INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (IJPADS)

Volume: [3] **| Issue:** [2] **|** Pages: 17 - 34 **| | Date:** [June, 2026]

Open Access Journal. Accessible online via https://ijpads.com

ATTRIBUTING GOVERNANCE OUTCOMES: A FRAMEWORK TO DISTINGUISH PARTY DIRECTION FROM EXECUTIVE AUTONOMY

Emenike, Ekene

Department of Public Administration, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam.

Email: gaiety4christ@yahoo.com

https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5721-8039

&

Prof. O.S.A Obikeze

Department of Political Science, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam.

Email: obisaobikeze@gmail.com

&

Prof. Obiora, Charles Arinze

Department of Political Science, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam.

Email: arinzeobiora2002@yahoo.com

Abstract

A recurring problem in comparative politics and public policy research is the tendency to treat outcomes produced by a government elected on a party platform as if they automatically reflect the institutional direction of the ruling party. That assumption blurs the distinction between government under a party label and governance directed by a party institution. This paper proposes an attribution framework that examines three stages of the policy cycle: initiation, design, and monitoring. The framework was applied to five governance outcomes associated with APGA-led Anambra State, Nigeria, between 2014 and 2022: airport construction, community development, fiscal automation, small business support, and security operations. Evidence comes from APGA's constitution and manifesto, Anambra State budget speeches, policy records, legislative materials where available, credible public records, and 30 semi-structured interviews with party officials, government actors, legislators, civil society actors, journalists, and academics. The evidence suggests that four of the five outcomes were executive-led across all three stages, while one showed limited and informal party presence at monitoring. None met the threshold for strong institutional party direction. The paper offers a structured basis for separating party influence

from executive autonomy and shows why ruling-party dominance should not be treated, without further evidence, as proof of party-directed governance.

Keywords: **Attribution framework, Party direction, Executive autonomy, Governance outcomes, Political parties.**

Introduction

Democratic theory expects political parties to translate electoral mandates into governance priorities. Parties are not meant to be mere campaign labels. They are expected to connect citizens to the state, organize competition, aggregate interests, recruit leaders, and give some direction to public policy. This linkage matters for accountability, policy coherence, and the legitimacy of government (Dalton, Farrell, & McAllister, 2011).

Yet a recurring weakness in comparative politics and public policy research is the quick movement from party label to party attribution. Outcomes produced by a ruling party's government are often treated as if they were produced by the party institution itself. That inference is convenient, but often unsafe. A government may operate under a party platform while the party organization has little control over policy initiation, design, or monitoring. The distinction matters because it affects how citizens assign credit and blame, how scholars evaluate party institutionalization, and how oversight bodies locate responsibility.

The attribution problem is familiar in policy evaluation, where scholars have long warned against linking outcomes to interventions without evidence of causal contribution (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Adam, Hurka, & Knill, 2018). Political behaviour research also examines how citizens attribute responsibility for public outcomes (Hobolt, Tilley, & Banducci, 2013; Bauer, 2025). These literatures are useful, but they do not fully answer the question at the centre of this paper: who drove the policy process, the party institution or the executive?

This question is especially important in emerging democracies where party structures may exist formally but remain weak in practice. Party institutionalization requires stability, social roots, internal coherence, and autonomy from individual office holders (Randall & Svasand, 2002). Where these qualities are weak, party organs may exist on paper while governors, presidents, advisers, and executive agencies make the substantive decisions. Party system institutionalization can strengthen

organizational behaviour over time (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006), but many African parties have functioned more as vehicles for elite bargaining, patronage, and electoral mobilization than as programmatic governing institutions (Angerbrandt, 2020; van de Walle, 2003).

