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Human Rights and Democracy in Nigeria and Ivory Coast: Challenges, Violations, And the Path to Reform

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Abstract

Within global politics, there is a rapid interconnection and an evolving political system that safeguards human rights and consolidates democratic principles, making it pivotal for any national development. This looks at the intricate relationship between human rights and democracy in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, two nations emblematic of the challenges faced by many third-world countries. Drawing on historical frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and contemporary treaties covers the dual imperative of protecting civil and political rights alongside economic, social, and cultural rights.

The central aim of this study is to scrutinise the persistent human rights challenges that affect the democratic consolidation in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the nexus between democratic governance and the effective protection of human rights and also analyse the institutional weaknesses ranging from arbitrary detention, judicial corruption, and abuse of power by law enforcement to understand how these factors erode public trust and impede democratic processes. The study adopts a qualitative approach and content analysis to systematically examine a broad spectrum of academic literature, policy documents, and human rights reports. The qualitative analysis facilitated an in-depth understanding of historical and contemporary challenges in the structural deficiencies inherent in the governance and judicial frameworks of Nigeria and the Ivory Coast.

Nigeria and the Ivory Coast suffer institutional challenges that compromise the enforcement of human rights. In Nigeria, issues such as extrajudicial killings, torture, and politically motivated detentions, exacerbated by ethno-religious strife and militant insurgencies, have severely affected the prospects of a fair judicial system. Similarly, the Ivory Coast has experienced electoral malpractice, political repression, and systemic discrimination in the wake of post-election violence. These challenges are a form of disconnection between constitutional guarantees and their practical realisation in society, and call for strengthening institutional frameworks that foster transparent electoral processes and judicial independence to bridge the gap between constitutional ideals.

Keywords

Human Rights, Democracy, Judicial Reform, Electoral Integrity, Political Instability.

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The Declaration on the Right to Development affirms the development of fundamental human rights adopted by the United Nations in 1986. This occurred thirty-eight years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The resolution received overwhelming support, with the United States being the sole nation to vote against it (Ajah, 2002). According to the UDHR, human rights are divided into two main categories: civil and political rights, and economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights (Haque, 2018). The concept of human rights is grounded in the principle that all humans deserve some fundamental rights/freedoms, be it locally or across international communities and boundaries. These rights within the ambit of the law are considered universal; they apply to everyone, everywhere and cannot be taken away from anyone as it is a concern within the universe. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, is one of the treaty documents that enshrines these rights. Donnelly (2013) sees human rights as the rights one has simply because one is a human being that stays within a community in the international system, and most of the declaration inspired international human rights treaties and national constitutions, and these laws are designed to promote human rights within the international system.

Despite the global acceptance of human rights as a principle by many countries, the violations remain prevalent in many parts of third-world countries such as Africa. Human rights challenges are linked to political instability, corruption, weak judicial systems, and cultural practices. These two countries (Nigeria and the Ivory Coast) have struggled with issues of arbitrary detention, torture, and lack of access to fair trials (Amnesty International, 2017). The human rights situation in Nigeria is complicated by other factors: ethnic tensions, religious conflicts, and the activities of militant groups: Boko Haram, the Niger Delta Militant group, and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) which have committed atrocities against civilians (Yagboyaju, 2013; Amnesty International, 2015; Okafor and Ugochukwu, 2015; Yagboyaju, 2022). Ivory Coast is also faced with human rights violations, in the wake of its political crises, such as the post-election violence of 2010-2011 (Human Rights Watch, 2011; Dugbenu, 2018).

One of the human rights issues in these countries is the abuse of power by the law enforcement agencies that are meant to safeguard the human rights of the citizenry. In Nigeria, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), which serves as a unit in Nigeria's police force, became notorious for its extrajudicial killings of the citizenry, torture, and other forms of abuse, before it was disbanded by the Buhari-led administration in the year 2020 after the nationwide protest tagged # EndSars. A report by the United Nations (2019) noted that Nigerian security forces are being implicated in human rights violations; unlawful killings, disappearances of journalists, etc, within the international system has various metrics that show this (Sani, 2021). In Ivory Coast, as a country within the West African region is equally reported that its security forces are accused of arbitrary arrests targeting political opponents or those who criticise the government (Amnesty International, 2016).

