## ASSESSING THE DYNAMICS OF POLITICS OF OPPOSITION, PARTY IDEOLOGY AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA: 1999 -

**2019**

## ABSTRACT

The study examines the nature of opposition politics and party ideology in Nigeria and their attendant impacts on democratic consolidation in the fourth republic (1999 – 2019). The core concern in developing countries is how to consolidate democracy or make it permanent; and of importance to this is the trend and viability of opposition politics and party ideology. Party politics in Nigeria is characterized by absence of purposeful opposition and political parties that are founded on ideological distinctions, which are necessary for policy-oriented oppositions whose objectives go beyond mere jostling for political power, government positions and the associated benefits. Therefore, the study finds it imperative to examine the dynamics of politics of opposition and party ideology in relation to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. A cross-sectional research was conducted using purposively selected five political parties in Nigeria with parties’ representations in the national legislature forming the basis of selection. A sample of two thousand one hundred (2100) respondents comprising registered members of the five political parties was drawn across six (6) selected states one from each of the geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The purposively selected sample was stratified along political party lines to achieve representativeness. The study also conducted one hundred and twenty (120) in-depth interviews amongst randomly selected members of the academia, journalists, ethnic and religious organizations as well as opinion leaders across the six selected states. The study utilized mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative data analysis technique to achieve the research objectives. Data gathered from two thousand and forty-six (2046) respondents were analyzed using chi square method to test for association between the variables derived from the research hypotheses. The study explored several theoretical perspectives in examining the issues of opposition politics and party ideology in relation to democratic consolidation such as disturbance theory. The theory is concerned with interest groups formed in part to counteract the efforts of other groups. According to this theory, anytime there is a disturbance in a political system, a group will arise in form of countermovement with one wave of groups giving way to another wave of groups representing a contrary perspective. The study found that opposition politics in Nigeria has not been based on principles and ideological persuasions but political patronage which partly manifested in incessant movements of political jobbers across party lines at such frequencies; a practice that has made development of viable oppositions impossible in Nigeria and which poses threat to democratic consolidation. One of the recommendations of the study is an amendment to the Constitution to limit if not to criminalize the practice of cross-carpeting among elected office holders in both the executive and legislative arms of government.

**Keywords** : Opposition politics, Political Parties, Ideology, Democratic Consolidation, Political Violence.

## CHAPTER ONE

**INTRODUCTION**

### Background to the Study

The size and complexity of modern society makes it a far cry from the ancient city-states of Greece where direct democracy was practicable. The emergence of modern societies rehabilitated the atomized individuals into political parties with the primary responsibility of capturing and running democratic government. Thus, the survival of democracy in modern society rests partly on the ability of political parties to recruit people into party and elective offices, aggregate and articulate interests, politically educate, socialize and integrate the people.

Political parties have existed since time immemorial in the history of the Nigerian project and internal democracy has always been a bone of contention. Independence in Nigeria was said to have broken the cor d of colonialism and the nation became a sovereign state to decide her future. What is attainable today is a total deviation from the Nationalists’ architecture (Odigwe, 2015). Nigeria adopted the concept of federalism in 1946 and became a federal state th rough the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. This was to help manage diversity and political tensions, negotiation and agreement. Political parties are the central features of any democracy; they are the vehicles through which the citizens come together freely to campaign for public office, express their interest and needs, and defend their aspirations for their society (NDI, 2008). There is growing evidence of

declined public confidence in parties the world over; political parties have deteriorated in membership, organization, and popular involvement and commitment to democratic ideal.

Students of political parties have commonly associated them wi th democracy itself (Orji, 2013 , p. 1 ). Political parties, are seen by them as “makers” of democracy, this have been so romanticized that scholars claim that neither democracy nor democratic societies are thinkable without them (Omotola 2009). In other words, the existence of vibrant political parties is a sine qua non for democratic consolidation in any polity ( Dode, 2010). It is patently ironic that political parties largely pursue (and profess) democracy outside the gates and resist it within the gates ( Ibeanu, 2013, p. 1). Competitive party and electoral politics is expected to deepen and consolidate the democratic transition, which the country embarked upon in May 1999 ( Jinadu, 2013, p. 2). Well- functioning political parties are essential for the success of electoral democracy and overall political development of Nigeria ( Adetula and Adeyi, 2013, p. 3).

Indeed, democracy is unthinkable in the absence of viable political parties. Parties are expected to participate in the political socialization of electorates, contribute to the accumulation of political power, facilitate recruitment of political leadership, and serve as a unifying force in a divided polity (Omotola, 2010, p. 125). The objectives which party regulation seeks to achieve, including the lingering question of internal party democracy, namely the push and pull of struggles to get political parties to respect their own rules and act in line with

democratic principles in the conduct of their internal affairs, all remains central to the wider consolidation of dem ocracy in Nigeria ( Ibeanu, 2013, p. 1).

The character and tendencies exhibited by politi cal parties has implications for democratic sustenance in the country ( Pogoson, 2013, p. 5). The political party is a critical, formal, institutional, organizational and mobilizational player in the political process particularly in relation to power, demo cracy, governance, governments and economy ( Ikelegbe, 2013, p. 4). The nature of political parties and the nature of party politics have consequences for the nature of governance (democratic consolidation), integration, stability and security. The performa nce of political parties in terms of articulation, aggregation, representation and organization are critical to political accountability, communication, democratic consolidation and political stability ( Ikelegbe, 2013, p. 4).

In spite of the evidence that Nigeria’s Fourth Republic has witnessed six general elections (1999, 2003 , 2007, and 2011, 2015, and 2019); the country is yet to show profound evidence of a consolidating democracy. Scholars and policy makers have focused attention on democratic consolida tion as a concept since the advent of the third wave of democratization. Consequently, the concept of consolidation has been viewed from two ways. According to Valenzuela (1992), consolidation is concerned with transformation from a diminished sub - type of democracy to a consolidated liberal democracy while on the other hand Linz and Stephan (1996 ) opine that consolidation is all about avoiding democratic break down. In this case, the former focused on the process of deepening, completing or organizing democracies while the latter has to do with the process of stabilizing

and maintaining the new democracies (Shedler, 1998). Democratic consolidation, as contended by Diamond ( 1997), represents a state whereby institutions, rules and constraints of democracy becomes the sole legitimate means for the acquisition and exercise of political power.

The decades of 1990 s were said to have witnessed what Huntington called the third wave of democratization for Africa (Omotola, 2009) and it can therefore be argued that political parties are makers of democracy and neither democracy nor democratic institutions are thinkable without political parties. Nigeria has come a long way since 1999 in terms of the number and spread of political parties as well as the level of opposition politics. For instance, Olanrewaju (2015) contends that with the spread of democracy in Nigeria, the formation of political parties have gathered more momentum. Accordingly, political party is essential to electoral democracy and one of most complex and critical democratic institutions is political party. The political parties and ideology have become a necessity in a democratic society in terms of their functions and responsibilities. The political parties serve as not only acceptable and legal platform for electing public office holders but also perform the roles of opposition politics as well as watchdog to the government of the day.

This study posits from the foregoing that political party is a fundamental political institution in the actualization of democratic regime. But its major concern is to examine the extent to which political parties in Nigeria have been contributing to the consolidation of democracy in the country through opposition politics and ideological disposition. In the argument of Olanrewaju (2015), the

role of political parties in the emergent political experiments in Nigeria has raised more questions than answers. Accordingly, political parties in Nigeria have rarely demonstrated ideology at all such that political parties in the cou ntry have many similarities than differences while the only visible difference being their names. The opportunity to vote in terms of party ideology is therefore lacking among the electorates as they rather vote for personalities being the best they could do in the absence of party ideology.

It could be deduced from the above argument that opposition parties in Nigeria are not adequately alive to perform their political responsibilities. Over the years, opposition parties seemingly show that they are strate gically weakened perhaps through overt and covert strategies of any of the ruling parties. The seemingly lack of commitment on the part of politicians to the national course has further worsened the fundamental role of particularly opposition political par ties. Dode (2010) indicate that more than 90 percent of political parties in Nigeria are fragile entities; hence have only developed shallow roots in the society. By this is argued that over the years, Nigerian political parties have been failing in their democratic responsibilities, especially in terms of aggregating social interests, representing specific constituencies, and serving as intermediaries between state and society. In line with this position, Yaqub ( 2002) opines that if a political party competently performs these roles, it can stand a good chance of displacing and, thereby, taking power from a political party currently in the saddle.

The wave of democratization has become a universal phenomenon that cuts across countries within the internation al system. This is why democracy has

become a generally acceptable system of government in various countries simply because it is believed to be the hope of the people. The consolidation of democracy is therefore seen as paramount in a country where it is being practiced. Nevertheless, the concept of democratic consolidation is not a lone ranger as it needs other concepts to be successful. The relevance of opposition politics, political parties and ideology in any democratic arrangement cannot be over - emphasised. By this is meant that the centrality of party politics to consolidating democracy remains a pillar in nurturing democratic system. No doubt, political parties constitute the popular and legal avenue through which individuals contest elections with a view to forming a legitimate government. The issues of concern in contemporary democratic societies particularly in developing countries have to do with the trend and viability of opposition politics, political parties and ideology in electoral contests. This therefore makes it imperative in this study to assess the dynamism of politics of opposition, political parties and ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria, especi ally between from 1999 to 2019.

### Statement of the Problem

The global perception that democracy is the best form of government has resulted in the acceptance and adoption of democratic regimes across the globe, particularly in hitherto dictatorial States of Africa (Barnabas, 2016). Thus, Nigeria returned to democracy on the 29th of May, 1999 with the hope of solving the governance and development predicaments that military rule had plunged the country into over the years. This is because leadership failure has been identified as the major problem bedeviling the Third World Co untries, especially in

countries where other forms of government, except democracy, are in place (Ake, 2001; 2008; Onyeonoru, 2004 ).

This political revolution was occasioned by the struggle, in many countries of Africa, and especially Nigeria, for democrat ic governance to be adopted and thereby jettisoning other forms of government which have been termed dictatorship. While most African countries, including Nigeria, have become ‘officially’, democratic States, there is yet to be seen, in practice, adherence to democratic standards, norms, values and expectations in these nations due to the manipulative activities of politicians. Thus, the political context in Nigeria has become a subject for deep thought and empirical research in recent years. The landscape of Nigeria’ s politics has been characterized by intense politics of opposition, increasing number of political parties and issues of ideology. In this case, the nature of opposition politics, political parties and ideology and their dynamics in relation to democratic consolidation in the country must be addressed. It is worrisome that twenty years after the inception of the present democratic dispensation, the political landscape is yet to show clear evidence of democratic consolidation. This is an area tha t needs to be given a more pragmatic consideration in Nigeria.

Opposition political parties must not be for opposition alone but must operate within the globally accepted standard or best practice of robust politics. Until 2015 General Elections when the country experienced a new dawn of political history, opposition parties in Nigeria are subjected to oppression and domination in the previous elections. Few works exist about Nigerian political parties but

their efforts on democratic consolidation are scan ty. Thus this study is timely and relevant it tends to ask for further research.

The motivation of this study is that, despite increase in the number of political parties in Nigeria since 1999, lack of political party ideology, ineffective opposition politics and weak democratization process remain widespread. This study opines that one major solution to this in the country is to position political party as capable of consolidating democracy in the country. In Nigeria, a substantial research has been conducted on democratization process in relation to challenges and prospects (Tyoden, 2000; Dolo, 2006; Fashagba, 2014; Edet, 2017).

There is limited research on consolidating democracy in Nigeria in relation to specific activities of the political party ideolo gy and opposition politics that can bring about strong sustainable and consolidated democracy. The research in this area has rather largely focused on the general role of political parties in a democratic system ( Egbewole & Etudaiye, 2010; Olaitan, 2015; Salaam & Usman, 2019). This study opines that Nigerian political parties are not where they ought to be in terms of exploring benefits of politics of opposition and party ideology to consolidate the country’ s democracy thereby making it stable for longer pe riod, hence the need for vital research questions.

### Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to ascertain the viability of dynamics of opposition politics, political parties and ideology as keys in consolidating

democracy in Nigeria. In order to achieve the comprehensive objective stated here, the study sets the following as specific objectives of the research. These are to:

1. examine the nature of opposition politics, political parties and ideology and their dynamics in Nigeria;
2. identify the problems and challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria, specifically in the Fourth Republic;
3. investigate the role and importance of Opposition Politics in Consolidating Democracy in Nigeria;
4. examine the influence of Political Parties and Ideology on Nigeria’s

democratic Consolidation; and

1. ascertain the feasibility of opposition politics, political parties and ideology as the key factors in consolidating democracy in Nigeria

### Research Questions/Hypotheses

This study seeks to provide answers the following relevant research questions:

1. What is the nature of opposition politics, political parties and ideology and their dynamics in Nigeria?
2. What are the problems and challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic?
3. Do opposition politics play an important role in consolidating democracy in Nigeria and how?
4. What influence do political parties and ideology have on Nigeria’ s

democratic consolidation and how?

1. Can the politics of opposition, political parties and ideology serve as the key factors in consolidating democracy in Nigeria and how?

In view of the above arguments, problems, objectives and questions, the following broad hypotheses will be tested:

**H0:** There is no significant relationship between opposition politics and the possibility of consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

**H0:** Political Parties and Ideology are not consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

**H0:** Politics of opposition, political parties and ideology are not the key factors in consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

### Significance of the Study

This study assesses the dynamics of politics of opposition, political parties

and ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. The key findings of this study portend potential contributions for political parties and politi cians. This study will hold great value to political parties based not only in Nigeria, but also political parties in other developing countries desiring to consolidating democracy. This research becomes imperative because political parties in Nigeria are seeking to gain political power, especially at the national level but cannot securely achieve this or consolidate democracy unless they work on their ability to innovate and develop new political strategies in relation to politics of opposition and formidable party ideology.

This study is significant because it seeks to explore the major factors, politics of opposition, political parties and ideology, which contributes to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It will serve as additional information on the quest for strategies that contribute to consolidating democracy in Nigeria. The findings of this study will be invaluable to the political party leaders and members as they will be able to understand vividly the factor of opposition politics and ideology that consolidates democracy. This study will contribute to the body of literature by providing investigations on the methods of opposition politics and political party ideology.

### Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study will focus on only the six states selected from six geoplitical zones

of Nigeria. It will also focus on registered members of five prominent political

parties in the country, including academia, journalists, religious leaders and heads

of major ethnic organizations. Given the limitation of distance, finance and time period involved, this implies that the findings of this study may not be replicated and generalised to all the states in Nigeria at large. Again, the study will mainly concentrate on the opposition politics, political parties and ideology in relation to consolidating democracy and not on democratic consolidation in general. There is likelihood of stress of travelling to all the geopolitical zones of the country to conduct a one on one interview with respondents within a limited period. In spite

of the anticipated limitations, information which will be gathered will be cross checked to ensure that the quality and authenticity is maintained.

### Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the introduction and it presents a brief background, statement of the problem, research aim and objectives, the research questions and hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study and organization of the study. The second chapter will focus on an in- depth review of the literature related to the study and it will be organized according to the emerging themes related to the entire body of literature according to different a uthors. It will also explore empirical review, explain theoretical framework and state gaps in the literature.

Chapter three focuses on the research methodology where issues of research design, population, sampling techniques and sample size, sources of d ata, data collection tools and procedures, questionnaire, case study, data analysis techniques, limitation and delimitation, validity and reliability of instrument, as well as confidentiality, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness are discussed. The analysis of the data is discussed in chapter four. Finally, chapter five is the summary of the study, the conclusion expected to be drawn from the analyses, contributions to knowledge, suggestions for further study and policy implication.

## CHAPTER TWO

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

### Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive survey of literature and theoretical description on major areas that are considered relevant to the research as enumerated below:

1. Conceptual Review
   1. Political Parties
   2. Ideology
   3. Opposition Political Parties
   4. Democracy
   5. Democratic Consolidation
2. The Evolution of Political Party
   1. Party in Western World
   2. Party in Asia and Latin America
   3. Party in Africa
   4. Party in Nigeria
3. The Emergence of APC as Opposition party to the Ruling Party
4. The Nature of Opposition Politics, Political Parties and Ideology and t heir Dynamics in Nigeria’s Fourth republic
5. The Problems and Challenges of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria
6. The Role and Importance of Opposition Politics in Consolidating

Democracy

1. The Influence of Political Parties and Ideology on Democratic Consolidation
2. Empirical Review
3. Theoretical Framework
4. Gaps in the Literature

### Political Parties

Strøm and Müller have noted (1999, p. 5), “the scholarly literature that examines political parties is enormous”. Indeed, parties were among the first subjects of analysis at the very birth of modern political science, as exemplified by the classic works of Ostrogorski ( 1964), Michels (1962) and Weber (1968 ). Over the following years, a number of extremely impor tant works were published (Merriam, 1922; Schattschneider, 1942; Key, 1949), but it was really in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s when studies of parties fully blossomed as a subfield in pol i tical science. Such works as those of Duverger (1954), Ranney ( 1954), Neumann (1956), Eldersveld (1964 ), Sorauf ( 1964), La Palombara and Weiner ( 1966, which included Kirchheimer’ s seminal contribution), Epstein (1967), Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and Sartori ( 1976 ) established the conceptual and empirical bases for countless studies in comparative politics. In terms of the sheer number of publications, the growth of this subfield has been spectacular. Since 1945, approximately 11, 500 books, articles and monog raphs have been published that deal with parties and party systems in Western Europe alone ( Bar tolini, Caramani and Hug, 1998 ).

However, scholars are yet to arrive at a definitional consensus of a political party. Saliu and Agara (2018 ) have suggested a simple way to organize the different definitions of political party according to (i) what does a party do? (ii) What motivations underlie a party’s behaviour? (iii) How does a party operate? and why does it operate the way it does? From the literature, definitions which focus on what functions parties perform can be classified into two categories: normative and descriptive definitions. Regarding normative definitions, the academic convention is to start with Burke’s (1770, p. 317) definition. He defines political party as a “body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed.” However, a more descriptive definition is that by James Madison who defined a faction (which at that time was not distinguished from a party) as,

a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. (Madison 1787, p. 54)

Madison’s definition is important for two reasons; first, it draws attention to the requirement, which is particularly important under democratic conditions, that the party would execute a unified effort to affect government, involving both group interests and popular passions; and second, it is associated with the idea of being in ‘adversity’ with other groups which implies some degree of, or a potential for, competition over the direction of government. The underlying premises of Madison’s definition which is, the collective character of a political party and its electoral focus, has been used partly by MacIver (1964) and Chambers (1963) or fully by Epstein (1980) as the foundation of their definitions of political party. For instance, Epstein (1980) sees political parties as: “any group, however loosely organised, seeking to elect governmental

officeholders under a given label. Having a label (which may or may not be on the ballot) rather than an organization is the crucial defining element.” (Epstein, 1980, p. 9). Epstein views parties as the only true linkage between society and government. The premise underlying this view is that democracy is best served by the majoritarian principle. This perspective, termed ‘responsible’ or ‘party government’, views parties as articulators of demands, aggregators of interests and educators of the electorate. The objective for responsible parties is the implementation of clearly defined policies, with elections serving only as the means to this end.

A similar perspective has been adopted by many scholars who had called attention to the role of parties in the manifestations of social divisions in the political process and in the process of policy formation. This has led to the labelling of some parties as ‘workers’ parties’, ‘bourgeois parties’, ‘peoples’ parties’, ‘mass parties’ and ‘peasant (talakawas) parties’; labels that are used to describe the prevalent social composition of a party’s electorate, membership, policy, and sometimes even a party’s behaviour. Neumann (1963, p. 352) provides a good example of this perspective when he defines a ‘political party’ generally as,

the articulate organisation of society’s active political agents, those who are concerned with the control of governmental power and who compete for popular support with another group or groups holding divergent views. As such, it is the great intermediary which links social forces and ideologies to official governmental institutions and relates them to political action within the larger political community.

Deriving from this definition is a commonality of all parties, which is, the partnership of individuals in a particular organisation, taking part in electoral contests and participation in the decision-making process, or at least the attempt at, and a chance for, such a mobilisation of action. This ever-present readiness alone, Neumann argues, makes them political in a genuine sense, for only in their fight for control and in their conscious influence on political forces, do parties gain meaning and importance. Thus, for any grouping or organisation to qualify as a political party,

such must openly claim to link the general public to political power by placing the representatives of their organisations in positions where they may exercise that power on behalf of that public. Alternative formulations which follow Neumann’s orientation are provided by Lawson (1980, p. 3) who defines the party as an agency “for forging links between citizens and policy-makers”, and Eldersveld (1964, p. 6) who defines it as “a structural system seeking to translate or convert (or to be converted by) social and economic interests into political power directly”. Power, according to Eldersveld (1964, p. 9), is characterised by a “reciprocal deference structure” due to the party’s need to “cope with widely varying local milieu of opinion, tradition and social structure… [that] encourages the recognition and acceptance of local leadership, local strategy, [and] local power”.

In this sense, a political party plays an intermediary role for groups representing multiple social interests for the achievement of direct control over government. The weak point in this perspective of a ‘party as an agent’ orientation is that it leads to seeing competitions and conflicts between opposition and party as modes of interaction between representatives of different social interests. It tends to represent divergences in the sociological profile and composition of the party leadership, parliamentary group, members and electorate as being caused by ‘distortions’ in the representation of social interests. Further, it ignores the fundamental process through which factors internal to the process of party competition can produce or sustain party differentiation (Dunleavy 1991). That is, it ignores the parties ability to shape voters’ preferences because of their control over the political agenda, their control over the ‘rules of the game’, their ability to use state power to try to produce favourable changes in the social structure, and their ability to intervene to alter their relative social and economic positions in order to strengthen their support among a target category. Thus, the ‘party as an agent’ orientation underestimates the ability of parties and candidates to use state power in order to tip the scales of electoral competition decisively towards the party of government.

Descriptive definitions which address what parties do by indicating that parties must be able to nominate candidates, such formulations restore the distinction between parties and their factional sub-groups, in that whereas factions, interest groups and financial contributors may propose the candidates, it is the party that obtains their election. Definitions which fall within this framework are Riggs (1968, p. 51) who defines a party as ‘any organisation which nominates candidates for elections to a legislature’, and LaPalombara and Weiner (1966, p. 29) have equally argue that to deserve the name of party an organisation must set up local units, seek electoral support from the general public, play a part in political recruitment and be “committed to the capture or maintenance of power, either alone or in coalition with others”. In addition, Sartori (1976, p. 64) advances the characterisation of a party as a group that “presents at elections, and is capable of placing, through elections, candidates for public office”. For Sartori, the electoral process wherein a party competes under its official label is taken as a discriminatory tool between parties and interest groups. Thus, the occurrence of an election suffices to distinguish the single party from those political groups that do not have recourse to ‘electoral rituals’. A conclusion that can be derived from the various descriptive definitions is that political parties form a distinctive group. They are unique in that they are a combination of collective team and ‘common impulse of passion or of interest’, they are significantly oriented towards elections, and they engage in the process of candidate nomination.

If political parties are made up of and created by groups of individuals, what then are the goals which underlie party behaviour? Basically, there are two broad categories of definitions which fall within this framework of analysis: the first relates to the ideological aims of the party, while the second, and usually refer to as the minimal definition relates to those aims that all parties are supposed to share. According to Gross (1967, p. 702), “a political party is an organized group, an association, oriented toward political goals, which attempts by its actions to maintain the status

quo or to change the existing social, economic and political conditions by means of influencing achievement or conquest of political power”. This definition is based on two presuppositions, namely, that parties are groups that pursue goals, and that a party’s ideology is the best indicator of its goals. For the second category of definitions, rational choice theorists have developed a set of theories wherein the party is defined according to its stipulated objective. For instance, Strom (1990) has distinguished between: (i) vote-seeking; (ii) office-seeking; and (iii) policy-seeking parties. In regard to the first, vote-seeking approach, Downs’ (1957, p. 25) has defined a political party as “a team of men seeking to control the government apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election. By *team,* we mean a coalition whose members agree on all their goals instead of on just part of them”.

Downs’ definition suggests that a party is monolith with an absolute consensus within the party, that every member of a party share similar or common goals. Going by the assumption that parties are concerned only with the rewards of office, Downs (1957, p. 28) has argued that “parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies”. This implies that each party seeks to receive more votes than any other. The more votes a party gets, the higher its bargaining power in the coalition negotiation, especially in multi-party systems, and hence the higher its chances to gain office and formulate policies which would contribute to its re-election. Thus, the Downsian conception of parties is not only as vote-seekers but also as vote-maximisers.

For the office-seeking approach, Riker (1962) and Leiserson (1968) identify parties as maximisers of their control over political office. Both agreed that the yearning for office by political parties exhibit a desire to control some sort of fixed prize, a prize captured by the winning coalition and divided among its members. The capture and control of elected office is operationalised in terms of government portfolios or ministries, and coalition bargaining is thus

viewed as a competitive process which determines how these portfolios will be allocated. Strom (1990, p. 567) enlarges the scope of ‘office benefits’ to include private goods bestowed on recipients of politically discretionary governmental and sub-governmental appointments. Seeking office implies therefore a consistent pursuit of such goods over and above their electoral or policy value. Finally, the works of Chappell and Keech (1986), Hanson and Stuart (1984) and Axelrod (1970) are illustrative of the policy-seeking perspective of political parties. These works view parties as groups which maximise their effect on public policy. According to Strom (1990), party joins or supports a government with the opinion of effecting policy change in its favour. This supposition has a fundamental impact on the entire process of electoral competition and coalition bargaining because most policy outputs are public goods that apply to all, whether or not the actors concerned have participated in the policy process, whether or not, indeed, they are in cabinet (Laver and Schofield 1990, p. 47).

The last academic trajectory in defining political parties has to do with their mode of operation which distinguishes them from other organisations in society. The definitions here focus on parties as ‘institutions’, implying durable and recurring patterned ways of doing things and differences between parties are therefore explained in terms of their mode of internal management. In this respect, there is a developing literature on party organisation which focuses on the internal arena as the key for understanding party behaviour and goals (Luebbert 1986; Panebianco 1988; Harmel and Janda 1994; Katz and Mair 1995; Maor 1992, 1995; Mule 1995). According to McDonald (1955), the issue of party management can be conceptually divided into two categories. The first category refers to the party’s way of running the government, that is, the way it ensures binding decisions and allocation of resources. This mode directs attention to the ways by which the party parliamentary group, the extra-parliamentary organisation and the party sub-groups adapt themselves to being a part of a governing machine. The second category refers to the party

managers’ way of running a party. This mode relates to the ways by which party officers deal with constitutional, procedural and behavioural problems within the party.

A definition that focuses the mode of party management, that is, the way party managers run a party, is Holcombe’s (1950) view of parties as a kind of *process* involving the coordination of factional interests, the presentation of a leading personality element, and the sublimation and merging of interests. According to this view, factions continuously shape the opportunities faced by the party, as well as its structure and character. As Holcombe has noted, parties are more than their leaders. Leadership seems to be the most important factor in the original organisation of political parties, but when a party becomes a going concern, its character is determined in some measure by its followers. But for the opposition parties, the opportunities are always conditioned by the membership of the factions from which the opposition is organised and which determine its character. It is easier for the major opposition party to leave the pioneer work on behalf of new principles to the minor parties. The latter are not embarrassed by the necessity of coordinating such a variety of special interests as the major parties (Holcombe 1950, pp. 102, 103).

The stress upon the interplay of these elements suggests what might be regarded as an institutional approach to the definition of political parties. This is emphasised by the suggestion that a party’s character is determined by the conditions which make for durability in the factions’ relations in a party. To understand these conditions one should address the modes of internal management across different parties. Discussions about party management as the crucial defining element of political parties require, among other things, an appreciation of four organisational problems faced by party managers. First, is the presence of individuals and groups within the party whose interests must somehow be adjusted and coordinated. Second is the existence of differences among individuals and subgroups in terms of involvement and information regarding party activity which may lead to differences in their behaviour. Third is the need to apply discipline and authority

by the party leadership if the aims of the party are to be achieved. Fourth, the establishment and maintenance of conditions, however loose they are, whereby the authority of representatives and officials is limited and made to conform to the preferences of the party supporters. These problems can be found in parties irrespective of political ideology and constitutional settings. While they are present in other types of organisation, in the political realm these problems are of particular significance because they bear directly upon party competition, the key component of the liberal democratic order. As Michels (1915, p. 365) notes: “it is organization which gives birth to the dominion of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organisation, says oligarchy”.

In short, there is a large genre of l iterature on political parties which has acquired the distinctive name stasiology that is political parties as subject (Obah - Akpowoghaha, 2013 ). Scholar like Max Weber **(2058 )** defines political parties as contending groups that struggle for political control within corporate bodies. According to Neumann (1969 ), “Political party is an organization of society active political agents who compete for popular support with another group or persons holding diverse views”. This definition places politicians and a candidate for leadership recruitment into both elective and appointive positions as principal actors and the objectives of party organization is to capture governmental powers. This definition is similar to that of Mildred S chwaz and Kay Lawson (cited in Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013 ) who opined that: “A political party is an organization that nominates (presents) candidates to stand for election in its name and seeks to place representatives (leader) in the government” By the theme and context of

these definitions, the primary objective of political parties is that they seek to organize and dominate the organs of government and to provide governmental and

national leadership ( Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013).

According to Kapur (2009 ), Political parties are indispensable links between the people and the representative machinery of government. They serve as the motive force in crystallizing public opinion and as the unifying government agency which make democracy workable. To Agbaje (2008) and Appadorai (2004), political party is conceptualized as a group of individuals united in principles and decision making with a common goal which is pursued through a democratically process of election.

Liberal view of political parties denotes that they are agencies of an organized public opinion which operate within a political system just l ike a machine or a platform for taking part in the struggle for power democratically . The Marxist views political parties as instruments for power domination and oppressi on of the proletariat which must lead to struggles where mass party will emerge to overthrow the existing elite capitalist parties for egalitarian society ( Johari, 2011).

Political parties as one of the most important democratic institutions perform many functions in democracy as identified by many sc holars ( Kapur, 2009; Agbaje, 2008; Johari, 2011; Appadorai, 2004). Some of these functions include: unite and stabilize the political process; struggling for capturing of power; providing a link between the government and the people; recruitment of political leaders; setting values for the society; brokers of ideas; political modernization most especially in developing democracies; social welfare functions and the role

of societal watchdog or opposition (Babayo, Mohammed and Bakri, 2018).

To Azelama (2002 , p. 99) political party is an organized and registered interest group, the members of which have reconcilable ideas on how the state should be governed, who seek to capture the machineries of government by constitutional means and govern according to their ideas. According to LaPalombara (1974, p. 509), a political party is a formal organization whose self - conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office persons who will control, alone or in coalition, the machinery of government. Political pa rties in the view of Ball (1986, p. 73) are organized groups whose major objective is to gain control of and exercise state power either solely or in cooperation with others.

Political parties are key actors in the electoral arena, serving both as agents of

representation and stepping stones to political power ( Mainwaring and Scully,

1995). At a minimum, political parties are stable organizations through which

politicians coordinate their political activity, engage in electoral processes, and

manage political power (Boix, 2007 ). Yet, beyond some minimalist set of

characteristics, political parties vary substantially in their organizational features.

Fjelde **( 2020)** define a party as strong when its internal architecture is ‘ unified,

centralized, stable, organizationally complex, and tied to long -standing

constituencies’. Specifically, a strong political party is characterized by having a

stable and entrenched organization, ‘in which influence is formally distributed by position ( rather than person), decision- making procedures are formalized and regularized through clear rules and statutes and appointment decisions follow formal procedures’ ( Bizzarro, Gerring, Knutsen, Hicken, Bernhard, Svend-Erik et

al 2018, p. 278; Mainwaring and Sculy 1995, p. 5).

Moreover, a strong political party is characterized by ‘organizational extensiveness’ ( Tavits 2013, p. 16), with party bases at the grassroots. These local networks of party branches facilitate information gathering and the aggregation

of interests upwards in the organization and allow for monitoring and information

sharing from the top. Finally, strong parties are able to link up with and mobilize

broad segments of the citizenry in a sustained fashion, through programmatic appeals rather than clientelism (Bizzarro et al 2018).

One distinguishing feature of Nigerian political parties since independence to date is; they are regional in outlook, ethnic in composition and reli gious in principles. With three dominant regions of North ( Hausa/ Fulani), West ( Yoruba) and East ( Igbo) establishing parties based on regional and ethnic sentiments (Agbaje, 2008). In essence, political parties are necessary for democratic rule and legal t ransfer of power in any democracy whether liberal or authoritarian.

### Ideology

Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836), a French scholar, had been credited with first using the term and he defined it as a study of the process of forming ideas – a science of ideas (Baradat, 1979). He recognized that ideas are stimulated by the physical environment; hence the notion of ideology as derived from empirical learning or sense-experience. Supernatural or spiritual phenomena or experience have no place in the formation of ideas. Although de Tracy was the first to coin the term ideology, he was not the first to embark on the systematic study of the process of formation of ideas. In contemporary times, ideology has come to be accepted as a set of ideas which are

adopted by a group in order to motivate it for the achievement of predetermined goals. Karl Marx in many of his writings has espoused his own perception of ideology. In *The German Ideology* (1845-1846) and *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx viewed ideology as a manifestation of false consciousness. He argued that in the process of social development, the material needs of the people advance faster than their social consciousness. This leads to distortion of consciousness; hence false consciousness, and this is reflected in their ideology. In every society, the dominant class makes use of ideology to maintain and perpetrate its authority on the rest of the classes in the society. Joined by Engels, they both held that ideology is an instrument for protecting the interests of the dominant class. Thus, the bourgeoisie needs and uses ideology to maintain itself in power. On the contrary, the working class; that is, the proletariat, does not need ideology to maintain itself in power once they come to power in a socialist revolution. Rather, the proletariat strives to create a classless society where the state will wither away. V.I. Lenin has continued the Marxist discourse by holding that ideology is not necessarily a distortion of truth to conceal the prevailing contradictions but it has become a neutral concept which refers to the political consciousness of different classes, including the proletarian class. He argued that the class struggle may continue for a very long time and so the proletariat also needs ideology to maintain the struggle – the ideology of scientific socialism for their guidance less they are overpowered by the bourgeois ideology.

Georg Lukacs, a Hungarian Marxist**,** expressed his view of ideology in his seminal work *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) where he argued that consciousness was always class consciousness. Thus, ideology refers to both bourgeois and proletarian consciousness without necessarily implying any negative connotation. He argued that Marxism is the ideology of the proletariat. Bourgeois ideology is false not because ideology itself is false consciousness but

because the capitalist class cannot stand on its own but must exploit the proletariat in order to

maintain and perpetuate itself. He submits that bourgeois ideology is deplorable because it dominates and contaminates the psychological consciousness of the proletariat. Karl Mannheim, a German Sociologist, rejects Marx conception of ideology in his work *Ideology and Utopia* (1929) on three grounds. The first is that there is no direct relationship between what he called the “style of thought” of any group to its interests. In other words, there is no direct correlation between a group’s consciousness and its economic interests. Second area of disagreement is that all thought is shaped by its social background; hence Marxism itself is an ideology of a class. Finally, he argued that it was not only classes that shape or has an influence upon consciousness; that other social groups, like different generations also have significant influence on consciousness. Based on this submission, Mannheim argued that false consciousness can be manifested in two forms: ideology and utopia. According to him, ideology represents the tendency of conservation. While ideology relies on false consciousness to muster support for the maintenance of status quo, utopia represents the impetus for change. Utopia equally relies on false consciousness by projecting unrealizable principles to muster support for the forces of change. Thus, while a ruling class may make use of ideology to maintain its rule, the opposition project a utopia in order to bring about change in the ideology. He submits that the Marxist vision of a classless society is utopia and it makes use of false consciousness to achieve this vision.

Generally, it has been agreed that ideology is a difficult word ( Freeden 2006). It is a term once designed to s ignify the study of ideas, even the science of ideas, yet it has come to denote one area of the domain it is supposed to study. Moreover, as a term invoking a subject-matter the word ‘ideology’ has proved to be very off - putting for the general public—the combination of ideas and ‘logies’ seems to indicate the kind of high abstraction that is remote from the experience and the

language of regular people, even though it is the latter on which ideology studies

have come to be chiefly focused. In the Anglo - American world, with its naïve myths of political pragmatism, ideology is all too often an alien implant, something concocted by spinners of dreams, otherworldly intellectuals, or machinators with totalitarian designs. In the European mainland, with its far greater familiarity with abstract theorizing, ideology is an obnoxious kind of grand theory attached particularly to its tempestuous early and mid - 20th century history in which fascists faced communists in a bid to dominate the world. Intellectually, the reception of ideology has been inspired by the theoreticians who, following Marx and Engels, became its sworn enemies.

Nevertheless, the term is very common, though not beloved, among scholars, writers and academics, and it has an illustrious pedigree, althou gh regrettably also a notorious one. “Nobody has yet come up with a single adequate definition of ideology…. This is not because workers in the field are remarkable for their low intelligence, but because the term “ideology” has a whole range of useful meanings, not all of which are compatible with each other. To try to compress this wealth of meaning into a single comprehensive definition would thus be unhelpful even if it were possible” ( Eagleton, 1991, p. 1).

“In the realm of political theory the term “i deology” is applied in two contexts:

(a) a set of ideas which are accepted to be true by a particular group, party or nation without further examination; and (b) the science of ideas which examines as to how different ideas are formed, how truth is distort ed, and how we can overcome distortions to discover true knowledge” ( Gauba, 2003, p. 13),

According to Seliger, an ideology is a “[ s] et of ideas by which men posit,

explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, and specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order” (Seliger, 1976, p. 11). To Hamilton, it is “[ a] system of collectively held normative and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of conduct, which its proponents seek to promote, realize, pursue or maintain” ( Hamilton, 1987, p. 39). In a nutshell, an ideology is “a fair coherent and comprehensive set of ideas that explains and evaluates social conditions, help people understand their place in the society and provide a program for social and political action” (Ball and Dagger, 2002 , p. 5)

Ideology is very crucial aspect in politics, not only serving as a cognitive structure of looking at society generally and providing a perspective formula, it also serves as a guide to individual action and judgment ( Dosumu, 2015). Ideology is also a powerful instrument of conflict managem ent, self-identification. In fact, ideology is an engine room of any political party. The success of any political party is determined by the degree of political ideology especially in advanced democracy ( Dilly, 2005, p 12). This issue of ideology has been so central to the activities of political party across the time and space, ideology has been regarded as the durable convictions held in common by party members in respect to the most desirable form, institutions, spirit and course of action of the state determines the natural attitude of a party towards ever y public question. ( Iyare, 2003, p. 12).

Downs working within the tradition of rational choice theory and in a manner befitting that approach conceives ideology to be not webs of ideas, but rather a strategic/instrumental tool. He asserts:

‘...lack of information creates a demand for ideologies in the electorate. Since political parties are eager to seize any method of gaining votes available to them, they respond by creating a supply. Each party invents an ideology in order to attract the votes of those citizens who wish to cut costs by voting ideologically’ (Downs, 1957 b, p.142 ).

This conceptualisation places attention squarely upon electoral, vote maximising incentives, rendering ideologies a ‘m eans to power’ (Downs, 1957a, p.97) whereby external, contextual factors condition a parties’ position. Hence, for spatial modellers ideology is seen as a functional variable equivalent to an organising or electoral device.

In applying this conception Downs builds on the work of Harold Hotelling (1929) and Arthur Smithies ( 1941) which tracks rational behaviour. He centers on the motivations for different ideological positions, mapping on a left - right scale the rationale for parties’ behaviour by considering voters’ single peaked preferences, the confines of parties’ ideological movement and the potential for those at ideological extremes to abstain. Through these assumptions Downs offers explanations as to why political partie s are not identical ( due to the need to maintain support for voters at the extreme left or right), why they converge in a two party system (to maximise their vote), why new parties surface (emergence of new constituencies of voters) and why political parti es adopt policies seemingly outside their ideological remit (to attract new support); positing

explanations which are still applied to political parties today ( Gunther &

Diamond, 2003, pp. 185 -186; Webb, 2003,). In this manner Downs’ approach focuses on party positioning, offering an explanatory tool through which parties’ relative positions are theorised and convergence and divergence explained.

From the same tradition of analysis as Downs, Budge defines and studies ideology in parties differently, seeing t he concept not as an electoral, vote maximising device but as providing ‘ a broad conceptual map of politics into which political events, current problems, electors’ preferences and other parties’ policies can all be fitted’ (Budge, 1994, p. 446). Emphasis i s placed upon how, in an uncertain political climate in which parties have scant and unreliable information, ideologies are ‘often defined as a body of normative and factual assumptions about the world, relatively resistant to change, which produces plausible reasons for action of one sort or another’ (Budge, 1994 ., pp.445-6). Ideology therefore ‘ provides a way of defining and partitioning policy space and of indicating the broad arena within which a particular party should take its position’ (Budge, 1994 , p.446 ). Accordingly Budge detects ideology in party outputs - specifically policies - offering a clear, though admittedly simple, conception of parties’ relationship with ideology.

In applying his definition Budge maps the ideological content of party poli cy and the net ideological position of a party’s policy programme. Budge uses party manifestos to determine ideological position as follows. First, quasi - sentences are coded into 54 categories covering seven domains of political debate: ‘External Relations’, ‘ Freedom and Democracy’, ‘Government’, ‘ Welfare and Quality of Life’, ‘ Fabric of Society’, ‘ Economy’ and ‘Social Groups’ (Budge, Robertson &

Hearl, 1987, pp.459 - 464 ), standardising the documents used to ensure compatibility (Bara & Budge, 2001, p. 592). Second, this coding is re- classified in accordance with pre-defined left and right wing markers wherein certain policies are assigned an ideological position so, for example, human rights references are seen to convey right wing sentiments. Then third, by noting the frequency with which each left or right wing policy area is evoked, the ideological position of the document is discerned, reducing ideology to the summation of certain pre-defined ideological policy markers.

Instead of ideological identificatio n, Nigerian political parties have been found to mobilize and associate on ethno -religious basis, which has had serious debilitating effect on the polity. Ethnicity and religion have acquired divisive character in Nigeria and have been largely unhelpful in the quest for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. ( Dosunmu, 2015: 5), lack of political ideology by parties plying the Nigeria political routes have denied the country serious gratifications which can help in the development of her democratic infrastruct ure and consolidation. Political ideology helps people to make persuasive arguments convincingly to enlist popular support for a given public policy (Omotola, 2009: 617),ideology is an indispensable element of politics, it does not only serve as a major instrument of convincing the electorates ,playing major role in the acquisition, but also functions as political lifeline for the animation of politics. Nigeria journey to civic culture which is the fastest route to democratic consolidation has been lengthened rather unnecessary by non-ideological political space. Ideology enriches the content of politics and as such help in the

development of discursive democracy.

The availability of manifestoes by political parties means that electorate can take parties on national issues and would help determine their choice of party to vote for in elections, parties and their manifestoes need to espouse the ideology on which they plan to run government in order to give the electorate a clear picture of where the country is heading and decide whether or not to work in that direction (Okoosi-Simbine, 2005),lack of manifestoes and culture of debate in a democracy is slow poison that would kill the system in due course, manifestoes provide the yardstick for measuring the performance of political parties and help election to fulfill its reward mandate.

In a democratically matured climes, political ideologies are the oil that grinds the wheels of successful political parties and their activities. Ideologies serve as the roadmap that guides a party’s quest for control of the apparatus of government.

