

**Political Parties and Governance Outcomes in Orlu Political Zone, Imo State (1999-2019)**Chijioke Sunday UMEH<sup>1</sup> and O. O. OKEREKE<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Department of Public Administration, Federal Polytechnic Ngodo-Isuochi, Abia State. NIGERIA<sup>2</sup>Department of Political Science, Abia State University, Uturu, Abia State. NIGERIA**Abstract**

*This paper examined how well the political parties that have governed or ruled Imo State have done in the area of road infrastructure, education and employment, using Orlu political zone as our study area. The objective is to assess the capacity or ability of political parties in Nigeria to occasion good governance through the provision of the dividends of democracy. Four hundred (400) respondents were randomly selected out of one million, eight hundred and ninety-two thousand, five hundred and twenty (1,892,520) eligible registered voters in Orlu political zone. A questionnaire titled Political Parties and Governance Survey Questionnaire (PPGSQ), structured in a likely format was administered for data collection and was complemented with interviews. The data collected was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. The study was anchored on the Structural Functional Theory. It was revealed that poor road infrastructure, education sector, as well as the rising unemployment was due to poor governance. It was therefore, recommended that parties in power should adopt well thought out policy strategies that will be effectively implemented to guarantee good governance.*

**Keywords:** Dividends of Democracy, Education, Good Governance, Political Parties, Road Infrastructure, Unemployment.

**1. Introduction**

In Nineteenth century, citizenship was gradually extended to the mass of the people. This was quickly followed by the emergence of representative institutions, the need for elections, and a subsequent expansion in the number of people who could vote and be voted for. Thus, it became necessary to create organs which could channel the electoral needs of the people and also provide the basis for representative institutions. Such organs became known as "Political Parties". Political parties are important and critical feature of a democratic society. They provide the platform for electoral process. Conceding this fact, Umeh and Okereke (2020) see political parties as an organized group that mobilize and educate the masses on major political and national issues. There is no limitation to the duration of political parties. Some political parties in the contemporary world are more than 100 years old while others disappear very quickly. In a developing nation like Nigeria, many political parties have been banned with the emergence of military governments or because they were not able to meet the required standard. Based on the foregoing, importance is placed on political rights such as the right to vote and be voted for, right to speech, movement, assembly, publication and association.

These rights under the platform of political parties are integral to either good or bad governance. The concept of governance is the use of political power to manage a nation's public affairs, shape its economic and social environment in line with perceived notions of public interest, and social progress (Osuji 2016). It is precisely from the great impact which use of political power leaves on a society either positively or negatively, that arise both 'development and progress' or 'stagnation and underdevelopment' in the society. Good governance therefore, suggests the positive exercise of political power to attain positive societal goals and development, while bad governance could be taken to be synonymous with the negative exercise of political power, usually for the private, sectional or group interests of the key political actors (Adedeji, 2020). Anchoring on this perspective, Nkom (2018) posits that good governance depends on the extent to which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimately committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens,

competent to assure law and order, deliver public services, able to create an enabling environment for productive activities and equitable in its conduct. The degree to which political parties have been used to achieve good governance in Nigeria becomes a thing of concern, hence the need for this study. Presently, Imo State has three zones. The Owerri Zone (Imo East), which has nine (9) L.G. As, the Orlu Zone (Imo North), which has twelve (12) L. G. As, and the Okigwe Zone (Imo South), which has six (6) L. G. As.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Modern political parties have become so much involved in the running of democratic government. The combination between the activities of political parties and governance has become so wide spread that it is difficult to imagine democratic governance in the absence of political parties. In addition to the general importance of political parties in democratic setting, is the number of political parties legally authorized to operate within any political system. In search of accountable and responsive good governance, various Nigerian governments at national and state levels (Imo State and Orlu political zone inclusive) have claimed democratic governance as a viable strategy for the achievement of sustainable development. Notably, the Buhari administration under the political party platform of All Progressive Congress (APC), with its Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) claimed democratic governance. The former Governor of Imo State, His Excellency, Governor Achike Udenwa, under the political party platform of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), from 1999 to 2007, claimed to be transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of the "Imolites". His successor, His Excellency, Chief Ikedi Ohakim, under the political party platform of the Progressive Peoples' Alliance (PPA) and later to (PDP), from 2007 to 2011 claimed openness of his "administration" as he openly invited all the people of the State into his administration. In 2011, his successor, His Excellency, Governor Owelle Rochas Okorocha under the political party platform of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) and later to (APC) also claimed to be running a "Peoples government". Undoubtedly, no responsive and accountable governance are usually associated with corruption and governance failures.