Also, judicial corruption is a barrier to the realisation of human rights in both countries. According to Owusu-Bempah (2016), corruption within the judiciary undermines the delivery of justice (violates the right to a fair trial), which is a cornerstone of the rule of law. When judicial officers engage in corrupt practices, the entire justice system becomes compromised. Human rights organisations (Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch) have acted a major role in highlighting these issues in these countries as well as advocating for statutory reform. Human rights organisations' presence in these countries has documented human rights abuses, bringing international attention to these violations. Most time, these human rights organisation reports are evidence that is used to hold governments accountable to push for changes that enhance the protection of human rights (Amnesty International, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Merely acknowledging and incorporating human rights into a legal framework will not suffice for African citizens if these rights are not translated into tangible or practical outcomes among the police force or the political leaders who use them as a tool to oppress the weak. As Peter observes, while promoting human rights across international, regional, and local levels is relatively straightforward, ensuring their enforcement remains a challenge (Peter, 2009). These factors are whether there are robust institutions or appropriate conditions in place to support the implementation of

these norms. In this context, it has been argued that democratic governments are generally better equipped than authoritarian ones to uphold human rights, thereby aiding in their advancement (Moravcsik, 2000; Erman, 2016; Mutua, 2017).

Human rights challenges require a multifaceted approach within the international system to solve this problem: treaties, legal reforms, and strengthening institutions to promote a culture of human rights in the countries. Hillebrecht (2012) argues that governments should be committed to upholding international human rights standards in implementing domestic laws that protect citizens' rights. This involves training law enforcement as well as judicial officers to respect human rights, ensuring that perpetrators of abuses are held accountable to provide the needed access to justice for victims (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020). The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as institutions, serve as instruments that give a framework for protecting as well as promoting human rights at the national level. Thus, this study aims to interrogate these issues to contribute to ongoing efforts to improve human rights in Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, and beyond. The primary issue this study addresses is the vulnerabilities faced by citizens and non-citizens within the criminal justice systems of Nigeria and Ivory Coast, which are compounded by systemic challenges such as discrimination, inadequate legal representation, and limited access to diplomatic or consular support within these countries' political systems. Despite the extensive body of literature on human rights challenges in Africa, there is a gap in the vulnerabilities of nationals in the criminal justice systems of these countries, and this study examines the human rights challenges in these countries. The objectives of this study are:

- i. To identify the nexus between democracy and good governance for human rights; and
- ii. To identify the various democratic institutions and processes in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast.

Literature Review

Several scholars have worked on the human rights challenges within Africa and the Sub west African states. Human rights are recognised as a principle in international law and ethics that mainly addresses issues on the protection of vulnerable populations, citizens, foreigners, or emigrants in a political system or within the international system. In a study carried out by the Pozen Centre's Human Rights Internship Programme, it was found that the practical applications of human rights protection are real in the democratic system within the international system and the local system of people. Also, numerous human rights treaties existed since the formation of the UN after World War II and through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), their administrative and practical application effectiveness is questioned and termed as an authoritarian state where these rights are infringed (Langlois, 2005; Campbell, 2010; Gruffydd-Jones, 2019; Lamentowicz, 2020).

From a global perspective, Adler (2020) describes human rights as innate and transcendent cultural and political divides that form a basis for other rights locally within a system or within the global community, where human rights are a major issue of discussion. Within the international system, human rights are universally accepted as standards for evaluating state actions and are embedded in various international documents, national laws, and treaties in which states are part of the international system. Human rights serve as justification for a range of actions from grassroots advocacy to international intervention, i.e., from local rights to the universal rights of a person in a system or the interconnectedness of people in the global system (Merry, 2009). Another scholar, Mezzina (2019), outlines the main concepts of human rights that operate within the universal system: as minimum standards for humane treatment and as rights inherent to human life and therefore, given the duality of human rights within a system is propelling in the discourse and practice of human rights in a state or within the international system.

Research Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach to give a comprehensive analysis of the human rights challenges in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, as countries in the West African region. The complexity as well as the need for an exploration of relevant literature and documents, a content analysis approach was used to discussed the study, also, this enables for

a systematically examine knowledge, theories, policies, and practices related to human rights as well as human rights violations of the citizens and non-citizens within the framework of Africa and in the international system. The method of analysis used in the study was content analysis. The content analysis of the documents and literature was used to gather quality information on the subjects that cover content analysis.