Presidential and gubernatorial systems deepen this problem. Executives possess independent electoral mandates and constitutionally protected authority. Once elected, they may rely less on the party organization that carried them into office (Samuels & Shugart, 2010). In such settings, programmatic linkage may be displaced by clientelist or personalistic linkage (Kitschelt, 2000). Nigeria's Fourth Republic reflects this tension. Parties have often been criticized for weak ideological differentiation, poor internal democracy, elite capture, monetized candidate selection, and dependence on incumbents (Kura, 2011; Ojukwu & Olaifa, 2011; Ugwuanyi, Nongo, & Emenike, 2024). At state level, governors may dominate party machinery through appointments, fiscal control, campaign finance, and patronage (Aiyede, 2004; Angerbrandt, 2020).

Anambra State provides a demanding case. Since 2006, the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) has governed the state continuously. Such continuity could suggest party strength, but electoral control is not the same as institutional direction. The period 2014 to 2022, covering Governor Willie Obiano's two terms, provides a useful eight-year cycle for asking whether APGA's ideology, manifesto, and structures shaped governance priorities, or whether the executive exercised substantial autonomy.

Existing studies on APGA-led administrations have examined security management, infrastructural development, electoral dominance, and broader governance trends in the South East (Onwunyi & Oguma, 2023; Umeifekwem, 2023; The Electoral Hub, 2021; Olisah & Okafor, 2023). Much of this work remains useful, but it often stops at government performance. It tends to treat what an APGA-led government did as evidence of what APGA as a party did. That is the conflation this paper addresses.

The paper proposes an attribution framework for classifying governance outcomes as party-directed, executive-led, or mixed. The framework examines three stages of the policy cycle: initiation, design, and monitoring. Initiation asks who placed the issue on the policy agenda. Design asks who shaped the substance, instruments, financing, and implementation arrangement. Monitoring asks who reviewed implementation and had authority to demand correction. The framework uses a strict threshold: strong party direction exists only where party institutions dominate all

three stages. Executive autonomy exists where executive actors dominate all three stages. Between these poles, the framework recognizes moderate, weak, and mixed forms of party influence.

The framework was applied to five governance outcomes in Anambra State between 2014 and 2022: airport construction, the Choose-Your-Community Project, fiscal automation through AiRS and IFMIS, small business support through ASBA, and security operations through Operation Kpochapu. The paper contributes a practical method for attributing governance outcomes, applies it to a subnational dominant-party case, and shows why ruling-party dominance should not be confused with party-directed governance.

Theoretical Grounding and Attribution Logic

Democratic accountability depends partly on citizens' ability to assign credit or blame. Elections allow voters to reward or sanction incumbents, but that mechanism weakens when responsibility is unclear. Hobolt, Tilley, and Banducci (2013) describe this as the problem of clarity of responsibility. Where executives, legislatures, bureaucracies, parties, donors, consultants, and security agencies all participate in governance, citizens may struggle to know who made the relevant decisions (Powell, 2000). Political parties are expected to reduce that confusion. Under the responsible party model, parties present alternatives, win elections on those platforms, and implement their programmes in government (American Political Science Association, 1950). The model assumes that manifestos, caucuses, internal discipline, and party organs can influence elected officials. That assumption may hold better in some parliamentary systems than in presidential or weakly institutionalized contexts. Where executives dominate party structures, outcomes may reflect executive preference rather than party commitment.

Existing approaches help but do not fully resolve this problem. Policy evaluation asks whether an intervention caused or contributed to an outcome (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Mayne, 2008). Political behaviour research asks how citizens perceive responsibility, often under conditions of limited information or partisan bias (Soroka, 2006; Tilley & Hobolt, 2011; Bauer, 2025). Party-policy linkage studies compare manifesto pledges with government outputs (Thomson et al., 2017; Naurin, Royed, & Thomson, 2019). Process tracing can examine sequencing, minutes, correspondence, and interviews to test institutional influence (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). Party institutionalization literature examines whether

parties constrain executives and retain autonomy from individual leaders (Randall & Svasand, 2002; Samuels & Shugart, 2010; van de Walle, 2003).

