

Advocating for practical solutions to challenges of Nigerian Party politics

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Abstract

The major challenges connected to Nigeria's political party politics includes ideology, corruption, money politics, ethno religious fragmentations, violence and a dominant ruling party with some opposition parties challenging each other. Studies on Nigerian political parties are narrow in advocating for practical solutions to the challenges of party politics in Nigeria, particularly considering the emerging shift in the voting choices of the citizens during the 2007 and 2019 general elections in Bauchi State. This indicates that the influence of political parties on voters appears to be in decline, or at the very least experiencing significant change. Thus, the nature of this evidence of decline and what it means for the future of parties and representative democracy needs to be investigated with realistic way out, which this study aims at through a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. The study concludes that, while political parties are reasonably and normatively important to the process of representative democracy, party politics in Nigeria should embrace a collective viewpoint and common ideology of serving and developing the welfare of the electorates as well as to aggregate, articulate, and stimulate the electorates interests in the form of policy alternatives. In addition, Nigerian political party system must be is a system of connections consequential from inter-party competition. This imply that

each party as a component affects and is influenced in turn by the performance of the other parties within Nigeria's political system.

Keywords: Nigeria; Party Politics; Ideology, Corruption; Money Politics; Ethno-religious Fragmentations; Practical Solutions.

Introduction

After independence in 1960, political parties, being one of the significant components of democratic government and politics in Nigeria, had gone through three stages: the elite parties of the 1920s and 1930s; mass parties of the 1940s; and ethnic and sectional parties of 1950s and beyond.¹ These transformations presented the form of politics and party system in Nigeria. The transformation of the three major parties, Action Group (AG), National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and Northern People's Congress (NPC)² to become provincial power alliances remained noticeable upsetting issues that described regional and cultural atmosphere of politics in Nigeria. NPC, headed by of Ahmadu Bello, ruled the Northern Region House of Assembly between 1960 and 1966, being the leading political party from the Northern Region. Labelled as 'One North', the party signified unity among its people regardless of rank, faith, or ethnic group. The philosophy of NPC appeared to be tremendously rooted in the wish for the growth and transformation of the Northern part of Nigeria.³ Similarly, AG conquered the Western

¹ The example of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) is interesting. Originally, this party formed in the 1940s as a pan-Nigeria nationalist party. However, responding to pressures of inter-party competition from other emerging parties in the 1950s, notably the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the Action Group (AG), the party turned into an ethnic party with its electoral support base in the Igbo populated eastern part of Nigeria. Patrick F. Wilmot, *In Search of Nationhood: The Theory and Practice of Nationalism in Africa* (Lagos: Lantern Books, 1980), 5-18.

² Operating in a heterogeneous environment with support from different ethno-religious groups and interests, it is more appropriate to describe NPC as a sectional, rather than ethnic, party.

³ NPC, "Constitution of the Northern People's Congress", Kaduna, 1953. Section II & III.

part of Nigeria, first piloted by Obafemi Awolowo and subsequently Samuel Ladoke Akintola. AG endorsed ethnic patriotism functioning in a federal structure.⁴ NCNC had its foundation in the Eastern part of Nigeria, and was steered by Nnamdi Azikiwe, a foremost nationalist and the first president of Nigeria. From the works and discussions of Azikiwe, the philosophy of NCNC is considered as the African renaissance.

African revitalisation encouraged the idea of the dignity of black man understood with a robust wisdom of economic determinism.⁵ There were comparatively smaller political parties with some electoral power that granted them chance to become respected merger allies to the three major political parties. These include Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) led by Mallam Aminu Kano. Its philosophy was directed towards emancipation of the disadvantaged social classes in the aristocratic subjugated Northern civilisation.⁶ The United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) functioning in the Middle Belt of Nigeria led by Joseph Tarka remained likewise a moderately smaller political party with modest electoral power. Borno Youth Movement (BYM), which originated from the Kanuri conquered northeast, was controlled by Ibrahim Imam.⁷ Generally, the rest of the political parties lack state, or federal legislative representation.⁸

Thus, AG arose from the Yoruba ethnic group, *Egbe Omo Odu'a*, and NPC from *Jam'iyyar Mutanen Arewa*. This indicates that political parties that developed and controlled sections of

⁴ AG, Constitution of the Action Group of Nigeria (amended), Lagos, 1962. See also Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (London: Faber & Faber, 1947); John A. Ayoade, "Party and Ideology: A Case Study of the Action Group", *Journal of Black Studies*, 16, no. 2 (1985): 169-188.

⁵ Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Respect for Human Dignity". An Inaugural Address Delivered by Governor General and Commander in Chief, Federation of Nigeria, Lagos, November 16, 1960; Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa* (London: Frank Cass, 1968).