A close observation of party practice and governance in Orlu political zone of Imo State does not show deliberate efforts by the parties that have governed Imo state towards good governance. Scholars like Obigwe (2011) and Obiesie (2012) have affirmed that Imo State is characterized by significant poor governance due to poor recruitment and selection of political leaders for governance, particularly judging from the analysis statistically made of the 1999, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 elections in the three zones. Therefore, it is for this seemingly observed recurring poor governance in the zone that motivated the researchers to embark on this study to determine how well the political parties that have governed, or ruled Imo State have done in the areas of road infrastructure, education, and employment, using Orlu political zone as a study. Thus, considering the rising needs for good governance in the zone, we are prompted to ask; in what ways have political parties in power enhanced road infrastructure, education and employment opportunities in Orlu political zone? In view of the above questions, we hypothesize that: (a) poor road infrastructure is due to poor governance, (b) poor education sector is due to poor governance and (c) rising level of unemployment is due to poor governance.

### **2. Conceptual Analysis**

Political parties provide the link between the government and the people. They seek to educate, instruct and activate the electorates. A political party has been defined as an organized group of people who have similar political opinion and ideology, and work together to gain the control of government, so as to be able to implement their party programmes based on their ideology. This may be why Umeh and Okereke (2020), see it as a political institution made up of people who share the same political belief, value or ideology. Okezie (2020) on his part posits that party corruption is one of the reasons for poor governance, pointing out that parties provide political leaders in Nigeria. According to the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria ASCON (1999), the term leadership has several meanings. First, "it is designed as an art of influencing the behavior of group of people in order to achieve specific objectives and goals". Speaking on the need to determine the best system of political organization that

will promote the growth of democracy, and good governance in the society, Egbo (2018) submitted that:

A political party can be described as a group of individuals who share a common interest and ideology, that engages in political activity mainly with the aim of winning elections and forming the government of a state or country thereby transforming their interest and ideology into the ideology and interest of the whole society; this desire to contest and win elections or to take control of state power through contesting and winning election, puts the political party away from all other groups that may seek to influence government policy and actions, but are not ready to actually take over control of the government of the land.

Historically, according to Ndukwe (2014), political parties have emerged and flourished in an attempt to pursue or promote a wide variety of interests and beliefs. He notes these interests as: the interest of the monarchy against the assaults of the parliament; the interests of the church against the anti-clerical; the interests of the workers against the bourgeoisie; the interests of the peasants against the feudalistic, etc. He argues that, whatever the particular nature is, the party can be considered a small fraction of the society which has or tries to promote a specific or partial union of how the society needs to be organized to fulfill the union it promotes. Subscribing to the submissions made by Ndukwe (2014), Eze (2016) asserts that, “the party usually presents a number of its own candidates which it considers competent to fill the key positions of government such as: president, Governor, Council Chairman, etc. at elections”. He points out that, through this process of contesting elections, the modern political parties play a very vital role in the process of democracy and good governance. Onyema (2018) seem to have agreed with Eze (2016) on this, when he observed that “the citizens can easily reward their leaders or punish them based on the peoples’ assessment of their performance in office by voting for or against them”.

In a similar view, Umeh and Okereke (2020) contend that, without political parties a democratic system would not be possible. They hold that the existence of political parties in a political system provides the enabling environment for a suitable relationship within the polity. Ajayi (2016) argues that the form and structure which political parties assume in most developing countries are located in their history. For Dike (2017), those roles and manifest functions of political parties in Nigeria are practice of internal democracy; membership drive and mobilization; the appointment of governmental leaders; interest articulation; control of ordered groups; control of public affairs; moderation of political power, “welfarism” etc. He observes that in Nigeria the democratic experiment and the adopted party system seem to be re-instituting authoritarian rule in the guise of civilian democracy. He adds that the roles of election in a democracy as means of articulating popular will, peaceful regime change, popular acceptance of democratic regimes and good governance have become questionable. Drawing from the foregoing, Umeh and Okereke (2020) hold that succession to power has always raised issues, particularly in Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Duke (2023) avers that the difficulty in every political mandate is that of succession, pointing out that another related problem is, in what way and by whom a present ruler can be replaced. He also notes that in Nigerian political class, power is the ultimate no matter the means by which it comes, submitting that in Nigeria, nobody accepts losing election, and for that reason, politics is not played by the rule. For him, political power is used to promote individual or sectional interest than national interest. Corroborating this submission, Ucheoffor (2015, p. 21) observes that, “every new government in Imo State is often ruined by the regular interference of political parties, which results to poor governance,” as witnessed in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019.