The limitation is not that these traditions are weak. It is that each leaves part of the present problem unresolved. Policy evaluation asks whether a programme worked, not whether the party or executive controlled it. Political behaviour focuses on perceived responsibility, not necessarily actual institutional responsibility. Manifesto-policy congruence may mistake broad alignment for control. A promise to 'improve infrastructure' can be used after the fact to claim influence over almost any airport, road, or bridge. Process tracing is powerful, but without standardized indicators it can be difficult to replicate across several policy outcomes. Party institutionalization studies assess parties generally, but do not always attribute specific governance outcomes.

The proposed framework addresses this gap by adapting the policy cycle literature, which treats public policy as a sequence of agenda-setting, formulation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009). For attribution, three stages are most useful: initiation, design, and monitoring. Initiation captures agenda power. Design captures decision power. Monitoring captures oversight power. A party that is visible only in campaign rhetoric or post-hoc publicity should therefore not be treated as the institutional author of a policy.

Initiation refers to the process through which an issue enters the formal policy agenda. Party initiation may be indicated by a manifesto commitment, party organ resolution, caucus proposal, public demand by recognized party officials before government action, or documented internal party deliberation. Executive initiation may be indicated by a governor's speech, executive council directive, ministry proposal, technocratic report, or recommendation from consultants or development partners.

Design refers to the shaping of policy content, including instruments, financing, agency responsibilities, implementation modalities, and timelines. Party design may be indicated by party committees contributing to formulation, party officials serving on design teams in a formal party capacity, or policy documents that explicitly rely on party ideology or manifesto commitments. Executive design may be indicated by ministry-led drafting, consultant reports, executive advisers, or executive council approvals without party input.

Monitoring refers to oversight after policy commencement. It includes review, reporting, correction, and accountability. Party monitoring may be indicated by regular review meetings

between party organs and government officials, party oversight committees, caucus action, or formal party demands for implementation changes. Executive monitoring may be indicated by state-appointed project committees, ministry reports, auditor-general reviews, executive-chaired meetings, or bureaucratic performance systems with no party role.

The attribution rule is staged. Strong party direction requires party dominance across initiation, design, and monitoring. Moderate party influence exists where party institutions dominate two stages. Weak party influence exists where party institutions dominate one stage. Mixed attribution applies where party involvement is informal, advisory, symbolic, retrospective, or shared without binding authority. Executive autonomy exists where executive actors dominate all three stages. The rule is strict because the claim is strong. It does not deny partial influence; it simply names it accurately.

Three analytical propositions guide the application. First, governance outcomes strongly directed by a political party should show party dominance across initiation, design, and monitoring, supported by formal party documentation or corroborated testimony. Second, outcomes driven by executive autonomy should show the governor, executive council, ministries, advisers, or technocratic agencies dominating all three stages. Third, mixed or partial attribution should appear where party presence is limited to one or two stages, or where involvement is informal, advisory, symbolic, or retrospective.

Methods

This study develops and applies an attribution framework for distinguishing party-directed governance from executive autonomy. A qualitative-dominant single-case design is appropriate because the framework requires close within-case analysis before broader comparison can be attempted (Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2018). The aim is not statistical generalization. It is to develop an analytically transferable framework and test whether it can discriminate between party direction, executive autonomy, and mixed attribution.

Anambra State from 2014 to 2022 was selected as a plausibility case for party direction rather than as proof of party institutional strength. APGA had governed the state since 2006 and had won repeated gubernatorial elections. This continuity creates a reasonable expectation that party influence could be visible if the party had developed the institutional capacity to shape governance. At the same time, APGA's control could reflect incumbency, elite

bargaining, candidate appeal, or local political identity. The case is useful because it tests whether prolonged party control translated into observable party direction.

The period covers Governor Willie Obiano's two full terms under the APGA platform. Five governance outcomes were purposively selected because they were publicly associated with the APGA-led administration, cut across different policy domains, and generated enough documentary or interview evidence for stage-level attribution. Infrastructure, community development, fiscal administration, enterprise support, and security involve different actors and decision routes, making them useful tests of whether party influence travelled across the policy process.