Ideologies act as a recipe for dishing out piquant manifestoes to the electorates in a bid to get their votes during election. Ideology functions as a means of self - identification, as an instrument of conflict management, as a prescriptive formula and as a mobilization and unifying force. Nigerian parties, despite their pretense through party manifestoes, do not have clear cut political ideologies ( Omotola, 2009: 6270 ), consequently, the parties have found it extremely difficult to emphasize politics of issue. Rather, their mobilizations of population forces have been largely driven by ethnicity, religion and influence of money politics. These forces, more than anything else, also determin e the pattern of electoral victory of

the parties.

Scholarly dispositions have surmised that ideologies perform at least 3 basic functions. The first is that they amplify, clarify or enlarge our view of the world and the events that take place in it. Secondly, they instigate action either for or against a proposed course of change and finally, they attempt to justify a course of action taken by individual or a group of individuals or by the government. So ideologies that are political are those that bother on the administration of the state or the institutions of certain form of political order. A political idea seeks to offer us an understanding of the state, the source of its power, and the location of, as well as power relations within the state. In essence, the state is organized around specific political ideologies of which there are so many and this had prompted Kramnick and Walkins (1979) to call our millennium the Age of Ideology.

However, for an ideology to be effective or persuasive, it need not meet with the measurement of rationality or the logic of consistency, but like religion which often serves as the basis for ideology, it must have the power to facilitate the reconciliation of the individual with its act or with those acts he desires or supports. In other words, for an ideology to be effective, it must reconcile and act as the basis for justifying actions and policies made on its behalf. Thus, for the revolutionaries, an ideology provides the basis for actions and at the same time justifies the violent overthrow of legitimacy. Ideology supplies the revolutionaries the needed justification for their actions, the ‘why’ and ‘ought’ for revolutionary action. In the final analysis, ideology therefore becomes a mass of doctrine that enables a variety of men to espouse a simple cause and to reduce their apprehensions for jeopardizing the stability of an old regime.

Generally, certain commonalities can be discerned from the ideological development and the political organisations based on them in most Third World countries. First, is that the ideologies of Third World political parties are often derived from religion than from materialistic ideologies

of the West as expected in many post-colonial societies. Glaring examples are the Hindu communal parties in India, the Moslem party in Indonesia and the Islamic party in Libya. The development of Islamic political ideologies is increasingly becoming significant in most societies of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (Lewis, 1998). Second, is that some parties have developed to defend distinct ways of life of different ethnic communities instead of reflecting a broad based political ideology. Most of Nigeria’s breakaway political parties are clear examples of this. However, further examples are presented by the Malays, Chinese, and Indians in Malaysia. Specifically, in India, the caste system provided the ground for the Dalits party representing the Untouchables. Third is that political parties of most Third World societies are populist in nature. Although populism may qualify more as a style of leadership than an ideology, the fact that populism provides a rallying ground and seeks to mobilise people regardless of class or any class based ideology, rejects the idea that groups have irreconcilable interests, and attempts to mobilise all interests under a single conception of the national interest, qualifies it to be seen as an ideology. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Sekou Toure of Guinea present us with ready examples of such leadership that have used populism as a basis for rallying support for political means. Also, of note is the Congress party in India which ranks as one of the most successful populist parties.

### Opposition Political Parties

According to Brack and Weinblum ( 2011), the concept of political opposition has rarely been rigorously defined. The scholars believe that a study of classic literature on opposition politics provides a quite nebulous and extensive definition. As a concept political opposition has been defined in a relative ter m referring to a relationship: “standing in some form of disagreement to another body” ( Norton, 2008: 236 ). Opposition politics can also be viewed as all the

political parties which do not form part of the ruling government or the coalition in government ( European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments, 2014).

Karpen ( 1996) is of the view that opposition in political l ife is a political counter-power which attempts to convince the majority that its values and goals are better; it tries to remove the majori ty legally or even illegally from power. Opposition is the fundamental bases for the development of democracy, as it recognizes rights for political and social actors to publicly criticize and challenge the government in its actions and policies. Oppositio n party is a system where two opposing political parties are opposing or resisting, being in conflict; antagonism, being in contrast with another, an obstacle. It involves two political parties or an organized group opposed to the group, party, or governme nt in power. A body of opposites; specifically, those members of a legislative body who are opposed to the administration for the t ime being, or the political party opposed to the party in power, frequently used adjectively: as, an opposition scheme; the opposition benches in the British House of Commons.

It has long been acknowledged by democratic theorists that the principle of legitimate political opposition is one of the most fundamental components of any liberal democracy. Opposition parties are partis an political institutions that are intentionally designed to temper the ruling party's excesses while still pursuing both legislative and presidential offices ( Dolo, 2006).

Opposition has historically taken different forms depending on the different ideological traditions and the socio- economic realities of the society in question.

Opposition parties are organised political groupings within a democracy that do

not currently hold power. They serve as the ' government -in- waiting', contesting the current government with the aim of seizing power at the next election. Thus, opposition parties are formalised political groups that possess the capacity of winning sufficient votes at the next election to remove the sitting governm ent and seize power (Adam, 2012 , p. 383). Opposition parties are also defined as minority parties that do not wield executive power, but act as a check on governments (Bgbin, 2008 ). The role of an opposition party in a democracy is to check and poke, and to replace the incumbent party.

Opposition is characterised as an essential ingredient and a desirable spice for a decent democratic government. The mostly easily conceived and discussed types of opposition are the elements or parties that challenge the ruling party or at best put i t “on its toes” ( Adesola and Akinyemi, 2014, p. 141). The relevance of opposition party is embedded in western style of party competition between political parties. It is regarded in the West as the most useful practical mode of producing stability in the absen ce of friction among the organs in a political system for a long period ( Adeola, 2014, p. 62). In democratic countries, opposition parties are free to criticise the ruling party and the government. They are entrusted with offering policy alternatives ( Dolo , 1988).

Ionescu and De Madariaga ( 1968, p. 9) conceive of political opposition as the “most advanced and institutionalized form of political conflict”. A common variable to the definitions is that scholars tend to define political opposition with emphasis laid on a particular form of opposition, which is the parliamentary opposition. However, some scholars provide an implicitly different variety of

opposition politics. For instance, Shapiro (1967) describe opposition politics as an organized political group, or groups, which aims at removing the government in power and replace it by one of its own in an electoral contest. To this effect, Kirchheimer ( 1964) delineates three different modes of opposition: “classic or loyal” opposition, offering alternatives t o the chosen policies while recognizing the government’s right to govern and the constitutional system in place; “principled” opposition, opposing both the policies of the government and the constitutional requirements of the political system; and “elimina tive” opposition where the minority group competes with the incumbent for power but ceases to present alternative projects.

In a clearly defined political system, opposition parties are believed to play an inexcusably critical role in shaping policy agenda , conducting civic education and checkmating corruption, often times in collaboration with the media. By their roles, they are faced with the need to correct such moves that constrain the democratisation of the nation building process ( Oyeyipo, 2013). Esse ntially,

opposition party denotes an organised partisan movement dedicated to opposing and possibly replacing an incumbent government. However, it should be noted that no political party is formed to serve as opposition. A party becomes an

opposition when i t loses an election.

It is posited that elections in Africa present the government in power with two

options: allow the electoral process to function as intended - fairly, impartially and objectively, and accept the peoples’ verdict by allowing the result s of elections to reflect their preferences and choices, or “slam the door shut” by

negating the peoples’ choice by skewing and manipulating the process to retain power ( Oko, 2009:13). Nigerian politics is often played out as zero sum game where anything other than a seat at the main table is not considered w orthwhile (africapractice, 2015 , p. 2). As such, the politicians have over the years “become more desperate and daring in taking and retaining power; more reckless and greedy in their use and abuse of p ower; and more intolerant of opposition, criticism and efforts at replacing them” ( Electoral Reform Committee Report, 2008, Vol. 1: 19 ). For the ruling party, electoral fraud represents part of a more general scheme to erode the concept of accountability a nd govern without feeling constrained by public opinion and the prospects of losing elections ( Oko, 2009, p. 10).

It is in this context that the relative success of the Nigeria’ s 2015 elections justifies the argument by Staffan Lindberg (2006, p. 145) that the repeated holding of elections, even if they are not fully free and fair, promotes democratization. This essay is therefore, an attempt to x -ray the role of the opposition party in Nigeria, particularly since the advent of the current democratic rule i n 1999. This is essentially pigeonholed from the lens of a personality that has shaped the face of opposition in the nation’s political history. Is Lai Mohammed a pathological agent of propaganda just to grab power or driver of change for vision -enhanced governance? How has his intervention as opposition spokesperson altered the political landscape of the country? Was the intervention a mere antagonism or patriotic timely engagement? Did Nigerian electorate really buy into that intervention or only responded to regime fatigue? Drawing extensively from

secondary sources with the aid of descriptive and narrative tools, this essay seeks to critically engage these questions more so that “the lack of regime turnover through elections needs to be analysed further from the perspective of opposition parties and coalitions, and their prospects for institutionalization and consolidation” ( IDEA, 2007, p. 130).

### Democracy

Perhaps more than any other thing, the concept of democracy connotes more than just another political form, a method of conducting government, of making laws and administering a state by means of popular suffrage and elected officials. Rather, it includes within it the best means for realising human relationships and the development of human personality. The keynote of democracy is the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together. Thus, universal suffrage, recurring elections, responsibility of those who are in political power to the voters and other factors normally associated with democratic government are means that have been found expedient and necessary for realising democracy as the truly human way of living.

As Saliu and Agara (2018) have pointed out, no matter the failings of democracy as a political format, the idea and principle on which it rests are still accepted as better than all other political formats. The foundation of democracy rests in faith in the capacities of human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative co-existence. The underlying idea and principle is that no man or set of men is wise enough or good enough to rule others without their consents. Implied in this idea is that everyone is affected by the social institutions of the state and therefore must have a share in producing and managing them. Democracy also rests on the doctrine of equality, not equality of natural endowments but equality as a legal and political doctrine. It is under this

belief that democracy guarantee equality of treatment under the law and in its administration. Every individual within a state is therefore expected to be affected equally in quality even if not in quantity by the institutions of the state and should have equal right to express his judgment. Given the possibility of natural and psychological inequality and the potency of this to become means of oppression of the less gifted, democracy sets the law of equality of opportunity which allows for every individual to contribute and it is the value of each contribution that is assessed in the final pooled intelligence constituted by the contributions of all. The appeal of democratic government and the democratic faith is that every individual has the chance and opportunity to contribute depending on his capabilities and the value of his contribution is decided by its place and function in the organised total of similar contributions and not on the basis of prior status of any kind whatsoever.

The essential feature of democracy which lies in its concern for the participation of the member in the process by which the community is governed, equally gives to each citizen a public office, a place in the sovereign tribunal. The citizen in his political capacity therefore, becomes a public agent thereby making government not a tool for impulsiveness but the instrument of collective deliberation. Democracy, therefore, is the substitution of the method of mutual consultation and voluntary agreement for the method of subordination of the many to the few enforced from above. Inherent in this is that any form of exclusion from participation becomes a subtle form of suppression.

In spite of the attractiveness of democracy, scholars are not agreed as to how best to define the concept. The widespread popularity and the highly normative content that democracy has acquired had made many political leaders to lay claim to practising democracy (Agara, 2007, p. 29). Of note were Kwame Nkrumah’s “guided democracy” and Sekou Toure’s “tutelary

democracy”. However, democracy as a concept must be understood from two dimensions – structural and behavioural dimensions. The structural dimension stipulates that a democratic government must include a constitution and political parties as well as structures of government that incorporate the three arms made up of an independent judiciary, legislature and an executive. On the other hand, the behavioural dimension includes the critical attitudes and qualities found in the people but which underpins the proper conduct of a democratic political system. This has been referred to as the “civic culture”.

Apart from the elements of tolerance of opposition and compromise that made up the civic culture, Agara and Okokhere (2011) have also noted certain salutory effects which democracy of the Western Liberal type has. First is that it increases the probability that government will follow or be guided by the general interest. This is because, “how governments act is affected by the constitutional systems through which they emerge…and democracies will ensure that governments pursue policies in the general interest or for the common good” (Lively, 1975, p. 111). Thus, the dictates of democratic system therefore requires that government should submit itself to periodic assessment and renewal of mandate. Within the framework of alternative choices, this implies that the government in power and which wishes to retain power must be responsive to the wish of the governed. Second, the liberal democratic form of government also imposes some restraint on the state. The state’s right is limited by certain constitutional provisions that assure the rights of individuals and groups in the society. Thus, in this regard, the “temptation of the political leadership to wield absolute power is restricted by the competitive nature of democracy” (Perry, 1969, p. 145). This probably provides us with one of the reasons that endeared liberal democracy to the bourgeoisie, and this is that it protects them from arbitrary state interference in their pursuit of and acquisition of wealth. Third is that competitive democratic system compels attention not

just to the form of government but also to the substance of politics in as much as political parties compete on the basis of what they have to offer to the electorates.

A fourth one is that democracy provides the citizenry with more opportunities to get involve in political decisions. The literature on mass society and political participation suggest that citizens’ participation in decision can be either as individuals or members of groups. It is only in this sense that representative democracy encourages “a belief by the masses that they exercise an ultimate self-determination within the existing social order…a credence in the democratic equality of all citizens in the government of the nation” (Anderson, 1977, p. 30). Finally, the primary concern of democracy with the formal political equality of all citizens, majority of whom are economically disadvantaged, provides for the economically advantaged and powerful groups to dominate and often times hijack the system thereby undermining the notion of political equality. Perhaps more than any other reason, this particular advantage made democracy quite attractive to the bourgeois. As Nairn, (1977, p. 13) has rightly observed; “the representative mechanism converted real class inequality into the abstract egalitarianism of citizens, individual egoisms into an impersonal collective will, what would otherwise be chaos into a new state legitimacy”. However, the institutionalization of mass participation in politics has thrown up what Przeworski (1986) has called the “institutionalization of uncertainty”.

In order not to join in the definitional crisis plaguing the term ‘democracy’, it may be necessary to distinguish between two types of conceptualisations of democracy – the minimal and the more elaborate definitions. The minimal definition alludes to the fact that all modern and complex democracies are ruled by the elites (Verba et al, 1971, and Barnes et al, 1979). The implication of this is that government by the people is anachronistic, that the making of effective policy decisions is actually confined to a narrow segment of the population and that only a small

fraction of the total population of modern political system possesses the requisite skills, knowledge, basic information and interest required for effective participation in political process and decision making. Lijphart (1984, p. 1) has also argued that a nation is democratic to the extent that it acts “in accord with the people’s preferences”. Combining these two minimal definitions, democracy can then be conceptualised in terms of elite responsiveness to the needs and demands of the people.

Schumpeter’s (1950, p. 269) definition provides us with a more elaborate one; that democracy is that “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote”. In explaining further, Schumpeter sets out four explicit conditions for the success of democracy in any country. These are (1) that the human material of politics (that is, the elite) should be of sufficiently high quality,

(2) the effective range of political decision should not be extended too far, (3) government should be able to command the services of a well-trained bureaucracy of good standing and tradition, and

(4) there should be democratic self-control (that is, the competing elite should tolerate each other’s rule and should resist the offerings of crook and cranks while the electorate, having made its choice, should refrain from interfering incessantly in the political actions of its representatives). Following the Schumpeterian tradition, therefore, Diamond et al (1988, p. xvi, and 1995, pp. 1- 57) have argued that for a political system to be truly democratic, it must exhibits certain features which include (1) periodic competition among individuals and organised groups, (that is, political parties) for effective government positions, (2) a highly inclusive level of political participation in the process of leadership selection through an electoral process that does not exclude any social group, and (3) a level of civil and political liberties such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organisations, sufficient to ensure the integrity of political

competition and participation.

Democracy is the supremacy of the people over the political system. An illustrative example is given like the powers of the God over the universe is the way people have supreme power over American democracy being a foundation for modern democracy (Tocqueville, 1969, p. 60). However, such an American democracy was made possible by the economic, social, political and cultural factors in the American environment. In contrary view, democracy is perceived as the government not run by the majority or collective decision making because states are governed not by the majority peop le but by elected officials along with unofficial political party members an d technocrats (Schumpeter, 1942, p. 23). For Schumpeter, democracy i s that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to d ecide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’ s vote (Schumpeter, 1942). This feature, rather than the closeness of the vote ( Vanhanen, 1990), turn out or actual turn - over among ruling elites, seems most likely to affect economic performance.

Democracy can be either strong or weak. A strong democracy is where democratic institutions are adequately instituted such as parties, rule of law, constitutionalism and other principles of government and a free and fair periodic election with an equal opportunity for participation in decision making (Barber, 1984, p. 47). Democracy is a system of government which is expensive and requires economic prosperity, equal economic opportunity and equitable distribution of resources for all members of the society ( Dahl, 1956 , p. 59). Democracy is a system of government that fosters civic equality by allowing all members of the society that attained the maturity age to vote freely for their

leaders and offer their part in running the affairs of their soci eties (Bowman & Allanheld, 1985 , p. 17).

Modern scholars have given democracy a thorough and concise meaning in different ways for instance; Appadorai ( 2004), Varma (2005), Laski ( 2011), Kapur (2012), Johari (2014) and Arora (2016) identified democracy as a form of government that is operated base on the principle of collective decision, majority participation, supremacy of the electorates and a system in which people participate freely by contributing their quota in the running of their state. Democracy can be either liberal or social as the name implies. Liberal Western democracy is anchored along liberal values where the society is free for equal participation and free participation in the affairs of their state. It is a system encourages by the USA and Western European countries. Socialist democracy is the one practice mainly by Eastern communist countries of Europe and China where freedom of participation is l imited, and decision making is restricted (Appadorai, 2004, p. 74 ). Democracy in i ts current form traced its root from the ancient Greek City States of Athens and Sparta where people gathered in the market square for collective decision making ( Kapur, 2012, p. 143). In the modern days, population explosion made i t impossible to practice such collective decision at once and that led to modern representative democracy where people elected their leaders through a popular vote to decid e on their behalf (Johari, 2014, p. 111).

Idowu (2017 ) sees democracy as a term used to refer to a system of government where sovereignty resides with the people. It is a form of government in which

the supreme power of a political community rests on popular sovereignty. Oyovbaire (1987 ) puts it that “democracy is a system of government which seeks to realize a generally recognized common good through a collective initiation and discussion of policy questions concerning public affairs and which delegates authority to agents to implement the broad decision made by the people through majority vote”. For Jakob and Siermann (1996), democracy could be seen from two points of view: from that of the individual citizen, and from that of the political institutions through which the values of democracy are realized in a particular social context. For them, at the briefest, democracy is a polity in which collective decisions (laws, policies, and procedures) are the expression, direct or indirect, of the preferences and choices of the collection of equal citizens of the polity.

Raphael ( 1976) believes that the contemporary democracy rests on representative government. It is characterized by fair, free, and competitive elections between multiple distinct political parties, a separation of power into different branches of government, the rule of law in everyd ay life as part of an open society, and the equal protection of human rights, civil rights, civil liberties and political freedoms for all people. Today, democratic governance has spread tremendously all over the world, making other systems of rule such as authoritarianism, a rather bitter pill. Gunther and Diamond (2001) are of the view that authoritarian ideologies have waned and no form of government other than democracy has any significant legitimacy. However, Osabiye (2015) is of the opinion that democratic governance since inception in Nigeria, in 1999, has been

a different thing when compared to what is obtainable in other parts of the world. The respect for human right and the rule of law which are the main features of democracy are not visible; election rigging and gangsterism are the order of the day that makes it difficult to differentiate between democratic government and autocracy.

### Democratic Consolidation

**In spite of the growing** body of l iterature that has been produced to spell out the dynamics of consolidation, it would appear that it is not so easy to do away with the “conceptual fog” around it. “Consodology”, in Philippe Schmitter’ s term (1995), is “anchored in an unclear, inconsistent, and unbounded concept, and thus is not anchored at all, but drifting in murky waters.” (Schedler, 1998a; Schedler, 1998b). Difficulties to define and conceptualize the concept and process of consolidation can be attributed to vari ous factors ( Usul 2003). As Schedler (1998a: 94 ) insightfully points it out, “The meaning that we ascribe to the notion of democratic consolidation depends on where we stand (our empirical viewpoints) and where we aim to reach ( our normative horizons). It varies according to the context and the goals we have in mind.” As stated above, democracy is in the last analysis a normative concept, and various understanding of democracy competes with each other in the realm of ideas. Therefore, any conceptualization of consolidation would b e numerous in accordance with how democracy is perceived.

In this regard, when we look at the literature of consolidation two main types

of conceptualizations are noticed. The first understanding of consolidation that

has been commonly used in the literatu re is avoiding “democratic breakdown” (Schedler, 1998 a: 95 - 96 ). That is, the consolidation of democracy means reducing the likelihood of democratic breakdown. In this sense, the consolidation of democracy can be construed the “mirror image” of the process of breakdown of democracy, as it was analyzed in Linz and Stepan’s previous se minal study (Diamond, 1997 ; Linz and Stepan, 1978). Pridham calls it “negative consolidation”. “Negative consolidation” involves:

The effective or final removal of the prospects for nondemocratic system alternatives... Negative consolidation includes the solution of any problems remaining from the transition process and, in general, the containment or reduction, if not removal, of any serious challenges to democratization. The la tter usually takes the form of groups or individuals characterized as antisystem. Negative consolidation is achieved when their presence or impact becomes numerically or politically insignificant... (Pridham, 1995: 169 ).

Democratic consolidation in the term of avoiding democratic breakdown involves doing away all disloyalties that Juan Linz (1978) already demonstrated: an explicit rejection of democratic regime and/ or i ts instruments such as political parties; a willingness of political elites to resort to v iolence, force, fraud, or other unacceptable means to get the power; and “knocking at the barracks” door (Linz, 1978: 30) to acquire support from armed forces. However, what has been seen in the third wave democracies is not an explicit and clear breakdown of democracies through a military coup. Therefore, today, what matters more is not a clear - cut breakdown of democracies, but gradual erosion of the qualities of democracies. In other words, Democracy gets hollowed out without classical, conventional interventions. Huntington clearly states this hollowing out of democracy through

comparing the past and the present:

In the past, when democratic regime fell as a result of coups or revolutions, no doubt existed as to what happened, and the transition to authoritarianism was brief, clear, and dramatic. With third- wave democracies, the problem is not overthrown but erosion: the intermittent or gradual weakening of democracy by those elected to lead it ( Huntington, 1996: 8).

Parallel with Huntington’s view regarding democratic erosion is O’ Donnell’s slow death argument. He contends that an authoritarian regression can take place through a “sudden death” with a military coup, and/or a “slow death”, “in which there is a progressive diminution of existing spaces for the exercise of civilian power and the effectiveness of the classic guarantees of liberal constitutionalism.” ( O’ Donnell, 1992:19). Slow death can be occurred by both elected and non- elected elites.

The second main sort of conceptualization of consolidation c ommon to most of the literature involves the democratic process from “electoral democracy” to “liberal democracy” that fulfill criteria of minimal definition of democracy explained before. O’Donnell calls this process as the second transition from democratic government to democratic regime. When the literature of democratic consolidation in this sense refers to consolidation, it means the transformation of democracy from i ts low-quality characteristics to a full- fledged, consolidated liberal democracy, rather than emphasizing avoiding of democratic breakdown and/or democratic erosion. The body of literature that analyzes “positive consolidation” ( Diamond, 1999; Valenzuela, 1992; Ethier, 1997; Linz and Stepan, 1996b; Diamond, Linz and Lipset, 1997; Gunther , Nikiforus and Hans-Jurgen, 1995; Diamond et al. 1995 ; Mainwaring, 1998; Dawisha, 1997; Parrot, 1997; Burnell and Calvert, 1999; Wise and Brown, 1998; Randall and Svåsand, 1999;

Lijphart and Waisman, 1996; Berman, 1997 ) attempts to find out a proper answer to the question as to how and/or through which instruments consolidation can be achieved. Thus, a great agenda to consolidate democracy has been emerged: drafting, revising and ratifying a new democratic constitution; ensuring the rule of law, establishing democratic representative, legislative, and executive institutions; eliminating all human rights violations, and all kind of discrimination, abolishing all “tutelary powers” and “reserved domains”; formation of an autonomous and robust political and civil society; and ensuring a reasonably fair electoral system. To be sure, these two kinds of consolidation are overlapping conceptually, and not mutually exclusive.

All these are for democratic consolidation. However, what is consolidation? Defining it is a difficult task. While some scholars of democratization construe consolidation an agreement on the implementation of democracy with the end of transition ( Di Palma 1990 a and 1990b) and as an “equilibrium of the decentralized strategies of all relevant polit ical forces” (Przeworski, 1991:26), some other scholars view consolidation as a long process of “achieving broad and deep legitimation, such that all significant political actors, at both and elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for their society, better than any other realistic alternative they c an imagine” (Diamond, 1999: 65 ). The middle-of-the- road definition of a consolidated democracy is expressed by Linz and Stepan as follows:

Behaviorally a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or

turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state. Attitudinally, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion, even in the midst of major economic problems and deep dissatisfaction with incumbents, holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective l ife, and when support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more - or-less isolated from prodemocratic forces. Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and nongovernmental forces alike become subject to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the bounds of specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic proce ss (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 16) .

This definition above put by Linz and Stepan has been so influential on the recent studies of consolidation that they generally follow, modify or enhance the definition above. Diamond, in his recent book, proposes that consolidation occurs in two dimensions - norms and behaviouron three levels: the elite level, the top decision makers, organizational leaders, political activists, and opinion shapers; the intermediate level, parties, organizations, and movements; and the level of the mass public (Diamond, 1999: 66 -73). Diamond’s definition is in fact a modified version of the conceptualization of consolidatio n proposed by Linz and Stepan.

Similarly, following Linz and Stepan’s definition, W. Merkel ( 1998) puts a “multilevel” consolidation model involving “constitutiona l consolidation”, “representative consolidation” ( parties and interest groups), “behavioural consolidation”, and “the consolidation of civic culture”. Thus, all these three conceptualizations of consolidation overlap each other, and three main dynamics of consolidation come to the fore: institutional, behavioural, and attitudinal dynamics of consolidation. In other words, democracy becomes the only game in town, institutionally, behaviourally, and attitudinally. Thus, this definition, l ike

most of the definitions, involves the processes stabilization, routinization, institutionalization, habituatition, socialization, and legitimisation of liberal democracy. Furthermore, realization of all these processes above requires some tasks such a drafting or revising a new constitution, establishing robust civil society, political parties, institutions, the rule of law, installing fair electoral system, and weeding out all the “perverse elements” like tutelary powers and reserved domains (Uzul 2003 ).

Oluwole ( 2014) described democratic consolidation as an identifiable phase in the transition from authoritarian rule to civil rule and by extension, democratic systems that are germane and fundamental to the establishment and enthronement of a stable, institutional and endu ring democracy. Essentially, arriving at a consolidated democracy requires nurturing democratic values and ethos, principles and institutions in a matured sense that prevents a reversal to a hitherto authoritarian regime. It also rests upon a strong and dy namic civil society whose responsibility it is to check repeated abuses of power hold public officials accountable for their actions and inactions in the management of public resources and serves to mitigate political conflicts ( Diamond 1999). In a similar study, Ademola (2011 ) described democratic consolidation as an identification phase in the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic system that are critical to establishment of a stable institutional and lasting democracy. Ogundiya ( 2009) on his part explained that democratic consolidation ensures regime maintenance thereby regarding the key political institution as the only legitimate framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic rules of the game. Put

differently, democratic consolidation entails widespread acceptance of rules that generate political participation and competition.

### The Nature of Opposition Politics, Political Parties and Ideology and Their Dynamics in Nigeria’s Fourth republic

The Nigeria’s fourth republic is politically characterized by different arguments in respect of the establishment of political parties, practice of opposition politics and inherent ideology. The essence of constitutionally formed political parties is to facilitate the establishment and sustenance of democratic rule because they are instruments through which democratic process evolves. According to Agbaje (1999:195), there are three distinguishable characteristics of political parties from. These are;

1. It is a label in the minds of its members and the wider public especially the electorate,
2. It is an organization that recruits and campaigns for candidates seeking election and selection into public political office; and
3. it is a set of leaders who try to organize and control t he legislative and executive branches of government

However, Olorungbemi (2017) has argued that since the inception of the present democratic rule in 1999 and the ongoing Fourth Republic, political party organizations were transformed into a battle field characterized by enmity, hatred, victimization and suspicion resulting from bitter struggles among party members in their attempts to achieve public and/ or personal interests all of which have

created political problems in the polity. The issue has to do w ith the sincerity of political parties and their leaders as to whether the real essence of establishing political parties is being practiced.

In terms of political party and ideology, Omotola ( 2009) contends that despite their pretense through party manifestoes, Nigerian parties do not have clear cut political ideologies. Ideology has been regarded as the most important vehicle of any political party and the absence of ideology in Nigerian parties is of great concern. (Olaitan, 2014:2 ). Political parties a re no longer after the doctrine, myths or beliefs; they refuse to offer anything special to differentiate them from other parties. ( Omoiya, 2012:12) Interestingly, Nigeria political parties have many similarities than difference, the only difference being their names, logo, people don’t go to polling unit with the mind of casting their vote base on party ideology because of lack of substantial political ideology and this factor is aiding the phenomenon of election deviation and vote buying (Ojo,2007:13) . Un like what is applicable in advanced democracy, party ideology is one of the major determinants for the electorates to select the candidate of their choice for any elective positions ,in Nigeria, forces of identity particularly, ethnicity and religion , vote buying appear to have taken the place of ideology in Nigerian political system.

Omotola ( 2009) assert that Nigeria parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments upon the relegation of politics of issues to the background across the various republics and its place the ascendency of identity or money politics. Undoubtedly, political party is one of the most complex and

critical institution of democracy or what Omotola called Makers of democracy and neither democracy or democratic society are thinkable without them base on their functions and responsibilities (Omotola, 2013: 12), with the absence of ideological based party in Nigeria as well as massive spread of democracy in Africa, leading to an unprecedented resurgence of multiparty po litics, there is no controversy about the fact that the mere adoption of party pluralism with no clear ideology will not automatically advance the ca use of democracy in Nigeria.( oyinloye, 2009 ).

Basically, Nigerian political parties are not driven by any s ubstantial ideologies and the party agendas are sin qua non to democratic consolidations, the agendas of parties supposed to influence the decision of the citizens at the poll but reverse is the case In Nigeria political system most especially under the current fourth republic.(Gadan, 2009: 10).Similarly, Jinedu,(2008: 3) made a critical observation of what he called “ developmental circumstance” of the party in Nigeria such as the country’s social structure, religion, language, ethno - communal, rural urban divide, ideology and education at all level. Party ideologies have been basterdise; religion and ethnic sentiment have become fundamental factors. Whatever the case, it is imperative to note that at the very heart of success or failure of political party i s the important question of political ideology. The emergent political parties from the mid -1920s reflected the dominance of the nationalist movements by a combination of petit -bourgeois middle class and proletarian strata of the country’ s social structure yet the logic of competitive party and electoral politics and unfading ethno - federal political

structure in the country meant that the emergent political parties must have speculated ideologies as part of their electoral strategies unlike the current four th republic( Gabriel, 2007: 13 ), there were symbiotic relationship between a number of political parties during 1950 and 1960.Although class and ideology division seemed not to have been significantly salient element of social structure of Nigeria, there is a sense in which the emergent party system in the 1950s and 1960 reflected class and ideological differences, most of the Nigerian parties during this period was what might be characterized as elite parties, with the exception of the Northern Element prog ressive Union (Panter, 2010: 12).

Interestingly, in a democratically matured climes, political ideologies are the oil that grinds the wheel of successful political parties and their activities, ideology serve as the roadmap that guides a party’s quest for control of the apparatus of government, moreso, ideologies act as a recipe for dishing out piquant manifestos to the electorates in a bid to get their votes during election.(Stanley, 2015: 1 ), infact one can rightly posit that an ideology succinctly describes what politician stand for, it is his life blood, ideology here refers to that set of economic cum political beliefs strongly held by members of a political party be it People Democratic Party or All Progressive Congress, with which the party hopes to arm itself with in order to tackle socio - economic issues if voted into power. Sadly, in Nigeria, political parties are no longer than a cabal of kleptomaniacs who are united by their sordid motives of looting the nation’s treasury.

Political ideologies are largely alien to Nigerian political parties which are utterly bereft of any modicum of a sense of direction ( Aba, 2013: 12), political parties are just constitutionally recognized platform for elevating our light - fingered leaders into vantage positions of authority, from where they loot and stash away unquotable figures in Swiss accounts while the masses wallow in penury. Hence, we have opposition parties who are just groups of disgruntled elements itching to have a bite at the national cake. This lack of i deology and a sense of direction accounts for why carpet - crossing is the order of the day in Nigerian political setting. Recently, allegiance is bought with “Ghana must go sack” and politicians change parties faster than a chameleon changes colour in ballroom light fittings. (Stanley, 2015: 2) The idea of carpet-crossing and counter carpet- crossing that have become the order of the day in Nigerian politics should not be done without due recourse to party’s ideology as this will be tantamount to dinning with the devil with bare fingers, joining political party should be determined by parties and political ideology. The current political landscape in Nigeria has demonstrated high level of indiscipline and lack of ideology, where politicians change party as if t hey are changing cloths. The structure of political party has allowed for little democratic space, this indiscipline and lack of clearly defined ideology have not provided for full blown internal democratic practice within parties and if there is any issue that needs to be addressed within all political parties in Nigeria, it has to be the lack of discipline, internal democracy and ideology (Peter, 2014: 11 ).

Accordingly, although party manifestoes and objectives could be a road -map to the ideological stance of a party, it is not inherently self -sufficient. It should rather depend on the extent to which such manifestoes differentiate the parties from one another. This is viewed to be rarely the case in Nigeria particularly beginning from the Second Republic. It is in view of this that Simbine (2005:24) opines thus,

An overview of the manifestoes of political parties in Nigeria shows that their objectives and strategies are not radically different from one another in their planks and are all virtually addressed to the same issue… the APP and AD manifestoes are almost a carbon copy of each other with the only difference discernible in them being the emphasis that they give to the programmes articulated or in few cases, the strategies for carryin g out the objectives.

Consequently, the political parties in the country have found i t seemingly difficult to emphasize politics of issues but have been mobilizing based on their popular forces often necessitated by ethnicity, religion and money politics a ll of which also determine the pattern of electoral victory of the political parties. This has further resulted into political parties being suddenly descended to the level of being used to promote personal and sectional interests at the expense of the collective good especially national integration, development and democratic consolidation. As noted by Omotola (2009), Nigerian political parties have not been able to attain a reasonable degree of institutionalization especially in the areas of internal cohesion and discipline.

According to Omotola (2009), the country’s political parties have proved to be very effective in mobilization and legitimization, the place of political ideology has been relegated to the background. This has also been observed by Simbine (2005: 24) in that: “right from independence, the country has had political parties with ill-defined ideological base if any at all. It appears that rather than improving on the structure of our established political parties, they have continued to diminish in terms of philosophy, content and objective’.

The Nigerian Political parties have been characterized by some challenges. According to Jinadu (2011 ), some of the challenges faced by the parties include, but not l imited to:

1. Absence of mechanism for public- and self- assessment of extent of democratic values in handling in- house matters in the party;
2. The recycling nature of Nigerian politicians that not only disallow young upcoming politicians to develop but also gradually take over the control of the parties is a challenge; and
3. Lack of ideology-based politics and excessive emphasis on personalized politics.

Olaiya ( 2016) identifies other challenges being faced by Nigerian political parties as including:

1. Patrimonial politics, which connotes the issues of godfatherism, violence and political insecurity have been manifest in the Nigerian polity from the colonial periods to the present political dispensation;
2. Power of Incumbency of the ruling party to control the appointed electoral bodies to the detriments of other parties reduces the integrity of electoral process, create mutual suspicion, disquiet among the parties and the defection syndrome that ultimately eliminate competitive politics;
3. Military-initiated democratic transitions and constitutionalism wh ich have made observance of the ideals of democracy observable by the rulers and the ruled;
4. Ethnicity- based politics and campaign of calumny for the sole purpose of gaining political advantage;
5. Poor funding of the parties from the INEC, which more often th an not reduced the parties to seek financial succor from rich Nigerians or, for the parties in power, from government official, have continued to compromise the virulence of the parties to pursue purely public goods;
6. Constitutional and Statutory lacuna that have rendered the political parties as willful assailants during election periods or victims of attack because there is neither constitutional nor statutory provisions for prosecuting election offenders.

### The Problems and Challenges of Democrati c Consolidation in Nigeria

Democratic consolidation has been defined as the challenge of making new democracies secure, of extending their life expectancy beyond the short term, of making them immune against threats of authoritarian regression (Schedler, 1 998). Similarly and in relation to Nigeria, Power and Powers (1988) have earlier argued that in new democracies such as Nigeria, where the threat of military coup is still

a possibility, consolidation may also include the process of eliminating opposition to democracy on the part of the powerful actors and establishing permanent institutions and other arrangements for the functioning of democracy as well as eliminating undemocratic features of post authoritarian systems.

For Schedler ( 1998), the usage of t he concept of democratic consolidation has expanded in scope as it is further associated with a wide range of issues such as popular legitimization, civilian supremacy over the military, party building, the stabilization of politics, the organization of fu nctional interests, the introduction of mechanisms of direct democracy, judicial reform, the decentralization of state power,the alleviation of poverty, and economic stabilization.

The advent of another democratic experiment in Nigeria on May 29, 1999 undoubtedly elicited expectations among the citizenry that the country would strive hard to keep deepening and consolidating democracy with a view to forestalling another breakdown of democratic process. In contrary to this expectation, the country’s Fourth Republic is viewed as witnessing developments that are not in tandem with democratic ethos and principles, including political exclusion, human rights violations, electoral malpractices, political assassinations, a tendency towards authoritarianism, and into lerance of opposition by ruling political parties, all of which have been resulting in lack of popular participation in politics and policies that affect the people (Unumen & Oghi, 2016).

Nigeria’s democracy in the Fourth Republic has been described as

characterized by lack of internal democracy in political parties, dysfunctional

electoral system, regime of contempt for the rule of law and pauperization of citizens ( Nyewusira & Nweke, 2012). Besides, Oke (2010), Abubakar ( 2015) and Obiajuluduba (2016 ) submit that the country’s Fourth Republic democratization process has been associated with institutional weakness and/or decay, human rights violations, cyclical crisis of legitimacy, corruption, insurgency, insecurity and terrorism, and chronic economic hardship. It is also observed that Nigeria’s Fourth Republic has scored very low with regard to citizens choosing their leaders and representatives in free, fair and credible elections as lack of credible elections has become the sore point of the country’s democratic practice is the Fourth Republic (Omotosho, 2013).

Consequently, many Nigerians now view democracy as associated with corruption, violence, poverty and underdevelopment all of which have given rise to fears that rather than consolidating the countr y’ s democracy, it may be heading for another breakdown (Oke, 2010; Obiajulu, 2016). It is in view of this that a number of scholars and analysts have made attempts to examine the challenge of democratic consolidation in the country’s Fourth Republic as wel l as proffer different solutions ( Alence, 2004; Sagay, 2012; Baba, 2013; Abubakar, 2015; Unumen, 2019 ).

For instance, Alence (2004 ) opines that consolidating democracy will demand upholding democratic values of popular participation, respect for the rules of law, free and fair elections, independence of the judiciary, strengthening democratic institutions and systems to a point where autocratic reversions are highly unlikely. Similarly, Unumen ( 2019 ) suggests that achieving consolidated democracy will

require good governance that essentially promotes improved welfare of the people, transparency and accountability by public managers in the conduct of state affairs and reducing corruption to the barest minimum by democratic governments.

### The Role and Importance of Opposition Politics in Consolidating Democracy

The study of opposition politics has been said to be rooted in Dahl’s (1973) first systematic treatment of the subject, however, it has not been matched by comparable subsequent studies particularly in d eveloping countries where one party is believed to dominate the political system and as a result, opposition politics remains an inadequately explored area of political science (Beyme, 1987; Lawson, 1993). Opposition politics denotes an organised partisan movement dedicated to opposing and possibly replacing an incumbent government ( Adeola, and Akinyemi, 2014; Dolo, 2006; Jung and Shapiro, 1995). It is founded upon a system of elections and limited terms of office in the elected branches of the government. Such a system offers recognised opportunities for the challengers of those in political power (Awofeso and Irabor 2018).

Jung and Shapiro (1995) argue that the role of opposition parties in democratic setting is threefold. The first is functional in that, should a government lose election, there is the possibility of a peaceful handover of political power among elites. Opposition parties are therefore sites for counter - elites to form and campaign as potential alternative governments. The second role of oppo sition is

to legitimise the democratic political order. In this sense, institutional space is

created to ensure that discontent and dissatisfaction can be directed at the government of the day rather than at the democratic regime i tself. As such, the right to criticise and compete against the government is not forfeited. Lastly, opposition is to ensure the presence of healthy political debate. Opposition encourages competition over ideas among elites and counter - elites, which leads to demands for reason-giving and coherence in public debate ( Lawson, 1993) .

Democracy, according to Murphy and Blair (2006) is a certain type of relationship between the incumbent party and the opposition parties characterized by: “contestation and participation” ( Dahl, 1971), “alternation in power” (Huntington, 1991 ) , and “ex ante uncertainty about outcomes” (Przerworski, 1991). Dolo (2006 ) defines opposition parties as “partisan political institutions that are intentionally designed to temper the ruling party’s excesses while sti l l pursuing both legislative and presidential offices.” Opposition parties are also defined as minority parties that do not wield executive power, but ac t as a check on governments (Babgin, n.d.). In democratic countries, opposition parties are free to criticize the ruling party and the government, and they are entrusted with offering policy alternatives. Opposition parties are also expected to recognize and respect the authority of the elected government ( Kii za, 2005). Dolo ( 2006) argues that “an authentic democracy is one where the ruling party has an effect ive opposition.” For Schmitz (1998, p. 2) “Genuine political opposition is a necessary attribute of democracy, tolerance, and trust in the ability of citizens to resolve differences by peaceful means. The existence of an opposition, without which politics ceases and administration takes over, is indispensable to the functioning

of parliamentary political systems.“ As Schmitz (1998, p.2) argues “the division between government and opposition is as old as political democracy itself.” In democratic countries, the government would alternate among different political parties, and “the minority could seek to persuade a majority of its point of view by peaceful, political means.” In liberal - democratic society a government should rest on the consent of the governed, and the minority accepts the right of the majority to make decisions. At the same time, the majority respect the minority’s right to: dissent from the decision set by the majority (i. e. incumbe nts) and to promote alternative policies (Schmitz, 1998) . The role of an opposition party in a democracy is to check and poke, and to replace the incumbent party. In established democracies, opposition parties are a “gover nment-in-the waiting” (Osei-Hwedie, p.57 ) or they are “alternative government” ( CPA, 2007, p.2). Therefore, “the notion of a loyal opposition is central to any democracy” (KIiza, 2005). The Opposition and the ruling parties are expected to entertain the values

of tolerance, cooperation and compromise (Dahl, 1971; Kiiza, 2005). According to LeBas [ 25, p.2 ], “a strong opposition may be the most effective means of creating checks and accountability in hybrid regimes and, therefore, the most important prerequisite for democratic deepening.”

In particular, opposition parties are expected to help in educating, articulating and aggregating issues that they contend that the public is not well informed about

or about which they want to make their own positions clear ( Akubo and Yakubu, 2014). In the words of Yaqub (2002) ‘ It is on the basis of competently performing these roles that an opposing political party can stand a good chance of displacing

and, thereby, taking power from a political party currently in the saddle’. In the course of preparing to capture state power and exercise authority in the future, the party must devote its attention to recruiting and training people to occupy political positions in the state. They thus, articulate alternative policies, while serving as legal opposition to the party in power.