The next concept that needs clarification is that of Governance, which could be either good or bad. As Osuji (2016) has already been cited, governance simply means the use of political power to manage a nation’s public affairs, shape its economic and social environment in line with perceived notions of public interest, as well as societal progress. Writing on the same subject matter, Bob (2021) posits that good governance lays emphasis on the way political power, the authority, and coercive instruments of the society are effectively put to use. It is essentially using political resources of the

society to achieve goals and ends which are in the interest of the majority of the people. In addition to this popular test, good governance emphasizes the use of open method to accomplish the goals of the society, the consciousness on the part of those who govern, that they hold a stewardship of the mass of the people who can withdraw that steward (Bob, 2021). According to Osmani (2019), the intrinsic value of participative governance refers to the idea that the act of participation is valuable in itself, quite apart from any instrumental or functional value it may have in helping to achieve other good things. This could have positioned the minds of Malena and McNeil (2020) assert that, good governance is delivery of developmental benefits to the people. For them, accountability is the obligation of public power holders to account for or take responsibility for their actions to the people, pointing out that, it is the cornerstone of good governance. Their argument hinges on the fact that, unless public officials can be held to account, critical benefits derivable from governance - such as social justice, poverty reduction and development in general, remain elusive. Subscribing to this, Odika and Ogbu (2016) observes that “Imo State government has refused to queue into the ideal desire of governance, as none of the governments have considered road infrastructure as an essential part of development to be delivered to the people”, indicating poor governance. They maintain that participative governance ensures ultimate/maximum accountability, and therefore, de-corrupts governance. When the people participate directly in governance, they are already accounting to self, and good governance will be the outcome.

On the basis of this understanding, Unanka *et al* (2019) hold that corruption occurs in the eyes of the individual or group that assigns someone else (e.g., a representative) to do a job on one’s behalf. They argue that when one is doing one’s job by self (i.e., direct participatory governance), corruption is not likely to be perceived. In this regard, they submit that de-corruption of governance reflects ultimate accountability and responsibility in governance assured, mostly when the people are directly accountable to the people or when one is directly accountable to oneself. However, the most important thing is to make the system corrupt free. Good governance entails transparency in the operation of government. Transparency is carrying out government business in an open, easy to understand and explicit manner, such that the rules made by government, the policies implemented by the government, and the results of governments activities are easy to verify by the ordinary citizen (Maduka, 2014). This may be why Izuogu (2019) in a paper presented in 2018, observed that education sector in Imo State has not received enough attention as a result of bad government. Another indicator of good governance is practical application of the rule of law as opposed to the arbitrary power of government or individual. In this direction, Bob (2021) offers explanation to the three dimensions of rule of law as suggested by Professor A.V Dicey, which according to him, are: (a) absolute supremacy of the law as the basis for measuring the conduct of individuals and groups. For example, in taking public action, the supremacy of the law requires that the government should be able to trace its action to a known or existing law, (b) absolute equality before the law: the central point of this dimension of rule of law is that all citizens who violate or offend the law of the land will be subjected to the same treatment before the law, and (c) the final dimension of the rule of law relates to the personal liberty of the citizens as viewed by the ordinary courts of the land. According to this principle, lord Dicey posited that in England as opposed to many other countries, the liberties of the citizens such as the right to life and freedom of movement are perceived as inherent rights of the citizens that are to be interpreted, and protected by independent judges sitting in courts. In Nigeria for example, the personal rights of individual citizens are embodied in a special chapter of fundamental Human Rights Chapter iv of the Nigerian Constitution. Articles 33-46 outline the Fundamental Rights of Nigerians that need to be protected by the High courts.

The concept of the rule of law is vital concept that links political theory, constitutional law and modern government into one integral whole in compliance to the rule of law. This could be why Mbanefor (2017) aligns himself to the law as opposed to the arbitrary power of GOVERNANCE. For him, good governance is predicated upon the principle of “due process” but in a political sense and from a legal perspective. Subject to this understanding, Adepoje (2018) argues that due process in political sphere of a country such as Nigeria can be seen from three different levels: the level of access to political office, the level of policy formulation and the level of policy implementation. In his view, one of the most significant formal requirements of democratic governance is the necessity for all those

who occupy important legislative and executive positions in a country to be popularly elected. This due process for coming to a position of power is considered so vital and critical that non-observance is usually considered a violation of due process. The requirement of the process is actually the basis for the legitimacy of most democratic regimes, and the violation of this due process is usually the root cause of lack of legitimacy suffered by military regimes (Adepoje, 2018). Due process at the political level according to Obialor (2011), can be seen in the process of policy formulation and implementation. For example, due process requires that a democratic government presents its policy programme (i.e., what it intends to do in office) to the electorate for prior ratification. He points out that the third dimension of political due process is considered necessary and useful in the process of policy implementation.