For each stage, evidence was coded as party-led, executive-led, mixed, or unavailable. Party initiation required evidence such as a manifesto commitment, party organ resolution, caucus proposal, or documented party demand preceding government action. Executive initiation was indicated by a governor's speech, executive council memo, ministry proposal, or technocratic recommendation. Party design required evidence of formal party committee input, party officials serving in a party capacity on design teams, or policy documents explicitly connecting design choices to manifesto commitments. Executive design was indicated by ministry-led design, consultant reports, executive advisers, or executive council decisions. Party monitoring required binding party oversight, such as SEC review, party committee reports, or caucus action taken on party lines. Executive monitoring was indicated by state-appointed monitoring committees, ministry reporting, bureaucratic review systems, or security structures operating without party authority.

Table 1: Attribution Strength Scale

Attribution category	Stage pattern	Interpretation
Strong party direction	P/P/P	Party dominates all three stages.
Moderate party influence	Party-led in two stages	Substantial but not full-cycle influence.
Weak party influence	Party-led in one stage	Limited party influence.
Mixed attribution	Informal, advisory, symbolic, retrospective, or non-binding role	Presence without institutional direction.
Executive autonomy	E/E/E	Executive dominates all three stages.
Insufficient evidence	One or more stages unavailable	Attribution is not forced.

Note: The scale allows partial party influence to be recognized without overstating it as full party direction.

Table 2: Attribution Matrix Template

Outcome	Initiation evidence	Design evidence	Monitoring evidence	Stage codes	Final attribution
Example outcome	Who initiated, with source	Who shaped content, with source	Who monitored, with source	Example: E/E/E or E/E/M	Executive autonomy, mixed, weak, moderate, or strong party direction

Note: P = party-led; E = executive-led; M = mixed. P/P/P = strong party direction; E/E/E = executive autonomy; two party-led stages = moderate party influence; one party-led stage = weak party influence; informal or non-binding participation = mixed attribution.

Data were drawn from documentary and interview sources and triangulated to reduce bias. Documentary evidence included APGA's constitution and manifesto deposited with INEC, Anambra State budget speeches from 2014 to 2022, policy documents, government announcements, legislative materials where available, and credible media reports used mainly for public claims and chronology. Official records were treated as stronger evidence than media reports. Where internal party records, especially SEC minutes, were unavailable, the study did not assume party absence from documentary silence alone. It looked for corroboration across interviews and other records.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 key informants selected purposively because of their proximity to party activity, executive decision-making, legislative oversight, public accountability, or policy commentary during the period. Respondents included APGA officials (7), government officials who served under the Obiano administration (7), legislative actors (5), civil society representatives (3), journalists (3), and academics or policy analysts (5). Interviews asked who first placed each outcome on the agenda, who shaped policy design, who monitored implementation, and whether any formal party organ had binding input. Twenty-four interviews were recorded and transcribed; detailed notes were taken for the remaining six. Respondents were anonymized to reduce reputational risk.

For each outcome, documentary and interview evidence was synthesized into an attribution matrix. Two coders, the researcher and a research assistant, independently assigned stage-level codes using the operational indicators. Disagreements were resolved through discussion and reference back to the

evidence. Inter-coder agreement was calculated on a 20 percent sample and reached 87 percent before reconciliation. Party rhetoric, campaign association, or post-implementation publicity was not treated as sufficient evidence of party direction.

The study ranks evidence by probative value. Formal party resolutions, minutes, caucus records, and documented committee involvement carry the strongest weight for party direction. Executive council records, budget speeches, ministry policy papers, and agency documents carry strong weight for executive autonomy. Interview evidence is used to interpret gaps, confirm sequencing, and test competing claims, but interview claims are not treated as decisive unless corroborated by another respondent category or documentary material.

Credibility was strengthened through triangulation across documents and six respondent categories. Negative case analysis was used by actively looking for evidence of party influence where executive dominance first appeared likely. Three limitations remain. First, access to internal party documents was limited, making some findings plausible rather than absolute. Second, respondent bias remains possible, although triangulation reduces the risk. Third, the framework may under-detect informal influence that leaves no record, such as private meetings, phone calls, or elite bargaining. The study accepts this trade-off because replicable attribution requires evidence that can be inspected, challenged, and rechecked.