⁶ NEPU, *Sawaba Declaration of Principles* (Jos: Baseco Press, 1952). See also Alkasum Abba, *The Northern Elements Progressive Union and the Politics of Radical Nationalism in Nigeria: 1938-1960* (Zaria: Ramadan Printing Press, 2007); 155-160.

⁷ Billy J. Dudley, *Parties, and Politics in Northern Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 164.

⁸ Examples of these included, though not limited to, the Republican Party (RP), Zamfara Commoners Party (ZCP), United National Independence Party (UNIP), Dynamic Party (DP), Democratic Party of Nigeria and Cameroon (DPNC), and Kano Peoples Party (KPP).

Nigeria that time were predominantly ethnic in character and viewpoint from formation. NCNC, which originated as a wide platform for nationalists' campaigning for the independence of Nigeria, later changed into an ethnic party by choice. This condition significantly exaggerated the development of politics and party system creation and stemmed to the appearance of political parties that were predominantly cultural centred and established on regional benefits. This correspondingly generated split in the nation and altered the foundation for political collaboration to cultural rivalries.⁹

Methodology

Qualitative method allows a researcher to understand and describe and analyse electorate's perceptions through discourse analysis with empirical evidences and facts. Various aspects of social life, experiences, and attitudes of individuals, using words or discussions with varying methodological practices,¹⁰ it is against this background that the study adopt a qualitative method in its data collection and analysis.

Nigerian political parties

⁹ Richard L. Sklar, "Unity or Regionalism: The Nationalities Question" in *Crafting the New Nigeria: Confronting the Challenges*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004), 39-59.

¹⁰ McCusker and Gunaydin, (2015); Gough and Lyons, (2016)

The growth and expansion of Nigerian political parties since independence in 1960 have been characterized by instability in Nigeria's democratization process. This influences their nature and settings meaningfully.¹¹

Abiyan and Agbese state that it leads to the termination of the establishments and arrangements initiated to enable the changeover comprising the five registered political parties, and Electoral Commission (NECON). Abdulsalami's government established another electoral body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The responsibility of this organisation was to register political parties, screen, and control their activities, and conduct elections to pave way for the Fourth Republic in May 1999. The Abdulsalami administration liberated entirely political convicts and summoned all political outcasts back to Nigeria. This judgement was encouraging. Subsequently, Nigeria was at the time struggling with two severe national dares. Firstly is, fighting conflict-ridden powers that endangered nation-wide unity and peace. Second, searching for an enduring democratic principle grounded in the ethics of fairness and equity.

General Obasanjo was among the freed prisoners who subsequently fused into PDP, contested, and emerged the victor of the 1999 presidential election. Obasanjo instigated a new committee to draft a fresh constitution.¹² This marked a very important stage in defining party systems and politics in Nigeria with other political establishments, and the plan for a sustainable democracy in Nigeria. INEC demanded political associations to present their applications for registration, and

¹¹ Whitaker Jr, C. S. (2015). *The politics of tradition: Continuity and change in Northern Nigeria, 1946-1966*. Princeton University Press;” Abdussalam Abubakar, “Maiden Broadcast to the Nation after his Inauguration as the Head of State and Commander in Chief of Nigerian Armed Forces”, Abuja, June 9, 1998. Abdussalam Abubakar, “38th Nigeria's Independence Anniversary Speech”. Abuja, October 1, 1998. Abegunrin, O. (2003). Nigerian foreign policy under military rule, 1966-1999. Greenwood Publishing Group; Dudley, B. J. (2013). Parties and politics in Northern Nigeria. Routledge. Sklar, R. L. (2015). *Nigerian political parties: Power in an emergent African nation (Vol. 2288)*. Princeton University Press.

¹² INEC, “INEC: History”. <http://inecnigeria.org/?page_id=43> (accessed 20 June, 2013). Abubakar notes that the 1995 Constitution designed by Abacha contained “certain inadequacies”.

about twenty-six associations were presented in 1998. INEC approved nine associations and gave them a conditional registration pending their performance in the council elections of December 5, 1998. Part of the fundamentals for a party to be granted endorsement to partake in the gubernatorial, state and national assembly, and presidential elections, was that it must gain above ten percent of the entire votes in at least two-thirds of the states in the country.¹³

Orji, Kunle, Adigbou, Okolie Saka, and Inokoba maintain that the histrionically short and recurrent life span of most of the political parties that operated from 1999 suffered from problems associated with elite defections, internal crises, and poor financial bases. From 1999 to 2015, there were occurrences of top-ranking politicians defecting from one political party to the other with massive separation among parties. Numerous circumstances led to these crises pointing out the management of those parties at both state and federal stages. There is the necessity for ideological commitment within political parties. Lack of ideology by the political parties is obvious in their noticeable deficiencies when confronted with crucial state matters. Moreover, a small number of these parties can claim of inspiring records of sincere associates who are meaningfully and significantly dedicated to the parties. The real associates of these parties remain the few who created and finance them for the projected returns.¹⁴

