sir/Ma,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your officers.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing therole of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisol Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

30<sup>th</sup>   
8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Commissioner  
Nigerian Police Force  
Ekiti State Command  
Ado-Ekiti

*copy received by me  
20/01/2024  
at about 10:10 AM*

Dear Sir/Ma,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your officers.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing the role of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola  
Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Chairman  
Nigerian Bar Association Ado-Ekiti Branch  
Ekiti State Dear Sir/Ma,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your members of staff.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing therole of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



# NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION ADO-EKITI BRANCH

Acio Afe Babalola Bar Centre,  
High Court Premises, Tajiwi,  
Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State.

Our Ref.....

Your Ref.....

30<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

OLORUNNISOLA JOYCE EKWANU,  
AFE BABALOLA UNIVERSITY,  
ADO-EKITI.  
EKITI STATE.

Dear Ma,

## RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

We write to acknowledge your letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 on the above subject matter.


We have considered the relevance of your research to the mandate of our organisation and it is crystal clear that your research would contribute meaningfully to the administration of justice in Nigeria, especially in the area of policing and electoral violence.

We therefore convey our approval for you to conduct your research while we'll offer all necessary assistance that may be needed in this regard.

Please note that you are to comply strictly with the ethical principles guiding the conduct of empirical study.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

  
Taiwo Omidoyin, Esq.  
Secretary.

L. A. Fasanmi Esq.  
Chairman  
09034895795

Taiwo Omidoyin Esq.  
Secretary  
08102325554

Shirley E. Akone Esq.  
Vice Chairman  
08067577657

Uzoma Anaku-Adelajo Esq.  
Treasurer

Olatunde Olayemi Esq.  
Financial Secretary

Ayobami Okunwo-Richards Esq.  
Publicity Secretary

J. S. Bolongun Esq.  
Welfare Secretary

Adesola H. Fajana Esq.  
Social Secretary

Mohamad Shittu  
Asst. Secretary



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Chairman  
New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)  
Ekiti State

Dear Sir/Ma,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your party members.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing therole of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



**NEW NIGERIA PEOPLE'S PARTY**  
Ekiti State Chapter  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

Tel: 07063575358

31st January, 2024

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwana  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

Dear Ma,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Your letter dated 8th January, 2024 on the above subject matter refers.

I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct a research on a topic: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in our organization has been approved.

We wish you a successful research work.

Yours sincerely

For: NEW NIGERIA PEOPLE'S PARTY

**Chief/Ade Ayeni**  
State P.R.O

Prince S.I Esan  
State Secretary

Dr. Yinka Folahan PhD.  
Care-Taker Chairman

Chief Ade Ayeni  
State P.R.O

Hon. Samuel Olofin  
State Treasurer



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Chairman  
All Progressive Congress (APC) Ekiti State

Dear Sir/Ma,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your members of staff.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing therole of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)

# ALL PROGRESSIVES CONGRESS



156, Ajilosun Street ,Ado-Ekiti,Ekiti State

19<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2024

Our Ref: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Ref: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Olorunisola Joyce Ekwana,  
Afe Babalola University,  
Ado-Ekiti.  
Ekiti State.


Dear Mrs. Olorunisola Joyce Ekwana,

I am writing to inform you that the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Ekiti has received your letter of request for permission to use the party for your research work. After careful consideration, we are pleased to inform you that your request has been granted by the party.

We encourage and support academic research that contributes to the growth and development of our society, and we believe that your work will help to achieve that goal. We would like to remind you to follow the necessary protocols and guidelines set by the party to ensure that your research work aligns with our objectives and values.

We wish you the best of luck in your research work, and we look forward to the findings that will come from your work.

Best regards,

  
**Garba Arogundade**  
Party secretary

Motto Justice, Peace & Unity  
- CHANGE -



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The President  
Nigerian Union of Journalist Abuja, FCT

Dear Sir/Ma,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your union members.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing therole of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



# NIGERIA UNION OF JOURNALISTS

(NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL / PROFESSIONAL UNION)

**LAGOS LIAISON OFFICE:**  
2, ERIC MOORE CLOSE,  
P.O. BOX 2453,  
SURULERE, LAGOS.

**NUJ NATIONAL SECRETARIAT:**  
PLOT 131, CADASTRAL ZONE,  
SECTOR CENTRE A, JAHI DISTRICT,  
OFF MABUSHI ULTRA MODERN MARKET ROAD,  
P.O. BOX 4350, ABUJA  
email: [nujnatsecabj@gmail.com](mailto:nujnatsecabj@gmail.com)  
website: [www.nuj.org.ng](http://www.nuj.org.ng)

Motto: Truth and Justice

January 28, 2024

**Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu,**  
Afe Babalola University,  
Ado Ekiti,  
Ekiti State.

**Re: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Yours on above dated January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024 refers.