Opposition is important to the operation of political parties simply because opposition political parties reserve the right to contest election and hope for the control of government power, especially when the ruling party’s policies seem unpopular and unfavourable in their implementation (Waldron, 2012).

Although the above argument is expected to be the condition of most political parties across the globe, the lack of ideology among Nigerian parties is viewed to have left much to be desired just as cross- carpeting and inter-party conflicts have gained momentum ( Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2006; Fashagba, 2014). According to Awofeso and Irabor ( 2017 ), the pursuit of selfish agenda by opposition parties to unseat the ruling party without clear cut idea of what to do in government is part of the criticism of lack of ideology of political parties in Nigeria.

In the view of Karpen (1996 ), opposition in political life is a political counter - power which attempts to convince the majority that its values a nd goals are better; opposition is the fundamental bases for the development of democracy, as it recognizes rights for political and social actors to publicly criticize and challenge the government in its actions and policies. Alabi ( 2009) believes that op position is muffled in many parts of Africa including Nigeria because of colonial legacies

and cultural factors. Accordingly, democracy in Nigeria will develop if the

opposition appropriately appreciates its role and adequately carries out same with the expected altruistic motives.

The long time acknowledgement among democratic theorists is that the principle of legitimate political opposition constitutes one of the most fundamental components of any liberal democracy. For instance, Dolo ( 2006) describes opposition parties as partisan political institutions that are intentionally designed to temper the ruling party's excesses while still pursuing both legislative and presidential offices. Also, opposition parties are viewed as formalized political groups that possess the capacity of winning sufficient votes at the next election to remove the sitting government and seize power ( Adam, 2012: 383). The fundamental role of an opposition party in a democracy therefore, is to check and to replace the incumbent party with a view to improving and consolidating democracy.

### The Influence of Political Parties and Ideology on Democratic Consolidation

There is a general agreement among political analysts that democratic consolidation would be impossible without the effective participation of political parties ( Omilusi, 2016 ). Political parties are the sole means of translating electoral outcomes into effective action, and they are a major component in legitimising control of political office. The literature on new democracies emphasises the organisational and structural obstacles faced by political parties in the process of democratic consolidation (Olal eye, 2003).

Along this premise, political parties are thus viewed as very important for democratization and democratic consolidation (Heywood, 20 02; Salih & Nordlund, 2007 ). The primary operation of political parties in democracies, according to Canton (2007 ), includes training, selecting and recruiting candidates for governmental and parliamentary positions; formulating government policies and programmes; gathering and implementing demands from a society; supervising and checking a government. Schattschneider (1942), in one of the earliest studies on political parties, states that it is impossible to have modern democracy without political parties. Also, political par ties created democracy, and party politics is the main factor that differentiates democracy from dictatorship.

Scholars l ike Saliu and Mohammed ( 2008); Ashafa (2002) argue that the preeminence of the role of political parties in the deepening and sustenan ce of democratic process is informed by the fact that the notion of majoritarian democracy becomes inconceivable outside of the context of parties and viable party system. Adele (2001 ) notes, political parties are the lubricant of democracy and without viable parties and vibrant party system the ideal that form the basis of Western democracy and democratic practice becomes unattainable. Adele’s position is significant given that political parties as an aggregation of individuals formed with the overriding objective of contesting and winning elections, is a veritable platform for the realization of the objective of continuous peoples participation in governance (Sani, 2013). Jinadu (2011) thus holds that the functioning of parties as vehicle for structure ele ctoral choice and as institution

for the conduct of government business set them apart from other social organization and/or interest groups.

Aside functioning as instrument for citizens’ mobilization, socialization and vehicle for nurturing political leaders and their presentation to the electorate in the context of elections, parties are also veritable platform for harnessing and aggregating of diverse opinions within society. In this regard, Dahl (1989) notes that parties are the most important platform through which the objectives of citizens’ political participation translate into tangible and concrete reality. Therefore, the institution of political parties is central to democratic process because parties serve as the linchpin in democracy as i t functi on as the institution that connect the electorate and their respective representatives. In that sense, Mohammed ( 2017) argues that the institution of political party becomes inseparable from the ideal of modern democracy and the o peration of democratic system.

According to Saka and Amusan (2018) the significance of political parties to democracy is sacrosanct because the whole question of competition and representation that underpin the operation of democratic system is only possible within the context of the existence of political parties and the inherent tradition of party competition for power. Thus, it is the option of choice that parties offer to the people through their open and structure competition for power that enhance the global visibility and acceptability of democracy as the most cherished form of governing modern state. The issue of choice and the rule base competition for

power that the institution of political party makes possible was what informed Anifowoshe position that;

Democracy exists where the principal leaders of a political system are selected by competitive elections in which the bulk of the population have the opportunity to participate. As a matter of fact, the condition of the parties, in a political system, is the best possible evidence of the nature of any democratic regime (Anifowoshe 2004).

What is implicit from the above position according to Saliu and Mohammed (2008), is that the level of party institutionalization, cohesion and social base, determines the degree of its viability. In the same vein, the degree of viability of political parties operating within a political system determines the extent of the growth and sustenance of the system.

Political parties are an essential component of democracy and central to an understanding of how politics works. Political parties are also the crucial link between the citizens and the government in a democracy. There can be no meaningful democracy without a properly functioning party system (Agbaje, 1999; 192). While democracy rests on the informed and active participation of the people, political parties are viable tools in this regard. Democracy exists where the foremost leaders of a political system are selected by competitive elections in which the bulk of the population has the opportunity to participate.

Diamond, Kirk-Greene, and Oyediran, ( 1997) stresses that: Political parties remain important if not essential instruments for representing political constituencies and interests, aggregating demands and preferences, recruiting a nd socializing new candidates for office, organizing the electoral competition for

power, crafting policy alternatives, setting the policy -making agenda, forming effective governments, and integrating groups and individuals into the democratic process. The authoritarian character of state actors, the clobbered nature of the political parties, the beggar-thy- neighbour mentality of elected party executives, in the face of the rapacious and abrasive role of leaders of party, have made them not to be ineffective and have equally led to internal contradictions within political parties (Momoh, 2010).

To Linz and Stephan (1996 ), political parties are very crucial in order to establish democracy. Olanrewaju (2015) opines that political parties influence democratic consolidation as they perform key tasks in a democratic society, such as:

1. Aggregating and articulating needs and problems as identified by members and supporters;
2. Socializing and educating voters and citizens in the functioning of the Political and electoral system and the generation of general political values;
3. Balancing opposing demands and converting them into general policies;
4. Activating and mobilizing citizens into participating in political decisions and transforming their opinions into viable policy options; and
5. Channeling public opinion from citizens to government

In his writing about democratic consolidation, Przeworski ( 1 991: 10) argues thus: “In a democracy, multiple political forces compete inside an institutional framework”, and contends that “Democracy is consolidated when under given

political and economic conditions a particular system of institutions becomes the

only game in town, when no one can imagine acting outside the democratic institutions … [ and] … democracy is consolidated when compliance – acting within the institutional framework – constitutes the equilibrium of the decentralised strategies of all the relev ant political forces.” This approach has the following implications:

* + Political engagement is democratic only when it takes place within an institutional setting.
  + Non- compliance occurs not only when party- political actors in the formal institutional setting break the rules of the institutional game, but also when political engagement happens outside a prescribed party-political institutional framework.
  + The approach creates a dynamic of exclusion which disqualifies non - party-political actors and is, therefor e, elitist to the extent that it limits conceptions of ‘ democratic consolidation’ to the institutional rules agreed upon by the elites.
  + It potentially criminalises the actions of political forces such as social movements.
  + It ignores the possibility that the democratic experience of citizens can be enhanced through an interaction between institutional and non-institutional players in the political game.
  + Perhaps the biggest weakness is that i t excludes the non -formal and non-institutional terrain as a site of political opposition.

It is, however, possible that these arguments apply in general to the body of scholarship which reduces democratic consolidation to the alternation of governing parties but, in Przeworski’s case, may or may not be going beyond the meaning he intends. Democratic procedures need to be built into the very first level of political organisation for a fully integrated democracy to occur, and that means at the very branch level of political parties. Again, a series of questions can help structure evaluations of the relative democratic nature of local political organizations. The purpose of the questions is not to suggest that there is only one recipe for internal party organisation, but rather to suggest the central issues that need to be discussed within an organisation as it seeks to improve its practical, internal democratic procedures (Omilusi, 2016)

Saliu and Omotola ( 2006 ) have pointed out that political parties can only cope effectively with these responsibilities to the extent of t heir political institutionalization in terms of structure, internal democracy, cohesion and discipline, as much as their autonomy. The element of party autonomy is very crucial (Omotola 2009 ). As rightly asserted by Alli Mari Tripp, those organizations that have asserted the greatest autonomy have generally been able to “select their own leaders, push for far - reaching agendas, and involve themselves in politics to a greater extent than organizations that have been tied to the regime/or dominant party, either formally or through informal patronage networks” (Tripp, 2001:101). Omotola ( 2009) calls for a note of caution in other to avoid confusion at this point. For him, the relationship between political parties and the state is a complex one as the party forms the government, and the latter,

the institution of the state. It may be unrealistic to talk of a hard-line demarcation between the two. Still, the relationship should be well defined such that political parties, especially the one in power, as a cri tical segment of both the state and society, can enjoy some reasonable degree of “societal autonomy”, the absence of which poses serious threats to “political liberalization, democratization and democratic consolidation” (Tripp, 2001:105). In such a situat ion, multiparty democracy can be adapted for the “politicization of ethnicity and further elite enrichment encouraging a confrontational and divisive system” ( cf Dicklitch, 2002: 205).

The import of the foregoing discussion, to take a cue from Saliu and Omo tola (2006:2), is that the level of political institutionalization of political parties and their institutional strengths are directly correlated to their ability to discharge their ascribed responsibilities, and by extension, the strengths of democracy. When well institutionalized, political parties can serve as a set of mediating institutions through which differences in ideas, interests and perception of political problems at a given t ime can be managed ( Olagunju, 2000; Omotola, 2005a). However, when the reverse is the case, the democracy project and the general system stand the risk of perversion and eventual breakdown.

What is evident from the position of Saliu and Omotola ( 2006:2), is that the ability of political parties to discharge their ascribed re sponsibilities, and by extension, the strengths of democracy are fundamentally hinged on their level of political institutionalization and their institutional strengths . When well institutionalized, political parties can serve as a set of mediating instit utions

through which differences in ideas, interests and perception of political problems at a given time can be managed (Olagunju, 2000; Omotola, 2005a). However, when the reverse is the case, the democracy project and the general system stand the risk of perversion and eventual breakdown.

Omotola ( 2009) points out that at the very heart of the success or otherwise of political party is the important question of political ideology. Given the importance of ideology to the activities of political parties across time and space, Anson D. Morse (1896:76 ) argues that ideology, being the durable convictions held in common by party members in respect to the most desirable form, institutions, spirit and course of action of the state, determines the natural attitude of a party towards every public question. In an incisive piece on “political party convention”, Richard Davies and Vincent J. Strickler ( 1996:1025) similarly argue that “ideology functions as planks”, that is, single issue statements within the platform, the exact ideological orientation of which is often used as a bargaining chip in seeking party unity. Here, the platform connotes a statement of the official party position on a variety of issues. Okudiba Nnoli (2003: 177 -82) also concludes that ideology is a very crucial aspect of politics, not only by serving as a cognitive structure for looking at society generally and providing a prescriptive formula, that is, a guide to individual action and judgement, but also as a powerful instrument of conflict management, self-identification, popular mobilization and legitimization. It may, therefore, be correct to assert that the first and most important vehicle of a political party, under an ideal situation, should be its ideological stance.

Nnoli ( 2003:181 - 83 ) has further summarized the functions of ideology as including the provision of:

1. A cognitive structure for looking at society generally, be serving as an explanatory and justificatory category for societal realities;
2. A prescriptive formula – a guide to individual action and judgment as a basis for the legitimization of public polities when in conformity with popular belief;
3. An instrument of conflict management and the integration of society by limiting the basic values and issues over which societal members and disagree;
4. A means of self-identification for the satisfaction of specific personality needs, a means of self- evaluation and social solidarity;
5. A dynamic force in both individual and collective commitment action for or against the ruling class or decision;
6. Enhancement of the political appeals of a political party, by differentiating one party from another; and
7. Negatively, may serve not only as a serious impediment to national integration and suppress the underprivileged, but also to disguise authoritarian rule.

Ideological principles are viewed as necessary in party formation, structure and management and this is why Seliger (1976) has averred that politics interconnect with ideology. Accordingly, the entrenchment of internal party democracy to guarantee equal opportunity for participation and protest is

fundamental in party ideology. In relation to Nigeria, Edet ( 2017) contends that issues such as ethnicity, religion, language, culture, money, among others have considerable role in the formation and management of political parties and thus, democratic sustenance in Nigeria has remained difficult as Nigerian political parties are riddled with ideological confusion, internal crisis and lack of capacity to sustain itself. This is said to have necessitat ed parties to keep changing names, merging with other parties and sometimes form alliance but still facing peculiar problems.

Ideology is seen as an engine room of any political party as the success of any political party is determined by the degree of po litical ideology especially in advanced democracy (Dilly, 2005). In this case, the issue of ideology is viewed as central to the activities of political party across the t ime and space as it constitutes the durable convictions held in common by party membe rs in respect to the most desirable form, institutions, spirit and course of action of the state ( Iyare, 2003).

Nigerian political parties represent a departure from ideological identification as they have been found to mobilize and associate on the basis of ethnicity and religion all of which have been largely unhelpful in the quest for democratic consolidation in the country. The absence of ideology in Nigerian political parties has become great concern as political parties are no longer after the doctri ne, myths or beliefs thereby refusing to offer anything special to distinguish them from other parties ( Olaitan, 2014). This further explains the assertion of Omotola (2009) that Nigeria parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments.

### The Emergence and Growth of Political Parties Globally

The academic literature on party politics has traditionally focused on the experiences of a limited group of Western countries, which reflects the belief among political scientists that West- Europe and North America are the ‘heartlands’ of political party development and democratization ( Duveger, 1954; Daalder, 1966; Ware, 1996; Scarrow, 2006). As a consequence, much of this literature concentrates on parties in Britain, France, Germany and the United States. Closely related to the interest in the ‘third wave of democratization’ and the role of political parties in consolidating democracy, there has recently been a growing interest in the study of parties in Latin America, Central- and Eastern Europe, and to a somewhat lesser extent, also Asia and Sub -Sahara Africa (Mainwaring and Scully 1995).

The early to mid-twentieth century literature on party politics focused mainly on how political parties and party systems in those countries originated and how they subsequently developed, both organizationally and programmatically (Ostrogorski 1964 ). The recent academic literature pays more attention to the various types of parties and party systems, their functioning in elections, as well as their l inkages with other political institutions, notably the state. Other recent topics of study include the funding of political parties and their apparent ‘decline’ in the current age of globalization (Burnell 2006).

Many of the recent comparative studies have indicated that not only are there large differences between political parties in different regions of the world, but

also that there is a large variation in how parties emerged and developed (Randall

2005). The next section will highlight some of the main geographical d ifferences in party development. For the sake of argument this chapter makes generalizations about regional experiences and/or ‘paths’ of party development. However, it is important to remember here that in the end each political party is a unique product of i ts own historical, political, socioeconomic, and cultural background.

### The Origins of Political Parties in the Western Countries

Organized political parties in West -Europe and North America roughly date back some 150 years. Before that, there were loosely structured political factions organized around a set of singular, narrow interests (Scarrow 2006). In countries like Britain, France, Germany and the United States, political parties – at least in the form of structured groups of people sharing an d representing certain societal interests and competing for government power in competitive elections – did not emerge until the mid-nineteenth century. At the time political parties developed in response to the needs of national governance systems that wer e changing from loosely organized smaller regions to bigger and more structured nation -states. In order to account for the adequate representation of the broad range of interests of people living in the new West-European and North American states, these st ates required an institution that could link “voters to political office - holders and hold those in power accountable to the mass electorate” (Crotty 2006). By unifying a group of leaders that could represent the population, channel their interests and by being elected into public office could put their ideas into practice, political parties proved to be the most appropriate vehicles for interest representation and

government formation. Yet, largely as a result of the particular country context, the parties that emerged developed in different ways.

In the United States, for example, the earliest political groupings such as the Federalists and Jeffersonian Democratic Republicans emerged in the eighteenth century as a reflection of opposing views over what the new nation should look like, over how power should be distributed and over how the federation of states should be run. At first, the American parties consisted of loose, weakly organized and rather elitist structures that were nevertheless capable of repre senting a large variety of societal interests (Crotty, 2006 ). This changed in the early nineteenth century, when the electorate expanded significantly and party competition increased. To help mobilize the new voters, the two parties established ‘ party machines’ that were able to recruit large numbers of party activists with various incentives, including jobs and other party -channelled favours (Ware, 1996).

In England and prior to the 17th century, absolute monarchy was the preferred form of government based on the longstanding Roman Catholic belief that the king, who enjoys the “divine right to rule”, is the representative of God ALMIGHTY on earth. The king who wielded absolute power was answerable only to God and not man (Holy Bible ( KJV), Daniel 4:17; Romans 13:1 - 2). After the bloodless Glorious Revolution ( 1688 - 1689) that ended the reign of King James II in England, the power of the monarch was limited by the parliament thus, constitutional monarchy replaced absolute monarchy in the country ( Ogu nnoiki, 2018).

However, structured political parties did not materialize until the Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 in England, which widened the franchise and enabled the electorate to grow significantly. This caused the elitist and loosely structured political groupings in parliament, the then Tories (the predecessor of the Conservative Party) and the Whigs ( the predecessor of the Liberal Democrat Party), to create electoral committees to register party supporters among the electorate and to form extra-parliamentary organizations to attract new party members outside parliament. It also led to introduction of ‘party whips’, which helped foster greater party discipline needed for garnering majority support in votes over important policy decisions. However, universal suffrage was not introduced in Britain until 1928 ( Fisher, 1996; Ball, 1981).

In Germany, the formation of political parties did not start until after the establishment of a parliament in the mid -nineteenth century and the formation of the Second Reich in 1871 . The earliest German parties represented only a small elite in society, however. In contrast, the Social Democra tic Party (SPD) that originated in 1863 represented the interests of a growing working class and is considered as one of the first examples of the ‘ mass party’ (Braunthal, 1996).

France like England, practiced prior to the 18th century absolute monarchy with absolute monarchs such as Louis XIV of the Ancien Régime on the throne. But the French Constitution of 1791 introduced constitutional monarchy which was jettisoned the following year for a republic during the French Revolution (1789 -1799 ). While the French Revolution was on, there were two active political “Clubs” that functioned more like what we know today as the ruling and

opposition party. These Clubs – the centre-left “Girondins” and the left- wing “Jacobins” were in various degrees radical. They had prominent leaders such as Marquis de Condorcet and Georges Danton respectively. In 1791, the Girondins dominated the French Legislative Assembly with a majority while the Jacobins were the minority. The Girondins, like the Jacobins preferred a republican government to constitutional monarchy. Hence, they (the Girondins) pushed for the declaration of war against Austria in 1792 with the hope that it would end the country’ s constitutional monarchy ( Ogunnoiki 2018).

France shows a somewhat different picture t o other European countries in that most of i ts early political parties did not depend on large memberships. Most of the groups that had consolidated themselves into parliamentary political parties after the Revolution of 1789 remained highly elitist, loose ly organized and disapproved of party discipline and membership obligations. In addition, in nineteenth century France few people were allowed to vote and “the election took place (…) amongst gentlemen” (Duverger, 1954). Although this situation changed somewhat when suffrage was expanded in 1848 and finally extended to all adults in 1919, most French political parties did generally not develop a mass party

organization and establish closer links with voters until after the Fifth Republic

of Charles de Gaulle (1958 -1969) (Knapp, 2002: Ware, 1996).

In the 19th century, political parties emerged in Germany following the Revolution of 1848 . In 1863 , the General German Workers‟ Association (ADAV) was formed and thereafter the Social Democratic Workers‟ Party (SDA P) in 1869. These political associations later merged in 1875 to form the Social Democratic

Party (SPD). Historically, the SDP has been a „workers party‟ with the social democracy ideology.

To the Scandinavian, Venstre Liberal Party of Denmark was formed i n 1870 with the ideology, conservative l iberalism. In 1871, it was the turn of the Danish Social Democratic Party, a party that professes the ideology „social democracy‟. In Norway, the oldest political party, the Liberal Party ( Vestre), with the ideology

„social-liberalism‟ was established in 1884. Same year, the Conservative Party (Høyre), with the „liberal- conservative‟ ideology also surfaced. In Finland, the Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP) was established in 1899 and i ts ideological leaning is on social democracy. In East Asia, the Aikoki Kōtō (Public Party of Patriots) was founded in Japan in the year 1874. This liberal party is the oldest party in the Japanese State. In South Asia, India precisely, the oldest party in the country, the Indian National Congress ( INC), was founded in 1885 and its ideology is secularism and democratic socialism ( Ogunnoiki 2018).

There are a number of factors that influenced the emergence and development of political parties in Western Europe and the United States. A first important factor was the introduction and gradual extension of the right to vote ( suffrage) to the wider population. According to some scholars, the resulting growth in the electorate increased the formal responsibilities of the legislature which, in turn, gave rise to the formalization of parliamentary groups representing certain interests ( Duverger, 1954). The second important factor was ‘parliamentarization’, which refers to the process whereby national assemblies gained increasing influence and control over the executive branch of government.

This latter factor has been highlighted by those who argued that political parties grew out of parliamentary groups. According to this view parties’ formal structures evolved as a result of competition with other parties to gain the votes of a growing electorate ( Duverger, 1954; Sartori, 1976). Although there is a debate in the literature over the exact influence of each of the two factors, there is a general consensus that both factors strongly influenced ea rly party development in Europe and the United States (Scarrow 206).

Where suffrage and parliamentarization played an important role in early party development, industrialization and urbanization were important factors in later party development in the early and mid-twentieth- century. The growth of political parties and the consolidation of the early British two - party system, for example, was particularly influenced by the emergent national press, new and improved transport facilities, the simple majority e lectoral system, the introduction of party manifestoes and changing patterns of employment ( from agricultural to industrial labour) related to the processes of industrialization and urbanization at the end of the nineteenth century. Seeking better working - class representation in a parliament dominated by Liberals and Conservatives, various British trade unions in 1900 established the Labour Representation Committee ( LRC), which later became the Labour Party ( Fisher, 1996; Ball, 1981 ).

Needless to say, not all political parties in the West have undergone the same evolutionary process of party development as described above. Over t ime, each country has had a variety of political parties with a broad range of organizational, electoral and/or ideological charact eristics. In addition, in some West - and South

European countries party development has been seriously hampered by wars, authoritarian rule and legal provisions restricting organized political activities. And finally, in East- and Central Europe party development has been heavily shaped by the different varieties of communist rule (Scarrow, 2006; Kitschelt, 1989; Enyedi, 2006.)

de Zeeuw (2009 ) notes that in the majority of Western countries political parties have mainly been affected by changes in their dom estic political settings. This stands in sharp contrast to the situation in non -Western developing countries, to which we will now turn.

### Party Formation in Asia and Latin America

Compared to party development in the Western world, poli t ical parties in Asia is of a much more recent origin and typically have not benefitted from decades of parliamentary experience. In Latin America there is a somewhat longer history of party politics. However, in all the two regions the political, economic and socio- cultural context is fundamentally different from Western societies (Burnell and Randall, 2005 ).

In political terms, many of the sovereign states in developing countries are fairly new and gained their independence from colonial administrations only in the last half century or so. The political parties that emerged in these countries have been profoundly affected by these external forces. Developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have different political, social, religious and other

norms than Western countries that reflect their unique history and cultural heritage (de Zeeuw 2009 ) .

These different conditions, in combination with the immense cultural and historical variation of countries in Asia, and Latin America make it much more difficult to come up with a generalized theory of party development for these regions. Extrapolating the emergence of political parties from the experiences of a few major countries in each region –let’ s say South Africa, Brazil, or India– seems inappropriate as well, as these countries are not wholly representative of the different political systems found in those areas. Moreover, it would not do justice to the sheer variety of origins, forms and structures of political parties found within Asia, Latin America and Africa de Zeeuw 2009).

Another problem that hinders the analysis is the lack of detailed knowledge about political parties and party systems in these regions, especially in Sout heast Asia. In contrast to the scholarly attention for all aspects of Western p arties, there are few systematic studies on the party politics of South east Asian, even by scholars hailing from these regions (Sachsenröder, 1998 ). And although there is an emerging l iterature on non- Western party politics that is careful not to be Euro - or ethnocentric, many of the concepts and references used in this literature are still taken from analyses of Western party development. In addition, so far there has been no alternative body of literature or single generally accepted theory about party politics in developing countries. The latter does not necessarily have to be a problem, as long as we are aware that the context for party development and the nature of political parties themselves can be very different in the various

regions. The next paragraphs identify some of the most distinctive features of (early) party development in each of the three main developing regions.

Latin America has some of the oldest political parties and party systems in the world. But because of the strong influence of (S panish) colonial rule as well as the region’ s diverse cultural heritage and historical experience, political systems have often been shaped in different ways than in Europe and/or North America. Currently, most countries in Latin America are either consoli dated democracies or are in a process of political flux. In both situations, political parties play a crucial role. Though many of them have remained weak, elitist and clientelistic, overall, political parties in Latin America have institutionalized signif icantly over the last four decades. Nevertheless, the political influence of parties varies heavily per country, and particularly in Central America, this is not always very high. This has partly been attributed “to parties’ relations with other institutio ns in the political system”, in particular the military that has played a long -lasting and dominant role in Latin American politics ( Gzoodman, 1992; Diamond and Linz, 1989 ). In addition, countries in Latin America differ in the degree to which party competition has become institutionalized with some highly institutionalized party systems in countries like Costa Rica and Uruguay and less institutionalized systems such as in Peru and Bolivia (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995).

Asia is probably the most diverse of the developing regions, not only in demographic and socioeconomic terms, but also when i t comes to its political context. The political regimes found in this region vary from the liberal democracies of Japan and Taiwan, the ‘ soft -authoritarianism’ of Singapore and

Malaysia, to the communist regimes of China and Vietnam and the military dictatorship of Burma/Myanmar ( Diamond and Plattner, 1996). Similar to Africa, many Asian countries are known for their distinct (political) culture, comprising among others a group or communal orientation, the extensive use of religion in daily life, and affinity with more ‘managed’ or authoritarian -led government, together often captured under the ill-defined concept of ‘ Asian values’ ( Diamond and Plattner, 1996). With regard to political party development, political parties in Asia are a much more recent phenomenon than in West - Europe, North and Latin America. With the exception of a few ‘ stable’ political parties like Singapore’ s People’s Action Party (PAP) and Japan’s Libe ral Democratic Party ( LDP) that originated during the 1940s and ‘ 50s, or the Communist parties of China and Vietnam that go back even as far as the 1920s and ‘30s, the majority of parties in Asia are still relatively young, weakly institutionalized and not very programme- oriented (Sachsenröder, 1998 ).

### Party Formation in Africa

Sub-Sahara Africa is the region where the development of political parties is probably furthest removed from the West -European or North American experience, in the sense that the wider socioeconomic and political context differs markedly from most Western societies ( Randall, 2001). Despite the impressive economic and technological progress made by some African countries, most of the continent has experienced limited economic growth and industrialization. The majority of households lives in the rural areas a nd survives on subsistence farming. In addition, the political context in many African societies is

characterized by weakly institutionalized states run on a non -bureaucratic, ‘ neo- patrimonial’ form of governance (Chabal and Daloz, 1999 ). Although there are a few notable exceptions, the origins of most African political parties lay in the period of decolonization after the Second World War. Therefore, in contrast to their Western counterparts, the majority of African political parties are only several decades old.

Before the period of decolonization, African party development was rather limited as several key conditions for political mobilization and party formation, such as competitive elections, suffrage and parliamentary representation either did not exist or were restricted under European colonial administrations. Because of this, a lot of African parties did not emerge from domestic political pressures, but emerged in response to what was increasingly perceived as the repression by Western, imperialist powers. Several of the most prominent African political parties that emerged during the 1950s and ‘ 60s can directly be traced to national liberation movements aimed at achieving independence from the European colonial authorities (Salih, 2003 ). Other important factors that influenced party development in Africa were the relatively late introduction of universal suffrage as well as the contacts between new African political movements and reformist intellectuals in France, the Arab -Muslim world, the USSR, Britain and the US (Hodgkin, 1961; Coleman and Rosberg, 1996 ).

In Africa, during the pre- party period, there were African Associations based on traditional aspects of African social l ife. The African associations that have led into parties are modem, simply in the sense that they have specialized

functions, and their leaders however traditionalist they may be in outlook are drawn for the most part from the new elites. This group has assisted in the formation of radical mass parties, nationalist movements studen ts organizations tribal unions and so on ( Ibingira, 1971).

Contemporary African political history starts with the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 , which resulted in the subdivision of the African continent into a multiplicity of states based on the economi c and geopolitical interests of the participating Western powers of the time. This exercise resulted in the creation of states composed of a diversity of ethnic, racial, religious and linguistic groups. The new states faced the daunting challenge of achiev ing nation-building, having gone through the often divisive pre-independence elections largely contested by ethnically- based political parties in a process exacerbated by the widespread use of the ‘ winner-takes-all’ electoral system inherited from colonization ( Kadima, n,d.).

The history of African political parties may appear to be a relatively “long” (Mozaffar 2005: 395) one if we look at the origins of the first party on the continent (the True Whig Party, set up in Liberia in 1860). By 1945, however, in a region that was still largely under colonial rule, less than a dozen parties had been “established by small groups of African elites as the organized expression of their political demands for reforming the colonial system, gaining access to colonial governments and influencing colonial policy” (Mozaffar 2005: 395). It was only with the independence of African states, and during the period that immediately preceded it, that parties began to proliferate in the Sub -Saharan

context. Between 1945 and 1968, as many as 143 new political parties emerged on the continent, the essential vehicles for the mobilization of national electorates that were eventually being given the suffrage and for the formation of the first independent governments (Mozaffar 2005: 395).

In South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) was formed in 1912 with the ideology nationalism and social democracy. In the Gold Coast ( now Ghana), the conservative nationalist party, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was founded in 1947 by Dr. J. B. Danquah with Kwame Nkrumah as the secretary. In the late 40s, Kwame Nkrumah left the UGCC and formed the Convention People’s Party ( CPP) in 1949. Ideologically, the CPP is a pan - African and socialist party. In Sierra Leone, the Dr. Milton Margai -led Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) was founded in 1951. As a party, it adopted the ideology – nationalism and social democracy. In French West Africa, the pan - African and nationalist Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) was established in 1946 by the Ivorian Félix Houphouët-Biogny. To East Africa, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) was formed by Julius K. Nyerere in 1954 with the ideology “African socialism” i .e. Ujamaa (Swahili: meaning familyhood).

In Kenya, the Jomo Kenyatta-led Kenya African National Union (KANU) was founded in 1960. On the political spectrum, KANU is a right - wing conservative party. In Algeria, the National Liberation Front ( FLN) was established in 1954 with the ideology nationalism and socialism. In Mozambique, the Mar xist- Leninist party, Mozambique Liberation Movement ( FRELIMO) was formed in 1966. In Angola, Holden Roberto in the year 1954 founded the right -wing National

Front for the Liberation of Angola ( FNLA), the Marxist - Leninist party by the name People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was formed by Agostinho A. Neto in 1956 and, the left - wing party labelled the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) by Jonas Savimbi in 1966. In Latin America (i. e. Central America plus South Ameri ca) several parties were formed in the 20th century such as the social democratic party – Sandinista National Liberation Front ( FSLN) which was created in 1961.

Pre-independence political parties were, in essence, formed along ethnic lines (Oyugi 2006 ), a trend that has continued. In this context, an electoral defeat did not only mean the defeat of a political party but of a whole ethnic group. The resulting post-election resistance to state power by the defeated parties or ethnic group culminated in ethnic polarisation and, in the worst of cases, civil wars and massacres, leaving deep scars in the socio - political fabric of these plural societies.

States had to find ways of dealing with the centrifugal trends in order to achieve some degree of national cohesion. In this context, nation-building became a fundamental objective for nearly all countries in Africa given that it was seen as a certain way of ensuring the peaceful coexistence of the various societal groups. Since political parties were themselves fo rmed along ethnic, linguistic, regional and/ or religious lines, several types of political party regulations were attempted to address the ethnic politics that threatened ‘social peace, national integrity and political stability’ (Bogaards 2008).

After a century of ‘divide and rule’ by the colonial powers, national cohesion efforts in Africa have often entailed the construction of a national identity through the integration of the various groups into a nation. National cohesion efforts have encompassed a range of initiatives such as the careful choice of national anthems, flags, national days, national languages and national myths; the use of military force; sports events; propaganda; the development of major infrastructure; massive investment; economic growth and revenue redistribution. Other important mechanisms for nation- building include the engineering of particular political systems and institutions, electoral systems, party systems and the devolution of some powers from national to sub- national entities (Kadima, n.d.).

In relation to political parties, targeted strategies that were developed and implemented included but were not limited to the establishment of single - party systems (in the former Zaire, Togo, Gabon, Cameroon, Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville and Côte d’ Ivoire), the merger of political parties (Zimbabwe) and the imposition of a two -party system as briefly introduced in Nigeria in the mid -1990s. An extreme option has been the banning of all political parties, as in Swaziland, or a one- party system disguised as a non- party system in Uganda, which ended in 2005, or a de facto one -party state such as Eritrea, where the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) rules and no other political groups is allow ed to organize.

It was only with the emergence of an African version of the global “third wave” of democratisation processes, between the late 1980s and the early 1990s that the situation began to change. During the early 1990s, virtually all sub -Saharan

countries shifted from army- dominated or single- party-dominated regimes to formally democratic systems. Unsurprisingly, structural l imitations (such as widespread and extreme poverty, low literacy levels, or state weakness), established political practices (notably, authoritarian rule and corruption) and the freshness of political reforms in these countries raised legitimate doubts about the depth of ‘democratic’ change. The latter, in many cases, was in fact limited to make up exercises. Overall, however, r eforms undoubtedly brought about a significant return of multipartism in sub - Saharan Africa (Carnone 2007).

All this goes to tell that the party is a recent phenomenon and democracy is a historical phenomenon and has existed in different forms at different t imes and therefore unfair to suggest that one model of politics (under parties) shou ld work in all places at all periods even when conditions are different. In fact it is at a point of capturing political power that political groups become parties and tr ouble ensues especially in Africa. The struggle ceases to be for democracy but for power. After independence the African ruling elites had two open options of political management; either under single party or multiparty and yet they had wanted to lead their fellow Africans to "self-rule'', but now it transforms itself into the rule of a party not of the people. Nowhere was i t thought of managing politics without parties in the modern sense. One wonders why movements that arose in definite social political contexts were forgotten like Maji -Maji and Mau- Mau in Tanzania and Kenya respectively. Instead emphasis on ideology tended to preclude any serious investigation of the demand ( content) of these movements; did they really demand rights or privileges? They c ertainly demanded rights.

It can be said that while parties in Europe evolved out of both objective and subjective conditions in the context of inherent contradictions between capital and labour, in Africa, it evolved out of only subjective conditions with out any fundamental cohesive base. Hence the party in Africa has not only been parachuted on to the African civil society but has also proved dysfunctional to the state itself and in some cases has kept the state insecure and temporary. In the case of Uganda the experience that we have had under multi - partism has been as bad as those under dictatorship because the two have reinforced each other and have led to each other's self-destruction. That is, dictatorship under colonialism led to multipartism (independence), which generated dictatorship (under Idi Amin). A semblance of stability and peace only emerged under a system that seemed to neither of the two but a hybrid of the two (the movement system) (Byamukama, 2003 ).

Regarding the nature of party politics in the developing world, a number of general characteristics can be distinguished. Notwithstanding important country variations, developing world politics has for a long time been characterized by single-party, military or one-party dominant rule. Particularly in African and Asian societies these uncompetitive forms of politics were often justified by distinct political ideologies (Coleman and Rosberg, 1966). Other common features of party politics in the developing world include the personalization of pow er by party leaders and presidents; the limits placed on the role of interest groups, especially trade unions, both by the colonial authorities and the new post - independent rulers; the subordination of the party to the state; the use of

clientelist networks in mobilizing party support; and, particularly in the African context the emergence of parties based on ethnic cleavages.(Salih, 2003; Tordoff, 2002; Doorenspleet, 2003).

### Historical Evolution of Party Formation in Nigeria

The history of the formation of political party in Nigeria dates 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 ( Ekeh , 1983). Omilusi (2016) argues that 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 centralisation 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 ).

Danjibo and Ashindorbe (2018) holds that it is impossible to discuss the nature of political party formation in Nigeria without coming to grip 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 franchise to Lagos and Calabar under the Clifford Constitution of 1922 (Adebayo 2006). The main objective was perhaps, that of buying legitimacy for the colonial government through ve ry 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 prevailing realities of colonial administration (Sklar, 1963; Coleman, 1958 cited in Omotola, 2009: 620). Little wonder, when the first political party in Nigeria, the Nigerian National Democratic Party ( NNDP) emerged in 1923, under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay, who was a Civil Engineer by profession and, the grandson of Bishop Ajayi Crowther, the first African Bishop, its activities were restricted to contesting elections into the Lagos city council.

The motto of the party was “salus populi suprema lex”, meaning “the s afety of the people is the greatest law”. The NNDP called for the establishment of a University, free universal compulsory education for Nigerians and the abolition of provincial courts. Ideologically, the party can be said to have believed in liberal nationalism, democracy and welfarism. In the first election to the Legislative Council which held on September 20, 1923, the NNDP members –

Egerton Shyngle, Eric Moore and Curtis Adeniyi -Jones of the NNDP won the three seats for Lagos. For the only seat allott ed to Calabar, Prince Kwamina Ata- Amonu of the Calabar Improvement League emerged the winner. Again, the NNDP won the three seats in 1928 and 1933. After being defeated by the NYM in 1938, the party bounced back and won the three seats for Lagos from 1943 to 1948. In the Lagos Town Council, it won all the seats available for election from 1923 to 1953. In 1934, the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) was formed by Enerst Ekoli, Dr. J.

C. Vaughan, Samuel Akinsanya and, H. O. Davies. They were later joined by Dr.

Nnamdi Azikiwe after he returned from the Gold Coast in 1938, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo ( Azikiwe, 1961; Hodgkin, 1961; Sklar, 1963; Ezera, 1964; Tamuno, 1966 ; Falola, 2004; Bah, 2005; Jacobs, 2014; Aiyede, 2016; Ajayi,

2018).

For years, the UNDP was hegemonic in its dominance in electoral politics in the country. This was to be challenged by the Lagos Youth Movement - later Nigerian Youth Movement ( NYM) which was formed in 1934 and which defeated the NNDP in the elections for the three seats allocated to Lagos that year. In 1936, the LYM, which was well known for opposing the colonial government’s educational policy with regard to the alleged deficiencies of the Yaba Higher College ( established in 1932 ) especially the inferior diploma awarded by College, changed its label to the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in order to have a national outlook. In the 1938 election for the three seats allocated to Lagos, the NYM candidates emerged as the winner (Adele, 2011), thus ending the consecutive election of the NNDP into the Legislative Council. Some years later,

an intra- party crisis erupted over who among the founding members (the newly elected president of the party, Enerst Ikoli ( Ijaw), or the vice president, Samuel Akinsanya ( Ijebu-Yoruba)) should be selected to fill the vacant seat won by the NYM in the Legislative Council. The seat became vacant when Sir Dr. Kofo A. Abayomi, the immediate past president of the party, resigned in 1941 to study Medicine (Ophthalmology) abroad. After much disagreement and tribal sentime nt in the party, Enerst Ikoli was selected. But the party did not recover afterwards, especially when Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe ( who supported Samuel Akinsanya) left the party in 1941 alongside other Igbos who saw it as a party of Yoruba intellectuals (Coleman, 1960; Azikiwe, 1961; Awa, 1964; Ezera, 1964)

By 1944 , the increasing tempo of nationalist agitation had resulted in the formation of another political party – the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon ( NCNC), under the leadership of Herbert Macaul ay and later Nnamdi Azikwe (Sklar, 1963 : 46- 50 cited in Omotola, 2009:620 ; Omoiya, 2012). This was followed by the transformation of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba socio - cultural organization into a political party, the Action Group in 1950 under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the Northern People Congress NPC in 1959 with dominance in the northern region.( Dudley,1973), by 1951, a breakaway faction of the NPC consisting mainly of radical youth based in Kano formed the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU). These parties dominated the political landscape of the country particularly in their respective regions towards independence and the First Republic (Dudley,1973). The oldest of the three major parties was the NCNC which was formed in 1944 (Dudley 19 82:45). The NCNC

was, in fact, the dominant force in Nigerian nationalism until 1951 when the Action Group rose to challenge it. The NCNC later had the problem of how to transform a structure that was principally organised to oppose colonial rule into a vote-winning political party. At this period, it was broad -based, with its influence significantly felt as far as the Cameroons ( Agbu 2016).

In 1956, there was an intra- party rift between Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Chief Whip of the Eastern Region House of A ssembly, Mr. E. O. Eyo, who was also the chairman of the Eastern Region Development Corporation. He ( not long after he resigned as the chairman of the Eastern Region Development Corporation in April, 1956 ), accused the Premier, Dr. Azikiwe, of abusing his office following the depositing of public funds (₤ 2 million) in the African Continental Bank (ACB) where he and his family members were shareholders. Consequently, the Forster - Sutton Tribunal of Inquiry was set up in 1956 to look into ACB -Azikiwe affairs (Sklar, 1963; Ezera, 1964; Aneke, 2012; Akinola, 2014). The Panel found out that the Colonial Office asked the ACB to raise its liquidity from 8 to 50% and inject fresh capital to restore solvency or i t would lose its license. If the bank were to collapse, Zik Group of Companies which depends on the bank’s overdraft would have been ruined financially ( Nnoli, 1980 cited in Aneke: 2012:129). Much later, the party changed i ts label to the National Council of Nigerian Citizens after the majority in Southern Cameroons voted “ YES‟ in a plebiscite from February 11 - 12, 1961, to join Northern Cameroons ( Ogunnoiki 2018).

The Action Group ( AG) on the other hand, was formed in 1951, as an offshoot of a Yoruba cultural organisation known as Egbe Omo Oduduwa formed by Chie f

Obafemi Awolowo and his friends. This party made it clear that it intended to operate principally from the regional level. In a press release issued in 1951, the party announced that it was a “Western Regional Political Organisation, pure and simple”. Its aims and objectives were for the advancement of the Yoruba race (Nnabuihe, Aghemale and Okebugwu, 2004:167). This revelation was later to set the tone for other parties to lay claim to hegemony of their regions during subsequent elections (Post 1963:31). This may be regarded as the prelude to the emergence of some regional and ethnically -based political parties in Nigeria.

On the other hand, the Northern People’s Congress ( NPC) with its base in the North was formed in 1949 on the initiative of some young men, including Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Yahaya Gusau and Dr. R. A.B Dikko. It was an offshoot of the cultural association known as Jam’iyyar Mutanen Arewa. By and large, the North had remained untouched by the nationalist movement that had significant followership in the South of the country. Deliberate British policy, more especially the principle of abs olute non- interference with Islamic beliefs, the discouragement of missionary activities for this same reason, and the relative insulation of the North from the effects of modern economic development, had ensured that no significant radical group emerged t o challenge the colonial administration. Though, initially perceived with suspicion by the traditional rulers, the party later gained support from them by stating that i t intended to work strictly within the limits of the traditional political systems. The NPC subsequently controlled the politics of the North due to its link with the Native Authority.