¹³ Most of these registered parties are no longer found on the electoral landscape of Nigeria, but some of them such as the Peoples Redemption Party had been de-registered by INEC in accordance with relevant sections of the 2010 Electoral Act (amendment). A. Sat Obiyan, "Political Parties under the Abubakar Transition Program and Democratic Stability in Nigeria", *Issue: Journal of Opinion*, 27, no. 1 (1994): 4; Agbese, P. O. (1999). Party registration and the subversion of democracy in Nigeria. *African Issues*, 27(1), 63-65.

¹⁴ Orji, N. (2014). Nigeria's 2015 lectoral Reform in Nigeria", *Journal of Nigeria Studies*, 1, no. 1 (2010): 15-16.; Adigbuo, E. R. (2008). Defender of the faith: the challenges of Nigeria's 2007 presidential election. *Politikon*, 35(2), 223-245. Okolie, A. C. (2010). The 2007 General Elections in Nigeria: An Account of the Politics of Personal Rule in an African Country by a former Presidential Aide. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 37(2), 153-172. Saka, M. (2014). Democratization and Political Development in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 7(11), 109-122. Inokoba, P. K., & Kumokor, I. (2011). Electoral crisis, governance, and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 27(2), 139-148. Election in perspective. *Africa Spectrum*, 49(3), 121-133. Kunle Animashaun, "Regime Character: Electoral Crisis and Prospects of E

Katsina, Isumonah, Jega, Ajayi, Joseph, Idang, Lloyd, Abdullah, Lewis, and Inohkoba posit that these political parties are deceitful, fragile, crisis-prone, internally divided, and immature in their manifestations. Although there are few striking opinions that recommended caution in tagging parties as organisationally weak, however, the growth of a political system and parties has refused to evolve within the Nigerian arena. Over the years, Nigerian democratic settings have always been the first target of the military rule. Thus, this has affected the growth and development of sustainable democracy. The transition from the military era to the fourth republic was very short (June 1998-May 1999) and this posed a constraint at organizing a sound democratic system, conducting credible elections and having an error-free constitution. Hence, it was only PDP that survived and maintained the party structures from 1999 to the period of 2011 when compared to other parties that got initial approval at the beginning of the fourth republic. The APP struggled with loss of political relevance despite its change of name to All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP). As for Alliance for Democracy (AD), it has had series of divisions and split and has disappeared from political scene by 2007. These problems prominently affect the political organizations in their ideology and structures, and make them to depend on primitive arrangements, sectional cleavages, and vote buying and electoral malpractices.¹⁵

¹⁵“ibid” Katsina, A. M. (2013). A contextual analysis of party system formation in Nigeria, 1960-2011. *Intellectual Discourse*, 21(2). Pp.69-72; Isumonah, V. A. (2012). Imperial presidency and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *Africa Today*, 59(1), 43-68.; Jega, A. (2000). The state and identity transformation under structural adjustment in Nigeria. *Identity transformation and identity politics under structural adjustment in Nigeria*, 24-40. Ajayi, K. (2006). Security forces, electoral conduct and the 2003 general elections in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(1), 57-66.; Joseph, R. (1978). Political parties and ideology in Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy*, 5(13), 78-90. Idang, G. J. (1973). *Nigeria: internal politics and foreign policy, 1960-1966* (p. 136). Ibadan: Ibadan University Press. Lloyd, P. C. (1955). The development of political parties in western Nigeria. *American political science review*, 49(3), 693-707.; Abdullah, H. (1993). Transition politics' and the challenge of gender in Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy*, 20(56), 27-41. Lewis, P. (1999). Nigeria: an End to the permanent transition. *Journal of Democracy*, 10(1), 141-156.; Inokoba, P. K., & Kumokor, I. (2011). Electoral crisis, governance, and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 27(2), 139-148.