According to the norms of democratic governance, accountability is required in the process of governance. Chimaraoke (2021) on his part, sees due process of law as the exercise of powers of the government, based on the permitted settled maxims of law and sanction, under the safeguards for the protection of individual rights which those maxims prescribe. The question is, does democratic governance lead to sustainable development? The answer is “yes”. The idea of sustainable development as put by Alex (2020) refers to “a process of economic growth that can be sustained over a long term, because it does not involve the destruction of the environment. Sustainable development or economic growth, according to him, is managed in such a way that there is both an improvement in the economic conditions of the society and environment. Following this perspective, Madu (2016) observes that in Nigeria today, unemployment has been on the increase, as a result of corrupt governance, noting that the government of the day has always neglected the need to create job opportunities to accommodate the rising number of unemployed youths. According to him, the implication of this is increase in crime rate. Writing on the same subject matter, Green (2018) argues that the main linkage between economic growth, development, sustainable development and governance is the desire to improve the material, emotional, social and spiritual being of man in his natural environment. He advocates that the greater the total number of beneficiaries of the process of economic change and growth, the more the process approximates with the concept of development and good governance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted structural functional theory. The theory was developed by Gabriel Almond in 1954 and was popularized by David Easton in the study of political science. The appropriateness of this theory to the study is based on two significant issues: structures and functions. First, the structure here stands for political parties which must perform their functions to ensure the survival of the political system. Secondly, if such structures instituted perform their functions well, the issue of governance will be enhanced. The political parties as structures are required to perform their functions effectively by assuming the role of gate-keepers who distill and allow the rule of law and the due process in the political process to ensure that the legislative and executive positions in the country are popularly elected. This is because, the due process for coming to a position of power (governance) is considered vital and critical to the extent that, its non-observance is usually considered a violation of due process. In doing this, the political parties also assume the role of appointing visionary leaders who have the ability to de-corrupt the political system, and occasion good governance through the provision of road infrastructure, improvement of education sector and employment generally, as the dividends of democracy. The political parties can achieve this by engaging in membership drive and mobilization, articulating public interest, controlling ordered group and public affairs, moderating political powers, etc. This is because the existence of well-organized political parties in a political system provides the enabling environment for sustainable development and democratic good governance to thrive within the polity. The degree of development and democratic governance in Orlu political zone will depend on the extent to which political parties as structures have performed their functions to achieve good governance.

### 3. Methodology

The study adopted a survey design. The population of the study consisted of registered voters in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State. Four hundred (400) persons were randomly selected out of one million, eight hundred and ninety-two thousand, five hundred and twenty (1,892,520) eligible registered voters. A questionnaire titled Political Parties and Governance Survey Questionnaire (PPGSQ), structured in a likely format was administered for data collection, complimented with interviews and secondary data. The data were collected and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. The mean cut off point is 2.50. Therefore, items with mean score of 2.50 and above were considered as encouraging good governance while, those below 2.50 were regarded as encouraging poor governance.

#### Result

**We had contended in our first hypothesis that poor road infrastructure is due to poor governance. To test this hypothesis, questions 1, 2 and 3 in the questionnaire were used.**

**Q1: Governor Achike Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu political zone.**

TABLE 1: RESPONSE ON UDENWA'S REGIME AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE (1999-2007)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	170	44.5	680	57.9
Agreed	110	28.8	330	28.1
Disagreed	62	16.2	124	10.6
Strongly disagreed	40	10.5	40	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.*

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{1174}{382} = 3.03$$

The result in table 1 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 2.91. Since the calculated mean score is above the cut-off point 2.50, we accept that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State. The above analysis has shown that 44.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, 28.8% agreed, 16.2% disagreed and the remaining 10.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that majority of the people/respondents believe that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State.

