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| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Paper Title:**

**AFRICAN UNION ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION**

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| **ABSTRACT**

Emilokan democracy, a term derived from the Yoruba ethnic trappings in Nigeria, refers to my/our turn, whether of the individuals, political clicks/class, ethnic groups, geopolitical zones, regions or any other groups. It is a pervasive political culture of patronage, clientelism, and corruption that undermines democratic institutions and processes.

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Emilokan democracy, a term derived from the Yoruba ethnic trappings in Nigeria, refers to my/our turn, whether of the individuals, political clicks/class, ethnic groups, geopolitical zones, regions or any other groups. It is a pervasive political culture of patronage, clientelism, and corruption that undermines democratic institutions and processes. This phenomenon is characterized by the exchange of material benefits for political support, vote-buying, electoral violence, and manipulation of election results. Emilokan democracy has been perpetuated by Nigeria's political elites, who use state resources to capture and maintain power, in addition to other privileges. Nigeria's democratic experience has been marked by a cycle of electoral fraud, violence, and political instability (Hultz, 2017). The 2023 presidential election presented an opportunity for the EU observation mission to assess the country's democratic progress and provide recommendations for improvement. However, the EU reports have consistently highlighted issues such as vote-buying, electoral violence, and manipulation of election results (EU EOM, 2023). The presence of international election observers, such as the European Union (EU), has become a crucial aspect of ensuring the credibility and legitimacy of electoral processes in developing democracies (Hansen, 2013). Nigeria, in particular, where the signpost of emilokan democracy seems the major direction to capturing of political power. Besides, the country is uniquely prisoned by a history of contentious elections, and the 2023 presidential election is no exception (Adejumobi, 2017). The EU observation mission's approach to addressing electoral process manipulations in Nigeria has been criticized for being too soft and not sufficiently emphasizing the need for democratic reforms (Adejumobi, 2017). Some scholars argue that the EU's focus on technical assistance and capacity building has not adequately addressed the underlying political and economic structures that perpetuate Emilokan democracy (Omotola, 2017).

The implications of Emilokan democracy for democratic consolidation in Nigeria are profound. It undermines the legitimacy of democratic institutions, perpetuates political instability, and reinforces patronage and clientelism. Moreover, Emilokan democracy has led to a lack of accountability, corruption, and mismanagement of public funds and trust. Despite the EU observation mission's efforts, Emilokan democracy remains a significant challenge to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The EU reports have consistently highlighted issues such as vote-buying, electoral violence, and manipulation of election results (EU EOM, 2023). However, the extent to which the EU reports have addressed Emilokan democracy and its implications for

democratic consolidation in Nigeria remains understudied. Studies have shown that international election observation can contribute to democratic consolidation by promoting credible elections and accountability (Hyde, 2011; Bjornlund, 2017). However, the effectiveness of EU election observation in addressing Emilokan democracy in Nigeria is unclear. Some scholars argue that EU observation missions have failed to adequately address issues of patronage and clientelism in Nigerian elections. Others suggest that EU reports have not sufficiently emphasized the need for democratic reforms in Nigeria (Adejumobi, 2017). Research has shown that international election observation can have a positive impact on the electoral process, by promoting transparency, accountability, and credibility (Hyde, 2011). Moreover, the presence of international observers can also contribute to the prevention of electoral fraud and violence (Lynch, 2017). However, the effectiveness of international election observation depends on various factors, including the observer mission's mandate, resources, and methodology (Bjornlund, 2017). To drive this paper home, this research question was formulated: How did the EU observation mission reports address issues of Emilokan democracy in 2023 presidential election and the implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

### **Election Reports and Emilokan Democracy**

Election reports strengthen Democratic processes through implementation of recommended reforms by election observation institutions and groups. It is against this backdrop, that study reviews election reports and emilokan democracy. First, election reports are detailed documents that provide an objective and impartial assessment of an election process (EU EOM, 2023). These reports are typically prepared by election observation missions, which are deployed by international organizations, regional bodies, or individual countries to observe and evaluate the electoral process (OSCE, 2022). Research has shown that international election observation can have a positive impact on the electoral process, by promoting transparency, accountability, and credibility (Hyde, 2011). Moreover, the presence of international observers can also contribute to the prevention of electoral fraud and violence (Lynch, 2017). However, the effectiveness of international election observation depends on various factors, including the observer mission's mandate, resources, and methodology (Bjornlund, 2017). Components of Election Report include but not limited to the following; an introduction, this provides an overview of the election, including the context, political landscape, and electoral system (AU EOM, 2022).