Yagboyaju, Oyebode, Adegaju, Awefoso and Irabor, Hamalai, and Mustapha argue that the prominent political parties from 1999-2015 includes the ACN, ANPP, APGA, CPC, LP and PDP, while only PDP controlled twenty-three states from 1999-2011. During this period, it is only the PDP that has national orientation because of its presence across both southern and northern parts of the country. ACN had six states under its watch which were predominantly in Southwest region and, thus, it was skewed as Yoruba party. Similarly, ANPP has the coloration of Hausa party due to its dominance in the northern region. However, the other parties, such as APGA, CPC, and LP, were barely dominance over more than a state each.¹⁶

Owen, Usman, Orji, Carbone, Casani, Thurson, Kerr, Nwozor, Oshewolo, LeVan, and Ajilola postulate that it is within this context that the All Progressives Congress (APC) materialised. In 2013, the chieftains of CPC, ACN, ANPP, and their respective governments, and other interested oppositions came together and formed the APC. The APC alliance stays solid, moves to gain more strength from aggrieved oppositions, most especially from a fractured PDP of notable importance. From this group are the former vice president Atiku Abubakar and seven governors from the PDP. The continuous crisis in PDP was a gain to the APC alliance, and hence gathered more support across the country.¹⁷

¹⁶ Yagboyaju, D. A. (2015). Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2015) and electoral outcomes: how long can patronage or 'politics of the belly' last. *Journal of African Elections*, 14(2), 162-185.; LeVan, A. C., & Ajijola, A. (2018). Drivers and Dynamics of Electoral Reform, 1999–2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics*, 336. Adegaju, A., & Oyebode, O. (2015). Humour as discursive practice in Nigeria's 2015 presidential election online campaign discourse. *Discourse Studies*, 17(6), 643-662.; Awofeso, O., & Irabor, P. A. (2018). Principle of Loyal Opposition: The Case of Political Parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *J. Pol. & L.*, 11, 17; Hamalai, L., Egwu, S., & Omotola, J. S. (2017). Trends in Election Outcomes, 1999–2015. In *Nigeria's 2015 General Elections* (pp. 125-137). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. Mustapha, M. (2017). The 2015 general elections in Nigeria: new media, party politics, and the political economy of voting. *Review of African Political Economy*, 44(152), 312-321.

¹⁷ Owen, O., & Usman, Z. (2015). Briefing: Why Good luck Jonathan lost the Nigerian presidential election of 2015. *African Affairs*, 114(456), 455-471. Orji, N. (2017). Preventive action and conflict mitigation in Nigeria's 2015 elections. *Democratization*, 24(4), 707-723. Carbone, G., & Cassani, A. (2016). Nigeria and democratic progress by elections in Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 51(3), 33-59. Thurston, A. (2018). The politics of technocracy in fourth republic Nigeria. *African Studies Review*, 61(1), 215-238. Kerr, N. N. (2018). Election-Day Experiences and Evaluations of Electoral Integrity in Unconsolidated Democracies: Evidence from Nigeria. *Political Studies*, 66(3), 667-686. Nwozor, A., & Oshewolo, S. (2017). Election Governance and Consolidation in Nigeria: An Assessment of the 2011 and 2015 Presidential Elections. *UNIUYO Journal of Humanities (UUJH)*, 21(2). LeVan, A. C., & Ajijola, A. (2018). Drivers and Dynamics of Electoral Reform, 1999–2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian Politics*, 336.

The numerous manifestations of Nigeria's multiparty democracy have contained a dominant ruling party and some opposition parties gracefully challenging each other. The PDP was the ruling party since 1999 at the presidential and governorship levels, a demonstration to its wide-ranging support through Nigeria's regional, religious, and ethnic configurations, and its profound national linkages. It is the platform on which Nigeria is democratized and the organizational basis for its competing and cooperating elites. Within the sixteen years of democratic rule, the party has lived longer than its opponents, some of which have fused with other parties, shrunken absolutely into the vagueness of regional politics. Nevertheless, the PDP's capability to accommodate interests and settle internal differences was rigorously ruined after 2010 when the party was unsuccessful to settle crises about the failure of its power-sharing principle generated when vice president Jonathan decided to run for office in 2011 after the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'adua, a northerner. The system of allowing power to rotate between different regions, or zoning, was planned to overcome perennial fear of domination between the north and the south, among the major ethnic groups, and between Muslims and Christians, which had led to violent coups and bloody civil war in the mid-1960s. Jonathan's doggedness on running for a second term in the 2015 elections, in spite of an assumed promise to party chieftains that he would serve for only one term, additionally tensed the party's unity and generated serious internal conflicts. President Jonathan's uninspiring personality, his incomplete experience, and the perceived provincial orientation of his administration, which relied on an inner core from the Niger Delta, isolated him from powerful party members. These kinds of differences within Nigerian political parties such as ideologies, corruption, and excessive use of money, notorious shifting alliances by politicians, political violence led to failure to use democracy to deliver development.