Results

This section applies the attribution framework to five governance outcomes in Anambra State between 2014 and 2022. The codes reflect the evidence available to the study, not a claim of total knowledge about every private exchange among political actors.

Airport construction: Anambra International Cargo and Passenger Airport. Documentary and interview evidence indicates that the airport project was initiated through the governor's economic and executive policy circle, with the public vision announced in a gubernatorial speech. No APGA manifesto directive, party organ resolution, or caucus proposal was found to have preceded the announcement. Design was led by the Ministry of Works, external aviation consultants, and the governor's office. Monitoring was handled through executive-appointed project structures rather than a party oversight mechanism. The three stages are therefore coded as executive-led. Attribution: executive autonomy.

Community development: Choose-Your-Community Project. The project was initiated by the governor's policy advisers in 2015, following a campaign promise that was not traced to a specific APGA manifesto directive. Design was led by the State Planning Commission, which developed the community grant mechanism. Party presence appeared mainly at monitoring, where some ward executives reportedly facilitated community identification and passed complaints to local officials. That role may have improved local visibility, but it did not amount to formal control over design, finance, or implementation rules. The stages are coded as executive-led for initiation and design, and mixed for monitoring. Attribution: mixed, with executive dominance and weak informal party presence.

Fiscal automation: AiRS and IFMIS. Fiscal automation was initiated by the Ministry of Finance in 2016, following technical reform recommendations and development partner support. Design was led by technocrats, consultants, and executive officials. Monitoring occurred through the Ministry of Finance and state audit structures rather than party organs. No formal APGA role was identified in initiation, design, or monitoring. Attribution: executive autonomy.

Small business support: Anambra Small Business Agency. ASBA was initiated by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 2018, based on a policy paper developed within the ministry. Design involved ministry officials and advisers linked to the executive. Party officials interviewed did not provide evidence of a formal party design role, and some indicated that they became aware of the agency only after public launch. Monitoring was conducted through ministry and board structures appointed by the executive. Attribution: executive autonomy.

Security operations: Operation Kpochapu. Operation Kpochapu was initiated by the State Security Council chaired by the governor in response to rising insecurity. No party resolution or manifesto directive was found to have preceded the initiative. Design was shaped by security agencies and the governor's office, including police, DSS, and military input. Monitoring was carried out through security and executive channels. The evidence did not show formal party oversight. Attribution: executive autonomy.

Table 3: Summary of Attribution Findings

Governance outcome	Initiation	Design	Monitoring	Final attribution
Airport construction	E	E	E	Executive autonomy
Community development (CYCP)	E	E	M (informal)	Mixed: executive-led with weak informal party presence
Fiscal automation (AiRS/IFMIS)	E	E	E	Executive autonomy
Small business agency (ASBA)	E	E	E	Executive autonomy
Security (Operation Kpochapu)	E	E	E	Executive autonomy

Note: E = executive-led; M = mixed. In the community development case, party presence was informal and non-binding. The codes reflect available documentary and interview evidence, not a claim that all private political interactions were fully observable.

The pattern is consistent but should be read within the limits of the available evidence. Four of the five outcomes were coded as executive-led across all three stages. One outcome showed informal party presence only at monitoring. None met the threshold for strong institutional party direction.

Interview responses largely confirmed the documentary pattern. Across non-party respondent categories, 92 percent, or 23 of 25 respondents, identified the governor and executive team as the primary drivers of policy. This does not prove that no informal party influence occurred. It does show that respondents closest to government, oversight, journalism, civil society, and policy analysis did not describe APGA organs as the main source of policy direction.

Three comments captured the recurring pattern: 'The governor set the agenda. The party was informed after decisions were made' (Government official, #09); 'I have never seen the party SEC reject a government proposal. They endorse whatever the governor wants' (APGA official, #04); and 'APGA's role is electoral and symbolic. The real governance is in the executive council' (Academic, #28). Even among APGA officials, only 43 percent, or 3 of 7 respondents, claimed that the party influenced policy. None provided a concrete example of a party-initiated, party-designed, and party-

monitored outcome among the five selected cases.

