

PARTY-POLITICS, DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper titles “Party politics, democratic consolidation and good governance in Nigeria”. The paper was aimed at examining the nature of African politics and governance and specifically Nigeria’s political development looking at the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences. Again, the paper also attempted to analyse the impacts and consequences of deviation from the actual democratic principles, tenets, traditions and values which underpinned sustainable democracy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria in particular, and Africa in general. The paper used secondary source of data collection that includes published works of scholars and internet source. The study was based on the causal research design that linked development and democratic peace or decay. The paper adopted context dependent and perspective dependent approaches to explain the precarious party politics, democratic consolidation and good governance in Nigeria with reference to prevailing activities of political actors due to their arbitrary selfish and self-serviant prebendalism that characterised Nigeria and African politics. The paper was aimed at exploring the vicious cycles that impede internal party democracy that underscores party politics in Nigeria and further undermines democratic consolidation and good governance characterised in the current political realities in Nigeria. The paper adopted Democratic Peace Theory propounded by Immanuel Kant and further modified by Michael Doyle to explain development, peace and stability in the context of liberal or republican democratic political system of governments. The paper discovered that no effective party-politics, democratic consolidation and good governance would be achieved without realistic development in the context of peace and democratic theory. The paper recommended that human development ought to be given top priority to ensure popular legitimacy and stability despite the existing political realities such as diversities in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: *Democratic Consolidation, Good Governance, Nigeria, Party-Politics*

Introduction

In the liberal democratic context, party-politics and good governance are among the most important pillars upon which democratic consolidation is predicated. Other pillars include strong governance institutions, competent and credible leaders, a thriving democratic political culture, good democratic governance, ‘universal’ human rights, and stable political and economic development. Democratic consolidation is necessary for, and aspired by citizens of, virtually all countries which have embarked on transition to democracy at various gradations. However, party-politics, to a large extent depends on how well established, structured, organised and functional political parties rooted in respect for internal democracy.

In the African context, party-politics, democratic consolidation and good governance are being remarkably constrained, if not obstructed, by evident weaknesses and obtuse nature of these pillars upon which consolidation of democracy is established. Remarkable improvements to satisfy the aspirations of citizens for desirable consolidation of democracy would therefore require, first, the deconstruction and as well as the

reconstruction of the current nature and character of African and Nigerian political parties, in addition to repositioning their roles and responsibilities in candidate recruitment and selection and inter-party engagements in the political and governance arenas. And, secondly, sustenance and enhancement of internal party democracy, good governance and rule of law in order to down scale the tendency of military coups and political decay evident from the prevailing political and economic malaises.

In a nutshell, for a durable, effective and viable democratic consolidation and continuity in Africa, West Africa and Nigeria, the following issues need to be adequately addressed such as political-patronage, money politics, politics of personal ambition and party interests over collective and national interests. Thus, political actors must not undermine freedom and independence of government institutions to exercise their constitutional responsibilities. Prevailing internal dynamics of party-politics in Nigerian context, historically and contemporarily affect the national political parties’ efficacy and effectiveness looking at how political parties are formed, shaped controlled and directed by so-called ‘moneybags’ and ‘godfathers’ with negative consequences on

the overall political development in terms of social justice, fairness, capacity building, and participation which would substantially foster greater confidence and support of the citizens to democratically consolidate a constitutional democracy in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Party politics refers to strict adherence to the politics, ideologies, guidelines and principles of a political party regardless of the public interest; partisan loyalty. Party politics involves commitments, devotion and partisan loyalty towards one's political party alone rather than to the state or good of the general public (Jega, 2022). Party politics is somewhat vague and politically incorrect to be allowed permeate a political system of a democratic state. Party politics involves commitments, devotion, and partisan loyalty towards one's political party alone rather than to the state or to the good of the general public. However democratic consolidation refers to regime continuity and to nothing else. Thus, for a regime to be deeply rooted must ensure free competition and fair elections; citizens' rights to express their opinions and make independent choices must be guaranteed and backed by legal framework. Nigeria's political development has since been slowly arrested in its delivery

with the activities of protracted impacts of the political actors who have failed to endure to accept the legitimacy of democracy and rule of law (Jega, 2023).

Therefore, the Nigeria's political development is still confronted with institutional, structural, systemic and attitudinal changes which must be improved to ensure a consolidated democracy, good democratic governance and a harmonised polity as opposed to a pattern of centrifugal forces that undermine the corporate existence of Nigerian state controlled by politics of prebendalism (Jega, 2023).

Good governance encompasses the general ideals and practices of rule of law, democratisation and adherence to the democratic norms and values while at the same time involves politics of inclusion specially to drive home a sustainable and consolidated democracy and more so institutionalise the culture of unity in diversity.

Good democratic governance involves both theory and practice of governance from the standpoints of leadership strategy and initiatives for good democratic governance by the government to the citizen overall utility of a good life and stable polity accomplish through holistic governance.

Good democratic governance upholds both guide and practical relevance for the upliftment of highest ideals as noble character and as a development policy on governance (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2023).

Bentham believed that private interest had to be guided if it were to served public interest; he argued that the pursuit of one's private pleasure would coincide with the greatest happiness of the great numbers. Thus, the most of confusing and complex socio-ethnic and cultural pluralism has been India, Japan, China, Yugoslavia etc. are perhaps the most confusing and complex societies in the world full of a number of contradictions while Mahatma Gandhi Mao Zedong Lee Kwan Yew, Gaddali, Mandela Jawaharlal Nehru amongst others conceived good democratic governance as an evolution of suitable political institutions such as the centralised nation state as the best means to achieve the same goal and the principal instrument of social change. Good governance is linked to rule of law, democracy and constitution (Author, 2023).

Principles of Good Democratic Governance

1. Properness
2. Transparency

3. Participation

Thus, good democratic governance is a result of hollowing out of the state, related not only to reform for modernising administration but also to the process of globalisation and the increasingly transitional dimension of regulation and policy making.