Nexus Between Democracy and Good Governance for Human Rights

Democracy is viewed among scholars and practitioners as the most favourable governance system as the world stands today. In modern societies, the discussion about democracy shifted from which political system is the best to how far the nations have been able to implement or attain democratic principles for the benefit of the people within the state. The attractiveness of democracy is beyond being a simple political choice; it is recognised as a symbol of civilisation and a universal benchmark that societies strive to achieve (Owolabi, 2001). Therefore, this aspiration within the global system is an agreement that democracy embodies such as; respect for human rights, the rule of law, and political diversity for societal development and stability in the political system and this make democracy transcends mere governance activities to other societal advancement and an obligation to uphold individual rights and dignity within the state and global system.

It is widely accepted that democracy embodies the most ethical and legitimate approach to managing any society, from developed to underdeveloped democratic societies. Global institutions, such as the World Bank, identified a strong link between democracy and effective governance for its effectiveness at the state level or within the global system. Incorporating principles of justice, equity, liberty, accountability, transparency, and civic engagement, democracy acts as a framework for sound governance within any system for the politics of scarce resources (Oluwole, 2003). Democratic values are essential criteria for assessing governmental performance, distinguishing those systems that prioritise the public interest from those that nurture corruption and oppression. Democracy states the rightful methods for obtaining political power through fair and transparent elections and dictates how that power should be exercised to promote the public welfare in a political system which requires that elected representatives of the people maintain some level of ethical standards in their governance, justice, public well-being, and moral accountability to the people (Parekh, 1993). So, the ethical foundations of democracy are the inseparable connection between democratic ideals and good governance. This relationship is that good governance is a fundamental philosophical basis of democracy and that political authority is applied in a manner consistent with the principles of social justice and citizen empowerment. Thomas Pickering, a former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, argues that this idea by asserting that the essence of good governance is democracy itself for the people (Skinner, 1970).

Currently, within the African setting, the "third wave" of democratisation that surged in the late 20th century instilled hope for political stability and socio-economic advancement beyond the African setting. However, the expected benefits of democracy are overshadowed by conflict, instability, and underdevelopment as they affect many aspects of the democracy of country. Countries such as Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Liberia, and Zimbabwe encountered a variety of challenges, such as civil wars, ethnic conflicts, political assassinations, and severe economic difficulties and making it a reality on the problem of democracy itself does not resolve governance issues in societies facing profound structural problems.

After many years, Nigeria returned to a democratic system of government in 1999, and this was accompanied by high hopes for transformative change in the state that would translate into a better life for the people of the state. However, since the return of democracy, the period is characterised by numerous socio-economic and political difficulties causing widespread poverty, youth unemployment, and ethno-religious conflicts that have kept the country in a state of underdevelopment for many years. The persistence of some of these issues indicates that democracy does not automatically result in good governance in Nigeria and in the African continent. However, in most of the countries within the West African continent, the efficacy of democratic systems does not shape the lives of citizens in terms of their socio-cultural, institutional robustness, and political commitment. Some important questions raised by scholars in the African context are: Who genuinely gains from democracy in Africa? What purpose does it serve in Africa? Democracy seems to be imposed from the West, primarily motivated by the need to secure international aid and financing for various special interests and groups. This externally motivated democratisation lacks authentic local backing and does not align with the socio-cultural contexts of African societies. Consequently, many African nations,

after becoming independent from the West, adopt liberal democratic models that do not fit their realities, leading to disappointment with democratic processes and institutions of democracy. To tackle some of the problems of democracy in Africa, African leaders must be ready to modify and "domesticate" democratic practices to suit the African narratives. This entails blending traditional democratic values with aspects of liberal democracy to forge governance systems that are practical and also culturally relevant to the African society and its citizenry in the 21st century. Gyekye (1997) contends that African countries should seek creative methods to reconcile their rich cultural heritage with contemporary democratic ideals. Therefore, going with this, African nations are establishing a governance model that is reflective of their distinct socio-cultural realities for achieving more substantial results in the form of applicability for good governance on the continent that has faced various challenges in the democracy. The fundamental human rights enshrined in Chapter IV (Sections 33 to 46) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) are as follows:

Right to Life (Section 33)

- Every person has the right to life.
- No one shall be deprived of life except in the execution of a court sentence for a criminal offense.
- However, the use of force resulting in death is not considered a violation if it occurs in:
 - a. Defense of a person from unlawful violence.
 - b. Lawful arrest or prevention of escape from custody.
 - c. Suppressing riots, insurrection, or mutiny.