Challenges of Nigerian Party Politics

The democratic process of voting between political parties in Nigeria remains a contest between an entrenched ruling party and a major opposition. The smaller parties are frequently in loose coalitions with either of the two. This trend makes the political system open to division and coupled with Nigeria's traditional configurations of north-south, Christian-Muslim, and majority-minority ethnicities. Despite the constitutional provisions designed to ensure that a winning party must manage to surpass these cleavages, usually elections have preferred the ruling party and its incumbent candidate, particularly the federal level to run for a second term. The massive payoffs of electoral victory generate extreme desperation on both sides, encouraging electoral malpractices that weaken the credibility of the electoral process. The political division that accompanies these contests regularly creates instability and violence before, during, and after the electoral process, and has paved the way for military intervention. More than eight hundred people died due to violence in the aftermath of the 2011 elections, while the military seized the civilian administration shortly after the elections of 1964, 1983, and 1993¹⁸.

In the same vein, Kendhammer posits that the effect of ethnicity on party politics in Nigeria since 1999 remains problematic. Strategies intended to end ethnic outbidding and the ethnicity of party politics have resulted in greater levels of ethnic violence. The Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) succeeds as a multi-ethnic coalition on the basis of informal bargains and accommodations. The practice of zoning, which distributes the spoils of office according to an ethnic formula, produces incentives for local elites to embark upon ethnic violence or ethnic mobilisation as a way

¹⁸ Sklar, R. L. (2015). *Nigerian political parties: Power in an emergent African nation*. Princeton University Press. Owen, O., & Usman, Z. (2015). Briefing: Why Good luck Jonathan lost the Nigerian presidential election of 2015. *African Affairs*, 114(456), 455-471.

of advancing the interests of their local constituencies. The institutional framework of Nigerian democracy creates incentives for selfish leaders and ethnically unpatriotic in their home constituencies¹⁹.

In another view, Waleck, Annan, Onah Nwali, Bryan, and Baer argue that money is one of the vital requisites for politics and its undertakings. In a democratic setting, money is significant for the conduct of regular elections that make democracy a popular system of governance. On the other hand, money becomes negative to democracy and good governance when it is made to define who participates or not in politics, through unjustified influence on electoral outcomes. This concentration of money in the political process is regarded as money politics. In Nigeria, money politics generally begins at the party level during candidate nomination and advances into election campaign and voting. It also extends to post-election problems such as the quest for electoral victory at the courts.²⁰

Omotola, Adetula, Ballington, Best, Ojo, Egwu, and International IDEA buttress that political parties in Nigeria lack stable and sound ideology. This makes it problematic to determining among political parties and their aspirants who will serve the interest of the people and manifestations of political party. Also, the issue of money politics becomes rampant as a yardstick for political enrolment in the parties. Party nominations are supposed to be contested by any eligible party

¹⁹ Kendhammer, B. (2010). Talking ethnic but hearing multi-ethnic: The Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in Nigeria and durable multi-ethnic parties in the midst of violence. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 48(1), 48-71.

²⁰ Walecki, M. (2008). Political money and corruption: Limiting corruption in political finance. In V. A. O. Adetula (Ed.), *Money and politics in Nigeria* (pp. 1–12). Abuja: International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES)–Nigeria; Annan, K. A. (2012, September). 'Foreword 'to Deepening democracy: A strategy for improving the integrity of elections worldwide. The Report of Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security. Bryan, S., & Baer, D. (Eds.). (2005). *Money in politics: A study of party financing practices in 22 countries*. Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

member. But only those who could buy the nomination forms and possibly make surplus donations to the party would stand as candidates. Even as the nomination exercise is going on, party leaders choose the candidate among other aspirants who would be able to stand against the candidates of the other parties. It is eventually the candidate who has the best prospects of mobilisation and finances that finally receives the nomination.

Thus, money remains a benchmark for selecting party candidates and recruiting party leaders. Similarly, candidates who lose are compensated based on the amount of money they spent for the party stakeholders and then be given ranks in the party or appointments in the government. Money politics is in consequence a way for political elimination. Those who are unable to present funding for political doings stay as ordinary members, and can at the very best, only work for the party or vote at elections for the desired aspirants of the party. The electoral system, from party nomination, election, and post-election issues such as election petition has been corrupted. Money politics makes leadership to be controlled by pretenders and political investors, who perceive politics as an investment that must at all times yield surplus value to their selfish interest. It thereby promotes electoral violence because politicians who have spent a fortune on elections set up every means of comprising the elections to ensure they win. The extreme cost of electioneering also inclines towards deterring women's presence and participation in politics owing to their low-income power which makes it difficult for women to compete effectively.

However, the general effect of money politics in Nigeria cuts across gender. It touches all non-moneyed elite regardless of gender. Money politics promotes political corruption because elected government functionaries attempt to recapture election expenses by all means. Consequently, it

endangers accountability, good governance, and democratic development. The vulnerability of money politics in Nigeria is that it weakens political participation, public policy, and good governance²¹.