Modern society and the state are undergoing tremendous changers because of the fusion of public sector modernization with regulatory reform movements, as well as trends such as globalisation and the knowledge-based society. These changes are involving new legal perspective to provide more instruments for effective government action. Traditional structures may be replaced by new regulatory models to steer different decision-making processes with a focus on citizens' needs and efficiency.

For this reason, the trend constitutes a call for the incorporation of governance trends in law.

Because of its intrinsic qualities: a solid piece of furniture, solid scholarship, a solid education, etc. In democratisation studies nobody ever speaks of a "solid democracy." Perhaps, this would sound too much of an overstatement in any empirical case. Yet the

terms “consolidating democracy” and “consolidated democracy,” though more modest in appearance, do carry the double meaning of stability and soundness. In most of academic literature, a “consolidating democracy” is meant either to remove the threat of democratic breakdown or to move towards some higher stage of democratic performance (or both things together). And a “consolidated democracy” is meant to be either a crisis-proof democracy or a high-quality democracy (or both things together). In the following we will argue that five competing concepts of DC circulate in academic literature, which all are compatible with the minimum semantic constraints the term implies: They all start from some type or other of democratic regime. And they all head toward some normative goal which either reads democratic survival or democratic progress.

Avoiding the Breakdown of Democracy

Once a transition from authoritarian rule in a given country has reached a point where (more or less) free, (more or less) fair, and (more or less) competitive elections are held, democratic actors often cannot afford to lean back, relax, and enjoy the “bounded uncertainty” of democratic rule. More often than not, regime threatening “unbounded

uncertainties” persist and the democrats’ fundamental anxieties do not recede but only shift from establishing democracy’s core institution to securing what they have achieved. For these actors, consolidating democracy means reducing the probability of breakdown to a point where they can feel reasonably confident that democracy will persist in the near 12 (and not so near) future. This preoccupation with regime survival describes, so to speak, the classical meaning of DC. In its positive formulations, this branch of consolidation studies speaks about the goal of reaching democratic continuity, maintenance, entrenchment, survival, permanence, endurance, persistence, resilience, viability, sustainability, irreversibility. By contrast, negative formulations invoke the necessity of moving beyond states of “non-consolidation,” beyond democratic fragility, instability, uncertainty, vulnerability, reversibility, the threat of breakdown. For all differences in nuance, the unifying purpose beneath this multifaceted vocabulary is straightforward. In biological metaphors: It is basically preoccupied with keeping democracy alive, with preventing its “rapid death” (O’Donnell 1992). In accordance with its focus on coup politics, the central issue this first notion of democratic

consolidation (DC 1) is concerned with deviant actors, anti-system actors, who sponsor antidemocratic activities or else, harbor antidemocratic motives. In principle, the range of actors who actually or potentially fall into this category of dangerous elements is unlimited. Given Latin America's recent history of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes, in the region, fears of democratic breakdown have tended to focus on the professionals of state violence as well as on the business class who too in the course of time has acquired a solid antidemocratic reputation (until the latest cycle of democratisation). But in fact the list of (either suspected or 13 convicted) assassins or gravediggers of democratic rule is much longer. It includes private men in arms (guerillas, drug cartels, violent street protesters), elected presidents who stage military backed autogolpes, and also a disenchanted population who, as many fear, some day may become tired of a democracy that in some cases, in material terms, has not delivered much more than economic hardship and social inequality (see, for example, Gunther et al. 1995; Huntington 1991; Linz and Stephan 1996; Mainwaring 1986).

Avoiding the Erosion of Democracy

As students of DC have been rapid to recognise, focusing on the military and on classical coup politics as privileged objects of research may be morally, politically, and empirically questionable as it diverts attention from other pressing issues. Moreover, it may even turn out to be a misleading, misguided perspective that looks for danger at the wrong places, and therefore overlooks real threats that hide elsewhere, at less traditional and less obvious sites. Many new democracies do face the quasi-traditional threat of illegal or pseudo-legal overthrow by antidemocratic forces. But in addition to the risk of breakdown, of dramatic, sudden, and visible relapses to authoritarian rule, many neo-democracies have to manage the danger of decay, of less spectacular, more incremental, and less transparent forms of regression to semi authoritarian rule. While the former provokes a radical discontinuity at the central front stage of democratic politics (leading to open authoritarianism), the latter implies a gradual corrosion at its backstage (leading to fuzzy semi-democracy, to some hybrid regime somewhere in the middle of the road between liberal democracy and dictatorship). The former stands at the center

of our first concept of democratic consolidation, the latter forms the normative core of our second one, its dominant concern, and its defining horizon of avoidance. It was Guillermo O'Donnell who at the end of the 1980s put forward the first explicit formulation of this extended understanding of DC. In his seminal essay "Transitions, Continuities, and Paradoxes" (O'Donnell, 1992) he drew attention to the threat of silent regressions from democracy to semi democratic rule and built the withering away of related concerns into his (broad) definition of democratic consolidation (see *ibid.*, 48). Emphasising the temporal dimension of his observation, he proposed to distinguish between "rapid deaths" and "slow deaths" of democracy.

Together with their rising concern about the dangers of democratic erosion, students of DC have improved their knowledge about different routes "slow deaths" of democracies may take and about different destinations (hybrid regimes) they may arrive at. The reassertion of military supremacy emphasised by O'Donnell is only one possibility, even if a very real one. Other forms of erosion¹⁷ attack other institutional pillars of democracy. For example, state violence as well as state absence may subvert the rule of law; the rise

of hegemonic parties may suffocate electoral competition; the decay of electoral institutions may affect the honesty of vote counting; incumbents may use their privileged access to state resources and to mass media in ways that violate minimum standards of electoral fairness and equal opportunity; or exclusionary citizenship laws may run against democratic norms of inclusiveness.