**Q2: Governor Ikedi Ohakim's regime under the political party platform of PDP enhanced road infrastructure in Orlu political Zone.**

TABLE 2: RESPONSE ON IKEDI OHAKIM'S REGIME AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE (2007-2011)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	54	14.1	216	27.3
Agreed	58	15.2	174	22.0
Disagreed	130	34.6	260	32.9
Strongly disagreed	140	36.6	140	17.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>790</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.*

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{790}{382} = 2.07$$

The result in table 2 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 2.07. Since the calculated mean score is below the cut-off point 2.50, we reject that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP enhanced road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State and, accept that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State. The above analysis has shown that 14.1% of the respondents strongly agreed, 15.2% agreed, 34.6% disagreed and the remaining 34.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the people/respondents believe that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State.

**Q3: Governor Owelle Rochas Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone.**

TABLE 3: RESPONSE ON OKOROACHA'S REGIME AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE (2011-2019)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	161	42.1	644	57.0
Agreed	96	25.1	288	25.5
Disagreed	73	19.1	146	12.9
Strongly disagreed	52	13.6	52	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.*

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{1174}{382} = 2.96$$

The result in table 3 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 2.96. Since the calculated mean score is above the cut-off point 2.50, we accept that Governor Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone. The above analysis has shown that 42.1% of the respondents strongly agreed, 25.1% agreed, 19.1% disagreed, and the remaining 13.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the people/respondents believe that Governor Owelle Rochas Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone.

**We had contended in the second hypothesis that poor education sector is due to poor governance. To test this hypothesis, questions 4, 5 and 6 in the questionnaire are relevant.**

**Q4: Governor Achike Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance the education sector in Orlu political Zone.**

TABLE 4: RESPONSE ON UDENWA'S REGIME AND EDUCATION SECTOR (1999-2007)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	180	47.1	720	59.9
Agreed	115	30.1	345	28.7
Disagreed	51	13.4	102	8.5
Strongly disagreed	36	9.4	36	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,203</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.*

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{1,203}{382} = 3.15$$

The result in table 4 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 3.15. Since the calculated mean score is above the cut-off point 2.50, we accept that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance the education sector in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State. The above analysis has shown that 47.1% of the respondents strongly agreed, 30.1% agreed, 13.4% disagreed, and the remaining 9.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the people/respondents believe that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance the education sector in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State.

**Q5: Governor Ikedi Ohakim's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance education sector in Orlu political zone.**

TABLE 5: RESPONSE ON OHAKIM'S REGIME AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE (2007-2011).

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	148	38.7	592	54.3
Agreed	96	25.1	288	26.4
Disagreed	72	18.8	144	13.2
Strongly disagreed	66	17.3	66	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{1,090}{382} = 2.85$$

The result in table 5 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 2.85. Since the calculated mean score is above the cut-off point 2.50, we accept that Governor Ikedi Ohakim's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance education sector in Orlu political zone. The above analysis has shown that 38.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, 25.1% agreed, 18.8% disagreed, and the remaining 17.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the people/respondents believe that Governor Ikedi Ohakim's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance education sector in Orlu political zone.

**Q6: Governor Owelle Rochas Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance the education sector in Orlu political zone.**

TABLE 6: RESPONSE ON OKOROACHA'S REGIME AND EDUCATION SECTOR (2011-2019)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	139	36.4	556	50.7
Agreed	109	28.5	327	29.8
Disagreed	80	20.9	160	14.6
Strongly disagreed	54	14.1	54	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{1174}{382} = 2.87$$

The result in table 6 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 2.87. Since the calculated mean score is above the cut-off point 2.50, we accept that Governor Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance education sector in Orlu Political Zone. The above analysis has shown that 36.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, 28.5% agreed, 20.9% disagreed, and the remaining 14.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the

people/respondents believe that Governor Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance education sector in Orlu Political Zone.

**We had contended in our third hypothesis that the rising level of unemployment is due to poor governance.**

**To test hypothesis three, questions 7, 8 and 9 in the questionnaire are relevant.**

**Q7: Governor Achike Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance employment in Orlu Political Zone.**

TABLE 7: RESPONSE ON UDEWA'S REGIME AND EMPLOYMENT (1999-2007)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	151	39.5	604	51.5
Agreed	145	38.0	435	37.1
Disagreed	47	12.2	94	8.0
Strongly disagreed	39	10.2	39	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,172</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.*

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{1174}{382} = 3.07$$

The result in table 7 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 3.07. Since the calculated mean score is above the cut-off point 2.50, we accept that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance employment in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State. The above analysis has shown that 39.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, 38.0% agreed, 12.2% disagreed and the remaining 10.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the people/respondents believe that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance employment in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State.