Right to Dignity of the Human Person (Section 34)

- No one shall be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment.
- No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
- No one shall be forced into compulsory labour, except:
 - a. Work required as punishment for a crime.
 - b. Military service or national emergency duty.
 - c. Community service imposed by a court.

Right to Personal Liberty (Section 35)

- Every person has the right to personal liberty.
- No person shall be deprived of liberty except under the following conditions:
 - a. Execution of a court order.
 - b. Preventive detention for public safety.
 - c. Detainment of minors for educational or welfare purposes.
 - d. Quarantine for the prevention of infectious diseases.
 - e. If unlawfully detained, the person has the right to compensation.

Right to Fair Hearing (Section 36)

- Every person has the right to a fair trial before an independent and impartial court.
- Accused persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- The accused must be informed of charges in a language they understand.
- The accused must be given adequate time and facilities to prepare a defense.
- Legal representation is guaranteed, and in serious cases, the government is to provide a lawyer if the accused is unable to afford one.

Right to Private and Family Life (Section 37)

Protects citizens from unlawful invasion of privacy in:

- Homes
- Correspondence

- Telephone conversations
- Family life

Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion (Section 38)

- Every person has the right to freedom of religion, belief, and thought.
- Individuals are allowed to change their religion or belief.
- No one is to be forced to participate in religious activities.
- Religious communities have the right to establish educational institutions.

Right to Freedom of Expression and the Press (Section 39)

- Every person has the right to express opinions, receive, and impart information.
- The press, radio, television, and other media are free to operate.
- The government may regulate media for public safety, order, and morality.

Right to Peaceful Assembly and Association (Section 40)

Every person has the right to:

- a. Peacefully assemble.
- b. Form and join trade unions, political parties, or other associations.

Right to Freedom of Movement (Section 41)

- Every citizen has the right to move freely within Nigeria.
- Citizens can leave and return to Nigeria without restriction.
- Limitations may apply due to national security, health, or legal reasons.

Right to Freedom from Discrimination (Section 42)

No Nigerian shall be discriminated against based on:

- a. Ethnic group
- b. Place of origin

Sex

- a. Religion
- b. Political opinion
- c. Circumstances of birth

Right to Acquire and Own Property (Section 43)

Every Nigerian has the right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in the country.

Compulsory Acquisition of Property (Section 44)

The government are only allowed to acquire private property:

- a. For public purposes.
- b. With proper compensation paid to the owner.
- c. The owner has the right to challenge the acquisition in court.

Restriction and Derogation of Rights (Section 45)

Rights may be restricted if necessary for:

- a. Public safety.
- b. Public order.

- c. Defense.
- d. Public health or morality.
- e. Protecting the rights of others.

Special Jurisdiction of High Court in Fundamental Rights Matters (Section 46)

- a. Any person who alleges a violation of fundamental rights is allowed to seek redress in the High Court.
- b. The High Court has jurisdiction to hear and enforce fundamental rights cases.
- c. The National Assembly is to decide to establish procedures for the enforcement of fundamental rights.

In sum, the rights in Sections 33 to 46 of the Nigeria constitution is the core fundamental human rights. However, as many other countries with the global system these rights are subject to some limitations when it concerns national security, public health, or legal proceedings. The fundamental human rights of citizens in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) are enshrined in Title I of the 2016 Constitution, under the section "Freedoms, Rights, and Duties" (Articles 1 to 40), that states the rights guaranteed to every Ivorian citizen and the circumstances for enforced or limiting it citizen.

Right to Human Dignity and Equality (Article 1 & Article 2)

- The human person is sacred.
- All individuals are born free and equal before the law.
- No discrimination based on race, ethnicity, origin, gender, religion, or political opinion.

Right to Life and Physical Integrity (Article 3)

- Every person has a right to life.
- The death penalty is abolished in Côte d'Ivoire.
- No one shall be subjected to torture, slavery, or inhuman treatment.

Right to Personal Liberty (Article 4)

- Every citizen has the right to personal freedom.
- No one shall be arbitrarily arrested or detained.