Institutionalising Democracy

The two concepts of democratic consolidation I have discussed so far DC 1 (avoiding democratic breakdown) and DC 2 (avoiding democratic erosion) represent variants of "negative" consolidation. They both try to prevent democratic regressions towards a (negatively valued) horizon of avoidance. Symmetrically, the last two notions of democratic consolidation on my list of five DC 4 (democratic completion) and DC 5 (democratic deepening) represent varieties of "positive" consolidation. They both try to achieve democratic progress towards a (positively valued) horizon of attainment. Democratic institutionalisation is meant here to describe two things basically: all those approaches that identify democratic consolidation with actors becoming less and less conscious of the¹⁸ contingency of

democratic institutions (“sociological institutionalisation”); and all those approaches that look beyond democracy’s basic rules of the game and equate DC with the construction of specific institutions on meso or micro levels (“sub-systemic institutionalisation”). The former perspective imports a sociological view of institutions into consolidation studies, and considers democracy to be consolidated when certain modes of perception settle in, or more precisely perhaps, when certain modes of non-perception settle in. According to this conceptualisation, in a consolidating democracy actors begin to perceive democratic institutions as part of the “normal” or “natural” order of things, as something familiar, taken for granted, beyond everyday reflection and concern, a simple element of practical knowledge. In an early formulation of this institutionalism perspective, Philippe Schmitter described democratic consolidation as a process “transforming the accidental arrangements, prudential norms, and contingent solutions that have emerged (during transition) into structures, i.e. into relationships that are reliably known, regularly practiced and habitually accepted” (Schmitter, 1998).

Completing Democracy

Liberal democracies face the “negative” challenge of preventing democratic erosion, the regression to semi-democratic rule. Semi-democratic “electoral democracies” face the symmetrical “positive” challenge of democratic completion, the attainment of full democratic rule. Students of such regimes often associate the notion of DC with this democratising task, with the telos of moving away from some “diminished subtype” of democracy towards a “non-diminished” democracy, or as Guillermo O’Donnell put it once, with the accomplishment of a “second transition” from a democratic government to a democratic regime (O’Donnell, 1992). In other words, when academic observers of hybrid regimes speak of DC they tend to think of the goal of completing a pending transition to democracy. In graphical terms, they tend to look not just backwards to the dangers of authoritarian regression; but also forwards to the promises of democratic progress. Which are the basic actors, conflicts, and sites of democratic completion? The answer is easy: It depends. It depends on the type of “electoral democracy” in place. In Latin America,

three configurations have been of special relevance. To begin with, there are those countries where the outgoing authoritarian regime was able to write certain authoritarian rules into the constitution. In such cases of constitutional defects, full democratisation required these formal authoritarian legacies to be removed. The prototypical Latin American case of constitutional semi democracy has been Chile after 1990. And the classical piece to model a general notion of DC along the Chilean fault lines was J. Samuel Valenzuela's "Democratic Consolidation in Post Transitional Settings" (1992). In his perspective, abolishing "tutelary powers," "reserved domains," and "major discriminations" in the electoral law, appeared as necessary ingredients of democratic consolidation. Since then, this notion of DC has received widespread attention. For instance, in their recent comparative volume, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan extensively analyses this constitution-centered type of democratic completion under the heading of "constitutional consolidation" (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Another kind of semi democracies which have been raising peculiar challenges of democratic consolidation as completion is "hegemonic

party systems in transition." In the continent, the cases are Mexico and Paraguay. What is the problem here? In essence, the problem is how to tell at what point (authoritarian) hegemonic parties have become (democratic) dominant parties.

While the constitutional legacies of military regimes as well as the structural legacies of hegemonic systems pose formidable "threshold problems" to democratising agents, they nevertheless concern just a small handful of cases. In comparison, a third variety of democratic consolidation appears of more general relevance for Latin American countries: the transformation of "illiberal democracies" where the rule of law is biased and selective (or even elective) into liberal democracies which effectively guarantee basic political, civil, and human rights. With the notable (and debatable) exception of the three Southern countries, Latin America's contemporary "designer democracies" (Nodia,1996) have not followed western Europe's "organic" route of political development, the well-known historical sequence of state building, first, legal domestication of the state, second, and democratic domestication of the state, third. Instead, as with many other "third wave" democracies, the sequence has been inverted. Democracies have been conquered

on the top of states whose presence looks partial and precarious (in both spatial and social terms) and with judicial systems in place that often cannot do much more than to administer the rule of lawlessness.

Deepening Democracy

The notion of democratic consolidation just discussed completing the democratic transition and traveling from electoral to liberal democracy represents one progress-oriented “positive” version of DC. Moving further on the “continuum of democracy” by deepening liberal democracy and pushing it closer to advanced democracy represents another, a second one. When we compare Latin America’s contemporary democracies with (more or less rosy pictures of) established Western democracies, the former appear as faltering on many accounts. They appear to possess (or to be possessed by) “comparative disadvantages” in virtually any field of democratic politics. The list of presumptive structural deficits is endless. It covers fields as wide and diverse as governmental performance, public administration, judicial systems, party systems, interest groups, civil society, political culture, and styles of decision making. In all these and many other areas, most Latin American democracies look

“underdeveloped” by comparison. They fall short of standards set by “advanced democracies.”

Party-Politics and Institutionalisation in Nigeria

Political parties, according to Oladeji (2022) constitute the foundation of democratic government. In every political system, the functions of political parties are: political recruitment of potential candidates into the party membership; interest articulation; interest aggregation; political socialisation. Political education involves the training of political leaders, and political communication.

The operation of political parties and politicians since the return to democracy do not manifest convincing prospects for party institutionalisation, which is a critical criterion for democratic growth and consolidation. This unfortunate scenario, said to be one of the most crucial and yet least developed democratic institutions. There are currently in the words of Oladije, many registered political parties in Nigeria, most of which are an assemblage of people who share the same level of determination to use the party platform to capture power. As such, it is difficult to identify programmes or ideologies. The structure of political parties

is such that internal democracy is virtually absent. The political parties are weak and unable to effectively carry out political education and discipline.