As earlier mentioned, apart from these three dominant parties, there were many other smaller ones such as the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), which emerged to challenge the hegemony of the NPC, the United Middle Belt Congress ( UMBC) which claimed to represent the Northern minority groups of the Middle Belt, the United Nigeria Independent Party ( UNIP) and others (Dudley 1982: 50). These were highly localized parties anchored basically on sectional interests and personalities. Apart from the NCNC, which was initially broad -based in its membership, the NPC and the AG were basically regional parties representing the interests of the ruling class in their respective regions. 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 i ts re ach 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). Of course, these interests were masked as ethnic interests, which contributed gravely to the events which occurred in the 1959 and 1964 Federal Elections. Political unrest and loss of l ives and property consequently led to the declaration of a state of emergency in the Western Region and subsequent military intervention of 1966.

The acrimonious politics of the Federal Elections of 1964, the manipulation of ethnicity and lack of political consciousness on the part of the people combined to remotely set the stage for the events of 1966. Pogroms were carried out against

easterners in the north of the country resulting in the declaration of the breakaway Republic of Biafra by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu on May 30 1966, when i t became clear that the Federal Government was not ready to protect the lives and property of easterners ( Ogbu 2016).

The leading political parties that emerged in colonial and immediate post - colonial Nigeria were provincial in outlook, having drawn their pro venance 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 saddle with the responsibility of forging national unity and solidarity The crucial role political parties’ plays 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 institution in the construction of a stable and participatory political order as well as serving as an instrument for interest aggregation and channeling disparate social groupings into a common socio political platform, thus providing a stabilizing effect to an otherwi se fractions society (Cited in Amusan 2011 ). The history and story of political party fo rmation in Nigeria as Danjibo and Ashindorbe (2018 ) reveal however run counter to the theoretical and normative role expected of them.

#### Political Parties in the Second Republic

1979 Constitution, Nigeria retained the multi - party system but, replaced the British Westminster system of government with the American presidential system of government. Following the lifting of the ban on political association by Lt. Gen. Olusegun Oabasanjo on September 21, 1978. The period of second republic witnessed the emergence of more political parties; there is no significant difference with what obtained under the first Republic ( Osaghae, 1998), what happened was the reincarnation of parti es of the First Republic under different nomenclatures with some additional parties like National Party of Nigeria ( NPN), the Unity Party NPP replacing the NPC, AG and NCNC, respectively. Others were the people’s Party ( GNPP), and later Nigerian Advance Pa rty NAP, which was registered in 1982, after failing the first round in 1978. These were the major parties in the Second Republic.

Of these, the UPN had been in the making long before it emerged in October 1978. In fact, most of the leadership of the UPN were the same set of people that had led the Action Group (AG) in the First Republic (Dudley 1982:186). The UPN claimed to be ‘democratic socialist’ in orientation, but in practice pragmatic considerations diluted its ideological commitment to democratic s ocialism. The NPN, on the other hand, initially was nothing more than a collection of rich individuals with enlightened self-interests and a commitment to the maintenance of a free market economy. Though broad - based, it represented the interests of the rich business-managerial class and had a firm base in the North. If the UPN was a reincarnation of the AG, the NPN was a descendant of the NPC and was firmly positioned to the right of the ideological spectrum. The original NPP, led by

Ibrahim Waziri was an amalgam of young moderate well-to- do businessmen and representatives of minority groups who felt marginalized in the power equation. Disagreement over leadership led to a split which saw the emergence of the GNPP which professed ‘consensualism’ (‘ politics w ithout bitterness’), and the NPP, which espoused a liberal ethic based on ‘ individualistic’/‘collectivist’ paradigm (Ogbu, 2016). A placing of these parties on an ideological spectrum had the PRP at the extreme left, followed by the UPN, with the NPP at th e Centre, followed by the GNPP and then, the NPN at the extreme right of the centre. At least, there was some semblance of ideological predisposition by these parties. This had completely vanished, however, by the beginni ng of the Fourth Republic (Ogbu, 2016).

At the end of the 1979 presidential election, Alhaji Shehu Shagari and his Vice Dr. Alex I. Ekwueme of the NPN emerged the winner of the election. Thus, Alhaji Shehu Shagari became the first Executive President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. At the state level, the NPN won in seven out of the then 19 states of the country – Sokoto, Niger, Benue, Cross River, Rivers, Kwara and Bauchi; UPN won the gubernatorial election in five states – Lagos, Ondo, Oyo, Bendel, Ogun; GNPP won two gubernatorial elections – Borno and Gongola; PRP also won two gubernatorial elections – Kano and Kaduna while, the NPP won the gubernatorial election in three states – Imo, Anambra and Plateau. For the purpose of bolstering its power in the Federal Legislature, the NPN form ed an alliance with the NPP but, in July, 1981 , the alliance was dissolved. The NPP then joined forces with the UPN to form the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) which some PRP and

GNPP members later joined (Synge, 2003). In 1982, the Nigerian Advance Par ty (NAP) was formed by Dr. Tunji Braithwaite Esq. which was registered as the sixth party to contest in the 1983 general election.

On December 31, 1983, there was a coup d‟état that brought Major -General Mohammadu Buhari to power as the military Head of State. The Major - General Mohammadu Buhari/Brigadier (later Major- General) Tunde Idiagbon military regime came to an end following a „ palace‟ coup that ushered the Army Chief - of-Staff, Major- General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, to power on August 27, 1985. But in December, 1985 , there was a failed coup by General Mamman Vasta to oust him. Again, on April 22 , 1990, there was an unsuccessfu l coup by Major Gideon Orkar against his regime ( Ogunnoiki 2018) .

#### Political parties in the Aborted Third Republic

Prior to the aborted third republic by the military in 1993, a two party system had replaced the multi-party system in the 1989 Constitution. The making of the Constitution all started with the 17 - member Political Bureau that was formed on January 13 , 1986. The Constitutional Review Committee (CRC), a 46 -member committee headed by Justice Buba Ardo, was set up in September, 1987, to review the report of the Political Bureau and the 1979 Constitution. The reviewed constitution of the CDC was then considered by the 567 - member Constituent Assembly (CA) which was inaugurated on May 11, 1988, with Justice A. N. Aniagolu as the chairman. The final revi ewed constitution was presented to Major-General Ibrahim B. Babangida‟s 28 -member Armed Forces Ruling Council

(AFRC) that promulgated it on May 03, 1989 ( Fajoyomi, 1998; Osaghae, 1998).

Following the lifting of the ban on political association on May 03, 1 989, 13 political parties applied for registration with the National Electoral Commission (NEC) – All Nigeria Peoples Party ( ANPP); Liberal Convention (LC); Ideal Peoples Party ( IPP); Nigerian Labour Party ( NLP); People’ s Front of Nigeria (PFN); Peoples Solidarity Party (PSP); Nigerian National Congress ( NNC); Nigerian Peoples Welfare Party (NPWP); Peoples Patriotic Party (PPP); Patriotic Nigerian’s Party (PNP); National Union Party (NUP); Republican Party of Nigeria (RPN); United Nigeria Democratic Party ( UNDP) ( Ita, 2018). Eventually, only two parties were registered by NEC under the chairmanship of Professor Humphrey Nwosu for the June 12, 1993, presidential election which was to be conducted using the novel Option A4 voting system (i.e. the open ballot s ystem) (Ogunnoiki 2018 ) .

According to Omotola ( 2009) in the aborted Third Republic, there was a fundamental change in the mode of party formation in Nigeria. This pertains to the official formation of parties by the state after a series of experiments with different political associations ( Oyediran and Agbaje, 1991). The military regime headed by Babangida (1985 -1993) attempted to decree elite accommodation with the formation of two government financed political parties (Danjibo and Ahindorbe, 2018). The parties were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC), the former being a little to the left and the latter a l itt le to the right (Olagunju, Jinadu, and Oyovbare , 1993:216; Omoruyi, 2002 ).

However, the creation of the two p arties was later to be criticized as basically undemocratic, on the grounds that people should ideally be allowed a free choice to associate and galvanize their interests in the way they want and in as many a political grouping as they wish. More significa nt however, was the result of the annulled June 12 1993 presidential election which saw Moshood Abiola, the billionaire politician poised to win in all sections of the country even in the North, though he was ethnically Yoruba. This was indeed, a novel dev elopment which seemed to point to the fact that with consensual agreement on how to organize the political system, it is possible to overcome certain inherently structural and constraining factors that inhibit political development. In this case, it would have been best if the two parties that contested the elections were allowed to ab initio evolve independently outside of government interference through the articulation of the interests of groups and individuals. This apart, the former president, Ibrahim Babangida, termed the herding of the various political associations either into the Social Democratic party (SDP) or the National Republican Convention (NRC) as simply a compartmentalization of these interests a little to the left – (SDP), and a little to the right (NRC). (But the constitution of the latter, the military junta’s preferred party, was more left -leaning than the former, thus sowing the seeds of confusion in the minds of politicians and the electorate alike). In terms of organisation, the government not only founded these parties, it built their offices all over the country, funded them and had overwhelming influence in their decision-making process. Obviously, both were broad-based, but basically ideologically suspect. It suffices to state tha t an undemocratic government cannot

enthrone democracy, especially one in which it single - handedly dictated the nature and character of the political parties.

This development, executed after the dissolution of the thirteen associations that applied for registration has been as part of the grand design to execute a “hidden agenda” to perpetuate the military regime in power ( Osaghae, 1998: 220). The eventual annulment of the 12 June 1993 presidential election which many believed Chief M. K. O Abiola won by the military regime of general Babangida lends some credence to this claim. Before stepping aside, he set up an Interim National Government ( ING) under Chief Ernest Shonekan (Nwankwo, 2015; Ukiabe and Fayehun, 2018 ). But no sooner had the helmsman, Chief Ern est Sonekan, started steering the affairs of the State than his interim government was dislodged on November 17, 1993.

The overthrow of the Shonekan-led ING brought in General Sani Abacha as the Head of State who made known his intention to transfer power to an elected civilian president that would be sworn -in on October 01, 1998. In the process of returning the country back to the path of civilian rule, five political parties were formed: Committee for National Consensus (CNC), National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), Democratic Party of Nigeria ( DPN), United Nigeria Congress Party ( UNCP) and Grassroots Democratic Movement ( GDM) (Dode, 2010; Ogbeidi, 2010; Adamu and Sakariyau, 2013; Akinboye and Anifowose, 2015; Ali, 2018). These five parties adopted General Sami Abacha as their presidential candidate which made the late Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, to describe them as the “five fingers of a leprous hand” (Ogbeidi, 2010).

On April 22, 1994, Abacha called for the setting up of a Na t ional Constitutional Conference ( NCC) that would draft a new constitution which the 25 -member Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) would promulgate. On June 27, 1994, the NCC was inaugurated by General Sani Abacha and upon the completion of their work, submitted the final draft of the constitution to the Abacha military junta on June 27, 1995 ( Lansford, 2012; Akinboye and Anifowose, 2015). The new Constitution which was to usher Nigeria into the fourth republic with General Sani Abacha transforming himself from a military Head of State to a civilian president through an election to be conducted by the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) did not take effect due to the unexpected death of General Sani Abacha in June, 1998 .

#### Political parties in the Fourth Republic

Following the sudden death of the dictator, General Sani Abacha on the 8th of June, 1998 , the Chief of Defense Staff, Major - General (later General) Abdulsalami Abubakar became the Head of State of Nigeria for a very short period, starting from June 09 , 1998. During his regime, which lasted for 11 months and 19 days, General Abdulsalami Abubakar freed the political prisoners incarcerated by General Sani Abacha ( one of who was Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, a retired General of the Nigerian Army and former military Head of State of Nigeria in the mid- 70s). Having lifted the ban on political parties, nine parties were given provisional registration out of the 26 political associations that sought registration. These included the All People’s Party (APP), People’s Dem ocratic Party (PDP), Democratic Advance Movement ( DAM), Movement for Democracy

and Justice (MDJ), United People’s Party (UPP), Alliance for Democracy (AD), and the National Solidarity Movement ( NSM). According to the Independent National Electoral Commission’s ( INEC) guidelines for the transition, for any of these parties to qualify for permanent registration, it must score 10 per cent of votes cast in at least 24 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory ( FCT) at the Council polls scheduled to be held on December 1998. INEC subsequently issued a code of conduct for parties and warned that ‘ any political party that fails to abide by the conditions shall have its registration withdrawn’ (The Guardian 1998 ). These conditions included cooperati on with INEC, respect for the rights of other parties, freedom to campaign, avoidance of violence and the use of inflammatory languages, rejection of corrupt practices… and assisting in ensuring peaceful and orderly voting on polling day. These conditions notwithstanding, some politicians accused INEC of incompetence and alleged malpractices during voters’ registration.

For those political organisations given provisional registration, a comparison with past experiences based on general aggregation of intere sts, and role of personalities reveal some interesting tendencies. Whereas the parties of the 1960s had very clear objectives, be it national or regional control and/or protection of traditional and minority interests, some of the associations which metamo rphosed as parties during this dispensation appeared vague in their party objectives apart from the common goal of seeking political office. However, one thing that was agreed upon by all the parties as a common objective was the fact that they all wanted an end to military rule.

The outcome of the council election showed AD as having won 100 local councils, APP won 182, and PDP won 389 out of 774 local councils in the federation. The other six parties divided the remaining 103 councils with none of them getting the stipulated percentage. Thus, with more than 70% of the local

councils divided between granted approval to participate in the state assembly,

gubernatorial, national assembly (NASS), and presidential elections of 7 January and 27 February 1999 to the Alliance for Democracy ( AD), All People’s Party (APP) (later All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP) and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) which originated from the G -34 (Kura, 2011; Odusote, 2014; Buba, 2017; Ali, 2018; Osaghae, 2018 ). .

The presidential election saw the AD/ APP‟s Chief Olu Falae and his running mate Umaru Shinkafi pitched against the PDP‟s flag -bearer, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo and his running mate Alhaji Atiku Abubakar. The idea here of having two Yoruba presidential candidates was to placa te the people of the South- West for the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. At the end of the election, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo emerged the winner. The new constitution (the 1999 Constitution) which was drafted by the Abubakar military ju nta was promulgated with the Decree No. 24 on May 05, 1999. On the 29th of May 1999, the winner of February 27 presidential election, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn-in as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with his Vice, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (Kura, 2011; Odusote, 2014; Buba, 2017; Ali, 2018 ; Osaghae, 2018). Cumulatively, the electoral performance of PDP in 1999 made it the dominant party in the country which controlled the federal government. This

allowed the party to subsequently establis h its nationwide dominance over the other parties and to substantially define the structure of the party system up to 2015.

During the 2003 general elections the number of political parties rose from the initial three in 1999 to 30 political parties. By 20 07, when the next general elections were conducted, the number of political parties had risen to 50 as registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission ( INEC)” ( Ita, 2018: 114). For the April 21, 2007 presidential election, Umaru Musa Yar’ Adua, the presidential candidate of the PDP, and his running mate, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan were declared the winner of the controversial election by the electoral umpire, INEC (Ogunnoiki 2018 ).

By April 2011, Nigeria’s political space witnessed an unprecedented ope ning as thirteen new political parties had joined the then existing 50 between 2007 and early 2011. Prominent among the new parties were: Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and, People’s Progressive Alliance (PPA). Out of these, only twenty (20) were able to field Presidential candidates. Save the PDP, Action Congress of Nigeria ( ACN) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the rest of the political parties performed abysmally in the Presidential election ( Ita, 2018:1 14). For the April 16, 2011, presidential election, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and his Vice, Arch. Mohammed Namadi Sambo of the PDP were declared the winner of the election by INEC and accordingly, sworn-in on May 29, 2011.

In the build up to the 2015 general e lection, some influential parties were determined to end the 16 years of the PDP dominance in Nigeria’s nascent democracy. Thus, the Action Congress of Nigeria ( ACN), which is an offshoot of Alliance for Democracy ( AD), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party ( ANPP), some fractions of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and, the All Progressives Grant Alliance ( APGA) merged to form the All Progressives Congress ( APC) on February 06, 2013. Officially, the party was registered by the electoral umpire, INEC, on July 31, 2013. In the 2015 presidential election, General (Rtd) Muhammadu Buhari of the APC defeated the incumbent President, Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP at the polls and was sworn - in with his Vice, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, on May 29, 2015 (Jibrin and Idayat, 2014; Durotoye, 2015, 2016; Badmus, 2017; Buba, 2017; Omilu si, 2017; Ali, 2018; Sule,

Sani and Mat, 2018 a. 2018b).

Investigations on party politics and party system in the Fourth Republic

showed that most of the parties are defective in terms of cohesive sociopolitical

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 acco untability, and intraparty crises usually resulting into factions violently competing against each other within these parties ( Animashaun, 2010; Lewis, 2003). PDP, like the other parties,

had its share of policy inconsistencies, heavy dose of internal conf licts, absence of institutional and financial autonomy, and problems of subordination between party organization and members holding political offices. In fact, i t would appear that, probably because of i ts position as the ruling party, these problems were

more noticeable in PDP than in the other parties combined ( Katsina, 2013).

It is, however, important to observe that some of these problems are directly

traceable to the incredibly short period —less than a year—in which most of the

institutions, structures, and even the legal framework necessary for

democratization were designed and incubated in the country. For instance, it

would be expecting too much from parties formed in less than a year not only to

show maturity and discipline but also to exhibit cohe sive ideologies and sufficient

institutionalization. The absence of sound social policies guiding their pursuit of

power, the ideological emptiness underpinning their campaigns, the fickle nature

of the loyalty of the party elites, and the unwieldy nature of the organizational

structures through which they ran their affairs are all manifestations of the

consequence of this short period. It could be argued that these parties have power

literally thrown on their laps before they were sufficiently prepared for it. These

factors contributed substantially in the formation of a skewed party system in

which a single party dominated the polity while the other parties sat on the fringes

and provided weak and ineffectual opposition for 16 years (Akubo and Yakubu, 2014; Animashaun, 2010; Katsina, 2013; Lewis, 2003).

* 1. **History of Opposition Politics in Nigeria**

Democracy in Nigeria as a matter of fact started during the colonial era when different political parties and associations were formed for the agitation of independent from the British which was ruling the country; although these political associations could not form any government until the formation of the regional government, which ushered in the independent of Nigeria from the British.

A truly democratic system is incomplete without the existence of viable opposition parties. Opposition politics is an ideological stance taken by group of politicians whose party fails to win a convincing majority in the election (Aborishade, 2013). Opposition parties sometimes structure themselves according to a shadow government or alternative cabinet to project a coherent bundle of policies to the electorate that is distinct from that of the government. The opposition parties articulate an alternative co urse of action from that being implemented by the government of the day and criticize its actions when they see fit. The exercise of opposition power in the legislature is in part an advertisement to the electorate for an alternative government with i ts ow n policies and ideals that is achievable through the next election s should voters endorse it ( Aborishade, 2013).

Opposition politics in developing democracies is not a vibrant activity as compared to their Western counterparts. Most often times, opposition min Nigerian politics is perceived as a threat, enemy, distraction and an immoral activity that should not be tolerated. Right from the emergence of active politics under the British colonialist, opposition was never taken lightly by the ruling

party. For instance, in Northern Nigeria, the late Malam Aminu Kano broke away from Northern Peoples Congress ( NPC) and formed an opposition party in the North; the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU). Such development was perceived and threatened with sharp hostility from the ruling NPC in the North. There were reports of persecution, intimidation, coercion and emasculation of the opposition. In the West, the Action Group crisis in mid 1960s led to a faction of the party between Obafemi Awolowo and S amuel Akintola leading to persecution of the opposition within intra-party crisis ( Falola and Heaton 2008).

The general election of 1959 that ushered in political independence in 1960 was won by the NPC which entered into a coalition with the NCNC. The AG served as the opposition. The parliamentary strength of the parties at the federal legislature supported this arrangement. The NPC won 148 seats; the NCNC - NEPU alliance won 89 seats while AG- UMBC- COR alliance won 75 seats ( Uwechue 1991 cited in Edoh and Genyi, n. d.)). While the competitive political space was preponderantly dominated by the trio of NPC, NCNC, and AG, minor parties existed operating as the opposition in their regions. Such parties included the United Middle Belt Congress ( UMBC) in Central Ni geria, the Northern Element Progressive Union ( NEPU) which had considerable following in the upper parts of the Northern region especially around Kano.

It was not long however before it became clear that Nigerian political elites who had all accepted the Whitehall model for the country had not sufficiently imbibed the ethos and nuances of that system. Thus even before the ink had quite dried on the instrument of independence, the NPC/NCNC coalition government

had started manifesting deep suspicions of both the style and motives of AG opposition. The latter’ s criticisms of the 1961 -62 Federal Budget, its implacable opposition to the 1962 Anglo- Nigerian Defense Pact as well as its suggestions for the inclusion of wide- ranging social welfare programmes in the First National Development Plan, among others were interpreted as indicative of a hidden agenda by the conservative coalition. On the other hand the opposition’ s continued propagation of the “Social Democracy” ideology for the emancipation of the masses was received with phobic distaste especially by the Hausa - Fulani oligarchies no less than his well -orchestrated political overtures to the UMBC which was opposed to the Northern region as it was constituted then.

Equally irritating and politically offensive was AG’ s support for the balkanization of the other regions. The coalition decided to cripple the opposition leader chief Obafemi Awolowo and neutralize and decimate the AG. He was arrested, tried and jailed for treasonable felony, a state of emergency was declared in the Western region at the end of which political power was handed over to his bitter opponent that was an ally of the NPC ruling party while another region (Mid- western) was created out of the west. With these developments the opposition was totally vitiated and the federal government under the ruling NPC/NCNC coalition operated without checks. The political intrigues during that era weakened the AG that held sway in the South West. Eventually, the politics of intolerance, suspicion and bitterness among the major political parties prompted the military to intervene in Nigerian politics on January 15, 1966. The

successor political party to the defunct AG, Unity Party of Nigeria ( UPN) served as the main opposition party in the second republic.

It appears correct to conclude that during the First Republic the opposition was largely ineffectual albeit not inconsequential. On the surface of it, the merciless onslaught and gang up by the NPC/NCNC ruling coalition as well as the dynamics of its own internal schisms provide ready explanations. In retrospect however, it is really difficult to see how the opposition could have succeeded in the immediate post-colonial Nigerian state. On the one hand there was the attempt by the withdrawing British colonial masters to transplant into Nigeria the Whitehall model of governance based on a strong opposition. On the other hand the same mentors had consistently demonstrated to the emergent African leaders through the massive use of coercive instruments of the state that those who govern do not take kindly to opposition. It was not too long after their withdrawal that this inherent contradiction took its toll on the system. This contradiction has come to haunt the polity to date.

The Second Republic lasted for four years (1979 -1983). The NPN won the Presidency and many states especially in the North. Opposition were suppressed, dominated while the 1983 re- election was allegedly bedeviled with massive rigging by the ruling NPN which rendered the opposition less relevan t in the process ( Falola and Heaton, 2008). The NPN was largely considered the successor to NPC and literally rose on the ashes of the defunct party (Uwechue 1991; Osahae 1998). The Unity Party of Nigeria ( UPN) headed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo was also considered as a successor of former AG. The party was socialist inclined with

a preference for welfare policies such as free education and health care services. The Nigeria Peoples Party ( NPP) was headed by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. The party was viewed by a number of observers as a resurrection of NCNC and was tailored towards social welfare ( Osaghae, 1998). The party also had international appeal to Pan Africanism. The Great Nigeria People’s Party ( GNPP) was a faction of the NPP and was headed by an entrepreneur and a former Federal Minister Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim. Ideologically, the party was inclined to free enterprise. The People’s Redemption Party (PRP) was a radical left wing party that bore resemblance to NEPU. It was headed by Alhaji Aminu Kano.

On assumption of office, it was very clear to the President that his party did not have a simple majority in both the Senate and House of Representatives for easy passage of party programmes and policies. The NPN therefore offered to work with the other parties but initially they all declined. UPN promised to cooperate on the condition that its four cardinal programmes on economic and political objectives would be implemented. UPN eventually rejected a coalition government on the grounds that it would be a haven for ab use and misuse of power and for unabated corruption on the part of ministers. The PRP favoured the formation of a national government based on a fusion of party manifestoes. It was only the NPP that accepted the invitation with the hope of securing key appointments for its members and money for development in the states the party controlled. The NPN-NPP accord was to soon break down in 1981 on the demand for more posts by the latter. However, the crisis in the accord stemmed from the

absence of consultation between the parties and the regard of NPP as a mere subordinate partner without a voice.

Having refused to join the NPN led government, the UPN, GNPP and PRP entered into an alliance of progressives with some vaguely defined socialism as the basis for governance in the states they controlled. Both the UPN and GNPP controlled states moved faster on the governance trajectory than the federal government. For instance all western UPN states had implemented free education policy while PRP abolished a flat rate personal taxation as part of a revolution to free the masses. The progressive alliance was pursued with vigour why eyeing the 1983 general elections.

Though the alliance failed to metamorphose into a political party, the federal government still moved against i t. The alliance failed largely though due to conflicting aspiration of its leaders as all three were still eyeing the Presidency in 1983 without apparent consideration for giving way to another. The alliance also lacked a unanimous programme indicati ve of a cohesive opposition. But even at this the ruling NPN found itself quite uncomfortable with it and decided to infiltrate it. As it were in the First Republic, the ruling party through its control of state power sought to repress the opposition. In B orno State for example, it deported Alhaji Shugaba Abdurrahman, the GNPP majority leader in the State House of Assembly on the grounds that he was not a Nigerian. This was a strategy to disconcert the opposition having one of their prominent politicians em broiled in such a controversy. The UPN supported the GNPP challenge of this development in court as a mark of solidarity in the spirit of the progressive

alliance. The build up to the 1983 general elections saw the federal government move up against the opposition by creating fear in their members using the Nigeria police which became an instrument of terror against the opposition (Edoh and Ogenyi, n.d.). In a development ominously reminiscent of a déjà vu with the First Republic, the opposition i tself remained largely disparate, in-cohesive, unfocused and highly fractionalized. Eager to partake in the lucre and the spoils of patronages that come with controlling political power in Nigeria, a number of its key members cross- carpeted or literally just “switch ed over” to the ruling party.

By the time of the 1983 elections although the UPN still held sway in the Western axis of the country, the opposition at the national level had become highly crippled if not completely dead. The ruling party bestrode the Niger ian political landscape like a colossus brooking little or zero opposition. This rabid phobia for dissent and opposition as was the case a decade and a half earlier was to prove, ultimately, its own death knell. The party’ s victory songs celebrating its phoney “land slide” triumphs in the 1983 elections soon proved to be the baneful dirge signaling the demise of the Second Republic.

Nwosu (1991 ) has stated that to “all sincere admirers and well- wishers of Nigeria the Second Republic was indeed a painful dis appointment”. 17 He posited that the manner, in which politics and governance were carried during the period, clearly indicated that the Nigerian political class had really learnt nothing new in the art of accommodation, tolerance of dissent and commitment to fair play. Indeed the dominating presence of many of the political elites, whose implacable disdain for dissent and alternative points of view created paralysis in the First

Republic, was suggestive right from the start that the same old political beat would go on.

It was the series of rather poignant attempts at re - engineering the contours of party politics in Nigeria by the military penultimate to i ts final disengagement in 1979. It became mandatory for example for parties to become “National” in thei r memberships, executive structure and office locations. They were banned from reference, directly or obliquely, to any ethnic or religious symbols and sentiments in their programmes, manifestoes and campaigns.

Way off into the fourth republic, in retrosp ect the failure of that experiment has given rise to many questions for which Social Scientists are yet to provide final answers. Was it for example, the case that the reforms did not go far enough? Or were they deliberately crafted to fail so as to provid e a return passage for the military at a later date? These questions and many others remain relevant as ever as Nigeria intensifies its search for a more stable polity firmly anchored on accepted democratic principles.

With the return to democratic rule in the Fourth Republic from 1999 to date, the scenario which was obtainable in the First and Second Republics emerged most forcefully and consolidated with the ruling PDP dominating almost 80 percent of the total Governorship seats and National Assembly seat s while asserting control of national politics at the Presidency. This domination has not been without explanation. There were allegations of massive riggings during elections, violence, corruption, political thuggery, vote buying, divide and rule

on opposition parties, intimidation and subjugation of opposition and their

stronghold as well as plotting moles in the opposition parties to scatter the parties and deny them any relevance i n challenging the ruling PDP (Adams and Agomor.

, 2015).

At the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999, two major political parties emerged as the opposition parties to the PDP. The Alliance for Democracy ( AD) was the strongest party in South West, while the All Nigeria Peoples Party ( ANPP) had strong presence in Northern Nigeria. Over the years, ANPP continued to witness internal crisis that really weakened its performance as a political party especially as an opposition to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) (Mbah, 2011).

While opposition parties such as the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), Labour Party (LP) and All Progressives Grand Alliance ( APGA) to mention but a few, struggle to assert their role by playing politics of criticism (albeit subjective in some ways) and providing choices for voters as alternative, electoral malpractices represents part of a more general scheme of the PDP to force opposition parties into the ruling party, thereby weakening the opposition parties and governing without constraints. The control of the nation’ s security apparatus, unopposed access to vast resources and the power of appointing electoral commission officials, being the preserve of the ruling party in presidential system of government, enable the PDP to skew and manipulate elections in their favour (Omilusi, 2017). Further study reveals that the military idiosyncrasy of the former President, Olusegun Obansanjo, paves the way for the PDP to consolidate political power for sixteen years (Cooke, 2015). Since politics in Nigeria is often played out as zero-sum game where anything

other than to gain political power is not considered worthwhile, political

opponents usually had no choice than to join the ruling alliance or suffer exclusion and lack of access to resources (Awofeso and Irabo r, 2016).

However, the above trend was surprisingly and miraculously overturned in the 2015 General Elections where against all odds, the opposition APC succeeded in

overthrowing the ruling PDP with landslide victory in an unprecedented history making. This feat that took place, is not without many obvious factors such as the improvement in the electoral body ( INEC), the use of electronic card reader, a strong merger of opposition parties in forming one formidable party; APC with wire withal for challenging the ruling PDP conveniently, serious national issues that made the public to detest PDP and have determination for a change such as corruption; poverty; unemployment; insurgency; illiteracy etc. Thus, it can be inferred from the above that, but, for the e mergence of opposition APC stronger, PDP would have continue beyond 2015.

### APC: From opposition to Ruling Party

The driving impetus of opposition politics in Nigeria as indeed anywhere else has been largely the desire to win elections and take control of the process of governance. This is the raison d’ etre of party politics in all liberal democracies. Perhaps what make the Nigerian experience a deviant are the level of desperation as well as the crudeness of the means often exhibited by those in contro l and those

outside but determined to wrestle that control. The typical Nigerian power seeker, always a faithful disciple of Nicolo Machiavelli has consistently remained

unperturbed by the legality or, for that matter, illegality of the technique of power

acquisition. What really matters is the end that prize confers: an open sesame to wealth, graft and status. Ake captured this succinctly when he declared that for the Nigerian political elite, control of the machinery of governance provides the greatest access to status and wealth (Teshome, 2009). Ultimately, he posited further, a desperate struggle to win control of state power ensues since this control means for all practical purposes being all powerful. Politics in such environment he concluded becomes warfare, a matter of life and death. As the resources available for control at the Centre has increased so also has the intensity to control it by the various factions of the political elite.

For 16 years, the gigantic behemoth, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) controlled the political system of Nigeria almost unopposed due to highly monetized politics, individualistic tendencies of politicians, incoherent party ideologies, and party defection among several other factors (Olowojolu, 2015) until the emergence of APC in 2013.

The route to this current position began with an alliance proposal between ACN/CPC in the build up to the 2011 general elections. The alliance collapsed due to overriding personal ambitions of the leaders of the two parties, none of whom would concede to the other the presidential candidate’s position. With the defeat of the opposition parties at the election and the seemingly deteriorating quality of governance in Nigeria, the leaders of the four major opposition parties came to appreciate the need to down play their ambitions in the collective public interest and therefore merge to become a more formidable force against the ruling party at the 2015 general elections. The process of painstaking consultations and

series of meetings between the opposition parties resulted in a decision on 6 th February 2013 to merge. At the inauguration ceremony of the merger committee of the ACN, Chief Tom Ikimi stated that:

at no time in our national life has radical change become more urgent… We, the following parties – namely ACN, ANPP, CPC and APGA have resolved to merge forth with and become All Progressive Congress and offer to our beleaguered people a recipe for peace and prosperity…. the APC is committed to the principles of internal democracy, focused on serious issues of concern to our people, determined to bring corruption and insecurity to an end, determined to grow our economy and create jobs in their millions through education, housing, agriculture, industrial growth etc and stop increasing mood of despair and hopelessness among our people (Mazen, 2013 ) .

Legally, the first major hurdle towards the merger was for the various parties to organize their conventions to affirm the merger. To achieve this, the ANPP and CPC held their conventions simultaneously on 11 th May, 2013 in Gusau, Zamfara state capital to approve the merger with ACN. The two conventions considered and adopted the APC Constitution, manifesto, flag and slogan. The Gusau conventions were actually sequel to the one by the ACN which was held earlier in Lagos on the 18 th of April 2013 to ratify the merger. Without a dissenting voice all delegates approved the motion to merge with ANPP, CPC and a faction of APGA ( Fadare, 2013 ) .

Following APC’s formal application for registration as a political party on June 7th, 2013 and having met all relevant laid down conditions for a merger, INEC registered the All Progressives Congress as a new political party on 31 st July, 2013 from a merger of the ACN, ANPP and CPC. In relation to the PDP, the newly registered mega opposition party is controlling 11 states against PDP’s 23.

The APC also have 32 senators to PDP’ s 72 and 134 members of the House of Representatives to PDP’s 214 ( Agbese, Jimoh, Wakili, and Sule, 2013 p. 6). In the democratic calculation of the country’ s electoral politics, the new party appears strongly positioned to challenge the ruling party in the 2015 general election.

The APC is thus an interest group (political party) that was formed to wrestle political power and influence with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Its primary objective is to change the PDP and take control of government in Nigeria and for the first time ever in the political history of Nigeria, it constituted a viable cum credible opposition and somewhat shadow government to the PDP. The rise of APC was very significant because several attempts in the past to form a mega party in the country had been unsuccessful (Egwemi, 2009). The APC leveraged on the weaknesses of the President GEJ led government and picked faults effectively in the hands of a docile leader who was visibly reluctant if not complacent to tackling national threats and challenges (Chiamo gu and Chiamogu, 2015).

In spite of its dominant majority at the federal and state levels of government, however, the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) was not able to justify i ts hold onto power convincingly for almost one - and- a–half decade. This is not contestable if the condition of critical infrastructure, quality - of-life of citizens, inability to stamp out corruption, rising levels of unemployment and insecurity exemplified by ethnic and religious clashes, the rising brutality profile of the Boko Haram sect, etc., are taken into consideration. This „failure of government‟ which, for Abba- Dabo ( 2012) symbolizes the ruling party’s “unfair, ludicrous and

farcical leadership” is what provided the background for the desire of Nigerians for a change.

As a result, the electoral fortunes of the ruling PDP declined in the 2011 general elections, even though it managed to retain political power at the federal level. For example, from a dominant position of over 75% of seats in the federal legislature in the 2007–2011 period, PDP won just over 50% of the seats in the legislature in the April, 2011 elections (OBG, 2011). Also, the party lost the gubernatorial elections in four states to opposition parties, including the most populous Kano State. Although PDP ret ained the presidency with about 59% (that is 22 million) of the total votes cast in the 2011 elections, a number of major political aspirants in the PDP lost their constituencies to other political parties (OBG, 2011).

APC became more strengthened after fi ve serving PDP governors defected to the newly formed party. Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, Abdulfatah Ahmed of Kwara State, Rabiu Kwankwanso of Kano State, Murtala Nyako of Adamawa State and Aliyu Wamakko of Sokoto State ( The Nation, May 29, 2015). Simil arly, 49 legislators defected to join the original 137 legislators in the APC. This new twist gave APC the cutting edge in the House of Representatives long before the election ( The Nation, May 29 , 2015.). On January 29, 2014, 11 senators led by former Kwara State Governor, Bukola Saraki decamped to APC (The Nation, May 29, 2015). Other political heavyweights such as ex - Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal (now Sokoto State Governor) and former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar joined APC. The GEJ government and character of the

New PDP when former President Obasanjo had issues with the presidency under Jonathan was that the party was without direction and everybody fixing and determining values at will. President Jonathan failed to fix the internal problems of the party and re-integrate all disgruntled elements in order to bring back some big wigs that were disillusioned and deprived of some values (political interests and positions). Hence the party became a pack of card that was very feebl e and could collapse at any slightest shake and attack (Chiamogu and Chiamogu, 2015) .

As the election draws nearer, those responsible for the management of the opposition APC electoral campaign maintain their gaze on the bigger picture i . e the need to ensure the electoral victory of the party at the poll. The party and its leading figures did all that is humanly possible in terms of mobilization and outreach to the electorate selling the policies and programmes that the APC if voted into power at the federal level intends to implement. At the dawn of the national elections it becomes clearer that opposition victory and possibly the defeat of the incumbent ruling party might actually occur for the first time in Nigeria’s democratic history (Saka and Amusan, 2018).

After initial three weeks extension, Nigerians went to the poll on 14th March, 2015. At the exit of the poll, the APC came out triumph defeating the PDP in the contest for the Presidency (Saka and Amusan, 2018). The presidential candidate of APC, Gen. Muhammudu Buhari ( retd) defeated the incumbent president, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP with almost 2.6 million votes ( The Nation, May 29, 2015). Currently, APC boasts of 22 executive governors, 64 senators and 225 members of the House of Representatives (including both the Senate President

and the Speaker, House of Representatives). APC is clearly the most dominant party in Nigeria since the conclusion of the 2015 general polls.

Number of factors aided APC electoral victory and the most significan t of these includes: the successful conduct of a rancor free primary to pick the party presidential candidate; the perceive credibility of the opposition candidate in the court of public opinion; the North/Southwest alliance as represented in the APC ticket; the issue based campaign by the APC; the success of the party to rally round its flagbearer and the prevention of crack in the rank of the opposition alliance after the politicking of the presidential primary and the opposition calmness in the face of overt provocation by the ruling PDP. Aside these, the ruling PDP also unwittingly aided the electoral victory of the APC through some of its actions and inaction especially as it relates to issues of corruption; the poor handling of Chibok girls abduction by the Boko Haram terrorist group; the unrestrained campaign of calumny mounted against the opposition notably the numerous attacks on the personality of General Buhari (Rtd.); the appeal to ethnic and religious sentiments by the handlers and managers of fo rmer President Jonathan campaign organization. It is also important to acknowledge the INEC enviable management of the electoral process, and more importantly the success of the computerization process and deployment new technology (PVC and Card Reading Machine).

The 2015 General Elections witnessed the first successful transfer of power from one democratically elected government to another on different party platform. There were pre- elections violence and hate speeches which made the

atmosphere tense but they were all overwhelmingly suppressed ( IRI, 2015). The growing tension of Boko Haram made the elections seemed not feasible with many zones identified as insecure before the conduct of the elections (Auge, 2015). The level playing ground for both the ruling and opposition parties improved positively (Olurode, 2014 ).

Until very recently, most Nigerians - and many others besides - believed that the powerful ruling PDP would be able to win every election either by genuinely attracting support at the ballot box or by intimidation or manipulation ( Mösch, 2015). The political climate in the runup to the 2015 elections was tense and acrimonious, as both the incumbent Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the lead opposition party All Progressives Congress (APC), back ed by competing opinion polls, predicted victory. The Nigerian rumor and conspiracy mill was ( and remains) in full swing, fuelled by social media and an often politicized news media. Leading party figures and their supporters hurled mutual insults and accusations, and alarmingly, religion became a more prominent wedge issue that party stalwarts on both sides showed little compunction in exploiting ( Cooke, 2015).

According to an Afrobarometer poll released in January 2015, 50 percent of respondents personally feared becoming a victim of violence during the polls as compared to 24 percent of respondents in 2011, with fears that women would be more likely than men to experience personal victimization at the polls (Daniel, Mbaegbu and Lewis, 2015 cited in National Democratic Institute, 2015). These fears were exacerbated by virulent rhetoric and hate speech by candidate

surrogates during the campaign period (NDI, 2015). Thus, the 2015 general elections were the most competitive polls since the country’s transitio n to democratic rule in 1999. They also were conducted within a political context that has been impacted by several negative factors over the years.

Jonathan conceded after results showed him losing by some 2. 7 million votes. Buhari’s democratic victory marks a return to power after three decades. He headed Nigeria for nearly two years after leading a military coup in 1983 (Democracy Now, 2015 ). According to Olubodun (2015), “never has a sitting president been defeated in an election and politicians are beg inning to see the need to be accountable and that there are consequences for certain types of governance”. Buhari and the APC’s victory marks the first electoral turnover from one party to another in Nigeria’s history, and it is a watershed moment in the continent’s political life (Kendhammer, 2015:172).

As a former military leader who took power through a coup in 1983, Buhari's candidacy was held by opponents to symbolise a return to a repressive past. Yet, he has since fought in three democratic contests, and claims to have learned from his stint in office. He presents himself as a born - again democrat. And he won on a campaign to root out corruption - a fundamental source of perversion of state institutions and of popular faith in them. Similarly, he promi sed to strengthen core institutions to enhance the provision of justice and the rule of law (Haenlein, 2015). While assessing the post -PDP governance in relation to the APC’s new status as a ruling party, Odunuga (2015:11) submits that:

By now, the APC should realise that the honeymoon is over. It cannot be on a driver’ s seat and still be heckling like i t did as a shadow government. If the APC fails to exert itself in drafting a clear-cut developmental strategy that is visible for all to see; if it struggles to put i ts cabinet together; if the President keeps lamenting about the encumbrances imposed on his performance by a constitution that spells out how things should be done in a federating union, then it should not blame Metuh for his cacophonous and sometimes annoying refrain about a confused party that only thought of grabbing power before thinking of what to do with i t!

According to Gbadegesin (2015: 48), the change campaign slogan of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Muhammadu Buhari, its presiden tial candidate in the 2015 general election, resonated with a substantial majority of Nigerians culminating in the historical defeat of an incumbent for the first time in Nigerian history. The presupposition of the change mantra and its acceptance by the electorate was that the status quo was no longer tenable or acceptable. With youth unemployment up in the stratosphere and generalised poverty and i ts attendant miserable existence ravaging the nation while a few amass stupendous wealth, many Nigerians felt neglected and unappreciated by their government. In view of the reality of post-election governance, Gbadegesin posits further:

While many saw presidential candidate Buhari as a Nigerian nationalist who can bring sanity to a broken system, others saw him as a sectional irredentist. And as he emerged as the elected president, that division still endures… Beside the pre - existing realities, however, the new administration and the coalition that brought it to power have had to deal with a new reality which is no less challenging. APC was marketed as the party of change. But since its assumption of responsibility for the running of the nation, it has struggled with its own inner demons, to the delight of its main rival, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). It appe ars that the party of change has not been well prepared for the discipline that it takes to govern with a mission of change.

Prior to the swearing-in of the new President, Lai Mohammed ( Nossiter, 2015) had lamented the governance crisis to be inherited by his party. According to him: “Never in the history of our country has any government handed over to another a more distressed country: no electricity, no fuel, workers are on strike, billions are owed to state and federal workers, 60 billion d ollars are owed in national debt and the economy is virtually grounded.” And now, i t is posited that addressing the big insecurity challenges in the Northeast, corruption, sustainable energy needs, and poverty connected to the human indicators of education , health, food security, and job creation ( formal or entrepreneurial), are the main stated governance pillars for the new Buhari Government ( Sanders, 2015).