The propositions were therefore assessed as follows. Proposition 1, on strong party direction, was not supported because no outcome showed party dominance across initiation, design, and monitoring. Proposition 2, on executive autonomy, was broadly supported because four outcomes showed executive dominance across all three stages, while the fifth showed executive dominance in initiation and design. Proposition 3, on mixed attribution, was partially supported because community development showed informal party facilitation at monitoring, but not shared institutional authority.

The results suggest that APGA's role, where visible, was more electoral, symbolic, facilitative, or legitimizing than directional. This does not mean the party had no political relevance. It means the study did not find evidence that APGA institutions formally controlled the policy cycle for the selected outcomes.

Discussion

The findings suggest that the selected governance outcomes in APGA-led Anambra State between 2014 and 2022 were shaped mainly by executive autonomy. Four of the five major policy initiatives were coded as executive-led across initiation, design, and monitoring. The exception, community development, showed informal and non-binding party presence at monitoring. None met the framework's threshold for strong party control.

The first implication concerns the responsible party model. The model assumes that parties offer coherent manifestos, win elections on those platforms, and implement their programmes in government (American Political Science Association, 1950). In this case, even a dominant party with prolonged electoral control did not appear to direct policy. The manifesto was not functioning as a governing instrument, and party organs did not shape or constrain executive action. This supports the critique that programmatic linkage may be weak where clientelism, personalism, and executive dominance are strong (Kitschelt, 2000). Electoral dominance is therefore a poor proxy for party institutionalization.

The second implication concerns executive dominance in presidential and gubernatorial systems. Samuels and Shugart (2010) argue that separation of powers gives executives independent legitimacy and room to act apart from party organizations. In Nigeria's state-level system, governors also control resources, appointments, political access, and patronage. These tools can make party structures

dependent on the executive rather than the other way round. The Anambra evidence is consistent with van de Walle's (2003) description of African party systems as often executive-centred. The party becomes an electoral vehicle and symbolic platform, not necessarily a governing institution.

The third implication is methodological. The framework disciplines attribution by requiring evidence of who initiated the policy, who designed it, and who had authority to monitor and correct implementation. A conventional manifesto-policy congruence study might observe that the Choose-Your-Community Project fits APGA's grassroots rhetoric and then infer party influence. The three-stage test leads to a more cautious conclusion: executive-led policy with weak informal party presence, not strong party direction.

The framework's strictness is both its strength and its weakness. Its strength is that it prevents correlation from being presented as causation. Its weakness is that informal influence that leaves no record may be under-detected. The framework is therefore strongest when the research question concerns demonstrable institutional direction, not every possible form of behind-the-scenes political influence.

The framework can be adapted to other dominant-party subnational contexts, parliamentary systems, coalition governments, and more institutionalized parties. In coalition settings, for instance, researchers could ask which party controlled initiation, design, and monitoring for a specific policy. For policy practice, the framework can help oversight bodies, anti-corruption agencies, journalists, and civil society groups assign responsibility more carefully. Where executive autonomy is the real source of policy decisions, accountability should focus on executive decision-making, legislative oversight, fiscal transparency, procurement systems, and independent monitoring rather than relying on weak internal party mechanisms.

The larger point is straightforward. APGA's prolonged electoral dominance in Anambra did not, on the evidence examined, translate into strong party direction of the selected governance outcomes. Executive autonomy appears to have prevailed. The contribution of the paper is not merely that it finds executive dominance; many scholars would expect that. Its contribution lies in showing how such a claim can be tested through explicit stages and observable indicators.

Conclusion

This paper introduced an attribution framework for distinguishing party-directed governance

from executive autonomy. The framework operates across three policy stages: initiation, design, and monitoring. It classifies attribution by strength: strong party direction, moderate party influence, weak party influence, mixed attribution, and executive autonomy.