Davis, Egwu, Coleman, Ojo Jinadu, Tamuno, Awolowo point out that Nigerian politics has been characterised by the use of too much money by the power elite to influence electoral results. Most literature on money politics in Nigeria traces the origins to post-independence events: the emergence of military rule, the oil boom in the 1970s, the character of the Second Republic politics and politicians, and the emergence of ex-military generals in politics. Historical evidence, however, shows that the monetisation of politics in Nigeria predates the country's independence. The foundation of money politics in Nigeria dates back to the 1922 Clifford Constitution which introduced the Elective Principle and created four elective seats, three for Lagos and one for Calabar. Though the elective principle introduced suffrage for the first time in Nigeria, it was an income-based franchise. The provision of the elective principle hinged the exercise of franchise on financial qualification. It only certified those with annual incomes of £100 or more to participate in an election. This happened at a time when the annual salary of most Nigerians was less than £100. The consequence was that many Nigerians could not contest or even vote in elections.

²¹ Omotola, S. J. (2009). Nigerian parties and political ideology. *Journal of Alternative Perspective in the Social Sciences*, 1(3), 612–634; Omotola, J. S. and Nyuykonge, C. (2015). Nigeria's 2015 general elections: Challenges and opportunities (Policy and Practice Brief, N0.033). South Africa: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD); Adetula, V. A. O. (2015, July). Godfathers, money politics, and electoral violence in Nigeria: Focus on 2015 elections. Paper presented at the national conference on the 2015 general elections in Nigeria: The real issues organized by the electoral institute/INEC, Abuja. Ballington, J. (2003). Gender equality in political party funding. In R. Austin & Tjernstrom M. (Eds.), *International IDEA-funding of political parties and election campaigns. Handbook series* (pp. 157–168). Sweden: Trydells Trpekeri; Best, K. C. (2008). Gender, money, and politics in Nigeria. In V. A. O. Adetula (Ed.), *Money and politics in Nigeria* (pp. 53–64). Abuja: International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES)–Nigeria; Egwu, S. (2009). Monitoring of the administration and finances of political parties in Nigeria–Legal and institutional limitations. *The Nigerian Electoral Journal*, 3(1), 33–41. Ojo, J. (2008). Money politics, political corruption and local government elections in Nigeria. In V. A. O. Adetula (Ed.), *Money and politics in Nigeria* (pp. 97–108). Abuja: International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES)–Nigeria. International IDEA. (2003). *Funding of political parties and election campaigns. Handbook series*. Sweden: Trydells Trpekeri AB

Hence between 1923 and 1946 only four Nigerians were elected as members of the Legislative Council by an electorate composed of the wealthier members of the communities. The limited franchise was a deliberate policy of the colonial government to circumscribe the quest for political participation in Nigeria which it feared would ultimately lead to the demise of colonial rule if not restricted. The idea was to use money as the marker that would determine those who would participate meaningfully in politics. The Nigerian nationalists understood the danger of this policy and tried to resist it. Thus, one of the aims of the Nigerian Youth Movement was the abolition of the property or income-based franchise and its substitution with universal suffrage. This aim was later achieved following the repeal of income-based suffrage and the introduction of universal adult suffrage for the regional elections in the Eastern and Western Regions in 1954 and 1956, respectively, and adult male suffrage for the 1959 elections in the Northern Region.²²

Joseph, Fogg, Walecki, Best, Iwu, Davies, Nnoli, Adekanye, and Onuoha contend that money became rampant in Nigerian elections between 1979 and 1983 i.e. Second Republic. Money politics has since then been sustained to define the careers and fortunes of politicians in the Nigerian Political positions. Those who were recruited turned out to be products of events that took place between 15th January 1966 when the first military coup transpired which led in military rule and 1979 when the Second Republic began following the return to a democratically elected government. These events were ‘military rule, a civil war, and enormous resources from mineral

²² Davies, A. E. (2012). Money politics in the Nigerian electoral process. UNILAG Journal of Politics. Rainy season. Lagos: Concept. Coleman, J. S. (1963). Nigeria: Background to nationalism. Berkeley: University of California Press. Ojo, E. (2000). The military and democratic transition in Nigeria: An in-depth analysis of Gen. Babangida’s transition programme (1985–1993). *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 28(1), 11–13.; Ojo, J. (2008). Money politics, political corruption and local government elections in Nigeria. In V. A. O. Adetula (Ed.), *Money and politics in Nigeria* (pp. 97–108). Abuja: International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES)–Nigeria; Jinadu, L. A. (2010). Electoral reforms and the future of democracy in Nigeria. Lagos: Department of Political Science/CBAAC 2010 Public Lecture.; Tamuno, T. N. (1966). Nigeria and elective representation, 1923–1947. London: Heinemann. Awolowo, O. (1960). Nigerian youth movement 1938. In O. Awolowo (Ed.), *AWO: The autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (pp. 113–132). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