### Assessing the Performance of APC as the Ruling Party

The PDP in 2015 , after 16 years of holdi ng on to the reins of power, suffered

a humiliating defeat at the polls by the opposition APC. This, observers have said

was largely due to perverse corruption, cluelessness in governance and

unprecedented insecurity challenges that characterized the Goodluck Jonathan

administration at the time, with the potency of driving the country to precipice.

As a result, the Jonathan’s presidency was roundly criticized by the citizenry of

ineptitude and cluelessness even as they yearned for a change.

Like the Biblical children of Issachar who had understanding of the time, President Muhammadu Buhari in the build -up to the 2015 general elections anchored his campaign promises on the tripod of economy, security and anti - corruption. Being that the nation was plagu ed with serious security challenges

occasioned by the Boko Haram insurgents, coupled with the ailing economy and

monumental corruption, the people swiftly keyed -in to the change mantra of President Buhari. They mobilised support and voted him en mass, asserting that a Daniel has come to the judgement seat.

A little above one and the half years into President Buhari’s second term in a

cursory look at President Buhari’ s performance on the issue of security, for

example, has shown that soon after he assumed of fice, all the 17 local

governments in the North-East which were under the firm grip of insurgents were

immediately liberated. This, political watchers have ascribed to the high morale,

discipline and psychological boost he brought to bear on the military, being a

former Army General. However, in recent times, the gains achieved in the fight

against Boko Hara have been frittered by the upsurge in Boko Haram attacks on

the Nigerian Army and communities in the North East. Observers have also

claimed that a comparative analysis of his administration and the previous ones

showed that the rate of kidnappings, armed banditry and Boko Haram insurgents

had heightened in the recent times; adding that he has not achieved much in this

respect. Corroborating this position, a former president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo

had recently in his letter castigated President Buhari on what he described as the

poor handling of the security situation, particularly the Boko Haram insurgency.

In the area of economy, pundits have equally scored the party low. They say,

under the APC’s watch, the economy had performed abysmally and ultimately slipped into a quarterly recession in 2016 that lasted for six consecutive times in the nation’s history. This has been attributed to Mr. President’s inability to constitute his cabinet six months into his administration. Also, 10m jobs are said

to have been lost in the process, according to the National Bureau of Statistics Report. This has further swelled the unemployment debacle which currently stands at 23. 3m and l ittle wonder Nigeria is now the capital of the poorest people in the world, they argued.

The volatility of the Naira on the parallel market has been unprecedented, despite the CBN regulated exchange rate of N197 –N199 to a dollar. Since the introduction of the regime, the Naira has continued to downswing on the parallel market as it fell sharply to more than N370 to a dollar, as against N270 at the beginning of 2016. The current forex regime was introduced in June 2015 as part of a long term plan by the current administration to cushion the effect of the slump in oil prices - by curtailing the unfounded pressure on the Naira, preserving external reserves, encouraging local manufacturing and diversifying the economy. Since the first quarter of 2015, CBN restricted supply of foreign exchange to importers, limited products that can be bought using dollars to a list of 41 items and cancelled the sale of dollars to Bureau De Change (BDC) operators.

The economic crisis that looms in the country fol lowing the foreign exchange policies of the CBN has prompted wake up calls by experts and critical stakeholders for relaxation of the monetary policies. Nonetheless, the Monetary Policy Committee ( MPC) of the CBN held on to the restrictive monetary policie s and went further to increase Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) to 12% from 11% and the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) to 22. 5% from 20% following the concern that excess liquidity in the banking sector further contributes to the current pressure on the foreign exhange market in March 2016.

Another area in which the party has been appraised and evaluated low is its anti- corruption war. Critics of the party and President Buhari administration have accused the party and the President of a selective corruption fight. Note that Senator Shehu Sani once said, the president uses insecticides to fight his

perceived political enemies, while using deodorants for others. Notwithstanding

this criticism, some progress has been made in this respect. There was a time when

the country swam in the ocean of cor ruption. This invariably earned her a poor

image and was often described in international circles as being “fantastically

corrupt.” This ignoble status came as a result of the way the nation was perceived

in the comity of nations. Today, same cannot be sa id of it. The world now sees

the country as one with a zero tolerance for corruption.

Since taking office, PMB has demonstrated an unprecedented political will to fight corruption. The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Independent Corruption and Other Practices Commision ( ICPC) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and other anti - corruption agencies are seen vigorously prosecuting the war against corruption. The new fight against corruption has targeted public office holders and civil servants in no small measure. The ant - corruption searchlight is being beamed on income -generating enterprises, the armed forces and other government institutions, political office holders, civil servants, private contractors, legal practitioners and individuals, all in a bid to recover looted funds and dismantle the setup that had hitherto engendered financial maladministration.

PMB has unrelentingly sought the assistance of foreign countries in the recovery of stolen money and has consistently called on world leaders at different global platforms and gatherings to strengthen international instruments a nd mechanisms to combat corruption and, specifically, illicit financial flows. Switzerland, Britain and the United States of America have agreed to help Nigeria locate and retrieve stolen assets domiciled in their countries. For instance, Switzerland has expressed readiness to repartriate $321million of Abacha's loot to Nigeria on the condition that a clear, practicable and implementable framework for managing the recovered loot will be developed. In the same vein, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have signed bilateral agreements to boost the government campaign on the recovery and repatriation of stolen wealth. These include Judicial Agreements on Extraction, Transfer of Sentenced Person s, Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters, and Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal and Commercial Matters (Premium Times, 2016)

In l ine with the campaign promise on instituting an accountability mechanism within Ministries, Departments and Agencies ( MDAs) to promote a corruption - free system, the adminstration has brought political will to bear and fully implemented the Treasury Single Account ( TSA). This initative is yielding positive results as the government claims to have so far saved between 2.1 and 3 trillion Naira. The TSA is further complemented by the In tegrated Personnel and Payroll Information System ( IPPIS) and Bank Verification Number (BVN). Through the IPPIS and BVN, the government says that it has so far uncovered 43,000 ghost workers ( Guardian, 2016) on its payroll and saved about N4.5

billion. Although these initiatives predate the present administration, it seems to have given them a new vitality and repositioned them to serve as veritable tools in fighting corruption.

The failure to institutionalize the fight against corruption constitutes one of the biggest challenges to combating corruption in Nigeria. Firstly, the government has focused more on dealing with political corruption, with little emphasis on petty corruption which permeates all sectors of the polity. Another challenge militating against the ongoing fight against corruption is the prosecutorial challenges encountered in bringing accused persons to book. The real litmus test for an anticorruption war is securing convictions of accused persons, especially "high profile" persons. The country' s judicial system is unusually slow in dispensing justice, partly due to capacity challenges in investigation and prosecution, but also due to corruption in the judicial system itself. Interestingly, at the end of PMB's first year of the anti -corruption war, only one conviction was secured (Premium Times, 2016 ) .

### Challenges of the APC

While the coalition that led to the formation of APC was [widely hailed as a](https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-triumph-for-democracy-in-nigeria/a-18353383) [positive turning point for Nigerian politics at the time ,](https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-triumph-for-democracy-in-nigeria/a-18353383) the crisis within the party has not come as a major surprise considering the postulations of Gauja ( 2009) in the framework of analysis that parties’ historical, conditional and nature of establishment are the major factors that determine its level of internal party democracy.. There was nothing ideological binding the APC together from the

beginning. The party only came about as a result of a desire to oust the ruling

PDP party. Donnelly also notes that the fragile, somewhat uneasy alliance in the party is really starting to show significant stress. At the t ime of the formation of the APC, it was an example of quite astute political thinking in seeing what could be done by forming an alliance across regions and with real political heavyweights

in Nigeria. However, with the different regions and different political heavyweights also come complications (DW, 2019).

From the inception, the National Assembly has the majority APC members in both the Senate and the House of Representatives as i t also has the majority Governors’ seat and a government at the centre. The formation of the leadership of the National Assembly set the foundation for intra -party conflicts that rocked the APC from the start. The national party executive and the executive wing settled for Senator Lawan Ahmad from Yobe State to lead the Senate as the President while Senator Femi Gbajabimiala from Lagos State to be the Speaker House of Representatives. The executive, however while having its preference for the National Assembly leadership maintained a non -interference status in order to ensure that the mistakes of former ruling PDP in terms of lack of internal party democracy was avoided. Some members of the National Assembly utilized the opportunity and turned against the preference of the party and the executive arm of government. They decided on Bukola Saraki from Kwara State to be the Senate President and Honourable Yakubu Dogara from Bauchi State to be the Speaker of the House. Many members that are loyal to the party and the executive were aggrieved and that factionalised the National Assembly into pro -Saraki and

Dogara group and antiSaraki and Dogara group being from the same party (Nwajiuba 2015 in Vanguard Newspaper online).

There is also the crises that emanated among the lawmakers in the APC was the Code of Conduct Tribunal trial of the Senate President Bukola Saraki in which he was allegedly found guilty of false declaration of his asset when he was the Governor of Kwara State. He was taken to the CCT for trial and the Senate was polarised into two, the pro-Saraki vowed to frustrate the trial at all cost while the anti-Saraki decided that he must be impeached and face the full wrath of the law. The pro-Saraki accused the executive arm of government and the party executive of plotting the trial to oust Saraki from the Senate President Seat. It caused lots of divisions and crises in the Senate till date which is becoming wider between the two conflicting groups (Ogundipe 2016 in Premium Times online).

Another dimension of the crises is the whistle blowing incidence in which a member from the ruling APC in the Federal House o f Representatives Abdulmumini Jibrin from Kano State revealed that there was budget padding in the House in the 2016 budget presented by the executive. The member was suspended as a result of such revelation and all efforts by the executive and party officials to restore him and resolve the conflict failed. He stayed suspended until March 2018 when he was called back. The Senate also witnessed such incidence in which Senator Ali Ndume from Borno State was suspended in March 2017 for six-month as a result of his call for the investigation of the issue of certificate forgery by one of the Senators Dino Melaye (Sahara Reporters online 2017). All these crises involved APC members while the opposition PDP was busy watching.

Given the recent development in the All Progressive Party power tussle, we could deduce that, though the people clamour for change, change was not secured. The democracy process is heading for failure, hence the elected officials don’t consider the electorate’ s needs and aspirations but are onl y concerned with who gets what and from what region. Ugwu, (2007) likened Nigerian political parties to warlords of Ancient Confucius China, who operated as semi -gods in political parties, giving orders and commands. He argued further that parties in Niger ia lack ideology and internal democracy, and their reward system is based on patronage. Turning the periscope towards the current conflict in the Nigerian National Assembly, it is attributed to a lack of internal democracy and is the symptom of regime reproduction among the party lords. The performance of the past administration has not encouraged internal democracy either; for example, it was noted that there were no party primaries for the PDP presidential candidate in the 2015 general election and that P resident Good luck Jonathan was assumed a consensus candidate based on a ‘ Yes’ or ‘No’ ballot with no contestant ( Odigwe, 2015). Even with the aggrieved going to the court of law to stop the procedure, the wind vein pointed the direction that the supposed party leaders made i t to point and this was a mockery of a sustainable democratic process. Another vivid example worth noting is the current Bayelsa September 2015 controversial APC governorship primaries that were flawed. The Chairman who was to conduct t he primaries was allegedly whisked out of the arena due to miscreant activities, which led to the cancellation of the result, and thus the primaries were full of irregularities. Elections have been more controversial in manipulated public

institutions, which result in a high level of poverty for the populace ( Yagboyaju, 2011).

In 2017, the national secretariat of the APC recently announced that i t set up a committee to settle the conflicting parties in th e various states that were facing the crises according to Bolaji Abdullahi the then APC spokesman. The states affected include Gombe. The party since its inception in 2015 during the primary election in Gombe fall in a serious crisis in which the party broke into two factions one led by Barrister Magaji Doho and another by Karu Ishaya. The crisis was backed up by two Senators Usman Bayero Nafada and Muhammad Danjuma Goje and both of them joined APC from PDP. The crisis in Bauchi State is between the Governor on one hand and most of the Federal lawmakers and the Minister of Education Malam Adamu Adamu. The lawmakers and the Minis ter accused the Governor of mis- utilisation of bailout funds and failure to settle workers’ salaries for many months making them suffer beyond imagination ( Owete in Premium Times online 2017).

In Borno, the ex Governor Kashim Shettima was in collision with Senator Abu Kyari who was believed to have been nursi ng Governorship ambition. The rift threatened to divide the party. In Ondo State, where the Governorship election took place in November 2016, the election divided then with many party members unhappy with the emergence of Governor Rotimi Akeredolu as the party flag bearer. The crisis spread to national level which made the APC national leader Bola Ahmed Tinubu to call for the resignation of the then party national chairman Mr. John Oyegun being seen as unable to settle the party crises. Crisis broke again

in Ondo when the state party chairman, Mr. Isaac Kekemeke was removed for allegedly for being directed to financially empower the APC national leader Bolo Ahmed Tinubu ( Owete in Premium Times online 2017).

In Plateau State, the APC crisis is a recurring one and spread. The nomination of Barrister Solomon Dalung as Minister of Youth and Sports created a division between the Governor Barrister Simon Bako Lalong and the Minister. There was also a petition by some party members calling for dismissal of a former Minister of Information and Communication Ibrahim Dasuki Nakande from the party. The crisis also occurred in many local governmen ts owing to clash of politicians’ interest of 2019 ambition. In Niger State, there was a crisis between the Governor Sani Bello and some Federal lawmakers especially Senator David Umaru and Senator Aliyu Abdullahi. The Senators were unhappy with the way th e Governor single handedly fielded candidates for local council elections without consulting them. The most notorious of the crises was in Kaduna State specifically between the Governor Malam Nasir Ahmed El Rufa’ I and the former Senator representing Kaduna Central Senator Shehu Sani and also the Governorship aspirant in 2019 Sulaiman Hunkuyi ( Owete in Premium Times online 2017). The crisis reached its peak when in February 2018 the Kaduna State Governor demolished the house of Sulaiman Hunkuyi his rival in Governorship contest in 2019.

. Another crisis which was more devastating was that of Kano State between the State Governor Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje and Senator Rabi’ u Musa Kwankwaso who was the Governor’ s predecessor and a Presidential contestant under APC in 2015. The crisis was believed to have erupted when Governor

Ganduje revealed that Senator Kwankwaso was meddling in his affairs and was trying to hijack the machinery of governance in the state. The crisis led to Kwankwaso decamping to PDP ( Owete in Premium Times online 2017).

Prior to the 2019 general elections, the APC was the incumbent party in Kebbi,

Jigawa, Zamfara, Kano, Adamawa, Katsina, Bauchi, Kaduna, Borno, Yobe, Niger,

Ogun, Plateau, Lagos, Nasarawa, Oyo and Imo. After the election, the party lost

four states of Bauchi, Oyo, Adamawa and Imo. A breakdown of the results from

the 29 states where elections held (Elections did not hold in Kogi, Osun, Edo,

Ekiti, Bayelsa, Ondo and Anambra), showed that the All Progressives Congres s,

which controls the centre, won in 15 states; while the main opposition Peoples

Democratic Party emerged victorious in 14 states.

Zamfara was bedeviled by a legal tussle that saw the APC lose the state to the PDP. The party lost all its seats in the 2019 elections in Zamfara State after a legal battle that terminated at the Supreme Court. The court ruled that the party did not conduct valid primaries to select its governorship, national and state assembly candidates in the build- up to the elections. The disagreement among leaders of the APC in the north-west state led to the inability to hold the primaries within the stipulated time. The faction of the loyal to ex - Governor Abdul' aziz Yari claimed it held congresses and had candidates, while the faction loyal to Kabiru Marafa, the then senator representing Zamfara Central, insisted that no primary was held.

In Rivers State, the APC suffered a similar fate as a result of the inability of

factions of the party loyal to the Nigerian minister of transportation, Rotimi

Amaechi, and Magnus Abe, a former senator, to reach a compromise on the party's flagbearer. The feud between the two APC leaders worked in favour of the incumbent governor, Nyesom Wike, who got a smooth ride t o victory in the election. Consequently, these issues formed part of the grievances of some party faithful, including NWC members, who not only demanded but plotted the removal of Adams Oshiomhole, as the national chairman of the party earlier 2020. Mr Oshiomhole was soon to be entangled in a crisis back home in Edo where he had been suspended after a vote of no confidence was passed on him by 18 chairmen of the local chapters of the party in the state last November. The suspension, presumably instigated by Mr Obaseki-led administration, was confirmed by an Abuja High Court but was reversed by a Federal High Court in Kano .

While the intervention of President Buhari initially saved Oshiomole his job,

he was eventually consumed. An Appeal Court upheld a lower’ s court ruling

suspending Comrade Adams Oshiomhole as APC’s National Chairman, the party

announced the Deputy National Chairman (South), Abiola Ajimobi, as the Acting

Chairman of the party. The following day, the Deputy National Secretary of the

party, Victor Giadom, said to be a protégé of Transport Minister Rotimi Amaechi,

and backed by a court order, declared himself Acting National Chairman of the

party. Majority of the members of the APC’ s National Working Committee

(NWC), ( rumoured to be loyal to the Tinubu/ Oshiomhole tendency in the party) came out to ratify Ajimobi’s appointment but said that since the former Oyo State Governor has been hospitalized, that the party’s National Vice Chairman (South - South), Hilliard Ita should stand in for him. Interest ingly, another group emerged

and declared that the position of APC Deputy National Chairman (South), which Ajimobi was said to occupy, was actually vacant and therefore, Ajimobi’s purported appointment as Acting National Chairman was a nullity.

In order to solve the lingering crisis, the National Executive Committee ( NEC)

on Buhari’s request dissolved the APC’s National Working Committee ( NWC),

led by Comrade Adams Oshiomhole. In its place, a 13- member caretaker

committee headed by Governor Mala Buni of Yobe State was set up. Former

members of the dissolved committee are free to seek re - election if they choose.

This caretaker committee will run the affairs of the party for the next six months.

As a matter of fact, this is what the Nigerian political parti es anchor their activities on: internal conflicts as a result of conflicting interests of party members. Jega, (2015) put some light on the state of political parties in the nation when he asserted that the germane issue is that too much opportunity is giv en to these parties to be hijacked by the powerful private individual, who later become the boss and determine ‘who becomes who’, that there is need to put in place a mechanism to make political parties public- owned institutions, and internal democracy can only be found in smaller parties. The Nigerian political atmosphere is characterised by money politics, political vagrancy, indiscipline and a lack of cohesion ( Omotola, 2009 ).

### Empirical Review

* + 1. **Political Parties and Opposition P olitics in Nigeria**

Wondwosen ( 2009) investigates the opposition politics in Africa and examines the status and the role, the contributions and the weaknesses of opposition political parties in Africa, particularly in transitional democracies that emerged in the 1990s. The uses descriptive method and concludes that the opposition parties in Africa appear or become active only during an election, and disappear when the election is over. The authors also find out that most of the opposition parties in Africa are established around the personalities of individuals, lack internal democracy, suffer from weaknesses such as inter -party and intra-party conflicts, lack of strong base and experience, bad organization and weak connection with the popular constituencies.

Egbewole and Etudaiye (2010) examine the nature of opposition in politics generally and in Nigeria, in particular. The authors show in their analysis that the role of opposition is sacrosanct as it is essential to the smooth running of any representative democracy. Lamidi and Bello (2012) examine the activities of Nigerian political parties since 1999. Relying on secondary examination, the authors show that Nigerian political parties did not possess features of political parties such as ideology, party manifestoes, l ikeminded people as well as viable opposition party as all parties seemingly engaged in intra party conflict rather than embarked on programmes that would benefit the masses.

Ebienfa (2014 ) in his study of opposition politics in Nigeria, argued that the first prerequisite in understanding opposition politics is to first and foremost identify the major actors in opposition politics and these include: the government in power, opposition political parties; individuals and groups that criticise the

programmes and policies of the ruling party. This context rightly sum up the role of Lai Mohammed, as opposition party spokesperson, of the then opposition APC. In his historical analysis of party politics in Nigeria and the importance of publicity, Oladesu (2013 ) recalls that former Premier of Western Region and First Republic opposition leader, Obafemi Awolowo understood the role of the opposition in democracy. Thus, he also fortified the publicity organs of the two political parties he led; the Action Group ( AG) and Unity Party of Nigeria ( UPN); by appointing competent publicists to tackle the ruling parties and canvassed the alternative routes to federal power. In the First Republic, AG Publicity Secretaries were the intellectuals and ideologues; the witty Ajibola I ge and Banji Akintoye, who were thorns in the flesh of Balewa and Akintola governments. In the Second Republic, UPN’s spokesman was the brilliant analyst, MCK Ajuluchukwu, the Director of Research and Publicity, whose efforts were complemented by the gifted orator, Ebenezer Babatope. In those days, the opposition was active and alive to its democratic responsibilities.

In his analysis executive-legislative relations in Nigeria present political dispensation, Mba (2011 ) argued that the 16 (Sixteen) years of people’ s Democratic Party ( PDP) made opposition party structure to take a different dimension as the country never witnessed a strong opposition. . Mba further noted that those in the political parties were not consistent as they kept jumping from one political party to the other. Meanwhile, the beneficiary of the instability during that moment was the PDP . Aborishade ( 2013), studying opposition politics in Nigeria with a focus on the South West, blamed this on the fact that t he political

parties which could have stood in opposition were not settled as they were bedeviled with serious internal crisis which did not give them the opportunity to scrutinize the government. Egwemi ( 2009) in his examination of the decline of opposition political parties in Nigeria noted that the country during the first 16 years of the ongoing political dispensation never experience real opposition until the emergence of the Action Congress of Nigeria which had six states of Lagos, Osun Ogun Ekiti, Oyo and Edo. These six states gave the party strength to mount formidable machinery used to confront the PDP.

Saka, Adebiyi and Bakare (2019) in their analysis of the challenges of opposition politics in Nigeria blamed it on the activities of godfathers also contribute to the lack of viable political opposition in Nigeria. The activities of political godfathers are inimical to the sustenance of democracy in the country. Edigin ( 2010) on his part, thus, noted that apart from being antithetical to democratic consolidation in Nigeria, godfatherism aid the growth of pervasive corruption and undermine governance thus, it promotes mediocrity and underdevelopment. This view is quite revealing as it unveils the problematic dimensions the phenomenon of godfatherism has assumed in Nigeria especially during the democratic dispensation under review. Experience has shown that godfathers who take charge of the affairs of political parties eventually constitute the monopolists that determine the outcome of governance. They ac complish that goal by taking (financial) control of the state through their godsons ‘State Capture’. In all, this corruptive tendencies accentuated by patronage politics (godfatherism) has weakened political institutions most especially that of

political parties and have served as hindrance to the performance of the functions of political parties including that of providing alternatives to the incumbent governments in the form of political opposition.

Apter ( 1970) discussing the challenges of political oppo sition noted that new nations or democracies after independence are faced with the accumulation of immediate and often mundane tasks such as the provision of social amenities and other essential services and necessities beyond the subsistence level. To sta te this aptly. He reiterated that in most of these countries such as Nigeria, per capita calorie intake remains far below that considered necessary for normal labour. Vivid in the minds of many political leaders are memories of the days when, not so long ago, they slept on the veranda and suffered from want of food and shelter. Some political leaders grew from poverty and obscurity to power in a short t ime. Politics is their only profession. For them to go out of office is in effect, for them to become unemployed. Therefore, most incumbent governments in post - colonial African states frown at multiparty system and in most cases strive with all the might associated with state authority to weaken, harass, divide opposition parties and in the extreme cases exterminate opposition leaders all in a bid to weaken political opposition.

### Political Parties, Opposition Politics and Democratic C onsolidation

Agudiegwu and Ezeani ( 2015) trace the historical antecedents of Nigeria’s first and second republics in terms of ideology of parties of those republics. The authors rely on the review of extant literature and content analysis and argue that

strong ideological base characterized the f irst republic than political parties of

the nascent fourth republic democracy which lack clear ideological focus and divides, while the politicians lack principles all of which threaten the country’s democratic consolidation and good governance.

Omotola (2009 ) addresses the issues of Nigerian political parties with emphasis on political ideology, being the first and most important vehicle of a political party. Based on descriptive method, the author argues that despite all pretences to the contrary through their manifestoes, Nigerian political parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments as indicated by factors such as the rising magnitude of political vagrancy on the basis of selfish and parochial interests, the high level of party indiscipli ne, as well as absence/weakness of party cohesion and internal democracy.

Also, there is a lack of party ideology. It was concluded that relevant sections of the 1999 constitution such as section 68(1) and section 109 (1) of the 1999 constitution became a platform for decamping for party members. This could pose a threat to the multi-party system and have a direct effect if not put in place to check on political progress and stability and clamour for a political party who place people at the centre (people oriented) and uphold political culture as an ideology. Okhaide, ( 2012 ) study titled ‘ Quest for internal party democracy in Nigeria’ examined the 2010 Electoral Act. In the study, it was revealed that the provision in section 87 (1 ) and ( 2) of the act prescribed the procedure for political parties’ nomination of members, but the repealed section 87 ( 9) of the act, which empowers the political party members on candidates’ nominations, led to the demise of internal democracy in the Nigerian political parties. It was concluded

in the study that the primaries conducted by political pa rties could serve as a yardstick for measuring internal democracy in these political parties due to non - compliance with the constitutional provisions. This made i t difficult for the Independent Electoral Commission ( INEC) to effectively carry out its manda te, it gave opportunity to party lords to select candidates of their choice, and i t was at the expense of internal democracy in political parties.

Adeosun (2014 ) critically studies democracy and democratic consolidation in Nigerian Fourth Republic. While r elying on qualitative approach, using data obtained from secondary sources such as text book, journal articles, among others, the author analyses the challenges confronting democratic consolidation in the country. The author reveals that electoral malpractice, poverty, corruption, incumbency factor, lack of viable opposition parties, insecurity, and incidence of political thuggery are the challenges facing democratic consolidation and they have constituted negative effects on democratic stability and cons olidation of Nigeria.

Akubo and Yakubu ( 2014 ) assess the role of political parties in the democratic consolidation of Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. With a reliance on secondary data supported by analytical approach, the authors indicate that the party system in Nigeria is still weak and vulnerable with no visible signs of adding value to the democratic consolidation. The authors identify lack of institutionalization and personalization of political parties, godfatherism, absence of internal democracy within the political parties and incessant party/ political violence as challenges

plaguing democratic consolidation in Nigeria since the commencement of the country’ s fourth republic.

Olanrewaju (2015 ) addresses the importance of political party in Nigeria’ s democratic atmosphere. Adopting secondary source of data, the author argues that despite the importance of political parties, Nigerian political parties have been manifesting ideological indisposition resulting to poverty of ideology. The author therefore suggests that political party can only perform their fundamental roles as well as ensuring democratic consolidation through meaningful ideological disposition.

Abba, Imam and Suleiman (2015) analytically examine Nigeria’s political cum economic penchant and attempt to determine the extent at which its democratic principles have been consolidated upon from the inception of its democratic rule since 1999. The authors note that Nigeria is a country with thriving democratic enthusiasm but is ruled by leaders who ha ve both the inclination and resources to scuttle agitations for democratic reforms. The authors find that consolidating democracy in Nigeria is tough and challenging but not entirely hopeless.

Isma’ila and Othman ( 2016) examine how electoral malpractice t hreatens and undermines the quest for democratic governance in Nigeria’ s fourth republic and how critical approach can be used to transform the system. Relying on secondary data, the authors show that like many other new democracies, Nigeria’s democratization has been characterized with electoral malpractices, and as such consolidating democracy in the country appears to be in crisis as a result of the

challenges of electoral malpractices which manifest in form of corruption, insecurity and weak democratic institutions.

Omilusi and Adu (2016 ) assess the nature and character of party politics in Nigeria and its impacts on democratic governance, essentially from historical perspective. The authors acknowledge the central role played by political parties in the development and nurturing of a virile democracy and its consolidation. The authors argue that democracy will survive for a long period of t ime in a particular society provided political parties, among other vital institutions, are well established, and have played the role expected of them. The authors therefore conclude that the Nigerian public needs to gain confidence in its institutions in order to advance the democratic project.

Edet (2017 ) investigates the trend of politics of defection in Nigeria a nd its implications on Nigeria’s democracy. Relying on content analysis, the author notes the way and manner politicians in Nigeria defect from one party to the other and sees it as a serious concern among political observers and participants in Nigeria. The author indicates that there is lack of clear ideology and manifesto among political parties in Nigeria and that the issue of defection has become one of the major bane of democratic process and consolidation in Nigeria. In achieving this objective, the study relied on content analysis.

Idowu ( 2017) examines the roles of political parties in democracy and democratization, with focus on how the existing political parties have assisted in democratic consolidation in Nigeria since 1999. The author adopts Sch edler’s

democratic consolidation theory and Arthur Fisher Bentley’s group theory as tools

of analysis, while also accessing data through the review of secondary data and uses content analysis to analyze the data. The author observes among others, that Nigerian political parties have not scored high in terms of democratic consolidation when placed side by side other countries heading towards stable democracy. The author’s observation of democratic consolidation drawback in the country is based on factors such as; failure of opposition to perform their political responsibilities as most of them are only but fragile entities with shallow roots in the society, incessant division within the ruling parties and opposition parties, and the un-institutionalized nature of most political parties in Nigeria.

Olorungbemi ( 2017) acknowledges political parties as the instruments of democratic process stable democratic order in the world over. The author examines the implications of inter and intra -party conflicts for democratic consolidation. Relying on secondary data, the author reveals that effective political parties are essential in consolidating democratic rule in Nigeria.

Akubo and Yakubu (2014 ) investigates the challenges of Nigerian political parties. The study found out that the challenges are as a result of a lack of institutionalisation and personalisation. In the study, the absence of internal democracy in the party is due to the heavy influence of the political godfather on their candidates: incessant party violence. They concluded that political parties in Nigeria are weak and vulnerable without a future, so there is an urgent need for internal democracy for party effectiveness and efficiency. Omotola, (2009) asserted that the connection is complex. Because the political parties forms the government which is an institution of the state, they are interdependent of each

other. The study also placed an emphasis on the need for party ideology in a well - defined relationship, hence this absence pose a threat to po l i tical liberalisation, democratisation and democratic consolidation. The conclusion was that Nigerian political parties lack party ideology and there is a need for sound intra - conflict management as a functional tool of ideology – this could be achieved through the help of both the elites and civil society in reforming the party and the members to achieve a good democratic process. Idike, (2014) work concerning political parties, political apathy and democracy in Nigeria shows that political parties are organs of interest articulation for the purpose of attaining power and the implementation of interest. The political party is a global phenomenon and a germane issue to developing countries like Nigeria.

Ikelegbe, (1995 ) focused his study on the process of c itizens politically

organising themselves through interest groups and the political parties. The study went further to equate political parties as organised groups with the objective to have control of the state and to exercise power. The study concluded t hat the Nigerian political parties emerged through organisations and movements due to the presence of colonialism, and that these movements later became political parties that mobilised the citizenry to support and participate in i ts favour. Omoweh, (2012 ) asserted that the nature of political parties and its capacity to conduct free and fair party elections has to do with the political leadership; the level of intra- party and inter-party democracy determines the existence of democracy. Firstly, the study revealed three conditions for political parties’ growth and this includes the weakness of internal democratic practices within

political parties, which is detrimental to democratic processes in all countries of the world. Secondly, it revealed that the ethn ic basis of the Nigerian political parties speed up the rise of autocratic and ethnic hegemonic leaders who have not be able to rise above this ethnic consideration, both at the regional and at the national level. Thirdly, the beneficiaries of the factions within the political parties in Nigerian and South Korea tends to resist democratisation. The conclusion of the study was that steps to help bring a true democratic developmental state include: the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs), and the need for vibrant labour unions to be the watchdogs in fighting corruption and ensuring true democratic practices in public institutions.

Oarhe & Ikelegbe, (2009 ) are of the view that political parties are essential to democracy and good governance and act as a central instrument. The study also shows that the ruling party between 1999 and 2007 performed below expectation in the promotion of good governance, and this could be ascribed to the problem of godfatherism. The conclusion was that there is an urge nt need to imbibe discipline to enhance democratic process and good governance. Aleyomi, ( 2013) work on the role of political parties in renewing Nigeria’ s democracy was based on the compatibility of neoliberalism and democracy through the viability of the political party system in Nigeria. The study shows that the inability to democratically manage intra-party sources of conflict could escalate and pose a threat to national stability and economic growth. Lamidi and Bello, (2012) concluded that the activities of political parties from 1999 failed to engage on issues of governance; they rather spent quality time on internal crises due to

factions and tribal loyalty. Therefore, party reformation is a prerequisite for a proper democratic process. To Badejo and Akpowoghaha,(2015) the Nigerian Fourth Republic 1999 political system has continued to experience a proliferation of political parties and decamping of members, and this development in the Nigeria scenario is due to a lack of internal democracy and the sel fish interests of its members. It was concluded that government financial grants to political parties, the ‘get rich quick’ syndrome by party elites, inefficient internal conflict management, the multi- ethnic nature of the nation, and a lack of internal democracy were causal factors for members cross - carpeting and proliferating political parties. For a peaceful coexistence, the parties must observe internal democracy and respect for constitutional provisions Aleyomi, (2013) findings were that politicians in Nigeria take political parties and politics very seriously, and this is due to their personal interests. According to the study, those who decamped often anchored their lack of political integrity on lack of internal democracy and political patronage, and this behaviour is as old as the nations’ independence and sovereignty.

Unumen (2019 ) examines the challenge of democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic and the role that strong institutions could play in overcoming it. Relying on descriptive analysis, the author posits that democracy is under threat in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic based on challenges such as systemic corruption, economic crisis, manipulation of both the electoral and constitutional arrangements for personal and party advantages, political exclusion, attempts at blackmailing and/or emasculating both the legislature and judiciary by the

executive, intolerance of opposition by ruling political parties and a tendency towards authoritarianism all of which have the capacity to derail th e country’ s current democratic experiment and/ or cause democratic breakdown. The author therefore concludes that institutional weakness is the bane of democratic consolidation in the Fourth Republic.

According to Huntington in his work titled The third Wav e: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century, a nascent democracy is considered consolidated only after it has experienced two peaceful electoral alternations ( Huntington, 1991). Schedler (2001) on his part argue that while passing the two turnover tes t does not imply that a democracy has become fully developed, the test itself remains widely used in indicating whether a new democracy has matured. Dahl (1971) famously listed „public contestation‟ along with participation as a key ingredient of “polyarchy”, his ideal type of democracy. To Dahl, a broader benchmark for measuring democratic consolidation is simply the alternation of power, without specifying two turnovers or two elections. Alternation of power is only possible where vigorous political compe tition exists.

Discussing power alternation further, the perspective towed by Rustow (1970: 337-363) which referred to democracy as „a system of rule by temporary majorities‟ illustrates the possibilities of vigorous political competition between and or amongst political parties. This vigorous competition makes it possible for political parties to pave ways for themselves in a freely, fairly and credible manner to winning elections in democracies and creates veritable ambience for the opposition to thrive.

What is more, Mainwaring (1992) identifies a procedural requisite of democracy as the “opportunity to get rid of rulers who lose their popular support”. This succinctly explains the scenario in the 2015 general elections where Nigerians demonstrated at the ballot that the former ruling party (PDP) has failed to provide the expected dividends of democracy and accepted the call for change. Before the 2015 elections in Nigeria, the presidency did not change hands, but there was significant turnover at other levels of government and this could be taken as an encouraging sign: 8 of the 36 incumbent governors lost in 2003 and, as discussed below, the turnover among the National Assembly rank and file as well as the leadership was substantial. Yet much of the chang e occurred within parties rather than between them – high turnover should not be equated with alternation of power.

Leftwich (2005 ) in his analysis of democracy and development in third world countries listed conditions for democratic survival, he goes on to mention five factors for democratic endurances which are: affluence, growth, declining inequality, absence of breakdowns and parliamentary rather than presidential governance in new nations. These are almost an exact replica of the Przeworski (2005 ) thinking in predictors of democratic survival. Corroborating the above views, Linz and Stepan (1996 ) observes that, the composition and consolidation of a democratic polity must entail serious thought and action concerning the development of a normatively positive appreciation of those core institutions of a democratic political society – political parties, elections, electoral rules,

political leadership, interparty alliances and legislature - by which society constitutes itself politically to select and monito r democratic government.

Salaam and Usman ( 2019 ) examine the role of the APC as opposition party in Nigeria’s democratization process. Based on extant literature from textbooks, journal articles, newspaper and magazines, periodicals and internet and using textual narrative analysis in analyzing the data qualitatively, the authors find out that since the collapse of the First and Second Republics in Nigeria in the 1960s and 1980s, the country has not had an effective opposition party the way Nigeria had it with APC in 2015. The authors nevertheless opine that APC was better off as an opposition party than a ruling party while concluding that a vibrant opposition party system would be needed to checkmate the party in power if democracy will be effective in Nigeria.

### 2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study uses a synthesis disturbance theory, opposition theory, elite theory,

game theory and pluralist democracy theory to examine the issues of opposition

politics, political parties and ideology in relation to democratic consolidation.

#### Disturbance Theory

The disturbance theory, as noted by David Truman, is concerned with interest groups formed in part to counteract the efforts of other groups. According to this theory, anytime there is a disturbance in a political system, a group will arise. In form of countermovement, one wave of groups will give way to another wave of groups representing a contrary perspective.

The theory depicts society as the interaction of the groups which compose it in line with the pluralist view. In an attempt to understand t he motivation behind people joining interest groups and how such groups are formed in plural societies, David Truman in his classic work t itled “Governmental Process” contends that interest groups are formed in response to big changes to how society should normally operate and how they attempt to restore a balance. In essence, disturbance theory is a political postulation by David Truman which holds that interest groups are formed essentially in opposition to other interest groups so as to counteract influence in their respective political domains (Truman, 1951). Political scientists and other analysts have generally agreed on the importance of interest groups to a large extent, but they have not seemingly always placed groups at the center of their analytic frameworks and theories.

Some scholars argue that disturbance theory can explain why groups mobilize

due to an event in the political, economic, or social environment ( Krutz, Fleisher

and Bond, 1998 ) For example, in 1962, Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring* , a

book exposing the dangers posed by pesticides such as DDT ( Oreskes, 1989) The

book served as a catalyst for individuals worried about the environment and the

potential dangers of pesticides. The result was an increase in both th e number of

environmental interest groups, such as Greenpeace and American Rivers, and the

number of members within them.

More recently, several shooting deaths of unarmed young African American men have raised awareness of racial issues in the United Stat es and potential problems in policing practices. In 2014, Ferguson, Missouri, erupted in protests

and riots following a decision not to indict Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, who had allegedly been involved in a theft at a local convenience store and ended up in a dispute with the officer (Rozell, Pederson and Williams, 2000). The incident mobilized groups representing civil rights.

In Nigeria, the January 1 st, 2012 removal of fuel subsidy by the government of

ex-President Goodluck Jonathan, led to massive protest by coalition of civil right

groups, political parties (notably, the then CAN, which later merged with ANPP,

CPC and a faction of APGA to form the ruling APC) and ordinary citizens. The

singular action by the subsidy on fuel help mobilized these groups to help

overcome collective action problems,

Truman suggests that interest groups arise from two interrelated societal processes. To begin with, they develop as society becomes more complex. In Truman's words, "it is obvious that the trend toward an increasing diversity of groups functionally attached to the institutions of government is a reflection of the characteristics and needs, to use a somewhat ambiguous term, of a complex society" (Truman 1951)

The increasing complexity of a society is best i llustrated by the differentiation in the division of labor. As technology and the economy change, new skills are required, and, thus, new groupings develop in relation to these skills. Quite often, tangentially related groups will formally organize into associations which, in turn, almost always become political interest groups. Truman points out that all this is

not just a response to the industrial revolution and past industrial technology but

that it is also a product of modern mass communications, which have facilitated the interaction of the units of potential associations.

The increasing complexity of society does not, however, by i tself, ex - plain "the proliferation of groups in our society" ( Truman, 1951). Rather, one must look beyond this broad generalization to the specific catalytic factors that impel previously unorganized individuals to organize into interest groups. The key to Truman's theory is that people are led to organize because of a disturbance which alters their relationship to other groups or institutions. A disturbance is some force that changes the " equilibrium" of the group with other elements in society. The purpose of forming an interest group or association is to overcome t hese disadvantageous forces and to stabilize relations so that a new equilibrium may be reached.

Despite its theoretical significance, Truman's thesis does not offer an explicit definition of the disturbance concept. One is forced to infer the exact bounda ries and limitations of the term from the examples he gives of the beginnings of individual organizations. From the numerous cases he cites, it seems evident that he considered the disturbance concept applicable across the entire spectrum of interest groups. His emphasis, how- ever, is on disturbances of an economic nature and their impact on the farm, labor, and business sectors. The effect of business cycles, wars, increased government activity, and the like are all identified as direct catalysts for the formation of various economic groups trying to restore equilibrium.

Its lack of precision notwithstanding, the disturbance explanation has considerable appeal (Key, 1964 ). Its essential reasoning is quite logical: there is a cause and effect relationship b etween external forces (disturbances) and the formation of new interest group organizations.

#### Opposition Theory

The question of political opposition which is regarded as one of the greatest political theorists of our times has defined as the first axis cons tituting *polyarchies* , alongside the inclusion/ participation axis ( Dahl, 1971). It is thus not surprising that the topic has drawn the attention of many scholars who have tackled the question from different perspectives. The first important branch of the literature to which Robert Dahl greatly contributed has concentrated on the function of opposition in democratic regimes and has been interested in the different forms opposition could take in democratic states (Dahl, 1971; Blondel, 1997; Helms, 2008 ). Trying to understand the development of political opposition, comparatist politists have also dealt with the factors explaining the emergence, institutionalization and decline of opposition in both democratic and non- democratic regimes (Dahl, 1971) Mutalib, 2000; Carbone, 2003; Barber, 1997) . Relating to this literature, an important number of studies have also focused on opposition in non- democratic and non- competitive regimes (Schapiro, 1987; Mutalib, 2000; Carbone, 2003 ) and on i ts role in the dem ocratization process (Stepan, 1997; Spence, 2007 ). Besides, many scholars, amongst which Dahl himself, have been interested in the structural elements affecting the opposition’s modalities of action in the parliament and its relations with the majority in power

(Kerr, 1978; Johnson, 1997; Mujica and Sanchez -Cuenca, 2006). Finally, and usually starting from a different theoretical perspective and interests, different scholars have concentrated on extra-parliamentary opposition and more specifically on social mobilization and the role of civil society ( Weigle, 1992; Kolinksy, 1987 ) .

In defining opposition’ s appearance, characteristics, goals and strategies, Dahl (1966a) follows a rather static approach. He identifies four important system characteristics ( organizational cohesion, competitiveness, site for the encounter between opposition and governing majority, the opposition’s distinctiveness) and looks at how the opposition’s goals and choice of sites combined with those characteristics to produce a specific choice of strategy (Dahl 1966a). In doing so, he focuses on the political system as such, linking the different characteristics to typical countries where such an opposition type might occur. Dahl acknowledges that opposition strategies and citizens’ attit ude to opposing government policies are linked to a country’s political culture and influenced by societal cleavages (Dahl 1966 c, pp. 352 f.). However, he does not attribute them to specific parties within a system. Blondel ( 1997), who both simplifies Dahl’s theoretical concept and extends it beyond western democracies, shares this static approach. Despite calling for a stronger consideration of partisan matters when looking at the structure of opposition, Blondel (1997, pp. 463) still sees opposition as “a ‘dependent’ concept” that is “tied to the character of the government”.