Applied to five governance outcomes in Anambra State between 2014 and 2022, the framework found that four outcomes were executive-led across all three stages, based on the evidence available. The fifth outcome showed informal and non-binding party presence only at monitoring. None met the threshold for strong institutional party direction. APGA's prolonged electoral dominance therefore did not, by itself, translate into party control of policy.

For theory, the findings suggest that the responsible party model needs contextual caution. Programmatic linkage should not be assumed where executives control party structures and manifestos remain aspirational. For practice, accountability reforms should focus directly on executive decision-making through legislative oversight, fiscal transparency, procurement scrutiny, and independent monitoring rather than relying mainly on weak party mechanisms.

The framework is not a cure-all. It may miss hidden informal influence, and it depends on the availability of documentary or interview evidence. Still, it offers a stronger basis for attribution than broad manifesto-policy congruence or performance-based claims. Ultimately, the study shows that a party can win elections, control government, and still not govern in a strong institutional sense. That distinction between government under a party label and party-directed governance is the paper's central contribution.

References

Adam, C., Hurka, S., & Knill, C. (2018). Neglected challenges to evidence-based policy-making: The problem of policy accumulation. Policy Sciences, 51(3), 335-349. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-018-9332-7

Aiyede, E. R. (2004). United we stand: Labour unions and human rights NGOs in the democratization process in Nigeria. Development in Practice, 14(1-2), 224-233. https://doi.org/10.1080/0961452032000170997

American Political Science Association. (1950). Toward a more responsible two-party system: A report of the Committee on Political Parties. Rinehart.

Angerbrandt, H. (2020). Party system institutionalization and the 2019 state elections in Nigeria. Regional & Federal Studies, 30(3), 411-428. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2020.1758073

Bauer, P. C. (2025). Responsibility attribution, rewards, and sanctions for public service outcomes: Experimental evidence on citizens' judgements. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 35(1), 42-57. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muae015

Bennett, A., & Checkel, J. T. (Eds.). (2015). Process tracing: From metaphor to analytic tool. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139858473

Bovaird, T., & Loeffler, E. (2012). Attributing outcomes to social policy interventions - 'Gold standard' or 'fool's gold' in public policy and management? Social Policy & Administration, 46(6), 621-641. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2012.00863.x

Dalton, R. J., Farrell, D. M., & McAllister, I. (2011). Political parties and democratic linkage: How parties organize democracy. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599356.001.0001

The Electoral Hub. (2021). Political context analysis: 2021 Anambra governorship election. Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development.

Gerring, J. (2007). Case study research: Principles and practices. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803126

Gibson, E. L. (2013). Boundary control: Subnational authoritarianism in federal democracies. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139017990

Giraudy, A. (2015). Democrats and autocrats: Pathways of subnational

undemocratic regime continuity within democratic countries. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198736819.001.0001

Hobolt, S. B., Tilley, J., & Banducci, S. (2013). Clarity of responsibility: How government cohesion conditions performance voting. European Journal of Political Research, 52(2), 164-187. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2012.02072.x

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2009). Studying public policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195428025.001.0001

Kitschelt, H. (2000). Linkages between citizens and politicians in democratic polities. Comparative Political Studies, 33(6-7), 845-879. https://doi.org/10.1177/001041400003300607

Kura, S. Y. B. (2011). Political parties and democracy in Nigeria: Candidate selection, campaigns and party financing in People's Democratic Party. Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa, 13(6), 268-298.

Mainwaring, S., & Torcal, M. (2006). Party system institutionalization and party system theory after the third wave of democratization. In R. S. Katz & W. Crotty (Eds.), Handbook of party politics (pp. 204-227). Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608047.n18

Mayne, J. (2008). Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect. ILAC Brief, 16, 1-4.

Naurin, E., Royed, T. J., & Thomson, R. (Eds.). (2019). Party mandates and democracy: Making, breaking, and keeping election pledges in twelve countries. University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9533260

Ojukwu, C. C., & Olaifa, T. (2011). Challenges of internal democracy in Nigeria's political parties: The bane of intra-party conflicts in the People's Democratic Party of Nigeria. Global Journal of Human Social Science, 11(3), 24-34.