Right to Due Process and Fair Trial (Article 5)

- Every person is presumed innocent until proven guilty.
- No one shall be punished without a fair and impartial trial.
- Everyone has a right to legal defense.

Right to Private and Family Life (Article 6)

The privacy of individuals, homes, and correspondence is protected from arbitrary interference.

Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion (Article 7)

- Every individual has the right to freedom of thought, religion, and belief.
- No one shall be forced to adhere to a particular religion.

Right to Freedom of Expression and the Press (Article 8)

- Citizens have the right to freedom of speech and the press.
- Censorship of the media is prohibited, except for protecting national security or public order.

Right to Peaceful Assembly and Association (Article 9)

- Citizens have the right to assemble and associate freely.
- Includes forming and joining political parties, trade unions, and civil society organisations.

Right to Freedom of Movement (Article 10)

- Every citizen has the right to move freely within the country.
- Citizens are granted to leave and return to Côte d'Ivoire without restriction.

Right to Property (Article 11)

- The right to own and dispose of property is guaranteed.
- Private property is to be expropriated for public interest with fair compensation.

Right to Work and Social Protection (Article 12)

- Every person has the right to work and choose their occupation freely.
- The state must protect workers' rights and promote equal pay for equal work.

Right to Education (Article 13)

- Education is a fundamental right.
- The state must ensure free and compulsory education up to a certain level.

Right to Health and Social Security (Article 14)

- Every person has the right to healthcare.
- The state must ensure access to quality medical services.

Right to a Healthy Environment (Article 15)

- Every citizen has the right to a clean and safe environment.
- The state must protect the environment from degradation.

Right to Political Participation (Article 16)

- Every citizen has the right to vote and be elected in free and fair elections.
- Political parties must respect national unity and democratic principles.

Protection of Women's and Children's Rights (Article 17 & Article 18)

- Gender equality is guaranteed in all aspects of life.
- The state protects women from violence and discrimination.
- Children's rights to education, health, and protection from abuse are ensured.

Rights of Indigenous and Minority Groups (Article 19)

- The state protects and promotes the rights of indigenous communities.
- Ethnic and cultural diversity is recognised and safeguarded.

Prohibition of Discrimination (Article 20)

- Discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, or political opinion is prohibited.
- The state ensures equal opportunities for all citizens.

Protection Against Arbitrary Expulsion (Article 21)

- No citizen is arbitrarily expelled from Côte d'Ivoire.
- The state cannot extradite citizens to foreign countries unless agreed upon by law.

Restriction and Limitation of Rights (Article 22)

Rights may be restricted in cases of:

- a. National security threats
- b. Public health emergencies
- c. Protection of other citizens' rights

- d. Any restrictions must comply with international human rights standards.

Duty of the State to Promote Human Rights (Article 28)

- The state must educate citizens about their rights and duties.
- Human rights principles are integrated into education, security forces training, and public administration.

Right to Seek Redress (Article 40)

- Any person whose rights are violated has the right to seek justice in the courts.
- The judiciary must be independent and impartial.

In sum, the 2016 Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) establishes a framework for the protection of fundamental human rights of its citizenry, and these rights are enshrined in Articles 1 to 40 of the country.

Discussion

Democratic Institutions and Processes in Nigeria and Ivory Coast

In a comparative sense, the democratic institutions in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast are similar in many ways. Scholars in different times across fields in social science noted that comparison is a tool for shaping and sharpening reality. The effectiveness of democratic governance in any nation is influenced by the robustness of its electoral systems, political parties, and election management bodies that are in place to ensure fairness. Today in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, the structure and functionality of these institutions shape the democratic system. According to Sartori (2005), electoral systems are the mechanisms that convert votes into political representation, which, by the power of the state constitution, determines the composition of the legislative and executive branches of government for the state. One notable comparison is that both countries adopted a plurality (first-past-the-post) electoral system for their presidential and legislative elections to foster a two-party dominance, albeit with room for smaller parties to participate (Norris, 2004). In any democratic system in the world, Political parties, on the other hand, are essential for political mobilisation, representing diverse interests within society and making sure that the political parties are accountable to the people of the state (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). However, in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, political parties are characterised by weak internal democracy, ethnoregional cleavages and patronage networks affecting their ability to serve as effective vehicles of democratic consolidation (Omodia, 2011).