Party-politics in Nigeria, particularly in the Fourth Republic, is faced with a plethora of bottlenecks which negate party institutionalisation. The way and manner political parties emerge in Nigeria, especially in the recent period, tends to negate their prospects for institutionalisation, and the ability to guarantee political stability and consolidate democracy. The activities of political parties that have been operating in the country since 1999 are diametrically opposed to those of the established democratic norms.

However, the way they evolved has no correlation with what we are familiar in the extant literature. The fluidity and unstable character of their composition portray them as mere vehicles of regime change from military governance to civilian rule, and obviously lack the capacity to resolve the persistent political issues tormenting the Nigerian state (Oladeji, 2022). An in-depth examination of the way the Nigerian political parties have performed since the beginning of the Fourth Republic shows that they are incapable of addressing the various

problems facing the country. Since 1999, political parties have been enmeshed in unhealthy competition with one another. Party factions are more in competition with themselves than with another party. The situation is so dismal to the extent that the three major parties that operated between 1999 and 2003 as well as 2015 and 2023 manifested ethno-religious inclination and regionalist tendencies, which was exhibited in the patterns electoral prospects. These tendencies make party institutionalisation a herculean task.

Furthermore, Nigerian political parties have failed to maintain a harmonious relationship at the intraparty and interparty levels. Intraparty squabbles have always threatened the parties to extinction or caused schism of disturbing magnitude. This situation compelled many of the party stalwarts to defect or remain ambivalent. Thus, internal party democracy and party institutionalisation has far-reaching implications for democratic consolidation. If these problems are not remedied, they will not be better positioned to make meaningful contributions to democratic stability and consolidation.

Moreover, the implicit pitfalls of the political parties to play politics to play

politics according to the rules in their internal affairs as well as the larger political entity, have led to the politically motivated killings across political divides. The consequences of such conflicts have been the perennial collapse of the political order, resulting in pervasive instability all over the country and the monumental loss of lives and property. Invariably, the focus of the government and its hard-earned resources has been wasted on conflict management instead of development agenda.

Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

In the contemporary Nigerian context, a great dilemma would seem to confront democrats struggling for desirable democratic development and consolidation, and it requires incurable optimism and almost superhuman resilience to sustain the struggle towards attainment of desirable goals. The reckless Nigerian political class, having captured and bastardised the dominant political parties, and having captured the state and commandeered its resources, having governed so ineptly, thereby entrenching a profound crisis of economic growth and human development and security; they have now not only pauperised most of the citizenry, they have also made them disenchanted with

democracy and democratisation. As most citizens struggle for survival, using multiple modes of livelihood, honest and criminal, legal and illegal, they become apathetic and indifferent to demands for good democratic governance or political participation and voting in elections. Among the youth in particular, and many middleclass professionals, the preoccupation seems to be with opportunities to Japa! Most seem to care less, if at all, with engagements to reform political parties, or ensure the integrity of elections, or elect competent and credible people to bring about good democratic governance (Jega, 2022).

The increasing trend in vote buying since 2019, illustrates how reckless political class, are actively embarking on a project of total capture of citizens as voters and participants in the political and electoral processes.

However, drawing from theoretical postulations and global practical experiences, it would seem that positive changes for societal transformation occur much more easily, to contain state capture and reckless misrule, when a significant percentage of citizens are not totally captured; enabling their mobilisation by organised civil society groups for participation in the struggles to adequately

address vicious party-politics, state capture and bad governance. Given the developmentalist' scenario of development versus democratic peace and security, significant number of citizens are getting more conscious of their constitutional roles and political rights, demanding for what was hitherto being robbed by the political class.

Good Governance

Theoretical work on governance reflects the interest of the social science community in the shifting pattern and styles of governing. The traditional use of 'governance' and its dictionary entry defines it as a synonym for government. Yet, there is a redirection in its use and import. That may suggest why Stoker (1998) sees governance as 'a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed'. Allied to this, Committee of Experts on Public Administration (2006) opines that governance refers to the exercise of political and administrative authority at all levels to manage a country's affairs. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Moreso, the

United Nations Development Programme (2014) defines governance as a process of creating and sustaining an environment for inclusive and responsive political processes and settlements. It is worthy to submit therefore that governance involves the dynamics of transforming societal needs into concrete programmes. Put simply, governance means the development of governing styles in which boundaries between public and private sectors have become blurred and the needs of society increasingly met.

These days the adjective good has been added to the noun governance to form the concept 'good governance'. In fact, much discussion about the definition of good governance have centred on what makes institutions and rules more effective and efficient, in order to achieve equity, transparency, participation, responsiveness, accountability, and the rule of law. These aspects are crucial for human development and the eradication of abject poverty since ineffective institutions usually result in the greatest harm to those who are poor and vulnerable – children, women, the elderly and the infirm. Nigeria is rated low on the UN human development index (UNDP, 2014).

Without reference to a universal standard for governance, the notion of what is

good is thus defined by the desired outcome, which varies from one situation to another. Nonetheless, two broad governance issues can be discerned. The first pertains to institutions of governance, including public administration and public services connected, in particular, with the sound management of resources, delivery of and equitable access to public services, responsiveness to the views of citizens and their participation in decisions that concern them.

The second broad governance issue is concerned with concepts of democracy and the rule of law, including with rights-based claims to equality before the law, judicial independence, participation in the conduct of public affairs, electoral integrity, political plurality, freedom of expression and media independence (General Assembly Resolution 59/201). These claims include demands for gender equality and the inclusion of the elderly, youth and marginalised groups. Integral to effective execution is an informed and empowered citizenry engaged in transparent and accountable governance processes. Free and pluralistic media is considered essential to such ends as is the right to freely access information held by public bodies. Of course, citizens need information (data and statistics) from the government to help them advise the governing elites. No effort is to be spared

in insisting on good governance in a democracy. Nigerians have paid great price for democracy. Therefore, institutions of state must be up and running in meeting the needs of the people. Some of these institutions are here under reviewed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Democratic Peace Theory was used to explain interplay of the citizens' hopes and expectations and the government performance in terms of driving development to the people or not. Proponents of the theory includes among others, Kant, Doyle, Diamond, Nodia and Fukuyama with slight modifications upon the earlier assumptions. The democratic peace theory argues that democratic states do not initiate war against one another and that democratic institutions discourage that initiation of conflicts. The theory further argues that there would be no conflicts or crises between democrats due to shared democratic identities of norms, cultures and traditions or common practices such as consensus, compromise, participation and negotiations mechanisms to resolve differences, if any. The theorists affirm that there is positive relationship between peace and development. Thus, any change whether better or vicious would affect the nature, pattern and character of the overall

political stability or otherwise to a given political entity. To domesticate the theory in the context of Nigeria, conflict is inevitable so long as leadership negligence or nonchalant attitude continue to trend on realistic development and rule of law. So, there is quite correlation between human development and peace and political stability in country such as Nigeria.