This is to convey the approval of the National President for you on your study research in our reputable Union.

While we urge you to be responsible and factual in your findings, accept the assurance of our support at all times, please.

*28/1/2024*  
**Akorede R. Opeyemi**  
Assistant National Secretary

For: National Secretary

**National President:**  
Chris Isiguzo (08037762492)

**National Secretary:**  
Shu'aibu Usman Leman (08034004239)

**National Treasurer:**  
Bamidele Atunbi (08033584763)



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Ogoga of Ikere Land  
Ekiti State

Dear Sir/Ma,

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study with a brief interactive session with your royal majesty.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing therole of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



HIS ROYAL MAJESTY  
**ỌBA ADEJIMI ADU ALAGBADO**

**(AGIRILALA II)**

**OGOGA OF IKERE KINGDOM**

Office Tel: +234 (0)9033906851

30th Jan.,2024

OUR REF: \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR REF: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu,  
Afebabalola University,  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

Dear Mrs. Olorunnisola,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Your letter dated 8th January, 2024 on the above subject matter refers.

I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct research on a topic: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigerians Fourth Republic in the palace of the Ogoja of Ikere Ekiti has been approved.

We wish you a successful research work.

Yours sincerely,



.....  
Omoiofa Reuben Olawumi  
Ogoja Palace Administrator

HIS ROYAL MAGESTY  
**ỌBA SAMUEL ADEJIMI ADU ALAGBADO**  
AGIRILALA II  
THE OGOGA OF IKERE KINGDOM



HRH Igwe Engr. J. O. Eze  
Ugwu Na Agbo Autonomous  
Community Nsukka L. G. A.  
Enugu State

Dear Sir,

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study with a brief interactive session with your royal majesty.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aimed at analysing the role of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I shall appreciate your response in writing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



**HRH IGWE ENGR. J.O. EZE**  
**UGWU NA AGBO AUTONOMOUS**  
**COMMUNITY NSUKKA L.G.A**  
**ENUGU STATE.**

Phone No. 08033119241,



Our Ref.....Your Ref.....Date 30/01/2024

**Attention!!!**

Mrs. Olurunis Ola Joyce Ekwanu

Your request to conduct a research work on the topic policing system and Electoral violence in my ancient kingdom is graciously granted.

We would want to assure you of a free and healthy atmosphere, while researching.

HRH Igwe Engr.  
Jude Onyewe Eze.



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Director General  
National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)  
NYSC Directorate Headquarters  
Yakubu Gowon House  
Plot 416, Tigris Crescent Maitama District  
P.M.B 138, Garki Abuja

Dear Sir/Ma,

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your corps members.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aimed at analysing the role of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I will appreciate if your response to this letter is sent to my email address: [olorunnisolaje@abuad.edu.ng](mailto:olorunnisolaje@abuad.edu.ng) and [geojoydelight@gmail.com](mailto:geojoydelight@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



Yakubu Gowon House  
Plot 416, Tigris Crescent,  
off Aguiyi Ironsi Street,  
Maitama District,  
P.M.B. 138, Garki,  
Abuja.

NYSC/NDHQ/PRS/RSL/CRW/VOL. 1/82

26<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

**Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwana,**

Afe Babalola University,  
Ado-Ekiti,  
Ekiti State

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I write to acknowledge the receipt of your proposal dated 8th January, 2024 on the above subject matter and extend Management's appreciation on your interest in the NYSC operations.

2. I wish to inform you that the Director General has obliged your request to conduct research study at NYSC as well as interact with Corps Members on the role of the Police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. (Analysis of the Policing System and Electoral Violence).

3. At the end of the research work, you are requested to submit a copy of the project to the Scheme for record purposes.

4. While we appreciate your concern for the operations of NYSC, Please accept the assurances of the Director General's warm regards.

**Dewan S.G.**  
Deputy Director (PRS)



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
AfeBabalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Coordinator  
Atunluse Initiatives  
No. 28, Ikale street  
Opposite Ijapo Housing Field  
Jiano Estate  
Akure, Ondo State

Dear Sir/Ma,

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your corps members.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing therole of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

I will appreciate if your response to this letter is sent to my email address: [olorunnisolaje@abuad.edu.ng](mailto:olorunnisolaje@abuad.edu.ng) and [geojoydelight@gmail.com](mailto:geojoydelight@gmail.com)

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



No 28, Ikale Street,  
Opposite Ijapo Housing Field,  
Iiano Estate Akure Ondo State

31<sup>st</sup> January, 2024

**OLORUNNISOLA JOYCE EKWANU**  
Afe Babalola University,  
Ado-Ekiti,  
Ekiti State.

Dear Ma,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Your letter of request on the above subject matter dated 8th January, 2024 refers.