**Q8: Governor Ikedi Ohakim's regime under the political party platform of PDP enhanced employment in Orlu Political zone.**

TABLE 8: RESPONSE ON OHAKIM'S REGIME AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE (2007-2011)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	85	22.3	340	37.2
Agreed	91	23.8	273	32.0
Disagreed	96	25.1	192	21.0
Strongly disagreed	110	28.8	110	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.*

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{915}{382} = 2.40$$

The result in table 8 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 2.40. Since the calculated mean score is below the cut-off point 2.50, we reject that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP enhanced employment in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State and, accept that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance employment in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State and accept that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State. The above analysis has shown that 22.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 23.8% agreed, 25.1% disagreed and the remaining 28.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the

people/respondents believe that Governor Udenwa's regime under the political party platform of PDP did not enhance employment in Orlu Political Zone of Imo State.

**Q9: Governor Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance employment opportunities in Orlu political Zone.**

TABLE 9: RESPONSE ON OKOROACHA'S REGIME AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (2011-2019)

Pattern of Response	F	%	X	Points %
Strongly Agreed	149	39.0	596	52.0
Agreed	134	35.1	402	35.0
Disagreed	54	15.2	108	9.4
Strongly disagreed	41	10.7	41	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,147</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey Data, 2023.

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{\sum f} = \frac{1147}{382} = 3.00$$

The result in table 9 shows that the calculated mean score of the distribution is 3.00. Since the calculated mean score is above the cut-off point 2.50, we accept that Governor Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance employment in Orlu Political Zone. The above analysis has shown that 39.0% of the respondents strongly agreed, 35.1% agreed, 15.2% disagreed and the remaining 10.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The implication is that, majority of the people/respondents believe that Governor Okoroacha's regime under the political party platform of APC did not enhance employment in Orlu Political Zone.

TABLE 10: SHOWING THE NUMBER OF DEPLORABLE ROADS, DILAPIDATED SCHOOL BUILDINGS, AND EMPLOYED YOUTHS AT THE ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE BY THE GOVERNORS THAT HAVE GOVERNED OR RULED IN IMO STATE (1999 TO 2019).

S/N	Governors	Year	Deplorable Road	Dilapidated Schools	Unemployed Youths
1.	Gov. Achike Udenwa	1999-2007	687 km	410	54,021
2.	Gov. Ikedi Ohakim	2007-2011	626 km	356	31,541
3.	Gov. Rochas Okorochoa	2011-2019	581 km	334	25,451

Source: Area Office, Education Zonal Management Board and Civil Service Commission Owerri and Orlu.

Table 10 above shows the number of deplorable roads, dilapidated schools and unemployed youths at the assumption of office by the previous three Governors of Imo State, from 1999 to 2019. For example, in 1999 when Governor Achike Udenwa under the political party platform of PDP took over the governorship of Imo State from the military administrator, Tanko Zubariru, evidence revealed that he inherited deplorable 687km roads (i.e. not motorable roads) to be constructed, dilapidated 410 schools to be either built or renovated and 54,021 unemployed youths to be employed. In 2007, Governor Ikedi Ohakim under the political party platform of PDP inherited deplorable 626km road (i.e., not motorable roads) to be constructed, dilapidated 356 schools to be either built or renovated and 31,541 unemployed youths to be employed. Finally, in 2011, Governor Rochas Okorochoa under the political party platform of APC, inherited deplorable 581km road (i.e. not motorable roads) to be constructed, dilapidated 334 schools to be either built or renovated and 25,451 unemployed youths to be employed.

TABLE 11: SHOWING THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF DEPLORABLE (NOT MOTORABLE) ROADS, DILAPIDATED SCHOOLS AND UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS AT ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE AND ACTUAL NUMBER EXECUTED BY EACH GOVERNOR ON EXIT FROM OFFICE IN ORLU POLITICAL ZONE (1999-2019).