Therefore, political actors are obliged to uphold to democratic norms, principles and values to entrench a sustainable democratic culture, discipline and further consolidate electoral and or liberal democracy in Nigeria.

Political Party

Party politics is a key ingredient of representative government. It is the core or life line of modern politics. It is the key vehicle of popular participation in the political process and the means political elites maintain power and authority not just in democratic but also in many authoritarian or close regimes. Given the variety in its historical evolution, organisation, ideology, social base, objectives and strength, having a generally acceptable definition of political party may be a challenge. Nonetheless, what a political party's role should be in a democracy is known. Political theorists and Thinkers have advanced different

views on the subject. Burke as shown by Cone (1957) sees political party as a body of men and women who are united for the purpose of promoting, by their joint endeavours, the national interest upon some particular principles agreed jointly. In other words, a political party's existence is tied to involvement in political activities such as political socialisation, nomination and electioneering. Abeje (2013) identifies the major functions of political parties to include: nominating, electioneering, shaping opinion, mediating among groups (brokerage), managing government, and providing link between government and citizens. Salih (2001) expands these role further: they endow regimes with legitimacy by providing ideologies, leadership or opportunities for political participation; they act as a medium for political recruitment, thus creating opportunities for upward social mobility; they provide opportunities for the growing of coalitions of powerful political interests to sustain government, supervise policy implementation, and promote the political socialisation of people to undertake self-help activities; they promote political stability in societies that are able to absorb increasing levels of political participation by the new social forces generated by modernisation; they serve as major vehicle for agenda setting base on its

ideology.

In addition, liberal political systems, political parties provide the connection between the party system and government on the one hand, and between government and society on the other. 'Within a context of competitive party systems, political parties are multifunctional institutions; they can be put to almost any political or governmental purpose (Blondel, 1969). In a nutshell, the debate is no longer whether there should be political parties, but whether the party system should be pluralist or not that is two or multi-party system (Doorenspleet, 2003).

As far back as 1922 when the electoral principle was introduced into Nigeria body polity by the Sir Clifford, there was no intention to limit expression of interest to one party system. Hugu Clifford represented the Crown in the Nigeria overseas territory. On the agitation by Nigerians to be a part of the Executive and Legislative Councils, the Clifford Constitution introduced Elective Principle. It was a novelty on the African continent. Clifford expanded membership of the legislative council from 36 of the 1914 constitution to 46 in the 1922 constitution. Four Nigerians were subsequently elected directly into the legislative council on the ratio of 3:1 - three from Lagos and one from Calabar

(Okibe, 2001). Arising from the introduction of elective principle in 1922, the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) was transformed into and registered as Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923. From small beginnings, party politics has come a long way in Nigeria. Colonialism that ended in 1960 influenced party politics in Nigeria. Since independence on October 1st 1960, party system has made progress though with long pauses by military regimes. This interregnum has limited political space, political maturity and speed with which party system would develop in Nigeria. Three republics have come and gone, Nigeria is in the fourth test currently in her 17th year obviously the longest single experiment in Nigerian history. One may ask, how has the party system fared?

At the birth of the fourth republic, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD) were the dominant national parties. Alignment and re-alignment mostly in preparation for general elections have led Nigeria to now have two national political parties- All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). A review of the manifestos of both political parties show semblance in nearly every front. The PDP has 32 items while APC has 28

items. The single most visible variation of the APC manifesto from the PDP's is the inclusion of fight against corruption as an objective of the party. One is unable to place any of the political parties to the left. Both are centre right conservatives. PDP led Nigeria for 16 years at the centre and lost the presidency in 2015 to the APC. It is on this basis that the question comes, are the political parties in Nigeria playing the role expected of them? That is to say, are the parties supreme in Nigeria? Have political parties with commitment articulated and established a sustained faith in their ideologies presented in their manifestos? Political parties are widely seen as vehicles for contemporary democracies. The influence of political parties on the work of the legislature, executive and the conduct of its members is critical. It has largely been sanctioned by law, be it at the level of the constitution or laws or the parliamentary standing orders. But the real influence of the parties goes far beyond what is stated in the letters of the law. In general, it derives from the leading position of a political party to the country's political life. A government is expected to be driven by the manifesto of the party in power, be it left or right (Kędzia and Hauser, 2011).

At times, parliamentarians vote against party position. This contradiction

between disciplined voting in parliament or other forms of party discipline and the free mandate is no new phenomenon. The domestic constitutional orders often sanction this tension by setting forth the free mandate while situating political parties as the main actors of the parliamentary process. Heidar and Koole (2000) point to the fact that most parliaments constitutionally reflect the traditional, strong legitimacy of the individual MP (as the representative of the people) at the same time as they in practice give him/her a subordinate position to the effective power vested in the Party Parliamentary Groups (the caucus). In Nigeria, there exist now the PDP and APC caucus in the assemblies both national and states. Such groupings make for party unity. In cases where a legislator makes known that he or she will for some reasons defy the official party line, there is a strategy to promote party unity-both carrots and sticks. Party supremacy in Nigeria though threatened, can be redeemed if:

- Party leadership is separated from government.
- Party officials restraint themselves from greed;
- Funding of party comes from direct percentage deductions from elected members of the party and contract awards;
- Disciplinary measures are explicit and enforced on members

without fear or favour and;

- Election of party executives is open and competitive.