Helms ( 2004, pp. 24 ) explicitly points out “theoretical and analytical shortcomings of the comparative opposition literature”. Despite this observation, his

contribution on this topic, which focuses on the constitutional level and describes

five different types and forms of legitimate opposition to the government, again refers to specific countries ( UK, Germany, Fifth French Republic, USA and Switzerland), instead of choosing an approach detached from constitutions and institutions.

By referring exclusively to constitutional and institutional aspects of opposition, determined by a country’ s political, party and electoral system, these authors elude the question of whether different kinds of parliamentary opposition, displayed by competing parties, might be visible within one political system.

#### Elite Theory

Elite theory as discussed by Robert Michel is an important component of modem political system as the concept earlier evident in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The literature on political elites is argued to be dominated by two rival perspectives. For instance, the liberal pluralist version focuses on the dispersion of power within the elite and argues that changes are likely to happen over time while in contrast, the critical elite perspective emphasizes elite power concentration and cohesiveness, leading to resistance to change and limited openness and inclusiveness (Olsen, 1993). Michels admits the virtue and ability of elites in controlling the political system and believes that elites being a minority group hold influence and controls the political system by virtue of ' Iron Laws of Oligarchy' ( Mahajan, 2005). Michel’s argument is based on the supreme power and grip of elite in an organization being another way of spelling Oligarchy (Agarwal, 2005 ).

According to Henry ( 1994 ), elite theory is a theory of the state which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in contemporary society. Accordingly, the theory holds that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and political elite, controls the most power and that this power is independent of a state's democratic elections process. Michels looked for an organizational basis to support the emergence of elites. According to Michels's basic reasoning, organization precludes democracy, and can destroy democracy, and can facilitate democratization (May, 1965).

The Nigerian political system upholds the elite theory which asserts that small minority groups consisting of members of the economic, political and policy - planning networks holds the most power and that power is independent of the state’s democratic election process. Theory further maintains that power lies in positions of authority and in key economic and political institutions. This has been the situation in the Nigerian political system, whereby a selected and privileged few usurp and dominate the politica l process of a state by apportioning/ circulating political offices for themselves and their family members for personal and group interests at the expense of the entire citizenry. This is further buttress by the classical elite’ theory proponent which is based on the two ideas concepts, that power lies in position of authority in key economic and political institutions of a state. These elites will by necessity seek to dominate and occupy these offices for self-preservation and political relevance in the nation. The second assertion upholds the psychological difference that sets elites apart, that is they have personal resources, intelligence and skills and vested

interest in the government. The elites in Nigerian political space engage difference strategy to retained, sustained and perpetuated themselves in power, such as the use of religious sentiments, ethnic / cultural practices and party affiliations are usually in the front burner when seeking/ campaigning for political offices.

Gaetano Mosca further explained the formidable tendencies of the elite class in any given society, that sociological and personal characteristic are the hallmark of the elites class, this is evident in Nigerian political class, whereby politics are driven and built around powerful individuals instead of institutions). Gaetano Mosca contends that, the ruling class is composed of the ruling elites and the sub - elites, that this groups are very organized and that the masses are unorganized majority in nature and in manner. These groups of in the society take advantage of the ignorance behavior of the masses to exploit and rule them arbitrarily. Vilfredo Pareto also assets, the psychological and intellectual superiority of the elites, that they were the highest accomplishers in an y field. Dahl ( 1967:39) quoting Alexander Hamilton during the American constitutional conference debates in 1778 clearly demonstrate this face, that “men love power, give all power to the many and they will oppress the few, give all power to the few and they will oppress the many. Both therefore ought to have power that they may defend itself against the other.’’ Politics in Nigeria afford the elites to amass unaccounted wealth at the expense of the state. Therefore it is seen that political offices/appointments in Nigeria and indeed in Africa in general is a means for the elite in society. That is why it is zero sum in nature as stressed by Morgenthau.

The effect of this tendency is sporadic conflicts, agitation and violence in that society, as contended by Iyayi (1995) that elections and by extension, politics and its processes in Nigeria are characterized by violence conflicts, cheating, fraudulent practices, tension and are highly complicated, this is perpetuated by the elites in their bit to retained p ower at all cost. Robert Michaels also contends that social and political organizations are run by few individuals. These social organizations are elitist in nature and character and that theses elites have three basic principles that help in the bureaucr atic structure of political organization, namely ( a) needs for leaders, specialized staff and facilities. ( b) utilization of facilities by within their Ake ( 2001:16) also contend that questionable and flawed electoral process suppresses the wishes, intents and hopes of the electorate, and allows for evil option; It stimulates divisive tendencies in the society as result of these unfair and monopoly of the machinery of government these elites in the society. This is further maintained by Macpherson (1973) th at a democratic system is indeed a rule in the interest of the whole people, transcending classes, it is the procedures ( elections) by which a society is rule. Tayler ( 2006) contends that elections deepen the concept of accountability so central to consti tutional democracy, by giving citizens the opportunity to choose their leaders and to reject those they do not like, through a credible electoral process’. Thereby ensuring peace, stability and violence free society. More so, politics is a contestation f or wealth and power in the side of the world, it is a platform to attend riches, fame and recognition, instead of service to humanity, and laudable programs for sustainable development and growth. Max (1875) further stressed that as people

live in a society, some will rule and other will be ruled’. That there will always

be a struggle among and within societies’. It is true that everybody in a given society cannot be equal, just as all fingers are not equal, people in the society cannot also be equal in all respects, but they should be fairness, justice and social equality to guarantee peace and tranquility in that society, yes no society can attend the utopian state or society as postulated by Karl Max. The Nigerian state is far from the utopian state, in fact, it is the exact opposite, this is seen in the spate of injustice and political marginalization of several sections in the state, this is done through a flawed electoral process and political system adopted. Elkit and Stevenson (1997 ) further contend that, elections allow periodic changes and create legitimate government that enjoys popularity from the people. This further provides the mechanism for the citizenry to assessed and monitored how the state funds are managed, through accountability and soc ial responsibility of the leadership in power to the electorates. Stewart (2001) further excludes that, politic vis-a-vis elections remain a viable medium of regime change in a democratic setting it is a contest in the polity, as postulated by Morgenthau’s political realism theory, ‘power quest in human nature and desires’

#### Game Theory

Another theoretical underpinning of this work is the game theory. Historically, the game theory was propounded in the 1920s by Emil Borel, and was further developed by John Von Neumann to explain the behavior of the economic man or the rational actor. John Von Neumann was also credited with further development of infinitesimal calculus which deals with change and its effect under certain conditions. It is a useful and potential tool for the understanding of human affairs.

Game theory has been introduced as a part of a general theory of rational behavior. Rationality is a normative concept, which indicates what individuals or groups are thinking in terms of behavior involving a choice of the best means available for achieving a given end ( Harsanyi, 1980). Von Neumann recognized the necessity of characterizing games of strategy in an unequivocal manner.

Bhuiyan (2016 ) explains game theory as the logical analysis of situations of conflict and cooperation and formally defines it as a theory of rational decision in conflict situations. Model of such situations, as they are conceived in game theory, involve a set of decision makers, called players; a set of strategies available to each player, courses of action which he or she may choose to follow; a set of outcomes, the strategies chosen by each player determine the outcome of the game; and a set of payoffs accorded to each player in each of the possible outcomes (Rapoport, 1974).

The game theory, as Jack Piano and Robert Riggs ( 1973:65) see it, deals “with rational decision strategies in situation of conflict and competition, when each participant or player seeks to maximize gains a nd minimize losses”. The emphasis of the theory was the application of mathematical models to political studies, and it has its origin in those parlour games, like chess, chicken poker or bridge characterized by “element of conflict, decision making and co operation”. These are games between two or more players, where the decision of each player “is contingent upon the decision of others” ( Ajayi, 2006:93).

The central point here is the nature of inter -dependence of whatever decisions

are made by the different players participating in the game. This is because it is

not possible for any one player to make a choice without giving considerations to the choices made by the other players. Thus the task before each player is to ensure that decisions are based on expectations of what actions the other players would take at any given time. The import of this is that the game entails elements of consistency and rationality among actors because such actors have partial control over the strategic factors affecting their environment. According to Ajayi (2006:93), the use of games theory in political studies is based on the following assumptions:

1. That the game is usually well defined.
2. That the game has an explicit set of rules.
3. That the information available to t he players is specified at every point.
4. That the scoring system is complete (Verma, 1975: 5).

Central to the theory are two vital components, namely; the players and the strategies or tactics. The players, also known as the decision makers, could be individuals or institutions, are assumed to be rational with well - defined objectives and are endowed with resources to checkmate competing forces. To guide the deployment of these resources are rules.

The game theory further argues that “each player has a sca le of utilities according to which he prefers some outcomes, so long as he plays the game at all”. The player also has a range of options among different moves he can make, and there are particular expectations of such moves. Even though their knowledge

of outcome of their actions are uncertain, the theory further argues that if players

must play well, they must know what they know and what they do not know, and they must know what they can and what they cannot do,( Duetsch, 1978:54). But the assumption of the theory that a player can strategize in a manner that takes care of all possible contingences has l ittle application to real life situations.

The outcome of whatever strategy is adopted gives rise to the different forms of game theory we know. Examples i nclude:

* 1. The zero – sum game.
  2. The non zero – sum game.
  3. The zero – sum n – persons game.
  4. The non zero – sum n – person games.

In the zero – sum game we have only two players and the gains of one are always equal to the loss of the other. In (b ) and ( c), two or more persons are involved, and the players may share the division of the award, and the gain of one needs not be equal to the loss of the other. In ( d) where there are three or more players, it is possible for two or more players to coope rate against the others by pooling resources and making collective decisions during the play. This is the idea behind the coalition and realignment in politics or ‘ganging up’ on the front runner in order to stop his chances of winning ( Verma, 1975: 5).

No matter its inadequacies, game theory has found relevance in analyzing major issues of national and international politics. It is used, for instance, as analytical tool of strategic studies to explain the phenomenon of wars, diplomacy

and bargaining. It has also been found useful in explaining the dynamics of national politics, especially issues of electoral politics, voters behavior, politica l alliance and elite conspiracy.

***Pluralist Democracy Theory***

The pluralist theories of democracy fall into two categories: ( a) the elitist theories which regard the plurality of elites as the foundation of modern liberal democracy, and (b) the group theories which interpret democracy as a process of bargaining among relatively autonomous groups. The existence and f unctioning of these groups in a democracy lends a pluralistic character to the polity. A. F. Bentley (1908 ) and Truman, D (1951) interpreted democracy as a political game played by variety of groups. According to this interpretation, the government is focal point for public pressure and its task is to make policies which reflect the highest common group demand. Thus democratic society is seen as a pluralist, differentiated society where the management of public affairs is shared by number of groups having different values, sources and methods of influence.

Pluralist democracy theory according to Robert Dahl is the theory which holds that political power is distributed among a wide array of diverse and competing interest groups. The theory holds the conviction that humans are confronted with a multitude of significant values and goals such that these values and goals unfortunately often clash, and that, when this happens, there will be need to inevitably strike a balance ( Dahl, 1982). Accordingly, in pluralistic societies it is both unavoidable and laudable that individuals will organize on the basis of

different values, interests, and definitions of the common good. In democratic

politics, Dahl 1982 ) argues that independent interest groups acting as power buffers and communication channels between state and individual play a pivotal role. They believe that through elected representatives, different groups and socio economic backgrounds are represented in the government. For the Nigerian scenario this view provides a viable explanation for the forms of government practiced at the local, state and federal level of the country.

The concept of pluralism forms the core of liberal elite theories and it implies that power is fragmented and dispersed over various groups formed on the basis of cross-cutting differences of interest in society (Stepan, 2001). Pluralist assumptions partly hold the notion that political regimes vary according to the nature of rules and resources that structure power and roles ( Fishman, 1990). Dahl (1995) has contended importance of pluralism in democracy in that while authoritarian regimes restrict entrance to the power structure to a few, democratic regimes give access to a majority of the citizenry.

Also classical pluralists believe that “all sections and all shades of political opinions are represented and reflected in a wide variety of groups in western democracies” ( Haralambose, 2005:548). They regard the exercise of power through the state to be legitimate rather coercive, since it is held to be based on the acceptance and cooperation of the population. Many political scientists believe that the concept of democracy is an ideal condition which can be continuously approached in many ways. For example, Dag Ancker and Robert A.Dahl both believe that a community is democratic when the acts of its government correspond to that rational wishes of the people and each citizen has

equal opportunity of expressing preference concerning the final outcome (Arisukwu, Nweke and Asamu, 2015). In a genuine d emocracy, the majority owns the power of decision-making and no one individual or few, no matter how privileged or well-placed could decide for the rest. Power and authority come from the people and the people have the right to withdraw same when necessary .

Robert Dahl (1956 ), developed a model of the democratic process which he described as polyachy. This corresponds to group basis of politics developed by other group theorists, Bentley and Truman also known as pluralism or group theory. The term is used in sociological sense that is to describe the pluralistic nature of democratic society. The group theory of democracy introduces pluralism for a scientific explanation of the political process. The main thrusts of group theory are as follows: The policy making process however centralized it may appear in form, is in reality, a highly decentralized process of bargaining among relatively will of the elite or the chosen few as the elitist theories of democracy holds. On the contrary, it is an outcome of interac tion of all groups who make claims upon or express interest in a particular issue (Agu 2015). The extent to which different groups will get their way, is a function of the strength of the groups and intensity of their participation. This therefore explains the rationale for the adoption of the theory as explanatory framework. This theory becomes much more relevant when we consider the fact that political parties are the major component of democracy through participating in elections. Pluralists believe that political parties give the public opportunities to influence and shape government programs and party ideologies and principles. So political parties are veritable

vehicles to acquire and utilize political power. To achieve this, political parties need to secure the support of various interests groups in the society. For the citizens to benefit from the political process they have to take part in the democratic process in one way or the other through participatory election. It is observed that different groups have lost hope in the political process in Nigeria. This has equally affected the level of participation and voters turn out during elections.

### 2.4 Justification of Elite Theory

The Elite Theory as popularized by Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Roberto Michels, Wright Mills, among others, no doubt obviously explicates the Nigeria political system considering the fact that most political parties that exist in the country either be classified as cadre or elite parties which manipulates the sentiments of the masses for the selfish objective of acquiring economic base (Varma 2006). At this point what constitute political power varies from one society to the other but the difference may be minimal. In Nigeria, political power can be viewed from the perspective of those who have occupied one political office or the other, especially retired military and other public officials such as top civil servant, past ministers and so on. These are the group of persons that have been circulating themselves in governance since the country’s independence in 1960 ( Dike 2003).

One of the advocates of elitism, Pareto (cited in Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013) believes that elite in different occupations and strata generally come from the

same class: those who are wealthy are also intelligent; they have an aptitude for

mathematics and moral character. To him, society, thus, consists of two classes:

(1) a higher stratum, the elites, which are divided into governing elite, and non - governing elite, and (2 ) a lower stratum, the non - elite. Pareto’s focus of inquiry was the governing elite which, he believed, rules by a mixture of force and cunning (Varma 2006). This last analysis unveils the traits of some Nigerian politicians; particularly the band of retired military Generals and top go vernment officials that have entered the political scene. This is where Roberto Michels “Iron Law of Oligarchy” comes to play. From all available indications, these individuals have been on top of their professions but still cling very tight to the ruler-ship of the country using their Party as well as the title of a ‘ General’ for intimidating others. The point here is that political parties no longer functions as expected, precisely because decision and information are made and circulated by the few. This has really paralyzed the growth of the democratic process in the country.

However, according Roberto Michels ( cited in Varma 2006) proceeded to demonstrate that every organization – whatever its original aims – is eventually reduced to ‘ oligarchy’, that is , the rule of the chosen few. He held that majority of human beings are apathetic, indolent and slavish. They are permanently incapable of self- government. So they have to bank upon their leaders for pursuing their social objectives. Trade unions, politica l parties and other organizations are the vehicles of such leadership. These manipulative devices of the masses by the political elites according to the elite theorists exist because the elites are better organized and possess class consciousness when comp ared to the

masses. In south western part of Nigeria, it is a contest between elites and the popularity of a given leader. This manipulative process is a complex one that threatens the survival of the polity not only because of the contradiction of interests among the elites as a result of extravagance lifestyle, but also because the political elites tend to manipulate ethno - religious sentiments as tools for the acquisition of political support. Also, members of this dominant elite group are powerful, well organized and politically skilful to such an extent that they are 'capable of exploiting their positions so as to preserve the elite's domination over other members of the society. This point explains the leadership pattern of the People Democratic Party ( PDP) whose aim is to rule the country for sixty years (Obah- Akpowoghaha 2013).

However, as a movement or party grows in size, more and more functions have to be delegated to an inner circle of leaders, and, in course of time, the members of the organization are rendered less competent to direct and control them, as a result of which the officers acquire greater freedom of action and develop vested interest in their position. They cling desperately to their new powers and privileges, and become almost irremo vable. Once the leader reached the pinnacle of power, nothing could bring them down. “if laws are passed to control the dominion of leaders, it is the laws which gradually weaken, and not the leaders.”. It is however important to emphasize the various form s of elite. These include: bureaucratic elites, religious elites, military elites, traditional elites, etc. It is also important to state that elitist classifications are not mutually exclusive in the sense that an individual elite can fall within more tha n a classification. Such

classification also varies from time to time. For instance, the military elite during a military regime could also be qualifying as political elite, especially when he is involved in the authoritative allocation of state resources ( Varma, 2006).

The implication of the above is that since elitist classifications are not mutually exclusive, i t means that the political elites could easily depend on other elitist class for the manipulation of support for power acquisition. This is quite visible in Nigeria in the form of traditional rulers influencing support for political candidates or bureaucratic elites in the civil service influencing the electoral process in order to keep their jobs. Besides, political elite aspiring for elective offices had on several occasions used the instrument of money to buy votes and manipulate electoral outcomes (Ayoade 2008). Also, political thugs and hooligans have been recruited to create instability during election by disrupting and snatching ballot boxes. Dudley (cited in Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013) sees instability in Nigeria as a result of the constitutional impropriety of the elite. As he puts it, “stability can only be maintained if the behaviour of leadership and actors is consistent with rules of the game or if the boundary-determining rules are respected”

However, in Nigeria, the activities and inputs of the elites is so pronounced that before the end of a recruitment process or election the results have been predetermined and if there is contrary outcome on the proposed results, the elites attempt to use economic and political means to influence the results. This was very rampant during 1999 , 2003 and 2007 election at the state level as well as the national level. A case in mind is the political conflict between the then Party

Chairman of People’ s Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Audu Ogbeh, and former President Olusegun Obasanjo which led to the forceful removal of the former Chairman of the party ( cited in Obah- Akpowoghaha 2013). Other examples are evident on the pattern of cross-carpeting of politicians, emergence of factious executives which snowballed into dual or multiplicity of executives within the same political party. The above points buttress Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels theses on that “the elit es possess economy power and control the political system.

Conversely, in the area of political recruitment, the support base for democratic governance in the ongoing democratic dispensation is on the high side as a result of the failure of military govern ance. However, the recruitment process adopted by the political parties during the onset of this democratic process t when we had three political parties – Alliance for Democracy (AD), All People Party (APP), and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was not diff erent from the old in that the recruitment focus was on the elites. The only difference, perhaps, was that while that of the AD was sectional, PDP and APP were more national in their outlook. In the second phase with the further registration of political p arties bring their number to 50; political parties became even more sectional in their outlook. The above scenario, in terms of socialization and recruitment in the Nigerian, no doubt, had a far- reaching implication on the interest articulation and aggrega tion functions of parties. This is because the recruitment focus of the parties, to a great extent, determines the interest to be articulated and aggregated ( Omodia 2010).

However, the case that vividly comes to mind is the formation of the Action Congress (AC) by the former Vice President Abubakar Atiku and other former PDP chieftains live Tom Ikimi and Audu Ogbeh, among others, who felt disadvantaged by the politicking within the PDP -led government (Dode 2010). The resultant effect of the above is that th e PDP though the party in power at the centre and still on control of majority of the states of the federation, have lost some of her strongholds in States like Edo, Abia, Imo, Anambra, Ondo, Bauchi (Ayoade 2008). And currently, the report also that the in ternal crisis rocking the PDP that has assumed its ugly face in President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan’s administration sends a danger signal to the nations stability, security and might propel the unthinkable return to military rule. Question then remained una nswered whether the prediction by Former United States Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell is right or wrong. Whilst emphasis has been laid more on the PDP, the emergence of strong oppositions from ACN, CPC and other parties to form All Progressive Congress (APC) cannot be ignored and coupled with the emergence of New-PDP faction (led by Baraje, Oyelola, Atiku and others PDP bigwigs) that has vowed to unseat President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for his 2015 presidential ambition ( Vanguard Sept., 4 2013; The Tribune Aug., 18 2013).

Using the elite theory, APC won the polls because both the political elite in the north and southwestern Nigeria worked assiduously to iron out their perceived religious and cultural differences in order to build a formidable oppositi on party. The political elite in the north believed that the region was edged out of enjoying political power after the demise of late President Yaradua and the emergence of

Dr. Goodluck Jonathan in 2011 as the elected President. Jonathan’s re -election bid was perceived by northern political elites to be an attempt by a section of the country to cripple the Hausa/ Fulani hegemony on Nigerian politics. Similarly, the Bolaji Ahmed Tinubu led Action Congress of Nigeria ( ACN) perceived President Jonathan’s body language, political appointments and policies to be anti - Yoruba. Besides, the party stalwarts in ACN believed it was high time the Yoruba nation joined mainstream political climate of Nigeria. The vice presidential slot given to Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, an accomplished lawyer and scholar from Ogun state was a clear indication that southwest meant real business (Olowojolu, 2015).

The propaganda used by the northern and southwestern elite was well received by the people from those regions who boast of the largest percentage of population spread. The emergence of Buhari as APC’s presidential flag bearer, who commands a cult like followership in the north and his track records as an anti - corruption crusader and military tactician helped in polishing his image both locally and internationally. The APC campaign strategists capitalized on the failures of Jonathan’ s administration in addressing the Boko Haram Insurgency; fighting corruption and salvaging the dwindling economy to sell the “CHANGE” bandwagon to the public.

The defection of some notable influential party leaders from PDP to APC validates the postulations made by elite theorists. The much publicized political feud between Dr. Jonathan as sitting President and former military ruler and civilian President, Olusegun Obasanjo gave the PDP a bad image. Obasanjo’s expulsion from PDP, his withdrawal from partisan politics and the adoption of his

junior in the military, Gen. Buhari ( retd) was seen as a paradigm shift by the majority of Nigerian elite to effect a chang e in the running of the country.

The implication therefore is that, the political elites are so powerful either as a means of reaching out to the masses or for acquiring political power through electoral rigging. This explains the focus of political partie s on the elites in terms of interest articulation and aggregation. For political communication, the fact that the political process has been widened with the registration of up to 63 political parties and although some where later deregistered, however, th e system has witnessed functional political communication in term of demand emanating from the people but with poor channel into the political process and poor system capability to process the demands into policy outputs with effective communication to the people (Obah- Akpowoghaha 2013).

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‘‘ a comparative study of globalization and democratic consolidation in Ghana and Nigeria” reveals that:

The more the peripherals state derives huge revenues from commodity export the more it will be able to exercise a significant degree of independence by resisting external pressure to imbibe liberal democratic values and vice-versa. Similarly, the higher a peripheral country’ s aid per capital from the core the more it will be able to consolidate its transition to democracy. Hence just as the transition to civil rule was engendered significantly by external stimuli, democratic consolidation is also not unconnected to external factor. Here the role of the political class towards consolidating democracy, issues of internal party democracy and politics of tolerance will go a long way in socialising and integrating the populace concerning democratic values

According to Okechukwu Okoh ( cited in Obah- Akpowoghaha 2013) a professor of Southern University Law Centre, Baton Rouge Louisiami USA carryout a study titled “The challenge of Democratic Consolidation in Africa, Nigeria as a Case Study” identified the following as the major challenges facing the African states: domestic challenges, organizing credible election, improving the condition of government, revamping public institutions, improving security, counteracting anti-democratic sentiments, citizen and leaders. It is on the above obser vations that Makinda ( cited in Obah- Akpowoghaha 2013) asserts that democracy is only possible if the structures, processes and institutions, through which the people will is expected to be addressed, accommodate their interests, values and aspiration. Constitutional democracy continues to falter not only because of the conduct of leader but also because of inefficient, ineffective and deteriorating public institutions.

### 2.7 Gaps in the Literature

Although many studies have been conducted on the concept of democracy and challenges of democratic consolidation as well as ways to consolidate democracy, there is a need to assess the direct impact of opposition politics, political parties and ideology on democratic consolidation process. The topics of political parties and democratization have attracted considerable interest in the literature. Much of the interest in the two areas is largely based on explicit and implicit findings that there is correlation between political parties and ideology which re sults in party stability.

This study however seeks to examine specifically the dynamism of opposition politics in relation to political parties and ideology and the relevance of this dynamism to the consolidation of democracy in a specific developing coun try, Nigeria. The review of literature further shows that there are some studies on the relationship between political parties and democratic consolidation, though less in number. However, there is dearth of empirical research on the direct role of opposition politics and ideology on both political parties and democratic consolidation within the studies of democracy.

In particular, a nexus between politics of opposition and consolidating democracy has rarely been theoretically proposed in the democratic literature. This research therefore intends to fill these gaps while hoping that the results of the study would aid political parties to determine politics of opposition and political party ideology can be used in consolidating democracy and enhancing its long term stability in a country.

## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on the processes and methods that will be adopted in carrying out the data collection. This is a descriptive section of the thesis and i t dwells on the research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, data collection tools and methods of data collection, description of research instrument, validation and reliability of the instrument, data analysis, reliability/trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

### Research Design

This research will be conducted with a view to assessing the dynamism of opposition politics, political parties and ideology in relation its capability in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. A single-sectional research will be conducted in purposively selected five political parties in Nigeria. This study opts for this method because it will enable the generalization of research fi ndings across persons, settings, and time (Cooper & Schindler, 2008).

The researcher will use both primary and secondary data and will adopt mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research approach to study the research objectives, research questio ns and hypotheses. The mixed methods approach is adopted simply because it will help to establish reliability of the findings, ensure its acceptability by readers and enhance the credibility of the

study. Quantitative approach on the other hand also become s imperative when testing a hypothesis, measuring the size of phenomenon of interest and generalizing the results while qualitative approach is concerned with the understanding of the issue of study with personal opinions taken into consideration ( Tracey, 2013 ).

This study will also use qualitative research methods in the form of in - depth interviews. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), qualitative research methods are described as inquiry methods that are often used in various fields of academic disciplines, such as social sciences and management researches among others. The study will use a statistical means of descriptive survey design for the purpose of easy inferences and valid generalizations.

### Research Setting

The research setting includes the geo-political locations, population, history, major cities and languages, and cultural and economic information of the Nigerian States that were randomly selected for this study.

Nigeria is the focus of this study. The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a federal constitutional republic comprising 36 states and i ts Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares land borders with the Republic of Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. Its coast in the south lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean.

The world population data sheet of Population Reference Bureau estimates the country‘s population to be one hundred and seventy -seven million, five hundred and forty-two thousand ( 177,542, 000) in 2014 (Prborg, 2014).

Nigeria is structured into six ( 6) geopolitical zones that include North - West Zone, North-East Zone, North-Central Zone, South- West Zone, South-South Zone and South-East Zone. Each of the 36 States in Nigeria produces three ( senators) while the Federal Capital Territory produces one (1) senator. Thus, there are one hundred and nine (109) senators in Nigeria. However, in the Federal House of Representatives, there are three hundred and sixty members (360). This brings th e total number of members of the National Assembly to four hundred and sixty - nine

(469). Besides, there are seven hundred and seventy - four ( 774) local governments in Nigeria. The six States that were randomly selected for this study are Adamawa, Kaduna, Kogi, Edo, Imo and Oyo,

### Population of the study

The target population for this research is registered members of all political

parties in Nigeria and it specifically targets the registered members of the selected political parties in the country. Besides, the study will also focus on members of

the academia, journalists, religious leaders and heads of major ethnic

organizations.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

Multi-stage purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used in drawing the sample for this study. In the first instance, the population was delineated by

the six geopolitical zones that make up Nigeria . The next stage involved purposive selection of six states across the six geo -political zones in the country – Adamawa (NE), Kaduna ( NW), Kogi (NC), Edo (SS), Imo (SS), Oyo (SW) . The next stage involved purposively selecting 350 respondents across five political parties - APC 100, PDP 100 , AA 50, APGA 50 and LP 50 - on stratified basis.

The sample size for this study is therefore two thousand one hundred (2100) respondents which will comprise registered members of the selected five prominent political parties in Nigeria. The choice of this sample size is informed by the decision of the researcher to focus more on registered members’ vi ews regarding political parties, ideology and politics of opposition which constitute the main subject of the study.

Besides, one hundred and twenty (120) respondents across academia,

journalists, religious leaders and heads of major ethnic organizations will be purposively selected for in- depth interview because they are at the helm of affairs saddled with the information on the issues of this study. The sample will be drawn

across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria . The sampling in this study will be confined to individuals within specific political parties who are available to provide the expected information, either because they have adequate experience or they are ready to abide by the researcher’s rules (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

### Data Collection Tools and Method of Data Collection

Data collection method involves the procedures of administering the

research questionnaire and making contact with the selected respondents for interview. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be co llected in the study.

Qualitative data will be obtained mainly from primary sources involving in -depth interviews while the quantitative data will be collected using survey questionnaire. The questionnaire will be directly administered and the data will be personally collected. This will be done with a view to building confidence in the respondents and obtaining constructive and realistic information. The structured questions, which are meant for the collection of primary data, will be directly administered. Collection of data for this study will be carried out by administering questionnaire on the purposively selected members of the selected political parties.

Prior to administering the questionnaire, a pilot test will be conducted with a representative sample of the respondents from the selected political parties. The reason for the pilot test is to determine any potential problems with the wording or instructions of the questionnaire to administer. Besides the socio -demographic characteristics of the respondents, each questionnaire will contain 20 questions to be designed to generate opinions from the respondents. In-depth and structured interview will be used to collect the needed qualitative data for this study and the interview will be conducted at the office or convenient place of the prospective interviewees.

### Description of the Research Instrument

The instrument of survey for this study is questionnaire and in -depth interview. The questionnaire will be closed - ended format while the in- depth interview questions will be structured so as to objectively collate the views or

opinions of the intended respondents. It will comprise two sections where each

section will dwell on different issues as relevant to the research topic, objectives, questions and hypotheses. Specifically, information on socio -demographic characteristics and opinions of respondents will constitute the two sections respectively.

A structured questionnaire will be used, which will contain a series of questions. A structured questionnai re is advantageous because it presents questions in sequence. It also standardizes the research instruments and removes the chances of the respondent teleguiding the researcher. The study will use the scaled questions. The scale of response on the question naire will be from Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The degree of respondents’ opinion will be sought using a five - point likert scale statements and the degree of their answers will be measured on the following scale as fol lows:

Strongly agree (5 ) **;**

Agree (4) **;**

Strongly disagree ( 3) **;**

Disagree (2 ); and Undecided ( 1).

### Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The study will ensure that the face, content and construct validity of this research is ascertained by the experts including the supervisor in this area through adequate assessment of the questions, and the researcher will thereafter effect

corrections in necessary areas. The test-retest method will also be employed within the period of three weeks in order to ensure the reliability of the instrument. This will be carried out through the distribution of the same questionnaire among fifty (50 ) members of pol i tical parties who are not part of the sample for a period of three weeks.

### Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis technique will be used to analyze the data. Quantitative data intended to be collected will be analyzed accordingly using descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages and Chi-Square for the descriptive analysis.

The qualitative data will be analyzed thematically with appropriate coding using Nvivo 2010, a software used in qualitative data analysis which helps in the process of coding, retrieving and searching texts as we ll as the storage and organization of data for proper management (Creswell, 2002) . The analyzed data will be presented in form of tables where applicable. The general analysis of the data will be based on simple descriptive analysis of frequency distributi on of relevant statistical information which will be supplemented by percentage. By this is meant that a simple frequency distribution tables of types and number of responses translated into percentages will be constructed and analyzed.

All the hypotheses will be tested at the 5% level of significance; thus, the P-value in any of the chi-square tests must be less than or equal to 0. 05 for the tested association to be adjudged as significant. Chi-square will be used to test

the research hypotheses. The techniques of chi-square ( χ2) will be used at 5% level of significance to test the hypothesis. Chi -square test is capable of providing a means of comparing a set of observed frequencies with a set of expected frequencies. The study adopts this test in order to determine how well an observed set of data will fit an expected set.

The study will also adopt the method of reduction, classification, and interpretation in analyzing the qualitative data as will be generated from the in - depth interviews.

### Confidentiality

The researcher will ensure that data eventually collected will be properly protected by creating a file, storing on a computer and keeping in a locked area. Pseudonyms are intended to be used to further protect anonymity of participants. The researcher intends to remove all identifying information during the preparation of the thesis report. The researcher may opt for the replacement of names of respondents with pseudonyms with a view to protecting each participant’s confidentiality.

### Trustworthiness

Creswell ( 2002) has advanced a number of criteria that justify the trustworthiness of data some of which have to do with whether the study generates concepts, whether the concepts were systematically related, and whether the analysis indicates an account of change. This study intends to abide by these

criteria. The study will also take the issues of sample, gender, status, amongst others into consideration.

### Ethical Considerations

Strong ethical standards will be ensured throughout the re search. The issues of anonymity and confidentiality will protected regularly with adequate explanation provided in the form of background information that will be made available to all participants while the primary aim of the study will be clearly stated. The researcher will also allow prospective participants to know what is expected of them and vice versa as well as the process, so as to ensure that the information to be collected does not cause an embarrassment or harm to them. Their cooperation will be sought throughout the research process while their privacy will be respected. Appropriate permission will be sought from the selected interviewees to conduct the interview.

## CHAPTER FOUR

**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION INTRODUCTION**

This chapter features the presentation and discussion of data collected through primary instruments of questionnaire and in -depth interview as well as information from secondary sources. The chapter presents the results of the investigation in both quantitative and qualitative forms. The result was however discussed in two parts: the first part deals with the demographic data, while the second deals with the research questions or substantive data. The result of the findings is discussed under respective tables. For the sake of analytical clarity, analysis of data and discussion of findings are structured in line with the research questions. The research questions are made the central theme of analysis of the set of data relating to a given question. In order to present evidence -based and empirically grounded robust analysis, qualitative data are corroborated or juxtaposed with quantitative data so as to uncover all the nuances of the correlates interviews from the key situations in volving the dynamics of politics of opposition, political parties and ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages and charts are used to report and analyse all sections of the questionn aire and discussion of the

sections relating to the research questions.

A total of 2100 questionnaires were administered according ly, out of which a total of 2045 ( 97 %) copies were retrieved; 339 of 350 or 96.7 % of questionnaires distributed in Adamawa state were returned, 337 of 350 or 96 .3% of those distributed in Kaduna State were returned, 341 of 350 o r 97% of distributed questionnaires were returned in Kogi State, 346 of 350 o r 98. 9% of questionnaires distributed were returned in Edo state, in Imo State, 344 of 350 or 98.3 % of questionnaire distributed were returned and 339 of 350 or 96.7% of those distributed in Oyo State were returned. The impressive number of questionnaires retrieved may have been due to concise and simplified nature o f the questions asked. On the other hand, this study interviewed a total of one hundred and twenty

(120) key stakeholders on the basis of twenty ( 20) in each of the selected states.

Responses of the interviewees were cited simultaneously during the analyse s of responses from questionnaires.

## 4.1 UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS (FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION): SOCIO - ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The following tables contain the presentation and analyses of data based on the items in the self- administered questionnaire.

## BIODATA

### Table 4.1 .1 : Analysis of copies of the Questionnaire Administered and Retrieved

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **State** | **Copies**  **Administered** | **Copies Retrieved** | **Percentage %** |
| Adamawa | 350 | 339 | 96.7 |
| Kaduna | 350 | 337 | 96.3 |
| Kogi | 350 | 341 | 97 |
| Edo | 350 | 346 | 98.9 |
| Imo | 350 | 344 | 98.3 |
| Oyo | 350 | 339 | 97.7 |
| **Total** | **2100** | **2046** | **97** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

### Table 4. 1.2 : Distribution of the respondents based on Sex, Age, Marital status and Religious affiliation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| **Gender** |  |  |
| Male | 1079 | 52.7 |
| Female | 967 | 47.3 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |
| **Age** |  |  |
| 18-29 | 268 | 13. 1 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 30-39 | 616 | 30. 1 |
| 40-49 | 656 | 32. 1 |
| 50-59 | 348 | 17. 0 |
| 60 and Above | 158 | 7.7 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |
| **Religion** |  |  |
| Christianity | 862 | 42.1 |
| Islam | 1124 | 54.9 |
| Others | 62 | 3.0 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |
| **Marital Status** |  |  |
| Single | 536 | 26. 2 |
| Married | 1226 | 59. 9 |
| Widowed/ Divorced | 284 | 13.9 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |
| **Educational**  **Background** |  |  |
| Primary/Secondary | 573 | 28.0 |
| Tertiary | 1473 | 72.0 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |
| **Occupation** |  |  |
| Unemployed/Retired | 346 | 16. 9 |
| Self Employed | 1001 | 48. 9 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Government  Services | 102 | 5.0 |
| Private Services | 597 | 29. 2 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

**Age**: Table 4.1 .2 shows that 52. 7% out of the total respondents are male while 47.3% are female. Thus, the male gender constitutes the majority of respondents in the study. A critical observation of table 4. 1 .2 shows that the age bracket of majority of the respondents in the study was between 30 to 49 years. This is highly suggestive of the participation of youths and young adults at not just the general elections, but in the primary elections of political parties before the candidates are nominated for the general elections.

Importantly also, the involvement of young people in party politics, as shown in this study, is encouraging and supports the argument of Abbani ( 2015) cited in Suleiman ( 2016) that the Nigerian youths have played prominent roles in the emergence and sustenance of democracy in Nigeria. The result of this study and Abbani‘s work totally contradict the harsh conclusion of Ajidahun (2015) that Nigerian youths‘ participation in the politics of Nigeria has been in the context of thuggery and political violence.

**Religion** : Table 4 . 1. 2 shows that 42. 1% of the respondents were Christians while 54.9 % were Muslims, the two religions constituting 97 % of the all respondents. Again, the point is that the two religions which teach against any form of cheating or malpractices produce members as politicians. More

importantly, the information from responses of research participants and literature suggest that religion plays little or no role in res training Nigerian politicians from engaging in undemocratic political behaviour. If anything, religion serves as a tool of demagoguery to deceive gullible voters.

**Marital Status** : The table shows that 59.9 % of the respondents were married, 26.2% were single, and 13. 9% were either separated, divorced or widowed. Thus, the marital status of the respondents were majorly married and single. From the marriage status of the respondents, it can be deduced that the Nigerian political environment attaches significance to marriage, perhaps as a demonstration of responsibility on the part of political participants.

**Education** : Table 4. 1.2 shows the educational level of the respondents. 72 % of the respondents possess tertiary educational qualification and 28 % have either primary or secondary educational qualification. What is instructive here is that most of the respondents are highly educated. But how does the level of education of the respondents help the sanctity of political parties and democratic practice in Nigeria? This question will be addressed by relevant data in the relevant sections of this study. This is even more interesting because there are no regulations on educational level as requirements for participating in primary elections, as the case is with general elections.

**Occupation** : Table 4.1. 2 further shows that 48.9 % of the respondents were self- employed; 16 .9% were either unemployed or retired; 5 % were in government organizations and 29 .2 % were engaged by private organizations.

### Table 4. 1.3 : Distribution of Respondents by Political Party

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| APC | 586 | 28. 6 |
| PDP | 587 | 28. 7 |
| APGA | 288 | 14. 1 |
| LB | 290 | 14. 2 |
| AA | 295 | 14. 4 |
| **Total** | **2040** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

As shown in Table 4 . 132, the party memberships of the respondents are 38. 6% for the All Progressives Congress ( APC), 28.7% for the Peoples Democratic Party, 14.1% for the All Progressive Grand Alliance, 14. 2% for the Labour Party and 14.4% for the Action Alliance. This represents a fair share of the representation of the five political parties used for this study.

### Table 4. 1.3 : Distribution of Respondents by State

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Adamawa | 339 | 16. 6 |
| Kaduna | 337 | 16. 4 |
| Kogi | 341 | 16. 7 |
| Edo | 346 | 16. 9 |
| Imo | 344 | 16, 8 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Oyo | 339 | 16. 6 |
| **Total** | **2046** | 100 |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1. 3 shows the number and percentage of participation of respondents from the States surveyed. The Table shows that 16.6 % of the respondents were from Adamawa; 16 .4 % from Kaduna; 16. 7% were from Kogi; 16.9% were from Edo; 16.8% were from Imo; 16. 6% were from Oyo. It must be noted that the state here refers to the states where the respondents registered as membe rs of political parties. It does not necessarily mean the state of origin of the respondents.

### Table 4. 1.4 : My political party is guided by ideology

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 194 | 9. 5 |
| Agree | 219 | 10. 7 |
| Undecided | 141 | 6. 9 |
| Disagree | 837 | 40.9 |
| Strongly Disagree | 655 | 32.0 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4.1 .4 shows the respondents‘ views on how if their parties are guided by ideology. Here, 20.2 % of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their

parties are guided by ideology, compare to 72. 9 % who either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their parties are guided by ideology and only 6.9% were undecided . This scenario corroborates the response of a journalist, accredited to cover PDP 2019 governorship primary Kaduna in his State. He noted that:

Individuals that make up parties in Nigeria are not driven by any political ideology. The issue of party ideology is a mirage. People are desperate to achieve their political objectives at the detriment of ideology; the politicians change parties almost on daily basis.

The view of the respondent which corroborates the experiences or opinions of the delegate can further be substantiated by the ver y high level of indiscipline and decamping in all the political parties in the country. Hence, political parties that are just groups of disgruntled elements itching to have a bite at the national cake. This lack of ideology and a sense of direction accoun ts for why carpet- crossing is the order of the day in Nigerian political setting. Recently, allegiance is bought with “Ghana must go sack” and politicians change parties faster than a chameleon changes colour in ballroom light fittings.

### Table 4 .1. 5: I understand and key adequately into my political party’s ideology

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 199 | 9. 7 |
| Agree | 214 | 10. 5 |
| Undecided | 144 | 7. 0 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Disagree | 836 | 40.9 |
| Strongly Disagree | 653 | 31.9 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1. 5 shows that 20. 2% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they understood and keyed into their parties’ political ideology . 72. 8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed on whether they understood and keyed into their parties’ political ideology This brings to the fore the ever-present argument in the politics of Nigeria about the poverty of ideology in Nigeria’ s political parties. Nigeria’s political parties have many similarities than differences, the only visible difference being their names.

Majority of respondents interviewed also corroborated the views of the majority who felt that there was no ideology to understand not to talk of keyin g into it as there are no ideological differences in most of the political parties in the country. A religious in an interview has this to say :

Where is the ideology? If there is any ideology in political, we would not be having most of these crises in our political parties and spate of carpet- crossing we see on dsily basis

Similarly, a chieftain of Ohanexe N Digbo from Imo state noted that:

The current political landscape in Nigeria has demonstrated high level of indiscipline and lack of ideology, where politicians change party as if they are changing cloths. The structure of political party has allowed for little democratic space, this indiscipline and lack of clearly defined ideology have not provided for full blown internal democratic practice within parties and if there is any issue

that needs to be addressed within all political parties in Nigeria, it has to be the lack of discipline, internal democra cy and ideology.