Legal Framework which analyzes the legal framework governing the election, including the constitution, electoral laws, and regulations (EU EOM, 2023). Electoral Administration: Assesses the electoral administration, including the election commission, voter registration, and polling procedures (OSCE, 2022). Voter registration which evaluates the voter registration process, including the accuracy of the voter roll and the inclusivity of the registration process (AU EOM, 2022). Campaign finance: which examines campaign finance regulations and practices, including transparency and accountability (EU EOM, 2023). Media and Freedom of expression that assesses the media landscape and freedom of expression, including access to information and media coverage of the election (OSCE, 2022). Voting and Counting: Observes the voting and counting processes, including the accuracy and transparency of the results (AU EOM, 2022). Post-Election Dispute Resolution: Evaluates the mechanisms for resolving post-election disputes, including the judiciary and electoral tribunals (EU EOM, 2023). Conclusion and recommendations provides a summary of the findings and recommendations for improving the election process, strengthening democratic institutions, and enhancing the overall quality of democracy (OSCE, 2022). Preliminary statements issued shortly after the election, providing an initial assessment of the electoral process (EU EOM, 2023). Interim Reports: Published during the election process, highlighting key findings and concerns (OSCE, 2022). And, final reports revealing comprehensive reports issued after the election, providing a detailed assessment of the entire electoral process (AU EOM, 2022).

Follow-up Reports: Published after the final report, tracking the implementation of recommendations and progress made in addressing electoral concerns (EU EOM, 2023). Election reports should maintain objectivity and impartiality, avoiding bias and political interference (OSCE, 2022). Transparency and Accountability: Reports should be transparent, with clear Page | 73 methodologies and evidence-based findings (EU EOM, 2023). Comprehensive Coverage: Reports should cover all aspects of the electoral process, providing a comprehensive assessment (AU EOM, 2022). Timeliness: Reports should be issued in a timely manner, allowing for prompt action to be taken on recommendations (OSCE, 2022). Stakeholder Engagement: Reports should engage with various stakeholders, including electoral authorities, political parties, civil society, and the media (EU EOM, 2023). On the other hand, emilokan democracy refers to a duped political culture where individuals, ethnic groups, political class, geopolitical zones or other groups prioritize their personal or group interests and turn in power over the collective good, weeping in sentiments of my turn/our turn to benefit from democratic process in area of capturing of state power. The concept of Emilokan Democracy has been conceptualized as a form of "neo-patrimonialism", where political leaders use state resources to maintain patronage networks and perpetuate clientelism (Bakere 2023, Agbese 2022, Owubiko 2022, Odun&Murtala 2022, Odinkalu2022, Okonkwo 2022, Orji 2022 and Sani 2022). This has led to a lack of accountability, corruption, and mismanagement of public resources (Itua, Ugwu, Orji & Nnamani, 2022). Emilokan Democracy is a political phenomenon where democratic institutions and processes are undermined by patronage, clientelism, and corruption (Olusunle 2022, Okoro 2022, Onuoha 2022, Obogo 2022, Taiwo-Obalanye 2022, Osazo 2022, Kalu 2022, Obi 2022, Agbodo 2022, and

Kanu 2022,). It is characterized by the exchange of material benefits for political support, vote-buying, electoral violence, and manipulation of election(Bakere 2023, Uwaje 2022, Odogwo 2022, Salaudeen 2022 and John 2022).

### Theoretical framework

Democratic Theory of election observation posits that election observation is a crucial component of democratic governance, as it ensures the integrity and legitimacy of the electoral process. This theory was propounded by Dahl(1957) in his book, Polyarchy and popularized by authors such as Pippa(2012) and Gromping(2012l).

### Key Assumptions

1. **Focus on Democracy:** The study focuses on election reports, which are a key aspect of democratic governance. The democratic theory provides a framework for understanding the role of election observation in ensuring democratic integrity.
2. **Emphasis on Accountability:** The democratic theory emphasizes the importance of accountability in democratic governance. Election observation reports provide a means of holding electoral authorities accountable for the conduct of elections.
3. **International Context:** The study involves international election observation missions, which are a key component of democratic governance at the international level. The democratic theory provides a framework for understanding the role of international election observation in promoting democratic norms and standards.
4. **Focus on Election Integrity:** The study focuses on election reports, which are a key indicator of election integrity. The democratic theory provides a framework for understanding the importance of election integrity in ensuring democratic legitimacy
5. **Free and Fair Elections:** The study assumes that the election reports analyzed reflect the conduct of free and fair elections.
6. **Accountability:** The study assumes that the election reports hold electoral authorities accountable for the conduct of elections.
7. **Democratic Norms:** The study assumes that the international election observation missions promoting democratic norms and standards in their reports.
8. **Independent Media:** The study assumes that the media reports analyzed are independent and accurate.
9. **Civil Society Engagement:** The study assumes that civil society organizations are engaged in the electoral process and able to observe and report on election irregularities.