<b>A. Governor Achike Udenwa (PDP) (1999-2007) on Road Infrastructure, Education Sector (SCH) and Employment (8 Years)</b>				
S/NO	Items	Number of Deplorable Road, Dilapidated Schools and Unemployed Youths at Assumption of Office	Actual Number Executed by each Governor on Exit from the office	% of Actual Number Executed/ Number of Road, Schools and Unemployed Youths at Assumption of Office
1	Road	687km	61km	8.9
2	School	410	54	13.2
3	Employment	54,021	22,480	41.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>Three '3' items</b>	<b>55,118</b>	<b>22,595</b>	<b>63.7</b>
<b>B. Governor Ikedi Ohakim (PDP) (2007-2011) on Road Infrastructure Education Sector (SCH) and Employment (4 Years)</b>				
1	Road	626 km	45km	7.2
2	School	356	22	6.2
3	Employment	31,541	6,090	19.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>Three '3' items</b>	<b>32,523</b>	<b>6,157</b>	<b>32.6</b>
<b>C. Governor Rochas Okorochoa (APC) (2011-2019) on Road Infrastructure, Education Sector (SCH) and Employment (8 Years)</b>				
1	Road	581km	84km	14.5
2	School	334	137	41.0
3	Employment	25,451	16,970	66.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>Three '3' items</b>	<b>26,366</b>	<b>17,191</b>	<b>122.2</b>

Table 11 above shows the comparison between the number of deplorable road infrastructure, dilapidated schools, and unemployed youths at the assumption of office from 1999 to 2019 and their corresponding achievement in Orlu political zone, under the various political party platforms upon their exit from the office. For example, from 1999 to 2007, out of the 687 km deplorable roads (i.e., not motor able roads) to be constructed in Orlu political zone which Governor Achike Udenwa, under the political party platform of PDP inherited from the then military administrator, Gov. Tanko Zubuiro, only 61km (8.9%) roads were made motor-able or constructed. Within this same period, out of the 410 dilapidated schools only 54 (13.2%) were newly built or renovated, while out of 54, 021 unemployed youths, only 22, 480 (41.6%) were employed. From 2007 to 2011 the era of Chief Ikedi Ohakim's government, under the political party platform of (PDP), evidence also revealed that within 4 years of his governance, out of the 626 km deplorable roads (i.e. non-motor able roads) inherited from his predecessor, only 45 km (7.2%) were made motor-able or constructed, 22 (6.2%) schools were either built or renovated out of the 356 dilapidated inherited from his predecessor, while out of the 31,541 unemployed youths, only 6,090 (19.3%) were employed. From 2011 to 219, the era of His Excellency, Governor Rochas Okoroach's administration, under the political party platform of (APC), evidence also showed that within 8 years of his governance, out of the 581km deplorable roads (i.e., not motor-able roads) inherited from Chief Ikedi Ohakim, only 84km (14.5%) roads were made motor-able or constructed, 137 schools were either built or renovated out of 334 dilapidated, while out of 48,451 unemployed youths, only 16,970 (41.1 %) were employed.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the first hypothesis concerning people's perception on how political parties in power have enhanced road infrastructure in Orlu Political Zone revealed that poor road infrastructure was due to poor governance, which is in tandem with hypothesis one earlier postulated. Poor road infrastructure refers to the inability of the government of the day to engage or carry out good or standard road network within its jurisdiction. Further assessment showed that poor governance gave rise to poor road infrastructure. This finding is in line with Odika and Ogbu (2016) who posited that Nigeria government has refused to queue into the ideal desire of governance, as none of the

government has considered road infrastructure as an essential part of development to be delivered to the people, indicating poor governance. Supporting the finding, Malena and McNeil (2020) held that unless public officials can be held to account, critical benefits derivable from governance such as; social justice, poverty reduction and development (road infrastructure inclusive), good governance remain elusive. Corroborating this position, in 2010 during the era of Governor Ohakim, under the political party platform of (PDP), Hon. Peter Ozuu, one of the party ward Chairmen in Orlu political zone, voiced out that Ohakim's government lacked the wisdom to embark on the construction of good road networks in Imo State (Orlu Political Zone inclusive), which according to him, is one of the dividends of democracy (*Imo Trumper Newspaper, Nov. 3, 2017*).

The analysis of the second hypothesis concerning peoples' perception on ways in which political parties in power have enhanced the education sector in Orlu political zone revealed that poor education sector was due to poor governance, which is in line with hypothesis two earlier postulated. Education sector here means a branch that engage in the process of training children and young people in schools, which are designed to give knowledge and develop skills in them. Additional evaluation indicated that it was poor governance that led to poor education sector. This finding is in agreement with Onyema (2018), Ndukwe (2014), Izuogu (2019), who observed that educational sector in Nigeria (Imo State inclusive) has not received enough attention as a result of bad governance. In this direction, in 2019 the former Imo State Governor, Achike Udenwa under the political party platform of (PDP) observed that Governor Rochas Okorochoa's regime under the political party platform of (APC) appeared to be concerned with the education sector, when in essence he did nothing to surpass the achievement in his regime and that of Ohakim. In the same vein, the former APC leader, Chief Joseph Ojinaka said that statistically judging the Imo State governance from 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019, none of the political parties in power would claim to have stood taller than others in terms of progress in education sector. He therefore described them as birds of a feather (*Announcer Express Newspaper, Oct. 11, 2019*).