Party leadership has a bearing on the performance and perception of the party other things being equal. Composition and the nature of party structure are important. As all of this makes clear, parties have adopted a wide range of approaches to their internal organisation, and they are constantly experimenting with new structures and new procedures to cope with internal and external pressures (Udeh, 2016). So it is hard to generalise about how democratising membership will affect a party’s overall structure. However, using the ideas of inclusiveness, centralisation, and institutionalisation one can distinguish five common organizational models: (1) the leader-dominated party; (2) the party of notables, sometimes called the cadre party; (3) the party of individual

representation; (4) the corporatist party; and (5) the party built on basis of democracy (Scarow, 2013). These models help clarify some of the different challenges and internal stresses caused by democratising reforms. Some of these models have been more characteristic of certain historical eras than others, but none of them are entirely obsolescent: Elements of all the models can be found in contemporary parties in new as well as established democracies. While no individual party perfectly corresponds to any of these types, recognising a party’s general organisational starting point can give one some clues about the likely effects of organisational democratisation: Which groups are likely to benefit, and what types of structure may need to be strengthened or changed to make internal democratisation work?

Table-1.1. Selected Models of Party Organization and Organisational Tendencies

Type	Centralization	Inclusiveness	Institutionalization
<i>Dominant Leader</i>	High	Low	Generally low
<i>Party of Notables</i>	Medium (often stratarchical)	Low	Low to medium
<i>Individual Representation</i>	Medium to high	Medium to high	Medium to high
<i>Corporatist Representation</i>	Medium to high	Medium	Medium to high
<i>Basis Democracy</i>	Low to medium	High	Medium to high

Source: Adopted- Scarow (2013).

Political party leadership may equally influence membership. That's why is vital for a party to carefully review members who offer themselves for party offices. Functional democracies rely on the party as an eye on good governance, guide adherence to its ideology and manifesto, ensure internal party democracy, uphold party discipline and take responsibility for poor party performance. Participatory democracy is about the people. So the party should sale itself well with respect to its ideology, programmes, structure and leadership since they contribute to party success at the polls and performance in government.

Election Umpire

The origin of election commission in Nigeria goes back to the period before independence when the Electoral Commission of Nigeria was established to conduct 1959 general elections (Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), 2000). Following independence in 1960, Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) was established to conduct the immediate post-independence federal and regional elections of 1964 and 1965 under the chairmanship of Chief Eyo Esua. Military coup of 1966 saw the demise of FEC. Preparatory to the second republic, the regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo set up FEDECO under the

chairmanship of Chief Michael Ani to organize the 1979 general elections. FEDECO also conducted the 1983 general elections. In 1987, the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida established National Electoral Commission (NEC) with Prof. Eme Awa 1987-1989 and Prof. Nwosu H. 1989-1993. Under General Sanni Abacha, NECON was established to conduct elections in 1997 with Prof. Okon Uya and Chief Dagogo-Jack. NECON was dissolved by General Abubakar who replaced Sanni Abacha and established Independent National Electoral Commission in 1998. To her credit, INEC has conducted more elections than any other electoral commission in Nigeria. Justice Ephraim Akpata conducted the transitional elections 1998/1999. Dr. Abel Guobadia organised the 2003 general elections which observers say were -marred by widespread violence and other irregularities (Human Rights Watch, 2003) Prof. Maurice Iwu chaired INEC during the 2007 general elections in Nigeria which witnessed unprecedented irregularities (Bassey, 2010). Prof. Attahiru Muhammadu Jega chaired INEC which conducted the 2011 and 2015 general elections in Nigeria having been appointed by the Jonathan administration on June 8th, 2010. Prof. Mahmud Yakubu

is INEC incumbent Chairman. INEC is a creation of the constitution. Section 153 of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) (as amended constitution, 2010) recognises INEC as the electoral umpire for Nigeria.

Organisational Structure and Functional Responsibilities of INEC

Organisational structure is important as a tool of understanding communication channels and power relations. It is the structures that specify flow of authority and obedience. At the apex of the Commission is the Chairperson who is appointed by the president subject to the approval of the senate (CFRN, 1999). Directly below the Chairperson are the 12 National Commissioners. Next in authority are the 37 Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) representing the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. Each of the 774 local government councils is headed by an Electoral Officer (EO). This structure puts INEC in a right frame to deliver her responsibilities as spelt out in the CFRN (1999) and Electoral Act (2010) as follows:

1. Organise, undertake and supervise all elections in Nigeria to the offices of the President and Vice President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a state, and to the membership of

the Senate, the House of Representatives and House of assembly of each state of the Federation;

2. Register political parties in accordance with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution and the Electoral Act 2010.
3. Monitor the organisation and operation of political parties in Nigeria, including their finances;
4. Arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties and publish a report of the audit for public information;
5. Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote and prepare, maintain and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election under the Nigeria 1999 constitution;
6. Ensures that Electoral Commissioners, Electoral and Returning Officers take and subscribe to the oath of office prescribe by law;
7. Delegate any of its assigned powers to any Resident Electoral Commissioner; and
8. Carry out other duties in the 2010 Electoral Act (Electoral Act, 2010).

For INEC to successfully carryout these functions, her independence is critical. Proactively, the 1999 constitution provides for her independence by stating inter alia... and the

Independent National Electoral Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other authority or person (1999; 188 (1)). So far, INEC has conclusively conducted five general elections in Nigeria. The score card is not perfect. For instance, the conduct of the 1999 and 2003 elections as reviewed by Ogbeidi (2003) shows that some staffers of the umpire connived with unruly politicians to rob would be winners of the elections. To be fair, INEC has made progress. A report by the USA Institute of Peace vetted by Bekoe (2011) on the 2011 general elections observes:

Nigeria's 2011 general elections in particular the presidential elections were seen widely as being fair. This was especially important given the poor conduct of the 2007 elections. A number of factors contributed to ensuring that Nigeria's 2011 elections were successfully administered. They include the fact that the voters register was the most accurate, and there was also adequate training and fielding of election observers. The chair of the Independent Nigerian

Electoral Commission (INEC), Prof. Attahiru Jega, was well regarded and judged independent from the government. And, the parallel vote tabulation used by domestic observers allowed poll monitors to concurrently record the results of the election along with INEC as a means to provide a check on the official results. Additionally, ordinary Nigerians were encouraged to report, via calls or texts, any incidents of fraud or violence that they witnessed or experienced.