### Table 4. 1. 6 : My political party engages in opposition politics

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 676 | 33.0 |
| Agree | 887 | 43. 5 |
| Undecided | 130 | 6. 3 |
| Disagree | 205 | 10.0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 148 | 7.2 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1. 6 shows that 76. 5 % of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their political parties engaged in opposition politics. Just 16.3 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their political parties engaged in opposition politics.

Although majority of respondents above agreed that their political parties engage in opposition politics, however many of those who were interviewed did not align with the above assertion, for them there is no opposition politics at present in the country. According to most of them, the PDP which should have provided the needed opposition to the ruling APC is not ready for being in the opposition from being the ruling party.

### Table 4.1 .7 : I am convinced that my political party engages in the right or positive political opposition practices

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 622 | 30.4 |
| Agree | 832 | 40.7 |
| Undecided | 142 | 6. 9 |
| Disagree | 256 | 12.5 |
| Strongly Disagree | 194 | 9.5 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4.1 .7 indicates that 71. 1% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their political parties engaged in the right political opposition politics. Only 19.4 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their political parties engaged in opposition politics and 12.5 were neutral.

Again, most of those interviewed did not share th e sentiment of the respondents above. A respondent from Oyo state submitted that

Unlike the ruling political leaders, the opposition group has not been able to make effective use of godfathers in politics neither have they recognized that the effectiveness of political power depends on the political influence of the person occupying the position. First, many of the newly registered political parties were established by persons whose political influence is limited to their

party, while there are so many political heavy-weights with enormous influence but which are not associated with any political party for one reason or the other.

### Table 4 .1. 8: I believe that democracy is growing in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 489 | 23. 9 |
| Agree | 662 | 32. 4 |
| Undecided | 127 | 6.2 |
| Disagree | 365 | 17. 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 403 | 19. 7 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4. 1.8 clearly shows that majority of the people believe that democracy is growing in the country. From the Table, 56.3 % of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that democracy is growing in the country, while 37.5 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed and 6. 2% were undecided.

Almost all those who were interview also lay claim to the fact that democracy is on the rise in Nigeria’s current dispensation in spite of the seeming contradictions in party ideology.

### Table 4. 1.9 : There is stable democratic process in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 481 | 23. 5 |
| Agree | 657 | 32. 1 |
| Undecided | 140 | 6.8 |
| Disagree | 363 | 17. 8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 405 | 19. 8 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1 .9 shows that 55 .6 % of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that there is stable democratic process in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic . This shows that there is a relatively high acceptance of the democratic process in the country. Just a 37 .6 % either disagreed or strongly disagreement that there is stable democratic process in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

### Table 4. 1.10: I feel democracy is not threatened in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 460 | 22. 5 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Agree | 637 | 31.1 |
| Undecided | 163 | 8.0 |
| Disagree | 465 | 22. 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | 321 | 15. 7 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1. 23 shows that 53.6% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that democracy is not threatened in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. Only 38.4% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that democracy is not threatened in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. Unfortunately, however, 38. 4% reflects the current danger that Nigeria‘s democracy faces. This danger does not necessarily have to include a military coup or truncating of Nigeria‘s democracy, but an indictment of Nigeria‘s democratic values, for which many lives have been lost to bring the nation to what it is today, democratically.

Many of those who were interviewed also believed that the way politicians conduct themselves leave more to be desired as they see politics as do or die. One responded from Oyo State submitted that

# Politicians see politics as everything and everything as politics including life and death. Anyone that wins in politics wins everything, and anyone that loses, loses everything including lives and livelihoods.

This fear aligned with the submission of collier (2010) who said that ‘ in the

# ensuing war-like struggles, especially through elections, different groups and

individuals try to outdo one another in bending fragile rules, and short-circuiting laid down processes. Instructively though, wars, guns, and votes are about power’. Winners and losers alike do not trust the rules of election as well as themselves because these rules are flouted by both losers and winners, thus further weakening the rules and procedures for credible elections, and making it impossible for a stable and legitimate regime of power transfer and winner to emerge with serious implication for democratic consolidation. This lawlessness also explains why personalisation of power is very rampant in Africa (Ibeanu & Mbah, 2014).

### Table 4.1 .11 : In my opinion, democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s Fou rth Republic is not facing problems and challenges

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 316 | 15. 4 |
| Agree | 501 | 24. 5 |
| Undecided | 161 | 7.9 |
| Disagree | 669 | 32. 7 |
| Strongly Disagree | 399 | 19. 5 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1. 11 shows that 39.9% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that democratic consolidation in Nigeria‘s Fourth republic is not threatened, while only 52.2 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed that democratic consolidation in Nigeria‘s Fourth republic is not threatened . This view was very well supported by the responses of politi cians that were interviewed in the in-depth interview session. A politician from a North - Central state who admitted to have been involved in some of the undemocratic practices in elections which have negative impact on democratic consolidation since the advent of the Fourth Republic responded thus:

What we are doing in Nigeria is not democracy. All that is required to win election is to undermine the rules of democracy using money to compromise voters, INEC, security agencies and other party agents who will help to rig elections in your favour. Every politician, except a few people like Buhari, is involved in this undemocratic practices. But all politicians like to benefit from it. They only complain when they are not the beneficiaries of the democratic maneuverings

### Table 4.1 .12 : I believe opposition politics is important in a democratic society

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 577 | 28. 2 |
| Agree | 959 | 46. 9 |
| Undecided | 79 | 3.9 |
| Disagree | 232 | 11. 3 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strongly Disagree | 199 | 9. 7 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1. 12 shows that 75.1% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that opposition politics is important or crucial for a stable democratic society, while only 21% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that opposition politics is important or crucial for a stable democratic society and just 3.9% of them were neutral. This view was very well supported by Awolowo ( 1966) who argued that dissent is a hallmark of representative democracy and that oppression and victimization of the opposition elements throughout Nigeria was one of the factors which led to the collapse of the first republic.

### Table 4 .1. 13 : I am convinced that opposition politics can play an important

**role in consolidating democracy in Nigeria.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 575 | 28. 1 |
| Agree | 961 | 47 |
| Undecided | 80 | 3.9 |
| Disagree | 231 | 11. 3 |
| Strongly Disagree | 199 | 9. 7 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4 .1. 13 shows that 75.1% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that opposition politics can play an important or crucial role in consolidating democracy in Nigeria, while only 21% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that opposition politics can play an important or crucial role in consolidating democracy in Nigeria and just 3.9% of them were neutral.

### Table 4 .1. 14 : I observe that opposition politics can be separated from democratic consolidation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 213 | 10. 4 |
| Agree | 202 | 9. 9 |
| Undecided | 95 | 4.6 |
| Disagree | 953 | 46. 6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 583 | 28.5 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Statistics in table 4.1. 14 indicates that 20.3% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that opposition politics can be separated from consolidating democracy. 75 .1 % either disagreed or strongly d isagreed that

opposition politics can be separated from consolidating democracy in Nigeria and just 4.6% of them were neutral.

A lecturer from Kogi State University who was responding to the above view submitted that:

Opposition politics is inevitable in a democratic society. Genuine political opposition is a necessary attribute of democracy. How can a country be democratic without Opposition parties? How do you ensure a proper check and balance of a government under the democratic process without an Opposition? The existence of an opposition, without which politics ceases and administration takes over, is indispensable to the functioning of democratic political systems

### Table 4. 1.15: I also opine that opposition politics can destroy democracy in Nigeria

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 209 | 10. 2 |
| Agree | 198 | 9. 7 |
| Undecided | 93 | 4.6 |
| Disagree | 960 | 46. 9 |
| Strongly Disagree | 586 | 28.6 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

As seen in table 4. 1 .15, 20 .3% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that opposition politics can harm or destroy democracy in Nigeria. 75.4%

either disagreed or strongly disagreed that opposition politics can harm or destroy democracy in Nigeria and only 4.6% of them were neutral.

### Table 4.1 .16 : I don’t see party ideology as important to democratic consolidation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 146 | 7.1 |
| Agree | 201 | 9.8 |
| Undecided | 86 | 4.2 |
| Disagree | 707 | 34. 6 |
| Strongly Disagree | 906 | 44.3 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4.1.16 shows that 16.9 % of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that party ideology is not an important factor to achieving democratic consolidation, as they believe that with or without party ideology, democratic consolidation can be achieved. However, a significant number of respondents, 78.9%, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that party ideology is not an important factor to achieving democratic consolidation as the poverty of ideology in political parties in Nigeria poses serious ch allenge to democracy in the country.

One of the area where ideology is important in consolidating is during election period. It helps to define direction of a political party. Political parties campaign based on critical issues that will positively impact the people but the scenario in Nigeria is that because of the absence of ideology, campaigns of political parties are geared towards attacking personalities and not what they would do when they are elected. For example, In the run- up to the 2015 elections, the PDP alleged that APC is filled with Muslim fundamentalists that want to Islamise Nigeria. At the same time, the then Vice-President, Namadi Sambo, while campaigning in Dutse, Jigawa State, warned the North that the vice presidential candidate of the A PC, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, has over 5,000 churches and by implication, should be seen as a religious threat to the Muslim North (Okonkwo, 2015). This tends to fracture the country by introducing distrust and disrespect among Nigerians. This is complex since the ethnic and religious entanglements and divisions are within communities, local governments as much as they are between ethnic nationalities (Okonkwo, 2015 ). The post-election violence in 2011 may be called a crisis of expectation in the context of zero- sum political competition.

### Table 4.1 . 17: I am confident that my political party can influence Nigeria’s

**democratic consolidation.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 477 | 23.3 |
| Agree | 589 | 28.8 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Undecided | 112 | 5.5 |
| Disagree | 452 | 22.1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 416 | 20.3 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4. 1.17 shows that a 52.1 % of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that their party can influence Nigeria’s democratic consolidation, as they believe they believe strongly in their partys’ abilities to do so. However, 42.4 %, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they have confidence in their party’ s ability to influence Nigeria’s democratic consolidation .

### Table 4. 1.18: The ideology of my political party is strong enough to

**influence Nigeria’s democratic consolidation.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 150 | 7. 3 |
| Agree | 205 | 10.0 |
| Undecided | 82 | 4.0 |
| Disagree | 853 | 41.7 |
| Strongly Disagree | 756 | 37.0 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4. 1.18 shows that a 17.3% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the ideology of their political party is strong enough to influence Nigeria’s democratic consolidation, 78. 7%, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the ideology of their political party is strong enough to influence Nigeria’ s democratic consolidation,

### Table 4. 1.19: I see political parties, ideology and democratic consolidation as inseparable variables

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 925 | 45.2 |
| Agree | 877 | 42.9 |
| Undecided | 79 | 3.9 |
| Disagree | 99 | 4.8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 66 | 3.2 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4. 1.19 shows that a significant number of the respondents, 88.1% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that political parties, ideology and democratic consolidation are inseparable variables, just 8%, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that political parties, ideology and democratic consolidation

are inseparable variables.

### Table 4 .1. 20 : I view politics of opposition as a key factor in consolidating democracy in Nigeria

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 944 | 45.1 |
| Agree | 598 | 29 .2 |
| Undecided | 92 | 4.5 |
| Disagree | 210 | 10.3 |
| Strongly Disagree | 202 | 9.9 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4. 1.20 shows that a significant number of the respondents, 74.3% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that politics of opposition is a key factor in consolidating democracy in Nigeria,20.2%, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that politics of opposition is a key factor in consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

While in an interview with a leading community leader in Kogi State, he argued that in a democracy, the opposition provides the people with a choice and ultimately seeks to wrestle power from or out of the hands of the incumbent and present a different vision of social and economic progress. In doing this, the opposition may be constructive - in this regard it could even work with the ruling

party or government to promote the national interest. At the same time, he posited further that opposition politics can be disruptive, and apropos, the strategy of the opposition is not to construct an ything or offer any value but to “oppose, oppose, oppose” by any means possible to wear down and pull down the incumbent

government. Physical violence, blackmail, abusive words, post -truth imagery and

fake news are part of the arsenal of the disruptive opp osition.

### Table 4. 1.21: I am sure that political parties constitute an important factor in consolidating democracy in Nigeria

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 992 | 48.5 |
| Agree | 686 | 33.5 |
| Undecided | 52 | 2.5 |
| Disagree | 200 | 9.8 |
| Strongly Disagree | 116 | 5.7 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4.1 .21 shows that a significant numbe r of the respondents, 82 % of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that political parties constitute an important factor in consolidating democracy in Nigeria , 15.5 %, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that political parties constitute an important f actor in

consolidating democracy in Nigeria. The rest of the respondents, 2.5%, were neutral.

All those who were interviewed also aligned with the importance of political parties to democracy. This submission confirms the position of Omotola ( 2010: 125) who contended that democracy is unthinkable in the absence of viable political parties. Parties are expected to participate in the political socialization of electorates, contribute to the accumulation of political power, facilitate recruitment of political leadership, and serve as a unifying force in a divided polity and that of Jinadu ( 2013: 2) who argued that competitive party and electoral politics is expected to deepen and consolidate the democratic transition, which the country embarked upon in May 1999 .

### Table 4.1 .22 : I believe ideology is a relevant instrument in consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 994 | 48.6 |
| Agree | 690 | 33.7 |
| Undecided | 53 | 2.6 |
| Disagree | 198 | 9.7 |
| Strongly Disagree | 111 | 5.4 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4. 1.22 shows that a significant number of the respondents, 82.3% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that ideology is a relevant instrument in consolidating democracy in Nigeria, 15.1%, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that ideology is a relevant instrument in consolidating democracy in Nigeria.. The rest of the respondents, 2. 6%, were neutral.

### Table 4. 1.23: I agree that the dynamic nature of politics of opposition, political parties and ideology can contribute positively to democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responses** | **Frequency** | **Percent%** |
| Strongly Agree | 1003 | 49.0 |
| Agree | 789 | 38.6 |
| Undecided | 52 | 2.5 |
| Disagree | 125 | 6.1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 77 | 3.8 |
| **Total** | **2046** | **100** |

Source: Field work ( 2020 )

Table 4. 1.23 shows that a significant number of the respondents, 87.6 % of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the dynamic nature of politics of opposition, political parties and ideology can contribute positively to

democratic consolidation in Nigeria., 9.9 %, either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the dynamic nature of politics of opposition, political parties and ideology can contribute positively to democratic consolidation in Nigeria... The rest of the respondents, 2 .5 %, were neutral.

### Test of Hypotheses

For the purpose of this research the inferential statistical tool that would be used to test the research hypotheses is the Chi - square (𝑋2 ).

The formula for calculating chi-square (𝑋 2) is: X2= ∑ ( fo-fe)2

Fe

Where:

Fo= Observed frequency Fe= Expected frequency X2 = Chi – square

∑ = Sum of

Generally, the decisional rule for accepting or rejecting a hypothesis is the same for all inferential statistics:

1. When the calculated statistic is greater than the table value, the research rejects the null hypothesis (Ho) and accepts the alternate

hypothesis ( Hi).

1. When the table value is greater than the calculated statistic, the research accepts the null hypothesis (Ho) and rejects the alternate hypothesis ( Hi).

### Hypothesis One

**H0:** There is no significant relationship between opposition politics and the possibility of consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

To test this hypothesis, data in tables 4. 14 and 4.20 were used.

### Table 4. 1.24.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question No** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **Total** |
| **D** | **415** | **95** | **1536** | **2046** |
| **E** | **1542** | **92** | **412** | **2046** |
| **Total** | **1957**  **(47 .8%)** | **187 (4.6%)** | **1948**  **(47.6%)** | **4092** |

Table 4 .1. 24 shows that 47.8 % of the respondents were in favour of questions in tables 4 .14 and 4 . 20, 47 .6 % of the respondents were not in favour and 4.6% of the rest were undecided.

Test statistics: chi-square( x2) The formula for chi square is:



Where:  is the value for chi square. is the sum.

O is the observed frequency

E is the expected frequency. Degree of freedom ( df): 2

Level of significance: 0.05

Computation of expected frequency is shown in table 4.1.25 below

### Table 4. 1.25 : Calculating Expected Counts from Observed Counts

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **A** | **B** | **C** | **Total** |
| **D** | **2046 x1957/4092=978.5** | **2046x187/4092=93.5** | **2046x1948/4092=974** | **2046** |
| **E** | **2046 x1957/4092=978.5** | **2046x187/4092=93.5** | **2046x1948/4092=974** | **2046** |
| **Total** | **1957** | **187** | **1948** | **4092** |

**Observed and Expected Frequencies Weighted Table 4. 1.26**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Observe**  **d** | **Expecte**  **d** | **Deviatio n (0 -E)** | **Deviatio n Squared**  **(0-E)2** | **Square**  **d and**  **Weighed** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Frequency (0 )** | **Frequency (E)** |  |  | **(O- E)2 /E** |
| **A** | **415** | **978.5** | **-563. 5** | **317532.25** | **324. 51** |
| **B** | **95** | **93.5** | **1 .5** | **2.25** | **0.02** |
| **C** | **1536** | **974** | **562** | **315844** | **324. 27** |
| **D** | **1542** | **978.5** | **563.5** | **16** | **324. 51** |
| **E** | **92** | **93.5** | **-1.5** | **2.25** | **0.02** |
| **F** | **412** | **974** | **-562** | **25** | **324.27** |
| **Tota**  **l** | **4092** | **4092** |  |  | **1297. 6** |

Calculated X2 = 1297.6 , Df = k – 1 = 6 – 1 =5, Alpha level = 0.05, Table value

= 11.070.

Decision rule: Retain Ho if calculated x 2 value < critical x 2value. Reject Ho if calculated chi-square > critical x 2value.

Since chi- square calculated is greater than chi- square tabulated i. e. 1297. 6 > 11.070, we reject the null hypothesis because there is very strong evidence against the null hypothesis. We therefore accept the alternate because as the result of this hypothesis has shown there is a significant relationship between opposition politics and the possibility of consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

### Hypothesis Two

**H0:** Political Parties and Ideology are not consolidating democracy in Nigeria. To test this hypothesis, data in tables 4. 16 and 4.18 were used

### Table 4. 1.27.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question No** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **Total** |
| **D** | **347** | **86** | **1613** | **2046** |
| **E** | **355** | **82** | **1609** | **2046** |
| **Total** | **702 (17.2 %)** | **168 (4.1%)** | **322 ( 78. 7%)** | **4092** |

Table 4 .1. 24 shows that 17.2 % of the respondents were in favour of questions in tables 4 .16 and 4 . 19, 78 .7 % of the respondents were not in favour and 4 .1% of the rest were undecided.

Test statistics: chi-square( x2) The formula for chi square is:



Where:  is the value for chi square. is the sum.

O is the observed frequency

E is the expected frequency. Degree of freedom ( df): 2

Level of significance: 0.05

Computation of expected frequency is shown in table 4.1.25 below

### Table 4. 1.28 : Calculating Expected Counts from Observed Counts

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **A** | **B** | **C** | **Total** |
| **D** | **2046 x702/4092= 351** | **2046x168/4092=84** | **2046x3222/4092=1611** | **2046** |
| **E** | **2046 x702/4092= 351** | **2046x168/4092=84** | **2046x3222/4092=1611** | **2046** |
| **Total** | **702** | **168** | **3222** | **4092** |

**Observed and Expected Frequencies Weighted Table 4. 1.29**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Observe**  **d**  **Frequency (0 )** | **Expecte**  **d**  **Frequency (E)** | **Deviatio n (0 -E)** | **Deviatio n Squared**  **(0-E)2** | **Square**  **d and**  **Weighed**  **(O- E)2 /E** |
| **A** | **347** | **351** | **-4** | **16** | **0. 045** |
| **B** | **86** | **84** | **2** | **4** | **0. 047** |
| **C** | **1613** | **1611** | **2** | **4** | **0. 002** |
| **D** | **355** | **351** | **4** | **16** | **0. 045** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **E** | **82** | **84** | **-2** | **4** | **0. 047** |
| **F** | **1609** | **1611** | **-2** | **4** | **0. 002** |
| **Tota**  **l** | **4092** | **4092** |  |  | **0. 19** |

Calculated X2 = 0 .19 , Df = k – 1 = 6 – 1 =5, Alpha level = 0. 05, Table value

= 11.070.

Decision rule: Retain Ho if calculated x 2 value < critical x 2value. Reject Ho if calculated chi-square > critical x 2value.

Since chi- square calculated is less than chi-square tabulated i. e. 0. 19 < 11.070, we accept the null hypothesis because there is l ittle or no evidence against the null hypothesis. We therefore accept the null hypothesis because as the result of this hypothesis has shown and backed by responses from the respondents and people interviewed, there is no significant relationship between party ideology and the possibility of consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

### Hypothesis Three

**H0:** Politics of opposition, political parties and ideology are not the key factors in consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

To test hypothesis three, responses from gotten from respondents in tables

4.1. 21 and 4 .1. 23 were used.

### . Table 4.1 .30

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question No** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **Total** |
| **D** | **1678** | **52** | **316** | **2046** |
| **E** | **1792** | **52** | **202** | **2046** |
| **Total** | **3470**  **(84 .8%)** | **104 (2.5%)** | **518 ( 12. 7%)** | **4092** |

Table 4 .1. 30 shows that 84.8% of the respondents were in favour of questions in tables 4 .21 and 4 . 23, 12 .7 % of the respondents were not in favour and 2.5 % of the rest were undecided.

Test statistics: chi-square( x2) The formula for chi square is:



Where:  is the value for chi square. is the sum.

O is the observed frequency

E is the expected frequency. Degree of freedom ( df): 2

Level of significance: 0.05

Computation of expected frequency is shown in table 4.1.25 below

### Table 4. 1.25: Calculating Expected Counts from Observed Counts

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **A** | **B** | **C** | **Total** |
| **D** | **2046 x3470/4092=1735** | **2046x104/4092= 52** | **2046x518/4092=259** | **2046** |
| **E** | **2046 x3470/4092=1735** | **2046x104/4092=52** | **2046x518/4092=259** | **2046** |
| **Total** | **3470** | **104** | **518** | **4092** |

**Observed and Expected Frequencies Weighted Table 4. 1.26**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Observed Frequency**  **(0 )** | **Expected Frequency**  **(E)** | **Deviation (0-E)** | **Deviation Squared**  **(0-E)2** | **Squared and**  **Weighed**  **(O- E)2 /E** |
| **A** | **1678** | **1735** | **-57** | **3249** | **1.87** |
| **B** | **52** | **52** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| **C** | **316** | **259** | **57** | **3249** | **12.54** |
| **D** | **1792** | **1735** | **57** | **3249** | **1.87** |
| **E** | **52** | **52** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| **F** | **202** | **259** | **-57** | **3249** | **12.54** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total** | **4092** | **4092** |  |  | **28. 82** |

Calculated X2 = 28.82 , Df = k – 1 = 6 – 1 =5, Alpha level = 0. 05, Table value

= 11.070.

Decision rule: Retain Ho if calculated x 2 value < critical x 2value. Reject Ho if calculated chi-square > critical x 2value.

Since chi- square calculated is greater than chi -square tabulated i .e. 28.82 > 11.070, we reject the null hypothesis because there is very strong evidence against the null hypothesis. We therefore accept the alte rnate hypothesis since the result of this hypothesis has clearly shown that politics of opposition, political parties and ideology are not the key factors in consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

The primary objective of this study is to examined the dynamics of opposition politics, political parties and ideology and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, The results of the analysis of the questions as taken from the questionnaires and interviews and the subsequent test of the validity of the three hypotheses have actually shown the crucial role that opposition politics, political party and party ideology play in democratic consolidation. As seen in table 4.1. 12, a total of 75.1% of the respondents either strongly agreed o r agreed that opposition politics is important in any democratic society as against 21% of them who either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Equally, in table 4.1.13, 75. 1% also either strongly agreed or agreed that opposition politics can play an important role in consolidating

democracy in Nigeria as opposed to 21% who either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Another major findings from this study is the importance of political ideology to the sustenance of democratic consolidation. A look at table 4. 1.16 clearly shows that 16.9 % of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that party ideology is not important to democratic consolidation. This is in opposite to 78.9% of them who strongly disagreed or disagreed with this assertion. In other words, an overwhelming majority aligned with importance of party ideology in consolidating democracy. Indeed, as t he data in table 4. 23 indicated, 87.6% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the that the dynamic nature of politics of opposition, political parties and ideology can contribute positively to democratic consolidation in Nigeria as against 9.9 % who either strongly disagreed or disagreed. This clearly shows the importance of opposition politics, political parties and party ideology to democratic consolidation.

Given the fundamental mission of political parties in democratic consolidation, its importance has been stressed by various scholars. For example, Oarhe and Ikelegbe, (2009 ) maintain that political parties are essential to democracy and good governance and act as a central instrument. Also, Idowu ( 2017 ) argued that for any democratic system to thrive, it does not only need a periodic free, fair and credible elections and transfer of power, but most importantly, to make the above happen, existence of vibrant political parties (ruling and opposition) must be encouraged. Political parties play a universal role in democracy and democratic consolidation. That is to say that the roles of political parties in a democracy is

not peculiar to race, region or country. In other words, political parties play the

same roles of political recruitment, political enlightenment, forming the government and the opposition, etc. in any democracy world over. However, these roles are not performed at the same level of efficiency due majorly to operations, structures and viability of parties that vary from one particular system to others in Nigeria. While it is altruistic that political parties of advanced democracies have attained high level of vibrancy ( alive to perform their duties optimally), the same cannot be said of political parties in Nigeria.

In the same vein, Bryce (1921), argued that “Parties are inevitable: no free country has been without them; and no one has shown how representative government could work without them”. Also, Schattchneider ( 1942), summarized the importance of political parties on democracy, when he states that “Modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties”. Corroborating this view point, Stokes (1999 ), notes that “Parties are endemic to democracy, an unavoidable part of democracy”. Therefore, political parties are simply the engine of any democratic system, without which the system losses democratic tenets. They are the heart which pumps the blood needed to keep democracy hale and hearty; otherwise, democracy dies. It is worthy to note he re, that the numerosity of parties does not justify vibrancy.

In this light Dode (2010) observed that more than 90 percent of political parties in Nigeria are fragile entities; hence have only developed shallow roots in the society. It could be very correct to argue that over the years, Nigerian political parties have failed and continue to fail in their democratic responsibilities of aggregating social interests, representing specific constituencies, and serving as

intermediaries between state and society. The opposition functions specifically of

educating, articulating and aggregating issues that the parties feel the public is not well informed or about which they want to make their position clear, are not being performed. In the words of Yaqub (2002), “It is the basis of competently performing these roles that a political party can stand a good chance of displacing and, thereby, taking power from a political party currently in the saddle”.

Closely related to the above anomaly as highlighted by Idowu (2017) is the fact that opposition parties in Nigeria are rarely alive to perform their political responsibilities. Over the years, opposition parties which ought to serve as alternative parties from which the electorates should choose if they so decide, are often strategically weakened through overt and covert strategies of any of the ruling parties. This is further worsened by lack of commitment on the part of politicians to the national course. During the sixteen (16) year rule of the Peoples’ Democratic Party for example, the opposition were merely l iving as political parties only in name, This is mainly as a result of the strategies adopted by President Olusegun Obasanjo, which he passed on to other administrations of his party. The near absence of opposition could also explain the nurture of the third term ambitions of Olusegun Obasanjo. Furthermore, more recently, most political analysts have interpreted the ongoing fight against corruption as being strategically targeted at the opposition, in an attempt to muffle the opposition. However true this claim, the argument is beyond the scope of this paper; but the fact remains that since the inception of the incumbent government of the All Progressives Congress of Nigeria (APC), the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) , presumed to be the major opposition party in the country, has gone nearly

completely ‘blind, deaf and dumb’ to important political and economic issues besetting the country. This poses a threat to the nation’s democracy.

The role of the opposition in a democracy is to question, criticize, challenge, and audit the governments of the day – local and national - and make them more

transparent and accountable, and even if these twin -objectives may not be

immediately achieved, the opposition exists nonetheless to put the people in

power “on their toes” as it were in the people’s overall interest. This is the

underlying principle of a parliamentary system of government, and even in other

forms of government including a Presidential system, the opposition provid es

checks and balances, it is a kind of alternative government, a counterweight,

providing such balance that could safeguard the integrity of the political process.

But of course, what is at stake is “the conquest of power”: the opposition provides

the people with a choice and ultimately seeks to wrestle power from or out of the

hands of the incumbent and present a different vision of social and economic progress.

Abati (2018 ) therefore, noted that at the moment, we neither have a

constructive or a disruptive opposition. He argue that whatever look remotely as

any form of opposition is weak, uncoordinated, and ineffective. The political

parties are internally polarized, politics has become evil, political leaders do not

know where to draw the l ine, t he ruling government is having an upper hand, it is committed to an unrelenting, overzealous persecution of the opposition and progressive ideas. The last time the country witnessed what looked like organized opposition, even if it was disruptive, was iro nically through the All Progressives

Congress ( APC). In 2013 , a number of political parties formed a synergy with

civil society groups to become the All Progressives Congress, and adopting an “oppose, oppose, oppose” strategy, they managed by 2015 to get t he ruling Peoples Democratic Party out of power. It was a major turning point in Nigerian politics since the return to civilian rule in 1999 ( Abati, 2018).

The PDP was not prepared for its new role as the leading opposition party, just

as the new government led by the APC was equally unprepared for governance.

This sudden reversal of roles caught Nigeria’s main political actors napping. The

APC at the centre found it difficult to even appoint Ministers: it took six months

to come up with a list. In one or two states, the Governors acted as sole

administrators for up to a year. There are about 80 registered political parties in

the country, but these are at best relatively unknown parties. The main political

party, the PDP has been largely in disarray since it lost power. Most of its

members have defected to the new ruling party, many of its founding fathers now

prefer to be known and addressed as statesmen, an d the party’s strong mouthpieces

have all been cowed into silence by a ruling party that is wielding power like a whip.

The PDP have members in the legislature at the Federal and State levels, but

their voices have not been loud enough. Nigerian politics has not been ideology-

driven for a while, that is one explanation, but as Abati (2018) argued, it is also possible that the remaining PDP members are hedging their bets and secretly planning to join the APC. This is the case because the ruling APC is now i n charge of state resources – and that is a major attraction for Nigerian politicians, besides,

the APC not knowing how to govern has been functioning more as an opposition

party. It has spent the last five years hounding PDP members and the Jonathan administration, and making it difficult for anyone to come up with progressive, opposition ideas ( Abati 2018).

It had to take Microsoft’s Bill Gates to criticize the Economic Recovery and

Growth Programme ( ERGP) of the Federal Government before the PDP realized

that such a document existed. The new PDP, failing in its role as an opposition

party, cedes the initiative to the APC and merely reacts through statements that

do not even make much impact. In the states across the Federation, opposition

members often forget what their role in the legislature is supposed to be as they

join the queue of lawmakers trooping to the Government House to collect favours from imperial Governors.

On that premise, Alabi ( 2009) argued that opposition is muffled in many par ts of Africa because of colonial legacies and cultural factors. Democracy in Nigeria will develop if the opposition appropriately appreciates i ts role and adequately carries out same with the expected altruistic motives. In the parliamentary system of government as practiced in the United Kingdom, the tasks and responsibilities of the leader of opposition are clearly spelt out and are challenging especially if the parliamentary duties are considered.

Apart from the assigned roles in the parliament, he is ex pected to co-ordinate the activities of his party outside parliament especially at the level of mass struggle if the opposition must effectively challenge the ruling party. There is usually what is called a shadow cabinet which oversees all segments of the government, provides alternative ideas, and articulates the policies of the party

on every policy decision of the ruling party.

The Network of Ethiopian Scholars (NES) articulated the position that a key component of democracy is the toleration of dissent and that the only condition is that dissenters do not engage in violating the rights of others and use of force, deception or fraud to pursue their interests and goals. The group argued further that as long as they express their dissenting voices within t he bounds of democratic ethos, there is no reason to bar them from playing active role in public life (Egbewole and Etudaiye, 2010).

This is an area that has to be given a more pragmatic consideration in Nigeria. Opposition must not be for opposition sake and it must be devoid of violence and must be within the globally accepted standard or best practice. The people in government are not angels; they are human and indeed Nigerians. They are l iable to make mistakes and in the same way as party in opposition. The only duty an opposition party need is to provide an alternative view and this must be properly dissected, articulated and effectively communicated to the general public. NES asked the question ( as if it is directed at the political class in Nigeria): “ Why was i t not possible to use debate, dialogue and democratic forum to those whom it thinks have not acknowledged the regime’ s self -validated and justified role as having contributed positive good” ( Egbewole and Etudaiye, 2010).

It must be realized by both government and opposition that the aspiration to be in government is for one common goal -service to the people. From the dynamics of the happenings in Nigeria, it is clear that apart from a very few individuals in and out of government, it appears that the majority of the political class are “crass opportunists”. It has nothing to do with any political party and

neither does i t have any colouration of ruling or opposition party.

The result of the various local government elections betrayed the political class. Where the Peoples Democratic Party is the ruling party ( PDP), all the seats must necessarily be won by that party. Where the controll ing party is the All Progressive Congress ( APC), all the Local Government Chairmen invariably ar e members of the party. Equally, where the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) is the dominant party, then, the seats at the local g overnments are in the APGA’ s firm control. This trend portends a grave danger and engenders the possibility of muffling the opposition party and that is likely to serve as a negative commentary on democratic rule and ideals. This is what the leadership of the various political parties and those in government swore to uphold.

It is an understatement to argue that in an ideal setting, the respons ibilities expected of political parties are important to the political system. That is why Omotola (2010 ) held that at the minimum, political parties serve as a formidable democratization force by articulating and aggregating public opinion and interests, engendering popular participation, and promoting political education and national integration. Thus, when political parties function in this regard, they help in the overall stability of the system. Simply put, political parties cloth regimes with legitimacy through the provision of leadership, ideology and avenues for political participation (Boafo -Arthur 2003). Essentially, political parties are instruments for political recruitment as well as providing opportunities for articulating group interests by me ans of exerting pressure on the political system. Thus, through this medium, activities of political parties impact the entire

process of governance and the extent to which these functions are performed equally determine the quality of governance in the po litical system.

Most of the respondents and those interviewed were of the opinion that political parties in the country lack ideology. Data in table 4.1. 18 clearly backed this assertion. For example, the statistics from the table shows that just 20. 2%% of them said that they either strongly agreed or agreed that their party is backed by ideology. However, 72 .9 % of them said that their political parties are not backed by any ideological disposition. This is rather a sad commentary on political parties in Nigeria given the role they play in the existence, survival and consolidation of democracy in modern societies cannot be over-stressed. As ‘makers’ of democracy, political parties have been so romanticized that some scholars have claimed that neither democracy nor democratic societies are thinkable without them ( Omotola, 2009 ). Sadly, this all-important institution of democracy is increasingly becoming synonymous with ideological sterility in Nigeria. Although political party had turned to be useful as one of the desiderata for democratic consolidation, it was first invented for more limited and self - serving purposes.

This observation aptly captures the Nigerian reality. At its inception on 24th June 1923 following the introduction of elective principle by the Clifford Constitution, the Nigerian National Democratic Party ( NNDP) had very limited and self-serving objectives― buying legitimacy for the colonial government through very limited franchise that was restricted to Lagos and Calabar. Accordingly, Richard Sklar demonstrated articulately how the emergence of

political associations such as the People’ s Union was only in response to the prevailing realities of colonial administration (Sklar, 1963). Little wonder, the activities of NNDP were restricted t o contesting elections into the Lagos City Council.

Historically, Nigerian political parties are not entirely associated with ideological emptiness. Political historians and analysts significantly agree that what separates most of the First and Second Republic political parties from their present-day counterparts is that the former strove to pattern their politicking along unambiguous ideological lines. Under the colonial regime, they were essentially driven by a commitment to the nationalist struggle again st colonialism, though in varying degrees of intensity. In the First Republic, politics and political parties were largely developmental. The regional governments and the political parties that controlled them were concerned mostly about wealth creation be cause that was the only way they could derive their revenue and survive. For instance, the ideology of the Action Group ( AG) under Chief Obafemi Awolowo could be clearly gleaned from the premium it attached to education. This perhaps explains the high literacy rate the regions under the party had enjoyed hitherto. Similarly, the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens ( NCNC) led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was commonly associated with welfarism. Most importantly, the Mallam Aminu Kano-led Northern Elements Progressive Union ( NEPU) was unequivocally committed to the total emancipation of the downtrodden otherwise known as the “talakawas” in local parlance.

Similarly, the five political parties during the Second Republic — National Party of Nigeria ( NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Nigerian Peoples’ Party (NPP), Great Nigerian Peoples’ Party ( GNPP), and People’ s Redemption Party (PRP)― had distinct ideologies and manifestoes. Most people knew the four cardinal programmes of the UPN. Once elected into office, every UPN-state implemented the free education and free medical care programme of the party. Even the NPN ( widely believed to be a conservative party) had i ts key programmes summarised on its logo ( a house, with two corns by the side ( agriculture), and a crown (governance). The NPN-controlled Federal Government launched its green revolution, a national housing programme, and insisted that i t would offer good governance. Similarly, the NPP’ s neo-welfarist ideology/manifesto was symbolised in its logo (the people). Each party also had its core intellectual ideologues and powerhouses. For instance, Dr. Chuba Okadigbo published a book on “The Mission of NPN”. Chief Ebenezer Babatope and associates led the UPN’ s scientific socialism; while Chief Chris Offodile wa s the brain-box of PRP’s democratic humanism, etc. (Soludo, 2013 ).

In a corroborative sense, some scholars have argued that the NPP and GNPP appeared to be liberal in ideology with a strong belief in mixed economy; the NPN conservative with emphasis on free market system and respect for traditional institutions. The PRP, a leftist and most radical party had a populist, anti -neo- colonial agenda and advocates social revolution and income redistribution; and the UPN, the most disciplined, socialist/welfarist in orientation was based on the philosophy of free education and health care delivery (Ujo, 2000 ). Each political

party contested the elections with a clear manifesto which was its contract with the people, and once elected, i t sought t o implement it to the letter. Every state controlled by a political party implemented the party’s programmes to the letter. Nigerian political enthusiasts relished in the intellectual debates on the alternatives offered by different parties. Regular campus symposia involving high-ranking members of different political parties explaining and defending their party manifestoes were also held.

Nonetheless, the ideological ambiguity and contradiction of these political parties can be gleaned from the pattern of alignment between/among them. For example, the resolve of the two ideologically incompatible parties - NPC and NCNC- to enter into an alliance that formed the government during the First Republic attests to this. While the former was a right wing party, the latter was more inclined to the left. Scholars have generally pointed out that the alliance was a “marriage of inconvenience”, and would have been better between the AG and NCNC.

Similarly, the NEPU was associated with ideological contradictions when it was compelled by survival necessity to align with the NPC- controlled Central Government in the First Republic. Because these alliances were not informed by a commitment to a belief system and principles underpinned by party ideology, they crumbled, sooner than expected, like a pack of cards. Later, the December 1964 Federal Parliamentary electioneering which spilled over into 1965 witnessed an alliance between the NCNC and AG, in con junction with two minority northern allies, NEPU and the Joseph Tarka-led United Middle Belt Congress ( UMBC) to

form the United Progressives Grand Alliance (UPGA). The NPC, on the other divide, mobilized the Akintola-led Nigerian National Democratic Party ( NNDP) and opposition political parties controlling ethnic minorities in the Mid - Western and Eastern Regions to form the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). The UPGA presented itself as an alternative to northern and, more specifically, the Hausa - Fulani domination of the federal government. Sadly, the formation of UPGA as a strategic alliance was not motivated by genuine ideological orientation but purely to wrest power from the hegemonic NPC.

The aborted Third Republic witnessed a new experiment in party for mation, when for the first time in the history of party politics in Nigeria, the government created and imposed two political parties on the political system. Ordinarily, the existence of two parties should represent two different ideological camps, as has been the case between the Labour and Conservative Parties in Britain and Democrats and Republican Parties in the USA. This was not the case with respect to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) in Nigeria. Although, while one was a little to the left and the other a little to the right, nothing much differentiates the parties, at least not in ideological dispositions (Adejumobi, 1997 ). Accordingly, Yaqub notes *inter alia* :

The way incompatibility had been manifest ed in the two parties … was not fundamentally due to serious ideological divisions ( in any case, the manifestoes of the parties, despite phrase–mongering of “a little to the left”, and “a little to the right”, did not articulate much programme differences), but to assert, that even if we are to borrow Babangida’s words, the “old l ines of cleavages and primordial loyalties” once again simply asserted themselves (Yaqub, 2002 ).

Unfortunately, the quality of political discourse has further deteriorated since the previous republics. The return to civilian rule in 1999 heralded the proliferation of weak, unviable and regional political parties that are not ideologically driven. Given the obvious poverty of ideology that characterized the first three political parties— the People’ s Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples’ Party ( APP) and the Alliance for Democracy ( AD) — of the Fourth Republic, it is not surprising that almost all the other parties that sprang up or broke away from them did not do so because of ideological disagreements. It was also not based on well-articulated alternative views of governance for sustainable democracy and development as a viable basis of popular mobilization to wrest power from the incumbent party. Rather, they were products of adversarial elite behaviour taken to the points of irreconcilability. Thus, these parties have no ideological stance on major national questions other than the transformation and manipulation of forces of identity particularly ethnicity and religion ( Okoosi- Simbine, 2005 ). The implication is that the so - called political parties are not in competition with one another. They are in factions; these factions are more in competition within themselves than with another party (Omotola, 2009 ).

The APC, which was registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission ( INEC) on July 31, 2013 ( by subsequently withdrawing the operating licenses of the merging parties), emerged from the ashes of the Action Congress of Nigeria ( ACN), the All Nigerian Peoples’ Party ( ANPP), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). The collapse of these regional political parties into the APC is a

reminiscence or reincarnation of the pattern of alliance during the 1999 Presidential Election. Nigeria went into the election with three political parties namely PDP, APP and AD. While the PDP maintained a semblance of mass party, the AD and APP had the colouration of caucus parties. In the Presidential Election, the APP and AD went into alliance to present a candidate, Chief Olu Falae, against the PDP which presented Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. While the APP transmuted into ANPP in search of national outlook, the AD changed into AC and later ACN. The CPC represents a faction that pulled out of the ANPP led by Muhammadu Buhari. Apart from Governor Rochas Okorocha’s faction of APGA, the APC is but a reincarnation of the 1999 alliance between the defunct APP and AD.

From the ideological predisposition of the defunct political parties, it is noteworthy that the APC is an assemblage of political strange bedfellows. Accordingly, Nwodo (2013 ) observes that:

Within its motley crew of political operatives, the APC has some truly uninspiring tendencies. The ANPP, for example, is a party that has historically used ‘ Islamopopulism’ to win votes in the North and revels in smearing the PDP as a Christian and therefore “anti- Islamic” party. A frequently unremarked point is that the terrorist group, Boko Haram emerged in ANPP -controlled states and can be justifiably labelled a mutant outgrowth of the party’s Islamo-populist stance. The ACN... embodies a strain of ethno- nativism particular to the Southwest ( although it is admittedly far less insular than the old AD). The CPC is essentially a personality cult built around Muhammadu Buhari while the APGA represents a brand of Igbo opulist irredentism (Nwodo, 2013).

The only pronounced ideological stance of the APC is that it prides i tself as a progressive party. Progressivism relates to governments that take greater burdens

off the citizens. The government bears more costs in promoting the welfare of

citizens for better standards of l iving. Such government is usually construed as socialist in the common parlance. Presently, virtually every governor implements populist policies relating to free education, free primary healthcare, reduction of maternal and infant mortality, poverty alleviation through skill acquisition, youth and women empowerment, private sector participation, gender -based affirmative action, and a host of others. The APC which purportedly arises to liberate Nigerians from the stranglehold of PDP has had government in states controlled by their governors demolish houses without alternative arrangements to resettle the people.

