

100 Years

(1923 - 2023)

of POLITICAL PARTIES EVOLUTION IN NIGERIA



Edited by
Anthony Igyuve
Chris Oge Kalu

A Publication of



100 Years of Political Parties Evolution in Nigeria

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Foreword

Political parties have been vital organs and institutions of the democratic process in Nigeria. Since the formation of the first political party in 1923, Nigeria has moved from ethnic and regional-based parties to nationally-oriented institutions with the mandate of political education and socialization, as well as providing personnel and candidates for elective positions. The evolution and formation of political parties globally have demonstrated that the purpose of democracy may be defeated if individuals emerge in electoral contest on their own whims and caprices. This further underscores the importance of political parties in any democratic setup where ideological foundation is developed, decorum is upheld, social engagement is encouraged, and loyalty is emphasized.

The formation of political parties and party politics is a subject taught in our schools; however, without a concise book that captures the history of party formation from 1923 to 2023 (100 years), we risk continuing to encounter conflicting narratives about our political journey. As a nation, we can not discuss the formation of political parties without appreciating the sense of commitment and nationalism courageously shown by our past heroes. The British colonial government may not have granted Nigerians the freedom to form a united body if our nationalists had not “fought” diplomatically during the reign of Sir Hugh Clifford. The establishment of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923, led by Herbert Macaulay, marked a significant turning point in this struggle for representation.

Titled, **"100 Years (1923-2023) of Political Parties Evolution in Nigeria"**, this comprehensive book is structured into ten insightful chapters, each contributed by esteemed academics from various institutions across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones.

This book provides an encyclopedic exploration of political party formation and evolution in Nigeria from 1923 to 2023. It highlights the importance and establishment of political parties while also examining the challenges faced by political parties.

Furthermore, it incorporates diverse perspectives from contributors spanning various fields, including media, politics, management, economics, administration, history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and linguistics, to enrich the narrative.

By examining our past through this lens, we can better navigate future pathways toward an inclusive effective democratic society that honours our collective heritage while addressing ongoing issues head-on.

I, therefore, strongly recommend this book to every Nigerian who is interested in understanding Nigeria's political history and the lesson it holds for our efforts at building a stable, prosperous, and inclusive nation. More particularly, this book is specially recommended to all politicians, INEC officials, civil society organizations, youth organizations, students, academics, civil servants, and teachers in primary and secondary schools, among others.

Anyim Pius Anyim. LL.B, LL.m, GCON

Former Senate President & Secretary to the Government
of the Federation, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Preface

The book, *100 Years of Political Parties Evolution in Nigeria*, lays bare some of the fundamental problems that have dogged political parties in Nigeria from the formation of the first political party- Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP), by foremost nationalist, Herbert Macauley in 1923 in Lagos till the present-day. Some of these include but not limited to godfatherism, nepotism, ethnicity and lack of internal democracy evident in imposition of candidates resulting in defections to other parties by the aggrieved, known in its earlier incarnation, as cross carpeting.

Other factors negatively impacting the deepening of democracy in Nigeria as encapsulated in the book, include lack of faith in the electoral body by political parties leading to serial contestation of election results, election related violence, politicians not following their ground rules and winner takes all syndrome among others.

The book also presents in bold relief, the contribution of political parties in entrenching the capitalist economy and the changing dynamics of neo-liberalism, which still hold sway in spite of the long military rule in Nigeria. It equally reveals the survival strategies of minority parties from pre-independence to date in the face of dominant political parties riding on ethnic and religious contiguity at a point and elite self-interest at other times. The Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), for instance, became radicalised and challenged the hegemony of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the North to protect the interest of minorities. NEPU was to transform to Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) in the second Republic and New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) in the fourth Republic.

But quite illuminating from the book is the abiding faith in a thriving

democracy in Nigeria and the pathways to achieve this. The contributors for this book, who are eminent scholars, must be commended for their painstaking efforts in appraising not just the history of political parties in Nigeria in the last 100 years and the challenges they faced but coming up with workable submissions to make democracy flourish in Nigeria henceforth.

At 100 years, there is no doubt that political parties in Nigeria have come of age. This book is therefore a celebration and an introspection at the same time on the journey so far. Rich in historical facts aided by scholarly research, detailed analysis and literature reviews, it is a treasure trove of information on the evolution of political parties in Nigeria and the country's body politic.

I warmly recommend this book to political parties, the political class, students of government and politics, political scientists, researchers and the public at large. It is an invaluable resource material.

Yusuf M. Dantalle

National Chairman,
Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC).

Acknowledgments

For a book of this national significance, it is both logical and gratifying to acknowledge and appreciate the sources, individuals, and corporate entities that played critical roles in ensuring that this book and its narrative see the light of day.

The journey of political parties in Nigeria and their formation of successive governments cannot be told by a single individual. This is, however, an opportunity to appreciate all the contributors, especially Professor Anthony Igyuve, for their professional and analytical inputs, which ensured that all the chapters were enriched with facts and detailed events.

It is with utmost privilege that we appreciate the immediate past Chairman of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Engr. Yabagi Y. Sani. His profound knowledge of the political landscape in Nigeria initiated the move to document the evolution and journey of political parties in Nigeria. His vision and dedication have been instrumental in bringing this project to fruition.

As is the tradition with IPAC, policies and strategic communications are not abandoned by successive administrations. On this note, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the current leadership of the council, beginning with the National Chairman Alhaji Yusuf M. Dantalle, Mr. Dipo Olayoku Deputy National Chairman, Barr. Maxwell Mgbudem National Secretary, Hon. Zainab A. Ibrahim Deputy National Secretary, Comr. Egbeola Wale Martins National Organizing Secretary, Hon. Maryam Bagel National Treasurer, Mrs. Chinyere O. Kalu National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Ibrahim Suleiman National Financial Secretary, Barr. Obed Agu National Legal Adviser and Prince Chinedu Obi DG.

Their unwavering support and commitment have ensured that this book reaches the hands of readers, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of Nigeria's political history.

This book is the result of collective efforts, and we are deeply grateful to all the research assistants, contributors, scholars, editing staff, and opinion leaders whose ideas, statements, opinions, and experiences have led to robust discussions and enriched the content of this book. Their dedication and hard work have been invaluable.

And of course, we must express our deepest gratitude to the one who holds the power of life and death, the Almighty God. His endless guidance and wisdom have been with all the contributors throughout this journey, and for this, we offer our heartfelt thanksgiving.

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Chapter One

Evolution of Political Parties and Party Politics in Nigeria

- Terhemba Wuam, Ph.D -

Introduction

Political parties are a global phenomenon with an almost ubiquitous presence in all the nations of the world. Although modern political parties first emerged in Britain in the 18th century, their starting point in Nigeria was in 1923 with the establishment of the colonial era Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) to compete in local elections in Lagos. In the past 100 years since Nigeria's first political party was established, many other political parties have evolved from the late colonial period, the First Republic to the Fourth Republic in the political arena of the country.

The objective of this chapter is therefore to appraise the evolution of political parties from 1923 to 2023. In the past 100 years as the chapter will attempt to show, political parties have been vital organs and institutions of the democratic process. Their evolution from being ethnic and regional based parties to nationally-oriented institutions with the mandate of political education and socialization as well as providing personnel and candidates for elective positions in Nigeria, has as the chapter will show, witnessed both challenges and successes.

Political Parties and Nigeria's Political Context

The origin of political parties in Nigeria is rooted in the evolution of the modern Nigerian state and its modernization processes that began in the 19th century with European merchant penetration of

Nigeria, which eventually culminated in the British colonization of Nigeria. British colonization of the peoples of Nigeria which started in 1861 with the establishment of the Lagos colony, was subsequently followed by the granting of a royal charter to the Royal Niger Company as a governing entity which consolidated the peoples and entities in the area and paved the way for formal British colonization of Nigeria's Northern and Southern protectorates and their eventual amalgamation into a single British territory in 1914 (Smith, 1978).

Thus, with British rule established over a united Nigeria in 1914, Nigeria became firmly part of Great Britain's colonial empire. This background provides the setting for the emergence of Nigerian political parties whose origins are rooted in the new Nigeria that would gradually evolve as a result of the modernization processes and the nature of the political system that westernization introduced to Nigeria (Kums, 2016).

With the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914, the British colonial administration entrenched an authoritarian regime of imperial overlordship in which the political systems of Nigeria were termed traditional and consequently subsumed as subservient organs of the colonial administration.

On top of the traditional layer of administration, the British created a modern administrative and political system headed by the structures of the colonial order with an executive council, a judiciary and a legislative organ. As an autocratic system whose administration was controlled by the Colonial Office in London, the executive organ under the control of the Governor-General oversaw the colonial bureaucracy and security organs and was the most preeminent arm of government.

In the early colonial structure, separation between the three organs was very minimal and colonial officials could perform both executive

and legislative roles as well as judicial roles (Lugard, 1970).

Throughout the colonial phase, the citizens of Nigeria were not sovereign and had limited authority and influence in the conduct of the affairs of the state till eventual independence in 1960. Following independence, and as a result of the 1963 Republican Constitution, the transition of power from the British to Nigeria was complete and political authority and sovereignty was wholly vested in Nigerians from the First Republic through to the military regimes and up to the Fourth Republic which began in 1999.

The history of political parties in Nigeria therefore began with Nigeria under colonial rule, and under democratic and military dispensations in Nigeria over the course of the past 100 years when the first political party in the country was established in 1923.

Global Origins, Development and Functions of Political Parties

According to Olugbamiye (2010, p.12) political parties theoretically “provides the medium through which the accountability of the executive and the legislators to the electorate is exercised through periodic elections under a multiparty electoral” system. According to Rose (1978), a political party is “an organization concerned with the expression of popular preference and contesting control of the policy-making officers of government” (Rose, 1974).

Thus, both Rose (1974) and Olugbamiye (2010) see political parties as the vehicles by which political competition for elective offices takes place within a democracy whereby competing political parties present voters with candidates for positions and articulate their policies before the electorates whose duty it is to choose among the candidates of the competing parties. Victory at the polls for parties and their candidates then give the victors the legitimacy to govern for fixed

terms according to constitutional provisions.

In addition to serving as vehicles for political contestations political parties perform other critical functions wherever they are formed. A vital function of political parties is the promotion of national integration and promotion of national goals and nation-building among its members. Political parties also act as organs for mobilizing members to work towards achievements of the goals and objectives of the party.

They therefore promote broader and wider participation in the affairs of the state and nation from a diverse set of actors who would have otherwise been excluded. Thus, by their action, parties through political mobilization promote the growth of a vibrant political culture among citizens. A key function of political parties is to recruit members into the political system and also as noted by Ujo (2000), parties act as intermediaries between the people and the government by aggregating, harmonizing and articulation of the various political demands of the people into a coherent political programme of activities and action for implementation by the government.

Although political parties are ubiquitous today, their origin, in the global context, is fairly recent. While groups and factions have always organized themselves throughout history to pursue common aims as was noticeable in Classical Greece, and later in the Roman Republic, the origin of modern political parties in their present configuration is traceable to 18th century Britain. In the crisis of how the British were to organize their political system in the 18th century had emerged two contending factions who identified themselves as the Whigs and Tories.

The Whigs supported a Protestant monarchy with a limited constitutional role, as opposed to the Tories who favoured a strong

monarchical role in the government of Britain (Jones, 1961). From their origins in Britain, the next country in which political parties will develop and flourish was the United States of America, where following the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1788, a proto two-party state emerged and in the course of the 19th century, became formalized and institutionalized. The embryonic origins of the United States party system were traceable to the political factions that had emerged, one in support of, and the other in opposition to the ratification of the constitution. These were the Federalists, whose proponents supported the Constitution and the Anti-Federalists, a political movement that criticized and opposed the constitution (Bernstein, 1987).

From these two nations, Great Britain and its progeny, the United States of America, the party system in the course of the 19th century became the process by which almost all European governments organized their political systems. Among the European countries, Sweden became the first to have a fully stable and institutionalized party system that Metcalf (1977) referred to as the world's first modern party system.

According to Metcalf (1977) while other countries, such as Britain, had produced political parties, these were usually not sustained, and in this regard, the Swedes were the first to develop the world's first party system. Following on the example of Sweden, countries such as Germany, France, Belgium and Sweden also adopted the party model in organizing their political and governance structures (Boix, 2009).

By the beginning of the 20th century across the globe, political parties had become the prevalent mode of organizing political competition even in countries that were under colonial or foreign political domination. In India, for instance, the first political party, the Indian

National Congress with a membership of 55 million by 2023, was established in 1885.

At its formation in 1885, it had the distinction of becoming the first nationalist and anticolonial movement to arise in Asia and Africa, eventually, leading India to independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi (Chiriyankadath, 2016). While in the 19th century, political parties had usually existed along the liberal-conservation divide, the 20th century gave birth to both the communist and socialist parties that were organized to attract workers and labour unions which were largely influenced by the revolutionary ideologies of Karl Marx and later Vladimir Lenin (Debrizi, 1982).

It is important to note that in the world that emerged in the 20th century and up to the 21st century, although almost all countries have political parties, not all the countries where parties exist are democracies. Universally four types of party systems have emerged and as noted, parties can exist even in authoritarian and undemocratic states.

However, in both democracies and non-democracies, political parties constitute the vehicle for contestations for the control of the government and for policy articulations. In the world of the 21st century, there are four party systems around which all nations organize their politics. The first is the non-party system which includes the monarchies of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, all in the Middle East; the Vatican City State and Tuvalu as well as the Island Republics of Micronesia and Palau which do not have parties recognized by the state. Thus, globally, it is only in these ten countries that political parties have no legal status and do not feature in the organization of politics and governance (Ottaway, 2021).

The second, is the one-party state or one-party system, where only one party is legally allowed to exist. In one party-states, the governance structure is under the control of a single political party which excludes or prohibits political participation by other political parties. One-party systems historically have been dominated by Marxist-Leninist ideology and uphold communism and often identify themselves as communist parties. In addition, nationalists and fascists' parties that emerge victorious in elections such as the National Fascist Party in Italy and the National Socialist German Workers Party or (Nazi Party) in Germany outlaw all other political parties and become one-party states.

One-party systems had also emerged in African countries where through the decolonization process, the party with the dominant role in the independence struggle constricts the political space against other political actors as in the Republic Zambia. Closely aligned to the one-party state are also what is known as the defacto one party state or one-party dominant systems where although other parties exist, a single party dominates the electoral process and becomes hegemonic over several consecutive election cycles. In some de facto one party state, the dominant party through a measure of unfair practices prevents other political parties from gaining influence. Purely one party states as of 2023 in the world are China, Cuba, Eritrea, Laos, North Korea, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and Vietnam (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010).

The third type is the two party system, where two major political parties exist and dominate the polity. In a two-party system, the dominant two parties have the potential to gain executive power or control a branch of the government at any point in time. Both parties are also routinely either the governing party or the opposition party or they can be either the majority or the minority party.

While there are other parties in a two-party system, though other parties may win legislative or regional elections, rarely do such parties stand the chance of controlling the central legislature or the national government. Countries with dominant two-party systems include the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and Ghana among others.

The Fourth type is the multi-party system. In this type of system, multiple parties have the potential or possibility of winning elections, which makes it difficult for a single party to out rightly control the legislature and is therefore more common with parliamentary systems of governance.

In multiparty systems, to gain control of government, multiple parties tend to come together to form coalitions. A multiple party system thus encourages coalition governments, which may not survive when even small parties that are part of that coalition pull out. India, Indonesia, Brazil, France are examples of countries with multi-party systems.

The Political Party System in Nigeria since 1923

Political parties first emerged in Nigeria 100 years ago and as this chapter shall show, Nigeria has experienced all the four types of party systems since amalgamation in 1914. In the early phase of the colonial era, parties were non-existent, and during military rule, political parties were outlawed. In the First Republic, that lasted from 1960 to 1966, Nigeria practiced a multiparty system, as during the Second Republic. In the still-born, Third Republic, Nigeria experimented with a decreed two-party system and in the Fourth Republic, which is Nigeria's most enduring post-independence political dispensation, Nigeria, nationally has alternated between the two-party system and the one-party dominant model, despite the presence of several other political parties. This section will appraise the evolution of political

parties and party politics in Nigeria since 1923. According to Ujo (2010), Nigeria has had six generations of political parties over the past 100 years. This chapter will consider the evolution of these six generations in the context of the political and historical realities that led to their formation and their subsequent roles in the polity.

Political Parties in Colonial Nigeria through to the First Republic

British colonial policies which tended to respond or react to the nationalist aspirations of Nigerians had a role in the emergence of Nigeria's first political party, which like the Indian National Congress party was formed with the objective of being a platform to agitate for the interests of Nigerians within the colonial administration.

In 1922, Sir Hugh Clifford who was Lord Frederick Lugard's successor as the Governor-General introduced the Clifford Constitution, among whose provisions was the introduction of the Nigerian Legislative Council, and an executive council in place of the Council for the Lagos Colony and the Nigerian Council, which had been in place since 1914 (Dudley, 1982).

A key feature of the Clifford Constitution was the introduction of the elective principle for the election of four (4) Nigerians into the legislative council. Although the elective principle was restricted to Southern Nigeria, and in the south to only Lagos and Calabar, it provided the impetus for the formation of Nigeria's first political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay (Aliu, 2014).

The trigger for forming political parties in Nigeria therefore came with the Clifford Constitution of 1922. The history of political parties in Nigeria is therefore traceable to this constitution, and to its elective principles proviso as well as the granting of limited franchise, for the



Sir Herbert Macauley
*Founder of Nigeria's first political party,
the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP)*

first time to Nigerians, for the cities of Calabar and Lagos, which were the only areas allocated seats to the Nigerian Legislative Council.

The NNDP operated largely in Lagos and its influence was limited only within the city as the party had no national outlook. It was effective in Lagos in bringing together various factions and interest groups under its banner and successfully won the three Lagos seats in the 1923, 1928 and 1933 elections (Tamuno, 1966).

Following the NNDP, the next political party was the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), which was more national in its organization with its membership cutting across different regions. Its formation in 1934 made elections to the Nigerian Legislative Council for Lagos to be more competitive and in 1938, it was able to defeat the NNDP in Lagos (Coleman, 1971). In 1938, the Nigerian Youth Movement was estimated to have 10,000 members (Mitchison, 1960). Both of these two pioneering Nigerian parties have however, been referred to by Hodgkin (1961) as proto-parties, in the sense that even as political organisations, their aims and objectives were limited as their objectives in the large scheme of affairs was not the control of the government or its policies (Hodgkin, 1961).

Thus, even though the participation of both the NNDP and the NYM and to a lesser extent, an organisation like the People's Union, a Lagos association formed in 1908 were limited, it marked the beginning of representative government, in which the concerns of Nigerians could be expressed in a formal setting to the colonial authorities (Sklar, 2004; and Dixon-Fyle 1999).

According to Ujo (2010), also, considering the limited objectives of the first generation of political parties, they could more or less be described as pressure groups. The origins of these parties showed that they emerged first as pressure groups and maintained that role. Ujo

(2010) noted that:

"These organisations started as pressure groups rather than political parties. During the early period of colonial rule, some Nigerians organized groups of protests against the policies of the government. The People's Union was formed to protest the imposition of general rate to finance a new water scheme. The Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society was at the forefront of protecting the customary rights of Lagosians..."

The formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party was a simple transformation of Lagos Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society in reaction to the introduction of the elective principle into the legislative council" (Ujo, 2010, p.18-19).

The objectives of the parties were also limited to improvement of municipal facilities in Lagos and the action against discrimination of Africans as well as lobbying for the provision of compulsory primary education and the introduction of higher education.

The first generation of political parties during the colonial period were therefore limited in objective as the Clifford Constitution made no provision for the emergence of political parties in Nigeria, whose objective would be to control government, providing both the leadership and policies.

In this wise, the Clifford Constitution could be considered as the forerunner, setting the stage for the emergence of Nigeria's political parties whose objectives was that of independence for Nigeria and taking control of the national government.

The course of the Second World War and its aftermath, including the march to independence for India, saw increased nationalists' agitations for greater autonomy, self-rule and eventual independence for Nigeria.

The British colonial empire shaking within and deeply affected by the Second World War, chose to respond with reforms and constitutional processes to grant greater autonomy to Nigerians. A key element of the changes brought about was the introduction of the Macpherson Constitution in 1951 whose key features were the coming into existence of a federal system for the three regions of East, North and West together with a central legislature and executive; as well as regional legislatures and executive councils.

What the Macpherson Constitution did was to create regional governments and legislatures as well as the Federal House of Representatives. Building on the Macpherson Constitution, the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 operationalised Nigerian federalism with division of powers and authority between the centre and the regions, and eventually self-government as a precursor to independence.

This meant that the political space was opened to Nigerians both at the regional and national levels and as such, political parties were required for organization of members and for contestations into these elective offices for the purpose of forming regional governments and articulating their policy directions (Dudley, 1982). In allowing for parties to exist and be recognized, the colonial government did not interfere in their formation and had no role in funding the political parties. There were equally no guidelines or rules regulating their formation and their trajectories and functions in the political space were largely to be determined by success at the polls (Ujo, 2010).

The end of the Second World War and then the Macpherson Constitution therefore set the stage for the second generation of political parties that emerged during the colonial period. The first of these parties, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), which was led by Herbert Macaulay, was actually established towards the end of the Second World War in 1944.

The party emerged due to increased nationalists' activities, which informed the importance of presenting a common voice against British colonialism and hence on 26 August, 1944, over forty associations fused into National Council, which would be renamed National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and eventually become the National Council of Nigerian Citizens. At Macaulay's death in 1947, he was succeeded by Nnamdi Azikiwe, whose leadership of the party, made it one of the most preeminent nationalists and pre-independent parties of the second half of the colonial period in Nigeria.

The other major political parties of the era were the Action Group (AG), the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) among several other parties that were created after the war (Ujo, 2010).

The second major party of the era was the Action Group, whose origins were derived from the cultural association, Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Society of the Descendants of Oduduwa) formed by Obafemi Awolowo and others in 1945 as a cultural and educational association. In 1948, the objectives of Egbe Omo Oduduwa were expanded to include protection of Yoruba culture and way of life and "to accelerate the emergence of a virile, modernized and efficient Yoruba state... with its own individuality within the federal state of

Nigeria” (Mitchison, 1960, p.94). In response to the 1950 Macpherson Constitution, the Action Group emerged from Egbe Omo Oduduwa as a political party to enable it participate in the political process.

The third major political party of the late colonial era was the Northern People's Congress (NPC). Like the Action Group, it emerged from the amalgamation of Northern cultural groups, the Jami'yyar Mutanen Arewa (JMA) (the association of peoples of the North) and Jamiyya Jama'ar Arewa (Northern Nigerian Congress), and transformed into a political party in 1951. The JMA had emerged in 1948 as an association of Northern intelligentsia. When it became a party, the NPC motto was “One North; One People, Irrespective of Religion, Rank or Tribe.” Unlike the other parties, the NPC according to Dudley, (1982, p.49) “was the only party with a restricted membership, this being open only to 'people of Northern Nigerian descent' as the party's constitution was later to specify.” The party was headed by Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarkin Sokoto.

These three major parties due to the federal principle of the Macpherson Constitution would subsequently emerge to control the regional politics of the regions in which they were dominant. This was the prevailing situation in the last decade of colonialism and as well as with the 1959 elections that paved the way for independence in 1960. For instance, the NCNC under Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo, as leader controlled the Eastern Region, while the AG with Awolowo, a Yoruba, dominated the Western Region, and NPC, with a Fulani, Sir Ahmadu Bello controlled the Northern Region. Each of these parties was dominant in its region, while the Northern People's Congress had the majority in the Federal House of Representatives.

During the First Republic, the regional governments were controlled by parties that could be considered as ethnic-based parties, which

were dominant in their regions. At the Federal level however, as a Parliamentary democracy in the First Republic, despite the dominance of the NPC, it lacked the majority to independently form a government and had to rely on coalitions with other parties to form the central government.

Thus, Nigeria in the last decade of the colonial era and the period of the First Republic, had a multiparty system with several parties in contention against the leading parties; both within the regions and at the centre. In each of the regions were parties that were opposed or in alliance with the ruling party.

The Northern Region had several major opposition political parties like the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), the Idoma State Union, the Igbira Tribal Union, Ilorin Talaka Parapo and others like Idah Divisional Union and Borno Youth Movement among several others. In the Western Region, the parties in opposition were the Mid-West State Movement and Mabolaje Grand Alliance. The opposition party of the Eastern Region was the Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers State Movement.

The dominant objective of most of the opposition parties, which were largely ethnic based was the struggle for fair treatment within the regions and for the creation of more regions or states within Nigerian federalism, an objective that all the major political parties were not disposed to, especially within their own regions. Thus, the major political parties were not really concerned about how to resolve the minorities' problems of their regions (Hembe, 2005 and Ujo, 2010).

Political parties, both the major and minority ones were therefore regional and ethnically oriented. The electorates in choosing also voted for political parties that they considered well-placed take care of their ethnic and regional interests over and above those of others.

Thus in elections to the Federal Legislature both in 1959 and in 1964/65, the major political parties did well in their strongholds: the AG had the support of the Yoruba and did well in the Western Region; the NCNC had Igbo support and performed well in the East, while the NPC did well among the Hausa-Fulani in the Northern Region. Because the NPC in 1959 failed to secure a parliamentary majority, they had to go into alliance with the NCNC (Mitchison, 1960). The major parties also sought for alliances with minority parties across regions other than theirs in order to extend their influence beyond regional bases. The guiding philosophy of party politics was largely governed by regionalism and ethnicity in the quest for control of the federal government.

In the struggle of which party will control the centre in the 1964/65 General Elections, the political process became fractured and violent and the alliance between the NCNC and NPC collapsed. In its place, a new alliance system emerged in which NCNC and AG formed the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) and the NPC joined with the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), a splinter of the AG in an alliance known as the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) (Dudley, 1982). These alliances heated up the polity.

There was government interference in electoral matters, which affected the conduct of free and fair elections. In addition to this, was the manipulation of elections by political parties resulting to widespread violence that undermined the democratic process. There were boycotts and rejection of results, crises and violent bloodshed which eventually led to the collapse of the First Republic when the military intervened with the coup of 15 January 1966 (Dudley, 1982).

Political Parties from Military Rule to the Fourth Republic

The collapse of the First Republic through military intervention on 15 January 1966, halted democracy and party politics at its embryonic stage. Upon assuming power, the military proscribed all political parties and associations in the country and would only lift the ban in the transition to the Second Republic in 1978 to allow for newly formed political parties to compete for the 1979 General Elections. In the march to the Second Republic, steps were taken to re-engineer political parties to avoid the mistakes of the colonial era and the First Republic.

Thus, unlike the laissez-faire approach of the colonial authorities to the formation of political parties, the military transition programmes came out with specific guidelines for the registration and regulation of political parties that were meant to ensure that the parties avoided the pitfalls of the past. Policies and guidelines were consequently introduced towards making political parties to be more national in outlook as against being regional, sectional, religious or ethnic-based (Jinadu, 2011).

The tenets of the post-military and post-First Republican party system that emerged were designed to bring about the desired outcome of having more nationally oriented political parties that promoted national unity rather than the interest of specific ethnic groups or regions. To achieve this, guidelines for party registration in 1978 provided among others that party membership was to be open to all Nigerians irrespective of ethnicity, religion or sex and that parties in their name and branding were not to connote regional, sectional, ethnic or religious affiliation, but were to be a representation of all of Nigeria.

In addition, the headquarters of political parties was to be situated in the Federal Capital Territory. Political parties were also required to have branch offices in at least two-third of the states of the federation. The guidelines emanated from the 1979 Constitutional provisions that highlighted that political parties were to be national organisations in structure, membership and their leadership (Ujo, 2010). Prescriptions and guidelines in subsequent military transition programmes for political parties have been closely modelled along the 1978 template.

Consequently, in 1978, nineteen (19) political associations sought for registration as political parties, and based on the established criteria, five of them secured registration to contest elections to start the Second Republic. The registered political parties were: National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian People's Party (NPP), Great Nigerian Peoples' Party (GNPP), People's Redemption Party (PRP) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

These parties contested the 1979 elections and recorded varying degrees of victories at state and federal level, with the National Party of Nigeria producing the president and having the majority of seats in the Federal Legislature. It is important to note that while the First Republic had been a parliamentary system, the Second Republican Constitution that came into existence in 1979 introduced a presidential system of government for Nigeria. In 1983, due to the fact that in a democratic dispensation party registration is a continuous process, a sixth party was registered, and this was the Nigerian Advance Party (NAP) (Ujo, 2010).

While these regulations brought about more nationally oriented parties with a national outlook, the key leadership and main support base of the major parties, especially the frontline three, the NPN, NPP

and UPN were still associated with the regionalism and sectionalism of the First Republic, hence the support for NPN with President Shehu Shagari was largely drawn from the North, while NPP with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe had their support base from the East and UPN with Chief Obafemi Awolowo had its stronghold in the West. This highlighted that the regulations were yet to eradicate the old cleavages of the First Republic in political parties and their organizations as the outlook of the Second Republic parties still reflected that of the earlier era. Equally, intra- and inter-party rivalries were rife and the level of violence in politics was reminiscent of the First Republic (Jinadu, 2011).

The military intervention of 31 December 1983 ended the Second Republic after only four years and two election cycles thereby impeding the growth and maturity of the political parties of the era. The transition programme to the Third Republic, which eventually became stillborn taking cognizance of the challenges of a multiparty system that was still dependent on ethnic and regional cleavages took party regulation and control by government a step further than those for the Second Republic transition.

The military government in 1989 decreed into existence a two-party system. The government created the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) as political parties to participate in the transition programme to the Third Republic. The military government described the two party initiative as a "guided democracy" (Ujo, 2010). The two political parties, the SDP and NRC, being the only parties, met the criteria of national parties. Located in all the states, politicians in the country were either members of SDP or NRC, thus, by fiat, the government had created a two-party system for Nigeria.

From 1990, the two parties contested for elections in the Third Republic transition programmes at the local government and state levels electing officials from councilors to chairmen, and members of the state houses of assemblies as well as state governors. At the federal level, elections were successfully conducted for the Federal House of Representatives and the Senate, while the presidential elections of 12 June 1993 was annulled by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, the Head of state, despite their successful conduct, in which the SDP candidate Chief M.K.O. Abiola had had a clear lead and was presumed the winner (Lewis, 1994).

The June 12 annulment brought about a political impasse which led to the stepping aside of General Babangida in August of 1993, and the installation of an Interim National Government (ING), which within three months was overthrown by General Sani Abacha, who subsequently initiated a transition government that produced five political parties: Congress for National Consensus (CNC), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), National Democratic Coalition (NDC) and United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP).

The highpoint of the transition was the adoption of four of the five parties of General Sani Abacha as the consensus presidential candidate. The parties also participated in elections for local government councils, state Houses of Assembly, and the National Assembly.

Abacha's death on 8 June 1998 truncated the transition programme which was meant to have ended on 1 August 1998 with governorship and presidential elections. Abacha's goal to transmute himself to a civilian president and the actions of the political parties in the era to support him, meant that the political parties lacked independence

and autonomy and were unduly influenced by the military government. Consequently, with Abacha's death, the new military government of Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar dismantled the five political parties and initiated a new transition programme (Lewis, 1999). The Abdulsalami Abubakar's transition programme to the Fourth Republic lasted nine months and had the distinction of being the shortest and most forthright in Nigeria since independence in 1960. Three political parties were registered after the local government elections of December 1998 to participate in the elections to usher in the Fourth Republic.

The parties were: Alliance for Democracy (AD), the All Peoples Party (APP) – which later became the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The current dispensation of the Fourth Republic has proven to be Nigeria's most successful democratic era with seven general election cycles and active participation by the political parties. From the three initial political parties that were registered in December of 1998, dozens more have been registered and as of November 2023 there are 19 political parties registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The political parties are: Accord (A), Action Alliance (AA), Action Democratic Party (ADP), Action Peoples Party (APP), African Action Congress (AAC), African Democratic Congress (ADC), All Progressive Congress (APC), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Allied Peoples Movement (APM), and Boot Party (BP). Other registered parties are Labour Party (LP), National Rescue Movement (NRM), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), Young Progressive Party (YPP), Youth Party (YP) and Zenith Labour Party (ZLP) (www.inecnigeria.org).

The political parties of the Fourth Republic especially the dominant ones, the Peoples Democratic Party and the All Progressive Congress have proved to be successful political organisations. This is despite the various challenges they have faced. They have lived up to the billing of meeting the responsibilities of political parties which include recruitment of members and development of the political class, maintaining a party organization through party leadership and bureaucracy, policy and ideological formulation, and presenting candidates for elections. Other functions that these political parties have performed include voter education and mobilization and having policies and programmes for the development of the nation and upholding the nation's constitution.

Despite meeting up with these responsibilities, the political parties of the Fourth Republic challenges have included lack of internal party democracy, the crises of godfatherism, intra- and inter-party conflicts and lack of discipline among party members. Parties have also been involved in electoral malpractices and fuelling of political and electoral violence (Jinadu 2011 and Dauda, 2014).

A major characteristic feature of the political party process in the Fourth Republic is that while multiple parties exists, Nigeria has largely emerged as a two-dominant party system since 1999. From 1999 to 2015, the dominant party was the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which severally won the presidency and the National Assembly and also controlled majority of the states. Since 2015, however, the All Peoples Congress (APC) became the dominant political party with control of the presidency and more state administrations than the PDP.

The APC emerged through the merger of the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for

Progressive Change (CPC) and a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) as well as a faction of the Peoples Democratic Party. The merger of these five groups to form the All Progressive Congress (APC) made it a mega party with the ability to challenge the PDP. The APC victory in the 2015 General Elections and again in the 2023 General Elections at the federal level and in majority the states while gaining them the presidency on both occasions have shifted the balance of power from the PDP, which is still a strong opposition party to the APC (Chidi, 2015).

A common feature of all the parties in terms of membership since 1999 has been the fluidity with which key party members decamp from one party to the other. This highlights the fluidity of party membership and political alliances in Nigeria. It is however, important to observe to the credit of the two dominant parties that the ethnic and sectional cleavages that blighted the political parties of the late colonial era and the First Republic; and to a lesser extent, the Second Republic, are now things of the past. Because the PDP and the APC are the dominant parties across all states in Nigeria, party membership is no longer organized along ethnic or religious lines as was the case in the past.

Conclusion

This chapter notes that political parties first emerged in Nigeria in 1923, when the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was formed in colonial Nigeria as a result of the introduction of the elective principle by the Clifford Constitution of 1922. As a proto-party, its objectives were limited by the imperial colonial context, which only permitted the party to field a token of three (3) candidates into elections to the Nigerian Legislative Council.

Thus, while later parties had the objective of being vehicles for taking

control of government, this was not the case before the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 and Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. Both constitutions made it possible for the second generation of leading political parties in Nigeria – the NCNC, AG and NPC – to gain control of their regional governments in the last decade of colonialism. With independence, these parties sought to gain control of both the regional and central governments. In addition, through their elected officials, they articulated policies and programmes for the development of Nigeria. Although, inter-party politics was riddled with intense rivalry along regional and ethnic lines with constant rancour and tension among the political actors, the political parties were learning to navigate these issues, but for the military incursions into the polity that disrupted their learning curves, first in the First Republic and second, during the Second Republic.

However, the military governments on their part attempted reforms of political parties through introduction of regulations for party registration; and during the aborted Third Republic experimented with enforcing a two-party system, which failed with the annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential elections. In the Fourth Republic which began in 1999, party politics, despite its challenges is thriving. To a large degree, the political actors have learnt their lessons with some exceptions to avoid the mistakes and mistakes of the past. The emergence of a dominant dual-party system in which there are multiple fringe parties, guarantees freedom of political expression and choice.

As the framers and reformers of Nigerian constitutions had wished for, to a large extent, Nigerian political parties are now largely free of regional, ethnic and religious affiliations and constitute some of Nigeria's most national organisations. The next phase of their evolution would be to turn into institutions that are dedicated and totally committed to working for accelerated national transformation.

Chapter Two

Inter-Party Politics and Democratic Governance in Nigeria from 1960 To 2023

- Martin Terngu Kpoghul Ph.D -

Introduction

The history of the formation of political parties in Nigeria date back to the colonial era. Before the advent of colonialism, the whole idea of political party was an alien phenomenon. Ekeh (1983) argued that political party form part of those institutions he referred to as 'migrated social structure', by this he means organisational systems that were literally parceled from metropolitan centres of Europe to Asia and Africa and engrafted in the new Colonial situation. It is therefore impossible to discuss the nature of political party formation in Nigeria without coming to grips with the epochal significance and legacies of British colonial policies.

For instance, the first political party in Nigeria, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) formed in 1923 came into being as a result of the establishment of the Nigerian Legislative Council which extended its franchise to Lagos and Calabar under the Clifford Constitution of 1922 (Adebayo 2006). The leading political parties that emerged in colonial and immediate post-colonial Nigeria were provincial in outlook, having drawn their provenance from socio-cultural and ethnic based associations and this fitted well into the colonial policy of divide and rule. Independence did not obliterate deep seated mistrust and rivalry among the leading political class who

perceived themselves first as champions and avatars of their ethnic groups rather than statesmen saddled with the responsibility of forging national unity and solidarity.

The crucial role political parties play in the overall development and wellbeing of a state, especially in culturally diverse and variegated societies cannot be overstated. The significance of political parties, goes beyond the mere utilitarian function of contesting and capturing or retaining political power. Political parties are necessary and crucial institutions in the construction of a stable and participatory political order as well as serving as an instruments for interest aggregation and channeling disparate social groupings into a common socio political platform, thus providing stabilizing effects to an otherwise fractions society (Cited in Amusan 2011).

The history and story of formation of political parties in Nigeria as this study, run counter to the theoretical and normative role expected of them. Political party formation from the pre-independence era took a regional pattern starting with the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) which at formation attempted to be national in outlook, but later came to be perceived as a party principally for the eastern region, the Action Group party (AG) for the western region and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) for the northern region respectively.

Each of these parties therefore regarded their respective geographic regions and ethnic base as bastion and fortress from which 'alien' intruders must be kept at bay. The attempt by the Northern People's Congress (NPC) to extend its reach and make inroad into the western region perceived as the stronghold of the opposition, Action Group party through an alliance with a splinter group of disaffected AG members, precipitated political crisis that ultimately culminated in the truncation of democratic rule in 1966 (Sklar 1963).

The Second Republic also witnessed similar patterns of party formation with the dominant parties in orientation and leadership reminiscent of the parties of the first republic. This scenario, coupled with the electoral heist of 1983 and sundry administrative malfeasance by the dominant party of that dispensation- the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), eventually culminated in the collapse of the Second Republic (Joseph 1999).

The military regime headed by General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) attempted to decree elite accommodation with the formation of two government financed political parties- the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). This experiment did not last largely due to insincerity on the part of the administration. The birth of the current democratic dispensation in 1999 has not exorcised the ghost of elite fragmentation and mobilization along primordial fault lines.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP), the erstwhile governing party formed in 1998 with membership that cut across all the ethnic groups in the country, eventually became bogged down by vicious factional wranglings that often take on ethno-religious and regional dimensions (Simbine 2014).

The emergence of the All Progressive Congress (APC) as the new governing party after the 2015 general elections is also not free of accusation of ethnic and religious motivation in its emergence. Why have political parties in Nigeria failed to fulfill their theoretical function of serving as base for national unity and integration? Will the formation of three dominant political parties, the All Progressive Congress, the Peoples Democratic Party and a third force, the Labour Party help in reversing this negative trend? These questions are what this chapter seeks to interrogate.

Conceptual Clarification

Political Parties

Political parties constitute an essential component of the modern democratic tradition. This is evident because without political parties, democracy that is based on the liberal model of majority rule would be practically impossible. One of the earliest definitions of political party was given by Edmund Burke who considered a political party as “a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours, the national interest upon some particular principles in which they all agreed” (cited in Adebayo 2006, 64).

There are several other definitions of political party as there are scholars interrogating this concept. For instance, Giovanni Satori sees a political party as “any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office” (cited in Kopecky & Mair 2003, 29). Satori's definition serves two useful purposes,

On the one hand, it is precise enough to distinguish political party from other groups in society, as it is only political parties that field and sponsor candidates for election. On the other hand, it is broad enough to include all political parties, whether in non-competitive single party regimes or in competitive multi-party system. According to Neumann (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013), “Political party is an organization of the society with active political agents who compete for popular support with another group or persons holding diverse views”. A school of thought sees political party as an “instrument for catching power”. Essentially, a political party is a platform, or apparatus for taking part in the tussle for power, thus “a political party is an agency to mobilize people's support at the time of elections; it is a tool for aggregation of interests that demand strident articulation” (Johari, 2008).

In addition, Heywood (2002) holds the opinion that a political party is a group of people that is structured solely for the purpose of holding elections or using other means to claim government power. He states the characteristics and functions, and makes a distinction between political parties and other groups. To him, political parties are organized bodies with formal card-carrying membership; win political offices with the aim of exercising government power by doing so; usually takes on a large focus issue, addressing each of the major government policy areas; and holds similar political preferences and a broad ideological identity, making them united to some extent.

However, political parties are not subject to only these functions, “they perform other functions that include mediating between citizens and state institutions; recruiting and preparing individuals for political leadership; organizing election campaigns; aggregating societal interests, and providing a participatory, responsive relationship with the people; political recruitment and training; education, socialization, building consensus, providing alternative world views and political communication among others (Pogason, 2013, p. 4).”

Party Politics

In a liberal democracy, a political party is an association of people with similar interest(s) and common purpose. The interest(s) and purpose shown by them revolve around the objective of using the party to acquire power, share in the exercise of power or to take control of government (Yaqub, 1992). Olaniyi (2001:99) defines party politics as “activities of political parties in a democratic environment to seek for the control of political offices through stated norms of elections”.

It exists when elective principles are present in a democratic state which recognizes and institutionalizes the legitimate choice of the

citizens to elect their representatives into political offices (Azeez, 2009).

Hence, the primary objective of party politics is directed towards a single goal of accessing and controlling governmental or political power. In the submission of Okoye (1982), party politics includes “activities of formal structure, institution or organization which compete through electoral process to control the personnel and policies of government, with the aim of allocating the scarce resources in a state through an institutionalized means or procedure”.

There are arguments that the character of party politics in Nigeria is such that the political party in power at the centre stifles opposition parties. In the long-drawn controversy, it is argued that party politics in Nigeria's democratic practice since 1960 shows that any political party in control of the apparatus of state, principally gained and sustained by control of the economy, plants moles and disruptive elements in opposition parties to create instability and render them ineffective to compete for power.

The reaction of Ogunmefun (2007:18) to these arguments is that, it is the responsibility of opposition parties to develop their parties and make them viable to compete for power. He further observes that “the opposition parties are weak, ineffective and poorly organized to challenge for political power”. Writing on the crisis of party politics in Nigeria, the Political Bureau (1987:128) in Jaja & Erondue (2000:64) emphasizes thus;

Party politics is poisonous. It is the politics of war not peace, of acrimony and hatred, mud-slinging, not of love and brotherhood, of anarchy and discord, not of orderliness and concord, it is politics of cleavages, divisions and disunity and not of co-operation, consensus and unity; it is the politics of

hypocrisy, not patriotism, it is the politics of rascality, not maturity, of blackmail and near gangsterism, not of constructive honest contribution.

Without doubt, one of the tragic features of contemporary politics and conduct of political office holders in Nigeria has been the crisis of party politics extensively outlined by the Political Bureau.

The basic truth about party politics in Nigeria is that, it has remained a means of economic survival. As Abdulrazaque (2008:8)) affirmed, party politics in Nigeria has degenerated to a "tea-party" and are organized in a manner that reflect the "pro-rich, monetized, individualistic and self-centred politics of the Nigerian capitalist elite". In the same vein, Adedeji (2000) in Ogunmade (2008:21) writes that "political parties have been turned into panoply of institutions of no consequence".

On his part, Komolafe (2008:88) thinks that the decline of party politics is the "tragedy of contemporary Nigerian politics". This, in Komolafe's view, is so because weak political parties is a metaphor for weak institutions of liberal democracy. In his words, 'the organizations called political parties determine the capacity of states to establish and maintain legitimate, transparent and accountable political institutions'.

It is obvious that political parties in Nigeria lack character, ideology, conviction and direction, while party politics is characterized by poverty of ideas, lack of ethical content and devoid of democratic ethos. It also logically follows that party politics in Nigeria is at variance with the fundamental purpose of political parties which, among other things, are indispensable structures of democratic governance.

Democratic Governance

According to 1989 World Bank Report on Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, governance is defined “as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development”. Democratic governance, by extension, refers to a democratic mode of exercising powers and performing functions by established institutions to achieve developmental goals (Lafenwa, 2009). More appropriately, democratic governance can be understood in terms of the elements it constitutes. It is in line with the constitutive elements of democratic governance that the National League of Cities (2008) in Lafenwa (2009:4) defines the concept as “the art of governing a community in participatory, deliberative, and collaborative ways”.

Jega (2006) correctly listed the constitutive elements of democratic governance to include the following;

- Representation: People having the freedom to choose their representatives through periodic free and fair election.
- Participation: People being involved in the processes of policy formulation and policy implementation, and in the general management of public affairs.
- Responsive and Accountable Governance: Delivery of service to the people and communities in a manner that creates utilitarian value i.e. policies of government bringing greatest happiness to the greater number of people.
- Egalitarian Society: Equality before the law, rule of rule, constitutional regime, fairness, economic and social justice.

Transparency and Accountability in both public conduct and in the management of commonwealth (public resources).

The attainment or elusiveness of these elements in a political system is, simply, a measure of its democratic stature.

In revisiting basic questions concerning the values and nature of democratic governance, the concept is approached by emphasizing two of the main pillars of the liberal democratic tradition; citizen participation in the determination of government itself and in decision making processes; and a rights "platform" that supports and protects the role of individuals in the governance process.

This explains, to a large extent, why democratic governance is defined by Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights (ODIHR) as a "system of government where institutions function according to democratic processes and norms, both internally and in their interaction with other institutions"(www.osce/odihr/demgov).

According to these organizations, key principles of democratic governance are political pluralism, institutional accountability and responsiveness, active civil society, human rights, the rule of law and democratic elections.

Broadly speaking, democratic governance, in the expressions of Roberts and Edwards in Bello-Imam and Obadan (2004:3) depicts:

Popular participation, absolute respect for the rule of law, a general guarantee of fundamental freedoms which lubricate popular participation, periodic, competitive, free and fair elections with the vote of every citizen counting equally, respect for majority rule as well as the readiness of the

minority to acquiesce in the decision of the majority, accountability, guarantee of separation of powers in practice, transparency, and responsiveness in governance and opportunity for change of government or any leadership found wanting.

Ideally, democratic governance operates with democratic institutions like political parties, the judiciary and the legislature, which are adduced by classical democratic theory as bulwarks of democracy.

The dominant role of political parties in democratic governance is much stressed by Agorundu (2009) and Achi (2005). Agorundu not only described political parties as “central organs in any democratic setting”, but also alluded to the fact that strong and viable parties are “prerequisites to an enduring democratic culture”. He further noted that party politics based on principles of equity, representation, diversity and choice is important for the democratic governance. Similarly, the critical links between political parties and sustenance of democratic governance reinforces what Achi (2005:109) refers to as “non-negotiable imperative of strong political parties as a bulwark for the survival of democracy”.

Political Party Formation Pattern in Historical Perspective

In Africa and indeed Nigeria before the advent of colonial rule, political party was an alien institution. However, nationalist pressures during that era quickened the pace of constitutional development and in turn stimulated the development of political parties (Coleman 1958). Political parties thus form part of what Ekeh called “migrated social structure”, referring to institutions and models almost literally parceled from metropolitan centres of the imperial West to Asia and Africa and engrafted into the new colonial situation emptied of their moral content and underlying ethics that

sustained them in the metropolis (Ekeh 1983). Thus the history and evolution of political parties in Nigeria has been undulating just as the quest for democracy, good governance and national integration has been full of various missteps and unfulfilled expectations.

In discussing the history and evolution of political parties in Nigeria, Ujo (2000) classified political parties into four generations. (Cited in Saliu & Muhammad 2008). The first generation of political parties according to him consists of the pre-1945 parties. These included the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) and the Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM) formed in 1923 and 1936 respectively. These parties were localized in their base and their interest covered very narrow and specific policies of the colonial government. This perhaps explains the limited cases of ethnic and tribal politics in this era. While Herbert Macaulay led NNDP won all the seats in the legislative council as a result of the introduction of elective principle by the Clifford constitution of 1922, it was not until 1938 that it was successfully challenged by the NYM.

The second generation consisted of those parties that emerged between 1945 and the end of the first republic. This group, according to this classification was the National Council of Nigeria Citizens, (NCNC) the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG), the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU).

These parties' major preoccupation was to wrest power from the colonialists, a feat they eventually accomplished. One major flaw that characterized these political parties was their formation pattern and subsequent degeneration into ethnic-based parties and the personalisation of their operations by the founders. The cultural influence in the formation of these parties undoubtedly played a significant role in this regard. For instance, the Action Group party

(AG) which emerged as a response to the growing popularity of the (NCNC) in the western region is traced to the pan Yoruba socio-cultural organisation, the 'Egbe Omo Oduduwa' (the gathering of the descendants of Oduduwa). After series of meetings and preparation, the cultural organization on March 1951 metamorphosed into a political party and held its inaugural conference in Owo, a town in the present day Ondo state, Nigeria (Mackintosh 1966).

The same is true of the Northern People's Congress which emerged from a cultural organisation called Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa (Association of People from the North), formed in June 1949. The leaders of the group announced that the objective of the group was to combat idleness and injustice in the northern region. This cultural group eventually transformed into a political party in October 1951 (Dudley 1968). The cultural and ethnic origin particularly of the NPC and the AG consequently generated conflict between them as each sort to protect its regional enclave while they attempted to make electoral inroad into the political base of the rival party; this strategy only served to inflame ethnic hatred and animosity.

Independence was however achieved in spite of these rivalries because of a high degree of mobilization of the citizenry to end colonial rule. However, intra and inter-party rivalries characterized these parties after independence leading to their degeneration into ethnic pressure groups, a trend that eventually led to the truncation of democratic rule (Yakub 2004).

The third generations of political parties going by Ujo's classification were the parties of the second republic (1979-1983). The constitutional and political reforms of 1975-1979, moved the definition of political party away from a functional notion to a legal-constitutional one. Political parties were defined more in terms of structure than of functions, with emphasis on structural

requirements for political party registration such as national outlook and spread, internal organization or democracy, recognition and registration by an electoral management body.

The aims of the constitutional and political reforms that preceded the inauguration of the second republic among other things were to de-personalize operations of political parties, and to de-ethicize and give them a national outlook (Omoruyi 2002). The parties of that era included the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria People's Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), the People's Redemption Party (PRP) and later National Advance Party (NAP). What characterized the political parties of this dispensation was their degeneration into regional parties. Most of them turned out to be reincarnates of the first republic parties. The NPN, UPN, NPP and the PRP were adjudged to be similar both in leadership and orientation to the Northern People's Congress, Action Group, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens and the Northern Element Progressive Union of the first republic respectively. Intra and inter-party rivalries, corruption and the electoral heist perpetrated by the National party of Nigeria (NPN) led to the collapse of the second public (Babarinsa 2003; Joseph 1999).

The fourth generation political parties following Ujo's classification included parties of both the Babangida and Abacha government sponsored and financed parties. The Social Democratic party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). Unlike the earlier parties, because of the stringent requirement for party registration and government funding of the parties, ethnic and regional rivalries were not pronounced. The evolution of the two political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC), grew out of security and national integration considerations and led to the gradual reduction of ethno-religious and regional politics during that era, as the data from the series of

elections held between 1989 and 1993 demonstrated.

Omoruyi (2002), posited that the innovation of the two party system in 1989 introduced some elements of discontinuity between the past and 1989 in terms of origin, composition, leadership selection, funding and the interest they served. According to him it removed the idea of 'founders' and 'joiners', as all were joiners. It removed the idea of owners, as the government financed the operations of the two parties and provided a level playing field for all those who wanted to stake a political career from either of the two parties.

For instance, the SDP had a Muslim-Muslim ticket in M.K.O Abiola and Babagana Kingibe as its presidential and vice candidates respectively, which clearly violated known balancing act of Christian-Muslim ticket or vice versa; yet Nigerians ignored religious affiliations of the presidential candidate and his running mate and voted for them en masse. Also, none of the two parties of that dispensation could be labeled as either belonging to the south or the north.

The two-party system adopted in the truncated Third Republic effectively discouraged the politicization of religion and ethnicity, the twin evils that had bedeviled the polity since the pre-independence era. In effect, for the first time in Nigeria's history, there were political parties in which no one or group of persons could claim to be the founders. The experiment was highly instrumental to the conduct of Nigeria's freest and fairest presidential election of 12th June 1993.

Unfortunately, the military junta that designed the transition programme never really intended for the experiment to succeed as it annulled the election, and halted the match toward democracy and national integration. The five political parties registered during the Abacha regime, aptly described by Bola Ige, a frontline opposition figure of that era as "the five fingers of a leprous hand" were designed

to fulfill the ambition of Abacha transforming into a civilian president and were dissolved after his demise.

The fourth republic began after the death of General Sani Abacha in June 1998. The transition to civil rule programme of the General Abdulsalami Abubakar's administration lasted for only eleven months, the shortest in the country's history and ushered in the fourth republic. Political parties of this dispensation in the words of Nigeria's first executive President, Shehu Shagari "were created in a matter of weeks and prepared for elections in a matter of days" (Cited in Salisu and Muhammad 2008, 163).

In other words, parties of this era did not evolve organically to produce a prior long term political association between the various groups and individuals that came together. This has impacted on their operation and performance such that nineteen years after the return to party politics, with over sixty registered parties, their relevance has remained contested.

Even those that have acquired government control have not significantly contributed to good governance and better quality of life for the generality of Nigerians nor have they robustly espoused ideas and ideals aimed at strengthening the fragile nationhood; rather, they have violated every known rule of decency and probity both in the management of electoral processes and in the conduct of the affairs of state.

Thus far, political parties mean different things to different people depending on who is assessing their evolution and relevance. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo for example, once described the political party under whose platform he rose to become president - the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as "a dynamic amalgam of interest groups held together by, if anything at all, the fact that the party is in power

and therefore the strong expectation of patronage” (Cited Anifowoshe 2004, 65). In the same vein, Bamanga Tukur, a former national chairman of the same party was quoted as describing his party as “an amalgam of diverse groups united only by one purpose- to grab power, but not yet fused into a functional political party for development” (This Day 2013).

These assertions by the national leaders of a party that until recently was in charge of managing the affairs of the country captures the essence of national malaise in Nigeria and partly explains why political parties in this dispensation have not fulfilled their role as institutions for national development and integration.

The formation in July 2013 of the All Progressive Congress (APC) by by leading opposition leaders and a splinter group from the PDP who collapsed their respective platforms in order to form a broad based party, represents a new phase in the democratic evolution of the country. The new party did not only hold a successful national congress to elect officers to administer the party, it succeeded in wrestling political power from the former ruling party in the general elections conducted in March 2015. The success of these two events especially the alternation of political power at the national level have expectedly generated renewed but cautious optimism in the prospect of not only consolidating democracy but also charting a new course for the development of the country.

Historicizing Operations and Development of Party Politics in Nigeria

Party politics in Nigeria is associated with the pattern of colonial governance in the state. It could be recalled that decolonization as envisaged by the British in what later became the Nigerian State was viewed as a gradual process of constitutional transformations that would give greater freedom to the Nigerian people in form of

participation in governance through “partyism” before the attainment of political independence.

Thus, the nature and pattern of party politics during colonialism was to a great extent determined by the constitutional concessions permitted by the British Colonial system. For instance, while the 1922 Clifford Constitution gave birth to the first political party in Nigeria known as the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923, party politics in the Nigeria was restricted to just two cities; Lagos and Calabar (9-10). The implication is that party democracy during this era was restricted to two cities, and even in the cities, franchise was restricted because of property qualification coupled with the fact that the system was purely one party system.

However, shortly before the 1946 Richards Constitution, party democracy was widened with the birth of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1934. As a result, Nigerians in the two cities of Lagos and Calabar had the opportunity of choice between the NNDP and the NYM. With the operation of the 1951 Macpherson Constitution, the Action Group (AG), the Northern People's Congress (NPC) were registered and they became major players with the NCNC in the march towards Nigeria's independence. It is however, important to state that during this dispensation, the main objectives of the political parties were, one, acquire political power and two, achieve independence status for the Nigerian State. These basic objectives therefore defined the operations of party politics in Nigeria in that even when parties were elitist in formation, they were deeply rooted in the people in terms of interest articulation, aggregation, political socialization and elite recruitment coupled with political communication.

Although, this scenario of mass based political parties persisted in the First Republic though ethicized, one basic manifestation of that

republic which adversely affected party democracy was elitist contradiction in which ethnic sentiments, thuggery, rigging among other political ills, were used as tools for acquiring political power. This is unlike what was obtainable before political independence in that while the parties wanted power, their activities were moderated by the need to achieve the shared objectives of acquiring political independence.

The development of political parties in Nigeria must be understood against the wider context of how the political system has developed since independence, as well as in relation to the sense of deterioration of the institutions of governance since the return to democracy in 1999. Nigeria is governed by a presidential system. Over the decades, and following the experience of military rule, the country has seen a centralization of power in the hands of the executive and a progressive weakening of the federal pact upon which Nigeria was founded.

However, as political power has been concentrated in the centre, and in the hands of the executive branch, an intricate body of informal rules of political interaction has also evolved, including through the experience of civil war (the Biafra war) and military rule, by which power is brokered in a way that achieves a sense of stability – at least among elites. (Domingo and Nwankwo, 2010:3).

At the inception of party politics in 1923, precisely 24 June, 1923, following the introduction of the elective principle by the Clifford constitution, Nigerian parties had very limited and self-serving objectives.

The main objective was perhaps, that of buying legitimacy for the colonial government through very limited franchise restricted to Lagos and Calabar. Richard Sklar, in his seminal work, *Nigerian Political Parties* clearly demonstrate how the emergence of political associations such as the People's Union, was only in response to the

guided by an ideology or specific focus; they were not led by mass mobilizers who could drive and guide their actions and policies, and inspire internal cohesion and discipline.

Indeed, political parties took the colouration of electoral machines, whose sole aim was to win political power through the ballot.

Aspirants were mostly individual actors sponsored by some powerful individuals as the cost of electioneering had now become astronomical. Over three decades of military rule distorted social values and undermined democratic institutions in Nigeria, political parties and civil society inclusive. It was worse for the development of the country's party system. The political parties were in complete limbo, and almost near extinction, courtesy of the numerous military coups and counter-coups that punctuated Nigeria's political history.

The rise and fall of the Nigerian military is well documented in the literature on politics and development in Nigeria. Suffice to say, however, that the military held all democratic institutions captive between 1966 (when they first struck) and 1999 (when they retreated to the barracks), except for their occasional ceremonious "stepping aside." Weak structures and ineffective operations of political parties made things worse for the electoral environment in the country. Well-functioning political parties are essential for the success of democracy.

However, in the particular case of Nigeria, there are limited opportunities for the development of political parties. Political party activities resumed in Nigeria towards the end of 1998 after a long period of military rule during which party activities were banned. The next section comprehensively examines the nature and character of the four Republics since Independence.

Electoral Politics, Party System and Democratic Governance

When party politics was introduced in Nigeria in 1922 via the Clifford Constitution, its major impediment was the restriction on political participation and representation. The political parties were limited in terms of number, as fore grounded by the fact that there were only two of them: Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) and the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM that emerged in 1934), and in terms of spread of activities Their activities were limited to the coastal towns especially Lagos for the NYM and Lagos and Calabar for the NNDP. This is coupled with the fact that only four people were elected in the election (Omodia 2010).

Nigeria has come a long way since 1923 in terms of the number and spread of political parties. The number of political parties and their spread seems to give the impression that representation has become an important requirement for the existence of political parties. For example, one of the requirements stipulated for the registration of political parties in the political transition to the Nigerian Fourth Republic was that aspiring political associations needed to garner at least ten percent of the votes in 24 out of the 36 states to qualify for permanent registration (Aina 2002). This requirement seems to suggest that political parties were expected to really show capacity to represent the people.

However, in the preparation for the 1999 elections, this requirement had to be watered down to avoid the emergence of a two party system. This was the reason the Alliance for Democracy (AD) was registered as the third party in 1999 (Aina 2002). Since then, there has been an exponential growth in the number of political parties and this has given the impression that the grounds of representation have increased. The number of political parties has grown from three in

1999 to thirty in 2002; 50 in 2007 and about 57 but pruned to 19 after the 2023 elections. However, instead of this meaning more representation, it has not. As the number of parties increased, their relevance in terms of being channels of representation has diminished (Egwemi 2009).

Two major elements, according to Animashaun (2010), have dominated electoral politics in Nigeria in the post-independence period. The first is trenchant disputation of official election results. Indeed, as noted by the late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua during the inauguration of the Electoral Reform Committee in August 2007, since the 1959 elections, which were the last to be supervised by the colonial authorities, all but one election has had its result contested. The only exception to this pattern was the June 12 1993 presidential election which was annulled by the Ibrahim Babangida's military administration.

The post-election crisis that followed the annulment of the election results was not a consequence of inter-party disputation of the outcome of the election. Rather, it was orchestrated by a military regime that was evidently reluctant to pursue its democratic programme to the end. General Babangida was later forced out of power in August 1993 after ruling the country for eight years as military president. The second element, a direct consequence of the first, is electoral violence. Election-related violence has negatively impacted the quest for deepening democratic rule in Nigeria. In the history of elections in Nigeria, only elections organized by the colonial state and the military were not marred by violence.

As for the military-supervised polls, Kurfi (1983 cited in Animashaun, 2010) has perceptively observed that the absence of electoral violence could not be attributed to the internalization of a culture of tolerance but rather was a consequence of the recognition of the threat of

military retribution for breakdown of law and order as well as the possible extension of the transition project.

As copiously documented by Anifowose (1982 cited in *ibid*), election-based violence imperiled Nigeria's first democratic experiment with violence in Tivland and Yorubaland as the two significant cases. According to Anifowose, the violence in Tivland was a reaction to political intimidation and harassment of the opposition politicians by the ruling Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). On the other hand, the violence in Yorubaland was in reaction to perceived massive irregularities that characterized both the 1964 federal elections and 1965 Western region elections. The consequences of these crises largely contributed to the rude termination of Nigeria's first republic through a bloody military coup in January 1966.

A thorough examination of the Nigerian democracy since 1999 in particular reveals that virtually all the political parties in Nigeria find it very difficult to adopt an open system that will not only allow members of the party to participate in the decision making process, but also give them unrestricted opportunity to contest in elections under the party's platform.

This kind of restriction and constraint have increasingly resulted in party defection, party wrangling, war of attrition, recrimination, acrimony, coordination dilemmas, and cross-carpeting among Nigerian political parties (Abimbola and Adesote, 2012:46). Political parties are formed to play the crucial roles of political recruitment, interest articulation and aggregation, political education and capacity building of the political leadership.

But the majority of the political parties in the countries of the South have been unable to perform these functions creditably, due largely to the complex historical antecedents of the state and inadequate

governance mechanisms. In the colonial history of Nigeria for instance, political parties were created as an instrument to facilitate either the transfer of power from colonial regimes to the local political elite; or they were formed by the local political leadership to fight colonialism.

Once the colonial state was driven out, political parties degenerated into ethnic and regional groups, acting in most cases as the vanguard of local hegemonic forces to meet their narrow interests. In such circumstances, the people could not have been empowered to have any say in how the political parties were governed.

Furthermore, the fledgling political parties were to face greater challenges as they were confronted with the need to choose among ideological positions that would guide their policy implementation. Caught between the two ideological extremes of capitalism and socialism, political parties supported welfarism or conservative perspectives, depending on the preferences of the founding members of the parties, but without sticking to any of them.

Key leaders who provided finance to the parties cashed in on this to occupy top political positions both in the parties and in government. The national leaders of the parties were, in most cases, the owners of the parties, whose interests and world views ultimately became the objectives, manifestoes, rules and regulations of the parties. Political parties were no less than the personal property of their leaders, who decided on who should be a member.

That way, membership of political parties was exclusive, and further reinforced the disempowerment of the people and their lack of ability to participate in party and national politics. The Nigerian political society typified by party politics and other intricacies targeted at seizing governance has been criminalized. The ruling People's

Democratic Party (PDP) has always used its power of incumbency to arm twist other parties and dominate the political system. Worst still, the opposition parties that ought to step up their game in the areas of alternative policy option, strong and dynamic ideologies, checking and checkmating the ruling party for accountability, abandoned this to their detriment.

Every plummeting condition in the country has been politicized as a failure of leadership by the ruling party without an effort by the opposition parties to prove an alternative policy. The “pull him down syndrome” has played out well for politicians in Nigeria who are avowed to pull the system down when not in power. The responsibility of civic education for quality citizens' participation has been relegated to the background.

Overall, there is a sense that the quality of democratic governance has been deteriorating since the transition to multi-party democracy in 1999, and the irregularities of the 2007 election signaled a growing lack of credibility and legitimacy of the institutions of representative government.

The 2007 electoral process was rendered highly questionable by levels of pre-election and election-day violence, the problematic registration process, snatching of ballot boxes and ballot papers, and the manner in which results were announced. Most reports since then signaled the poor performance of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which is seen to be lacking in independence and impartiality.

As such, the immediate consequence is very poor quality human resource recruitment process for the nation's ruling class. The result is not unexpected- ineffective governance and leadership identified by Achebe who stated that “the problem of Nigeria is that of leadership”.

As such, corruption like a cancer has permeated into all levels of governance and every gamut of the Nigerian society.

Over a decade of democracy, has witnessed years of looting public treasury at the local, state and national levels of government. It is reported that between 1970 and 2007, Nigeria lost an estimated \$400 billion oil revenue to official corruption (Agbo 2009: 55). It is, therefore, not surprising that out of the 36 governors that ruled the states from 1999 to 2007, at least 21 were fingered by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for looting their state treasuries.

Moreover, Nigerian parties have not been able to attain a reasonable degree of institutionalization especially in the areas of internal cohesion and discipline. This deficiency has also contributed to the decline of the conflict management capacity of the parties at both intra and inter-party levels. The depth of crisis at both levels of party relations is worrisome. It is such that none of the parties have been able to hold itself together without conflict that most times threaten the very heart of the parties. The most notable illustrations can be located in the morality of leadership in all the parties, as well as the unprecedented rate of political vagrancy (Omotola, 2009).

Trends and Perspectives of Party Politics and Contentious Elections in Nigeria

Political parties and contentious elections are no strange fellows in Nigeria. The "rosy" relationship started in colonial time when contesting political parties and their members saw elections as "do or die affairs" in which all should do whatever was humanly possible to win.

In the light of the above, Iyayi (2008) stated that spanning a period of well over 50 years, with the first major elections of 1951, elections and

electoral practices in Nigeria had attracted public outcry. Mass demonstrations, popular uprisings, and local and international condemnation provided justification for several military coups and counter coups.

The National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Report (in Ibrahim, 2007), shows that only the 1959 and 1979 elections had taken place without systematic rigging. Those two elections had one point in common: They were held in the presence of strong arbiters, the colonial state and the military, that were not participants and desired free and fair elections. Although this report is contestable as proceeding discussions show how even colonial officials colluded to rig elections for preferred political parties.

Although the 1951 elections were a water-shed in the history of party politics and elections in Nigeria, it was engulfed in controversial circumstances which effects made the former Lt. Governor and later, Governor of Northern Nigeria, Mr. Bryan to confess to the effect that he was involved in election manipulations so that the Northern Peoples Congress could win 90% of the votes (in Okonjo in Iyayi, 2008:6). The problem generated by that singular act led 'by such "lunatic fringe" anti-British parties such as the Northern Elements Progressive Union and the Middle Zone League and by such parties as the Action Group or the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon were devastating.

It was such manipulations in favour of one political party or another that led to the emergence of the Northern Peoples Congress as the leader of government business at independence. Thus, Enahoro (1985:21, 22) succinctly asserted that "Nigeria became the only country: in the entire history of the anti-colonial struggles of our time in which those who fought for independence were not those who had the privilege and the historic duty of meeting the challenges of

independence...

The truth of the matter, which determined efforts to falsify history cannot forever conceal, is that the nationalists who were prepared to work, to fight, to risk, to dare - to die if need be, lost control of the situation and were displaced or succeeded by those who had remained untouched by the unifying and modernizing flames of the new nationalism".

The political parties instead of showing better electoral behaviour in the 1964 and 1965 elections, executed fait accompli through unprecedented character deficit that culminated in the truncation of the First Republic. The Nigeria National Alliance (NNA) and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) were the two major Alliances for the election.

The first national post-independence general election was said to have been by marred by violence, manipulations and malpractices in the North, West, East and in Lagos (Adeniji, 2010). For instance, in the petition to the then President of the Federation, the UPGA showed that the NPC/NNA had perfected a strategy of getting its candidates returned unopposed by arresting UPGA and other opposition candidates to prevent them from filing their nomination papers within the prescribed time. In this manner, the NPC was able to get 60 of its candidates returned unopposed. On account of these, there were arbitrary abductions, arrests, detention, intimidation of its candidates and copious evidence of which was submitted (Osinbajo, 2009). Election results were keenly and even violently contested and at the end of it all, "Operation Wetie" came up, and set the whole place on fire.

Rigging in the Regional Election in the Western region in 1965, was worse than the 1964 election. The NNDP which was in power in the West, the product of a rigged election sought to retain its hold on

power. Using its appointed returning officers, NNDP perfected its rigging strategy. Returning officers deserted their posts after accepting nomination papers from government candidates, or outrightly refused to accept the nomination papers of opposition candidates for some flimsy reasons or the other. In some cases, returning officers who had accepted nomination papers from the opposition candidates had their appointments revoked, made replacements and then rejected the validity of earlier nomination papers and refused to accept new nominations.

Using these tactics, the NNDP was able to get 16 of its candidates returned unopposed, but at the actual election itself, government agents illegally accessed large numbers of ballot papers. Even when, despite all these, an opposition candidate won, the results were simply reversed, and the government candidate was announced on the government owned radio as the winner (Osinbajo, 2009). "Akintola government publicly (interfered) with the results of the elections (Ademoyega, 1981:21-22). Hence: the most notorious example of this travesty was the case of a man who won the election in one of the Owo constituencies, his NNDP opponent was declared the victor. He thereupon announced that he had decided to join the NNDP. A few days after this announcement, the electoral commissioner declared him the successful candidate and quietly dropped his opponent (Arikpo in Osinbajo, 2009).

Sadly, what the politicians failed to use to their advantage, the military politicians later hijacked and the First Republic came to an abrupt end. Thus, Nwabueze (in Osinbajo, 2009:3) concludes that "... by the closing year of the Nigerian First Republic, the institution of free elections, the cornerstone of democracy, had ceased to have any meaning in Nigeria, so blatantly had it been perverted as long as an election posed any possibility of defeat for the government".

Based on the long period of military interregnum, and the joyful hope with which the return of civil democracy was awaited, one thought that the political parties and politicians would have learnt their lessons by 1979 to no avail. The elections, although under the supervision of the military, were not without some forms of manipulations and its concomitant controversies. One may not forget in a hurry, the heat and confusion generated by litigations against it of which legal interpretations of 2/3 percent of the 19 states of the federation was paramount. The parties especially the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was hell-bent on misinterpreting the constitution to its advantage.

The 1983 elections did not only showcase the level of electoral decay in the country but went further to trivialize the monumental errors of the previous elections with more horrendous manipulative strategies. Through its national "landslide Victory" slogan, the ruling NPN taught other political parties the necessity of "auxiliary precautions" through manipulation of voter registration and register, purchase of voters' cards, intimidations, monumental rigging, and of course, deportation.

Alhaji Shugaba, a strong opponent of the NPN, was deported from the country by the NPN led government on grounds that he was an illegal alien to create chance for NPN to concretize its return bid. Iyayi (2008) adds that in Modakeke, a suburb of Ife, South- West, Nigeria, voter registration jumped from an original 26,000 voters to 250,000 thus, making the voting population there more than the voting population of the whole of Ife! Thus, when the results came up, it was massively contested by opposition political parties and even non-party members, the consequence of which was the military take-over of power and emergence of General Muhammadu Buhari as Head of State in January, 1983.

The 1999 elections could be regarded as less contentious as the 1983 elections, perhaps, because of the strong presence of the military supervisors, especially the then Head of State, Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar, who was really committed not mainly to the democratic process but the military's return to the barracks. However, such commitment could not be said to be expressed in the 2003 elections conducted by an elected government of President Obasanjo of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The elections were simply a show of shame and democratic deficits. The report of the Transition Monitoring Group (2003:120) indicated that there were numerous reports of fraud in many states across the country.

Twenty-nine of the registered political parties that either contested or did not contest the elections had variously rejected the results as announced by the INEC, declaring the results as fraudulent. Both Domestic and International Election Observers documented massive irregularities that characterized the elections and refused to endorse the elections as free and fair. Some political parties and their candidates decided to challenge some of the results before the various Election Petition tribunals and had gone ahead to do so while others declared "mass action" to pressure a government without popular mandate to abdicate power.

This was collaborated by the European Union Observers' report which also reported widespread election-related malpractice in a number of states in the Middle Belt, the South-East and the South-South (European Commission, 2003: 4).

The varied forms of electoral malpractice and the high number of incidents of electoral violence rekindled old fears that the basic institutional weaknesses associated with the electoral system could bring the democratic experiment to grief (Ibrahim, 2007:3). For example, in the 2003 Presidential election petitions led by Gen.

Muhammadu Buhari (ANPP's Presidential Candidate), the petitioners averred that in respect of Akwa Ibom state that at a meeting which took place at the Banquet hall of the Government House in the early hours of April 19, 2003 (the day of the Presidential Elections), officials of the ruling PDP and 36 soldiers from the 6th motorized battalion, Ibagwa, Abak led by the commanding officers, Lt S. A. Sangonuga, thumb-printed the materials, and allocated figures, between the hours of 2.30am and 5.30am on April 19 2003.

Team leaders of the group collected N200, 000 each from the PDP liaison officers in their areas of posting. The Petitioners went on to list the names, ranks and commission members of the 36 soldiers in their petition. In response, the respondents merely denied the incident. It is apparent that the allegations were never subsequently investigated. In any event, who would have thought that the Federal Government, whose leadership were the perpetrators, that soldiers in the Nigerian army, clearly identified by name, rank, etc, could be accused of such a heinous offence against the state and people they swore to protect, and escape sanctions. It is a regrettable matter indeed (Osinbajo, 2009).

As regrettable as the 2003 elections were, it established to a great extent, the grip the ruling party, PDP, had on the Nigerian polity and its resolve not to create any space democratically for the opposition. While the 2003 elections were regarded as a travesty of electoral process, the 2007 elections came as a total and unprecedented departure from acceptable democratic principles. Its preparations were glaringly faulty making Ibrahim (2007) to warn earlier that it seemed as if a plan was unfolding to produce failed or no elections in 2007.

However, Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP was declared winner with 69.82 per cent followed by Mohammadu Buhari of the ANPP with 18.7

per cent and Atiku Abubakar of Action Congress who scored 7.47 per cent. The beauty of previous elections was that at least, voting was held and the outcome manipulated, but in the case of 2007, it was mostly a case of no voting at all. In most places, Nigerians came out to vote but were unable to do so either because there were no Electoral Officers or in places where they were found, there were no voting materials.

Obasi (2009:22) said that there were no elections as both local and international observer groups were in consensus on the fact that it was just a sham and the worst election so far on the face of the earth under a president who boasted that “the election is a do or die affair”. It is ‘the worst conducted anywhere in the world in recent times’ (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

“The 2007 General Elections belong in the genre of undemocratic elections. Indeed, the elections of April 2007, were or did not satisfy the minimum conditions of democracy” (Yaqub, 2008:2). Consequently, the result of the 2007 and 2011 elections were seriously challenged at various levels of the courts led by Buhari and Abubakar of the ANPP and the AC respectively, Civil Societies Organizations, Labour and Trade Unions and students. A similar scenario has played out in the 2023 elections with Atiku Abubakar of the PDP and Peter Obi of the Labour Party both challenging the election of Bola Tinubu of the APC. International Observers equally faulted several aspects of the electoral process,

While it could be said that Nigeria is not so fortunate in electoral matters, it could not be said that free and fair elections are not possible in the country especially when the major stakeholder in that direction, the political parties, redefine their roles and play according to the rules of the game.

Causes of Party Politics and Contentious Elections in Nigeria

It requires but a superfluous acquaintance with history to accept the fact that the peculiarity of Nigerian political parties is consequent on the odd Nigerian political terrain where a litany of factors have played host to the undemocratic behaviours of political parties at elections. A perusal of these factors is as interesting as they are revealing.

Lack of internal democracy in the parties is to a great extent responsible for their inability to understand the need for democracy in the larger Nigerian society, after all, no one gives what he does not have. The shameful and undemocratic way these parties handle their internal matters show that their respect for democratic principles is only on paper. One cannot forget in a hurry the problems created by the inability of the parties to hold credible primaries to choose candidates for elections.

For example, the choice of PDP's Obasanjo in 1999 and the nearly handpicked method of President Obasanjo on the choice of Yar'Adua in spite of opposition from within the PDP in 2007. The choice of Charles Soludo (PDP), Uche Ekwunife (PPA), Andy Ubah (LP) etc in the 2010 Anambra State gubernatorial election runs short of minimal democratic expectations. The implication of this is that when the candidate is not popular or imposed, the party and the imposers strive to use whatever means possible to secure victory for him. When other parties do same, the polity is heated up and electoral fraud becomes the only way where the smarter fraudster wins.

Closely related to the above is the problem of intra-party rivalries in which individual party power brokers within the parties are at loggerheads especially at the choice of party candidates. Ibrahim (2006) notes that their recent study show that the country's four leading political parties were enmeshed in internal crisis with a high

level of violence.

As 2007 approached, assassinations of party leaders started. Between June and August 2006, three gubernatorial candidates were assassinated no thanks to the fact that many political parties were operated by political "godfathers", who used money and violence to decide party nominations and campaign outcomes, and when candidates tried to steer an independent course, they used their preferred instruments to deal with them. As a result, they raised the level of electoral violence and made free and fair elections difficult (Ibrahim 2007).

The Babalakin Commission on the 1983 elections substantiates this when it noted in its report that "...for the most part, political parties are dominated by men of influence who see funding of political parties as an investment that must yield rich dividends" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1986: 348).

One cannot forget in a hurry, the abduction of former Anambra state Governor, Dr. Chris Ngige by his purported godfather, Chris Ubah, in 2004 as a result of internal squabbles between them based on the refusal of the former to respect the agreement that bankrolled his emergence as PDP candidate and the gubernatorial race that led to his Governorship.

No doubt, Nigerian political parties dangle on the ever slippery corridors of ideological deficiency. Ideology streamlines party's political beliefs and provides the benchmark for their expected behavior in any given circumstance. They are engulfed in the ideological confusion of mixed economy, social democratic, capitalist, welfarist, liberalist, socialist etc without the basic tenet of these in their actions before, during and after elections. This makes it difficult for any clear cut differences to be established between the existing

political parties in Nigeria. Without proper ideological definitions, parties behave beyond their bounds which could be conflict generating.

Membership of Nigerian political parties runs short of general expectations because parties are meant to have people of like minds convinced of a particular way to acquire and manage state power. The parties are a conglomeration of people of varied backgrounds, ideological orientations (for those who have them at all) and conviction on how to capture and use power. Some do not even have any idea of these at all. Moreover, many party members share very little in common in terms of ideas and beliefs which explain the varied ways members go their different ways in matters that should be of collective importance such as elections. They belong to the parties either because their kinsmen are involved or that they believe that more money would be made from them during and after elections. Thus, it is difficult to predict or explain the logic of party's line of action in any given situation.

It is interesting to note too that there is no party in Nigeria with a clear cut manifesto for the Nigerian people. Even those, like the PDP, which claim to have one are not proud to present such to the public with the necessary pride and conviction such requires. For example, "the PDP and the APP were status quo parties when they were formed. They did not have policy position, besides wanting to occupy the vacant positions at all levels of the federation in 1999 (Omoruyi, 2001).

The Seven Point Agenda of the PDP's Umaru Yar'Adua cannot explain in concrete terms how such laudable plans could be achieved. The ineffectiveness of the agenda may not be divorced from this flaw.

In addition, to draw clear-cut distinctions between the parties, are really difficult. It should be noted that some time ago, a chieftain of the

AD and former presidential candidate of ANPP, Olu Falae, boasted that he personally drafted the manifestoes of the PDP and AD. During the Obasanjo regime, the AD once accused the president of stealing its programme in the area of poverty alleviation scheme which generated unnecessary tension. This type of clash can inject desperation in the life of political parties as they relate to one another during and after elections.

The practice of winner takes all in Nigerian politics is not healthy to peaceful elections in the country. Traditionally, political positions and the “spoils of office” are shared to the members of the party that won elections and the losing parties are seldom considered. This is not helped by the fact that Nigeria is a country where politics is regarded as full time business and serious investment which must not be compromised. This trend heats up the electoral terrain as each party and its members strategize to make it at elections at all costs. It is even a maxim in Nigerian politics today that one should do whatever is possible to win and “let the opposition go to court”.

That was exactly the situation in 2007 when the ruling PDP fooled Nigerians with its so called elections. The situation is compounded by the non-workability of coalition politics in the country; all efforts in this direction proved abortive. In the First Republic, the NNA had structural difficulties; in the Second Republic, the 'NPP/NPN Accord' suffered great set back rooted in distrust while the Fourth Republic's 'Government of National Unity' has lost its bearing thereby making it difficult for the opposition parties to feel any sense of belonging in the system. When this happens, agitations by the opposition will definitely continue as the ruling party tries to consolidate.

The Challenges and Effects of Party Politics on Democratic Governance in Nigeria

It is saddening to note that instead of finding ways of contributing to the development of democracy in the country, the political class have been known to constitute nuances that worsen democratic governance in the nation. Since 29 May 1999, when the fourth republic took off in Nigeria, politicians have been unable to bring reasonably good governance to the country as expected.

These are reflected in poor standard of living, huge unemployment, poor power supply, poor security, spiraling inflation, poor medical facilities, poor standard of educational facilities, and other social infrastructures. The challenge of service delivery, infrastructural deficits, and good quality of life for the citizenry among others, demonstrate that the expected democratic benefits have not been delivered (Ibietan & Ajayi, 2015).

Several factors constitute challenges to democratic practice and the effects of party politics to democratic governance in Nigeria. Different scholars (such as Chinedu 2022, Adamu 2015, Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013, amongst others) highlighted: Godfatherism, tribalism, ethnicity, nepotism, sectionalism among others as barriers to achieving democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

This study adds to the discourse by asserting that the political environment is not conducive for electoral officers to do their job. Electoral officers who are supposed to be neutral, have been found culpable to have compromised their neutral positions during elections for personal aggrandizements. Some electoral officers have also alleged threat to life and intimidation by politicians who want to get hold of power by any means necessary.

Asides the above, Obah-Akpowoghaha (2013) argued that political

primaries are conducted based on selection and not election; emergence of candidate are usually through imposition by political godfathers or unfair processes, a reality which is often inconsistent with the party's constitution, causing some party members to defect to other parties. The years 2007, 2013, 2014, and 2019 for instance, witnessed increased cross-carpeting of politicians from one party to another due to internal party conflicts and imposition of candidates.

In 2013, seven aggrieved PDP governors formed a splinter group known as N-PDP; and they later decamped to the APC. In 2014, former governor of Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau decamped from APC to PDP. In Sokoto state, former governor of the state, Attahiru Bafarawa also decamped from APC to PDP in 2014. Atiku Abubakar, a former Vice president, also decamped from PDP to APC, and the list is endless.

Towards the 2019 general election, there was also massive decamping of some governors and members of the national assembly from the APC to PDP and vice-versa. A comprehensive detail on political cross-carpeting of politicians in Nigeria has been documented by Chinweuba, G. E. (2019). Intra-party conflicts affects governance and distracts the government in power. It leaves little room for quality governance as attention would be given to resolving party issues rather than focusing on the provision of quality projects and better living conditions for citizens.

Furthermore, those that emerge from lopsided primaries (candidate imposition) after winning elections only seek to advance their self-centered interests and those of their godfathers, families, tribes, and loyalists further entrenching nepotism and polarizing the state. In such a situation, it becomes difficult to initiate policies and projects that are devoid of sentiments based on party affiliations, kinship, or loyalty at the detriment of the generality of the people. Justifying this

line of argument, Osabiya, (2015) asserts that political appointees divert funds meant for the public to their private coffers and give preferences and unmerited favor to sponsors, godfathers' friends and families at the expense of the masses.

According to (Adamu, 2015), the problem of greed, corruption, and absence of internal democracy among party elites in Nigeria has made politicians not to have focus. Chinedu (2022) asserts that the politics of godfatherism makes politicians turn their attention from sustainable development to satisfying the whims and caprices of their political godfathers.

This condition only deepens the state of undemocratic practices in Nigeria and further impoverishes the masses. We have seen this play out many times in governance. For instance, if a governor assumes office, usually one of his first line of action would be to fire all those appointed by his predecessor, and sometimes retract actions taken by his predecessor. This is not because the former appointees were unqualified, or the actions put in place were unproductive; it is simply to reward his cronies and discredit his predecessor especially if the latter is from a different political party. With such reality, it becomes difficult to get objective actions and policies that are people-centered rather than self-centeredness.

Additionally, the process these candidates emerge, leaves little room for accountability to the people as they owe their allegiance to their political sponsors. Lack of accountability and transparency breeds corruption and this is the story of governance in Nigeria. For instance, the over two decades of democracy has witnessed years of looting public treasury at the local, state and national levels of government. Out of 36 state governors from 1999-2019, 21 have been indicted for looting their state treasuries (Nnochiri, 2019).

Chinweuba, (2019) argues that "Governance in Nigeria is replete with sentiments, incoherent and non-inclusive policies, government lip-service, corruption, tribal and party consciousness". Because candidates who emerge owe no allegiance to the people, their nonchalance and high handedness in governance reflect its disregard for service to the people manifested in neglect for provision of quality education, welfare of citizens, and outright disregard of the rule of law, amongst others. Those in positions of authority have remained indifferent to the plight of the poor, the marginalized and unemployed. Instead, they are obsessed with siphoning the fortunes of the country, hence social injustice, corruption; poverty and insecurity have brought untold hardship to the people.

The desired national transformation of the country is still a mirage despite the abundance of human and material resources, which should have ordinarily translated into a buoyant life for the citizenry. The greatest threat to democracy and good governance in Nigeria has thus been party politics hinged on imposition of candidtaes, nepotism, and monetization of the process which breeds hostile political environment for national development (Odo, 2015).

Another challenge to democratic practice and governance in Nigeria as identified by Olu-Adeyemi (2020) is the electoral system. It is known from history that turbulent elections have been a source of political crisis in Nigeria and controversies surrounding elections have serious potential to undermine the legitimacy and stability of democracy. The late president Umar Musa Yar'Adua acknowledged the need for reform of the Nigerian electoral system and made it an integral part of his seven-point agenda. Goodluck Jonathan, a former president, recently criticized the National Assembly by asking that the contentious Section 84 of the new Electoral Act be removed (Vanguard, 2022). This serves as a reminder of some of the challenges to Nigerian democracy.

Reforming the Sequence of Ethno-Regional Party Formation

It is instructive that while historical evidence from the first and second republics revealed that political parties were either formed based on ethno regional affiliations or invariably evolved into regional based parties, evidence from that era also showed ongoing attempts to forge party alliances and build coalition of like minds across regional lines which if not truncated by military intervention would have culminated in the formation of two broad based and dominant political parties (Akinola 2014).

Perceptive and progressive politicians realized early enough the importance of discarding parochial platforms and reaching out beyond narrow confines, but their efforts never really bore fruitful dividends. In the first republic, the second federal elections conducted in 1964 were contested between two broad coalitions of parties. The opposition parties that came together to form the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) comprised principally of the Action Group party (AG), the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC).

While the ruling party, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) formed an alliance with the breakaway faction of the Action Group that had merged with the western wing of the (NCNC) to form a new party known as the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), the coming together of these parties with the ruling NPC resulted in the formation of the Nigeria National Alliance (NNA). It was these two broad political parties that contested the 1964 federal election, though the opposition party boycotted the election in many significant areas. The controversy arising from the conduct of that election coupled with a potpourri of other events culminated in the

January 1966 coup (Ige 1995; Akinola 2014).

The effort at evolving broader and national political platforms was repeated in the second republic (1979-1983) when the National party of Nigeria emerged as the dominant party following the 1979 general election. This scenario compelled the self-styled progressive politicians to attempt to forge an alternative political platform via the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) which comprised of the Unity Party of Nigeria, (UPN), the Nigeria's Peoples Party (NPP) the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP). The alliance however collapsed in its formative stage because of rivalry as members were unable to agree on a common candidate for the 1983 presidential election. According to Richard Joseph:

Although the UPN was actively engaged in the meetings of the “progressive governors” and although it participated in the negotiations which led to the creation of the Progressive People's Alliance (PPA) in March 1982, it did not enter into the subsequent arrangement to have a new party, the Progressive People's Party (PPP) (Joseph 1999, 167).

In the aborted third republic, two political parties were decreed into existence by military fiat. The parties were certainly not as ideologically coherent as their label ostensibly gave the impression, but the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was without doubt closer to progressivism on the ideological spectrum than its opponent, the National Republican Convention (NRC). The experiment collapsed with the annulment of the 1993 presidential election. The country however, faced a choice between a broadly conservative party and a roughly progressive party in that election (Bourne 2016).

At the start of the current democratic dispensation in 1999, there was an alliance between the All People's Party (APP) and the Alliance for

Democracy (AD) which succeeded in fielding a joint presidential flag bearer of the APP/AD alliance against Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP in the February 27th 1999 presidential election (Simbine 2002). It is the nucleus and core of the groups that midwifed the 1999 alliance between the APP and the AD that eventually merged with other splinter groups to form the All Progressive Congress Party (APC) in 2013.

The democratic and political evolution of the country since independence thus partly depicts attempts and movements towards the formation of a two-party system. The uninterrupted spell of democracy since 1999 thus provided the opportunity to evolve and consummate two dominant parties to serve the course of democratic consolidation and national integration. The formation of the APC is perhaps a realization of the political truism that regional and sectional political parties have only served as platforms for the promotion of ethnic chauvinism and regional rivalries and have become unfashionable. The two dominant political parties, the APC and the PDP today boast of a crosscutting membership and support base all over the country thereby breaking the cycle of regionally based political parties.

The birth of the new party engendered a national debate on the character of the leading members and the promoters of the party and their claim to progressive credentials. While a segment of the commentators and analysts dismissed the merger as simply an alliance of frustrated and aggrieved politicians, others welcomed the emergence of the party arguing that a strong and competitive two-party system can only serve as a sinew to the nation's democracy (Thisday 2013).

While it may be true that the country's democracy will be better served by two strong parties, what Nigeria does not need are two parties

whose only difference is their nomenclature, such that if any political actors loses out in the power calculus in either of the two leading parties, they quickly defect to the rival party in the quest for power. This appears to be the case at present with politicians moving in different directions depending on the power equation and permutations at every round of elections. The APC is certainly not exactly the immaculate progressive party as their name portrays; it is at best, a motley crowd of discernible elements of both progressivism and conservatism.

The defeat of the PDP in the general elections (2015, 2019 and 2023), the emergence of a third force, (Labour Party) and the alternation of power have presented a chance to deepen and consolidate democracy in Nigeria. It is also an opportunity for reformists to insist on internal reforms so as to transform the party politics (Adeniyi 2017; Abdullahi 2017)

Conclusion

From the perspective of group theory, it was vividly observed that the mechanism for candidate's emergence in Nigeria is to a great extent, exclusive of the input of the masses. This no doubt has led to the recycling of political actors, and when new candidates emerge, they are merely representing the interest of a political group (godfathers) thereby maintaining the status-quo of social relations between political elites and the people.

This dysfunctional social relation with regards to governance could be checked if political leaders are recruited through an open process that is inclined towards the masses. This could be achieved in an environment of matured political culture where there are free and fair elections, and the political actors view themselves as public servants rather than masters. For this to be achieved, the political system must be de-monetized, political education enhanced through functional

education, and the economy well-improved so that people do not get into politics because of idleness or viewing it as a quick means for wealth acquisition.

Since political parties constitute functional institutions for political recruitment in a democracy, it is important to accentuate that the functions, purpose, and structures of political parties should be well defined and deeply rooted in the people with the hope of improving the system. This implies that political parties must effectively perform the function of political education of its members as well as building and sustaining internal democracy under the supervision of an independent electoral body which would aid and reflect stable interparty activities. This, no doubt would provide the foundation for an enduring democracy that would be appreciated by all and sundry.

Politics in Nigeria is very attractive in terms of incentives, and this is a major reason many politicians are desperate to take up positions. If politics is made less attractive and politicians are paid much less, it might discourage many from engaging in illicit vices to attain power. There is therefore the urgent need to reform political financing. The Nigeria political system needs to be overhauled because where incumbency, godfatherism, electoral fraud and other barriers are major determinants of electoral outcomes in Nigeria, it will be difficult to make progress as a nation.

First Legislative Council Members

The first general elections in Nigeria on 20th September, 1923.



Kwamina Ata-Amonu
Independent Party



Joseph Egerton Shyngle
Nigerian National Democratic
Party (NNDP)



Eric Moore
Nigerian National Democratic
Party (NNDP)



Crispin Curtis Adeniyi-Jones
Nigerian National Democratic
Party (NNDP)

Chapter Three

Political Economy of Political Parties in Nigeria

- Ambrose Ihekwoaba Egwim, Ph.D -

Introduction

This chapter studied the evolution of the Nigerian economic system, how the development of political parties and ideologies sustained the colonial capitalist economy and governance model. Nigeria's economic reform initiatives had been a history of Western initiatives, together with policies emanating from their institutional cohorts (International Monetary Fund {IMF}, World Bank, etc.) for good or bad, which have increased rather than decreased poverty in the country. The foreign aid the major Western global economic institutions provided has profoundly influenced Nigerian societies' economic and social patterns, as has the end of the Cold War.

From the independence era in Nigeria (the 1960s) to the current Fourth Republic (1999), the ideological transformation of political parties has reinforced the capitalist economy. The argument is that an intimate relationship exists between the developments of Nigerian parties' ideologies and the Nigerian economic system.

According to Hedlund and Lundahl (1989), "the explicit use of ideology can shape an economic system. Ideology is one of the determinants of the economic system, a driving force in the government's economic policy-making. To influence the economic

system, an ideological party has to be in power and not act at the fringes of power. Therefore, the nature and ideologies of parties in power shape the country's economic system. The political parties that have been in power in Nigeria since its inception have helped maintain the status quo - improving the colonial capitalist economy and governance model."

Ideological Parties, Government Policies and the Economy

Within pre-independence, independence and, to a large extent, the Second Republic, Nigerian political parties were more ideological due to the influence of communism, generating a welfare state. Socialism and capitalism formed the prism through which parties see, define, and provide solutions to society's challenges.

According to Horowitz (2004:205), "Faced with communism, capitalism/liberalism unconsciously shifted its strategies." In the current dispensation, the 21st century post-Cold War global dominance of neo-liberal ideology has led to the ideological centre's convergence. There is a consensus on the political agenda and a convergence of commitment to normative values and ideas by the political class, which is distinctively neoliberal, projecting a consolidation of the capitalist economy or market society.

In the 1960s independence era, political parties like NPC (Northern Peoples Congress), AG (Action Group), and NCNC (National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon) had a romance with their time's prevailing ideologies - socialism and capitalism, which bifurcated the world. According to Joseph (1978), "the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was a conservative regional party; the original National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) appeared centrist, while both the Action Group (AG) and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) were social welfarist/leftist.

In concrete policy terms, the parties led by Awolowo in the First and Second Republics - the Action Group (AG) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), respectively, were committed to the provision of free education, free health care, full employment, rural integration, and development as well as a massive expansion of infrastructure. The Russian Revolution of 1917 divided socialism into revolutionary or Russian socialism and evolutionary /democratic socialism. In democratic socialism, the power to carry through socialist reforms is secured through the democratic process of elections, not by revolution. These different socialist brands existed within the AG. The dialogue between these brands eventually led to the adoption of Democratic Socialism by the AG (Joseph 1978).

A socialist system of government is based on social justice, equity, equitable distribution of wealth, and equality in universal access to opportunities and essential social services. It focuses on community ownership of public resources rather than concentrating any percentage within the private sector. Awolowo and his parties never controlled the centre. The more conservative-inclined parties (in the sense of retaining the colonial economic legacies), such as the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) and the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the parties in power at the centre in the first and second republics were less prone to utilize state resources to provide social welfare services.

They instead preferred policies that would help cultivate a viable business class and thriving private sector capable of spurring economic growth, believing that the masses would ultimately benefit from the trickle-down effects of such policies. This laid the foundation of the economic ideology of the Nigerian state. From the independence era to the current Fourth Republic, the ideological transformation of political parties that have been in power in Nigeria shows liberal/neoliberal, capitalist changing dynamics.

The First Republic politicians were far from perfect but were generally well-educated, principled, and motivated by ideals (Adebajo, 2020). Ideological differences often led to a merger or coalition collapse in the First Republic, but the conservatives always had their ways to power, not the radicals. An example was the NPC/NCNC independence coalition that collapsed in 1964, according to Ojo (2010:344):

Even though the NPC-NCNC alliance was generally expected, it was strange: it brought together two political parties with diametrically opposed ideologies, worldviews, structures, and programmes... The ideology and orientation of the alliance partners were diametrically opposed to each other; the most important reason that brought them together was their common hostility to the AG.

Ojukwu (1989: 28 in Ojo, 2010:345), on the ideological incompatibility of the 1960 coalition between the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), notes: "...the departing imperialists handed over the country to a committee of incompatibles, composed of conservatives on the one hand and pan Nigeria nationalists and petit-bourgeois radical socialists on the other. From the point of view of party ideologies, the federal linkage of the NPC and the NCNC was imperfect. ...

The coalition of quasi-feudalistic and conservative NPC and the more radical-progressive NCNC... was an unholy alliance" (Akindele and Varma. 1974:384). For many observers, it was surprising that the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) could ally with the NPC instead of the Action Group (AG), which was closer to its ideological leaning. "like the Action Group, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens adopted the ideology of pragmatic socialism, but it opposed

nationalization to implementing it.

The Northern Peoples Congress did not espouse any definite ideology except preserving northern interests" (Ayoade 1985:187). Therefore, the NCNC could not strike an alliance with the NPC based on the similarity of ideologies. Principle and ideology had no place in forming the alliance but controlling the centre. The status quo regarding the economy - improving the colonial capitalist economy and governance model was sustained.

Even when it lost out at the centre, ideological parties remained relevant to the region. This was Awolowo's case and his Action Group in the Western region. The then-existing political parties saw the 1959 independence general elections as a fight of who controls the centre, which was not possible in the poll because the parties were ethnic and regional based. This led to a coalition of strange political parties ideologically to form a government at the centre.

By definition, ethnic parties cannot expand significantly beyond their ethnic electoral base; thus, they cannot pursue hegemony. The force to aggregate at the centre becomes tremendous as power consistently through the dominant oil economy shifts to the federal government. Political parties started de-emphasizing ideology to generate wider support to control the centre.

This heralded the birth of national parties starting from the NPN of the Second Republic, 1979-1983 which became more pronounced since the Fourth Republic kicked off in 1999. The de-emphasis on ideology to form a coalition or generate wider electoral support by political parties helped sustain the colonial capitalist economy as it marked the absence of radical political parties.

Nigeria emerged from the Civil War (1966-1970) as a much stronger

state due mainly to federal power growth, enhanced by the significant increase in the Federal Government's revenues, particularly from petroleum—the federating states' miniaturization from 4 Regions to 12 federated states in 1967.

Then, 19 in 1976, 21 in 1987, 30 in 1991, and 36 in 1996, enhanced the central government's power and political parties' appetite to control it. This has a history of pushing regional elites and political parties into a series of coalitions with wider interest aggregation to control the centre. On the other hand, opposition parties, large but fragmented, organized to displace the ruling party at the centre, at one time or the other, prompting a two-party system. As a means of capturing power at the centre, umbrella parties – “catch-all parties” emerged in the 21st century with the reduction in competing ideologies of the 1960s. The major parties are ideologically ambiguous in that they are umbrella organizations that can accommodate people representing a broad spectrum of interests. What seems common in the “catch-all parties” thesis is the idea that ideological content is downgraded by candidates to be electable by the majority of the voters by holding up issues that are scarcely liable to meet resistance in the community (Heinz and Hornig, 2012; Katz and Mair 1995; Wolinetz 2002; Koole 1996).

The concept of catch-all parties brings about the idea of a basic consensus around issues and problems. “Nigerians may have agreed on building a capitalist economy” (Egwim, 2022). The primary (if not sole) purpose of catch-all parties is to maximize votes, win elections and govern. Their eclectic policy orientations shift with the public mood to expand their electoral appeal to various groups. In Nigeria today, alliances and mergers of political parties are mainly motivated by political expediency.

The desire on the part of individuals, ethnic and other social groups to

widen their support to control the centre and thereby have unhindered access to what they regard as their share of the so-called "national cake." Political power acquisition is generally seen as the best form of insurance against domination by other ethnic groups.

Catch-All Strategy and the Economy

When the presidential system of government was introduced in 1979, the ruling political party, National Party of Nigeria (NPN), adopted a purely catch-all strategy for the first time in Nigerian politics. When they fell short of a comfortable majority to control the centre, the party entered into a working agreement with the NPP. When the NPN tried to maintain control of the centre through massively rigged elections, self-styled progressive politicians attempted to forge an alternative political party via the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) in 1983. Nigeria Peoples Party, a faction of the Peoples Redemption Party, and the Great Nigeria Peoples Party allied to contest the general election. The pattern of electoral politics that has emerged is one in which one party is trying to maintain dominance. The opposition, on the other hand, tries to merge to challenge it.

Concerning the ideological left, Joseph (1978:82) argues that the Second Republic's preparation and party registration methods that sanctioned national spread, neutralized the Nigerian left.

The prospects for radical social progress in the electoral success were left to the PRP and UPN against the other three centre-right parties, the GNPP, NPP, and NPN. The ruling NPN was seen as a proper conservative party. Its fundamental objective was to improve the capitalist economy and governance model emerging under the First Republic (Joseph, 1978:82).

According to Joseph (1978:79), "during the first stage (1975-76) in which the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) was preparing the

draft constitution, it was clear that the mixed-economy advocates had prevailed against the socialists." In that regard, Ujo (2000:102) noted, "The postcolonial political and constitutional history of Nigeria gave rise to several settled issues of governance and socioeconomic organization: the mixed economy, federalism, presidential system of government, republicanism, the centrality of Africa in the country's foreign policy and the non-aligned foreign policy." These, as expected, influenced the dynamics of ideologies and policies of political parties between 1979 and 1983 within the larger capitalist development model.

The military imposed ideology of "a little to the left" and the other "a little to the right" in the "aborted" Third Republic did not last long for a meaningful analysis. In the military-guided Third Republic, two national parties were established by decree - the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). They were considered distinct ideologically, one "a little to the left" and the other "a little to the right," respectively. The military imposed the said ideology to represent ideological influences at that time.

The politicians were to choose between any of the two parties depending on their ideological leanings or stay out of politics; in other words, the parties' ideological leaning was mere cosmetic. The Third Republic is regarded in the literature as "aborted", with the annulled June 12, 1993, presidential election presumed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola of the SDP.

In contemporary Nigeria (the Fourth Republic starting from 1999), while the principle of non-alignment has been made irrelevant regarding globalization's prevailing realities, the mixed economy's consensus has shifted to neo-liberalism owing to the collapse of communism and the absence of any serious contemporary alternative to the market economy. The Fourth Republic initiated through the

1999 Constitution, for its first elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recognized only three political parties – the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP), and the Action for Democracy (AD).

Following Supreme Court judgments, conditions for the registration of political parties were liberalized. Subsequently, Nigeria's political space witnessed an unprecedented opening, with sixty-three (63) registered political parties emerging by April 2011. During the buildup and the 2015 general election, Nigerian party politics witnessed a two-dominant party system. Only two parties have a reasonable chance of winning office in the national elections, the PDP and the APC, with the umbrella and bounded broom logo representing the catch-all strategy with consensus around neoliberal ideology and policies—the era of the consolidation of capitalism.

The Dominance of Neoliberalism and Political Parties in the Fourth Republic

Liberal/capitalist ideology promotes competitive individualism, private property, limited government and free-market. Neoliberalism is a term that describes the worldwide spread of an economic model emphasizing free markets and free trade, decreased governmental regulation, privatization of government-owned enterprises, reduced government spending, and lowered barriers to international trade and investment.

According to Steger (2002:8-9), the guiding principles of neoliberalism include “the primacy of economic growth, the importance of free trade to stimulate growth, the unrestricted free market, individual choice, the reduction of government regulation, and the advocacy of an evolutionary model of social development anchored in the Western experience and applicable to the entire world. Internalizing the deregulation of markets, the liberalization of

trade, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises” (Steger, 2005:14). The driving idea behind globalization is free-market capitalism - the more you let market forces rule and open your economy to free trade and competition, the more efficient your economy will be.

Since the Babangida regime (1985-1993), there has been increasing national consensus on building an economy driven by the private sector, not the government, to curb corruption, promote democracy, and have a minimal government that will ensure good governance and efficiency. Provision of an enabling environment for all and sundry to realize their full potential through infrastructure such as power, roads, railways, waterways and water for irrigation and industry, human capital development - education, healthcare delivery, skills acquisition, capacity building, etc. An economy led by the private sector, downsizing the public sector, privatization, and cost recovery, anti-corruption drive intended to block leakages, reduce wastages, and significantly reduce governance costs (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) 2004; The Transformation Agenda 2011-2015; Yar'Adua's 7-Point Agenda 2007). According to Soludo (2015; 2013):

... The foundation for our current market economy in Nigeria was laid by the (Babangida) regime liberalization of markets, including market-determined exchange rate, private sector-led economy including licensing of private banks and insurance, deregulation, privatization of public enterprises under TCPC, etc. Just abolishing the import licensing regime was a fundamental policy revolution. Despite the criticisms, these policy thrusts have remained the pillars of our deepening market economy

The deployment of neoliberalism as an ideology in the last three

decades, aided by international lending institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization WTO, and other Western finance lending institutions, tremendously impacted political party ideologies in developing countries.

These previously keyed into the IMF policies: Shagari administration (1979-1983) "Economic Stabilization Act" April 1982, culminated in General Ibrahim Babangida's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), June 27, 1986. But as the neo-liberal ideology gained hegemony with the collapse of communism, political elites and political parties' emphases shifted to principles to ensure veritable ground for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Egwim, 2018c).

In that regard, President Umaru Musa Yar' Adua (May 29 2007) notes that "over the past eight years, Nigerians have reached a national consensus in at least four areas: to deepen democracy and the rule of law; build an economy driven primarily by the private sector, not government; display zero tolerance for corruption in all its forms, and, finally, restructure and staff government to ensure efficiency and good governance" (Inaugural Address of Umaru Musa Yar' Adua May 29 2007).

Since 1999, the return to democratic rule under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and subsequently the All Progressive Congress (APC), government policies have bestowed more trust in private sector participation. Privatization, deregulation, commercialization, liberalization, trade, globalization, transparency, and anti-corruption have been government policies' gamut. The economic policies revolve around creating a market economy, designing and maintaining a political and legal framework suitable for a market-led economy, upscaling human resource base for the market economy to survive and thrive, transparency, accountability,

and the rule of law to sustain the market economy.

Deregulation is the allocation of resources by market forces or price determination by interplaying demand and supply, contrary to a controlled and "command" economy where the resources allocation mechanism is a government responsibility. Deregulation means opening up the industrial sector for private investors to participate in activities, unlike the situation where only the government, through its agents, determines how much to produce and what price to sell. Privatization and commercialization are products of deregulation.

Privatization means downsizing the state's role in the economic sector to allow private-sector-led growth and development, thus privatizing state-owned industries. In contrast, commercialization means introducing a profit motive in running the enterprises. The liberalization of trade entails the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to imported goods. "Regulations that discriminate against foreign investments must also be eliminated" (Daily Champion July 11, 2000:24).

As part of the free market package, the Nigerian currency, considered overvalued, has been floated under the Tinubu APC led government to achieve a real exchange rate in the international market. Subsidies on petroleum products have been removed; the rationale is that providing this and other subsidies was one way the state interfered with free market operation. In particular, removing the petroleum subsidy is argued to have released government revenue previously tied up in the subsidy, earned more revenue for the government through increased petroleum product exportation, and reduced waste in petroleum products' domestic consumption.

The rationale for privatization is that the state's excessive intervention in the economy caused price and market distortion,

inefficient allocation of resources, and stagnation. The ensuing free interplay of market forces was expected to reduce waste, generate productive forces, and foster efficiency and growth. Through competition, it is believed that prices will fall in the long run since buyers will have alternatives.

The proponents of these neoliberal-driven policies describe it as a step in the right direction and economic approach to addressing the structural problems in the Nigerian economy. These have not mitigated the inherent difficulties with deregulation, commercialization and privatization; the social outcome means the suffering of the masses.

The ruling political parties have continued to project capitalist economic theory or market society. Capitalist economic theory posits that self-seeking is good. In seeking profit, men also serve the public interest. If people's propensity for self-seeking is allowed to be acted out, efficiency will be achieved in both production and resource allocation. The creed's political manifestation is that the government, which governs the least, governs best. The political ideology of capitalism - liberal democracy, sees the state's role as the imposition and maintenance of order. It denounces the welfare state and opposes state intervention and control of economic activities. Neo-liberalism is a contemporary version of classical liberalism that seeks to restore laissez-faire individualism (Gaubu (1981: 27).

Major and minor political parties manifestoes, legislation, and core campaign promises focus on neoliberalism (Egwim, 2022; Egwim, 2018a; Egwim, 2018b). In the 2019 presidential election, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, insisted on privatizing the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and electricity if elected president. Despite not being part of the party's campaign promises, the All Progressives

Congress (APC) deregulated the downstream sector and electricity tariff after winning the election (Egwim, 2022). The prevailing neoliberal situation has softened the hard Labour (Nigerian Labour Congress - NLC) stance against naira devaluation and fuel subsidy elimination. The labour movement, especially their organized forces in the trade unions, the student movement, and pockets of radical socialist groups, were known for popular resistance to neoliberal policies. Promoting radical alternatives in Nigerian politics has been closely tied to the trade union movement and some active socialist thinkers on the university campuses among the lecturers and students.

Petroleum subsidy removal so far has proved the most challenging condition to be implemented by the government of Nigeria, as it has encountered public resistance on several occasions. The response from the Labor union to the fuel subsidy removal in September 2020 was different. It was Festus Keyamo, former Minister of Labour and Employment, who tweeted two minutes after the resolution of the threat of a strike by labour:

FG & LABOUR reached an agreement at 2:53 a.m. Deregulation to stay as Govt rolls out palliatives for labour; Electricity tariffs suspended by Govt for two weeks with a joint committee headed by @fkeyamo to examine the justification for the new policy. Strike suspended (in Ogunyinka, 2020).

The labour union has sold their socialist perspectives for palliatives. The liberal, neoliberal, capitalist economy has been solidified. In February 2020, the government raised Value Added Tax (VAT) to 7.5% from 5% to boost tax revenues, seen as among the lowest in the World (Reuters, 2020). Petrol went from N145/litre to N162/litre (then N620/litre in October 2023), with the electricity tariff going

from about N30.23 per kWh to about N62.33 per kWh in the first week of September 2020.

The 1st January 2012 fuel subsidy removal by President Goodluck Jonathan's PDP federal government led to the labour unions' protests and strike. The Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) called for Occupy Nigeria strike in 2012 over the increase in petrol pump prices in furtherance of the government deregulation policies. In May 2016, under the Buhari APC government, the pump price of petrol increased to N145 per litre, up from N87 when the previous government of Goodluck Jonathan left office. By September 2, 2020, it reached N162 and by October 2023, N620/litre marketers' price without protest.

The economic, political and religious class base of Nigerians is now neoliberal. The dominant economic perspective of the political parties' leaders is the market-led economy - an economy led by the private sector, downsizing the public sector, privatization, and cost recovery. "The political class has bought into the tenets of neoliberalism even though its political party machinery functions without any well-articulated stand to this world view ... it nonetheless constitutes the underpinning philosophical commitment of the dominant political class" (Ichimi, 2014:35). There has been a commitment by the political class in Nigeria to neoliberalism. This preference is reflected in the elite's (political, economic, religious, academic) and the state's attitude, as it is in the manifestoes of the ruling and opposition political parties.

Neoliberalism and Political Elites: Obi LP/Atiku PDP/Tinubu APC 2023

The campaign thrust of Peter Obi, presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), suggests moving Nigeria from a consumption to a production culture that will lift citizens' quality of life. During campaign briefings, he made some pro-business policy promises the

LP government would enact if it won the 2023 presidential election. Obi's political rhetoric is founded on cutting the wasting of the country's resources by frugal expenditure, refocusing the economy on production rather than ostentatious consumerism, and resourceful management and investment in critical economic growth and development sectors. In that line, Obi is astutely neoliberal.

The overall goal of my administration shall be to streamline governance, making it more responsive, transformative, effective, less transactional, efficient, and cost-effective. We will enforce the legal framework protecting foreign investors and their indigenous partners. This is the only way to tamper with monopoly and capital flight ... encourage the private sector to build and operate refineries. ... Remove fuel subsidies, use the resources to support critical areas of production from critical infrastructure to education, and support investment in the refinery (Obi in Ayodele, 2022, Nathaniel, 2022).

Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi (both rooted in PDP) accept the logic of neoliberalism, allowing the market and the private sector a leading role in the economy. There has been no change in Atiku's economic policy since 1999, when he played a crucial role in PDP's pro-market economic reform based on the three guiding principles/economic agenda that is purely neoliberal. Atiku continued to promise to give the private sector a more significant role in the economy by breaking government monopoly in all sectors of the economy, including infrastructure, allowing the market greater leverage in determining the prices to aid in eliminating the frequent price distortions in the country.

There were further promises to break government monopoly in all infrastructural sectors, including the refineries, rail transportation,

and power substations, giving private investors a more prominent role in funding and managing the sectors and repositioning the public sector to focus on its core responsibilities:

...Reaffirm the critical sector of private leadership and greater private sector participation in development. Repositioning the public sector to focus on its core facilitation responsibilities and enabling appropriate legal framework for the rapid economy and social development. Allow the market greater leverage in determining the prices. We shall eliminate the persistent price distortions occasioned by the current interventionist exchange rate management policy. Government interventions, where necessary, will be done responsibly and judiciously (Atiku in iniobong. 2022).

Bola Tinubu promised to lead Nigeria to a new era of economic prosperity, peace, security, and political stability. A plan titled My Vision for Nigeria pledged that Nigeria would be transformed into greatness, the pride of Africa, a role model for all black people worldwide, and respected among all other countries.

To build an economy that will make the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grow quicker annually for the next four years while providing jobs for millions of youths. He also promised to launch a new national industrial policy focused on special intervention to reinvigorate specific strategic industries:

I will focus on stimulating jobs, my top priority as president. I will get Nigeria to work by launching a major public works program, a significant and heavy investment in infrastructure, and value-adding manufacturing and agriculture. My administration will build an efficient, fast-growing, and well-diversified emerging economy with a real

GDP growth averaging 12 per cent annually for the next four years, translating into millions of new jobs during this period (BAT, Bola Ahmed Tinubu manifesto 2022:5).

The social policies of Tinubu are focused on stimulating jobs by launching major public works programmes, a new National Industrial Policy that will focus on special intervention to reinvigorate specific strategic industries, and establishing new industrial growth centres by creating six new Regional Economic development agencies (p.5-7) and starting a social welfare scheme with Direct Cash Payments to about 25 million vulnerable Nigerians (p.18).

The centrepiece of his fiscal and economic policy is to optimize economic growth and employment, portraying neoliberalism. Build an efficient, fast-growing and well-diversified emerging economy with real GDP growth averaging 12% annually. (p.5). "Immediate privatization of the NNPC and compelling exploration companies to list their equity on the Nigerian Stock Exchange" (Pp.12). "There will be no subsidy because the market will be open and transparent. The forces of demand and supply will determine the price of petroleum products (p. 13)":

I will run a lean and efficient Federal Government with zero tolerance for wastefulness, corruption, and inefficiency (BAT, Bola Ahmed Tinubu manifesto 2022:25).

An initial examination of Ahmed Bola Tinubu's proposals shows a more prominent and active government involvement in economic transactions. His former projections majorly tend towards the centre-left economic ideology, as evidenced in his previous write-ups and speeches:

We begin from the premise that the Washington Consensus

and the IMF/Post-Bretton Woods prescriptions for development have served their time and, to a large extent, have not delivered on their promises. There is a need for what has been described as a THIRD PATH - a Pathway between the pure market-driven, neo-liberal socioeconomic policies and the various variants of the command economic models.

That Third Path is particularly important for countries such as ours, with an incredibly large and growing poor, poor infrastructure and weak financial and social institutions (Tinubu 2013 in his address at the British parliament).

The question may be: which of these policies, social democratic interventionist or minimal neoliberal, market-driven policies portrayed, will become dominant in his government? The trend in APC under Buhari's administration reveals the latter (neoliberalism), not necessarily the former (interventionist). Between 2015 and 2023, "Buhari removed electricity subsidies, fertilizer subsidies, Hajj /Christian pilgrim subsidies, diesel subsidies, and kerosene subsidies, among others" (Oyero, 2023).

Tinubu's first actions in office have seen the deregulation of petrol supply and sales, the deregulation of foreign exchange supply and the targeted deregulation of education and its funding through student loans.

Political Parties and Their Survival in the Current Dispensation

The political party seeking to be relevant in recent times must be pragmatic within the larger umbrella of neoliberalism. Opposition disagreement with the mainstream party must key on matters and policies - personalities of their candidates, policy effectiveness, the economy, fight against corruption, insecurity, regionalism/ethnic

politics/power shift, and other critical national issues in mobilizing public support.

Ethno-regional power-shift seems to be a major factor in consolidating political parties in the current dispensation. Parties flourish in relation to this critical national political power-sharing arrangement. Playing ethno-regional cards to control the centre may prove the survival or death of a party.

Obasanjo's scheming the South-West AD (Alliance for Democracy) Governors then (Adebayo Adefarati (Ondo), Lam Adeshina (Oyo), Olusegun Osoba (Ogun), Adebayo Adeniyi (Ekiti), Bola Tinubu (Lagos) and Akande (Osun) into playing the ethnic card to control the centre in the 2003 Presidential election against General Buhari of ANPP, marked the gradual death of AD. According to Abidoye (2022), the crisis generated by the PDP's disrespect for power shift may "end the PDP in Nigeria's political space."

In contrast, the northern elites' stand that power must return to the North in 2015, was a boost to the All Progressive Congress (APC) which presented an option to the northerners who insisted on a power return; rallying around the northern electoral support to battle the ruling party. Part of APC's support in 2015 was derived mainly from the overwhelming agitations by the various groups and individuals in the North who had made it clear that it should be the North's turn in 2015.

The rotational presidency or power shift remained a pivotal issue in the Labour Party's (LP) emergence as a 'third party' in the 2023 dynamics. Parties must change from regional to national parties to be competitive at the centre and control the Federal government, which allocates much of the resources. The catch-all parties are insatiable in their interest aggregation to control the centre. They stifle minor

parties, encouraging defections, appointments to opposition members, coalitions or mergers.

Conclusion

Since independence, the market economy has shaped Nigeria's ruling parties' political and economic ideologies. Now that ideological differences play a diminishing role in the party system and electoral mobilization due to the hegemony of neoliberalism and the collapse of communism, the mainstream parties have conveniently converged ideologically to the centre, sharing capitalist policies. They differ in implementation strategies and candidates' personalities in seeking public support. When in power, the PDP prioritized the economy within the market economy framework. The same logic of the open market economy can be advanced to explain the positions of APC since the party assumed office. Various factions of the Nigerian ruling class have a solid commitment to neo-liberalism across the boundaries of political parties and civil society.

Chapter Four

Ethnicity, Religion and Party Politics in Nigeria

- Chris S. Orngu, Ph.D -

Introduction

Historically, the Nigerian state has evolved through a number of processes, chiefly among which is the colonial scheme. Before the coming of European explorers, followed by the European Christian Missionaries, and then the European traders, the area that later became Nigeria had existed with a motley of autonomous ethnic groups. These autonomous ethnic groups, which later formed the organic composition of the Nigerian state through colonial influence, already had their various religious and cultural orientations, political organizations and economic activities.

Thus, it was colonialism that later created the Nigerian state by bringing the various ethnic groups from their different geographical divides together mainly for administrative convenience and economic consideration in the interest of the colonial administrators and their home governments.

The fusing together of these ethnic groups under one institutionalized geopolitical structure and administrative leadership by the European colonialists transformed and deformed the nature of their inter-group relations. Similarly, the challenge of harmonizing the diverse cultural and indigenous political orientations of the various ethnic groups under a common political and administrative entity was profoundly

enormous.

The challenge became more complex with the introduction of party politics by the colonial government as ethnic rivalries (and later, religious affiliation) became the drivers and triggers of contestations for political and other advantages in a fiercely self-seeking colonial state. This experience, which characterized the dimensions of inter-group relations in colonial Nigeria, has remained a colonial legacy that dictates the patterns of political socialization in modern Nigeria. In concise terms, ethnicity and religion have remained the dominant banners for political socialization among the various ethnic entities in Nigeria during and after colonialism.

Over time, the adherents of the colonial legacy theory have situated the complex challenges of post-colonial African states on the doorsteps of colonialism (Maathai, 2009:25-47). While this perspective still subsists in some conversational domains, the substance of its argument does not sound substantially convincing in modern academic discourses (Orngu, 2018:15).

There is, therefore, the need to explore new perspectives to the analysis and understanding of the multilevel problems of post-colonial African states like Nigeria. The main task of this academic enterprise is, therefore, to engage some innovative intellectual perspectives in explaining the relationship between ethnicity and religion in order to generate a proper understanding of the character of party politics in modern Nigeria. The understanding derivable from these perspectives will then provide the impetus for a fresh orientation in Nigeria's party politics for a well cultured political socialization among the organic components that make up the country. Precisely, the thrust of this work is helmed in an impact analysis bothering essentially on the extent to which ethnicity and

religion have combined to affect the trends and patterns of party politics in modern Nigeria.

Conceptualization

Basically, the progress of this chapter hinges on a tripartite conceptual architecture. Specifically, the three concepts of ethnicity, religion and party politics are central to the analytical thrust in the chapter. It is, therefore, necessary to deliberately contextualize the three concepts in the perspectives that enhance the logic and clarity of the core issues at stake here. Thus, the three concepts identified above are interpreted and applied within the construct of the ongoing discussion.

To begin with, there is a persistent tendency for confusing the concept of ethnicity with tribalism, notwithstanding the fact that there is a thin dividing line between the two. The distinction between the two concepts gravitates from the global dynamics typified in the trajectory of social history. Over time, tribalism has been used by Eurocentric scholars in referring to the backwardness and developmental disabilities of sub-groups in African societies (Orngu, 2014:324).

To validate this notion, it has been argued that the concept of tribalism gained popular usage among colonial anthropologists who sought to interpret both pre-colonial and post-colonial African politics in pejorative terms (Orngu, 2014:323). With time, the concept of tribalism became gradually internalized by Africans themselves in critical discourses on the changing nature of their societies. In modern Nigeria, for instance, the concept of tribalism has become central to the explanation and understanding of the divisive character of the country's various politics, especially where it serves as the driver of separatist agendas for the various interest groups within the country.

The nexus between tribalism and ethnicity lies in the fact that the former can be interpreted as a social phenomenon that has similar functions and emotional effects as the latter. According to Onwuejeogwu (2000:1), the concept of ethnicity derives from the Greek word tribe. To that extent, it is plausible to assert that both the etymological and epistemological meanings of ethnicity and tribalism are suggestive of a deep interpretative synonym. Onwuejeogwu further argues that an ethnic group is defined more or less as a section of a population which by virtue of sharing common cultural characteristics separate them from others within that population (2000:1).

Nnoli (1978:5) trenchantly describes ethnicity as a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. Furthermore, he sees ethnic groups as social formations that are distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries, which are language, culture or both. This conceptual exploration, which fits into the complex social formations of the Nigerian state sounds convincing, especially given its analytical ingredients that explain the differentials among the various ethnic groups that make up the Nigerian state. In the main, it is proper to argue that both ethnicity and tribalism are interlaced social phenomena that establish and sustain the communal and cultural boundaries of groups within a given geopolitical milieu.

To that extent, ethnicity is the banner that gives a unique identity that is particular to a social group in a geopolitical setting. In a pluralistic state like Nigeria, many of these social groups – ethnic groups – exist along with others and are naturally locked in keenly competitive engagements over scarce resources, defined values and political advantages. What then is religion?

In the most simplistic interpretation, religion refers to a belief system and practice that relate to a divinity which connects and sustains the unity of purpose among its adherents. The usage of the concept of religion began to gain popularity in the 17th century, following the splitting of Christendom during the Protestant Revolution alongside the age of exploration that facilitated contacts between various cultures that were alien to European traditions (Harrison, 1990; Harrison, 2015; Orngu, 2018:17).

The conceptual concern of scholars with the meaning of religion, proceeds beyond mere linguistic interpretations, which obviously points to the fact that the concept is not likely to have a consensual meaning among scholars of different intellectual orientations. Interestingly, Vergotte (1996), a renowned Theologian, provides a penetrating intervention to extenuate the ambivalence of the concept when he emphasizes the cultural element of religion in his interpretation thus:

Almost every known culture has a depth dimension in cultural experiences... toward some sort of intimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life. When more or less distinct patterns of behavior are built around this depth dimension in culture, this structure constitutes religion in its historically recognizable form. Religion is the organization of life around the depth dimensions of experience – varied in form, completeness, and clarity in accordance with the envioning culture (cited in Orngu, 2018:17).

Deriving from the above, it is clear that religion is an important dimension of the cultural aspect of a people with commonalities in world view, cosmology, value perception and worship system. The

interlacing relationship between religion and culture can be measured in the similarity of the relationship between tribalism and ethnicity. In Nigeria, for instance, the relationship between ethnicity and religion has increasingly become inseparable, to a very large extent. It is the relationship between the two that has profoundly affected the character of party politics in colonial and post-colonial Nigeria with severe consequences for nation-building and national integration, especially in modern times.

To appreciate the meaning of party politics, it is necessary to first understand what a political party entails. In general, a political party is an organized platform that coordinates political activities for party candidates to compete in a country's electioneering process.

One of the key activities of political parties is the provision of platforms for electioneering; which explains the notion that party politics is synonymous with electoral politics – the only institutionalized means through which members of a democratic society choose their leaders (Olaitan, 2005:44).

It is expected that a political party is founded on distinct and clearly articulated ideological bases or policy objectives which party members identify with and cherish as grand norms. Party Politics will, therefore, signify the existence of two or more political parties in a given political environment in which there is contestation for scarce political goals or competition for control of power in a democratic system.

The character of democracy in modern Nigeria typically illustrates a multi-party political culture in which many political parties co-exist and participate in periodic elections to compete for political positions among other contestants. Party politics broadens the space for political participation among the political class in the same way it

offers a wider variety of political choices from which the electorates can choose.

The key concern of actors in party politics is to undo their political opponents by projecting their preferred political parties in the light of superiority over other contending political parties in order to win sympathy and support from the electorates for electoral victory and control of state power.

Theorization

There is persistent argument on, whether or not, theoretical perspectives are critical to all intellectual discourses. Again, some scholars argue that theories are inescapable components within the matrix of certain academic disciplines while this is optional in some academic disciplines. However, given the cascading rate of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary methodological approaches to the study and analysis of phenomena in modern academic disciplines, theories are becoming a cross-cutting imperative component of all intellectual engagements.

It is on the basis of this realization that this intellectual engagement is anchored on a theory. For the purpose of this discussion, the theory of geo-history provides a suitable anchorage to drive the analytical basis for understanding the relationship between ethnicity and religion; and how the two variables significantly influence the patterns and dimensions of party politics in Nigeria.

The theory of geo-history is rooted in the assumption that the linkages between the geographical and historical strands are critical to the analysis of phenomena in human societies (Orngu, 2023:11). Basic to this theoretical assumption is that history, particularly social history, originates from human activities within time and space. The theory was first applied at the University of Texas at Austin, USA, in

explaining the geographical and historical factors that led to the colonization of Africa by Europe; and in explaining how geo-historical factors have encouraged the persistence of dependence and neocolonial ties between African economies and Western capitalism (Orngu, 2017: 8-9). The geographical content of this theory as applied here indicates that the proximity of Africa to Europe was a defining factor in the colonization of the continent by Europe.

Similarly, it was the geographical contiguity of the various ethnic groups of the country that facilitated the bringing together and the eventual amalgamation of the various geographical components into one geopolitical unit of administration. Even the artificial boundaries created among the native peoples derived essentially from geographical features like rivers, forests, roads and other landmarks. The historical content of the theory argues that Nigeria itself is a colonial creation and the various ethnic groups have a common history of colonization through which their religious, cultural and political orientations have been profoundly influenced and their inter-group relations altered.

Additionally, Christianity, which was introduced to the native peoples as a major religion in Nigeria, served as the forerunner of colonialism in the country. While Christianity was introduced through the southern axis of the country, Islam, another major religion in Nigeria, penetrated through the northern axis. Clearly, the geographical and historical linkages are apt in explaining the relationship between ethnicity and religion, given that the ethnic groups of the northern axis are predominantly adherents of Islam while the ethnic groups of the southern axis are predominantly Christians.

The theoretical assumption of geo-history convincingly explains the extent to which the two variables of ethnicity and religion have

persistently driven the trajectory of party politics in Nigeria within time and space. Therefore, to adequately comprehend the dynamics of ethnicity, religion and party politics in modern Nigeria, geographical factors and colonial history of the country must be appreciated as the treads that run through the creation and configuration of the Nigerian state. To that extent, the theory of geo-history provides a viable perspective to the interrogation and analysis of the three variables of ethnicity, religion and party politics in Nigeria.

Evolution of the Nigerian State, 1861-2023

As noted earlier, Nigeria is a colonial creation. Prior to the advent of colonialism in Africa, there were various autonomous political units, which were organized in the mould of chiefdoms, empires and kingdoms in the continent. The political units existed and maintained some level of sovereignty, territorial integrity; and interacted with one another in the form of exchanges and diplomatic engagements. This was the experience with the areas that later became Nigeria following the European incursion.

It was Flora Shaw who first coined the word Nigeria in 1899 in an article in the London Times (1899), with reference to the territories around the Niger area. Originally, the coinage specifically referred to the Northern Protectorate before it was later extended to encompass the entire country at the different phases of amalgamation. The final phase of the amalgamation took place on January 1, 1914, marking the final journey of the creation of Nigeria as a political entity – a journey that commenced in 1861 with the British conquest and annexation of the Territory of Lagos as a colony.

The creation of Nigeria in 1914 derived from an agglomeration of various colonial territories that were acquired in piece meals,

culminating into three phases of amalgamation, beginning with the first phase in 1900 when the Niger Coast Protectorate was amalgamated with the Colony of Lagos to form part of the Southern Protectorate. The second phase was in 1906, when the Colony of Lagos was merged with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form a single political unit known as the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In 1914, the final phase saw the amalgamation of the Northern Protectorate with the Colony and Protectorate of the Southern Nigeria to form a single political entity to be known as the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.

Briefly, it can be summarized that the making of the Nigerian state took place in five historical epochs. First, it was the arrival of the British Royal Company in the area mainly for commercial purposes. Second, the British Royal Niger Company was given a Charter to govern; and third, the Company transformed itself into British Royal Niger Company. Fourth, the Royal Niger Charter was revoked in 1900 following which Frederick Lugard became the High Commissioner. Fifth and finally, Lugard brought all the territories under his control and named them the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. This was followed by the grand finale of amalgamation on January 1, 1914.

With the eventual creation of the Nigerian state in 1914, constitutional government began to take shape to provide the ground rules for effective administration of the colonial state. This formed the basis for the institutionalization of the Nigerian Council by Lugard, a development that heralded the process of constitutional development in colonial Nigeria. In 1922, the Nigerian Council was dissolved following the adoption of the Clifford Constitution.

Thus, during the period from 1922 to 1954, colonial Nigeria was governed under four different constitutions – Clifford Constitution

(1922); Richard Constitution (1946); MacPherson Constitution (1951); and Lyttleton Constitution (1954). It was the Richard Constitution that introduced regionalism that split the colonial state into the North, East and West regions, all of which began to develop at their distinctive rates (Olusanya, 1980:518; Orngu, 2014:103-110).

Full-fledged federalism was introduced in the country in 1954 by Lyttleton Constitution, following which two Constitutional Conferences were held in 1957 and 1958 to address the contradictions that persistently arose from the minority question and to activate the process for the establishment of self-government in the colonial state of Nigeria. In 1960, Nigeria became an independent sovereign state and in 1963 it became a republic. From 1960 to 2023, the country has been governed by successive military regimes (with Decrees) and democratic regimes under different constitutions with varying degrees of successes, failures and challenges. In 1967, the country moved away from four regions to twelve states. Since then, Nigeria's intermittent state creation exercises have brought the country to a total number of thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Background to Party Politics in Nigeria

The Clifford Constitution introduced the principle of election in colonial Nigeria in 1922. This principle was the forerunner of electoral politics in the country, deriving from which the first elections were conducted in that year to elect members of a Legislative Council to make laws that would govern the Southern Protectorates (Olusanya, 1980:518). This paved the way for electioneering and party politics in the country's body polity. It was, however, the build-up to the 1959 federal elections conducted to elect leaders to take charge of the affairs of Nigeria at independence that began to intensify party politics in the country. As Nwolise (2007) has argued, it was from that

time that party politics became deeply entrenched along with the intensification of electoral violence in physical, structural and psychological dimensions.

In 1964, party politics became more intensive in Nigeria during which general elections were, for the first time, conducted and supervised by the indigenous leadership of post-colonial Nigeria. It was during the period that the country witnessed, for the first time, intense and syndicated campaigns with horrendous post-election violence that led to severe collateral damages in some parts of the country. From 1965 to 1966, for instance, party politics had heated the polity in the Western region and precipitated explosive post-election violence that arose from the hotly contested election between the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) and the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in their desperate quest for power to control the Western regional government (Orngu, 2020:10).

From all indications, the build-up to the 1964 general elections erected the pillars for intensive party politics in Nigeria during the first republic. The political parties that dominated the political space of the country on the eve of political independence and during the first republic were characteristically dominant in their respective regional domains.

The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) was the dominant political party in Northern region, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), was dominant in Eastern region and the Action Group (AG) was dominant in Western region.

The United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), which was originally conceived to check the perceived marginalization of the Tiv and other minorities within the Middle Belt region in the northern political scheme of things, was more of an ethnic political party.

The UMBC was mostly dominant with an unequaled influence in Tivland where it got overwhelming victories in the 1956 and 1959 elections (Anifowose, 1982:88). The UMBC's alliance with the AG gave the NPC a good fight and won twenty-five seats in the federal legislature during the 1959 federal elections (Anifowose, 1982:88). In any event, this did not change the ethnic coloration of the political party throughout the first republic.

Thus, besides the UMBC, the formation and operational parameters of the other political parties during the first republic clearly reflected political control of regional enclaves by Nigerian nationalists and indigenous politicians who had converted their respective regions into regional political territories with deeply entrenched orientation of divisive party politics among their followership – a reality that nurtured and sustained the philosophy of ethno-regionalism in the political interface among key political actors in the country throughout the remaining part of the first republic.

During the second republic, party politics in Nigeria shifted from regional coloration to ethnic banners. The dominant political parties during the period like the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) clearly reflected the Hausa/Fulani, Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) reflected the Igbo while the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) was of the Yoruba. This was demonstrated in the pattern of political activities of the political parties between the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigerian government and politics.

The series of military despotisms and the long stretch of military rule in Nigeria has had some serious consequences for the character of party politics in the country. For instance, the body polity of the country is reflective of an overhang of military characteristics, showing some relics of military despotism and indicating the

militarization of the country's political culture. The increasing violence coupled with the obnoxious roles which some major stakeholders have played in Nigeria's electoral process in all democratic dispensations (from the first to the fourth republics) clearly demonstrates a tangible level of systemic degeneracy and underdevelopment of party politics in the country. In essence, the previous republics in the political history of Nigeria and the sustained period of uninterrupted democracy in the country since 1999 present a viable aperture for a critical evaluation of the extent to which ethnicity and religion have affected the dimensions of the country's party politics.

Ethnicity, Religion and Party Politics in Modern Nigeria

In Nigeria, the relationship between ethnicity and religion are profoundly interlaced. This notion finds expression in the geographical and historical contexts that define the configuration of the country. As argued earlier, the two orthodox religions – Christianity and Islam – were introduced into pre-colonial Nigeria through the south and north geographical axes.

This geo-historical reality explains why the ethnic groups of the southern parts of the country are predominantly Christians and the ethnic groups of the northern parts of the country are predominantly Muslims. Again, the proximity of the Middle Belt region to both the southern and northern parts of the country has distributed the ethnic groups of the area among the two orthodox religions, with Christianity as the more dominant religion in the region.

A major problem in Nigeria's socio-political milieu derives from resource and socio-economic competition, which has led to the politicization of ethnicity and religious factionalism. The foundation

of this problem is traceable to the emergence of contemporary ethnicity encapsulated in the fear of scarcity, unequal opportunities, the myth of cultural diversity and the colonial policy of divide and rule.

Thus, the regionalization of nationalism and, later, the ethnicization of nationalism are all fallouts of the ingredients of this disorder that has roots in colonial Nigeria. The following remarks made by Oluwole Alakija, a Yoruba, in 1948, will serve to drive home this notion on the nature of ethnic rivalry in colonial Nigeria:

We were bunched together by the British who named us Nigeria. We never knew the Ibos, but since we came to know them we have tried to be friendly and neighbourly. Then came the Arch Devil to sow the seeds of distrust and hatred... We have tolerated enough from a class of Ibos and addle-brained Yorubas who have mortgaged their thinking caps to Azikiwe and his hirelings (Coleman, 1986:340).

The above remarks indicated a very clear sense of a xenophobic disposition imbued with the tendency to drive the mechanics of ethnic discord between the Yoruba and Igbo in the context of political socialization in colonial Nigeria.

Subsequently, at an all Igbo-state Conference in 1949, Nnamdi Azikiwe made the following remarks:

... it would appear that the God of Africa has specially created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages... The martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of

preserver... The Ibo nation cannot shirk its responsibility... (Coleman, 1986:347).

The above remarks clearly indicated an overt ambition to establish the Igbo as a superior race with dominion over other ethnic groups, not only in Nigeria but also in the entire African continent. Coming from a statesman of his Olympian height, it was worrisome that Azikiwe had abandoned his nationalistic ideals to fly an ethnic kite. There is the strong suspicion that the above declaration instigated and further deepened ethnic animosity among the majority ethnic groups of the country with their affiliates, particularly on the eve of political independence.

Thus, when in 1953, Anthony Enahoro moved a motion at the Federal House of Representatives in Lagos for self-government in 1956, the discordant reactions of the various ethno-religious champions clearly played out in the heated exchanges contained in their war of words and infelicitous utterances.

The lack of consensus on the appropriate time for the country's political independence demonstrated severe levels of ethno-regional animosities, which dovetailed into religious colouration and reflected the practicality of what Abubakar Tafawa Balewa had affirmed in the Legislative Council in 1948 thus:

Since 1914 the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite... Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country (Coleman, 1968:320).

The above reaffirms what Obafemi Awolowo had said in 1947 that Nigeria is not a nation but a mere geographical expression (Awolowo, 1947: pp47-48). When the various statements of these eminent Nigerian leaders that represented the overall interests of their respective regions are put together, it becomes very obvious that the country was, ab initio, not conceived for political solidarity and national integration. This is the foundation that has consistently defined the nature and character of party politics in Nigeria up to modern times.

While ethnicity and regionalism played out very prominently in the political socialization of colonial and immediate post-colonial era, the religious dimension has made inroad and has assumed a momentous stature in the country's political space, especially beginning from 1999 – at the turn of the fourth republic. The period brought religion as a critical factor in configuring the structure of Nigeria's leadership, especially at the centre and in other political components that are have an admixture of Christian and Muslim populations in significant percentages. This explains why, until the 2023 presidential election, the country had, since 1979 maintained a religious balance between a Muslim President and a Christian Vice President and vice versa in all democratic dispensations. The following table illustrates this claim:

Table showing a chronology of leadership succession in Nigeria's democratic dispensations since

S/N	Period	President	Religion	VicePresident	Religion
1.	1979-1983	Shehu Shagari	Muslim	Alex Ekwueme	Christian
2.	1999-2007	Olusegun Obasanjo	Christian	Atiku Abubakar	Muslim

3-	2007-2010	Umaru Musa Yar'Adua	Muslim	Jonathan Goodluck	Christian
4	2010-2015	Jonathan Goodluck	Christian	Namadi Sambo	Muslim
5-	2015-2023	Muhammadu Buhari	Muslim	Yemi Osinbajo	Christian
6.	2023 ?	Bala Ahmed Tinubu	Muslim	Ahmed Shettima	Muslim

Source: compiled from various sources, including C.S. Orngu, "A Historical Diagnosis of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Toward a Model for Peaceful Coexistence," *Journal of Living Together* (2028), Vol.4-5, Issue 1, p.19.

The above table provides a graphic illustration of the centrality of the religious factor in the political permutations of leadership recruitment in Nigeria's highest office. Although the 2023 presidential election has altered the equation of religious balancing in the political leadership recruitment at the level of the presidency, it is still maintained in the leadership structure of the national assembly and in states where the two orthodox religions have tangible populations.

Moreover, the road to the alteration has been dotted with raging controversies with difficult and seemingly unending dialogues. The fact must be stressed that in 1993, the religious element was downplayed, when MKO Abiola and Babagana Kingibe (both Muslims) were popularly elected as Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates on the platform of Social Democratic Party (SDP).

Unfortunately, the election was annulled by the Federal Military Government of Ibdahim Babangida – a development that heated up the polity and snowballed into a political impasse of unimaginable

proportions with unpleasant consequences for Nigeria's body polity.

In the past, Nigeria's military regimes had maintained ethno-religious balancing in their leadership composition; but this was not as pronounced as it has become in the country's modern party politics. Critical discourses on Nigeria's national politics now tend to oscillate round the two prominent denominators of ethnicity and religion with severe consequences for national integration and political solidarity.

Implications of Ethnicity and Religion for Party Politics in Modern Nigeria

Modern Nigeria is steadily sliding towards a very dangerous level of disintegration as a result of a multiplicity of factors. While the political leadership continues to deploy empty sloganeering and futile rhetoric to proclaim national unity, the masses have continued to demonstrate apathy in the task of nation-building and national integration in the face of false unity. Obviously, there is a sharp displacement of nationalistic patriotism with ethno-religious loyalty among many Nigerians.

The failure of the Nigerian state in exciting the confidence of Nigerians towards feasible nationalistic ideals has created a very deep crisis of confidence in leadership at all levels of governance. The rowdy atmosphere that characterizes the nature and character of party politics in modern Nigeria has cascaded into the following unsavoury dimensions:

Fractured unity: This is a function of the persistence of ethno-religious dichotomy that trailed the amalgamation of the various ethnic groups to forge a united nation in 1914. Ethno-religious considerations have assumed more complex levels that have continued to inhibit the quest for national integration. The orientation of party politics in modern Nigeria is somehow driven by

ethnic and religious affinity. Nationalistic ideals and patriotism have diminished and given way to ethnic and religious attachments in the country's political socialization.

This has created and sustained a horrible state of xenophobia in the form of ethnocentrism and, in some cases, religious fanaticism. These elements are, in their complex combination, central to the state of the fractured unity in modern Nigeria.

Thus, any ambition of amending the fragile unity of modern Nigeria without first addressing the challenges of political exclusion, marginalization and the minority question that arise from the xenophobic pathologies that pervade the country's socio-political milieu will consistently remain an illusion.

Identity Politics: Party politics in modern Nigeria has taken the path of identity politics where loyalty to political parties is hinged on ethnic and religious factors. The clientelistic network of political patronage, with its self-seeking philosophy of patron-client relationship, is fuelled and sustained by ethnic and religious solidarity in modern Nigeria.

Similarly, identity politics has rendered Nigeria's federalism dysfunctional to the extent that the country's federalist ideas have become subjects of unending controversies among the various ethnic groups – with the various ethnic groups conceiving the idea of federalism in their exclusive terms, convictions and advantages without cognizance for reconcilable positions and unity of purpose. The sharp disagreements among ethnic representatives at the series of national debates and national conferences that have taken place in the country will suffice to validate this notion.

National security threats: A litany of ethno-religious conflicts

have occurred in Nigeria over time. There is no doubt that conflicts are significant threats to any nation's security architecture. In Nigeria, conflicts that bother on ethnic and religious factors have proved to be highly complex and very complicated to resolve. When ethnicity and religion form the basis of political conflicts, their escalation have always tended to heat up the domestic environment with a proclivity to threaten the territorial integrity of the country. The Nigerian Civil War, for instance, was enmeshed in both the ethnic and religious banners; and the international politics that played out during the period illustrated the extent to which major internal crisis can serve as a threat to the territorial integrity of a sovereign state.

Threats to Nigeria's Democracy: The politicization of ethnicity and religion has serious consequential effects on the survival of Nigeria's democracy. In the past, the country's democracy has experienced major setbacks as a result of the polarization of the citizenry along ethnic and religious lines.

This is a deliberate scheme that politicians deploy to divide and rule the people; but it creates challenges of sharp cleavages and deepens the divisive tendencies inherent in the psychological make-up of a large mass of misgoverned citizenry and, in the process, places the country's democracy in a precarious state.

The implications of ethnicity and religion for modern Nigeria's party politics are complex in their manifestations and intertwined in their nature. They keep emerging in response to the dynamic realities of the country's socio-political and economic dynamics. The few ones discussed here are not exhaustive but enough to demonstrate the extent of their severity in order that pathways can be identified to place the country's party politics on the threshold of political redemption.

Pathways to Political Redemption

Having established the miasma of contradictions embedded in the twin variables of ethnicity and religion with reference to party politics in modern Nigeria, it is appropriate to point to the direction of a viable intervention in order to redeem the system. The following will, therefore, constitute the pathways to political redemption in modern Nigeria's party politics.

First and foremost, political parties in Nigeria should be built on realistic ideological foundations that are relevant to confronting the challenges of national unity, equity, fairness and economic viability in the country. The levels of political disharmony and mutual distrust between and among the various ethnic groups and adherents of different religions derive partly from ethnic fractionalization and the institutionalization of religion as key determinants of political calculation in the country. This can be extenuated through a well-conceived national agenda for accommodation and tolerance in the face of cultural diversity.

The National Orientation Agency and other governmental institutions saddled with the task of public enlightenment are required to work out a strategic synergy to reengineer the mechanics of public enlightenment and awareness in the direction of repositioning the mentality of the citizenry for national integration.

The second approach resides in de-emphasizing religion in the country's party politics. Theoretically, Nigeria is a secular state; but in practice, religion has taken a central place in the country's government and politics. Contradictorily, the adherents of the two dominant religions of Christianity and Islam enjoy prominence in this context to the exclusion of the practitioners of African Traditional Religions.

The emotional and psychological attachments to religious sentiments have often led to fanatical dispositions and pathological fixations when national issues are placed on the table for critical engagements. This has affected critical mindedness in addressing critical issues of development and national integration at the various levels of Nigerian government and politics.

Very importantly, there is the need for deliberate and conscious efforts towards building confidence among Nigerians through plural accommodation, good leadership and functional institutions of governance. The national assembly, the Central Bank of Nigeria, the national security organs and other institutions of government should demonstrate compliance with national ethics in their operational tenets in order to entrench a sense of collective ownership and inspire the desired confidence among Nigerians.

Again, corruption stinks in all the spheres of Nigeria's socio-political milieu. In fact, political corruption has attained the level of impunity in Nigeria today. It is political corruption that opens the gateway to other forms of corruption. It is tempting to argue that it is political corruption that has taken ethnicity and religion to the centre stage of Nigeria's party politics for manipulative purposes. There is, therefore, the dire need for all Nigerians to rise up against corruption in whatever form, including deploying legal means to make elected and appointed public officers transparent in their responsibility and accountable to the people.

Finally, Nigeria's educational system should be properly funded for enhanced capacity to drive the processes of national orientation beyond mundane promptings. The country's educational system has been held down for too long; and the fallout of this unfortunate reality reproduces itself in many retrogressive elements with negative

consequences for party politics and, by extension, over all development in modern Nigeria.

Conclusion

This disquisition has demonstrated the extent to which ethnicity and religion have affected the dimensions of party politics in modern Nigeria. The analysis connects Nigeria's past experience with her ethno-religious dynamics and other emerging national issues to explain the nature of party politics in modern Nigeria.

It argues that ethnicity and religion have had negative consequences for modern Nigeria's party politics and, by extension, the country's national unity in the same way they have held down the prospects of national integration among the various ethnic groups of the country. Above all, ethno-religious factors have severely underdeveloped the logic and utility value of party politics as catalyst for growth and sustainable development in modern Nigeria.

The concomitant consequences of this reality for the corporeality of the country's sovereignty are complex; but the good news is that the sorry state of affairs is redeemable if the pathways prescribed here are given conscious consideration by relevant stakeholders.

Chapter Five

Internal Democracy and Party Politics in Nigeria

- Adebayo O. Adedeji, Ph.D -

Introduction

Nigeria, often hailed as the giant of Africa, has traversed a complex political landscape since gaining independence in 1960. Over the years, the country has witnessed significant political transitions, from military rule to democratic governance. A crucial aspect of this democratic journey has been the evolution of internal democracy within political parties, shaping the very essence of Nigeria's party politics.

Internal democracy refers to the practice of conducting party affairs, such as candidate selection and policy formulation, in a transparent, inclusive, and participatory manner (Okhaide, 2012). In Nigeria, where diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural identities coexist, fostering internal democracy within political parties is not only essential for the parties themselves but also instrumental in achieving democratic consolidation at the national level.

Nigeria's progress toward democratic consolidation is intricately linked to the degree of internal democracy practiced by its political parties (Adejumobi and Kehinde, 2007). As these parties nurture democratic values within their structures, they contribute significantly to building a political culture based on accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of the citizens.

The history of Nigeria's political parties, reveals a dynamic interplay between internal democracy and the country's democratic aspirations. From the early days of independence, when political parties primarily represented regional interests, to the present era of multiparty democracy, the evolution of internal party processes mirrors the broader socio-political changes in Nigeria. Today, as Nigeria stands at the crossroads of its democratic journey, the emphasis on internal democracy has become paramount. Vibrant, inclusive, and transparent party politics are not only essential for ensuring fair representation but also for fostering trust between the electorate and political institutions.

Political parties play a pivotal role in both driving the democratic process and fostering democratic consolidation. The essence of democracy as a viable form of government relies on active participation in competitive and regular elections organized by these parties. Such periodic and competitive electoral events contribute significantly to the strengthening of democracy through institutionalization, as highlighted by Akinbobola (2003).

The presence of political parties is fundamental in the institutionalization of democracy, as emphasized by Agbaje (2004). In theory as well as in practice, it is challenging to conceptualize democracy without the essential presence and conducive environment for active participation facilitated by these parties.

Similarly, political parties play a crucial role in offering diverse electoral choices to the voting public, presenting competing manifestoes and worldviews. They enable electoral competition, highlighting the distinct feature of inevitable electoral, defeat, victory and vice versa. As this pattern persists over a significant period, the democratic process becomes consolidated, gaining the resilience to

withstand pressures that might otherwise jeopardize its stability or lead to its reversal, as noted by Beetham (1994) and Huntington (1991).

However, for political parties to effectively contribute to democratic consolidation, they need to possess certain key features. Firstly, they should consist of individuals with similar or at least compatible worldviews, ensuring ideological alignment. Secondly, these parties must advocate for a set of programmes reflecting their vision, mission, and manifestoe, tailored to address public needs. Thirdly, they should have a broad mass base, enhancing their legitimacy among the people. Additionally, their development should be gradual and systematic, marked by identifiable leaders who serve as focal points for the party.

Crucially, these parties must operate with internal democratic principles. This aspect is pivotal in understanding why Nigerian political parties have not effectively facilitated democratic consolidation; many of them suffer from internal weaknesses and democratic deficits in their conduct and functioning (Adejumobi and Kehinde, 2007).

Several factors have impeded internal party democracy in Nigeria, as outlined by Bamgbose (2012):

1. **Ethnic Politics:** Ethnic divisions are prominently evident in Nigerian politics, especially within political parties. Historical tactics of division and manipulation by former colonial powers have led to fragmentation and factionalization among the people. Consequently, ethnic considerations often take precedence in the internal activities of political parties.

2. **Monetization of Politics:** In the past, political positions did not offer significant financial incentives as they do today. Recent government policies have made politics financially lucrative, attracting individuals who view politics as a means to amass wealth. This perception has led some Nigerians to join politics through various parties, willing to go to great lengths, even at significant personal costs, to win elections.
3. **Unnecessary Political Ambition:** Nigerian society has become highly politicized, with a growing demand for political participation. However, the capacity to absorb these participants has not kept pace with the increasing demand. This mismatch results in intense competition among political aspirants, prompting them to resort to extreme measures to secure and retain political power.

Moreover, Udeuhele (2017) observed that the absence of internal democracy within political parties has led to a situation where influential groups within these parties, often referred to as cabals, avoid conducting primary elections. Primary elections, which are meant to be the essence of party politics, are thus viewed with apprehension by these powerful factions due to the lack of democratic processes within the parties.

This paper delves into the challenges faced by Nigerian political parties in embracing internal democracy, ranging from issues of factionalism and godfatherism to the need for electoral reforms and greater youth and women participation. By understanding these challenges, stakeholders can work toward innovative solutions that promote internal democracy, thereby fortifying Nigeria's democratic foundation. Furthermore, this analysis illuminates the critical nexus

between internal democracy, party politics, and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. By embracing internal democracy as a guiding principle, political parties can not only strengthen their own structures but also contribute significantly to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, ushering in an era of stability, prosperity, and genuine political empowerment for all its citizens.

The paper commences by providing an introductory overview of internal democracy within political parties and its role in democratic consolidation. The second section offers a conceptual clarification of internal democracy and its intersection with party politics. Following this, the third part delves into the specific dimensions of internal democracy and party politics within Nigeria's fourth Republic. Finally, the paper concludes in the last section.

Conceptual Clarification

Central to the discourse on Internal Democracy and Party politics are political parties and politics. The two concepts will be defined to allow for a proper conceptualization of Internal Democracy and Party politics.

According to Sartori (1976), a political party is defined as a political group officially identified by a label that nominates candidates for public office during elections. In the scholarly discourse, Lapalombara and Anderson (2001) describe a political party as any group possessing an official label and a formal structure connecting the central organization to local branches. These parties participate in elections and have the capability to field candidates for public offices, whether the elections are free or non-free.

Alternatively, Ikelegbe and Osumah (2008) characterize a political party as a voluntary association formed by individuals united by common interests. Such parties aim to gain or maintain power by

electing their candidates to public positions. Political parties can be understood as organized entities whose members share common values, ideals, and goals, and actively participate in the structured contests and struggles for political power (Udeuhele, 2015). According to Coleman and Roseberg in Smith (1996), political parties are formally established associations explicitly dedicated to acquiring and, to some extent, maintaining legal control over the personnel and policies of the government of an existing or potential sovereign state.

Essentially, parties consist of organized or loosely affiliated groups operating under a recognized label, with the primary goal of attaining power through electoral processes (Epstein, 1967). Lawson (1976) asserts that a political party constitutes a group of individuals aiming for continuous public approval, both electorally and non-electorally, to empower specific representatives within the organization to wield political authority in particular government positions. These parties claim to exercise this power on behalf of the public. According to Kura (2005), political parties are formally recognized entities whose members share common values, ideals, and aspirations regarding the political, socio-cultural, and economic organization of society for the collective welfare. They seek to realize these ideals and values by gaining control of the government, placing their representatives in competitive, free, fair, and transparent elections, devoid of harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.

From the foregoing, political parties are entities that draw membership from diverse groups in society, sharing a common goal which is the contest for political power in order to implement the party's manifesto in terms of policies and programmes that enhance the well-being of the citizens. Scholars are concerned with how the internal procedure of political parties in terms of selection of its leadership and candidates for political positions aligns with

democratic principles. However, to get a holistic view of the concept of internal democracy, it is pertinent to define politics and party politics.

Diverse authors have given varied definitions of politics, and these definitions are a reflection of the authors' political, social, and philosophical backgrounds. Consequently, there is no agreed definition of politics in existence. Easton (1957) defines politics as the authoritative allocation of values. Politics, according to Lantham (1954), are the social processes that enable the distribution of values through the use of power structures. Politics is primarily about the exercise of power. According to Dyke (1960), politics is a struggle between individuals who have divergent goals on societal issues. Despite having different views on politics, the importance of the state and of power in the political process is a point of agreement.

As a result of the aforementioned, party politics can be defined as all the activities undertaken by political parties in the political process with the intention of gaining political power in order to take over political/public offices that play a key role in the administration of the current government and the making of decisions that affect the general welfare of its citizens (Oluwatusin and Daisi, 2018). Party politics, according to Omilusi (2010), are the activities of formal structures, institutions, or organizations that compete in elections to determine the leadership and policies of the government as well as to distribute the limited resources in a state using institutionalized methods or procedures.

Internal democracy refers to the diverse methods used to involve all members of a political party in internal decision-making processes and discussions (Scarrow, 2005). Duverger (1963) stresses that internal democracy is essential for the proper functioning of a democratic system. However, Sartori (1977) argues differently,

asserting that vibrant democratic functioning is primarily driven by the logic of party competition, not internal democracy.

Notwithstanding, internal democracy encompasses a comprehensive approach to party decision-making, including activities such as party primaries, representation, accountability, and ensuring a level playing field for all members within the party (Okhaide, 2012). Internal democracy, also known as intra-party democracy, refers to the presence of established procedures and principles within political parties for collaborative decision-making and conflict resolution. It aims to prevent arbitrary decisions or the imposition of candidates contrary to the majority members' preferences.

This internal democratic process is crucial for democratic stability and representation, allowing for the proper recruitment of members, socialization, training, discipline, accountability, and transparency within the party. Internal democracy encompasses the selection of candidates within political parties, consultations among members, adherence to internal party discipline and sanctions, the promotion of party ideology, and ensuring accountability (Awofeso, Obah-Akpowaghaga and Ogunmilade, 2017). Hallberg (2008) cited in Sule and Yahaya (2019) outlined two primary approaches to enhance internal democracy: advocacy and legal/regulatory measures. The advocacy perspective involves choosing party leaders, selecting representatives for elections, making decisions collectively, and engaging in peaceful negotiations.

On the other hand, legal/regulatory methods entail having a party constitution, gentlemen's agreements on principles and regulations governing representation, considering minority opinions, negotiating solutions, and implementing penalties for members. The absence of internal democracy leads to anti-party activities, conflicts,

electoral failures, and departure from democratic principles (Omilusi, 2016).

Conflict as a manifestation of party politics is a pervasive occurrence of political parties in Nigeria. According to Muhammed (2008), internal conflicts within political parties have been a significant aspect of partisan politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Nearly all major political parties in this era have been plagued by internal issues. Building on Muhammed's perspective before the 2015 elections, Olorungbemi (2014) argues that since the start of democratic rule in 1999, political party structures have turned into battlegrounds marked by animosity, hostility, victimization, and suspicion due to intense power struggles among members striving to pursue both public and personal goals.

In other words, intra-party conflict implies a disagreement among members of a political party as they contend for control over the party's decision-making apparatus and other resources that could provide personal benefits. As stated by Momodu and Matudi (2013), this conflict arises when members within the same political party pursue conflicting political objectives or attempt to manipulate the party's decision-making process to serve their own interests. Basiru (2019) observed that since Nigeria's re-democratization in 1999, it is reasonable to say that political parties have not performed well in managing internal conflicts.

In recent years, the failure in conflict management has led to continuous internal disputes within parties, ongoing legal battles, widespread party defections, and other conflicts that are uncommon in democratic societies. The next section examines the dimension of internal democracy and party politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Dimension of Internal Democracy and Party Politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Nigeria's Fourth Republic, inaugurated in 1999, marked a significant turning point in the country's political landscape, ushering in an era of democratic governance after years of military rule. One of the essential aspects of this democratic transition was the establishment of political parties, which became the bedrock of Nigeria's multiparty system. However, the success and stability of any democratic system hinge on the internal dynamics of its political parties. In this context, the dimension of internal democracy within Nigerian political parties has been a topic of great importance and debate.

The concept of internal democracy refers to the democratic processes, practices, and norms that operate within political parties themselves. It encompasses how parties select their leaders, make decisions, and manage internal conflicts. In the case of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, internal democracy within political parties has emerged as a crucial factor shaping the country's political landscape. It reflects the extent to which parties adhere to democratic principles and the rule of law within their own structures, beyond the broader democratic framework of the nation.

This section delves into the intricate interplay between internal democracy and party politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It explores the challenges, developments, and implications of internal democratic practices within the major political parties – Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC) - that have played pivotal roles in shaping the nation's political destiny. This exploration aims to shed light on the complexities of party politics in Nigeria, offering valuable insights into the democratic process and political stability in the country.

Party Primaries: PDP Presidential Primaries

The debate surrounding President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's successor in the 2011 elections took a dark turn when former President Olusegun Obasanjo, serving as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the PDP, publicly denied the existence of any zoning arrangement in an interview with the Voice of America. This statement, made before Goodluck Jonathan formally declared his intention to run for president in 2011, was widely interpreted as an encouragement for him to do so (Aiyede, 2012). At that time, Acting President Jonathan did not confirm his candidacy but asserted in a CNN interview that he had the legal right to run and expressed his commitment to ensuring a fair and credible election in 2011.

Amidst the controversy, efforts were made within the PDP to change its leadership, seen by many as Jonathan's strategy to gain control of the party, potentially paving the way for his candidacy in the PDP primaries. Ogbulafor, the then-party chairman, faced corruption accusations and legal action initiated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Additionally, 19 members of the PDP Reform Forum, led by former Senate President Ken Nnamani from the South East, were suspended for advocating democratic reforms within the party. Eventually, Ogbulafor was ousted from his position and replaced by Ekwesilieze Nwodo, who promptly stated that zoning had been a firm principle in the party only in 1999, challenging the notion that it remained a guiding principle (Aiyede, 2012).

During that period, Abubakar Rimi from the North West, who had opposed this new arrangement, was barred from contesting the party's presidential primary despite his application to do so. However, according to Nwodo, apart from this incident, the party did not prevent or exclude any member from seeking any position, regardless of their zone of origin. The 1999 primaries witnessed a

contest between Obasanjo from the South West and former vice-president Alex Ekwueme from the South East, both from different southern zones, even though the office was supposedly zoned to the South West. In 2003, Obasanjo contested the presidential primary against candidates from the North West and North Central. The 2007 primaries saw multiple aspirants from various zones vying for the party ticket (Onabanjo, 2010).

Amidst these party dynamics, supporters of Goodluck Jonathan's candidacy in 2011 actively mobilized public support through statements and advertisements in national news-papers. They made concerted efforts to engage northern politicians, especially those from the North Central and North East zones, to rally their support for Jonathan's campaign. These efforts involved arguments and negotiations, ultimately leading to the peaceful conduct of the PDP primaries.

The Northern Summit Group (NSG), under the leadership of Solomon Lar, a founding member and the first national chairman of PDP, strongly supported Jonathan's candidacy. This group acknowledged zoning as the party's power-sharing formula but emphasized that this policy was not a permanent arrangement. They viewed zoning as a tool used to stabilize the country in 1999, asserting that it was not meant to be a permanent fixture (Okocha and Shiklam, 2010).

Similarly, Barnabas Gemade, former national chairman of the PDP from the North Central, argued that zoning was designed to address specific needs of a particular time. According to Gemade, the basis for zoning no longer existed, as the presidency was no longer confined to a specific region, especially after the annulment of the June 12, 1993 elections (Okocha & Shiklam, 2010). On the other hand, Atiku

Abubakar, the former vice-president from the North East and a prominent supporter of the zoning arrangement, contended that the arrangement had been settled. He expressed concerns that if Jonathan sought re-election, it might lead to political instability in the country. Atiku's stance found support in the Northern Political Leaders Forum (NPLF) led by Adamu Chiroma, a former finance minister. The NPLF insisted that a northerner must succeed Jonathan in 2011 to fulfil the North's term until 2015. In a communiqué, the NPLF stated that the North had conceived the zoning arrangement to enable southern access to the presidency and expressed dissatisfaction with the strong calls for Jonathan to contest the presidential election (Aiyede, 2012).

The group initiated a process to identify a consensus candidate from the northern region who could challenge Jonathan in the PDP primaries. They narrowed down their options to three northern presidential hopefuls: Ibrahim Babangida, a former military president; Atiku Abubakar, a former vice-president; and Aliyu Gusau, a former national security adviser to the president. Eventually, they declared Atiku Abubakar as the consensus candidate for the North in the primaries, scheduled for 23 November 2010 (Adisa, Ibrahim and Usigbe, 2010). The group emphasized that retaining the PDP's zoning arrangement would ensure the country's stability and guarantee that all ethnic groups, including minorities, would have a fair share of power. The NPLF further argued that zoning and rotation were not prohibited by any section of the national Constitution (Okocha & Shiklam, 2010).

Opponents of zoning argued that it is an undemocratic approach that encourages mediocre performance among elected officials, reinforces ethnic divisions, and prevents the most qualified individuals, regardless of their ethnic background, from holding public office.

They believed that the provision for zoning in the PDP constitution should be secondary to the 1999 Constitution, which guarantees the right of all citizens to stand as candidates for public positions.

On 18 September 2010, during a ceremony in Abuja, President Jonathan declared his intention to run for re-election and received immediate endorsements from 28 state governors of the PDP, including 15 out of the 19 northern governors (Oyebode, 2010; Adisa, Muogbo, Samuel, Usigbe and Alao, 2011). The PDP's presidential primary took place on 13 January 2011 at the Eagle Square, featuring three candidates: Atiku Abubakar, the northern consensus candidate; Sarah Jubril, a female aspirant; and Goodluck Jonathan. Jonathan emerged victorious in all six geopolitical zones and the Federal Capital Territory. He defeated Atiku Abubakar in 32 states, including Atiku's home state of Adamawa (Aiyede, 2012).

However, according to Owen and Usman (2015), the PDP's capacity to accommodate diverse interests and resolve internal conflicts significantly deteriorated after 2010. This decline was due to the party's inability to resolve a dispute concerning the breakdown of its power-sharing principle. The system of rotating power among different regions, known as "zoning," was established to address longstanding fears of dominance between the north and south, major ethnic groups, and Muslims and Christians. Jonathan's decision to run for a second term in the 2015 elections, despite an alleged promise to party leaders that he would serve only one term, further strained the party's unity and triggered significant internal dissent.

In 2023, a familiar situation unfolded within the PDP. Instead of adhering to its established principle of rotational presidency, the party chose to open the ticket for competition, disregarding the notion of zoning it to the South (Businessday, May 15, 2022). The public

demand for southern presidency had risen due to the incumbent President, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtd), being from the North. However, Atiku Abubakar, driven by his long-held presidential aspirations, opposed the zoning arrangement and successfully persuaded the party leadership to his stance.

Even though Atiku Abubakar emerged as the winner of the PDP presidential primary, the aftermath saw the rise of the G5 Governors from Abia, Enugu, Oyo, Rivers, and Benue States. These Governors, acting against the party's interests, spearheaded the campaign for the resignation of the PDP National Chairman, Iyorchia Ayu (Premium Times, November 20, 2022). This incident highlighted the ongoing crisis within the PDP's primary elections, echoing a larger issue of lack of internal democracy prevalent not only in the PDP but also in other political parties.

Party Leadership and Discipline: All Progressives Congress

The All Progressives Congress (APC) emerged on February 6, 2013, in Nigeria, in anticipation of the 2015 elections. In a historic turn of events, APC candidate, Muhammadu Buhari secured victory in the 2015 presidential election with a lead of almost 2.6 million votes. On March 31st, incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan gracefully conceded defeat. This marked a significant milestone in Nigeria's political landscape, being the first instance where an opposition party successfully displaced a ruling party in a general election, demonstrating a peaceful transition of power.

Furthermore, the APC achieved a sweeping triumph, securing the majority of seats in both the Senate and the House of Representatives during the 2015 elections. This success was the outcome of a strategic alliance formed by Nigeria's three prominent opposition parties:

Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) – along with a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). Together, they merged forces to challenge the dominance of the Peoples Democratic Party. The historic resolution leading to this alliance was signed by key figures such as Tom Ikimi, representing the ACN; Senator Annie Okonkwo, representing APGA; Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau, the Chairman of ANPP's Merger Committee and former governor of Kano State; and Garba Shehu, the Chairman of CPC's Merger Committee. This collaborative effort reshaped Nigeria's political landscape, underscoring the power of unity in the face of political change (Okoroiwu and Ononogbu, 2017).

The 8th National Assembly was predominantly composed of members from the APC, holding the majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as occupying most Governors' seats and the central government. However, conflicts within the APC arose early on due to the formation of the National Assembly leadership. The national party executive and the executive branch agreed on Senator Ahmed Lawan from Yobe State as the Senate President and Honourable Femi Gbajabimiala from Lagos State as the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Despite their preferences, the executive maintained a non-interference stance to prevent a recurrence of the lack of internal party democracy seen in the former ruling PDP. Some members of the National Assembly seized this opportunity to defy the party's and the executive's choices. They elected Bukola Saraki from Kwara State as the Senate President and Honourable Yakubu Dogara from Bauchi State as the Speaker of the House. This move caused disaffection among party loyalists and the executive, leading to a factional divide within the National Assembly. This division pitted pro-Saraki and

Dogara members against anti-Saraki and Dogara members, all belonging to the same party (Nwajiuba 2015 in Vanguard Newspaper online).

The second crisis that rocked the ranks of the APC lawmakers centered around the trial of Senate President Bukola Saraki at the Code of Conduct Tribunal. Saraki was accused of falsely declaring his assets during his tenure as the Governor of Kwara State. This trial deeply divided the Senate, leading to two distinct factions: the pro-Saraki group, determined to thwart the trial at any cost, and the anti-Saraki faction, advocating for his impeachment and the full enforcement of the law. Proponents of Saraki alleged that the executive and party leaders conspired to orchestrate the trial, aiming to remove Saraki from his position as Senate President. This situation led to significant internal discord and crises within the Senate (Ogundipe 2017 in Premium Times online).

Similar incidents of internal conflict occurred between the executive and the legislature such as the bold defiance of APC party members in the National Assembly, who elected leaders for both chambers contrary to the preferences of the executive and the party.

While it is essential for lawmakers to maintain independence in their affairs, it is also important for the party to instill discipline, and for the executive to engage in diplomatic efforts to secure positions within the Houses. Following the leadership dispute in the National Assembly, the Senate under Saraki's leadership and its supporters sensed a looming threat, believing it originated from the executive. This perceived threat began with the Code of Conduct Tribunal trial of the Senate President.

Consequently, Senators aligned with Saraki's leadership resolved to address the executive in their own manner (Nwajiuba 2015 in

Vanguard Newspaper online). The legislature's response to the conflict included the rejection of Mr. Ibrahim Magu, the Acting Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, for the substantive chairman position, a decision made twice in 2017, first in April and then in June.

Despite the Presidency's resistance and insistence on retaining Magu, the National Assembly remained firm in their refusal to confirm him. Magu continued as the Acting Chairman until his eventual removal and replacement by Bawa. In reaction to this crisis, the APC Chairman, Mr. John Oyegun, stated that the party possessed internal mechanisms to resolve conflicts between the executive and the legislature, assuring that they were prepared for such situations (Tukur, 2017 in Premium Times Newspaper online). Nevertheless, the conflict persisted despite the assurances given by the party chairman.

The legislature intentionally postponed the approval of the 2017 budget until June of that year before finally passing it. This delay dealt a significant blow to the ruling party's performance, which had been elected on promises of change and economic transformation. Additionally, in November 2016, the Senate rejected the President's ambassadorial nominees, citing the lack of career diplomats among them. This incident highlighted the evolving nature of internal crises within the APC, where the party, despite holding the Presidency and a majority of seats at all levels, was hindering itself from expediting appointments and budget approvals crucial for swift implementation of developmental projects and government initiatives (Sule and Yahaya, 2019).

In a comprehensive study conducted by Sambo et al (2022), an in-depth analysis of the leadership crisis within the APC from 2014 to

2022 was presented. During this period, significant events reshaped the party dynamics. John Odigie Oyegun served as the National Chairman from 2014 to 2018. However, his ambition for a second term was curtailed under pressure from the Party leader, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This move was attributed to Tinubu's alleged aspirations for the 2023 Presidency, laying the groundwork for internal discord. Oyegun and Tinubu clashed repeatedly, especially concerning the outcome of the APC governorship primary in Ondo State. Following Oyegun, Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole assumed leadership from 2018 to 2022. His tenure faced immediate opposition, sparking internal strife before the 2019 General Elections. This turmoil resulted in the loss of several states, including Zamfara, Bauchi, Oyo, and Adamawa, as the party fragmented into two factions. Oshiomhole led one faction, while Buba Galadima led the other.

The party's division posed a grave threat to its unity and prospects in the 2019 General Elections, leading to mass defections to the PDP and a loss of seats and states. Oshiomhole's leadership was marked by suspensions and reinstatements, notably in 2020 due to conflicts with his State Governor in Edo, Godwin Obaseki. Abdullahi Adamu assumed control in 2022, amid allegations of imposition by powerful figures in the Presidency. The convention that saw Adamu's appointment lacked internal democracy, characterized instead by forceful imposition and manipulation. Moreover, the party leadership's attempt to impose Ahmed Lawan, the Senate President, as the APC flagbearer for the 2023 Presidential Elections led to a rebellion by state Governors and strained relations between the party leadership and numerous members.

Conclusion

In examining the intricate interplay between internal democracy and party politics in Nigeria, it becomes evident that the democratic fabric

within political parties is fundamental to the overall health and stability of the nation's democratic system.

This analysis sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by Nigerian political parties as they navigate the complex terrain of internal democracy. Internal democracy within political parties is not just a matter of principle; it is the lifeblood of a vibrant democracy. It embodies the core values of fairness, inclusivity, and transparency, ensuring that the voices of party members are heard, and their choices respected. In Nigeria, where a diverse range of ethnicities, cultures, and ideologies coexist, internal democracy serves as a unifying force, promoting a sense of belonging and ownership among party members.

However, the journey toward a robust internal democracy in Nigerian parties is riddled with challenges. Issues such as godfatherism, imposition of candidates, and lack of level playing field often undermine the democratic ideals within parties. The case studies of the two major political parties, illustrate how power struggles and personal ambitions can derail the democratic process. This has far-reaching implications, as it weakens the parties internally and erodes public trust in the democratic system as a whole.

The Nigerian experience underscores the importance of learning from the past to shape a more democratic future. Due to the absence of internal democracy, Nigerian political parties have struggled to achieve the anticipated level of institutionalization, particularly concerning internal unity and discipline. This absence has further eroded their ability to effectively manage conflicts, both within their parties and in their interactions with other political entities (Akubo and Yakubu, 2014). Consequently, no party has managed to maintain internal stability without facing significant conflicts. Additionally, the

lack of institutionalization has led to a concerning issue: a handful of prominent, powerful, and influential individuals have seized control of the party apparatus, as highlighted by Ikelegbe (2013). This situation underscores the critical need for reform and the establishment of robust internal democratic processes within Nigerian political parties.

The prevailing political landscape in Nigeria, characterized by a culture where politicians exploit the state and indulge in prebendal politics as described by Joseph (1987), along with the persisting winner-takes-all mentality, is primarily responsible for the aggressive and detrimental manner in which politics is conducted and the extremely low level of internal democracy. An effective and straightforward solution to enhance internal democracy is to promote openness in party membership. This approach ensures that the party machinery isn't monopolized by a select group of influential individuals.

Furthermore, disciplinary actions such as expulsion based on vague grounds like "involvement in anti-party activities" should be avoided. Arbitrarily expelling members, contradicts the fundamental principles of democracy. Instead, fostering inclusivity and transparency within party structures can pave the way for a more democratic and equitable political environment.

In conclusion, the journey toward a robust internal democracy in Nigerian party politics is an ongoing process that demands collective effort, vigilance, and commitment. It requires a paradigm shift where political parties prioritize the principles of fairness, accountability, and inclusivity. By addressing the challenges, Nigerian political parties can serve as beacons of democracy, inspiring confidence in the electorate and fostering a prosperous, united, and democratic

Nigeria. The realization of this vision rests not just in the hands of party leaders but in the collective will of the Nigerian people to uphold the democratic values that underpin the nation's progress and prosperity.

Chapter Six

Political Parties and Governance in Nigeria

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Introduction

Apparently, divorcing governance from party politics is nearly impossible due to their organic inseparable nexus. Scholarly attempts at establishing this nexus stress that political parties play crucial roles in shaping the governance and political landscape of any country. The premium placed on political parties cum party politics across the globe hinges on the assumption that the duo provides the framework for instituting accountable and legitimate governments in democratic societies. Thus, party politics instantiates the mechanism that helps to harmonise and implement public policies and programmes within the domain of public interests. Hence, the inherent dynamics of party politics in any society reflects the pattern of governance likely to occur in the polity. In other words, the activities of political parties either engender good governance or result to governance deficits.

Indicatively, the third wave of democratization resulted in transition from authoritarian rules to “democratic” governance in most African societies including Nigeria. This culminated to the formation of political parties and active politics as the bedrock for contesting political power. Since then, political parties and party politics have remained the cornerstone and one of the most important ingredients

of governance due to its capacity to regulate the dynamics of political power.

Since political independence in 1960, Nigeria's political party system has evolved significantly with manifest dynamic and often turbulent political environment characterized by a multi-party system. Initially, the country operated under a parliamentary system, with the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) emerging as the dominant parties.

However, military coups and subsequent military regimes truncated the development of political parties in Nigeria until a transition to a presidential system in 1979 with the emergence of the second republic. This change laid the foundation for the development of a more robust, diverse and competitive party system. Prominent political parties that participated in that process include; Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP), Movement of the People Party (MPP) National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria Advance Party (NAP), Nigerian People's Party (NPP), People's Redemption Party (PRP) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN).

In the short-lived third republic, the state established and allowed only the political parties to operate in the political space. The two parties were; National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP). The Fourth Republic, which began in 1999 after years of military rule, marked a significant turning point in Nigeria's political landscape. The era saw the emergence of several prominent political parties, such as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD), and numerous regional and smaller parties. The PDP, in particular, dominated Nigerian politics from 1999 to 2015. The merger of opposition political parties to form All Progressives Congress (APC)

led to the first electoral milestone in Nigeria with APC winning the presidential election and majority seats in National Assembly (Saka & Amusan, 2018). Since then, the APC has been enjoying a prolonged period of uninterrupted rule.

Bartolini and Mair (2000) opine that the key functions of political parties include: the integration and mobilization of citizens; the articulation and aggregation of interests; the formulation of public policy; the recruitment of political leaders and the organization of parliament and government. The foregoing suggests that political parties serve as vehicles for citizens to participate in the democratic process, articulate their demands, and hold elected officials accountable (Diamond & Plattner, 2015).

The degree of capacity of political parties to shape party politics has implications on governance. In Nigeria, it is worrisome that party politics appear to have been characterized by a complex interplay of ethnic, religious, and regional factors (Adejumobi, 2002). In fact, political parties often align themselves along these fault lines with over emphasis on ethno-regional considerations which often influence party membership, candidate selection, and voter behaviour (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). This phenomenon has both positive and negative implications for governance in the country.

On one hand, it allows for the representation of diverse interests and perspectives (Kura, 2011). On the other hand, it can foster identity-based polarization and hinder the formation of broad-based coalitions. Therefore, the relationship between political parties and governance in Nigeria is a subject of considerable debate and scrutiny. However, challenges such as intra-party conflicts, lack of internal democracy, and corruption have often plagued Nigerian political parties, undermining their effectiveness as instruments of good governance. The impact of party politics on governance outcomes,

including policy formulation, implementation, and service delivery, has not been sufficiently addressed. This study therefore strives to investigate political parties and the nexus between party politics and governance in Nigeria.

Conceptualizing Political parties and Governance

Political parties are organized groups that seek to influence political outcomes by mobilizing support, contesting elections, and shaping public opinion. Political parties provide a platform for citizens to participate in the political process, articulate their interests, and collectively pursue policy goals (Ware, 2012). This is an indication that political parties constitute the multifaceted entities that play a significant role in democratic governance. In every democracy characterized by episodic elections, the registered political parties are involved in several activities that determine the formation of government. The combination of these activities tends to shape the overall dynamics of party politics in the society.

Party politics on the other hand, refers to the activities, strategies, and dynamics of political parties within a political system. Party politics involves activities such as candidate selection, campaign strategies, policy formulation, coalition-building, and party discipline (Katz & Mair, 2018). Essentially, politics encompasses the activities, processes, and structures through which power is acquired, exercised, and contested within a society. It involves the formulation and implementation of policies, decision-making processes, and the distribution of resources and authority.

Politics also connotes institutional and ideological interactions that form the basis for governance within the political sphere (Heywood, 2017). This covers the internal workings of political parties, their interactions with other parties, their engagement in electoral

processes, and their role in shaping public policy and governance. As Nebeife, Nwafor & Chinwuba succinctly put it, party politics is a formidable cornerstone of governance due to its capacity to regulate the dynamics of political power. This is because governance is a function of a vibrant political system where leaders become accountable and answerable to the people through effective party politics. That equally fits in properly to the tenets of (good) governance.

Essentially, governance entails the procedure, structures, and institutions through which authority is exercised, decisions are made, and actions are taken to manage public affairs and address societal challenges. It encompasses interrelated processes, institutions and people in the act of allocating state resources (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013a). It includes the mechanisms and practices by which power is distributed, and policies and resources are allocated in a society. It involves both formal and informal systems, including government institutions, public administration, civil society organizations, and networks of actors (Rhodes, 2017).

In the views of Ademolekun (2002:42), “governance is the process of exercising political power to manage the affairs of a nation and that involves the main element of; rule of law, freedom of speech and association, free and fair election, accountability, probity and transparency and result oriented leadership”. The World Bank (1992:2) identified three key aspects of governance to include;

- The form of a political regime
- The process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and

- The capacity of governance to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge function.

In a nutshell, governance is the process of making and enforcing decisions by the government of a state often driven by many different motivations and with many different results. Topmost among the motivations is the interest to survive by the political parties that contest for or control the instruments of the state. The main argument of the scholars interfaced with in this literature revolved around the basic description of political parties, party politics and governance, especially in establishing how the spate of political power contestations by the party leaders that are engaged in political struggles impact on governance in Nigeria.

This paper adopts the Elite capture theory as its theoretical anchorage. The elite capture theory is anchored on the assumption that most societies are dominated by elites of unprecedented power and unaccountability, free from popular control, pursues their own concerns which is power and self-aggrandizement. This creates a situation where a fraction of the society has the power to take decisions which affect society and these decisions usually reflect the interest of the elites rather than the wishes of the majority. The theory emphasizes personal attributes of leaders, which aid their hold or dominance in power positions and the institutional framework of society (D'Exelle, &Ridle, 2008).

The theory highlights the role of elites, who possess economic and political power, in diverting resources and opportunities for their own gain. Khan, (2017) opines that the elite capture theory is based on several key assumptions which include concentration of power by the elites, protecting their self-interest and manipulation of institutions to shape policies, regulations, and decision-making processes in their

favour.

Political elites are usually located within the political parties of any nation-state and are responsible for managing the political and administrative affairs of the political parties (Platteau, 2004). The theory argues that the elites possess some qualities necessary for their accession to political power, such as consciousness, coherence, conspiracy and organisation. Members of the elite are thus not only aware of their status, but work determinedly to protect it with the use of exclusionary factors in the party politics.

As should be noted, the elite capture theory has faced some criticisms from scholars who argue that it oversimplifies complex societal dynamics and neglects the agency of non-elites. Critics argue that while elites may play a significant role in shaping development outcomes, they are not the sole determinants. Factors such as historical legacies, social structures, and external influences also contribute to development dynamics (Leftwich, 2010).

Within the circumference of this paper, the elite capture theory is aptly relevant. Nigeria has faced persistent challenges related to corruption, political patronage, and the concentration of power among elites and without going far, that has led to numerous reports of crises. As reported by Nwanegbo (2016), contrary to the expectations of democratic leadership establishing good governance, their basic activities deepened outcomes that are antithetical to good governance.

The theory therefore provides insights into how political parties and their leaders exploit party politics to capture resources and maintain their dominance, often at the expense of broader societal development. The elite capture theory, therefore analyzes the extent to which Nigerian political parties and party politics perpetuate elite

capture and hinder effective governance. The theory helps to identify the mechanisms through which elites manipulate party structures, electoral processes, and policy formulation to consolidate their power. Additionally, it shed light on the impact of elite capture on development outcomes, social inequality, and democratic governance in Nigeria.

In this regard, the political power of elites is perpetuated through manipulation of party politics to win elections and retain power to decide the direction and dimension of governance (Ademola & Adenuga, 2015). The elites in Nigeria's party politics tend to have kept virtually all the party apparatus at hostage through conscious manipulation of party politics to tilt governance in their self-centred interest. In fact, the political party structures are captured by the elites to influence the activities of the state as the legislature, executive, judiciary, and even regulatory agencies have been captured by the elites thereby weakening the capacity of the state to ensure the rule of law and effective governance. The consequence as pungently declared by Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) is that democracy in Nigeria instead of leading to development, rather, institutionalised poverty in the society.

This is because the elites focus on control of political and state power for protecting and promoting the interests of their clique at the expense of the masses. The consequence is very inimical to the tenets of the rule of law and tends to negate the critical attributes of governance which are embedded on accountability, responsiveness and transparency. This trajectory accounts for the inability of party politics to engender governance capable of promoting socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Perspectives on Political Party Trajectory and Governance in Nigeria

Nigeria's political party trajectory can be examined through a historical lens, considering the country's pre independence and post-independence period, military rule, and the transition to democracy. The historical perspective sheds light on the formation, development, and transformation of political parties in Nigeria. Political parties developed in Nigeria following national sentiments, consciousness, and movements. Nationalist agitators formed groups and associations to take a stand against colonial misrule. The founders of the pre-independence Nigeria's political parties include Herbert Macaulay, H.O. Davies, Ernest Ikoli, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Ahmadu Bello among others.

The pre-independence parties in Nigeria were formed due to a number of factors and as well as being a result from certain situations. The factors revolve around the constitutional development of 1922; to achieve complete autonomy within the British Empire; to seek total independence for Nigeria; to campaign against the constitution of 1946 among others. The problems with the early political parties began with self-interest of the party leaders, inter-party and intra-party conflicts (which split the parties into factions) and political party defections (which weakened or led to the collapse of some of the political parties) etc.

During the pre-independence era, the Clifford constitution with the

S/N	Names of Political Parties	Year	Remarks
1	Nigerian National Democratic Party	1923	
2	The People's Union	1923	
3	Union of Young Nigerians	1923	

100 years of Political Parties Evolution in Nigeria

4	Nigerian Youth Movement	1937	
5	National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons	1944	
6	Northern Elements Progressive Association	1945	
7	Northern Elements Progressive Union	1950	
8	Action Group	1951	
9	Northern Peoples Congress	1951	
10	United National Independence Party	1953	
11	Middle Belt League	1950	The merger of these two parties gave birth to the next party below
12	Middle Belt Peoples Party	1953	
13	United Middle Belt Congress	1955	
14	Dynamic Party	1955	
15	Bornu Youth Movement	1956	
16	National Democratic Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons	1958	

introduction of elective principle in 1922 ushered in the first political party known as Nigeria National Democratic Party. Several other political parties emerged later and at those different times, over seventeen political parties were captured to have existed between 1922 and 1958 and to independence in 1960. As captured in Hodgkin (1961, p.157-159)'s work, the most prominent parties in Nigeria then were as represented in table below:

Incidentally, most of these political parties were formed along ethnic and regional lines. Also, the pattern of party politics toed the same fault lines especially during voting for political office holders.

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country embarked on a journey of nation-building and the establishment of a democratic system. At each stage of the journey, political parties played crucial roles in shaping the country's political landscape. Notable parties that became principal actors during this time included the Northern

People's Congress (NPC), the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), and the Action Group (AG) (Sklar, 2004).

These parties represented different regions and ethnic groups and had varying ideologies and policy platforms. They competed for power and influence, often reflecting regional and ethnic interests. The post-independence period saw intense political rivalries, including the heated competition between the NPC and the NCNC, and the eruption of violence between the interest of NPC and the Action Group in western Nigeria which eventually led to the first military coup in 1966, marking a significant turning point in Nigeria's political trajectory (Falola, & Heaton, 2008, Nwanegbo, 2006).

From 1966 to 1999, Nigeria experienced a series of military coups and periods of military rule. During this time, political parties either dissolved or were suppressed, as the military sought to consolidate power and maintain control over the country. The military regimes implemented varying degrees of authoritarian rule, often suppressing political dissent and curtailing civil liberties. However, it is important to note that even during military rule, political parties continued to play vital roles, albeit in a restricted manner.

The political parties of the second republic were recorded (i.e. after the ban on politics was lifted in September, 1978) based on the elections participated in and the states controlled along with the duration the said states were held by the political parties. In the third republic, the transition from military to civil rule allowed for two political parties to be registered according to the constitution of 1989. This was the first time, that Nigeria had a constitutional two party system. The parties of this republic had all the officials, congresses, and national conventions directed by the government.

The military regime faced mounting pressure both domestically and

internationally to restore civilian rule. This culminated in the eventual return to democratic governance in 1999 with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as Nigeria's president. The transition to democracy witnessed the resurgence and reformation of political parties. The fourth republic, which is also the current republic had three political parties (the Alliance for Democracy, the All Nigeria Peoples Party, and the People's Democratic Party) registered in preparation for the new republic in 1998 by the Independent Electoral Commission.

However, since the inception of the fourth republic, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), has registered over 40 more political parties in the country. New parties emerged, such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Progressives Congress (APC), and numerous smaller parties representing various interests and ideologies. These parties competed in elections, and power began to shift through peaceful transitions of power, marking a significant milestone in Nigeria's political party trajectory. Party politics has continued to play a crucial role in keeping the flame of democracy alive and maintaining a semblance of political opposition during a challenging era.

Adigun (2011) holds the perspective that Nigeria's political party trajectory has often been influenced by ethno-religious dynamics, as parties tend to align along ethnic or religious lines to appeal to specific constituencies citing the fact that the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), which dominated Nigerian politics in the 1980s, was seen as a Hausa-Fulani party. Also, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which emerged in the early 1990s, was seen as a Yoruba party.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP), which has ruled Nigeria since 1999, has been a broad coalition of ethnic and religious groups, but has been accused of favouring certain groups over others. The All

Progressives Congress (APC), which emerged in 2013, was seen as a Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba alliance.

Those who project the institutional perspective on political trajectory of Nigeria such as Agbu (2016) focused on the role of formal institutions, such as electoral systems and party regulations, in shaping the trajectory of political parties in Nigeria. The institutional perspective has made a number of important contributions to our understanding of political parties in Nigeria. For example, it has shown how Electoral systems can influence the formation and success of political parties. For instance, the adoption of a semblance of proportional representation electoral system in 1999 led to the proliferation of political parties in Nigeria. It has shown that Party regulations can impact the internal democracy of political parties. For example, the requirement for political parties to hold regular conventions and elect their leaders in a democratic manner could also help in promoting internal democracy within some parties.

It is instructive to note that party-state relations can also shape the behavior of political parties. The governance perspective analyzes the relationship between political party trajectory and governance outcomes in Nigeria. It explores how party dynamics, including party ideology, internal organization and leadership, influence governance quality, policy formulation, and implementation. Oni, (2020) argues that Party ideology can influence governance quality. For example, parties with a strong commitment to democracy and human rights are more likely to implement good governance policies.

Party internal organization can also impact the effectiveness of governance. For example, parties with a strong internal democracy are more likely to be able to hold their leaders accountable and to implement policies that are in the best interest of the people. Party

leadership can also play a decisive role in shaping governance outcomes. For instance, visionary and transformative leaders can help to improve governance quality and to deliver better outcomes for citizens.

The Character of Party Politics in Nigerian Political System

Party politics consists of the functioning of political parties, especially the creation of organizational structures of political parties; the establishment of political parties and the struggle to obtain political power (Awopeju, 2012). Again, Olaniyan (2009) posits that party politics is the process of taking part in political activities within the democratic sphere in order to gain political power and control political systems through elections. Implicitly, party politics is an offshoot of electoral principles within the democratic sphere in order to gain political power and control political systems. In essence, the focus of party politics is to facilitate the chances of a political party to win elections and control government.

The character of party politics in the Nigerian political system is often characterized by patronage, clientelism, and ethno-religious polarization (Adigun, 2011). Patronage-based politics is a system in which political actors distribute favours and rewards to their supporters in exchange for their loyalty and support. This system is often characterized by corruption and nepotism.

On the other hand, Clientelistic politics is a system in which political actors build personal relationships with their constituents in order to gain their support (Ikelegbe, 2015). This system can also lead to corruption and nepotism as political actors may favour their constituents over the public interest. Ethno-religious politics is a system in which political parties are aligned along ethnic or religious

lines. This can lead to inter-communal conflict and make it difficult for governments to implement policies that are in the best interests of all Nigerians (Afolayan, 2019).

The Nigerian party politics is also characterized by weak internal democracy. Political parties in Nigeria often lack internal democracy. This means that party leaders have a great deal of power and that party members have little say in the decision-making process. Also, the incidence of Political corruption is a major problem in Nigeria. Political parties are often involved in corrupt activities, such as bribery, embezzlement, and money laundering. Political parties in Nigeria often have close ties to the state. These character have very negative consequences on the capacity of political parties and party politics to evolve good governance in Nigeria and that is what we interrogate in the next section of this paper.

The Nuances of Political Party Administration and Political Recruitment in Nigeria

Political party administration and political recruitment in Nigeria are complex processes influenced by various factors. Understanding the nuances of these aspects require a multifaceted analysis that considers party structures, party internal dynamics, and external influences. Party structures play a fundamental role in political party administration.

In Nigeria, political parties are typically organized hierarchically, with a national executive committee overseeing the party's affairs at the national level. This committee consists of party leaders and officials who are responsible for decision-making, policy formulation, and ensuring the party's overall coherence. These structures provide a framework for the party's functioning and determine the distribution of power within the organization (Egwu, and Nwolise, 2016).

Internal dynamics within political parties are shaped by various factors, including power struggles, ideological differences, and personal ambitions. Political parties in Nigeria often face internal conflicts resulting from competing factions or interests within the party. These conflicts can arise from disagreements over the party's direction, leadership positions, or resource allocation. Internal dynamics influence the party's decision-making processes, candidate selection mechanisms, and overall party cohesion (Transparency International, 2019). External influences also significantly impact political party administration and political recruitment in Nigeria.

One of the most prominent external factors is the role of money in politics. Political parties rely on funding for their activities, including organizing campaigns, mobilizing supporters, and maintaining party structures. The influence of money in Nigerian politics can lead to corruption, as parties may (and indeed do) prioritize wealthy individuals or interest groups who contribute substantial financial resources. This can (and do) undermine the inclusivity and fairness of political recruitment processes (Ibrahim, 2016).

Another external influence is the role of ethnic and regional considerations. Nigeria is a diverse country with multiple ethnic and regional identities, and political parties often reflect these divisions. In some cases, parties may prioritize candidates from particular ethnic or regional backgrounds to appeal to specific voter bases. This can lead to a lack of diversity and inclusivity in political recruitment, limiting opportunities for talented individuals from under-represented groups (Olaniyan, 2018).

Additionally, external factors such as media, civil society organizations, and international actors also play a role in shaping political party administration and recruitment in Nigeria. Media

outlets influence public opinion and can impact party dynamics through their coverage and framing of political events. Civil society organizations advocate for transparency, accountability, and good governance, which can influence party practices and candidate selection processes. International actors, including foreign governments and international organizations, may exert pressure or provide support to political parties, shaping their decision-making and recruitment strategies (Onu, 2019).

Political Parties, Party Politics and Governance Deficits in Nigeria

Without doubt, Nigeria has experienced sustained records of government deficit since the beginning of this republic in 1999. Arriving at the above conclusion came from the fact that most of the indicators of governance as the variable here are not presenting good marks when checked. They include the existence of those measurable indicators which, in the report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1999) are complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. They also include the processes of initiating policies, managing public resources, securing and organizing people, directing institutions of the state (including private institutions) to ensure justice, accountability and fairness in running day-to-day government business (see Oyovbaire 2007, Adamolekun 2002, etc.).

For Adamolekun (2002), the main elements of governance are: rule of law, freedom of speech and association, free and fair election, accountability, probity and transparency and result oriented leadership.

Measuring the contributions of political parties and the dynamics of party politics on these elements of governance will help us in understanding the basis of governance deficit in Nigeria. For purposes of measurability, we used governance in the opinions of Kaufmann (2000) which could be divided into three broad categories, each containing two components thus:

1. (a) Voice and accountability which includes civil and political liberties and freedom of the press, and
(b) political stability and lack of violence.
2. (a) Government effectiveness which includes the quality of policy making and public service delivery, and (b) the lack of regulatory burden.
3. (a) The rule of law that includes protection of property rights and an independent judiciary, and
(b) control of corruption (Kaufmann 2000:4-5).

The discussion here centres on finding out the part political parties and politics play in the achievement of voice and accountability (which includes civil and political liberties and freedom of the press), in achievement of political stability and violence free polity in Nigeria; in ensuring government effectiveness (which includes the quality of policy making and public service delivery) and the lack of regulatory burden; and finally in ensuring the rule of law (that includes protection of property rights and an independent judiciary) and (b) control of corruption.

In looking at the part political parties played in governance in Nigeria, it should be remembered that since independence, political parties at formative stage tend to have more ethnic and tribal colouration than serving the general interest of all which distinguishes political parties

from the interest groups. With the exception of the earliest political parties that were formed in 1923 in response to Clifford constitution of 1922 (NNDP, The People's Union, Union of Young Nigerians, and Nigerian Youth Movement) all the other parties that took part in the first republic were formed to represent the interest of one ethnic group or the other. That affected the political parties even from that period in advancing credible positions in governance in Nigeria.

Indeed, the political crises that bedevilled Nigeria's first republic party politics has its roots in that. In fact, instead of striving to mobilize support from outside their regions of dominance, the political parties and their leaders sponsored splinter groups to weaken the control of their contending parties in the regions. The United Middle Belt Congress had such support of the Action Group; the NIP acted in such position in the Eastern Nigeria while NIPP did same in the Western Nigeria. The implications of the activities of such groups were manifest in the various conflicts in Northern region and Western region respectively. In the Second republic, the situation became more glaring from the onset, leading to the abysmal performance of the government of NPN. In fourth republic that started in 1999, the challenge changed to lack of ideological content of the parties, to dominance or money bags, etc.

Owing to all these, Nigeria under the watch of political parties has been plagued by governance deficits (Suberu, 2015). These deficits are manifest in many forms namely; corruption, weak institutionalization of the system, etc. For instance, as noted earlier, corruption is a major problem in Nigeria. It is estimated that Nigeria loses over \$50 billion per year to corruption. Corruption undermines public trust in government and institutions, and it diverts resources away from essential services (Transparency International, 2023). Many of Nigeria's institutions are weak and ineffective. This makes it difficult

for the government to implement policies and programmes effectively. Nigeria faces a number of security challenges, including terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping.

There is a high level of political and socio-economic inequality in Nigeria. The richest 10% of Nigerians control over 40% of the country's wealth. This inequality has led to social unrest and instability (World Bank, 2023). As a result, Nigeria has low levels of public service delivery. This means that many Nigerians do not have access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and security. More so, there is weak and equal application of the law across board in Nigeria. This means that the law is not applied equally to everyone and that powerful individuals and groups are often able to escape justice (Ibrahim, 2018).

Looking at the above measurable conditions, it can be explicitly concluded that the governance records in Nigeria is weak. The weakness is seen in the fact that the very important political liberties and freedoms associated with civilized societies of the world are lacking in the true sense of it in Nigeria. A check at the regulatory frames put in place by the state against citizens' voice bears clear testimony to this. We should remember that the National Assembly in 2019 engaged in the passage of the Anti-Social Media Bill also known as the Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019 for the regulation of the social media at the risk of closing the free spaces for people's participation in discourses in Nigeria.

We should also consider the effect of the different levels of censorship, silently and selectively going on against the media houses in Nigeria. Owing to the effort at suppression of the voice and freedom, and the unstructured means of seeking redress in Nigeria, the state has been thrown into different dimensions of violence, social unrest and social

movements. The EndSARS protest, Occupy Nigeria Movement are the manifest instances of such situations in the country of our time under political party leaderships.

The second part of the governance discourse under the study is in the area of policy making and public service delivery and also in regulatory burden. Indeed, top on the weaknesses of Nigeria's governance matrix is on public policy making and public service delivery. All the sectors involved in policy formulation and implementation – legislature, executive and regulatory agencies have been negatively impacted upon by the shortcomings of political parties and party politics in Nigeria. This can be seen in the qualities of laws made by the parliament and the spate of failure in implementation.

The selection process of parties' candidates for elections is concerning. The absence of control by the political parties of their members in political offices and the clear but continuous support of bad conduct by party members in and out of office to the detriment of the general public, indicates collusion against good governance by the political parties. The implications are quite obvious in the quality of our roads, health services, schools, etc. People's disappointments in these sectors are clear testimonies to this reality.

Instead of given attention to these situations, political parties engage at different times in politicking to sustain themselves in power but do little or nothing in ensuring that the state is well governed. Hence, their activities and struggles to control the resources of the state negate the real essence of governance.

The third and final part of this include the rule of law, protection of property rights and independence of the Judiciary. Without engaging much on this, it can be stated this aspect leaves much to be desired.

Conclusion

Party politics can have both positive and negative implications. The specific implications of party politics depend on a number of factors, including the strength of democratic institutions, the level of corruption, and the degree of ethno-religious polarization. On the positive side, political parties play a pivotal role in shaping the governance landscape of Nigeria. They are not only essential for the democratic process but also significantly influence the effectiveness of governance. Nigeria, as a diverse and populous nation, has a multi-party system that has evolved over the years.

The historical context of party politics in Nigeria has been marked by periods of military rule, party fragmentation, and power struggles. In recent years, there have been positive developments, such as increased political participation, electoral reforms, and efforts to strengthen the institutional framework of political parties.

Despite these positive developments, Nigeria faces several challenges in its political party system and governance. The proliferation of parties and frequent party switching among politicians has contributed to political instability, lack of ideological clarity, and the marginalization of smaller parties. Corruption remains a significant issue, undermining the credibility of political parties and the effectiveness of governance. Ethno-religious sentiments and regional divisions continue to influence party politics, often hindering the country's ability to build a truly inclusive political system.

Addressing the challenges of governance occasioned by skewed party politics requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders, including the government, civil society organizations, and the citizens. Thus, there is the need to ensure the promotion of civic education and political awareness to help citizens make informed choices and reduce the

impact of ethno-religious sentiments in party politics. Strengthening internal democracy within political parties and encourage ideological clarity, is essential to help voters make more informed decisions and promote accountability. Efforts should be made to ensure that all regions and ethnic groups are represented in political parties and governance. Encouraging dialogue and cooperation among different regions and groups can help bridge the divides that often hinder progress. Civil society organizations should play an active role in monitoring political parties and promoting accountability.

Their involvement can help keep parties in check and ensure they prioritize the interests of the people. Political Parties should consider coalitions or alliances when necessary to present a united front on important issues. This can reduce fragmentation and foster more effective governance.

Above all, Nigeria's institutions need to be strengthened in order to make them more effective and accountable. This can be done by reforming the civil service, the judiciary, and the anti-corruption agencies. Also, there is need to enact laws that require the government to disclose its financial information beyond the Freedom of Information Act which has many restrictions.

Chapter Seven

Politics of Political Parties in Nigeria from the First Republic to 2023

- Nfor Eric Siben, PhD -

Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the political dynamics surrounding political parties in Nigeria, spanning the colonial era to the present day. The historical process of colonization in present-day Nigeria has engendered numerous obstacles in terms of development and governance in the contemporary Nigerian state. A significant occurrence of historical significance during the colonial era in Nigeria was the coercive amalgamation of more than 350 distinct ethnic groups into a singular political entity, presently recognized as the Nigerian state.

The formation and subsequent development of political parties in Nigeria, particularly during the colonial period and beyond, were influenced by ethnic nationalities characterized by a prevailing sense of fear, suspicion, domination, and strategic manipulation. These ethnic groups sought to attain leadership positions and control over resources through political power, thus highlighting the significance of ethnicity in this context.

The aforementioned phenomenon serves as the foundation and genesis of the ethnically stratified society in Nigeria. Consequently, interpersonal connections have been established based on ethnic divisions, resulting in the pervasive presence of fear, suspicion, and

power dynamics among all ethnic groups within the nation. This pervasive influence has permeated various aspects of Nigerian society, including its political landscape, which is not exempt from these dynamics (Owaifo, 2016). The work also looked at the functions of political parties as anticipated by Nigerians in a true democratic setup.

This is corroborated by Adebayo (2016) when he stated that political party is one of the major tools for aggregating and mobilizing the various interests and resources for the purpose of nation building. This is the tradition in all climes that embrace democracy, expectedly when Nigeria gained independence, people were happy that at least the era of colonialism is gone thereby giving Nigerians the opportunity to freely participate in the electoral process, and do things in their own ways. Ibeanu, (2019) further explained that Nigerian political parties have been widely studied, dating to their early beginnings during colonial rule. The development of parties has brought about a profound transformation in the structure of political regimes (Duverger, (1954). Adebayo (2006) corroborated that political parties are important institutional component of liberal democracy and electoral process.

Parties produce candidates, set the parameters of issues and agenda within which elections are to be fought and are furthermore expected to perform these duties from one election to another. In the views of Animashaun (2010) and Lewis (2003) as cited in Katsina (2016), party politics and party system in the Fourth Republic showed that most of the parties are defective in terms of cohesive socio-political ideologies for attracting and securing membership loyalty.

Other visible traits of most of the parties include their seasonal life cycles, policy inconsistencies, absence of institutional and financial

autonomy, absence of genuine national outlook, and lack of strong support base beyond the immediate neighborhoods of their leaders. Then, there are also issues of ceaseless defections of party elites occasioned by absence of internal democracy and accountability, and intra-party crises usually resulting into factions violently competing against each other within these parties.

The configuration of the Nigerian state significantly influences the extent of underdevelopment and inadequate integration among the many ethnic groups in the country. The aforementioned animosity is evident in the political dynamics between these groups, characterized by disdain, competition, distrust, animosity, and enduring apprehension regarding potential subjugation by the dominant factions inside the country (Owaifo, 2016). The individual elaborated on the notion that the genesis of ethnicity in Nigeria may be attributed to the country's colonial history, namely the merging of Nigeria's Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914.

According to Osadolor's research conducted in 1998, as referenced in Owaifo's scholarly work published in 2016, it may be argued that the act of amalgamation was not conceived as a federal concept. Lugard's vision for Nigeria did not encompass the establishment of a federal state. According to the colonial office's statement, when Lugard presented his recommendations on 9 May 1913, it was expressed that the state envisioned by Sir Lugard's proposals defies classification (Osadolor, 1998 in Owaifo, 2016). Throughout the pre-colonial era and subsequent independence of Nigeria, ethnicity has exerted a significant and ongoing influence on the political landscape of the nation.

The historical comprehension of the Nigerian state provides a deeper insight into the underlying causes of the significant political disputes

that exist both within and between political parties in Nigeria's political sphere. These disputes are marked by a dearth of intra-party ideologies, amicable inter-party relations, and democratic practices, resulting in the emergence of ethnic, religious, and regional sentiments in Nigeria following its independence in 1960. The aforementioned distinctions have significant ramifications for how political parties have emerged since 1923, as influenced by the Clifford Constitution of 1922 up till the present time.

The present discourse, however aims to elucidate the evolutionary trajectory of political parties in Nigeria, as well as the underlying rationales that have propelled the proliferation of party politics in the nation and the concomitant dynamics in the behaviour of political parties and their stakeholders from colonial era to date.

Understanding Political Party

The concept of political party has been subject to varying definitions by researchers across different regions globally. A political party can be defined as an assemblage of individuals united by shared policy positions and perspectives, working together to advance a broad political objective, namely the acquisition, control, and maintenance of governmental power and its associated positions, for as long as is politically viable (Agbaje, 1999).

Furthermore, it may be argued that a political party can be defined as an organized collective that endeavors to secure the election of candidates to public office by providing them with a distinct party affiliation, which serves as a recognizable label for the electorate (Wilson, 1992 as referenced in Anifowose & Enemu, 1999). Neumann (2008) posits that a political party can be defined as a societal organization of individuals who actively engage in politics and vie for public endorsement against opposing factions or

individuals with differing perspectives.

According to Chikendu (2003), Edmund Burke defines a political party as "a collective of individuals who are united in their pursuit of advancing the welfare of the nation based on a shared set of principles." According to Ofoegbu, a political party is an organized group of individuals who are collectively dedicated to advancing the shared national interests that they have mutually endorsed. According to Ofoegbu (1976), a political party can be defined as an organized group of individuals who share similar beliefs and goals, working together to promote and advance agreed-upon objectives. According to Johari (2008), a political party can be understood as a platform or apparatus utilized to engage in the pursuit of political power. Johari posited that a political party serves as a mechanism to rally public support during electoral periods, functioning as a tool for consolidating diverse interests that necessitate assertive expression.

According to Curtis (2005), a political party can be defined as a collective of individuals who share specific political ideologies or are willing to endorse the party's candidate, collaborate towards achieving electoral success, and acquire and sustain political influence. Kura (2011), states that political parties can be defined as associations comprised of individuals who share shared ideas, ideals, and aspirations, and who actively engage in structured competitions or conflicts to acquire political authority. To John (1995), political parties are collective structures that facilitate the organization of political office competitions.

Moreover, Chhibber and Kollman (2004), assert that individuals affiliated with a political party participate in electoral competitions using a common designation. From a limited perspective, a political party can be conceptualized as solely comprising the assemblage of

candidates who seek public office while aligning themselves with a certain party affiliation.

In a more comprehensive sense, political parties encompass the entirety of the structure that facilitates the electoral success of a collective of candidates. This includes individuals who align themselves with a specific political party, such as voters and volunteers, as well as the official party organizations that provide support for the election campaigns of the party's candidates. Moreover, legislators who are affiliated with the party and hold positions within the government also form an integral part of the political party apparatus (Sarah, Anzia; & Olivia, 2016). The concept of a political party is legally defined in numerous nations, with governments establishing specific criteria that an organization must meet to be recognized as a legitimate political party (Avnon, 2007). In their seminal work, Henig and Pinda (1969) similarly sought to delineate the concept of political parties as a collective of individuals who collaborate to attain specific political objectives, typically centered around the acquisition of governmental power.

Furthermore, a political party is an institution made up of people who share the same political belief, value or ideology (Umeh & Oyari, 2020). In the 19th century Europe, citizenship was gradually extended to the mass of the people, quickly followed by the emergence of representative institutions, the need for elections, and a subsequent expansion in the number. He points out that political parties became necessary to create organs, which could channel the electoral needs of the people and also provide the base for representative institutions.

A political party can also be described 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 programme based on their ideology (Oyediran (2002); Obialor (2011) cited in Umeh, & Oyari, (2020).

Evolution of Political Parties in Nigeria and Reasons for Party Politicking

The emergence of political parties in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial administration, specifically the introduction of the Clifford Constitution in 1922, which marked the first election in colonial Nigeria. During this period, political parties primarily focused on advocating for independence. It was evident that the desire for independence was particularly prominent in the western part of the country. The National Youth Movement (NYM) played a significant role in spearheading independence efforts in the western region. This eventually led to the formation of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) political party, which was led by Sir Herbert Macaulay in 1922.

Subsequently, numerous other political parties emerged in Nigeria (Owaifo, 2016). It is noteworthy that the formation of political parties in Nigeria from the pre-colonial era has been influenced by regional, ethnic, and religious apprehensions led by individuals from diverse locations. The region of Northern Nigeria, due to its relatively slower pace of growth, particularly in the field of education, as well as its conservative tendencies, was not adequately prepared for independence before the expected timeline set by the Southern region. This evolution elucidated the disparities between the two regions.

The Northern region, displaying a notable degree of contentment with the ongoing colonial governance, exhibited a delayed inclination towards the establishment of a political party. It was not until the year

1951 that the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) was formed, spearheaded by Sir Ahmadu Bello and other prominent northerners.

The organization in question emerged as a derivative of the cultural group recognized as Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa. Generally speaking, the northern region of the country had mostly been unaffected by the nationalist movement, which had garnered considerable support in the southern region. The deliberate policy of the British government, particularly the principle of complete non-interference with Islamic beliefs, the discouragement of missionary activities for the same purpose, and the relative isolation of the Northern region from the impacts of modern economic development, resulted in the absence of any substantial radical group that would pose a challenge to the colonial administration (Post, 1963).

The aforementioned events have significant repercussions for the characteristics and dynamics of political parties within the nation. According to Owaifo (2016), the post-independence party activities of various political parties in the nation were predominantly regionally and ethnically oriented. This phenomenon can be attributed to the prevailing fear and suspicion among different ethnic groups, which led to the emergence of parties with strong regional and ethnic affiliations after the departure of the colonial masters.

It is important to acknowledge that the emergence of political parties in Nigeria can be traced back to the nationalist movement. These parties were primarily regionally based and characterized by sectional ideologies and philosophies. They also exhibited a significant cultural and religious affinity, sentiments, and orientation. Consequently, political parties in Nigeria developed along ethnic lines, with a dominant figure at the center exercising political power to the detriment of the collective interests of the party as a whole.

According to Owaifo (2016), the process of political party formation during the early days in Nigeria primarily revolved around clashes of personalities. Sir Ahmadu Bello, a prominent figure associated with the Northern People Congress (NPC), advocated for the interest of the northern region. On the other hand, the Action Group (AG) represented the political extension of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba cultural organization established in 1947.

The AG primarily focused on regional and sectional concerns, specifically aligned with the interest of the Yoruba people residing in the western part of the country and led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The Western House of Assembly and the broader political landscape in the Western area were largely controlled by AG. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) led by Herbert Macauley and founded in 1944 had significant influence over Eastern Nigeria but jostled for votes in the Western region. Macauley was succeeded by Nnamdi Azikiwe during the post-independence era of Nigeria (Owaifo, 2016). However, it is worth noting that there were other fringe parties representing different tribes and political groups.

The establishment of an ethnic foundation, albeit indirectly, had subsequent implications for the social, economic, and political framework of the Nigerian society. Consequently, the Nigerian state faced a significant challenge as political parties in the country eventually emerged along ethnic, religious, and cultural divisions in their pursuit of power and dominance.

This marked the emergence of a privileged social class in Nigeria, characterized by their relatively high levels of education, exposure, and economic influence. Members of this elite class played a significant role in shaping the policies and direction of the colonial government. However, those who fell out of favour with the colonial administration became increasingly dissatisfied, adopting more

radical and assertive approaches in their resistance against colonial rule, ultimately contributing to the agitation for independence from the colonial powers. One of the noteworthy individuals was Herbert Macaulay, a member of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC). His political party won the two seats in the initial elections conducted by the colonial authority in Lagos and Calabar in 1923. The rise of the upper class can be attributed to concerns regarding potential control by diverse ethnic factions.

The Place of Political Parties in a Democratic Setting

It is incontestable that political parties have remained vital and indispensable tools in institutionalizing democracy in most democratic institutions in the world today. Arising from the catalytic feature of political parties, they serve an intermediate role in democratic societies by acting as a connecting cord between the government and the people, thereby ensuring all tenets of democracy are upheld in the country.

This justifies why most literatures explain democracy in the context of political parties. The strength and effectiveness of political parties is directly proportional to the degree of resilience democracy enjoy. Political parties are pivotal to democracy as they serve as vehicles for the contestation for power. From these, it is therefore a truism that political parties pose as an instrumental paddle of democratic foundations, which employ diverse processes in ensuring such democratic structures are guarded and protected (Orji, 2013; Agudiegwu et al (2015); & Omotola, (2009) cited in Adekeye & Abdulrauf, (2017).

Political Parties in the First Republic

During the initial period of the republic, political dynamics and party structures were primarily influenced by factors such as ethnicity,

religion, regionalism, and other deep-rooted sentiments, similar to the pre-colonial era. This has had an impact on the efficacy and implementation of effective governance, diverging from the practices inherent in other global democracies.

The advent of independence in Nigeria posed numerous obstacles for political parties. The initial sense of joy and shared determination to combat a shared adversary, namely the colonial masters, transformed each faction and eventually evolved into rival contenders vying for dominance in the quest for political power at the core. This phenomenon also resulted in alterations to the operational methods of each political party, leading to their descent to ethnic jingoism with its negative implications for democracy. As the contest to replace the departing colonial rulers intensified, each political party increasingly relied on garnering support from its respective ethnic constituency.

According to Muhammad, from the time of independence until the fall of the First Republic, there was a lack of a genuine national party.

Additionally, the process of national integration was hindered by heightened ethnic chauvinism, bigotry, and extreme intolerance fueled by the actions of various political parties. The NCNC, before exhibiting some inclination towards national representation, had a decline in influence as its leader, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, witnessed a decrease in popularity among the populace, transitioning from being seen as "Zik of Africa" to being mostly associated with the Igbo ethnic group (Muhammad, 2007).

According to Egbefo and Oghomo (2014), during the conclusion of the First Republic, political parties in Nigeria got involved in a phenomenon referred to as the politics of ethnic mobilization. This shift was a result of changes in the political landscape influenced by the certainty of independence and its impact on the operating

environment of political parties. The influence of this phenomenon on the character and essence of the parties can be analyzed from two distinct perspectives. Initially, inter-party dynamics were marked by fierce competition for control at the centre.

Additionally, there emerged internal conflicts within parties, which verged on a struggles for supremacy and the exertion of dominant influence over party structures. This was particularly evident within the AG and the NCNC, as party members engaged in power struggles and sought to assert their authority within the party apparatus. During the period under consideration, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe encountered difficulties in establishing his leadership in the NCNC as he faced opposition from prominent members such as Professor Eyo Eta and Kingsley Mbadiwe. Similarly, Chief Awolowo engaged in a bitter struggle against Chief Ladoke Akintola and others. The rise such anti-democratic inclinations had a significant role in the final fall of the Nigerian First Republic, resulting in the initiation of a military interregnum that persisted until October 1979, when a new civilian rule was established (Tyoden, (2002) cited in Egbefo & Ogbomo, 2014).

The political parties of the first republic did not deviate significantly from those established during the colonial period in terms of their composition, ideology, purpose, and intentions. These parties included the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe; the Action Group (AG), headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo; the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), led by Sir Ahmadu Bello; the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), led by Aminu Kano; and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), headed by Joseph Tarka.

Upon rigorous examination, it becomes evident that these political

Leaders of Political Parties in the First Republic



Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe

*First elected
President
and Leader
on the
platform of
the National
Council of
Nigerian
Citizens
(NCNC)*



**Sir. Abubakar
Tafawa Balewa**

*First and
only Prime
Minister and
deputy
Leader on the
platform of
the Northern
People's
Congress
(NPC)*



**Chief Obafemi
Awolowo**

*First
Premier of
the Western
Region and
Leader on
the platform
of the Action
Group (AG)*



Sir. Ahmadu Bello

*First
and only
Premier of
the Northern
Region and
Leader on the
platform of
the Northern
People's
Congress
(NPC)*



**Senator Joseph
Tarka**

*Member of
Parliament
and Leader
on the
platform of
the United
Middle Belt
Congress
(UMBC)*



Mallam. Amino Kano

*Member of
Parliament
and Leader
on the
platform of
the Northern
Elements
Progressive
Union
(NEPU)*

parties served as representations of either the primary ethnic groups within the nation or certain regions, namely the East, West, North, and Middle Belt (Dudley, 1982).

Formation of Political Parties in the Second Republic

The registration requirements stipulated in the 1979 constitution facilitated the expansion of political parties in terms of their organizational structure and leadership, allowing for representation from various regions of the country.

According to Jinadu (2011), before obtaining official registration as a political party, an organization must demonstrate a geographical spread across the country. This implies that the allocation of offices and membership within political parties must encompass the entirety of the nation, adopting a national perspective rather than appearing to represent certain regions, religion, or ethnic group. Consequently, this requirement ensured that every party possessed a wide spread throughout Nigeria.

The parties which met the guidelines and were registered were: National Party of Nigeria (NPN); Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN); Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP); Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP). Later, Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) was registered joining the initial five in the fray.

Formation of Political Parties in the Third Republic

According to Ojo (2020), the process of political party development in the third republic diverged from that of earlier republics. The political transformation initiative during the military rule of General Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) was marked by a systematic and gradual approach. A significant element of this agenda entailed the deliberation surrounding the selection of a political system that

Nigeria ought to embrace. In pursuit of this objective, a Political Bureau was established in 1986, which subsequently produced a report. This report put out various recommendations, one of which was the adoption of a two-party system for Nigeria's Third Republic (Osita, n.d.).

In this context, the government established and provided financial support for two political parties known as the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Odivwri claimed that although being established and financially supported by the government of the federal republic, there persisted certain aspects of ethnic and religious sentiments inside the parties. The visibility of these factors was seen in the membership and composition of the two political parties. The SDP had a preference for individuals from the southern region, whilst the NRC was mostly aligned with the Hausa Fulani North, as seen by their operational activities (Odivwri, 2011).

The Alliance for Democracy (AD) was established with the collaboration of various regional pressure groups, namely the Eastern Mandate Union, the People's Consultative Forum, the National Democratic Alliance (NADECO), and the Southern Leaders Forum. According to Maja-Pearce (1999), certain factions expressed opposition against Sani Abacha's attempt to secure self-succession.

Formation of Political Parties in the Fourth Republic

The Fourth Republic, which emerged out of necessity, was consistently influenced by religious and ethnic factors. The All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) was predominantly controlled by the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group from the North. Conversely, the Alliance for Democracy (AD) succeeded the Action Group led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and subsequently gained dominance in the six Yoruba-speaking states of Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo.

This dominance continued until 2003 when the AD lost control of all the states except Lagos. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) was often regarded as the sole political party with a comprehensive national representation, owing to its leadership structure and membership composition. However, during the 2011 general elections, the manifestation of ethnic and regional politics became apparent. Following the death of Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'adua, some Northerners expressed opposition towards the transfer of power to the South, hence initiating resistance against the presidency of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (Owaifo, 2016).

The newly registered political parties, such as the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), were observed and interpreted as being representative of the Igbo ethnic group due to their ethno-religious and regional characteristics. Similarly, the ACN was viewed as a revival of the A.G. or UPN parties, which were predominantly rooted in the Yoruba region. On the other hand, the CPC and ANPP were associated with the Hausa/Fulani. The promotion of ethnic nationalism in Nigeria can be attributed to two significant factors: the enduring impact of colonialism and the monopolization of power by large ethnic groups, leading to the marginalization of minorities.

Another factor contributing to ethnic divisions is the lack of effective leadership in promoting national unity among the diverse ethnic groups within the nation (Aluko, 2003). According to Babangida (2002), the presence of widespread poverty and unemployment leads to feelings of alienation and insecurity among individuals, hence fostering a preference among Nigerians to seek solace in ethnic affiliations.

According to Ekundayo (2016), the conceptualization of party politics in the Fourth Republic was grounded on the notion that political

parties serve as robust foundations and tools for the recruitment of competent leaders and the cultivation, entrenchment, and consolidation of democracy. In light of the aforementioned circumstances, General Abdusalami Abubakar assumed control of the government and proceeded to disband the five political parties that had been officially recognized by the Abacha dictatorship.

Additionally, all subsequent elections slated for the period were nullified. A novel transition program was implemented, accompanied by the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The regulatory body initially provided provisional registration to nine political parties to conduct the 1998 Local Government elections.

However, it required that full registration would only be given to parties that achieved a minimum of 10% of the total votes cast in 24 states. Following the conclusion of the elections, three prominent political parties, namely the Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), completed the registration process and subsequently participated in the 1999 general elections. Both the African Democratic Congress (ADC) and the All People's Party (APP) fielded a single presidential candidate for the 1999 presidential election. During the initial stage of the fourth republic (1999-2003), except for the Alliance for Democracy, all political parties exhibited a national perspective.

However, the registration of additional political parties resulted in a further division along sectional lines. By August 2002, three more political parties, namely the United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP), National Democratic Party (NDP), and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), had been officially registered. By December 2002, the total number of registered political parties had increased to thirty, as

shown by Chizea (2004) and Omodia (2010).

None of the political parties can be attributed to possessing any specific guiding principle or political or economic viewpoint from an ideological standpoint. The individuals in question can be characterized as factions of political opportunists and unlikely allies, lacking a shared vision for the future of Nigeria. According to Ekundayo (2016), this undermines the fundamental principles of political parties.

Upon securing victories in the federal and state elections of 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011, several political parties swiftly distanced themselves from the general populace. There existed apprehension regarding the potential pursuit of a clandestine agenda for the establishment of a one-party system by the federal government under the PDP. However, this concern was alleviated in the latter part of 2012 and the early part of 2013, when opposition groups, namely ACN, CPC, and ANPP, merged to create the APC. This merger was undertaken to provide formidable competition to the PDP in forthcoming elections.

Dode's prediction regarding the potential downfall of the PDP was based on his assertion that the fourth republic could face significant challenges unless proactive measures are taken to address the need for political party reform. It is imperative to promptly undertake measures aimed at reversing the adverse trajectory and transforming political parties into effective tools for the recruitment of political leaders and the consolidation of democracy (Dode, 2010 as cited in Ekundayo, 2016).

The Evolution and Political Power Dynamics between Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC)

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

The origins of this phenomenon can be attributed to a widely supported resistance movement known as the G34. The G34 transformed from its origins as the Institute of Civil Society, which was established in the latter part of 1997 to educate individuals about their rights and responsibilities during a period of military governance. The Institute transformed, evolving into a collective of 18 individuals primarily consisting of politicians from the northern region. Their discontent stemmed from General Abacha's proposed plan of self-succession. The aforementioned group was then expanded to include 34 individuals, referred to as G34, who were distinguished Nigerians hailing from various regions of the country.

On 24 February 1998, these individuals together penned a private correspondence to General Abacha, urging him to reconsider his course of action (Maja-Pearce 1999). The organization was perceived to possess substantial financial resources and had a significant number of retired generals and senior military commanders among its members. This composition raised doubts among many individuals regarding the organization's intentions and legitimacy. The Party proper was established by the collaboration of prominent individuals from the G34, a political coalition, under the leadership of Dr. Alex Ekwueme, who served as the Vice-President of Nigeria from 1979 to 1983.

This initiative involved the participation of various other political factions. Several political groups were involved in the Nigerian political landscape, such as the All Nigeria Congress (ANC), New Era

Alliance (NERA), and the United Nigerian Peoples Party (UNPP).

With a diverse membership comprising both old and contemporary politicians from all states of the federation, the party was regarded as having wide-ranging support base and stood to benefit from its inclusive composition and origins. Prominent individuals affiliated with the party included Chief Alex Ekwueme (Chairperson, Board of Trustees), General Olusegun Obasanjo, Mallam Adamu Ciroma, Chief Solomon Lar (National Chairman), Alhaji Sule Lamido, Chief Jim Nwobodo, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, Chief Don Etiebet, and Dr. Tonye Graham-Douglas.

The aforementioned political party emerged victorious in the general elections of 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011, despite the prevailing perception of significant irregularities in all elections except for the 2011 polls. These irregularities encompassed issues such as unreliable voter registrations, inadequate organizational measures, instances of voter intimidation, manipulation of votes, and an overall deficiency in election security.

All Progressives Congress

Formed in February 2013, the party is the result of a merger of Nigeria's three largest opposition parties - the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) along with a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and the new PDP - a faction of the ruling People's Democratic Party. The resolution was signed by Tom Ikimi, who represented the ACN; Senator Annie Okonkwo on behalf of APGA; Ibrahim Shekarau, the Chairman of ANPP's Merger Committee; and Garba Shehu, the Chairman of CPC's Merger Committee.

The party received approval from the nation's Independent National

Electoral Commission (INEC) on 31 July 2013 to become a political party and subsequently withdrew the operating licenses of the three parties that merged (the ACN, CPC and ANPP).

In November 2013, five serving Governors from the governing PDP defected to the APC: Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, Abdulfatah Ahmed of Kwara State, Rabi'u Kwankwaso of Kano State, Murtala Nyako of Adamawa State and Aliyu Wamakko of Sokoto State. It had been previously reported that Governors Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu of Niger State and Sule Lamido of Jigawa State were set to defect from the Peoples Democratic Party to the APC; however, both ended up remaining with the Peoples Democratic Party. Amid the governors' defections, nearly 50 federal legislators (including Speaker of the House of Representatives Aminu Tambuwal) joined the party, adding to the 137 legislators in the APC as a result of the prior merger of the smaller opposition parties.

These legislative defections initially gave the APC a slim majority of 186 legislators in the Lower House out of a total of 360 legislators; however, subsequent political wrangling and pressure from political factions and interests outside the National Assembly, gave the party only 37 additional legislators thus giving the APC a nominal majority of 172 out of 360 Legislators, as opposed to the PDP's 171 (although some smaller PDP-allied parties held the balance of the other seats). This was further confirmed when the party seated 179 members on 15 January 2015 when the House resumed after a long recess to finally affirm its majority.

Political Power Dynamics between Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC)

The arrival of the All Progressives Congress on the political scene of Nigeria changed the dynamics of politics in the country haven shown

abilities to oust the 16-years rule of the People's Democratic Party in the 2015 general elections. The merger of different political parties that made up the APC were strange to each other in terms of ideologies, aspirations and strategies. The level of conflicts of candidate imposition and self-interest within the PDP leading to the 2015 general elections seems to have given APC an advantage because it created serious intra-party conflicts, which shook the party to its roots.

The internal conflicts within the PDP had consequential implications for the party's performance in the 2015 general elections, resulting in its defeat by the All Progressives Congress (APC) led by Muhammadu Buhari as its presidential candidate. The formation and registration of the APC were not primarily intended to address crises arising from the inherent ideological diversities within the new party. This perspective is supported by Ekundayo's assertion that even the APC has not been exempted from the political turbulence that has affected political parties in Nigeria. Upon the registration of the APC, there was a notable sense of anticipation surrounding the emergence of an alternative platform for the efficient recruitment of political leaders.

Regrettably, the resolution of the internal conflicts within the prominent political parties in Nigeria remains elusive in light of the ongoing events. The aforementioned development has significantly impacted the roles and obligations of individuals in Nigeria, specifically in their role as effective instruments for the recruitment of political leaders (Ekundayo, 2016).

It is in the light of this that Babalola and Abba (2017) postulated that the issue of candidate selection process within Nigeria's political parties is often faulty. They went further to state that in Nigeria, primary elections are the most common method of selecting party

flag-bearers, and more often than not, this process is undermined by party elites who deploy money to influence choices thereby, leading to the outright collapse of the party structures, which are expected to sustain internal democracy.

Atiku Abubakar had warned after decamping from PDP to APC that the ills of imposition of candidates were as a result of lack of internal party democracy. Ugbede (2017) went further to quote the former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar at the second annual conference of the Inter-Party Advisory Council, IPAC, in Abuja lamenting the deficiencies in the two major parties, APC and PDP, and that true democracy requires internal democracy in the political parties. He stressed that there is a close relationship between democracy within political parties and democracy within the nation.

Put simply, you cannot give what you don't have. You cannot build democracy on a substructure of dictatorship and intolerance. A political party that constricts the freedom of its members cannot really offer freedom to the citizens of the nation. Democracy is not just an idea; it is a cultural practice. This means that efforts to deepen Nigeria's democracy must include efforts at democratizing our political parties. This perspective is amplified by Okah (2022) that "socio-political restriction and constraint have resulted in party wrangling, war of attrition, recrimination, acrimony, coordination dilemmas, and cross-carpeting particularly in the two major political parties.

The institutionalization of democracy in our internal party processes will help us deepen democracy in Nigeria. Leaders are more likely to tolerate opposition from citizens and other parties if they tolerate it within their own party." These and more are most often the reasons of internal wrangling within political parties which has led to aggrieved

members either decamping to other political parties or forming new parties (Ugbede, 2017).

Conclusion

Looking through the prism of the historical evolution of political parties in Nigeria, we can conclude that formation and composition of political parties in Nigeria from the colonial era to date suggests reasons for inter and intra-party politicking which has in no small measure affected the democratic processes especially from the First Republic to date.

Parties' efforts to win election at all costs and control political power at the centre have always been one of the major reasons for the level of political conflicts emanating from ethnicity, regionalism, and politics of personality to clack of party ideologies and democratic culture. Most parties in Nigeria's democracy are more or less strange bedfellows because of their differences in structures and ideologies even though constituting one mega party.

Due to the absence of genuine national outlook, and lack of strong support base, absence of internal democracy and ideologies in political parties, parties merge to form mega parties with little or no regards to the fundamental responsibilities they owe their followers.

Unfortunately, this has made nation building and deepening democracy hardly the agenda of Nigerian politicians and political parties as well. Cross-carpeting, proliferation of political parties with no ideologies, endless political violence, religious and ethnic clashes, legitimacy crises are all fallouts from the struggle for political power with disregard to the unity and development of the nation. Till date, ethnicity plays a significant role in shaping the social structure of the Nigerian state, hence exerting a profound influence on the origins and evolutionary paths of political parties in Nigeria.

It can be recommended that political parties should be held accountable for their abuse of the system and failure to represent the interests of the Nigerian people. Politics of ethnic, regional and personal interests must be discouraged by political stakeholders in order to promote nation building and deepening democratic culture for a better Nigerian state devoid of political tension or vindictiveness and acrimony in the polity.

Members of political parties must not be allowed to decamp from one party to another if there are no justifiable reasons as stipulated in the electoral act for such actions in order to enshrine the culture of democracy into the political party system. Politicians who are meant to use these political parties as platforms to represent their people must account for their periods in office by way of providing dividends of democracy to their electorates.

Chapter Eight

Political Parties and Mass Movement in Northern Nigeria

- AbdulAziz Sani Zango PhD -

Introduction

The history of political parties formation and emergence in northern Nigeria like in other parts of the country, has been characterized by struggle and resistance against the vested interests imposed upon the colonial subjects by the colonial government through the institutions of traditional feudal aristocracy, obtained throughout the three colonies and protectorates that were amalgamated into a single political entity in 1914 as Nigeria, and which they found expedient and utilised in establishing and consolidating their colonial administration and perpetuating their exploitative goals through obnoxious multiple taxations and forced labour.

This trend resulted in growing mutual discord between common men in Northern Nigeria and the feudal aristocrats and by extension their colonial masters. Even when the largest political party in the north known as Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) emerged, it only succeeded in consolidating the powers of these feudal aristocrats and the British colonial rule against the popular will.

Consequently, this generated anxiety, resentment and bred militancy and rebellion, in forms of mass collective action waged for the liberation and redemption of the colonial subjects particularly the

downtrodden masses. This was what explained the resurgence of radical political movements, associations and parties like Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) among others that dominated and became the nucleus of the politics of stiff resistance and fierce opposition in Northern Nigeria, which later found expression in the activities of mass parties like People's Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) in the second republic and by extension to the current fourth republic in the operations of mass movements like Kwankwasiyya Movements.

This chapter examines the historical evolution of political parties' formation and the nature of their collective mass action against the unpopular colonial and feudal aristocratic order in northern Nigeria and categorically explores the factors that breed mass movements in forms of collective political activism against the domination and exploitation of the ruling class in northern Nigeria.

Political Parties

According to Coleman and Rosenberg (1966, p14), political parties are "associations formally organised with explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and to some extent maintaining legal control, either singly or in coalition or electoral competition with other associations over the personnel and the policy of a sovereign state."

In a narrow sense, Sartori (cited in Yashushi, 2023), sees political party as closely related to electoral competition. In his words, "a political is a group that is officially recognised as being part of the electoral process and who can support (put forth) candidates for elections (free or not) on a regular basis."

In a similar vein, Kura (2011, p269), observed that political parties are formally recognised organisations whose members share certain

common values, ideals and aspirations about how society should be politically, socio-culturally and economically organised for the common good, and aspire to translate these ideals and values through the control of government by placing their representatives in free, fair and honestly conducted elections, without harassment, intimidation and threat of violence.

In view of the explanations above, it can be established that political parties are crucial elements of democratic systems. As they carry along their operations of political mobilization, enlightenment and education, they also serve as mediums through which electoral processes are conducted, and also a tools for safeguard against injustice and power abuse, and these always revolve around mass protests and action.

In view of this, Reily (2008, p3), argues that political parties perform a number of essential functions that make democracy in modern states possible. They represent political constituencies and interests, recruit and socialize new candidates for offices, set policy making agendas, integrate disparate groups and individuals into the democratic process, and form the basis of stable political coalitions and hence governments. Collectively, this means that political parties are one of the primary channels for building accountable and responsive government.

In addition, Diamond (cited in kura, 2011, p270), stresses that political parties remain important if not essential instruments for representing political constituencies and interests, aggregating demands and preferences, recruiting and socialising new candidates for office, organising the electoral competition for power, crafting policy alternatives, setting the policy making agenda, forming effective government, and integrating groups and individuals into the

democratic process. As well as serving as pressure group by means of opposition function. (Kura, 2011, p270).

There are various types of political parties as has been classified by scholars in accordance with their composition, ideological labels or modus operandi. Durvenger (cited in Danjibo & Ashindorbe, 2018, p88), distinguishes three variants of political parties namely: (i) Cadre Party which are led by individuals with higher socio-economic status in the society (such as bourgeoisies and aristocrats); (ii) Mass Party which enjoy popular support and mobilizes a broad segment of the society through the development of a large and complex organization and (iii) Devotee Party which are tied to the veneration of a particular charismatic leader such as in Communist societies.

Mass Movements

Mass Movements represent a coalition of political parties and associations enjoying popular support and working cooperatively towards achieving common political goals, such as constitutional and political reforms, fighting injustice and abuse of power, electoral frauds, and the general improvement in the socio-economic condition of the people etc.

In view of this, Stephen (2020, p6), described social movements as being made up of diverse groups and individuals organised around shared identity, change-oriented goals and widespread voluntary participation. They often engage in civil resistance, which is a method of waging conflict that includes a wide range of non-violent tactics, including protests, sit-ins, boycotts, strike and civil disobedience, that are used to shift power and disrupt the status quo. They are rooted in communities that experience real or perceived injustices, and can mobilize collectively to pressure power holders. (Stephen, 2020, p6). In a similar vein, Dictionary.com (2023), describes mass movements

as "an organized effort by a large number of people, especially those not forming part of the elite of a given society, to bring about pervasive changes in existing social, economic, or political institutions, frequently characterized by charismatic leadership."

The Historical Development of Political Parties and the Politics of Mass Movements in Northern Nigeria

The political parties that evolved in Nigeria under colonial rule were products of necessity, this is because their formation arose out of the need to challenge and or even abrogate colonial rule, thus served as instruments of mass mobilization toward community development, racial liberation, welfarism, political and constitutional reform, and ultimately political independence of the country. (Saka & Ifejika, 2017, p30). Most of these emerged as political movements or rather associations from the beginning with the first ever known as People's Union formed in 1908 by Herbert Macaulay with the primary motive of mobilizing popular support against the imposition of tax and general rates by the colonial administration.

With the introduction of Elective Principle of 1922 and new Legislative Assembly that allowed four elected Nigerian representatives from Lagos and Calabar, under colonial Governor Sir Hugh Clifford, People's Union transformed into the first political party in Nigeria's political history named, Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay, Karimu Kotun, Adeniyi Jones among others, in order to contest election into the newly created Legislative Assembly (Ojiako, 1981, p9-10).

Subsequently, towards 1938, other movements emerged, the most popular among them being Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC 1946, Action Group (AG) 1948, Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) 1950, United Middle

Belt Congress (1955), (Saka & Ifejika, 2017, Danjibo & Ashindorbe, 2018, Kano State Directorate of People's Redemption Party (PRP) cited in Daily watchpress.com, 2023).

In contrast, the historical development of political parties in Northern Nigeria could be explained in the context of delay tactics employed by the colonial administration by not allowing the early formation of political parties similar to what had been allowed in southern Nigeria. This may be attributed to their imperial desire to willingly control the northern colony and protectorate since the amalgamation of 1914, through the Governor's proclamations, and despite the agitation by the Nigerian nationalists for political and constitutional reforms, that led to the introduction of Elective Principle in 1922. Still, northern Nigeria remained under the control of the colonial governor and the native authority dominated by feudal aristocrats. This was captured by Ojiako (1980,p10), who observed that the Nigerian Legislative Council introduced by Sir Hugh Clifford whose membership was expanded to 36 including four elected Nigerian representatives from Lagos and Calabar, legislated only over the affairs of Southern provinces while in the Northern provinces, legislative powers were vested in the Governor alone. It was only in 1933, that all the northern departments were unified with southern administration.

Thus, it was not until the new colonial governor, Sir Arthur Richard introduced his constitution in 1946, which divided the country into three administrative regions (North, West and East), that development of political activities began to manifest, but mainly through cultural associations and movements like Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa, Northern Elements Progressive Association (NEPA), Borno Youth Movements, among others; some of which later transformed into political parties, that contested and assumed political control of the region. Predominantly, the political landscape

was under the control of Northern Peoples Congress (NPC). This is observed by Abdallah (in Dailytrust, Saturday 28th December, 2013) that significantly, the dominant political structure in northern Nigeria was established by Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) and was for the powerful and ruling elites. Similarly, Ibrahim (Daily Trust.com, Friday August, 14th, 2020) noted that NPC was the party of the Northern aristocracy structured and operated around the system of the Native Authority (NA). It was a conservative party that believed in maintaining stability and the power it controlled through the use of ruthless measures in repressing opposition.

In addition, their political romance with colonial administration especially in supporting and promoting colonial exploitative interests, through crude form of multiple taxations, forced labour, and other obnoxious racial discriminatory policies, set the party against the common people throughout the region. Consequently, these tendencies created spontaneous reaction in terms of defiant resistance, non-violent rebellion, civil disobedience and sometimes militancy against the feudal aristocrats and their colonial masters. In view of this development, the ordinary people detached themselves from the ruling class and came up with their own mass-based political associations such as the Northern Elements Peoples Assembly (NEPA), which later transformed into a popular political party, Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) as an alternative party that served as the vanguard of the masses, and also as an instrument for fighting against injustice, ignorance, inequality and human exploitation.

Hence, right from the onset of the political processes, to the party formation, everything was rooted in class struggle between vested interests by colonialists and the northern feudal aristocrats and bourgeoisies on one hand, and the common men, Talakawa,

comprising proletariats, peasants, pastoralists and labourers among others. And, since then the politics of northern Nigeria has invariably taken that trajectory. Thus, in the politics of the second republic, it manifested in the form of ideological struggle between the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP). In a similar vein, this has also translated in the politics of the fourth republic through political engagements and activities of mass political movements like Kwankwasiyya movement which transformed into a political party, New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP).

The Politics of Mass Movements in Northern Nigeria

The political movement that inspired the northern political activism in a radical way was the NCNC led nationwide campaign tour of 1946, embarked upon to mobilize and secure the mandate of the ordinary Nigerians, to lead a delegation to London in order to protest against the obnoxious provisions of the Richard constitution of 1946, imposed without any due regards and consideration of the Nigerian people. Out of this development emerged, NEPA in Kano on 1st October, 1946, as the first political mass movement in northern Nigeria which had a radical posture and disposition around its leaders like Habib Raji Abdallah, Abubakar Zukogi and Abdul Rahman Bida who were openly associated with the Zikist movement's wing under the NCNC (PRP constitution and manifesto at inecnigeria.org, 2023).

This development generated reaction from the British colonial government who swiftly moved to disband the NEPA members who were in public service including Abdurrahman Bida. Consequently, this marked the political exodus of NEPA members and leadership, moving to Lagos and joined ranks with the Zikist movement and intensified the national and political activism. In view of the new

development, the British colonial government attempted similar measures and moved to swiftly ban the Zikist movement in 1950. (PRP constitution and manifesto at inecnigeria.org, 2023).

Out of this repressive measures emerged Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), led by eight young Nigerians, namely: Bello Ijumu, Abba Maikwari, Mudi Sipikin, Magaji Dambatta, Baballiya Manaja, Musa Kaula, Abdulkadir Danjaji and Garba Bida, with Mallam Aminu Kano, Headmaster at Maru Teachers College, acting at the background and Mallam Sa'adu Zungur, the NCNC Federal Secretary, on 8th August, 1950. The party took off as a northern-based political party with deep national outlook and radical orientation (PRP constitution and manifesto at inecnigeria.org, 2023). This view was also captured by one of the founding members of NEPU, Alhaji Magaji Dambatta (in Nasidi, 2022, p27-28), who revealed that NEPU originated from NEPA, which was formed in 1947, and its members were mainly drawn from ordinary people.

However, the growing fear by the colonial government and Native Authority that the movement may transform into political party, pushed them to act quickly and crush then nascent movement, thus, most of the members were transferred out of Kano, to far-flung places.

But, that transfer only boosted the morale of their sympathizers who began to be defiant. Eventually, this culminated in a bold move three years later, precisely, on 8th August, 1950, when a group of young men with radical views and free of any obligation to the colonial government met in Kano. They decided on a programme of political agitation and activism, with set objectives to reform the oppressive feudal system and achieve political independence for Nigeria. Later, Malam Aminu Kano was brought into the struggle to serve as its leader.

Indeed, according to Kano State Directorate of People's Redemption Party (PRP) (cited in Dailywatchpress.com, 2023), NEPU was "the first political party in northern Nigeria, founded on 8th August, 1950, in Kano at a time when British colonial despotism was at its zenith.

The party arrived when the notorious, corrupt and oppressive Native Authority system, as the local tier of British colonial administration, subjected the citizens to different kinds of exploitation, illegal extortion and dehumanizing repression." Thus, as Abdullah (Daily Trust, Saturday 28th December, 2013) opined, it was touted as the poor man's alternative route to power, or at least, equity in the distribution of national wealth and emancipation of poor men from repressive rulers in various Emirates in northern Nigeria. Hence, its members were drawn largely from common people, tailors, peasants, traders and teachers, who saw the party as theirs.

In a similar vein, another NEPU political stalwart, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai (in Kano focus.com/08/08/2020) noted that NEPU was the first and only political party in the history of Nigeria formed solely not to only fight oppression and exploitation of the common man, Talakawa, by the ruling class in northern Nigeria, but also for the unity, freedom and independence of our motherland.

The party's ideology emerged in response to the socio-economic ills of British colonial domination and loudly questioned the existing social arrangements with fearless enthusiasm. The originality of its philosophy and actions made the party's mobilized masses, or Talakawa to reject all forms of oppression possible. There was a clear message of the need to stand up and struggle for freedom which appealed to the people (Kano State Directorate of Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) (cited in Daily watchpress.com, 2023).

As reflected in SAWABA (Freedom) declaration in 1950, NEPU

committed to the struggle to wrest the clutches of both British colonial authority and their collaborators, the Emirates aristocracies of northern Nigeria. (Bello, 2020).

The SAWABA Declaration was inspired by communist manifesto and it clearly spelt out the objective principles of the struggle and dedication towards emancipation of Talakawa from domination and exploitation of privileged few and their colonialist masters.

The declaration reads as follows:

1. *that the shocking state of social order as at the present, existing in northern Nigeria is due to nothing, but the family compact rule of the so called Native Authority in their present autocratic form.*
2. *that owing to this unscrupulous and vicious system of administration by the family compact rulers, and which has been established and fully supported by the British imperialist government, there is today in our society an antagonism of interest, manifesting itself as a class struggle between members of the vicious circle of Native Administration on one hand, and the ordinary Talakawa on the other.*
3. *that this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the Talakawa from the domination of these privileged few and by the reform of the present autocratic political institutions into democratic institutions and placing their democratic control in the hands of the Talakawa for whom alone they exist.*
4. *that this emancipation must be the work of the Talakawa themselves.*

5. *that at the present, the machinery of Government, including the armed forces of the nation, exist only to conserve the privilege of this selfish minority group. The Talakawa must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation, and the overthrow of bureaucracy and autocratic privilege.*
6. *that all political parties are but the expression of class interest, and as the interest of the Talakawa is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the Master class both white and black, the party seeking the emancipation of the Talakawa must naturally be hostile to the party of the oppressors.*
7. *The Northern Elements Progressive Union of Northern Nigeria, therefore, being the only political party of the Talakawa, enters the field of political actions determined to reduce to nonentity any part of hypocrites and traitors to our mother country, and calls upon all the sons and daughters of Northern Nigeria to muster under its banner to the end, that a speedy termination may be wrought to this vicious system of administration, which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that POVERTY may give place to COMFORT, PRIVILEGE to EQUALITY , and political, economic and social SLAVERY to FREEDOM. (Yahaya, 1980, p238).*

This declaration was a clarion call and announcement dedicated to the movement for national and social liberation in the society, historically rooted in oppression and exploitation of the masses. Thus, from 1950 to 1966, the leaders of NEPU and all cadres and

militant members of the party in collaboration with other patriotic and progressive elements and revolutionaries sacrificed all they had including their lives to ensure that Nigeria's independence was complete, its unity promoted and defended, as well as its democratic rights asserted. (PRP constitution and manifesto at inecnigeria.org, 2023).

Thus, as Bello (2020), highlighted just in line with the call above in its *modus operandus*, NEPU exhibited three fundamental principles:

- (I) Multiculturalism in political organization and popular mobilization through which it reached out to all ethnic and tribal groups and associations and their inclusion into the party membership.
- (ii) Promotion of workers' solidarity through encouragement and forging of popular alliances between peasants, workers, petty urban bourgeoisies, urban wage earners, proletariats, traders and craftsmen, to identify with the struggles of the oppressed and exploited peasantry.
- (iii) Rugged and unalloyed commitment to Nigerian unity and independence in alliance with NCNC and UMBC. This was particularly during the tensest Elections period in the political history of Nigeria, the 1964 General Elections, where two great political alliances were formed for the grand contest between NPC/NNDP/Mid-West Democratic Front (MDF), known as Nigerian National Alliance (NNA), on one hand, and the NCNC/AG/NEPU/UMBC alliance known as United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) (Ojiako, 1980, p195-196).

Thereafter, what followed was a successful mass mobilization of the citizens, leading to deep entrenchment of a value system which

remained largely, a blatant resistance to injustice in the concept of *Mun Ki 'i.e* 'We stand opposed', as their own motto and weapon of salvation. (Kano State Directorate of People's Redemption Party (PRP) (cited in Daily watchpress.com, 2023).

The setting of this political environment and NEPU's radical stance attracted harsh reprisals from the colonial government. Consequently, NEPU's followers suffered all kinds of repression ranging from widespread intimidation, torture and imprisonment, unprecedented harassment, to exile, displacement, forced disappearance, and murder. However, sincerity of purpose, adherent and commitment to human emancipation allowed them to endure the persecution and achieve significant realization of the spelt out objectives of the declaration, even though they were never allowed to capture and control state power, either at regional or national levels. (Kano State Directorate of People's Redemption Party (PRP) (cited in Daily watchpress.com, 2023 & Yakasai in Kanofocus.com, 08/08/2020).

Despite, the crackdown and political onslaught against NEPU members and its leadership out of uncommon courage and fortitude coupled with unwavering determination, it inspired and engineered the sprouting of many opposition parties also fighting against colonial domination and feudal aristocratic exploitation of the time. These included: Borno Youth Movement (BYM), Ibira Progressive Union (IPU), Middle Belt People's Party (MBPP), Ilorin Talaka Parapo (ITP), Katagum People's Party (KPP), Habe Tribal Union (HTU) and United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC)., Igala Union (IU), Northern Progressive Front (NPF) and Zamfara Commoners Party (ZCP) among others (Yakasai, in Kanofocus.com, 08/08/2020).

Through mass mobilization, the party succeeded in inculcating

political consciousness and awareness among common men Talakawa throughout northern Nigeria, and organized them into a formidable political force, that learnt to oppose and resist all forms of exploitation and oppression. It also promoted educational awareness and enlightenment especially among adults and women. In addition, it proved to be a potent weapon for national unity and struggle for independence in collaboration with other radical movements and political parties such as NCNC, AG and UMBC.

As a mass inclined party, it was all-inclusive as it knew no tribal or ethnic boundaries and always discouraged primordial sentiments, especially during political campaigns. Above all, the party exhibited Pan-Africanism and commitment to supporting African unity and liberation movements in Africa, as well the elevation of the dignity of black race in Africa and world over. (Kano State Directorate of People's Redemption Party (PRP) (cited in Daily watchpress.com, 2023).

The kind of ultimate sacrifice by NEPU leaders and members, ushered the dawn of a new era of true democratic practice and national unity, with transition to second republic when People's Redemption Party (PRP) was formed on 28th October, 1978 under the leadership of Mallam Aminu Kano alongside other patriotic and progressive political elements such as S.G. Ikoku, Una Akan, Dr Kolabodgi, Michael Imoudu, Balarabe Musa among others. (PRP constitution and manifesto at inecnigeria.org, 2023).

The progressive nature of the People's Redemption Party was revealed in a more informative message in its general programme of action as follows:

... in the last analysis, the people are the motive power of history; the people are the salt of the earth in order to build an

independent, balanced; self-sustained and people-oriented national economy; there is need to eliminate foreign dominance in the economy; there is need to get rid of productive relations based on exploitation; there is the need to vest the commanding heights of the national economy in the state. (PRP constitution and manifesto at inecnigeria.org, 2023).

Kwankwasiyya is an offshoot of the radical movement of Malam Aminu Kano, driven by the quest for justice, freedom, resistance to corruption and exploitation. Thus, it is an ideology and movement of radicalism in both spirit and actions. (Nasidi, 2022, p2). As an ideology, Kwankwasiyya reflects the concepts of dedication, trust in governance, fairness, justice and equity, zero tolerance to corruption and mismanagement of resources, intolerance of deception and cowardice, jobs creation for the teeming population, development of education, and entrepreneurship especially for the youth.

As a movement, its major goal is to establish a corrupt free society where the youth would be given equal opportunities in the decision-making process. Its membership is characterized by selflessness, dedication, devoid of material obsession. In this context, the movement is always protected by political gladiators through advices and actions. (Nasidi, 2022, p52).

Minority Questions and the Politics of Mass Mobilization in Northern Nigeria

It is important to note that the repressive measures adopted by the British colonial administration, forced many ethnic minority groups in the Middle Belt region of Northern Nigeria into submission and remained silent, until the eve of independence in 1960s, when these ethnic groups in the region began to create regional identity, in order,

to contest the Hausa-Fulani hegemony especially at the regional House of Assembly.

This was more evident with formation of United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) in 1955 to compete with Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the ruling party, being the predominant political party in Northern Nigeria during the first republic, and its dream was to establish one single powerful, integrative, and united political party in which all northern tribes and groups belong irrespective of all inclinations. This can be seen from the motto of the party, which states "One North, One People, Irrespective of Region, Rank and Tribe." (Ojiako, 1981, p16).

However, the feudal aristocratic and autocratic style of their administration, and collaboration with the colonial masters contradicted their claim, thereby making it almost impossible for the common man in northern Nigeria to trust them.

This trend resulted in the resurgence of the waves of mass movements characterized by the struggle for self-determination and resistance against domination and marginalisation among northern minority groups especially Tiv people, in what constitutes the region known as the Middle Belt in Northern Nigeria. Thus, in an attempt to break the chain of oppression, marginalisation and domination of the Northern Nigerian feudal aristocratic government, Tivs in collaboration with other ethnic groups constituted in the late 1950s some political movements such as Middle Belt People's Party and Middle Zone League.

These were later merged and formed a political party called United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) in 1955, by Middle Belt progressive nationalist, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka, in collaboration with other elements such as David Lot, Ahmadu Angara, Solomon D. Lar and D.D. Dimka among others. (Post, 1963, Teniola, 2018). The party

committed to advancing and protecting the cause of the Middle Belt region through political mobilization of Tiv and other minority groups in the region against the politics of exclusion and marginalization, and also the struggle for the creation of Middle Belt Region out of Northern Nigeria (Teniola, 2018). To augment their power base, they entered into alliance with Action Group (AG) and NEPU to challenge the power of the Northern dominant party through opposition especially at Northern Regional House of Assembly.

This development met with brutal response and suppression from the feudal aristocratic system institutionalized in NPC led government. Hence, people of the region particularly the Tivs were subjected to torture, harassment, imprisonment and intimidation. This is captured by Soluap.com (2023, March 27), which noted that these political developments enraged the ruling party, NPC, and the colonial administration, thereby adopting crude measures, in order to suppress the genuine aspiration and agitation of the people in the Middle Belt Region.

This resulted in Tiv riots of 1957, which compelled the formation of Willink Commission of Inquiry that recommended, that creation of a separate state would not allay the fears in the region, instead, the fundamental rights of individuals must be respected as enshrined in the constitution. (Ugbem, Omobowale and Olutayo, 2019, p92-94).

This covered up only the symptoms of the crisis, as the grievance of the people in the region kept gathering momentum. This exploded in 1964, when a member of UMBC, Mr. Isaac Shahu, on the floor of the Northern Regional House of Assembly, threatened that, Tivs felt unwanted and as such given the size of their population of about 1000,000, they would pull out of Nigeria and become country of their

own. This was a threat of secession that had set a dangerous stage for the most violent Tiv riots in the political history of Northern Nigeria. (Ugbem, Omobowale and Olutayo, 2019).

In a similar vein, Teniola (2018), observed that suppressive measures by NPC government especially after independence, snowballed into major crises in the political history of Nigeria, referring to the Tiv riots in 1960 and 1965 respectively. The escalation and intensity of the violence and its social disruption necessitated the deployment of Nigerian Army to quell the riots. Yet, the violence failed to subside.

This forced the NPC led government to set up a Commission of Inquiry into the grievances of the people, which later confirmed the allegations of oppression, victimisation and discrimination against the Tiv by the Hausa-Fulani dominated Regional Government. (Ayeni-Akeke, 1988, p35). In addition, Teniola (2018) described the scenario of political developments resulting from the mass action of UMBC as revealed by the NPC led government which saw the development in the Middle Belt region especially the alliance entered with Action Group as a dominant political party in Western Nigeria, as a grand conspiracy with external forces, in order to destabilise the Northern government and hegemony.

As such it vowed to crush any of such attempts. On their part, UMBC coalition saw the riots as inevitable and necessary outcome of the oppressive and marginalized policies of the feudal ruling party and its government through the institutions of native authority and its subordinate chiefs, which manifested through the high-handedness of the local authority, the clan and kindred heads, arbitrary raids, mass arrests and imprisonment of innocent people by the police and by NPC Youth Wing, "Ahmadu Bello Youth Brigade" for framed offences.

Conclusion

The political history of party formation and operation and mass movement in northern Nigeria is characterized by power struggle by two antagonistic political forces, the ruling class comprising of feudal aristocrats and bourgeoisies on one hand and the Talakawa on the other hand, from the colonial era to the present fourth republic.

This historical development resulted in the emergence of political parties organized through collective mass action against the unpopular colonial and feudal aristocratic order in northern Nigeria, through mass movements in the form of collective political activism and struggles for human emancipation and national independence.

This in particular reflected in NEPU, UMBC, PRP and Kwankwasiyya movements. Thus, it can be established that the political processes in northern Nigeria have been shaped and influenced by radical political activism manifested in the radical political movements and parties in the region, nurtured from the colonial era, and the growing tension in the political terrain in the north between traditional aristocrats and common men, is a reflection of such class struggle, and this has been extended invariably to the politics of the fourth republic.

Chapter Nine

The Emergence of Political Parties in Southern Nigeria

- Ayodeji Ladipo Alabi, Ph.D -

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with two subjects: the emergence of political parties in southern Nigeria and party politics in southern Nigeria. To make the treatise meaningful, the discourse here explores the formation of all the political parties under Nigeria's scattered democratic dispensations and draws on the consequential behaviours of the prominent political actors in party politics and the far-reaching features of the various political groups to explain the performances of the political parties in southern Nigeria. Logically, therefore, the trajectory of this concern spans from 1922, the period in the colonial era when political party formation commenced in the territory colonially described as Nigeria, through independence in 1960 and the early years of the post-colonial nation-state, up to the present day 2023 of sovereign Nigeria.

The discussions here draw on a distillation of some contemporary literature with some other primary materials sourced online on election results, and the author's observations, to provide a nuanced description of the consequential issues in the trajectory of political party formation and party politics in southern Nigeria under the said period. However, unavoidably, this chapter's exclusive concern for party politics in southern Nigeria has to be comparatively discussed

concerning how the political parties also fared in northern Nigeria.

This is because party politics in southern Nigeria cannot be discussed or understood in isolation of party politics in northern Nigeria. Compactly, the specific questions that therefore guide this discussion are: (a) what were the main features of the political parties that operated in Nigeria between 1922 and 2023? (b) How did the parties' main features and the behaviours of the prominent political actors impact the performances of the different political parties in southern Nigeria?

Political Party Formation and Party Politics in Colonial Southern Nigeria

Generally, in modern times, a political party is understood to refer to a publicly organized group, a body corporate legally registered under relevant laws as a political party. The behaviours, programs and activities of such a party are directed towards gaining control of government to achieve certain advantages to the benefit of certain individual members of the group, the group as a whole, or the entire geopolitical territory that it seeks to govern (Dudley 1982, Dunmoye 1990).

Culturally, the concept of political party was foreign to the indigenous populations of pre-colonial Nigeria, as in other parts of pre-colonial Africa. The traditional African system of politics and power contestations, with its inter-group conflict masque, operated largely as spontaneously organized factions for momentary purposes rather than organized parties registered as a going concern, and the system's processes in most pre-colonial African communities were channelled by identity consciousness, spiritual engagements and militant actions (Monroe 2013), rather than the mass mobilization, public campaigning and voting activities of the democratic orientation of

European style political parties. This explains why ethnicity and violence continue to recur in political power contestation in modern-day African democratic practice. Therefore, the modern-day political party system in Africa was part of what Ekeh (1983) describes as a "migrated social structure". This specifically refers to those socio-organizational structures that were transmitted from European urban systems and superimposed on Africa as part of the colonial legacy.

Amid nationalist movements for independence from colonialism, the character of the emergence of Nigeria as a post-colonial state unavoidably made identity consciousness, more specifically ethnicity and religion, the drivers of the formation of political groups in the country. Nwabueze's (2010) analysis of ancient and modern colonialism highlights four issues which can be appropriated to underscore this fact.

First, the post-colonial state, kick-started by the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates of the colonial territory called Nigeria in 1914, was forcefully imposed on the indigenous population having been established without the approval of the numerous ethnic groups that made it up. Second, inter-ethnic conflict became unavoidable because of the asymmetric nature of the multiethnic composition of the colonial state.

Third, numerous arbitrary boundaries occasioned by the forceful creation of the colonial state separated kith and kin, and incorporated strangers, and this created a situation in which the various ethnic group slumped together in the country found themselves as irreconcilable antagonists.

Fourth, the colonial divide and rule system of administration strengthened and transmuted those underlying psychological moods,

superficial physical differences and cultural divergences among the indigenous populations into energetically antagonistic and violent intergroup relations.

These four issues trimly characterize the predicament of the indigenous populations during the period of colonialism and compactly underlay the conflicts of interests in intergroup relations during the period of nationalist movements for political independence from colonialism, thus forcing political party formation to be driven by ethnicity.

In essence, while nationalist agitation for independence was the macro unifying factor for the various ethnic groups encompassed in the colonial state, the micro interests of the different ethnic groups sandwiched that consideration and compelled the evolution of political alignments along ethnic lines. Given the circumstances, it was logically inevitable that political parties in Nigeria had to take off from the founders' ethnic base and those of his close ethnic associates before broadening in scope to become national political parties.

The opportunity for the formation of political parties came via the electoral concept introduced by the Clifford Constitution of 1922 which enabled Nigerians to win seats in the colonial Legislative Council. Nigeria's first major political organization was the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), founded in 1922 by Herbert Macaulay, a descent of the Yoruba ethnic group. The NNDP presented members that contested for and won all the three seats allocated to Lagos in the 1923, 1928 and 1933 Legislative Council elections. The NNDP's campaign for the seats emphasized five cardinal objectives of the party, namely:

- (a) To attain municipal status and local self-government for Lagos,

- (b) To provide facilities for higher education in Lagos for all Nigerians,
- (c) To introduce compulsory primary school education for all Nigerians resident in Lagos,
- (d) To encourage non-discriminatory, private economic enterprise in Lagos and support its extension to all parts of Nigeria, and
- (e) To Africanize / indigenize (that is, Nigerianize) the (colonial) civil service.

While the five objectives of NNDP were theoretically oriented to cater for all Nigerians, it was clear to its architects, and all visionary political actors at that time that, practically, the objectives were schemed to benefit only residents of Lagos, a colonial geo-political entity on Yorubaland called Lagos Colony and of which the Yoruba ethnics resident in the territory constituted the overwhelming majority of the population (Adeuyan 2011).

The above must have given the impression that the NNDP was overwhelmingly Yorubanized in leadership and membership composition, and strategic goals. Hence, in 1934, with macro nationalist inclination, several front-running graduates of King's College, Lagos, amongst which were Ernest Ikoli, H.O. Davies and Samuel Akinsanya, established the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM).

The main objective of the LYM was to agitate for requests for and champion the bettering of the living conditions of all Nigerians resident in Lagos Colony, irrespective of ethnicity. However, with the general observation that the scope of the main objective was limited to the residents of Lagos and Nigeria's Southern province, a much larger, pan-Nigeria nationalist movement, the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), was established in 1936 to replace the LYM.

The NYM was thus Nigeria's second major political organization. Within a few months of its establishment, the NYM recorded three categories of consequential achievements. First, the multiethnic composition of the body began to expand. For instance, in 1937, upon his return to Nigeria from Ghana, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe joined the group. Second, it began to establish NYM chapters in some American cities. Third, in 1938, the group officially released to the public its Youth Charter and Constitution. All these enhanced the popularity of the body in Nigeria, Britain and America as Nigeria's pioneer nationalist movement.

Amid the smooth sailing of NYM's macro-nationalist activities at home and abroad, ethnic politics became interjected into the body's activities by an opportunity for political succession involving the NYM in Nigeria's Legislative Council. One of the front-runners of the group in Nigeria's Legislative Council, Dr Kofo Abayomi, was appointed to the Executive Council. There was therefore the need for the NYM to replace him in the Council. Ernest Ikoli, the President of the NYM at that time, and Samuel Akinsanya, a front-line member of the movement, both contested for the seat.

Eventually, Ernest Ikoli was chosen for the position by the party. The inability of Samuel Akinsanya to win the seat generated inter-ethnic controversies in which a group within the NYM, whose arrowhead was Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, claimed that Samuel Akinsanya did not win the slot because he was not the preferred candidate of the dominant Yoruba ethnic group in the party having come from the minority Ijebu sub-ethnic group. The Ijebu is a sub-group of the Yoruba ethnic stock. The uncontrollable internal strife arising from that controversial encounter resulted in the disbanding in 1944 of what many analysts regarded as Nigeria's first national political party (Nnabuihe, Aghemale, and Okebugwu 2004).

Three political parties jointly share being categorized as Nigeria's third major political organization. The first in this regard was the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) which succeeded the disbanded Nigerian Youth Movement in 1944. It later became the National Council of Nigerian Citizens. The party emerged from the coming together of many ethnic nationality organizations, one of which was the Ibo State Union, among others. Sir Herbert Macaulay of the Yoruba ethnic group was the leader of the party while Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe of the Igbo ethnic stock was the national secretary.

However, following the death of Sir Herbert Macaulay in 1946, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe took over the leadership of the party. The party gained enormous popularity through its frank and relentless criticism of the colonial authorities. It was particularly reported that the party purposely dispatched a delegation to London in 1946 to strongly lodge complaints against the 1946 Richards' Constitution.

The second was the Action Group (AG) of Nigeria, formed in 1951 from the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a pan-Yoruba socio-cultural group, by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The third was the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) also formed in 1951 from the Jammiyyar Mutane Arewa, a Hausa cultural group. These three political parties were the major political organizations that played prominent roles in Nigeria's journey towards independence in 1960 and the first republic of the nation-state, given their dominant control of the regional governments in the East, West and North, respectively (Post 1963).

Political party formation and party politics in southern Nigeria at Nigerian independence up to the end of the First Republic

Four outstanding phenomena held sway in the realm of Nigeria's party politics and governance at independence in 1960. First, the post-colonial state was operating a parliamentary democracy in a multi-party system, the dominant political parties being the Northern

Peoples' Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG) of Nigeria and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). Other political parties were struggling for limelight at that time. One of them was the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) formed to contest the dominance of the NPC in the north and led by Mallam Aminu Kano.

There was also the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) which was a merger between the Middle Belt's People's Party (MBPP) and the Middle Zone League (MZL) to pursue the interests of the various minority ethnic groups in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, and led by Mr. Joseph Tarka. However, these were minority political parties that were contesting the Northern region with the NPC.

In southern Nigeria, there was the Mid-West Democratic Front (MDF) that garnered popularity in the Mid-Western region. There was also the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP), which was founded by Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola after he fell out with Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the AG. It must also be noted that the NCNC which initially had some followership across the southern region given the involvement of the Late Herbert Macaulay, a Yoruba man, and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwa, an Igbo man, in the formation of the party, later broke into three factions.

The Western region faction of the NCNC led by Chief Fani Kayode aligned with Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola to form the NNDP. An eastern region faction broke away to form the United National Independence Party (UNIP) to contest the eastern region with the NCNC. The third faction, the remaining NCNC members in the Western and Mid-Western regions, remained in Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's mainstream NCNC. These three political parties were also contesting the Western and Mid-western regions with the AG (Onabamiro 1983).

Second, between 1960 and 1963, the post-colonial governance of the

Nigerian state was carried out by one national government with its seat at Lagos, and at the initial stage, three regional governments, namely: Northern region with its seat at Kaduna, Western region with its seat at Ibadan and Eastern region with its seat at Enugu.

The territorial jurisdiction of each of the three regional governments was coterminous with the boundaries of a major ethnic group and its close affiliates. The dominant ethnic group in the Northern region was the composite Hausa-Fulani. That of the Western region was Yoruba, while that of the Eastern region was Igbo. However, in 1963, the Mid-Western region was created from the Western region, making the regions to become four. The Mid-Western region was composed of several minority ethnic groups such as the Bini, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ijaw, etc., and a fragment of the Igbo ethnic group.

Third, all the political parties survived and flourished on ethno-regional sentiments, and their socio-political objectives were driven by ethno-regional interests. This compelled the logic of the geo-ethnic territory emerging as their support base. The NPC was entrenched in the Northern region then known as Hausaland, the AG was rooted in the Western region then known as Yorubaland, while the NCNC was deep-seated in the Eastern region then known as Iboland. Therefore, the leaders of the three political parties were geo-ethnic leaders trying to transform into national leaders.

Fourth, the leaders of those political parties were the most prominent nationalists who fought for the political independence of the nation-state and eventually took over as the country's ruling elite. With these, the characters and the pathway of Nigeria's democratic journey were defined and determined by the interrelationships between those three political-cum-ethnic leaders. (Olukoshi and Agbu 1996)

In the parliamentary (House of Representatives) elections held in

December 1959, the NCNC with 34% of the total votes won 81 seats, the AG with 26% of the total votes won 73 seats, the NPC with 25% of the total votes won 134 seats and NEPU with 7% of the total votes won 8 seats. The result was a victory for the NPC as it entered into an alliance with five other political parties and two independents, and ended up holding 148 of the 312 seats in the parliament. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1959>). The NCNC and the AG did not think of forming an alliance, which would have given them 154 seats.

Incidentally, given the outputs of the parliamentary elections, because each of the political parties drew votes largely from its geo-ethnic enclave, none of the three major political parties secured the required percentage of votes to be able to form a national government at the centre. The NCNC, which had the majority of votes nationally cast, only effectively controlled the affairs of the Eastern region. Similarly, the AG established governance over the Western region while the NPC which had the majority of the seats in the national parliament was effectively in charge of the government of the Northern region. Forming a coalition at the centre was therefore the only peaceful way out for establishing a national government for the country at independence in 1960 (Post 1963).

Contemporary literature (Post 1963, Onabamiro 1983, Olukoshi and Agbu 1996, Nnabuihe et al 2004) are divided in their analysis of the political arithmetic and rationale for the NPC-NCNC coalition government formed at Nigeria's independence. This is evidenced by many narrations and submissions insinuating allegations of 'betrayal', 'sabotage' and 'divide-and-rule' against the prominent political actors of the period.

However, given that it is not clear why the three leaders at that time could not openly come together to form a government of national

unity at independence, the following speculative perspective can be conjectured. The NPC led by Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the AG led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the NCNC led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, may have separately and covertly initiated alliance talks amongst themselves to form a national government at the centre. However, by the time the coalition government was eventually formed, it can be assumed that each of the three leaders must have been approaching covert coalition talks amongst themselves with a political arithmetic tantamount to 'elimination by substitution'.

Given the inter-ethnic suspicion and geo-ethnic developmental disparities that pervaded the country's political landscape, and approaching the political arithmetic for forming a national government from the perspective of the need for a north-south balance in power relations, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of the NPC may have been looking towards a north-south coalition that would not put the north at any disadvantage.

Aligning with both the AG and the NCNC at the same time could tilt the power calculation in favour of the South. Therefore, he may have calculated that he just needed either the NCNC or the AG for a coalition government at the centre. In the same vein, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe's NCNC moves may be favourably disposed towards a coalition arrangement based on a north-south balance which should not put the Eastern region at any disadvantage. This may have made an NPC-NCNC coalition the most viable possibility to the advantage of the Eastern region.

While both Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa of the NPC and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC may have been thinking in terms of north-south balance in power relations, it was probable that Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the AG may not have been looking at Nigeria in terms of the constricted configuration of North and South, and

therefore not thinking in terms of the need for a north-south balance. Rather, he may have been looking at Nigeria from the more expansive purview of North, West and East balance and probably thought that an NPC-AG-NCNC coalition for the national government was a viable possibility, and he may have been waiting for the British monarch to take the initiative.

However, where it was impossible to achieve an NPC-AG-NCNC coalition for national government for whatever reasons, it was probable that Chief Obafemi Awolowo may have preferred to have an NCNC-AG coalition for a national government given the 'progressive' temperament in the southern region, which both Chief Awolowo and Dr Azikiwe shared, as against the 'conservative' disposition of the northern region represented by Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa at that time. These possibilities made the NPC and the NCNC to be nearly on the same page, while the AG singularly diverged. However, these are in the realm of speculation.

However, as events turned out, because the NCNC had the highest number of votes, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC was appointed Governor-General of Nigeria by the British monarch. Alhaji Tafawa Balewa of the NPC was invited to form a government as the Prime Minister because the NPC had the greatest number of seats in the parliament. Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the AG automatically became the leader of the opposition.

At the regional levels, Sir Ahmadu Bello was the Premier of the Northern region, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola of the AG was the Premier of the Western region while Mr Michael Iheonukara Okpara was the Premier of the Eastern region. Later, with the creation of the Mid-Western region from the Western region in 1963, which was interpreted as a strategy devised to weaken the political strength of

the Western region and Awolowo's AG in national affairs, Sir Dennis Osadebey became the Premier of the Mid-Western region. It was that year that Nigeria became a republic (Post 1963).

As the 1964 parliamentary elections drew nearer, the various political parties, and the major actors, began to make re-alignments based on new political arithmetic constructed from the disappointments that they experienced and the prospects they anticipated in the nation's political climate of that time. The AG forged a coalition with the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) and NCNC to establish the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) most probably for three reasons.

First, there were the 'progressive' temperaments shared by the leaders of the four parties, as against the conservative disposition of the leadership of the NPC at that time. Second, there was the crisis in the Western region associated with the geopolitical severance of the Mid-Western region from the Western region, and Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola's rebellion against Chief Obafemi Awolowo, both allegedly caused by the 'divide-and-rule' schematics of the NPC in breaking southern solidarity to the advantage of the north.

Third, it was probable that Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe may have felt disappointed at the way the ceremonial nature of his office as Governor-General/President sidelined him from pro-actively and constructively engaging the Prime Minister on state matters. It can be conjectured that he must have therefore felt the need to seek out other partners to work with in governance outside of the NPC fold.

The NNDP aligned with the NPC and an estranged Eastern region faction of NCNC to form the Nigeria National Alliance (NNA) probably for four reasons. First, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, who was the Premier of the Western region needed to defeat the AG in the

Western region to be able to retain his seat as premier. Second, the NPC was concerned about the electoral implications of the grassroots activities of the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) led by Mallam Aminu Kano and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) led by Mr Joseph Tarka which had continued to sabotage the geopolitical solidarity of the northern region. The NPC may have therefore felt that it needed some strategic positioning for more votes from the southern region to sustain the NPC in government.

Third, the NNDP presented a formidable opportunity for the NPC to gather votes from the Western region given the intra-party crisis that pitched Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola against Chief Obafemi Awolowo's interest in the struggle for the political leadership of the Western region, and Chief Akintola's exit from the AG to form the NNDP. Fourth, Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola, who was the Premier of the Western region at that time, paraded the prospect of deploying the power of incumbency and patronage to the advantage of the NPC-NNDP's Nigeria National Alliance (NNA) in the parliamentary elections.

The NNA and UPGA thus became the two coalitions which presented themselves as the two contending political parties in Nigeria for the 1964 parliamentary elections held between December 1964 and March 1965. In the NNA coalition, the NPC won 162, while the NNDP won 36, making a total of 198 seats for the NNA. In the UPGA coalition, the NCNC won 84, the AG won 21, and the NPF won 4, making a total of 109 seats for UPGA, while Independents won 5, out of the 312 seats in the parliament (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1964>).

Though the elections were marred by manipulation and violence, the NNA victory was a victory for the NPC and NNDP (Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Chief Samuel Ladoke Akintola), while the UPGA's

relatively low performance was a defeat for the NCNC and AG (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo). Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa became re-elected as Prime Minister, with Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe still sitting as president. This created some constitutional and legitimacy crises and triggered violence, arson and killings in different parts of the country. The series of events that followed culminated in the January 1966 military coup which terminated Nigeria's first republic. The consequential military dictatorship that governed Nigeria spanned between January 15, 1966 and October 1, 1979 (Onabamiro 1983).

Political Party Formation and Party Politics in Southern Nigeria During the Second Republic

A total of six political parties featured in Nigeria's second republic. Five of them, namely: the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP), Nigeria Peoples' Party (NPP) and Great Nigeria Peoples' Party (GNPP) were initially registered by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) and they participated in the 1979 general elections. The sixth political party, the National Advance Party (NAP), established and registered in 1983, joined those other five political parties to participate in the 1983 general elections (Nnabuihe et al 2004).

Six prominent observations can be made about those six political parties. First, in terms of formation, nearly all those mentioned political parties were reincarnations of the major political parties of the defunct First Republic. For instance, the NPN was formed by prominent leaders of the disbanded NPC. The UPN was established largely from the relics of the AG, and some remnants of the UMBC. The PRP was a direct resuscitation of the NEPU. The NPP was gathered from the leftovers of NCNC. The GNPP was a double-splinter group assembled from elements that had struggled against

both Hausa-Fulani and Igbo hegemonies in the politics of Nigeria's first republic. It was only the NAP that had no full-blown historical link with the defunct political parties of the first republic.

Second, in terms of leadership, logically following the issue of their formation, some of the Second Republic political parties were led by prominent First Republic political leaders who survived the bloody military coup which sank the First Republic. The UPN was led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the defunct AG. The NPP was led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe of the defunct NCNC. The PRP was led by Mallam Aminu Kano of the defunct NEPU. The leadership of the NPN was composed of the NPC survivors of the January 15, 1966 military putsch that terminated the first republic. The GNPP, formed from the Borno Youth Movement (BYM) and led by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, and the NAP, led by Mr Tunji Braithwaite were the only greenhorns amongst the lot.

Third, in terms of leadership behaviour, some of the listed political parties were operated as 'one-man' businesses. For instance, the UPN was like Chief Obafemi Awolowo's personal estate. Despite having a separate appointee as party chairman at the national level, and other party executives at national, regional, state, local government and ward levels of the party, Chief Obafemi Awolowo was the central decision organ whose instruction on any issue was unchallengeable. He was the 'law' in the party and its only presidential candidate throughout its existence.

Similarly, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe ran the NPP like a one-man business. He was the founder, leader and presidential candidate of the party throughout its existence. The attempt by Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim, the erstwhile chairman of the party, to contest the party primaries for the selection of the party's presidential candidate with Dr Nnamdi

Azikiwe resulted in an intra-party crisis which culminated in the exit of Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim from the NPP and his eventual formation of the GNPP. After forming the GNPP, Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim also ran the GNPP like his personal property. He was the founder, leader and presidential candidate of the party throughout its existence.

However, the leadership behaviours of the NPN and PRP were different. For both political parties, many prominent members of each of them, who regarded themselves as joint founders and joint owners, provided joint leadership for their respective parties. The NPN's leadership was nationally broad-based having adopted the zoning formula for the distribution of its elective and appointive posts at national, regional, state, local and ward levels. It included people like Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a Fulani, as presidential candidate and Chief Adisa Akinloye, a Yoruba, as party chairman at the national level, among many others, who were largely relics of the NPC-NNDP alliance of the defunct first republic. The PRP's control system was also broad-based.

Though, Mallam Aminu Kano was the leader and presidential candidate of the party in 1979, Khalifa Hassan Yusuf was the presidential candidate of the party in 1983. The NAP, founded by Dr Tunji Braithwaite, did not have the opportunity of a long existence that would have exposed its leadership character. The party was established in 1983, and it participated in the 1983 general elections. However, it was at the end of that year that the military terminated the life of the second republic.

Fourth, in terms of public perception of the campaign rhetoric and personalities of their leaders, certain dominant principles and philosophies were superficially associated with each of the political parties. The NPN was taken to be a conservative and capitalist party.

The UPN was acclaimed as a democratic socialist in orientation. The NPP was perceived to possess republican and liberal orientations based on the 'individualistic'/'collectivist' paradigm. The PRP was seen as a socialist party that was particularly opposed to the poverty and conservative dispositions that pervaded the North. The GNPP was considered to have both liberal and rebellious dispositions. The NAP was alleged to be a revolutionary body (Olukoshi and Agbu 1996).

Fifth, as regards their respective manifestos, each of the six political parties flagged dissimilar programs of action. The NPN paraded the green revolution (agriculture) and low-cost housing scheme as its two most popular programs. The UPN's popularized agenda included free health, free education, full employment and integrated rural development. The GNPP's main objectives were to foster economic diversification and provide an equitable distribution of national wealth for the development of all parts of the country.

The central aim of the PRP was to liberate the poor masses (the talakawas) from the stronghold of the oppressive autocratic privileges of a few Nigerians. The NAP had the aim of promoting the availability of surplus food, providing gainful employment opportunities, eradicating mosquitoes and rats, and providing a low-cost health insurance policy for all Nigerians. The NPP's main goals were to promote the fundamental human rights of individuals in the society, enhance the rule of law and equal justice, provide shelter and food for all Nigerians, mobilize rural dwellers into meaningful development and equitably distribute the gains of economic development within the political system.

Sixth, each of the six political parties of the second republic was generally observed to have had a geo-ethnic heartland as the primary

launching platform from where they hoped to spread to and be accepted in other geo-ethnic territories in Nigeria. Yorubaland was seen as the take-off base of the UPN. The NPP was noted to be rooted in Igboland as its launching pad. Kano was observed as the springboard for the PRP. Borno was regarded as the home base of the GNPP. Lagos was considered the take-off ground for the NAP. For the NPN, even though some people associated it with Sokoto, given the ethnicity and the sultanate heritage of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, its presidential flagbearer, the entire North was generally ascribed as the launching base of the party. All these gave the respective parties some ethnic colouration which affected the character of their reception and the depth of their penetration of other geo-ethnic territories in the country (Nnabuihe et al 2004).

Of all the six features discussed above, the geo-ethnic characters of the take-off bases of the six political parties were largely noted to have had the most serious impact on the parties' performances. For instance, in the 1979 presidential election, the UPN won in five (5) States, that is, all four (4) States on Yorubaland and one (1) in the former Mid-west region, a supposed primordial affiliate of Yorubaland. These included: Lagos, Oyo, Ondo and Ogun States (former Western region) and Bendel State (former Mid-western region).

The NPP won in three (3) States, two in Igbo territory and one in the middle belt, namely: Imo and Anambra (former Eastern region) and Plateau State (former Northern region). The PRP won in Kano State (Northern region), its home base, and the GNPP won in Borno State (Northern region), its home base. The NPN won in nine (9) States, that is, seven (7) in the northern region and two (2) in the southern region, namely: Sokoto, Bauchi, Kwara, Niger, Benue, Kaduna, Gongola States (former Northern region), and Cross river and Rivers States (former Eastern region). The NAP was not yet in existence in

1979 (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1979...>)

The leadership behaviours of six political parties can also be said to have impacted their electoral performances. The outcome of the governorship elections of 1979, which were just marginally different from that of the presidential election, and the percentages of votes won by each political party in the 1983 presidential election can be referenced to buttress this opinion. In the 1979 governorship elections, the UPN won in five (5) states, namely: Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Ogun and Bendel. The NPP won in Imo, Anambra and Plateau States.

The PRP won in Kano and Kaduna States, and the GNPP won in Borno and Gongola States. The NPN won in seven (7) States, namely: Sokoto, Bauchi, Kwara, Niger, Benue, Cross River and Rivers. In the 1983 presidential election, the NPN, UPN, NPP, PRP, GNPP and NAP had 48%, 31%, 14%, 4%, 3% and 1%, respectively, of the total 25,430,097 valid votes cast. In addition to the influence of geo-ethnic sentiments, these performances can also be credited to the extent of the inclusion of prominent ethno-political leaders across different geo-ethnic territories in Nigeria in the power hierarchies of the different political parties (Nnabuihe et al 2004).

Political Party Formation and Party Politics in Southern Nigeria During the Aborted Third Republic

Over time, the need to continue to sustain the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation-state and achieve some appreciable measure of political cohesion as a precondition for national peace, progress and development, have been of concern to political scientists and other nationalists. The succeeding sets of military usurpers that terminated the life of the second republic seemingly also aligned with that aspiration.

However, the General Ibrahim Babangida regime that snatched power from General Muhammadu Buhari in 1984 became intoxicated

with a 1986 Political Bureau idea that a good strategy to keep Nigeria afloat in a democracy was to use some undemocratic political party formation arrangement to scheme Nigerian political elite into a two-party system as a way of breaking their clinging to their traditional primordial identity consciousness in political party formation and politics. This they hoped would put an end to the political elites' sectional handling of the nation-state as a matter of northern and southern geopolitical arrangement, or northern, western, mid-western and eastern regional configuration, or the identity consideration as Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo ethnic divisions, etc.

This determination to address the cankerworm of ethnicity and enforce a national outlook for all registered political parties in the nation's political life culminated in the creation by the Babangida regime of two political parties, the Social democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC), with superficially decorated ideologies as a little bit to the right and a little bit to the left of the centre, respectively.

The two political parties were not only militarily decreed into existence, but the military government also wrote the respective parties' constitutions and manifestos, built offices and bought vehicles for them at the national, state and local government levels throughout the country, and funded their operational activities directly from the state treasury, thus treating them as government parastatals.

Although the political elite found themselves as strange bedfellows in those militarily decreed political parties, they still managed to play along with the thinking of first easing out the military before coming around to reorganize themselves and Nigeria. Hence, Babangida's phased transition program went on smoothly without any serious

problems having conducted local government chairmanship and councillorship elections in 1987 and 1991, and State governorship and Houses of Assembly elections in 1991 and 1992, and installed the persons elected. The final phase of the transition program involved the House of Representatives, Senatorial and Presidential elections in 1993. The House of Representatives and Senatorial elections had been successfully carried out some few weeks before the presidential elections, and the winners were merely awaiting their inauguration which was expected to be done by whoever was elected as president under the transition program.

The June 12 1993 Presidential election had Chief Moshood Abiola, a Muslim and Yoruba ethnic, as the presidential candidate of the SDP and Alhaji Bashir Tofa, a Muslim Fulani ethnic, as the presidential candidate of the NRC. Although, widely adjudged as the most peaceful, freest and fairest elections ever conducted in Nigeria as of that time, the results of the elections were shockingly annulled by General Ibrahim Babangida for largely insignificant and unsubstantiated corruption and state security breach allegations (Sowande 2022).

What were the performances of the two political parties, SDP and NRC, in southern Nigeria in the unofficial presidential election results of June 12 1993? At that time, Nigeria was still operating a 30-States structure, distributed at fourteen (14) States in the south and sixteen (16) States in the north, and one (1) Federal Capital Territory. Of the 14 States in southern Nigeria, the SDP (Moshood Abiola) won in ten (10), namely: Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo States, while the NRC (Bashir Tofa) won in four (4), namely: Abia, Enugu, Imo and Rivers States. Compared to the sixteen (16) States in northern Nigeria, the SDP won in nine (9) States, namely: Benue, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Taraba,

Yobe and Plateau States, while the NRC won in seven (7) States, namely: Adamawa, Bauchi, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Niger and Sokoto. The SDP also won in Abuja FCT, making a total of twenty (20) States-plus-FCT won by the SDP, with 58.4% of the total legitimate votes cast; while eleven (11) States were won by the NRC, with 41.6% of the valid 14,293,396 votes cast across the country in the presidential election (<https://www.legit.ng/1174697...html> and <https://africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html>).

The constitutions, manifestos and activities of the two political parties can be lightly considered as significant factors that determined southern Nigerian voters' choices in the elections because both political organizations were seen as government parastatals regimented by military dictatorship. All considerations were therefore on the personalities and behaviors of the two presidential candidates and their respective running mates.

Three factors can be located in this regard. First, Chief Moshood Abiola was widely popular throughout the country as a detribalized philanthropist while Alhaji Bashir Tofa was relatively unknown. It was only the 1993 presidential election that shot his name into the limelight. Both candidates were Muslims but Chief Moshood Abiola known for his many donations towards the sponsoring of Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca and the building of Mosques throughout the country, while Alhaji Bashir Tofa was not known for those types of contribution to society.

Second, Chief Moshood Abiola's running mate was Alhaji Babagana Kingibe, a former well-known career diplomat, Muslim and Kanuri ethnic from the north-east of Nigeria, who had also gained popularity as the former chairman of the SDP. Alhaji Bashir Tofa's running mate was Dr Sylvester Ugoh, a Christian and Igbo ethnic, who was a political figure not nationally known, except in the southeast

geopolitical zone. It was also only the 1993 presidential election that shot his name into the limelight.

Third, the campaign rhetoric of Chief Moshood Abiola concentrated on economic issues that seemingly underlay the predicaments of Nigerians and Nigeria, and he was also very critical of the structural adjustment program (SAP) and austerity measures of General Babangida's military regime. To many people, these indicated that Chief Moshood Abiola understood what he needed to do to economically salvage Nigeria and make life better for the citizens.

Alhaji Bashir Tofa's public campaign showed that he was supportive of SAP, and therefore less critical of the military regime's austerity measures. These made many people conclude that he had some bonds with General Babangida and may therefore continue the stringent economic policies of the military regime. These same factors can also largely be held responsible for the respective parties' performances in northern Nigeria.

As stated earlier, the June 12, 1993 presidential election results were annulled by the military. The crisis associated with the impasse terminated the regime of General Babangida and the political transition program, ushering in a very weak interim national government which was later also terminated by General Sani Abacha's palace coup staged toward the end of that year. The regime of General Sani Abacha, having arrested and detained Chief Moshood Abiola who was presumed to have won the June 12 1993 presidential election, also came up with a political transition program that was characterized by the military leader's insincerity occasioned by his desire for self-succession.

Under Abacha's transition program, five political parties were registered as participants.

These include the Congress of National Consensus (CNC), the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), the National Congress Party of Nigeria (NCPN) and the Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM). The activities of those five political parties were operationally directed and closely monitored by the Abacha military government, to the extent that, at the twilight of their existence, they jointly adopted and officially nominated General Sani Abacha, the sitting military Head of State and non-member of any of the political parties, as their consensus presidential candidate (<https://www.legit.ng/1210461-sani-abachas-biography>). This made the late Chief Bola Ige describe them as the five fingers of a leprous hand. The untimely death of General Sani Abacha on June 8 1998 terminated the charade.

Political Party Formation and Party Politics in Southern Nigeria During the Fourth Republic

General Abdulsalami Abubakar succeeded General Sani Abacha as Head of State in June 1998. On assumption, he immediately set in motion a new political transition program following the shocking death of Chief Moshood Abiola in government detention. Under the program, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) was reconstituted as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), all the previously registered political parties were dissolved and the political class was encouraged to form new political parties. Eventually, three political parties emerged and were officially registered. These were the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples' Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD).

In the fourth republic, general elections were held in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023, including some off-season governorship elections held intermittently along that trajectory. For this discussion, due to the dearth of space, we elect to closely look at

only the 1999, 2003, 2015 and 2023 elections. These four elections exhaustively provide us with all the consequential features that should enhance our understanding of the trajectories of party formation and party politics in southern Nigeria between 1999 and 2023. The selection of the 1999 election is because it was the first under the Fourth Republic dispensation.

The 2003 election was selected because of the complications associated with the opposing ethnic, religious and regional backgrounds of the presidential flag bearers of the two major political parties in the contest. The 2015 election was selected because in the contest, a Southerner and a Northern locked horns as presidential candidates, and particularly because a major issue in the contest centred on the call for a power shift from the South to the North. The 2023 election was selected because of the conflagrated intrigues that engulfed the election period for which the three front-running political parties, the APC, PDP and LP were not exempted. However, without doing their detailed analysis, the 2007, 2011 and 2019 elections would also be mentioned in passing.

Two issues need to be immediately noted concerning the take-off of the fourth republic. First, pressured by the urgent need to continue to keep Nigeria afloat and avoid another civil war, the majority of the military and political elites of northern Nigeria became inclined towards conceding a power shift to southern Nigeria. Second, given the crisis associated with the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election and the eventual death of Chief Moshood Abiola in government detention, the Nigerian political elite became persuaded to appease the Yoruba ethnic group by compensating their losses through a programmed agenda to have a Yoruba ethnic as president.

Acting under the manipulations of the sitting Head of State in concert with the political and military elites of northern Nigeria, the agenda to shift power to southern Nigeria and compensate the Yoruba ethnic group with the presidency instructed the seemingly selective registration, by INEC, of the PDP and APP at that time. Presumably, it was considered that it was going to be easier to guide the two parties into adopting the power shift agenda than having an array of political parties that may prove difficult to control.

Initially, the authorities did not intend to register the AD because, apart from the two-party agenda for a schemed power shift to the Yoruba ethnic group, it was also clear to the government and INEC at that time that the AD did not meet the national spread requirement for registration. But, given its inadvertent public presentation as a Yoruba party and seen as the exclusive political voice of the Yoruba ethnic group at that time, the Nigerian authorities were persuaded to also accord it official registration after an initial denial. Thus, the PDP, APP and AD were the three registered political parties that contested the 1999 general elections.

The PDP's flag bearer retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian and Yoruba ethnic, won the presidential election, and his installation commenced Nigeria's fourth republic. Now, what were the prominent features of these three political parties? How did the major political actors behave? And how did these impinge on the parties' performances in the elections held in 1999 in southern Nigeria?

The PDP emerged from the merger of a group known as G34, which was composed of retired military officers and notable politicians across Nigeria who were disaffected by the self-succession agenda of General Sani Abacha, with other political groups such as the All Nigeria Congress (ANC), United Nigerian People's Party (UNPP) and

New Era Alliance (NERA). At its inception, the notable members of the party included Chief Alex Ekwueme (Chairman, Board of Trustees), Chief Solomon Lar (National chairman), Mallam Adamu Ciroma, General Olusegun Obasanjo, Alhaji Abubakar Rimi, Alhaji Sule Lamido, Chief Jim Nwobodo, Chief Don Etiebet and Dr Tonye Graham-Douglas. The party also had many highly influential personalities as mentors, and this included retired General Ibrahim Babangida, among many others. The composition of the party was widely considered to be broad-based as it was regarded as a mixture of new and old-breed politicians selected from across all the states of the Nigerian federation (Maja-Pearce 1999, Agbu 2016).

The APP was a product of a discussion held in Lagos between the Southern Leaders Forum led by Chief Bola Ige and the Conference of Fused Associations led by Umaru Shinkafi. Later, the discussion brought in other groups such as the United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP), Peoples National Congress (PNC), People's Consultative Forum (PCF) also known as Afenifere, the All Nigerian Congress (ANC), and the National Unity Party.

The PCF later excused itself from the formation of the party due to what it described as the incompatibility of its principles with those of some prominent pro-Abacha politicians, such as Chief Arthur Nzeribe and a few others who were part of the discussions. At take-off, notable leaders of the APP included Senator Mahmud Waziri (National Chairman), Alhaji Usman Shinkafi, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, Dr. Olusola Saraki, Chief C. C. Onoh, Dr. Bode Olajumoke and Mr. Gamaliel Onosode (Maja-Pearce 1999, Agbu 2016).

The AD has its origin in the coming together of some groups largely based in southern Nigeria, and the United Democratic Congress (UDC) led by Ambassador Tanko Yusuf based in Kaduna, northern

Nigeria. The southern-based groups included the Peoples' Consultative Forum (PCF) which was also known as the Afenifere, a Yoruba socio-cultural group, the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) whose opposition to General Sani Abacha's self-succession agenda earned it enormous popularity, the Eastern Mandate Union which was an Igbo socio-political group similar to Afenifere, and the Southern Leaders' Forum.

The pioneer leaders of the AD included Chief Ayo Adebajo (Acting National Chairman), Bassey Etubom Bassey (National Vice-Chairman), Alhaji Abdul Kadir Daiyabu (National Vice Chairman), Dr. Udentia O. Udentia (National Secretary) Alhaji Yussuf Mamman (National Organising Secretary), Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife, Chief Olu Falae, Chief Bola Ige, Chief Segun Osoba, and Senator Bola Tinubu (Maja-Pearce 1999, Agbu 2016).

The 1999 general elections were largely a contest between the PDP and an AD-APP coalition. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was the presidential flag bearer of the PDP while Chief Olu Falae, also a Christian and Yoruba ethnic like Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, stood for the AD-APP coalition, presented as APP in the election. Their emergence as the flag bearers of their respective parties was the product of the northern elite's agreement to shift power to southern Nigeria.