Your request to conduct a research on a topic: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in our organization is hereby approved.

We therefore request that you forward to our organization a copy of the research work when completed.

Wishing you a successful research work.

Yours Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Shalom Olaseni  
Coordinator.



Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Afe Babalola University  
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State

8<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

The Coordinator  
Gender Mobile  
3 Tsukunda House  
Central Business District  
FCT-Abuja

Dear Sir,

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, a Master student at the Durban University of Technology South Africa. With utmost humility, I am formally seeking your permission to conduct my research study at your organisation and interact with few of your corps members.

My topic is: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. I humbly request your approval and would be extremely grateful if you will allow me to embark on the research study in your organisation. This is aim at analysing the role of the police in electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

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Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu  
Durban University of Technology  
(08030565780)



30<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

**OLORUNNISOLA JOYCE EKWANU**

Afe Babalola University,

Ado-Ekiti,

Ekiti State.

Dear Ma,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Your letter of request on the above subject matter dated 8th January, 2024 refers.

Your request to conduct a research on a topic: Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in our organization is hereby approved.

We therefore request that you forward to our organization a copy of the research work when completed.

Wishing you a successful research work.

Yours Sincerely,

Yours Sincerely,

Daramola Alaba Bankoleayo Esq.  
Board of Trustees Chairman

## Appendix C Letter of information



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu, Master, Management Science: Public Administration

Ilugbusi Segun, Ph.D /Professor Nirmala Dorasamy, D.Admin

The study's aim is to analyse the policing system and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The objectives of the study are to describe the existing structure of the policing system in Nigeria, examine the nexus between the current design of policing and recurrent electoral violence in Nigeria, identify the challenges militating against the restructuring of the police system in Nigeria and recommend policing measures to mitigate electoral violence in Nigeria.

**Good morning** sir/mam,

I am a master's student at DUT doing research for my degree in Management Sciences, Public Administration.

I would like to invite you to participate in the focus group discussion in this research.

Research is a systematic search or enquiry for generalized new knowledge.

, the qualitative method will be used to gather data that will allow inferences and conclusions to be drawn. In the course of the study, participants will be subjected to an interview wherein they will be asked questions that can assist in the realization of the data required. Furthermore, participation is entirely voluntary, as participants can withdraw from the study whenever they find it inconvenient. If there is any information regarding this study or unclear queries or ideas included, I, the investigator, should be consulted for clarification. The qualitative data collected will be analysed using a thematic data analysis approach to transcribe evidence recorded during the interview

into word format. Similarly, no preferential treatment will be accrued to or expected from the participants. Above and beyond this, the number of potential participants envisaged is 45 key informants as they are assumed to produce the data that would be adequate. The interview would be conducted at a time and place that is suitable for you.

There are no anticipated risks or discomfort by participating in the study.

The data collection process is purely voluntary and you may withdraw from the research at any time and for whatever reason. There will be no adverse consequences for withdrawing from the study, please.

The study will make a great contribution both in academic and policy-making circles towards combating electoral violence which is prevalent in Nigeria and other developing African countries.

You will not receive any direct benefits from participating, and there are no disadvantages or penalties for not participating. You will not receive any monetary or non-monetary remuneration for participation in the study. Also, please note that there will be no costs expected from you for participating in the study. You may withdraw at any time or not answer any question if you do not want to.

Your confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained; hence, no name will be mentioned. Information provided by you will remain classified, safely kept, and destroyed when the study has been concluded.

This study will be written up as a dissertation which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of the thesis, I will be happy to send it to you upon request. Ethics clearance has been granted; a copy of which is available on request.

There is no anticipated research-related injury expected in participating in the study.

All documents, materials, and relevant items utilized in gathering information during this research will be kept for 5 years according to document policy and destroyed by shredding hard copies while deleting all electronic copies and voice recordings.

**Persons to contact in the event of Any Problems or Queries:** My Supervisor/s please contact the researcher (+234 803 -056 7680), my supervisor/s Professor Nirmala Dorasamy, D.Admin 031 373 6862/0722678704 or Ilugbusi Segun, Ph.D +234 706 357 4472) or the DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on [researchdirector@dut.ac.za](mailto:researchdirector@dut.ac.za)

## Appendix D Consent letter



### CONSENT

**Title of the Study:** Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic

**Names of Researcher/s:** Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu

#### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu about the nature, conduct, benefits, and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: 237/23
- I have also received, read, and understood the above-written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials, and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature/Right Thumbprint

I, **Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu** herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct, and risk of the above study.