The integrity of democratic elections is largely dependent on the impartiality and efficiency of election management bodies (EMBs) that are also available in the state. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Nigeria and the Commission Électorale Indépendante (CEI) in Ivory Coast are tasked with overseeing the conduct of elections so that they are free, fair, and transparent so that the best candidate to govern the state, these institutions are criticised regarding their capacity to manage electoral processes effectively (Fall et al. 2022). Most of the election observer reports that the INEC's conduct during the 2019 and 2023 general elections was marred by allegations of logistical failures, vote-buying, and electoral violence, raising concerns about its ability to guarantee credible elections. Similarly, the CEI were accused of bias in the 2020 presidential elections and it was perceived as favouring the incumbent government.

In a state that operates by the tenet of democracy, constitutionalism is a framework of democratic governance, making it possible for the state and the people to have the legal and institutional foundations for protecting civil liberties, enforcing the rule of law and separation of powers (Elster, 2000). Nigeria's 1999 Constitution and Ivory Coast's 2016 Constitution outline the principles of democratic governance in the protection of fundamental human rights, the conduct of periodic elections, and the establishment of checks and balances. However, the practical implementation of these constitutional provisions falls short due to executive dominance, weak legislative oversight, and judicial inefficiencies (Olaniyan, 2020). In Nigeria, the president wields substantial powers and this gives a big concern about the erosion of democratic checks and balances in the state (Suberu, 2019). Similarly, in Ivory Coast, constitutional amendments that give room for the centralisation of power in the executive sparked major debates among state and non-state actors on the future of democracy in the country (Bah, 2021).

One of the most persistent challenges to democratic consolidation in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast is the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections. Electoral malpractice in the form of vote-buying, ballot-box snatching, and the manipulation of electoral rolls affects the legitimacy of electoral outcomes within the West Africa region within the African politics and internationally accepted norms of democratic principle (Diamond and Plattner, 2016). The prevalence of electoral violence during high-stakes elections complicates efforts to conduct credible polls. Nigeria has witnessed a series of violent incidents during its elections that disenfranchised voters and eroded public confidence in the democratic process (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In Ivory Coast, the post-election violence of the 2010 and 2020 elections exposed the level of political and ethnic divisions that raise questions about the country's commitment to democratic norms (N'Guessan, 2021).

Also, the role of Political parties is vital to the democratic process, serving as conduits for political participation, governance and accountability for the survival of democracy in any political system (Duverger, 1954). However, in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, political parties' function more as platforms for elite competition than as institutions representing based societal interests or the communal interest of their people (Lindberg, 2010). The personalisation of political parties around influential leaders, coupled with the lack of ideological clarity, is the level of fragmentation of the political system in these countries (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). Many times, this phenomenon is exacerbated by the use of state resources for political patronage affecting the principles of competitive democracy. In Nigeria, the dominance of the ruling party, coupled with the co-optation of opposition figures stifled political competition out of the system and always want it to be their party's affair only this is seen in the sixteen year of PDP People's Democratic Party and since the inception of the current political party the APC All Progressive Congress. In Ivory Coast, the political landscape is similarly polarised, with the main parties aligned along ethnic lines heightened tensions and contributed to electoral violence in the state (McCauley, 2020).

Conclusion

The signs and consequences of ineffective governance are apparent in human rights abuse, corruption, injustice, inequality, integration difficulties, ethnic and religious strife, along with other societal challenges. Among these issues, human rights are one of the pressing ethical dilemmas in governance within the sub west African region. It has driven an alarming increase in subsequent effects within the region on the foundations of effective governance. Human rights abuse impacts a portion of the population, which blinds people to their problems and hinders their ability to think of solutions to the local problems that affect the African continent and even the sub-West African continent. It makes citizens susceptible and easily exploitable in the name of democracy, where many of the people are treated with injustice. Also, in the name of democracy, the political elite uses this act as fundamental liberties to abuse a form of a tactical instrument for manipulation and control that their authority over society and for many years have been unchallenged in the countries as a result of the Hegemony of the elites in the affair of the state. Finally, for a meaningful reform in Nigeria and the Ivory Coast, these should be in the form of a re-evaluation of democratic structures and human rights practices. Strengthening institutional frameworks that foster transparent electoral processes and judicial independence is imperative to bridge the gap between constitutional ideals.

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