The PDP won 62.8% while the APP won 37.2% of the valid 30,280,052 votes cast across the country (<https://africanelections...html>). At the level of the governorship elections in the 36 states of the federation, the PDP won eleven (11) of the seventeen States in southern Nigeria, including all the five (5) Southeast states, namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States, and all the six (6) South-south States, namely: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers

States. It also won ten (10) of the nineteen (19) northern states, namely: Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and Taraba States.

The AD-APP coalition was not operated at the state governorship elections level as both parties presented and vigorously backed their respective gubernatorial flag bearers. The AD won six (6) of the seventeen (17) States in southern Nigeria. All were in the South-west geopolitical zone, namely: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti. The APP did not win any State in southern Nigeria but won the remaining nine (9) of the nineteen (19) States in northern Nigeria, namely: Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara States (<https://en.wikipedia.org>).

As stated earlier, the AD was largely seen as a Yoruba party, and its performance in the elections in southern Nigeria was largely because of its leadership composition whose structure was widely perceived to be dominated by Yoruba political leaders who openly behaved as ethnic leaders. In addition, they were known associates of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo who was largely considered as the political leader of the Yorubas.

In addition, the major public campaign rhetoric of the AD included the call for the restructuring of the Nigerian federation and all the nation's policing, armed and security agencies, devolution of more powers to the states, redesign of the nation's revenue allocation methods to be based on derivation, and the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference of all ethnic nationalities to re-negotiate Nigeria (Agbu 2016). All these were largely considered as brazen opposition to the wellbeing of northern Nigeria, hence the successes of the AD were restricted to Yorubaland.

The PDP owed its national success in the elections to its composition

which was widely considered to be broad-based as it was regarded as a mixture of new and old-breed politicians selected from across all the states of the Nigerian federation. The prominent leaders of the PDP avoided being seen as ethnic or sectional leaders. In addition, the party's campaign rhetoric displayed a balance of the conservative thoughts of many political leaders of northern Nigeria with the progressive mindset of many political leaders of southern Nigeria.

The non-performance of the APP in southern Nigeria was a direct result of the absence of southern ethnic leaders in its fold. South-west (Yoruba) ethnic leaders were in the AD. The majority of the respected southeast (Igbo) and south-south (Ijaw, Edo, Efik, etc.) ethnic leaders were in the PDP. APP's performance in northern Nigeria was also handicapped by the PDP's almost clean sweep of many prominent retired military officers of northern Nigeria into its fold.

As the 2003 general elections approached, the APP reconstituted and rechristened itself as the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) for it to have a more inclusive national spread that would enhance its capacity to wrestle power from the PDP. In a similar vein, the AD enlarged, reconstituted and renamed itself as the Action Congress (AC).

Although twenty (20) political parties, and therefore twenty candidates, contested the 2003 presidential elections, the major contenders were PDP's Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a Christian and Yoruba ethnic (southerner) and ANPP's retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari, a Muslim and Fulani ethnic (northerner). This made the contest to be construed as inter-religious, inter-ethnic and inter-regional contests. The complication resulted in some shift in political loyalty, particularly in the south-west geopolitical zone (Yorubaland) whose voters became more interested in retaining their kin, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, as president than being dogmatically

glued to the Afenifere-controlled AC, which incidentally did not present any presidential candidate for the election. Eventually, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP was returned as the winner of the 2003 presidential election for his second term having gotten 62% while the APP's Major General Muhammadu Buhari got 32% of the 39,480,489 valid votes cast at the elections. Inadvertently, the loyalty shift in the southwest geopolitical zone negatively affected the AC in the governorship elections of that year.

In the governorship elections, the PDP won fifteen (15) of the seventeen (17) States in southern Nigeria, including four (4) of the five (5) Southeast states, namely: Abia, Ebonyi, Imo and Enugu States; all the six (6) South-south States, namely: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River, Edo and Delta states; five (5) of the six South-west States, namely: Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo and Ekiti States. It also won twelve (12) of the nineteen (19) states in northern Nigeria, namely: Adamawa, Bauchi, Benue, Gombe, Kaduna, Katsina, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and Taraba States. The ANPP did not win any State in southern Nigeria but won seven (7) of the nineteen (19) States in northern Nigeria. The AC won one (1) State in southern Nigeria, namely: Lagos. The APGA also won one (1) State in southern Nigeria, namely: Anambra (<https://en.wikipedia.org>).

Also, as the 2007 general elections approached, achieving accepted into its fold some prominent political figures, such as Chief Audu Ogbe, a former chairman of the PDP, among others, who were estranged from the PDP, reconstituted itself as Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) to demonstrate its newly expanded national outlook. Nevertheless, the PDP won the presidential elections in 2007 installing Alhaji Umar Yar'Adua, a Muslim and Fulani ethnic, as president, thus securing a power shift back to the north. The sudden death of Alhaji Umar Yar'Adua mid-term propped up his vice, Dr

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, a Christian and an Ijawethnic, as president of the country, thus inadvertently returning power to the south.

Meanwhile, between 2002 and 2011, more political parties emerged and were officially registered by INEC, most particularly following a Supreme Court ruling on a case instituted by the late Chief Gani Fawehimi that principally bordered on the rights of Nigerians to have numerous political choices given the constitutional provisions for citizens' fundamental freedoms of thoughts and association.

This instructed the enlargement of the spectrum of Nigeria's multiparty system. Prominent amongst the new political parties that came up and were registered were the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), the National Conscience Party (NCP), the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the Labour Party (LP), among many others. This brought the number of registered political parties in Nigeria to over sixty, with many of them displaying nil or insignificant electoral successes in the 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections despite the periodic financial grants given by INEC to all registered political parties. Dr Goodluck Jonathan was sustained as PDP's presidential flag bearer in the 2011 general elections, which he won. The PDP thus remained the ruling party from 1999 up till 2015, sixteen years, prompting many to think that Nigeria was moving toward becoming a one-party state.

However, as the 2015 general elections approached, at the brazen initiative of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, many prominent members of the opposition, scattered in different political parties, jettisoned their differences and initiated moves to form a coalition to dethrone the ruling PDP. The moves culminated in the merger of the ACN, ANPP, CPC and a faction of APGA. The coalition also included an estranged but vocal fragment of the PDP advocating for a power shift

to the north and therefore opposed the candidacy of the sitting president, Dr Goodluck Jonathan. The merger produced the All Progressives Congress (APC) which was eventually registered by INEC in 2013 (Olowojolu and Ake 2015). Given his contributions to the merger, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu became widely respected as the unofficial leader of the new party prompting many voters in the south-west geopolitical zone to shift their loyalty from the PDP to the APC.

Although fourteen (14) political parties contested the 2015 presidential elections, the PDP and the APC were the main contenders. The PDP presented President Goodluck Jonathan and Vice-President Namadi Sambo as its flag bearers while the APC propped up retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari and Professor Yemi Osinbajo as its presidential and vice-presidential flag bearers. Eventually, the APC dramatically won the 2015 presidential elections, having gotten 54%, while the PDP got 45% of the 28,587,564 valid votes cast across the country in the election (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015>), dethroning the long-ruling PDP and achieving power shift to the north.

In the normal cycle of governorship elections held in 2015 in twenty-nine (29) States and the off-season governorship elections held in seven (7) States between 2016 and 2018, the APC won seven (7) States in southern Nigeria, including six (6) of the south-west States, namely: Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti, and Osun; one (1) of the south-south States, namely: Edo; and one (1) of the south-east States, namely: Imo.

However, it won sixteen (16) States in northern Nigeria, namely: Adamawa, Benue, Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kwara, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara

States. The PDP won three (3) of the five (5) south-east States, namely: Abia, Ebonyi and Enugu; five (5) of the six (6) south-south States, namely: Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Rivers, and Bayelsa. The PDP won three States in northern Nigeria, namely: Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba, and APGA won one (1) State in the south-east, namely: Anambra (Olowojolu and Ake 2015, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>).

The factors generally perceived as being responsible for the loss of Dr Goodluck Jonathan's PDP in the presidential election of 2015, and the party's poor showing in the in-cycle and off-season governorship elections held in the 36 States of the country include the enhanced electoral value produced by the merger of the major opposition parties into one party -the APC, and the schism in the PDP which was principally centred on the call for power shift to the north. Other factors include the corrupt image of the PDP's sixteen-year rule versus the supposed personal integrity of the APC's presidential flag bearer, retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari. These factors also robbed off on the 2019 presidential election which APC's Muhammadu Buhari also won with the PDP as the main challenger.

The discussion of party politics under the fourth republic dispensation should not conclude without mentioning the intrigues, anxieties and surprises associated with the 2023 presidential election whose central issue was the propriety, or otherwise, of deliberately scheming power shift to other sections of the country after northern Nigeria's Major General Muhammadu Buhari's eight-year rule. The major political parties and their respective presidential candidates included the APC with Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a Muslim and Yoruba ethnic (southerner) as the party's flag bearer; the PDP with Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, a Muslim and Kanuri ethnic (northerner) as the party's flag bearer; the LP with Mr Peter Obi, a Christian and Igbo

ethnic (southerner) as the party's flag bearer; and the NNPP with Mallam Rabi'u Kwakwanso, a Muslim and Fulani ethnic (northerner), as the party's flag bearer. The anxieties associated with the elections were specifically brewed by the confusion that ensued from the interface of the thought patterns of four categories of politicians.

First, to many fair-minded members of the political elite across the country, whose equity leaning was in terms of power rotation between the north and south, southern Nigeria was due to provide the next president. Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, Mr Peter Obi and The Progressive Northern Governors' Forum represented this thought pattern. Second, to some political pragmatists, keeping Nigeria's disparate geo-ethnic groups together required deliberately giving programmed access to all the six geopolitical zones of the country to the nation's topmost power hierarchy in a sequential rotation. Mr. Peter Obi of PDP/LP represented this thought pattern.

Third, to some other few broad-minded members of the political elite, whose professed understanding of democracy was one that forces no restriction on the political participation of citizens in the struggle for access to power, Nigeria should not be seen as a matter of north and south, or as one of north, west and east, or even in terms of the six geopolitical zones. Rather, the nation-state should be seen as a single entity whole leadership should be selected without surrendering nationalism, capacity and integrity to the conspiracy of ethnicity, mediocrity and dishonesty. Alhaji Atiku Abubakar represented this thought pattern.

Fourth, to some other rights-claiming members of the political elite, their contributions and sacrifices that enabled other peoples' ascension to power deserved to be reciprocated or likewise compensated in time and space. Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu

represented this thought pattern. These four interlocked thought patterns generated a series of intrigues that entangled the PDP, APC and LP in the build-up to the 2023 presidential elections.

Towards the general elections, the opposition PDP broke into four factions, namely: the mainstream PDP that was supportive of the candidacy of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as the party's presidential flag bearer, the Mr Peter Obi faction that later broke away to fuse into the LP, the Mallam Rabi'u Kwawanso faction that also later broke away to fuse into the NNPP, and the G5 governors, who, in their stand for power shift to southern Nigeria, were brazenly opposed to the candidacy of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, but remained in the party to fight the party on that ground. The G5 governors composed of Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia State, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State and Samuel Ortom of Benue State. The first four were governors in southern Nigeria while the last was a governor in northern Nigeria, specifically in Nigeria's north-central geopolitical zone otherwise known as the Middle-belt.

The APC experienced its dimension of internal intrigues which was centred on the support or non-support for Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the unofficial leader of the party, whose publicly announced presidential ambition challenged the unity of the party. First, many of Asiwaju's political beneficiaries, such as the then Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo and Senate President Ahmad Lawan, came out to contest the presidential party primaries with him, thus factionalizing Tinubu's support base. Second, the then-sitting party chairman of APC, who was helped by Bola Tinubu to ascend the party's topmost position became uncommitted to Tinubu's presidential aspiration and made efforts to discourage party members' support for him. Except for the unflinching support of the progressive governors' forum, the leadership of the APC had programmed Tinubu to lose the

presidential party primaries. He eventually emerged as the party's presidential flag bearer.

Third, the then-sitting president, Muhamáadu Buhari, seemed to have deliberately de-marketed the party in the build-up to the presidential election by allowing the occurrence of acute fuel scarcity which crippled the transport sector for so many months, making Nigerian citizens hate the ruling elite and the party. The suffering of Nigerians was compounded by a phony naira redesign policy which resulted in the scarcity of the local currency with far-reaching negative effects on the wellbeing of Nigerians. Both the fuel and naira scarcity were presumed to have been deliberately ill-timed to truncate the chances of the APC candidate in the general elections.

The LP, which accommodated and rehabilitated the political aspiration of Mr. Peter Obi, after he had exited the PDP, also broke into two factions. The two opposing national chairmen, Julius Abure and Lamida Apapa, who both, in the struggle for the leadership of the party, became locked in a frenzy of court litigation, divided the rank and file of the membership of the party and created public embarrassment for the LP presidential candidate. Mr Peter Obi's support for the Julius Abure faction made the Lamidi Apapa faction turn against the candidacy of the LP candidate and made efforts to discredit his personality.

Eventually, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (APC) won the presidential election has gotten 37.6%, against Alhaji Atiku Abubakar 29.8% (PDP), Mr. Peter Obi's 26.1% (LP), and Mallam Rabiú Kwakwanso's 6.4% (NNPP) of the total 23,377,466 valid votes cast in the election, and was sworn-in as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. All the various court litigations raised against his election failed. In the presidential election, results in the southern region showed that the

APC won five States, including four (4) States in the south-west, namely: Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, and Ekiti States, and one (1) State in the south-south, namely: Rivers State. It won seven (7) States in the northern region, namely: Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Niger, Zamfara, Jigawa and Borno States. This summed up to twelve (12) States across the country.

Results in the southern region also showed that the PDP won two (2) States in the south-south, namely: Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa and one (1) State in the south-west, namely: Osun State. The party won nine (9) States in the northern region, namely: Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Kaduna, Bauchi, Yobe, Gombe, Adamawa and Taraba States.

This also summed up to twelve (12) States across the country. Results of the LP in the southern region showed that the party won nine (9) States, including one (1) south-west State, namely: Lagos State, all the five (5) south-east States, namely: Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, and Ebonyi States, and three (3) south-south States, namely: Delta, Edo and Cross river States. The party won two (2) States in the northern region, namely: Plateau and Nasarawa States. This also summed up to twelve (12) States across the country. The NNPP won only one (1) State in the election, namely: Kano State in northern Nigeria (<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023-presidential-election-results-by-states/>).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the trajectories of the formation of the major political parties under Nigeria's scattered democratic dispensations and drew on the consequential behaviours of the prominent political actors in party politics and the far-reaching features of the major political groups to explain the performances of the political parties in southern Nigeria between 1922 and 2023.

The trajectories underscore some features of Nigeria's democratic practice. First, the 'ethnic constituency' remain the spindle used by political elites to launch their political career. This explains why all the political parties that operated in Nigeria's public space have roots in ethnic associations, and to date, all political leaders continue to first consider themselves primarily as ethnic leaders, before secondarily seeing themselves and behaving as national leaders. Second, while it was evident that all the political parties in Nigeria started as ethnic parties, it is gratifying that they have all vigorously pursued transforming into national parties.

Third, identity matters greatly in Nigeria. While nationalism, capacity and integrity are universally considered as part of the requirements for leadership selection in the public space, these virtues are noted to still be largely supplanted by ethnicity and religion. Fourth, there has been a tremendous improvement in the extent to which the political class have become committed to sustaining the corporate existence of Nigeria. This has been evident in the various instances of regional concession for power shift, demonstrated in 1999, 2007, 2015 and 2023, as part of the elites' sacrifices to make Nigeria survive.

With the above, it is worthwhile to close this discussion on a positive note. Although identity sensitivity is a bane of Nigeria's nascent democracy, there is no doubt that democracy has come to stay in Nigeria. There is also no doubt that the Nigerian project will continue to survive all hiccups and persist as a nation-state.

Chapter Ten

The Media and Politics of Political Parties in Nigeria

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Introduction

Studies, show that, the media can facilitate and to some extent, determine activities in society's dominant way of life as well as in how it is governed. The pertinence of the media in any society is, thus, premised on the fact that communication is the live-wire of any human activity. The media, thus, facilitates effective communication in an increasingly sophisticated world of rapid technological innovations, local culture, audience attitudes, convictions and especially politics (Pate, Nwabueze & Idiong, 2013).

Today, politics and the media are not only seemingly intertwined, but, have become two key variables that dominate any modern society. As Hague and Harrop (2013) put it, politics in modern democratic states globally have become the standard and acceptable procedure for democratic leadership and constitutional governance. This is because political procedures allow citizens as voters to democratically elect their preferred leaders.

These leaders in return, serve them for a specified period of time depending on the constitutional term limit in their respective countries. In Nigeria for instance, the constitution pegs the constitutional limit for an elected officer such president, senators, house of representatives both federal, state and local government

levels at two terms of four years each (Abba & Babalola, 2017). This is so for many African countries.

Thus, during elections, those aspiring for political office engage in campaigns, and use the media extensively to mobilize their electorates into casting the ballot in their favour. Consequently, elections are given a lot of attention the world over as well as attracting massive expenditure of financial resources on what is often described as 'politicking' (Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2006).

However, elections in some countries especially Nigeria cannot be thought of without political parties. This is because as Adetula and Adeyi (2013) explain, the country's constitution does not provide for independent candidacy and as such, political parties remain the only platform for interested persons to aspire to any political office. Therefore, activities within a political party that culminates in its candidate selection process have continued to enjoy unrivalled eminence in political discourses and analyses in Nigeria and other societies that practice this same system.

Accordingly, in the run up to any election cycle, what dominates national discourse is who gets the nod to be the party's flag bearer or ascends administrative positions within that political party. The 'chosen' ones often emerge in a process called 'party primaries' or 'conventions'. Expectedly, this process is often fraught with controversies, intrigues and suspense which leads to endless litigations and sometimes violence. For some scholars like Egwu (2014), politics within political parties in Nigeria is so opaque that onlookers often find it difficult to interpret outcomes of primaries, conventions or any other activity.

This has led to conclusions that 'party primaries' and 'conventions' are mere platforms of the affirmation of the elite's consensus. This, most

often than not, renders candidate selection process less credible amongst party members and this trickles down to the larger society (Egwu, 2014). In all this, the media often plays a pivotal role in the political process.

Although, the primary role of the media is to inform and educate (Singh, 2007); Dominick (2012) argues that the 21st century media also attempts to provide consistent perspectives, generate opinions and concepts as well as assist in promoting a cause, identifying important issues and engendering political values. This is possible because as Sambe (2008, p. 36) puts it, the media has become not only the 'eyes and ears of the public', they reduce uncertainties, connect the dots that help members of the society or any group reach resolution on critical issues. In addition, the media purvey political information which in turn enlightens the public, thus, enabling them to participate meaningfully in political activities in their environment.

This role often plays out in the execution of the mandates of political parties globally. Thus, willingly or unwillingly, the media is often at the center of the aforementioned activities of political parties. According to Ekanem (2013), the media is often employed in selling political parties, their candidates, programmes and policies. This is in addition to shaping party ideologies, as well as, actions. This is why Norman (1985) in Ekanem (2013) states that, it will be suicidal for anyone to dismiss the power of the media in any political organisation and process.

In recognition of this role, previous studies such as that of Adetula and Adeyi (2013); Ekanem (2013); Emeka (2015); Pate et al. (2013); among many others have continue to interrogate the interplay between the media and the 'politics' of the political parties in the country. This chapter, therefore, attempts to contribute to this

discourse by examining specific role the media plays in the 'politics of Political parties in Nigeria.

The Media Conceptualized

It is important to provide the conceptual clarification of what the discourse refers to as the 'media'. Generally, the media is referred to as a channel by which information reaches the receiver. However, due to advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as well as the development of the Web 2.0 version of the internet, the media have assumed a number of nomenclatures which makes it imperative for precise definitions and explanations. Consequently, the media as used here is categorised into: the Traditional Media; Conventional Media and the New Media.

Sambe (2008); Aikat (2021); and NIOS, (2021) opine that the traditional media refer to means of communication as practiced by various global communities and cultures from ancient times. Thus, includes folk media, street theatre, and puppetry as practiced by various global communities and cultures, or embodied in local custom or lore, generally involving the use of storytelling and especially communication arts that make up a distinctive culture, representative of a traditional way of life (Baran, 2009).

Furthermore, it represents a form of communication employing vocal, verbal, musical and visual folk-art forms, transmitted to a society or group of societies from one generation to another. They are indigenous modes and have served the society as tools/medium of communication for ages. A traditional media form can be anything which does the purpose of communication in your family, friends and as a whole in society (Mathiyazhagan, Kaur, Ravindhar and Devrani, 2015; NIOS, 2021). Accordingly, the lists include traditional dance, drama, painting, sculpture, song, music, motifs and symbols.

The second category- 'Conventional media', refer to a relatively recently developed or advanced technology of mass communication. Hongcharu (2008); Belch and Belch (2009); Akinfeleye (2011); Bansal (2007); Singh (2007) opine that the 'conventional' media addresses the serious problems of contemporary society, and the major public issues of our time. Accordingly, this genre includes the electronic media (Television and Radio), the print media (Newspapers, Magazines Books, Newsletters and Pamphlets).

Agreeing with this position, IGI GLOBAL, (2021); Shah (2020) note that any form of mass communication available before the advent of digital media fits the description of 'conventional' media. Thus, mass communication channels such television, radio, newspapers, books, and magazines may be referred to as 'conventional media'. This is perhaps why Shah (2020) explains that while this media can still be described as modern media since it is still relevant, the internet and new media have made the hitherto 'modern media' look archaic.

This is why some scholars prefer to call them mainstream media. Dominick (2012) identifies large, heterogeneous, as well as scattered audience, as the key feature as regards its audience. In addition, the media uses electronic means in the case of TV and radio to transmit messages and printed material as in the case of newspapers, magazines, among others. etc. Aside from this, direct feedback is either delayed or even absent.

The New Media which is the latest category and is a direct consequence and feature of media convergence is the new media. Accordingly, Friedman and Friedman (2008) defines the new media web-related communication technologies, such as blogs, wikis, online social networking, virtual worlds and other social media forms. Although, the term new media is used ubiquitously in many different

ways, Joe (2020) refers to internet platforms provides a rich communication experience for users.

The Concept of Political Party

Although, the term has no generally agreed definition, Nkamnebe (2003) describes political parties as groups organized, with the main intention of contesting, winning elections and taking control of government. Thus, based on this premise, taking control of state power is the primary reason for the existence of any political party. Supporting this assertion, Likoti (2005) opines that a political party is an organized group of people with a minimum of approximately similar political goals and views who aim to influence the general public policy by electing their candidates to position.

Consequently, political parties are organised group of people who come together to pursue specific policies and objectives with the motive of taking control of state power, by acting together as a political unit. Additionally, Wilson (1992, p. 138) in Usua (2010) concludes that a political party is a group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause which essentially is the pursuit, capture and retention for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its offices. Although, some literatures have likened political parties to pressure groups, this is far from reality.

According to Akeke-Ayeni (2008), political parties have certain features and characteristics that clearly distinguish them from the latter. They (parties) may begin as pressure groups, but as political associations develop, they eventually metamorphose into entities that have clearly stated ideologies and structures that is used to develop programmes with the express aim of capturing political power. On capturing political power, the parties now work towards

implementing its ideologies which is expected to change the structure and process of society for over overall growth and development of society. Based on these propositions, therefore, a political party should have three features: a label in the minds of its members and the electorates; an organisation that campaign for candidates seeking elective offices and leaders that control key political offices (Executive and Legislature) and lastly, an organised group that seeks to promote society's growth and development based on its stated ideologies.

Thus, political parties are conventionally noteworthy organizations in democratic societies. In fact, today the public often associate them with democracy itself (Orji, 2013). Political parties, as 'makers' of democracy, have been so idealized that scholars claim that neither democracy nor democratic societies are thinkable without them (Omotola, 2009). In other words, the presence of active political parties is a sine qua non for democratic consolidation in any society (Dode, 2010). Well-functioning political parties are therefore vital for the success of electoral democracy and political development in Nigeria. Along with their political activities, political parties have become an integral part of democracy and governance globally (Adetula & Adeyi, 2013).

A Brief on Political Parties in Nigeria

Available literature suggests that the origin of political parties in Nigeria can be traced to the Clifford Constitution in 1922 which provided for a Legislative Council (Dudley, 1982, p. 45 in Innocent & Anyadike, 2011). This constitutional provision paved way for the establishment of the country's first political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) by the foremost nationalist Herbert Macaulay. According to Dudley, the party confined its operations in Lagos and therefore cannot be regarded as a national

party. More than a decade later, the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) which began initially as a pressure group metamorphosed into a political party and replaced the NNDP in 1936. Although, NYM later collapsed following sustained period of leadership crisis, its activities were also restricted to the Southern part of Nigeria (Oluwaseun, 2012).

Joseph (1991) in Ikenna, Desmond, Evangeline, and Paul (2022) opines that based on its composition, the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) is regarded as the first 'national' party in the country. The party which had Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe as its President and General Secretary attracted followers from across the country. However, this support was subsequently weakened after Azikiwe assumed leadership of the Igbo State Union (ISU). The Action Group (AG) followed in 1948. The party, an offshoot of the pan Yoruba cultural organisation, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa (Society for the Descendants of Oduduwa-Legendary Yoruba Ancestor) was led by Obafemi Awolowo.

Ikenna et al. (2022) explain that in 1951, politicians in the Northern part of the country took their turn by introducing the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC). Like the AG, NPC was an offshoot of a Northern Nigerian cultural organisation Jammiyyaar Muttanen Arewa (Northern Peoples' Congress). The party's leaders included Dr. R.A. Dikko, the first Northern Nigeria medical doctor, Yusuf Maitama Sule and Mallam Aminu Kano. The three dominant political parties (AG, NCNC and NPC) that operated in the First Republic (1960 - 1966) were all embroiled in candidate selection crisis, which almost tore the parties apart before the federal elections of 1959, which ushered in Nigeria's political independence in 1960. What was discernible during that period was the imposition of candidates by the party leaders. The picture that emerged from the national

conventions of these parties show that all the written and unwritten rules, procedures and guidelines on candidate selection process were irrelevant as the party lords dictated to the rest of the party. For example, the AG reserved the position of the Prime Minister to the leader of the party, Obafemi Awolowo (Innocent & Anyadike, 2011).

In the Second Republic (1979-1983), five political parties dominated the political landscape: the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Obafemi Awolowo; the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe; the Great Nigerian Peoples' Party (GNPP) led by Waziri Ibrahim and the Peoples' Redemption Party (PRP) led by Aminu Kano. Ideologically, the NPN, like the old NPC, was a conservative party in the sense that it made no pretext about changing the class nature of Nigerian society (Dudley, 1982, p. 194 in Innocent & Anyadike, 2011), and was committed to the preservation of traditional institutions. Both the NPN and the GNPP articulated liberalist ideas and programmes to function within a mixed economy.

Like the defunct Action Group (AG), the UPN adopted socialist cum welfarist ideologies which saw the promoting free education, healthcare among others. As for the PRP, members were lured with the promise of political power. However, one striking feature of the parties was that all except the NPN were built around and personalised around a single personality who were also seen as patrons. In this regard, UPN had Awolowo as its personality; NPN-Azikiwe; PRP-Aminu Kano and GNPP-Ibrahim Waziri. This perhaps explains why political parties in this era abandoned the principle of internal democracy and political inclusion to embrace the practices of candidate imposition. As a testament of this, all the candidates that emerged to contest the 1979 presidential elections in the country never went through any rigorous party selection process. Rather, all the aspirants from presidential right down to national legislature

elections were simply imposed (Innocent & Anyadike, 2011).

Between 1985 -1993, the military government of Ibrahim Babangida decreed two political parties: Social Democratic Party(SDP) and the National Republican Convention(NRC). According to Ani (2011), the SDP was viewed as being 'a little to the left' in terms of ideological leaning while the NRC was 'a little to the right'. This imposition of political parties forced Nigerians during that era into strange political alliances which later played some part in the subsequent annulment of the outcome of the presidential elections which would have produced Chief M. K. O. Abiola as a winner (Usua, 2010).

After thirteen years of military rule, Nigerians again tasted civilian rule. Thus, new political parties emerged. Although as many as twenty-nine political parties were registered, there were only three were dominant. First was the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP) and the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). Samaila (2003) in a study revealed that by 2011, the number of the parties had ballooned to fifty. In spite of their number, the parties offered no real threat to the PDP especially the prospect of winning elections at the presidential level.

However, the political landscaped was to change dramatically in 2013 with the formation of a new political party- the All Peoples' Congress(APC) from the amalgam of three regionally based opposition parties: the Action Congress of Nigeria(ACN); All Nigerian Peoples' Party(ANPP) and the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). Accordingly, Jega and Ibeanu (2007), note that by 2015, the APC, APGA AND PDP became dominant in the political landscape of the country. A new addition to this family of 'prominent' parties was recorded in the yet to be concluded electoral process of 2023 (cases are still at the Supreme court at the time of this study) where the

Labour Party (LP) became a factor following its adoption of Peter Obi as its Presidential candidate.

The Nature and Character of Political Parties in Nigeria

Politics is one of the few most important subjects known to humanity, as it affects everything and everybody. Generally, 'Politics', refers to all the activities associated with acquiring power to govern in a country or an area (Valeri, 2010). In addition, Valeri explains that 'politics' also connotes a tussle for power between people or groups. By implication, it is a process of manoeuvring to assert rival interests. Boswell (2020) further adds that politics could also mean the 'battle' of ideas, in which participants attempt to control the narrative through tapping deep-rooted values and beliefs, rather than invoking objective self-interest. From the foregoing, therefore, 'politics' of Nigeria political parties as conceptualised by this discourse revolves around all actions, activities of who gets 'what', 'when' and 'how' in the parties.

In Nigeria, the very idea of politics conjures the images of power domination, ineptitude, and struggle to grab state apparatus (Iwokwagh, 2005). Thus, regrettably, there is at the moment, a deep source of worry about the current practice of politics in Nigeria. As Abdullahi (2002) puts it, the right desirable political culture has continued to not only to elude the country but has deteriorate steadily since independence from the British.

This undesirable political culture has continued right to this day with two clear prominent assumptions each time the Nigerian styled politics is mentioned. One of these assumptions, according to Pate (2003, p. 129,), is that "politics is a dirty game where rules and conscience do not matter as long as one can capture, retain or extend power". With this statement, Pate draws attention to the

characteristic absence of the "politics of principle" in the country.

Although some political analysts have tenuously argued that the country has progressed democratically, however, a plethora of visible deficiencies abound to challenge these optimistic assertions. These deficiencies have therefore compelled many development scholars like Ikelegbe (2013, p. 8) to argue that "for the pessimist, the Nigerian version of politics is not only 'business as usual' but 'everything goes'".

Consequently, the nature of 'politics' in political parties in the country is not far from the above assertions. According to Nwachuku and Ochonogor (2011), because political parties are at the center of 'politics' and 'politicking' in Nigeria, their nature reflects that of the general existing political culture of the country which is: opaque and inconsistent ideologies, lack of principles, imposition of unpopular candidates, ma-ladministration, abuse of office and stark incompetence.

Agreeing with this assertion, Nwachukwu (2013) states that the picture of 'politics' in Nigerian parties since independence is one of "political impunity", "political disease", ethnic chauvinistic predispositions, politics of corruption and mismanagement, cruel marginalization, electoral malpractices, inter and intra party wrangling, political favouritism, nepotism nauseating, sycophancy, among others. This situation according to Iwokwagh (2005) has led not only to what is often described as 'jungle politics', but also, a steady production of a crop of political leaders that have exerted negative influences over key sectors which in turn have impeded the growth and development of the country.

Conversely, therefore, the nature of 'politics' in Nigerian political parties is rooted in the prevailing 'political culture' of the country. This culture reflects deep corruption and a whole lot of unacceptable

political vices. These vices include politics played with the intent to oppress and suppress the poor and downtrodden. Suppression of opposition views within the parties has become the norm. Aside from this, politics is perceived by the elite party players as the quickest means of acquiring illegitimate wealth. Flagrant abuse of party constitution, non-adherence to party codes of conduct as well as suppression and intimidation against perceived opposition groups within the party have also become common place (Nwachukwu, 2013).

Media and Politics of Political Parties in Nigeria

The performance of the media has always been a reflection of the environment in which they operate. This, therefore, means that the media are reflectors of the prevailing ecosystem of a country. In Nigeria, the media have often been employed in selling political parties, their candidates, programmes and policies. However, at the same time, due to the prevailing political culture highlighted earlier, the media are caught in the country's political quagmire (Sambe, 2009). Thus, the media are frequently used as 'weapons' by influential party men and women to fight perceived 'opposition' within the party. To achieve this, influential members use the media to either directly or subtly portray their perceived 'enemies' in bad light among the public. This is achieved via sponsored stories, commentaries and opinion pieces (Jibo, 2003).

Agreeing, Pate (2003, p. 129) argues that the media have been found wanting in coverage and its relationship with the political process of the country. Today, "the media is often used as a channel by politicians not only to deceive the public, but also, to sow discord amongst themselves". A clear reference to the how the media is used in party politics. Pate concludes that the direct consequence of this is

that, politics has become one of the 'prisons in the Nigerian communication environment'.

This scenario played out in the recently concluded 2023 general elections in the country where the media was used to promote unhealthy intra – party competition during the election process. According to Morgan (2022), party primary venues in the run up to the 2023 general election were turned to 'battle grounds' with real violence disrupting the process with deaths and injuries in some cases. While crisis in some political parties have always existed, Morgan remarks that the new dimensions of disagreement, infighting and more importantly, 'media war', have left much to be desired. According to Gambo (2022), the Nigeria media which ought to be a bastion of objectivity and balance, completely abdicated this role of neutrality and fairness. In its place was a media that was not only partisan, but ready tools in the hands of the 'willing buyer/payer'.

For instance, Akinkuotu (2023) reports that the decision by the then President Muhammadu Buhari's government to redesign the Naira led to an unprecedented media war by members of the APC. The policy was perceived to be against the ambition of the incumbent President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. 'Staunch party members led by prominent governors not only organized frequent media chats to lampoon the policy and surreptitiously, the party's hierarchy, the media became a handy and willing tool in the struggle for supremacy within the party.

Before this episode, events leading to the party's presidential primaries also show cased how the media was used in 'politics' of selection within the party. Similar scenarios played out in the main opposition party-the PDP. The PDP was also embroiled in the 'politics' of selecting a presidential flag bearer. Although, events

before the primaries were less dramatic, after the primaries, matters took a turn for the worse with one of the aspirants, Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State leading four other colleagues to form what became known as the 'G-5' group. During this period, the media was used to keep the contending issues within the party constantly in the public domain. The LP did not fare better either as contending factions within the party have continued their 'media war' even at as the time of putting this discourse together.

Perhaps, in recognition of this abuse, Idiong (2008, p. 349) argues that: "it is currently an anathema for the media in Nigeria to be impartial or even objective in party politics. In fact, these days, the media is also a willing participant in intra and inter party conflicts nationwide". Similarly, Nwachukwu (2010, p. 96) remarks that: "the use of pejorative reference to person or group belonging to opposition party in today's media is rife especially in the states where the tussles for power control were stiff...." Lamenting the situation, Anyaoku (2012) observes that it is disheartening that the media which should be impartial is used to fight this political malaise are used by political pundits to perpetuate and sustain the ugly trend.

In addition, Ojo (2023) complains further that the media which should have been used to correct a deviant political culture that portrays political parties as disorganized, selfish and unpredictable group, have been used persistently to perpetuate and sustain the malaise. However, this should not be the case. As Iwokwagh (2005) puts it, the media in relating with political parties must function as the society's functional 'watchdog' and democracy's 'indomitable defender'.

Achieving a Balanced Role Between Media and Political Party 'Politics'

The media are agents of information and cultural transmission (Nwabueze, 2010). In other words, the media could be used to promote a healthy political culture. The media, thus, occupy a central position in the society as they provide information and views that help to shape society's views about life and how it could be lived. This is why Nwachukwu (2010) argues that the media can be used to disseminate a political culture that will facilitate growth and development of the society in which they operate in. From the foregoing, therefore, it is clear that the media holds a very strategic position in the political life of any nation.

Consequently, in achieving a balanced role as regards the 'politics' of political parties in Nigeria, the media must help the parties to imbibe and practice a progressive political culture. That is, a 'political culture' that, according to Nwachukwu (2013), is not perceived as 'a dirty game', 'political impunity', 'corruption and mismanagement', 'cruel marginalization', 'electoral malpractices', 'inter and intra party wrangling,' among many others. Rather, as Idiong (2010) puts it, the media can help members of political parties to find new norms and harmony in periods of transition, change the power structure in the society by giving knowledge and creating a sense of 'nationness'.

This eventually can lead to progressive political activity or participation and make political development a self-perpetuating process. Similarly, Ochonogor (2008) adds that the media should help define contending issues and provide the parties with common terms of reference so that public attention can be focused on the political process. This according to Ochonogor, is against the current trend where the media 'blindly' takes sides while provide little insight for the audience. The resultant effect is a public that is goaded

into a corner with little option in terms of decision making during the political process.

Additionally, since the media are recognised as agents capable of instituting a level of enlightenment and uprightness (Enahoro, 2010), it behooves on them to transform the current ailing political culture into one that project positive moral values and social realities. Thus, the media through their editorial matter and programmes can limit behavioural options and provide useful guidelines for acceptable politics within the parties and the larger society.

As Idiong (2008) observes, the media through their coverage of contending issues can enforce and transmit the right political culture. According to Idiong, this role is heightened by the ability of the media to define, analyse and interpret issues that can bequeath our society with the right political culture. These could be done with the 'agenda setting' ability of the media and the fulfilment of the media's 'social responsibility' to the political system.

Through their functions, the media could set 'agenda' on cultural values reorientation and reconstruction. This could be put in action by consistent and persistent creation and promotion of editorial matter such as news, editorials, commentaries and opinion pieces that highlight the right political values and culture.

In addition, programmes such as debates, talk shows, documentaries, news features and dramas can be designed to build and promote the right political culture in the country. Here, the media's 'cultivation analysis' ability could also be exploited to inculcate into the minds of the people especially the youth, the right political values which gradually filters to subsequent generations. These values, if well-constructed and maintained, could help give our politics in Nigeria political parties a 'breath of fresh air' (Nwachukwu, 2013).

Conclusion

This discourse interrogated the relationship between the media and 'politics' of Nigerian Political parties. Based on literature reviewed, it is clear that the nature of 'politics' in Nigerian political parties and the entire political ecosystem is not only undesirable but does not promote or reflect the right values.

In addition, the media have also been found wanting as it is also culpable in encouraging this trend. It is therefore the opinion of this discourse that the media should be an implement that assists in reconstructing the nature of 'politics' in not only the parties but in the entire political ecosystem. If this is done, the media will bequeath to generations unborn the right political culture. As Nwachukwu, (2013, p. 81) puts it, "our policy is not 'sick'. What is 'sick' about the country is the value system".

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APPENDIX A

Heads of Electoral Commissions in Nigeria from 1958 - 2024



**MR. RONALD EDWARDS
WRAITH**
Electoral Commission 1958-1963



SIR KOFO ABAYOMI
*Electoral Commission for the
Federation 1963-1964*



EYO ETA ESUA
*Electoral Commission for the
Federation 1964-1965*



CHIEF MICHEAL O. ANI
*Federal Electoral Commission
1976-1979*



**HON. JUSTICE V. OVIE-
WHISKEY**
*Federal Electoral Commission
1980-1983*



PROFESSOR EME AWA
*National Electoral Commission
1987-1989*

100 years of Political Parties Evolution in Nigeria



**PROFESSOR HUMPHREY
NWOSU**
*National Electoral Commission
1989-1993*



**PROFESSOR OKON
EDET UYA**
*National Electoral Commission
1993*



**CHIEF SUMNER
DAGOGO- JACK**
*National Electoral Commission of
Nigeria 1995-1998*



**JUSTICE EPHRAIM O. I.
AKPATA**
*Independent National Electoral
Commission 1998-2000*



DR. ABEL I. GUOBADIA
*Independent National Electoral
Commission 2000-2005*



**PROFESSOR MAURICE M.
IWU**
*Independent National Electoral
Commission 2005-2010*



**PROFESSOR ATTAHIRU
M. JEGA**
*Independent National Electoral
Commission 2010-2015*



**PROFESSOR MAHMOOD
YAKUBU**
*Independent National Electoral
Commission 2015-2024*

APPENDIX B

The 19 Registered Political Parties in Nigeria as at December, 2024.



APPENDIX C

National Chairmen of the 19 Registered Political Parties as at December, 2024.





APPENDIX D

National Executive Council Members of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) 2023-2025



Barr. Maxwell Mgbudem
National Secretary



Hajiya Zainab A. Rotahim
Deputy National Secretary



Barr. Obed O. Agu
National Legal Adviser



Ibrahim Suleiman
National Financial Secretary



Hon. Maryam Bagel
National Treasurer



Comr. Egbeola O. Martins
National Organising Secretary



Chinyere Onyemekara Kalu
National Publicity Secretary



Prince Chinedu Ohi
Director-General



„This Volume, with the keen perspective of political history, complemented by analysis of political parties as democratic institutions and agents for political communication over a hundred years, is a telling addition and intellectual mine for all students of Nigeria's political history and development. I highly commend IPAC for its thoughtfulness in availing the reading public of this vital volume.

- Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman
Director General, National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS).

The centenary celebration of the evolution of political parties in Nigeria underscores the complexity of our nation's history - from colonialism and independence to military rule, the return to democracy, and the ongoing challenges of modern-day governance. Throughout this transformative journey, political parties have played an instrumental role in shaping Nigeria's political landscape. The nationalist movements that demanded independence from British colonial rule, and the activism that resisted military dictatorship, stand as powerful testaments to the significant influence of political parties in Nigeria...

- Most Rev. Dr Matthew Hassan Kukah
*Catholic Bishop, Diocese of Sokoto, Nigeria. Founder, The Kukah Centre (TKC)
Convener, National Peace Committee (NPC).*

Documenting the evolution of party politics in Nigeria is a crucial step towards understanding the country's democratic journey. By capturing the challenges, contributions, missteps, and successes of Nigeria's political parties, we can learn valuable lessons from the past and build stronger, more viable parties for the future.

- Adebowale Olorunmola
Country Director, WFD-Nigeria

This book comes at a critical time, offering an invaluable opportunity to evaluate the evolution of our democracy over the past century while inspiring informed discourse on its future. Democracy, as the bedrock of any thriving society, requires all stakeholders, politicians, policymakers, think tanks, scholars, and citizens' collective efforts. The lessons documented within these pages will undoubtedly guide us toward a more resilient, transparent, and accountable democratic system.

- Prof. Ayo Omorayo
*Director General/Chief Executive Officer
National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS)*

A book documentation of the history of one hundred years of political parties and its political economy in Nigeria by IPAC is timely and commendable, posterity will be waiting as it continues to shape Nigeria's democratic leadership.

- Dr. Kendi Chino Opara
CEO / Heart Home care LLC USA

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CEO I Heart Home care LLC USA