oil (oil boom). Military rule created retired and wealthy military officers who became an emergent political power bloc. The civil war which lasted between 1967 and 1970 worn out traditional values and instigated moral decay in the society, and likewise created a new class of leaders who made huge riches from the civil war economy, notably, supply of weapons and essential commodities, e.g. food, during the war. Oil resources and the subsequent oil boom left the various military regimes with enough funds to throw around and, in their attempts to get loyalty and weaken resistance to military rule, they created new elites who became super rich through their immoral connection with the military regimes which rewarded them with questionable oil deals and government contracts. It was inevitable that this trio of moneyed elites would venture into politics and deploy any means possible, comprising monetary inducements, to capture the state power by contesting elections themselves or sponsoring their cronies.

Such military administrators and contractors became politicians, like Senator Olusola Saraki, and Alex Ekwueme, vice-president from 1979 to 1983. General elections were conducted with monetary enticements. The major political parties, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), that participated in elections were all connected to various dealings and rich government contractors who indulged in various kinds of electoral misconducts, mainly the use of money to influence party primaries, electoral officers and the electorate. These misconducted elections created leaders who syphoned government resources.

Consequently, the prebendalism that characterised the politics of the Second Republic and which eventually steered to its collapse following the military take-over in 1983 was a direct

consequence of money politics in the 1979 and the 1983 general elections. Also, the manifestation of money politics was fused in the Third Republic when the Military regime of Ibrahim Babangida presented the concept of new breed politics which eventually only served to hand over political leadership to bring in new personalities whose credential for power was the money they accumulated in the military period. The presidential election, which Babangida military government piloted in 1993 apparently as the culmination of the transition programme of the regime, was finally cancelled because money had become the determining factor of Nigerian politics and could not be denied. Political parties and candidates in both emerging and older democracies were faced with the rising costs of campaigning and deepening public mistrust about the invidious role of money in Nigerian politics. Money politics is usually corrupt political financing, and it manifests in various dimensions among which are the use of illegal money to fund political campaign and the use of money by political parties, candidates and their sponsors to excessively influence electoral outcomes through vote purchase and inducement of electoral officials. Thus, the issue of money in Nigerian politics actually originates from the challenge of leadership recruitment which is detrimental to democratic development and the society at large²³.

Onah, Mmaduabuchi, Okeke, Nwali, Adetula, and Suberu contend that money politics in Nigerian political parties remains an outcome of the political economy of parasitic accumulation and huge poverty. Campaign funding laws meant to overcome its occurrence remain problematic

²³ Joseph, R. A. (1991). *Democracy and prebendal politics in Nigeria: The rise and fall of the second republic*. Lagos: Spectrum Press. wu, M. (2009). The electoral process and the imperatives of electoral reform in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Electoral Journal*,3(1), 1–12. Abuja: The Electoral Institute.; Davies, A. E. (2012). Money politics in the Nigerian electoral process. *UNILAG Journal of Politics*. Rainy season. Lagos: Concept pp 68-69; Nnoli, O. (1980). *Ethnic politics in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension. Adekanye, J. B. (1999). The retired military as emergent power factor in Nigeria. Ibadan: Heineman Education Books. Onuoha, B. (2014). Publishing postcolonial Africa: Nigeria and Ekeh's two publics a generation after. *Social dynamics. A Journal of African Studies*, 40(2), 322–339.; Fogg, K. (2003). 'Preface'to *International IDEA: Funding of political parties and election campaigns in Africa (P.V.)*.Handbook Series. Sweden: Trydells Trepekeri AB.; Best, K. C. (2008). *Gender, money, and politics in Nigeria*. In V. A. O. Adetula (Ed.), *Money and politics in Nigeria* (pp. 53–64). Abuja: International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES)–Nigeria

and unsuccessful because the key factors pushing money politics are largely economic rather than legal. Sub-section (2) of Section 225 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) makes it compulsory for political parties to maintain and submit to the Nigeria's electoral management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), audited annual reports of their funds, whereas sub-section (3) circumscribes political parties from foreign finance. There are no other strategies made for checks and balance or to regulate and moderate the negative role of money in the elections apart from the one in the constitution. There are no limits for campaign donations to political parties and candidates or their campaign expenditures.

The consequence is that leaders manipulate the elections and fix themselves or their loyalist in power. This was seen when Gen. T. Y. Danjuma (Rtd.) acknowledged that he spent seven million Dollars on Obasanjo's presidential campaign in 1999. Money becomes a vital element of who wins or loses in an election. The primary elections of most political parties are considered to be full of corruption of delegates with satchels full of money to influence their votes. Money politics degenerates into a more frightening dimension in the elections as it is made part of Nigeria's electoral tradition which is detrimental to the ordinary people and their living standards. It has also affected political participation and leadership because most of the people who would sincerely aspire or run for political positions lack the financial capacity.

Consequently, money is seen as a top determining factor in Nigerian politics. It functions for the purposes of consolidating elite rule and the political exclusion of the non-elite. Money politics is one of the bedrocks of the overall devastation of democracy and governance in Nigeria. There is the need to provide reforms expected to foster good governance and restrain other irregularities

such as ideology, fragmentations, and violence in political parties and the whole political system at large.²⁴

Thus, it is against this background that this article attempts to examine and advocate for practical solutions to the challenges of Nigerian party politics in five sections. The first section introduces the article and discusses the background and issues connected to Nigerian party politics. The second section presents challenges of Nigerian party politics. The third section provides Methodology. The fourth section provides practical solutions to the challenges of Nigerian party politics. The fifth section concludes the article.

Conclusion

Political parties are voluntary associations in which a collective viewpoint and common ideology describe their membership. Political parties have a specified pledge to change the political system in which they function in agreement with their ideologies through a democratic process. Thus, since political parties work in a liberal setting, they are involved with other parties in a struggle for the quest of power. This condition permits them to aggregate, articulate, and stimulate people's interests in the form of policy alternatives.²⁵ Correspondingly, Wolinetz, Toka,

²⁴ Onah, E. I., & Nwali, U. (2018). Monetisation of electoral politics and the challenge of political exclusion in Nigeria. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 56(3), 318-339.; Mmaduabuchi Okeke, G. S., & Nwali, U. (2020). Campaign funding laws and the political economy of money politics in Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy*, 1-18.; Adetula, V. A. O.2009."Internal Democracy, Transparency in Party Administration and the Implications for Effective Monitoring of Party Finances. "The Nigerian Electoral Journal3 (1):18-39.; Suberu, R. (2001) Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press).

²⁵ Snyder, Jr, J. M., & Ting, M. M. (2011). Electoral selection with parties and primaries. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(4), 782-796; Barnea, S., & Rahat, G. (2011). 'Out with the old, in with the "new: What constitutes a new party? *Party Politics*, 17(3), 303-320.; Litton, K. (2015). Party novelty: conceptualization and measurement of party change. *Party Politics*, 21(5), 712-725.; Sikk, A. (2012). Newness as a winning formula for new political parties. *Party Politics*, 18(4), 465-486.

Mair Bardi, Golosov, Bolleya, and Bytzeck note that the sort of inter-party commitment explains what kind of party system a state runs, and the nature of the parties that constitute such a party system because it directly affects the set of choices obtainable to electorates in elections. In addition, a party system is a system of connections consequential from inter-party competition. This denotes that each party as a component affects and is influenced in turn by the performance of the other parties within the system.²⁶ Thus, Nigerian party politics must go directly in line with the initial and ultimate aim of what political parties stand to represent as revealed in the above work of Synder, Ting, Barnea, Rahat, Sikky, and Litton and Wolinetz, Toka, Mair Bardi, Golosov, Bolleya, and Bytzeck respectively. While political parties are reasonably and normatively important to the process of representative democracy, party politics in Nigeria should embrace a collective viewpoint and common ideology of serving and developing the welfare of the electorates as well as to aggregate, articulate, and stimulate the electorate's interests in the form of policy alternatives. In addition, Nigerian political party system must be is a system of connections consequential from inter-party competition. This imply that each party as a component affects and is influenced in turn by the performance of the other parties within Nigeria's political system. These stands to be very practical solutions to the challenges of Nigerian party politics.

²⁶ Wolinetz, S. B. (2006). Party systems and party system types. *Handbook of party politics*, 51-62; Tóka, G. (1997). Political parties and democratic consolidation in East Central Europe (No. 279). Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde.; Mair, P. (2006). Party system change. *Handbook of party politics*, 63-73; Bardi, L., & Mair, P. (2008). The parameters of party systems. *Party politics*, 14(2), 147-166; Golosov, G. V. (2011). Party system classification: A methodological inquiry. *Party politics*, 17(5), 539-560.; Bolleyer, N., & Bytzeck, E. (2017). New party performance after breakthrough: Party origin, building, and leadership. *Party Politics*, 23(6), 772-782.

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Author Contributions

R. A. G designed and analysed the data and draft the manuscript. M.N.U. and M.M. contributed in the manuscript draft and data curation. All authors reviewed and edited the manuscript.

Competing Interest

The authors affirm no competing interest.

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