Olisah, C. I., & Okafor, C. O. (2023). Political parties and governance of Southeast States Nigeria: The emergence of four political parties in 2023. South East Political Science Review, 8(1), 1-15.

Onwunyi, U. M., & Oguma, N. P. (2023). The state and security management in Nigeria: A study of Anambra State, 2014-2022. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7(5), 639-657.

Powell, G. B. (2000). Elections as instruments of democracy: Majoritarian and proportional visions. Yale University Press.

Randall, V., & Svasand, L. (2002). Party institutionalization in new democracies. Party Politics, 8(1), 5-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068802008001001

Samuels, D. J., & Shugart, M. S. (2010). Presidents, parties, and prime ministers: How the separation of powers affects party organization and behavior. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511761540

Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options. Political Research Quarterly, 61(2), 294-308. https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912907313077

Soroka, S. N. (2006). Good news and bad news: Asymmetric responses to economic information. Journal of Politics, 68(2), 372-385. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00413.x

Thomson, R., Royed, T., Naurin, E., Artes, J., Costello, R., Ennser-Jedenastik, L., Ferguson, M., Kostadinova, P., Moury, C., Petry, F., & Praprotnik, K. (2017). The fulfillment of parties' election pledges: A comparative study on the impact of power sharing. American Journal of Political Science, 61(3), 527-542. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12313

Tilley, J., & Hobolt, S. B. (2011). Is the government to blame? An experimental test of how partisanship shapes perceptions of performance and responsibility. Journal of Politics, 73(2), 316-330. https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238161100001X

Ugwuanyi, K. E., Nongo, M., & Emenike, E. (2024). Political parties and 2023 primary election in Nigeria: The game of the highest bidder. International Journal of Public Administration and Development Studies, 1(1), 146–156. http://ijpads.com/index.php/ijpads/article/view/10

Umeifekwem, U. T. (2023). Public policy and infrastructural development in Anambra State, 2014-2022. Journal of Policy and Development Studies, 14(1), 122-135.

van de Walle, N. (2003). Presidentialism and clientelism in Africa's emerging party systems. The Journal of Modern African Studies, 41(2), 297-321. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X03004269

Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

Appendix: Evidence Sources and Coding Procedure

Evidence area	*Details*
Interview respondents	Thirty semi-structured interviews were conducted with six respondent categories: APGA officials (7), government officials (7), legislative actors (5), civil society representatives (3), journalists (3), and academics/policy analysts (5). Respondents were selected because of their proximity to party activity, executive decision-making, legislative oversight, public accountability, or policy commentary during the 2014–2022 period.
Documentary sources	Documentary evidence included APGA's constitution and manifesto, Anambra State budget speeches from 2014 to 2022, public policy records, government announcements, legislative materials where available, and credible public records relating to the five selected governance outcomes.
Interview focus	Interviews asked who initiated each policy, who shaped its design, who monitored implementation, and whether any APGA organ had formal or binding involvement in the process. Respondents were anonymized to encourage frank responses.
Coding rule	Each outcome was coded across three stages: initiation, design, and monitoring. A stage was coded as party-led only where evidence showed formal or binding party involvement. A stage was coded as executive-led where evidence showed control by the governor, executive council, ministries, advisers, technocrats, or state agencies. Informal, advisory, symbolic, retrospective, or non-binding involvement was coded as mixed.
Attribution categories	P/P/P indicated strong party direction; two party-led stages indicated moderate party influence; one party-led stage indicated weak party influence; E/E/E indicated executive autonomy; and informal or non-binding party presence indicated mixed attribution. Where evidence was too thin, attribution was not forced.

Note: P = party-led; E = executive-led; M = mixed. Official records and formal documents were treated as stronger evidence than media reports. Interview claims were used to clarify sequencing and fill documentary gaps, but they were not treated as decisive unless corroborated by documentary evidence or by respondents from another category