<u>Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwanu</u>	<u>25/01/2024</u>	_____
Full Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature

## Appendix E Research ethics evaluation certificate



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Benwini Court  
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus  
Durban University of Technology  
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001  
Tel: 031 373 2375  
Email: [lavthad@dut.ac.za](mailto:lavthad@dut.ac.za)  
[http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics)  
[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

19 March 2024

Ms J E Olorunnisola  
Afe Babalola University  
Ado-Ekiti  
Ekiti State  
Nigeria

Dear Ms Olorunnisola

**Policing System and Electoral Violence: A Case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic**  
**Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 237/23**

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

**It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.**

**Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.**

Yours Sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof J K Adam  
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

## The Dissertation Design Master



Phone: +27780248617  
Email: [mketiwae@yahoo.com](mailto:mketiwae@yahoo.com)  
Email: [saniphethinvestments@gmail.com](mailto:saniphethinvestments@gmail.com)  
Web: <https://thesis-reports-proof-reading-and-editing.business.site/>



This is to confirm that the thesis entitled

### **POLICING SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: A CASE OF NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC.**

Authored by

**JOYCE EKWANU OLORUNNISOLA**

Student number: 22176558

was edited according to Durban University of Technology's specifications.

The student received a detailed report with suggested changes together with their thesis with track changes. The thesis will be fit for submission when the student attends to all suggested changes (**that should be reviewed together with the supervisor**) and obtains permission to submit from the supervisor. This certificate does not warranty permission to submit if the supervisor has not agreed with the student.

Report prepared by:

[Elizabeth Mnyandu](#)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature over printed name

Date: 23 August 2024



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## Appendix H Data collection instruments



### **INTERVIEW GUIDE “POLICING SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: A CASE OF NIGERIA’S FOURTH REPUBLIC”**

#### **Introduction**

My name is Olorunnisola Joyce Ekwana a postgraduate student at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. Currently undergoing a master’s degree in management sciences. I am currently conducting research as part of my curriculum for the award of a Masters degree. My topic is “**POLICING SYSTEM AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: A CASE OF NIGERIA’S FOURTH REPUBLIC**”. I would like you to help me with information to complete the research as a student of Management Sciences. All information provided shall be handled with strict confidentiality. Thank you for your help and valuable time which I do not take for granted.

#### **PART ONE**

##### **General Background**

- Can you provide a brief overview of your experience and role in the Nigerian political landscape, particularly during election periods?
- What is your age range Sir/Ma (19-29) (30 – 39) (40 – 49) (50 – 59) (60 – above)

- Mention your Religion and ethnic group
- What is your highest qualification? Primary/ Secondary/ graduate/ Postgraduate

## **PART TWO**

### **Section A**

#### **Structure of the policing system in Nigeria**

- How would you describe the current state of the policing system in Nigeria, especially concerning its effectiveness in preventing electoral violence?
- From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the Nigerian police force in handling electoral security?
- What are the current incidents that make the need for overhauling Nigeria's police architecture a necessity?

### **Section B**

#### **Nexus between the existing structure of policing and recurrent electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

- In your opinion, what are the main factors contributing to electoral violence in Nigeria?
- How have you observed the patterns and dynamics of electoral violence evolving over the years in the Fourth Republic?
- How do you perceive the role of security agencies, particularly the police, in maintaining peace and security during elections?
- Have there been instances where security agencies were effective in preventing or responding to electoral violence? Can you provide specific examples?

### **Section C**

#### **Challenges militating against the restructuring of the policing system in Nigeria**

- From your interactions with communities, how do they perceive the role of the police in ensuring a safe and peaceful electoral process?
- Are there community-led initiatives or practices that have proven effective in reducing electoral violence?
- What challenges do you believe the police face in effectively preventing and managing electoral violence?
- Are there systemic or structural issues within the police force that hinder their ability to address electoral violence?

### **Section D**

#### **Recommendation of policing measures towards effective prevention of electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

- In your opinion, what reforms or changes are needed within the policing system to enhance its capacity to prevent and respond to electoral violence?
- Are there successful strategies or interventions from other countries that could be adapted to the Nigerian context?
- What preventive measures do you believe can be implemented to reduce the likelihood of electoral violence in Nigeria?
- Are there specific initiatives or policies that you think would be particularly effective in this regard?

*Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your experiences with us.*