Violence that was noticed following the declaration of the result was at best ethnic and is understood in Nigeria context where elections are often a do or die affair. The 2015 general election was even more plausible. For the first time in Nigeria history, a seating president lost election, congratulated the winner and conducted peaceful transition. Credit goes to INEC for the courage to conduct in the opinion of majority of Nigerians and the international community a credible election. The PDP and Dr.

Goodluck Jonathan also deserve commendation to relinquish power freely.

Judiciary Independence

Government power showcases itself in three forms: legislation, administration and judicial decision. It is important to the theory of the organisation of government to determine whether, and to what extent, these powers should be combined in the same persons or body of persons, or should be entrusted to three separate agencies, coordinate and mutually independent (Appadorai, 1975). Early in the modern era, Jean Bodin in the book *The Republic* published in 1576 pointed out that some separation was essential. The Prince (Head of Government) he reasoned, should not administer justice in person, but should leave such matters to independent judges. From that early conception, judiciary independence has grown to be widely accepted especially in free democratic societies. Simply put, judicial independence can be defined as the ability of a judge to decide a matter free from pressures or inducements. The Judiciary as an institution, judicial independence means the ability of the Judiciary to be independent by being separate from

government and other concentrations of power (Daudu, 2014). The principal role of an independent Judiciary is to protect the rule of law and to ensure supremacy of the law. So, regarding appointment, promotion, remuneration, retirement or dismissal, the judiciary should operate independent of the executive or legislative influence. In close regimes like the military, the judiciary is hardly allowed to function independently as articulated. The degree of state influence at the time of the appointment and security of office may decrease the autonomy of justice which is key variable used by Feld and Voigt (2003) to measure the *de facto* independence of the judiciary. Has the judiciary enjoyed independence in Nigeria? The situation is mixed.

For instance, General Yakubu Gowon compulsorily retired Chief Justice Elias in 1970 for alleged fear of disloyalty (Sani, 2011). Also, court pronouncements are routinely disregarded. That's why Justice Oputa's condemnation of executive lawlessness as captured by Sani (2011) is apt:

I can safely say that here in Nigeria even under a Military Government, the law is no

respector of persons, principalities government, or powers and that the courts stand between citizens and the state alert to see that the state or government is bound by the law and respects the law... The court system cannot be maintained without the willingness of parties to abide by the findings and orders of a competent court until reversed on appeal. This means that no party and no court of subordinate or even co-ordinate jurisdiction can say: I do not like the order made and I will not obey it. And that is exactly what the Lagos State Government is doing in this case.

And that posture has to be condemned in the strongest of terms if we are not to say goodbye to the rule of law.

Similarly, in the *Obeya Memorial Hospital V. Attorney General of the Federation* another instance of executive lawlessness, the Supreme Court was *ad idem* in tutoring the executive on propriety in relation to extant judicial decisions (Oyebode, 2005). However, history cannot forget easily judges who have not exhibited any signs of timidity in the interpretations of the law. The forthright stance adopted by the

Supreme Court was poignantly captured in the celebrated case of *Governor of Lagos State V. Ojukwu* where Eso JSC in his lead judgment had observed.

It is a serious matter for anyone to flout a positive order of a court and proceed to taunt the court further by seeking a remedy in higher court while still in contempt of the lower court. It is very serious when the act of flouting the order of the court... is by the Executive... Executive lawlessness is tantamount to a deliberate violation of the constitution... the essence of the rule of law is that it should never operate under the rule of force or fear. To use force to effect an act and while under the marshal of that force, seek the court's equity is an attempt to infuse fear into court and operate a sabotage of the cherished rule of law. It must never be.

Flouting of court pronouncements was prevalent under the military regimes. The return to democracy has recorded partial observance of judiciary pronouncements. Courts have removed many who illegally got to power. Professor Osonbo, Dr. Chris Ngige, etc were removed as elected Governors of Edo and Anambra States respectively. Not to be forgotten is the fact that the Court of Appeal President Justice Isa Ayo Salami was removed by

President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for alleged impropriety. Though Justice Uwais' panel set up by the Chief Justice of the Federation found Justice Salami not guilty and criticised Justice Katsina-Alu in his capacity as CJN for not defending his colleague, President Jonathan refused to re-instate Salami. This was a major infringement on judiciary independence by the executive.

For Nigeria's democracy to be at par with those of the liberal states of the West, judiciary independence must be respected. No one is saying that the judiciary cannot err. No. But until a present decision is set aside, it should be respected. Recall that recently the Supreme Court of Nigeria had to set aside the decision of the Court of Appeal which sacked three elected governors- Udom Emmanuel, Nyesom Wike and Okezie U. Ikpeazu of Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Abia States respectively. Room for appeal which these Governors enjoyed should be utilised by others any time they feel wronged by a court pronouncements. The temple of justice *must not* be reviled by anyone, big or small.

No judge should allow himself or herself to be influenced to deliver face serving judgment. Testing of hypothesis and filling of frivolous objections to delay cases have become common place in

Nigeria. The judiciary eyes must be open to this rhetoric.