### Applicability:

By applying these assumptions, the study analyzes the EU EOM reports through the lens of democratic theory, examining how the reports unearthed and chastised issues bordering on emilokan democracy by reflecting the principles of democratic governance, accountability, and election integrity which breed a healthy process of Democratic consolidation in Nigeria. In conclusion, the democratic theory is the most appropriate theory for this study because it provides a framework for understanding the role of election observation in preventing the pervasive culture of emilokan democracy and ensuring democratic integrity, accountability and legitimacy which fasten democratic consolidation.

### Methodology:-

The study is qualitative and it employed case study research design. It adopted documentary method of data collection and utilized content analysis of election reports and signposts of emilokan democracy in the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria.

**European Union Election Observation Reports and Emilokan Democracy in 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria**  
**Table1**

S/N	Emilokan Democracy Indices	Description of Issues	Category	Frequency (EU EOM Report)	Percentage
1	My turn/Our turn to Power	Prioritizing political elites' interests over democratic principles. APC and PDP candidates and a section of LP supporters emphasizing them to rule.	Class Interests Prioritization	5	45%

2	Vote Buying	Offering material inducements in exchange for votes. Alleged offering of cash, customized ATM cards, and gifts by some political parties and their candidates.	Electoral Malpractice - Vote Inducement	4	36%
3	Weak Institutions	Ineffective or compromised electoral body and judiciary. INEC culpability and judicial bias.	INEC Failure and Compromised Judiciary	5	45%
4	Patronage	Exchanging government favors for political support. Some parties and candidates promising government contracts and appointments in exchange for political support.	Clientelism	3	27%
5	Godfatherism	Political elites recruiting political persons involved in patronage systems. Some parties' candidates were seen muscling their way through the godfather and godson network.	Political Elitism - Personality Cult	2	18%
6	Voter Intimidation	Political elites suppressing opposition in stronghold areas and intimidating voters. APC and PDP and Labour Party were alleged to have intimidated opposition supporters.	Electoral Violence and Malpractice	2	18%
7	Lack of Transparency	Secrecy in handling the conduct and deployment of BVAS. INEC culpability and compromised institutions.	Institutional Failure	1	9%
8	Lack of Political Will to Implement Electoral Reforms	Government deliberate efforts to thwart the implementation of electoral reforms. INEC culpability and government weaknesses.	Weak Institutions and Compromised Leadership	4	36%
9	Nepotism	Political elites appointing family members, friends,	Corruption	1	9%

**Source; EU EOM Reports in Nigeria(2023), compiled by the Authors**

**Note:**

Frequency: Number of times each issue appeared in the table Percentage: Percentage of total issues (11) that each issue represents Category:

**Categorization of each issue into broader themes**

### **Findings and Discussion:-**

EU Election Observation Mission Reports unearthed indices of Emolilokan Democracy in 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria Table one above reveals among other things that political elitism and electoral malpractice were the most frequent categories, each representing 45% and 36% of the issues, respectively.

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That weak institutions/Institutional failure and clientelism followed, each representing 27% of the issues. Corruption represented 18% of the issues. Godfatherism, voter suppression /intimidation, election rigging, lack of transparency, and nepotism were less frequent issues, each representing 9% or less of the total. The influence of powerful individuals or "godfathers" in politics, voter intimidation, that is the use of threats or violence to influence voter behavior, election rigging, the manipulation of election results through fraud or other means, lack of transparency, the lack of openness or accountability in political processes, nepotism, the practice of giving favour or preference to family members or friends in politics, all combined to firmly pigeonhole emilokan democracy in the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. Hence, the shadow of emilokan democracy fell upon almost every political activity of the 2023 presidential election. From declaration of interests to run, to becoming aspirants, to party conventions and to party primaries. From becoming flagbearers to the campaigns and conduct of the election, from the collation of results to the declaration of same, from the transition period to the swearing-in ceremony and from the nomination of ministerial candidates to their appointments, emilokan democracy shaped and controlled the politicking, where it did not directly influence it, it indirectly regulated, authorized and prescribed it.

### **Recommendations:-**

The EU election observation missions in conjunction with civil society groups, local and other international partners must continue to prioritize democracy promotion while using their soft powers, and technical supports to influence Nigerian government to implement electoral reforms to address the issues highlighted in the EU reports and consolidate democratization. In addition to carrying out punitive measures against culprits of election malpractices in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion :-**

This study demonstrates the importance of international observation missions in promoting democracy in Nigeria. The EU observation mission reports played a crucial role in enhancing the credibility and transparency of the 2023 presidential election. While challenges persist, the findings and recommendations of this study provide a roadmap for enhancing emilokan democracy in Nigeria. The study contributes to the ongoing debate on democracy promotion and highlights the need for sustained international support for democratic consolidation and development in Nigeria.

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