The analysis of the third hypothesis concerning peoples' perception on how political parties in power have enhanced employment opportunities in Orlu political zone revealed that the rising level of unemployment was due to poor governance, which is in line with the hypothesis three earlier postulated. Here, unemployment refers to the number of people without a paid job but are available to work. Further assessment showed that, poor governance gave rise to unemployment. The finding is in conformity with the finding of Madu (2016) who observed that in Nigeria today, unemployment has been on the increase, as a result of corrupt governance. He noted that the government of the day has always neglected the need to create job opportunities to accommodate the rising number of the unemployed youths. According to him, the implication of this, is increase in crime rate. Supporting this observation, Mr. Mike Anyoku, a member of APGA in Imo State, in 2019 while in a rally at Nkwere, observed that the previous political parties in power in the state had not made enough attempt to create job opportunities capable of reducing the rise level of unemployment in the state (*Weekend Announcer Express Newspaper, March 13, 2019*).

Finally, the analysis in table 13 above revealed that PDP has ruled 12 years consecutively from 1999 to 2011 while, APC has ruled for 8 years out of 20 years from 2011 to 2019. The implication of the above analysis is that Governor Rochas Okorochoa's regime under the political party platform of (APC) did more in the area of road infrastructure and education sector but, with substandard materials to the extent that more than 70% of the contracts done are already damaged within a very short period. The analysis also revealed that Governor Achike Udenwa and Chief Ikedi Ohakim under the political party platform of PDP might have done few works in these areas but, with more standard materials compared to that of Rochas. However, the analysis further revealed that for twenty years, from 1999-2019; the political parties in power had performed below average. The analysis in tables 11 and 12 above revealed that Governor Rochas Okorochoa's regime, under the political party platform of APC, performed higher when compared with other two regimes as the total percentages (122.2%) of his executed jobs surpassed that of the Udenwas and Ohakim, 41.6% and 32.6% respectively. Again, the analysis also revealed that none of the achieved percentages of the governors is up to 50% from 1999 to 2019, which showed that the political parties in power did not reasonably enhance road infrastructure, education

sector and employment opportunities in Orlu political zone. In other words, the percentage for each regime had always remained below 50%, indicating low performance from 1999 to 2019.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated political parties and governance in Nigeria, with a focus on Orlu political Zone of Imo State. Party corruption is one of the reasons for poor governance because; parties provide political leaders in Nigeria. Good governance emphasizes on the way political power, the authority and coercive instruments of the society are effectively put in use to provide quality road infrastructure, employment opportunities as well as services to the education sector. It is important to note that, good governance is using political resources of the society to achieve goals and ends, which are in the interest of the majority of the people. The aforementioned trends are not sufficiently seen in the zone. In an attempt to identify the political parties that will enable the government to keep in touch with the citizenry, there is need to determine the best political parties that will promote the growth of democracy and good governance in the society. Through the political parties which are pre-occupied with wining and retaining political power, they become the veritable instrument of mass education, political recruitment and training, interest aggregation, articulation and social mobilization. It is in view of these activities of political parties in most modern societies that described democratic government as party government. It is difficult to conceive a democracy functioning in a smooth way without the active participation of the political parties.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made that: **(a)** the political party in power should improve more on the provision of road infrastructure. Because, good road network will enhance the free movement of the people and goods within and outside the political zone, which will serve as an essential part of development to be delivered to the people of the zone. **(b)** The government should pay more attention to the education sector. Since improved education sector will not only enhance the knowledge of the youths but will develop skills in them through the acquisition of knowledge in the school. **(c)** The political party in power should as a matter of urgency create job opportunities to reduce the rising level of unemployment in the zone. It is important to note that unemployment has been described as a negative vice which is capable of running down the society. Any government that neglects its unemployed youths or pays lips service to the need to create job opportunities to accommodate the rising number of unemployed youths, should be prepared to battle with overwhelming rate of crimes and criminality. The resultant effect may also amount to die-hard and seemingly unending insecurity, chaos, fear, and apprehension in the society.

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