The Public Service

The public service constitutes the machinery for the delivery of public goods and development to the people. The delivery processes include habitual and efficient performance of duties by public employees. At the primary level, the public service is set up to execute policies of government, furnish government with data and statistics (inputs) needed for decision-making, regulate activities of individuals and organisations and ensures continuity of public administration (Udeh, 2015). Since the political component of government (political office holders) come and go, the public service is the permanent administrative structure which outlasts any government in power. Essentially, the functions of the public service include:

- (i) Contribute to translating the dreams and plans of the political/ruling class into concrete reality through the formulation of far-sighted policies and programmes and executing same loyally, conscientiously and effectively;
- (ii) Provide continuity between administrations;
- (iii) Serve as unifying force by

- bringing together people from all sections of the federation and providing effective and adequate social services;
- (iv) Advise the government on the full implications of various policy options open to it;
 - (v) Execute governmental policy loyally;
 - (vi) Protects public interest, as custodian of public conscience;
 - (vii) Manage government data (information) system optimally so as to facilitate availability of data for government decision-making;
 - (viii) Operate an open, humane and sensitive system which upholds the rule of law;
 - (ix) Operate a personnel management system which ensures high professionalism, significant specialisation, excellent motivation and high morale;
 - (x) Ensure prompt, effective and satisfying service delivery.

Whatever decision government makes, it is the personnel of government that will translate it to concrete programmes. In fact, what the people see is programme which helps them make meaning of what the politicians say. The public service therefore is vital to the attainment of goals and objectives of any government in power.

Code of Ethics

Ethics here means a sound culture, based on principles. A public servant should ensure compliance with the principles of law and the implementation of judicial decisions. He should perform his duties properly, efficiently, display professional discipline, integrity, equity, fairness, public spiritedness and courtesy. He should ensure at all times that public property under his responsibility is managed in the most appropriate and official manner. His conduct shall be deemed to be appropriate only when he behaves in a manner that enhances public confidence and promotes the image of the service. In addition, public officers are to observe the following as noted by Ekaidem (2007).

- i) Political neutrality and confidentiality: A civil servant should not use his post, functions or responsibility for political or partisan gains, which may be detrimental to the interests of the civil service. He should respect the confidentiality of official information to which he is puny (subordinate) by reason of his professional activities, even after leaving office, except where the law, the legitimate authority or the interest of justice requires otherwise. He should not, on the basis of his political affiliation or ideological

beliefs, seek to influence or change the policies, decisions or actions that the administration has decided to define, adopt or implement.

- ii) Integrity and Moral Rectitude: A civil servant should refrain from any activity that is inimical with ethics and morality, such as misappropriation of public funds, favouritism, nepotism, and discrimination, influence-peddling or administrative indiscretion. He should not accept, solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any payment, gift or other advantages in kind, in return for performing or refraining from performing functions or obligations. It shall be reprehensible for a civil servant to give gifts or other advantages that might influence in his favour or in the favour of his family members and friends, the judgment or decisions of another person. A civil servant shall, under no circumstance, misuse public property or prevail upon subordinates to perform activities other than those falling within the scope of their functions or mandate.
- iii) Conflict of Interest: A civil servant should not take up function or position, engage in transactions or have any financial, commercial or material interest that might be

incompatible with his functions, responsibilities or duties. Without prejudice, to the incompatible activities already established in the laws or regulations, He should, to the extent required by his office, declare any financial and commercial interests he might have or through family members, if such interests or activities are likely to trigger conflicts of interests. In the event of any potential or actual conflict of interest between his professional status and private interest, a civil servant shall terminate activities likely to give rise to such a conflict (source).

- (iv) Professionalism and Discipline: A civil servant must be well disciplined. Regulations should be adhered to and the interests of the service should be paramount. Senior officers should prescribe code of conduct which they themselves can and should comply with. Those who wish to lead others should always remember that effective leadership involves exemplary character, hard work and integrity. Good conduct is one of the criteria for promotion. Junior officers must be familiar with Government Regulations and Rules regarding good conduct. They must learn to comply with lawful orders

and constituted authorities.

Participatory democracy as practiced in Nigeria today is people oriented. When good governance is mentioned, it is based largely on the manifestations of the programme of government as delivered by the civil service. In plain language, the success or otherwise of government is seen in the bureaucracy. When one sees for instance, the orderly movement of traffic in Uyo Capital City, the timely construction of roads in Akwa Ibom, arrest and trial of treasury looters in Nigeria, it tells of a working public service. Also, tales of an ineffective public service equally abounds which is why the nation as a whole has refused to move.

Conclusion

Internal party democracy and good governance are vital ingredients to consolidation of modern democracy and stability. The Bill of Rights domesticated in Nigeria's constitution is to guarantee and expand the reach of liberty, justice, transparency and the rule of law for all. Citizen's view of the government is based largely on what they see and less of what is heard. Since government comes and goes, the public service must be effectively mobilised to deliver

government programme to the people. This work has also shown that institutions such as the political party, the judiciary, INEC and security services are pivotal in the deepening and sustaining democracy in Nigeria. The independence of the judiciary becomes an essential democratic ingredient, but perhaps of greater import is the integrity of the judges. Also, government must respect positive pronouncements of courts even if it involves a member of the opposition political party.

Nigerians love democracy and have sacrificed for it. Politicians must eschew traditional greedy material accumulation of needless wealth. Remember that in an open free contest such as Nigeria is beginning to have political party to be judged on concrete deliverables not on sentiments. The ground must be hit running with people oriented programmes geared towards eradication of poverty in Africa's most populous democracy and Nigeria in particular. With corruption and stolen mandate addressed, only candidates with track record of success will win the people' mandate moving forward.

Recommendations

The paper recommended that the following needs to be established to foster

unity, peace, stability and developments in Nigeria:

- i. To entrench respect for citizens' rights and choices to electing their leaders.
- ii. To establish independent democratic institutions with significant powers to exercise their constitutional roles.
- iii. To shun partisan politics of sentiments, selfish-ambition with corporate politics of collective interests.
- iv. Money-bag and patron-client politics of God-fatherism ought to be dramatically down played to allow for realistic socio-economic delivery to the citizens.
- v. For a viable democratic society, access to opportunities, capacity building and justice guarantees development.
- vi. Politics of zero-sum game or winner-takes-all tendencies need to be adequately reduced to the background in order to allow for consensus and compromise between contestants and opposition parties in the overall interest of the nation.

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