Apparently, they stand for liberty but enforce demolition of houses without compensation (Nwodo, 2013). Furthermore, virtually all state governors construct or rehabilitate roads. For instance, in Akwa Ibom State controlled by PDP, several new roads have been constructed; same in Lagos State controlled by the APC. In Lagos, however, the expansion of Lekki/Epe Expressway culminated into the erection of toll gates where tolls are collected from road users, but in Akwa Ibom new roads were constructed and no toll collected. In the same vein, the cost of tertiary education in states that are controlled by the APC is not cheaper than those controlled by other political parties. A case in point is the Lagos State University where the school fees are far above one hundred thousand naira. Arising from the above instances, therefore, the progressive claim of the APC is a mere exercise in political sloganeering and thus pales into insignificance.

From their actions and inactions, therefore, practically all the present species of Nigerian political parties have shown that they are everything but political

parties. This has been largely so becaus e of poverty of ideology and inability to provide the needed opposition politics to the ruling party. They have created and foisted a pace of jaundiced political atmosphere on the Nigerian polity through recklessness and classical display of “maradonic” in stitutionalization of dishonesty and attitudinal deception which, while completely oblivious of the avoidable rollercoaster national political past, has deliberately taken for granted Nigerians’ determination to quickly forget the blighted past and capacit y to resist government maladministration and provocative abuses of their political rights and truncation of their calculated political desires or preferences.

This trend as Olanrewaju (2015) noted, suggests that democracy in Nigeria is not only growing at a very slow trend but also oscillates between stagnancy and backwardness, thus degenerating into a crisis level where democratic ideals become threatened and governance becomes privatised, if not personalised, by the powerful. This, indeed, impairs the pace of political stability, deepens the root of political gerontocracy and strengthens sectional political hegemony. Present democracy in Nigeria is crisis- ridden and suffers from several problems which include but not limited to the following: de mocracy is being practised within inefficient and non- viable rules.

It is obvious that the political party system within this period has failed to chart a course that could entrench genuine democracy. This position was taken further by Ikeanyibe (2009:70) while building on the works of other scholars that political parties, especially in Nigeria’s fourth republic are “…lacking in organization, discipline focus or souls. Their membership is filled by corrupt,

unpatriotic and undisciplined political elite tha t sees election more as an investment than a call to serve people.” The desperation of politicians to capture state power becomes clearer in the l ight of these averments.

In a related discourse, Onyishi (2007: 199) was more pungent in positing that the inordinate quest to acquire and retain state power implies the deployment of “… resources of the state in the … struggle to retain it.” He submitted further that they “block every democratic tendency… (and) continue to use all kinds of means to capture state power in order to protect themselves against the vagaries of politics.” These expositions present cogent explanations on the palpable nature of democratic experience in Nigeria’ s fourth republic. This is exacerbated by lack of ideology, values and internal d emocracy within and among political parties. It is axiomatic and revealing that credible and robust opposition politics anchored on democratic tenets have been quite elusive within this period, and this was typified pejoratively by Ikeanyibe ( 2009:60) as “ the irony of one-party state in a multiparty system.”

The readiness of the stakeholders to play according to the rules often depends on the ability of the state to ensure compliance without fear or favour. The process itself allows for manipulation of existing rules. Poverty of politics and polit ics of poverty is endemic in Nigeria’s political space. The rich political actors in Nigeria target the already feeble and disenchanted mind of the poor to secure their election victory. Politics has been so monetis ed to the extent that an average, credible Nigerian cannot afford its exorbitance. Politics, therefore, becomes avenue to create and sustain poverty through looting of funds meant for developmental

purposes. Leadership ineptitude and promotion of personal aggrandisement at the expense of national interests grievously affect democracy in Nigeria an d makes the dream of consolidating i t difficult .

Nigeria's democracy is being manipulated by those in power. They employ and monopolise state machinery to maintain their hold on power ( Olanrewaju, 2015). The Obasanjo's administration, for instance, was noted for its selective judgement and flagrant disrespect for and disobedience to the rule of law; this is also a function of ineffective rules and weak institution. The administration hunted its opponents with the awe of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). It is only natural and expected, therefore, that in a situation where political opponents are clamped down upon, the political space becomes heated and tension-soaked as the opponents strive to ' balance the terror'.

This assertion resonate with Okeke ( 2015) who argued that the elite class in Nigeria has manipulated democracy in the country. According to Onuoha (2014) there is a coalition of ex/ retired military men, of the senior officer corps (citing Adekanye 1999 ); a new rich who made their money from civil war economy ( 1967 - 1970), corruption and Military government patronages, in mineral oil exploration/ allocation of mineral oil blocks, government c ontracts and related businesses; a new rich who made their money through outright fraud (known as 419 in Nigeria,), drug trafficking (drug barons) and other i llicit and at times criminal businesses.

This coalition has been in control of Nigerian politics s ince the aborted third

Republic in 1993. The coalition took control of democratically elected

government in Nigeria in 1999, and has been in charge ever since. Their boundaries are not readily perceptible and they have since 1999 coalesced to become difficult to distinguish. The coalition was the only force that had the type of big money required for success in Nigerian politics. In such a context, money was used routinely not only to corrupt the political and electoral process through vote buying and vote rigging, but also to attempt to buy justice (Amuwo, 2009). Consequently, Nigerian elections are often programmed to achieve pre - determined results ( Amuwo, 2009). Most other politicians, who succeeded in Nigerian politics … but did not belong to any of the three social groups, would have been sponsored by a member from one or the other of the three groups; sponsors are popularly known as political “godfathers” ( Onuoha 2014). The godfathers (the diabolical political elite) are immensely influential in the electoral process in Nigeria. They sponsor the formation of political parties and also determine who will be candidate at the elections. They determine the result of an election in advance and their dubious determination stands. They manipulate the democratic process.

It is a known fact that interest is the main propelling force for the acquisition of political power ( Varma, 2001: 169 -170). The question that then comes to mind is: to what extent is elitist interest synonymous with masses interest? This question is quite indispensable considering the fact that by the nature of politics, even in a democratic set-up, the elite tend to manipulate the unconscious mass class in favor of elitist hedonism. This shows that in most democracies including Nigeria, the quantity strength of the mass people have continued to count less

because of the manipulative political skills of the elites and given the paucity of ideologies in political parties in the country, this becomes more worrisome.

As documented by ( Obianyo and Alumona, 2014 ) the primacy of politics in Nigeria and state power created a dependent ruling class that lives off the state. The problem became accentuated with the advent of oil and oil rent. Oil revenue enhanced the instrumentalist role of the state and the centraliza tion that followed. Oil revenue alongside military rule restructured the federation in a manner that enhanced the powers of the centre over the sub units. This centralization threw up a new class of national bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes with a cen trist ideology that promotes the ascendancy of the centre over the units, with the sole aim of controlling the immense oil wealth vested in the central government. By virtue of the country's over dependency on oil revenue, and other forms of external rent for survival, the Nigerian state can also take the description of a rentier state.

The implication according to ( Obianyo and Alumona, 2014 ) is that the rentier state is immersed in distribution rather than production. What luciani ( cited in Ibrahim 2000: 53 ) called an ' allocative state" This kind of state according to Beblawi (in Widdowson 2005,p.9) creates "different layers of beneficiaries of government rent" which "in their turn give rise to new layers of beneficiaries" . Thus " the whole economy is arranged as hierarchy of rentiers with the state or government at the top of the pyramid acting as the ultimate support for all other rentiers in the economy". A rentier economy produces a dominant ruling class with a rentier mentality whose sole preoccupation is acquisition of state power.

The dominance of oil wealth also led to a centripetal form of federalism and a centripetal class structure that sustain it, and ipso facto a centripetal democratic system in which control of the central government is the epi - centre of democratic competition (Obianyo and Alumona, 2014). This centralization mentality consequently affected other socio political institutions in the state including political parties. As a result, the state and its apparatuses showcase an administrative federal structure that functions with a unitary power structure. There are sub units but the ultimate power flow from the top, the federal government, or in the case of political parties the central working committee and the central executive committees. Even the current state's embrace of market economy which encourage state roll back in the economy through liberalization and privatization of state owned enterprises, and cut back on state bureaucracy has not reduced the instrumentalist role of the sta te, nor its intimidating character. State power is still used to convert public institutions into private ones (in the name of privatization), while the coercive apparatuses are still employed to muscle opponents (Obianyo and Alumona, 2014).

In sum the rentier state creates rentier class( es) with rentier mentality and a rentier political culture that structures the democratization process leading to what (Obianyo and Alumona, 2014 ) called a rentier democracy. Rentierism permeates the democratic process in v arious ways. Accordingly, Joseph ( 1991:56 - 7) describes this phenomenon as " prebendal politics". He defines a prebend as " an office of state ... which an individual procures either through examinations or as a reward for loyal service to a lord or ruler". He observes that the post-colonial

state (of Africa) has a peculiar form of state organization and attitudes in which "constitutional and legal systems" and "stated impersonal norms" largely serve to camouflage extensive prebendal practices . He further asse rts that while "clientelism defines the nature of individual and group relationships within the wider socio-political sphere, ... prebendalism is primarily a function of the competition for, and appropriation of, offices of the state"(Joseph 1991:63). He further notes that electoral politics " revitalizes and promotes clientelistic networks" because of the extensive prebends associated with electoral democracy. What Joseph ( 1999) did not reckon with is the extent control of parties and party offices have become prebends. In addition Joseph failed to answer a basic question why public offices in Nigeria or elsewhere become prebends.

Secondly political parties, ( as the vehicles for fashioning and sustaining democracy) are sustained by state rent and this sustenance is strengthened if the party exercises control of the central or many of the sub unit governments. In fact political parties have become sources of rents as forming and controlling one or occupying an important party office assures access to state rent and or raises the negotiating potential of party owners or party office holders in the rent distribution circuit. This explains the manipulations, conflicts and blatant disregard for rules guiding political competition even within parties. Rentierism introduced another variant of machine or clientele politics called "godfatherism". It is a term (in the Nigerian political lexicon ) that describes the clientele network or relationship of a new political class better described as political entrepreneurs or brokers or godfathers, whose sole preoccupation is primitive accumulation

through the instrumentality of state power. Their influ ence in the various parties where they operate is dependent on the degree of their wealth, manipulative or vote rigging skill or better still proximity to or control of state power either as governor of a state or president of the country (Obianyo 2013). While the patron, Joseph(1999 ) describes in the clientele network of second republic politics of Nigeria depends on one or few prebends (political offices) for personal aggrandizement, the godfather -patron of the fourth republic has unfettered access to the treasury of a state, s/ he is the power behind the throne that makes electoral victory possible.

Electoral victory is not usually made possible through a free and fair process but through what Ibrahim & Ibeanu (2009 in Momoh 2013) called Direct Capture (DC). Direct capture entails using the Independent Electoral Commission ( INEC), state intelligence agencies and coercive apparatuses to undermine the electoral process. It entails "... the transformation of the state from an instrument and external enabler and implementer of rigging, to a direct party and implementer of rigging" ( Ibrahim and Ibeanu 2009 in Momoh 2013). The outcome of DC is Primitive Accumulation of Votes (PAV) which translates into Primitive Accumulation of Power (PAC). PAC in turn results to Primitive Accumulation of Capital (PAC). The simple formular therefore is DC=PAV+PAP=PAC. Thus, control of the party machinery is important for successful use of DC. Parties where one person has overwhelming influence as the party boss or godfather, IPD is not only unnecessary but is skewed to meet the wishes and intents of the godfather. However where there are two or more godfathers with commensurate

political and electoral influence, leadership/ candidate selection whether through primary election or caucus selection, results to intra- party conflicts that may yield factions or serious opposition to the hegemonic faction controlling the party. In such parties we encounter situations where various factions hold primaries, each claiming (sometimes with court judgment) to be the legitimate faction of the party. The centralization and personalization of decision making apparatuses of Nigerian political parties despite the decentralization that characterize its structural arrangement negates and obstructs the internal democratic mechanisms of these parties, and further reinforce hegemonic control of one man or a few men of influence and wealth who abrogate democratic processes for selfish ends. In the event how each party's decision making structures work is de pendent not just on the statutory provisions but also on the character of leadership and structure of the clientele network that permeates it.

In developed democracies, the skill of the politicians have manifested more in an integrative political machinery that accommodates the interests of the masses through inter-party electoral process which is mainly free and fair, internal party democracy no doubt reflects elitist dictate (Janda, Berry and Goldman, 1997). In the Nigerian state, just like most emerging democracies, the political skills of the elites have remained crude through the utilization of violence, thuggery, ethnicism, religious chauvinism and other negative factors in manipulating the masses for the acquisition of political power ( Ukaeje , 2001; Okoh, 2010). This situation is worse- off considering the fact that these manipulations exist at both

the intra and inter party level of competition for political power which has led to a scenario where votes are designed not to count in the democra t ic process.

Although (Omodia, 2003: 17) argued that this could be said to be a transformational process to an enduring democracy if democracy is nurtured to grow. But as this study has also shown, the lack of ideology inherent in Nigerian political parties has serious implication for democratic consolidation. According to Amuwo ( 2009), virtually all Nigeria’s postcolonial governments to date have been thrust to power without a concise national ideology, let alone a popular and liberating one. Between 2009 and 2015 also, nothing has really changed. Consequently, the Nigerian political system had not developed much since the colonial period ( Amuwo, 2009 ). Amuwo further posits that in theory, political parties are premised on the concept of political inclusivit y and anchored in political participation. In practice, however, parties are born mainly due to political exclusivity, that is to say, for purposes of wresting power and controlling the masses. There are likely to be few parties where politics and election s are structured by ideologies about the use to which power is put. Consequently, where ideologies are lacking and political formations are bereft of identity, as in Nigeria, we are confronted with the efflorescence of several look -alike political parties, differentiated only by the fatness of the purse of their main sponsors and the unique mannerisms and idiosyncrasies of their leaders ( Amuwo, 2009). Invariably, the electorate is left without options. Voting is done based on nothing. Election campaigns are reduced to disco sessions. In place of orators, the process produces inelegant speakers, who have no ideologies to propagate.

Indeed, in the literature on democratic consolidation, there is widespread agreement on the vital role played by political partie s in democratic consolidation (Clapham, 1993; Dix, 1992; Diamond, 1989). Notwithstanding the lack of clarity on the meaning of institutionalization, what these studies argue is that in order for parties to fulfil their role of advancing democracy, parties and party system require to be institutionalized (Randall, 2006). Most political observers affirm that strong parties and party system are the key requirement of strong democracies not only because they shape representation but also because the stability o f political leadership pertains to party activities whether in the electoral or the legislative arenas (Powell, 1982 ). Accordingly, as Mair asserts, it has always been appealing to “trace sources of problems of legitimacy and stability of regimes back to the character of their party systems” (Steinmo, 2008)

Democratic institutions in Nigeria are very fragile and are often unable to protect and promote sustainable democracy. Interregnum misrule of the military weakened the democratic institutions like judici ary and legislature. Flagrant disrespect for and disobedience to the constitution has become a feature that is conspicuous in Nigerian democratic experience, coupled with weak or lack of political will and capacity to punish electoral offenders. Other cris es facing democracy in Nigeria include: dependent and weak judicial system; poverty and ignorance; corruption; citizenship, settlers/strangers crisis; absence of internal democracy in political parties; political intolerance and winner -takes-all syndrome; inexistent deep- rooted ideology in political parties; self -serving legislature and so on.

Following this, Omilusin (2016) held that political parties have abandoned their traditional roles in a democracy, thereby constituting more of a clog in the wheel of this system of government. According to Momoh (2010), there is no more political education, consistent and sustained financial membership, regular grassroots meetings, except when elections are at hand. As such, party executives are imposed by one tendency against another t endency in the interplay of internal contestation for the soul and heart of the party. The dominant tendency does not wish to have a few position, they prefer to take all, if not the strategic positions, viz‐Party Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. They c an choose to trade Vice Chairman, Publicity Secretary, and Women Leader to other tendencies. When democracy and contest for power is designed in such absolutist winner ‐takes all spirit, i t spells doom for democracy, as this behaviour is again brought into the arena of national politics.

Nigerian democracy has confronted series of challenges with the return to civil rule in 1999 among which include the imposition of candidates, godfatherism, money politics, injustice, lack of party manifestoes and ideology, party indiscipline and so on. The absence of internal democracy among the Nigerian political parties constitutes a major threat to democratic consolidation in the country. This problem, which has led to party defection, otherwise known as cross- carpeting, party witching, floor- crossing, party- hopping, canoe-jumping, decamping and party jumping has remained a permanent feature in the Nigerian democracy( Abimbola and Adesote, 2012: 46).

Virtually all elections into political offices since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, particular the 1999, 2003 and 2007 general elections, were constantly secured by those who had the monopoly of weaponry and thuggery, as violence, rather than the electorate determined who occupied what position. This is clearly antithetical to the ideals of democracy. Any claim to democracy must essentially embrace the following principles: a high degree of popular participation; competitive choice; openness; the enjoyment of civil and political l iberties by the citizenry in concrete terms; accountability of the leadership and political tolerance.

The foregoing discussion on the dynamics of opposition politics, political party and political ideology and democratic consolidation in Nigeria portrays an undesirable political process in the country. The question here is “what accounts for this situation?” ( Akindele, 2011). In many writings of scholars on democracy in Nigeria and, Africa as a whole, the underlying problem is the apparent absence of the basic structures upon which a genuine politi cal party can be erected.

Various factors can be cited, looking back at the barrenness of the past. Proverbially, i t has been stated by the wise that: “if and whenever a child falls, he/she looks forward but, if, and whenever an elderly falls, he/she looks backward to see and identify what actually caused the fall”. ( Akindele, 2011) Political parties’ multidimensional problems since independence have been constantly caused and invigorated because each time political parties fall, the parties always looks forward. This has continued to be so in spite of her continuous aging.

Muhammad ( 2008) noted that some of the characteristics displayed by the political parties were moulded by the nature of the Nigerian society and the operating environment, which he identified to include the following;

* Dominant interests or personality influence
* Ethnicity
* Ideological emptiness of political parties
* Flawed understanding of the meaning and purpose of politics
* Low degree of institutionalization and coherent.
* Indiscipline among political party members.

Muhammad further articulates that internal political p arty discipline is weak, internecine battles are common, politics and access to public offices are still regarded as a highway to personal enrichment in politics. Conclusively, the ideological emptiness and internal political party indiscipline (lack of in ternal democracy) in Nigerian political parties fuel low level of commitment and high level of cross- carpet of politicians today. Consequently, electoral frauds, poor articulation and aggregation of the people’s interests and aspirations into policies formulation and execution exist in Nigeria polity. Hence, insignificant developments are recorded.

Nigeria’s political parties rather than democratically improving have been retrogressing due to the hollowness of the practical application of the principles of ideology. This disturbing trend has gained momentum during this fourth democratic experiment particularly in its first phase, a development which shows that our political parties have refused to free themselves from the manacle of

political immaturity which, among other factors, made it a ready captive of the

military oligarchy in the past and, which will continue to make i t so, unless there is urgent and permanent change of philosophy through a committed rearmament. When evaluated against the background wh erewithal and rationality of acceptable political parties, it is clear that the current events in Nigeria’ s political parties appear less favourable to an environment where a truly ideological political parties could sustain democratic consolidation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

**SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter presents the conclusion emerging from the study in the light of the research questions and the objectives that informed the study. Consequent upon the findings of the study, some recommendat ions are made to address critical issues raised in the study.

## SUMMARY

The general objective of the study was to assess the dynamics of opposition politics, political party and party ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic (1999 -2019). The study selected six states, each representing the six geo-political zones in the country. The states are Adamawa, Kaduna, Kogi, Edo, Imo and Oyo.

The general analysis of the data was based on simple descriptive analysis of frequency distribution of relevant statistical information which was supplemented

by percentage. Thus, a simple frequency distribution tables of types and number of responses translated into percentages was constructed and analyzed. The hypotheses were tested at the 5% level of significance . The study also adopted the method of reduction, classification, and interpretation in analyzing the qualitative data that were generated from the in -depth interviews.

The study results showed that the dynamics of opposition politics, political party and party ideology have not contributed to consolidating democr acy in Nigeria as the political parties lack the capacity to sustain democratic practice.

The study explored the background to the evolution of political party not only in Nigeria but also globally. The emergence of the then APC as opposition as the ruling party and the challenges faced by the APC as the ruling party . Literature was explored to reflect in-depth explanation of the core concep ts in the study such as political party, opposition politics, ideology, elec , democracy and democratic consolidation. Whereas, extant literature showed that much work have been done on the study of political party and party ideology in Nigeria’s attempt at consolidating her democracy, no known study has been carried out on the impact of opposition politics on democratic consolidation.

The study explored a number of theoretical perspectives relat ing to political party, ideology and opposition politics but ultimately based our conclusion on the theory of elite theory. Elite theory is premised on a number of assumptions: Th e society consists of two categories: the selected few, who are capable and, therefore, have the right to supreme leadership; and the vast masses of people

who are desired to be ruled; That the majority of human beings are apathetic,

indolent and slavishly uninformed about what goes on in the administrative system and permanently incapable of self- government. That is, the elite decides on the structure, the personnel, the process of public policies of the administrative system. Hence, the structure, substan ce and output of the administrative system may be viewed as the preferences and values of the governing elite (Dowse and Hughes, 1983).

The elite theory postulates that public policy reflects the values and preferences of the elite rather than demands of the masses. The elite consist of those few individuals who wield powers and hold leading positions in the strategic aspects of society. Scholars have argued that the behavior of powerful actors or elites is crucial to democratic stability especially in transiting political systems (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; LopezPintor 1987; Malloy 1987). In other words, elite choices determine the nature of democratic transitions and breakdowns. Nevertheless, Higley and Burton (1989:17) have argued, th at ‘democratic transitions and breakdowns can best be understood by studying basic continuities and changes in the internal relations of national elites’.

The governing elite in Nigeria deriving from their social characteristics and privileges of office operate as a formidable team against the mass (people) who are encumbered by daily pressure for sustenance and necessities of life. The manipulative tendencies and tool by the elite inhibit any genuine effort to advance common cause in form of qualitative education, shelter, basic infrastructure and other social amenities as deliverables of democratic governance. Madunagu (2005: 1) validated this in his assertion that “the dominant fraction of the Nigerian

ruling classes does not use the wealth they loot…for the benefit of “their people”, although these poor people whose names are invoked in vain are often mobilized to fight their imaginary enemies”. The reference to looting of the nation’s wealth above reinforces the serial argument by scholars and public ana lysts/ social commentators that the governing elites in Nigeria ( past and present) are complicit in resource plunder, and as an extension of the colonial state, the post - colonial state represented by the governing elite is also predatory and exploitative. Additionally, Onyishi (2007 : 197) documented that “…the post -colonial state never became a reflection of the contending social forces within society. This inorganic character of the emergent Nigerian state meant that it would… not encapsulate a social contract between the citizens and…the government”. He corroborated that the emergent statesmen were apprenticed under the colonial administrators and required such anti -democratic traits as arrogance; exclusivity; elitism; executive authoritarianism, censorship of popular debate on public issues.

The study was conducted using empirical method for data collection and simple percentages for the analysis of data collected through questionnaires administered among two thousand and one respondents each from Adamawa, Kaduna, Kogi, Edo, Imo amd Oyo States out of which two thousand and forty were recovered . The data from the fieldwork shows that the journey for a democratic regime which started in the year 1999 has suffered huge setbacks because of the activities of political parties in the country. This study notes that democratic values and practices are crucial for democratic institutionalization and the development of party strength. Democracy provides the opportunities for the people to freely

exercise their voting rights in the selection of representatives who govern them. Democracy depends on parties to survive, since the structure of elections right from citizens participation to candidates’ selection and presentation of competing political programmes is done by political parties. It is on this note that political parties occupy a special place in the democratic equation.

However, the result of this study reveals that Nigerian political parties did not possessed features of political parties such as ideology, party m anifestoes, likeminded people as well as viable opposition party. This study has shown that absence of these features in political parties led to crisis in the past civilian regimes, and a causal factor on which the military anchored its intervention in 1966. The history of Nigeria’s democratic experiments demonstrates that elections and electoral politics have generated so much animosity which has, in some cases, threatened the corporate existence of the country. Based on empirical evidence gathered from the activities of political parties of this dispensation, the critical nature of Nigerian political parties in the Fourth Republic has undermined their ability to contribute fully to the achievement of democratic consolidation in the country.

The study noted the parties are not helped by imposition of candidates, godfatherism, money politics, injustice, party indiscipline, the lack of a clear cut ideology, and virile opposition parties. The lack of political ideology throws up parties that are not themselves democratic. Democratic values and practices are crucial for democratic institutionalization and the development of party strength. It makes no sense to stand for a democratic polity and yet not practice democrac y

within one’s party. Unfortunately, that is the sad story of political parties in Nigeria. Parties do not accept democratic rules. This problem, which has led to party defection, otherwise known as cross - carpeting, party witching, floor- crossing, party-hopping, canoe-jumping, decamping and party jumping has remained a permanent feature in the Nigerian democracy. It is interesting to note in this context that a party’s relationship to intra -party democracy reflects its interaction with democratic procedures in general: Parties which are democratic internally also accept democracy as ‘ the only game in town’. This study confirms the view that clientelistic and ethnic parties are unwilling to abide by democratic rules while parties with at least a minimal ideo logical content do. Given parties’ intermediary role between state and society, democratic consolidation appears less likely in states in which parties fail to include programmatic ideas.

The responses from interview conducted corroborated the above narrat ives as they argues that while the process of forming and registering political parties has remained relatively open since 1999, the internal governance of the parties has hardly been liberalized. In fact, a few rich politicians have captured and privatized the political parties to meet their narrow ends, thereby re -orienting the parties away from their basic functions of interest articulation, aggregation and political education. As a result, political parties have become vehicles for power acquisition and surplus extraction.

The responses from the interviews conducted also revealed that the activities of all the parties shows that they possessed non identifiable ideology that serve as motivating force, which is expected to be the source of their manifesto. They

failed to have a grand strategy of enlighten the electorates that would make them secured people votes. For instance the most visible messages of political parties during campaign is that a vote for the other party is a vote for them is a vote against the other parties. One example suffice. During the 2007 campaign, the then Action Congress ( AC) campaign is that a vote for AC is a vote against the PDP government. The Democratic People’ s Party (DPP) presidential candidate promised free compulsory education for all if elected president; given that Sokoto where he is their current Governor has one of the highest illiteracy levels in the country. Similarly, the PDP promises to make Nigeria one of the 20 greatest economies by the year 2010. Similar promises were made by the ruling APC party during the 2015 campaign which are yet to see the lig ht of the day. It is deduced that most of the candidates failed to address fundamental questions of Nigeria’ s development. The focus of the campaign, according to revolved around personality of the candidates. That made it difficult to distinguish between the political parties in terms of ideology and policy.

On the issue of opposition, the current number of political parties in view of those interviewed, suggested a more democratic polity, a widening of political space and more options for voters. But most of these parties are composed of individuals whose personal interests are threatened by the existing governments and thus decided to join the opposition party. The existing opposition’s party in Nigeria today lacks the integrity to stick to their stance o n some salient political issues as it affects the citizenry. The priorities of all these parties is what they will gains in politics. Opposition parties in Nigerian democracy remained

ineffective due to their failure to form coalitions that will give a str ong opposition to the ruling party and make them obey the rule of the game for people to enjoy the dividend of democracy. The need for alternative policy in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. If ruling politicians are failing the people, i t is the responsibility of the opposition to step in, in a credible, robust, articulate, clear and coherent manner, to provide alternative policy options on how to deal with the challenges that confront the country and the majority of the Nigerian people.

* 1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The origin, absence of ideology, opposition and lack of charismatic leaders are identified as factors that hinder parties ’ effectiveness to consolidate democracy in Nigeria. And since political parties remained an important institution that democratic survival relied on, it is important that all political parties should be reformed. The area of reformation should include the procedure for admitting new cross carpeting members. The transparent in the procedure of selecting party flag bearers as well as involvement of all party cards carrying membe rs in their primary. And a well-designed and meaningful party manifestoes should be develops by all parties. By so doing, the parties outside government can criticizes the policy of ruling party base on their program me.

It is against this backdrop that the study provided the following recommendations addressing the research objectives:

1. Political parties committed to national development should abdicate primordial consideration when in control of government. While political

parties outside the government lack the necessary influence to effect fundamental policy issues, party in government , as a representative of the national conscience, has the opportunity to transform its manifestoes to national policies rather than selective sectional interests. Discipline among government officials with high moral standard should be the creed of political parties. In other words, political parties in government should not only concentrate in ruling for sectional interest but ensure discipline to avert corruption.

1. Disciplined political parties in government are capable of enforcing accountability. Lack of internal democracy often generates moral weakness. Thus, when political parties allow transparency in the choice of their electoral candidates, the government would tilt towards accountability. Opposition political parties are necessary as check to the go vernment. Responsible opposition enforces accountability and transparency. Nigeria’s presidential system offers opposition political parties pride of place for the opposition political parties.
2. Institutionalization of political parties. One of the key esse ntialities of representative democracy is viable political parties. The focus and organization of a political party should be ideologically ordered. Developed democracies owed their successes to ideologically inclined political parties which presuppose the baseline for the idiosyncrasies, attitudes and actions of party members in given circumstances including whether in power or in opposition. Party ideology is necessarily a driver of the conscience,

morality and disposition of party leaders, members and t heir sympathizers. Electoral violence is an amoral in ideal democratic culture and political parties which are often the masterminds of rigging and disruptions will do less if party ideology is shared along with moral discipline it imposes. The core of institutionalized political party is to be ideologically imbued. The structure and operation of a political party including party manifesto and agenda for government is driven by its philosophy. Incidentally, Nigerian political parties lack ideological persuasion. Most of the challenges confronting development of party politics in Nigeria are associated with absence of ideologically driven political parties. Politicians in Nigeria find themselves in political parties in a free - for- all manner with ultimate aim of reaping political benefits ( election or appointment), the means to which in the absence of ideological guidance, remains largely inordinate including violence. Lack of institutionalization makes political parties transient and susceptible to disintegration through decampment by politicians or cross - carpeting, lack of internal democracy, and unwieldy proliferation of political parties. For instance, the occurrences of cross -carpeting and decampment often causes violence among political parties, especially in a parliamentary system as well as lack of internal democracy. The developments brews to intra- party and inter- parties squabbles and many times escalated into violence as witnessed during the presidential rally of the APC in Lagos on January 9 2019 and in Abeokuta, Ogun state on February 11 2019. Absence of ideology can also promote proliferation of

political parties. Existence of numerous political parties in Nigeria which

was put at total of 91 by INEC for 2019 general elections is a manifestation of lack of vision and institution in the organization of political parties in Nigeria. Institutionalized political parties are philosophically built and supportive of democratic deepening; violent orientation should not be part of party ideology. Without a platform for action, the ethnic elite in Rivers State and godfathers in Oyo States would have no structure through which they pursue violent engagement as means to power. In other words, political parties provide the platform for all sorts of actions includ ing violence inciting activities of the politicians. Therefore, political parties in Nigeria need desperate rebranding in terms of institutionalization of ideologies so as to play the supportive role expected of them in democracy and election in particular.

1. In Nigeria, opposition parties have members in the legislative assemblies at the national and state levels. Similarly, a sizeable numbers of state governments are under the control of opposition political parties. Yet, governance crisis is not restricted to any level. This shows that political parties have not been able to exploit the necessary institutional mechanisms to promote the well- being of the citizens. In all, political parties should construct and develop a culture of development with a view to ensuring the promotion of good governance at all levels. Promotion of good governance will ultimately leads to democracy being consolidated
2. For democracy to thrive in Nigeria, the political leaders must engender creative ideas and robust strategies that w ill address poverty by generating

employment for the masses of Nigerians who are currently the agents or

tools of demagoguery as well as vulnerable to inducements because of the poverty they experience in their daily lives. Also, there has to be a massive, nationwide education of the Nigerian people about the essence of democracy and the disadvantages or destabilizing roles of normalizing practices that imply aberration to democracy. This is vital because, for an average Nigerian politician and voter, elect oral offences are understandably normal and expected such that ― everyone‖ and ―all politicians‖ engage in it in one way or the other. Thus, the attitudes of actors (politicians and their supporters) reflect those of the survival of the fittest in the battl e of wits, indeed demagoguery. Nigerian politicians and electorates must learn and appreciate the mores of democracy by a deliberate national programme of civic education in both formal and non - formal educational institutions.

1. Political parties must evolve objective procedures for selecting candidates that will be open, transparent and democratic by allowing INEC to have legal responsibility to supervise and authenticate primaries of political parties to ensure that aspirants seeking nominations do not use bribery, intimidation, threat or violence to gain nomination.
2. Also, in order to safeguard the democratic rights of party members, it is highly recommended that there should be a constitutional amendment that clearly states the conditions under which a memb er of a political party can be disqualified from exercising his or her democratic rights of aspiring to be a candidate of his party for an election. This will prevent the current trend in which the political parties are used as tools to scuttle the politic al

ambitions of constitutionally qualified Nigerians from contesting elections

as the case was with Ararume versus the Peoples Democratic Party in 2007, in which case, the candidate confirmed by the court as the authentic PDP flag bearer was dropped by the party on the basis that Ararume was disloyal to the party leadership by not accepting to be substituted for the defeated, but preferred, candidate of the party leadership. Because of the reprehensible roles of political parties and their leaders in disenf ranchising aspirants or candidates and serving as available tools of demagogues‘ imposition of candidates, i t is suggested that the current electoral act that empowers political parties to present the names of their candidates either through primary election or party nomination must be repealed in favour of credible, INEC-monitored primary elections.

1. Building virile civil-society interactions- The civil society in Nigeria should be made vibrant as a critical component of the democratic society. Civil society organizations in Nigeria can do more in terms of political education, public enlightenment, acting as watchdogs on the elections and political actors as well as mobilizers of last resort in defense of democracy in the advent of threat of collapse. All se gments of the civil society should annex the linkage opportunities to work in harmony towards sanitizing electoral politics in Nigeria through vehement push for reforms of the laws and restructuring of the institutions that are considered core to the succe ss of elections and democracy itself.
2. The need to encourage the culture of opposition politics is of crucial importance to the future of Nigerian democracy. It is widely known most

Nigerian politicians always prefer to be on the winning side and would therefore prefer to strike deals with the winning party. It is defeatist attitude. It would serve the course of democracy better if opposition parties remain steadfast, build strength and capacity around their programmes and manifestoes to provide the electorates with credible alternatives in future elections.

## CONCLUSION

The study demonstrated the significant of party ideology and opposition politics to the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. At any point in time there can only be one driver in a car and whichever party the society chooses as the government at any point, i t has a responsibility to discharge that mandate effectively and efficiently. At that point, the party that is not in government also has a role to play to show the electorates that it is better positioned to provide leadership and thus, must provide the alternative reasoning on all issues. There must be an opportunity for persons holding contrasting ideas, views, outlook, and philosophy concerning the solution to social, political, and economic problem to air their view freely and without any form of intimidation. There must be an ample opportunity for society to debate alternate courses of action before deciding upon a particular policy. Any group of people either organized or otherwise however, small that presents itself as having solution to any form of problem afflicting the society at any point in time must be allowed to suggest or present his or her ideas to the public.

Political ideology is a key component of democracy. It is the first and most important vehicle of a political party. Despite all pretences to the contrary through their manifestoes, as much as the superficial classifications as the “left” and “right”, “progressive” and “conservative”, Nigerian parties seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments. This conclusion is predicated upon the relegation of politics of issues to the background across the various republics, and in its place the ascendancy of identity and money politics. Other factors include the rising magnitude of political vagrancy on the basis of selfish and parochial interests, the high level of party indi scipline, absence/ weakness of party cohesion and internal democracy, and the high mortality and turnover of party leadership. Corollary to this challenge is that all the political parties are not providing the right opposition to the ruling party. Nigerian parties do not seem to be having it really good: despite the fact that we are in an era of multiparty democracy. This may not be unconnected with their low degree of institutionalization, internal cohesion and discipline, resulting in their underperforman ce. These contradictions can easily be traced to the poverty of ideology that characterizes the parties.

In terms of ideological disposition, Nigerian parties presents a contradiction. This contradictions as Omotola (2009) noted is manifested by the fact t hat while the parties parade their manifestoes and objectives, they are hardly different in any concrete way except may be in degree and modality of implementation. Second, such manifestoes have never been exploited as a basis of popular mobilization, legitimization, conflict management and other notable roles of

ideology. As such, the enviable roles of political ideology in party politics have been hijacked and perverted by the forces of identity notably ethnicity and religion as well as the influence of money politics. The implication has been that politics in Nigeria has become a dominantly an elitist affair for the disempowerment of not only the masses, but also the state. This manifests in the forms of rising poverty, inequality and the persistent crisi s of national integration and development, with heavy tolls on the consolidation of democracy ( Anifowese and Seteolu, 2004; Nwokoma, 2004; Nwomeh, 2005; Omotola, 2005a; Saliu and Omotola, 2006 ).

Give the above situation; it is crucially important to device a means of averting this trend so as to avoid the intriguing experiences of the collapse of previous republics in Nigeria. The starting point would be to revisit the ideological foundations of Nigerian parties. But then, this raises more questions t han answers. For example, who do we entrust with such a Herculean task, the party elites who are the chief, if not only beneficiaries of the perverted system? There must therefore first be an aggressive and sustained system of social mobilization at all levels of party organization and society, socializing and educating people of the ills of ideological barrenness to party politics, emphasizing the need for change. It should however be noted that political party reform cannot be done in isolation. It must be a part of a larger reform programme that addresses very decisively the crisis and contradictions of Nigeria’s political economy. This task certainly transcends the borderline of party activities. It is one that should embrace every segment of the Nigerian state and society. The civil society in particular has a

responsibility for the socialization, education, conscientization and mobilization of the masses for the required reform. Then some ideological sanity can be returned to political party and party p olitics for sustainable democracy and development.

## CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge in the area of democracy with particular focus on the role of political party, opposition politics and party ideology in the practice of democracy in Nigeria. Specifically, the study has contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

* + 1. Poverty of party and ideology and a virile opposition party are major problems that undermines and threatens democratic practice in Nigeria‘s Fourth Republic.
    2. The impact of lack of ideology in political parties and a strong opposition politics on democracy is massive and quite significant in determining the outcome of democratic elections in Nigeria.
    3. All parties in Nigeria‘ s democratic politics lack ideology and they considered it as a political norm, making it possible for political stakeholders to engage in one form or the other without fear of being sanctioned; especially that electoral victory depends on such practices ( bribery, threats, intimidation, manipulation/ falsification of election results, ballot snatching, et cetera), and all political parties are involved, although in varied degrees.
    4. The study presents Nigerian-specific types of political parties as different from what may be applicable in other political climes and advances reasons why some qualified and willing citizens avoid politics in Nigeria.

## 5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study opens up new areas for further research. Importantly, stu dies need to be carried out to ascertain the dynamics of political party, opposition politics, and party ideology on Nigeria‘ s democratic institutions generally, security agencies and the Judiciary, particularly. This will help enlighten relevant democratic stakeholders on the constraints that impede the performances of the institutions and consequences for democratic survival, deepening and sustainability.

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**Appendix 1**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**IGBINEDION UNIVERSITY OKADA, EDO STATE**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is for the conduct of a Ph.D. research on “Assessing the Dynamics of Politics of Opposition, Political Parties and Ideology in Consolidating Democracy in Nigeria: 1999-2019” with special focus on registered members of prominent political parties in the country, including academia, journalists, religious leaders and heads of major ethnic organizations.

Please, express honestly how you feel about these issues as your opinion is considered important. The information you supply is for academic research and will be kept confidential.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

### OSIFO, Washington Osai

**SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Personal profile: Please tick as appropriate [√]

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender: (a) Male [ ] | (b) Female | [ ] |  |
| Age: (a) 18-29 [ ] (b) 30-39 [ ] | (c) 40-49 [ ] | (d) 50-59 [ ] | (e) 60 and above [ ] |

Religion: Christianity ( ) Islam ( ) Traditional ( ) Other (please specify) …… Marital status: Single ( ) Married ( ) Separated ( ) Divorced ( ) Widowed ( )

Educational Background: Primary () Secondary ( ) Tertiary ( ) Other (please specify)……... Occupation: Unemployed ( ) Self-employed ( ) 4. Government services ( ) Private services ( ) Other (Please specify)……………………..

Political Party Membership: PDP ( ) APC ( ) APGA ( ) Labour ( ) Action Alliance ( )

State (as shown on your Voter‘s card): …………………………..

### SECTION B: Respondents’ Opinions

Please answer this section and tick as appropriate [√] by selecting one of the alternatives (SA (Strongly Agree); A (Agree); U (Undecided); D (Disagree) SD (Strongly Disagree); you may add comment to justify your answers.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S/N | STATEMENTS | **S A** | **A** | **U** | **D** | **S D** |
| 1 | My political party is guided by ideology. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | I understand and key adequately into my political party’s ideology. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | My political party engages in opposition politics. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | I am convinced that my political party engages in the right or positive  political opposition practices. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | I believe that democracy is growing in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | There is stable democratic process in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | I feel democracy is not threatened in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | In my opinion, democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic is not  facing problems and challenges. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | I believe opposition politics is important in a democratic society. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | I am convinced that opposition politics can play an important role in  consolidating democracy in Nigeria. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | I observe that opposition politics can be separated from democratic  consolidation. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | I also opine that opposition politics can destroy democracy in Nigeria. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | I don’t see party ideology as important to democratic consolidation. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | I am confident that my political party can influence Nigeria’s democratic  consolidation. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | The ideology of my political party is strong enough to influence Nigeria’s  democratic consolidation. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | I see political parties, ideology and democratic consolidation as inseparable  variables. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | I view politics of opposition as a key factor in consolidating democracy in  Nigeria. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | I am sure that political parties constitute an important factor in consolidating  democracy in Nigeria. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | I believe ideology is a relevant instrument in consolidating democracy in  Nigeria. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 | I agree that the dynamic nature of politics of opposition, political parties and  ideology can contribute positively to democratic consolidation in Nigeria. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 2**

## DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**IGBINEDION UNIVERSITY OKADA, EDO STATE INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Dear Respondent,

This interview guide is for the conduct of a Ph.D. research work on “Assessing the Dynamics of Politics of Opposition, Political Parties and Ideology in Consolidating Democracy in Nigeria: 1999-2019” with special focus on registered members of prominent political parties in the country, including academia, journalists, religious leaders and heads of major ethnic organizations. Please, your opinion is considered important. The information you supply is for academic research and will be kept confidential.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

### OSIFO, Washington Osai

Respondent’s Name:

Gender & Age:

Job Status:

Work/Professional Experience (in terms of years): Date of Interview:

Time of Interview:

Place of Interview:

Respondent’s signature:

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS**

1. How can you describe the political parties we have in Nigeria?
2. Are these political parties guided by ideology, and what is the nature of the ideology?
3. Do the political parties engage in opposition politics, and what are these political opposition practices?
4. Are you convinced that democracy is growing in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic, and what evidences can you give to support your opinion?
5. What do you view as the problems and challenges of democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic?
6. Taking Nigeria’s political experience into consideration, do you think opposition politics

can play an important role in consolidating democracy in Nigeria and how?

1. In what way do you think the ideology of these political parties can be explored to influence Nigeria’s democratic consolidation?
2. Generally, are you convinced that the politics of opposition can serve as a key factor in consolidating democracy in Nigeria, and how?
3. Above all, what is the overall importance of political parties and ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria?