

POLITICAL PARTIES AND CHIEF EXECUTIVES AS THREATS TO DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY (1999 TO 2007)

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Abstract

Although Political Parties are undoubtedly a key ingredient of building a robust democracy, the character of the parties and their modus operandi have a significant impact on democracy, with Political Parties often having glaring gaps that block the exercise of participatory democracy. Many Political Parties, especially in transitional and semi-authoritarian States, lack internal democracy. They also frequently fall under the control of powerful economic and political elites. It is from this view that the paper discusses political parties and Chief Executives in Nigeria's Fourth Republic with a focus of PDP (1999 to 2007). The paper argues that, in Nigeria, Chief Executives, particularly at the National level have been having influence over the activities of political parties at the detriment of "descent democracy". To get out of the malaise, the paper recommends that, the Chief Executives should learn to put aside their personal ego in the interest of the state and that they should aim at good governance. There should be freedom of thought and expression.

Keywords: Democracy, Political Parties, Chief Executives, Impeachment, Democratization.

Introduction

The development of Political Parties in Nigeria dates back to 1923 when the Nigerian National Democratic Party was launched. This followed the establishment of the Nigerian Legislative Council in order to provide some Political space for the participation of Nigerians. Franchise was however, limited in two cities Lagos and Calabar. A more vigorous process of party formation was initiated with the formation of the Nigerian Youth Movement(NYM) in 1938 and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1944 under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay. The Action Group (AG) emerged in 1948 while the Northern Peoples' Congress was established (NPC) in 1951. These parties constituted themselves as political expressions of ethnic-regional associations with the Action Group in the West evolving from a Yoruba cultural association Egba-Omo oduduwa, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) evolving from the northern Association, Jamiyar Mutanen Arewa and the National Congress of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) which started as a national party, but later narrowed its social base to a cultural association, the Igbo State Union in the South East. These ethno-regional elite blocs struggled against each other in configuring the Politics of the First Republic as a contest for hegemony by the elites of the major ethnic formations-

Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo and the marginalization of the minority groups. Massive electoral fraud in the 1964 and 1965 elections precipitated a Political crisis that led to the collapse of the First Republic and the subsequent entry of the military into Politics (Lifbowitz and Jibrin; 2013). Although the Second Republic (1979 - 1983) witnessed the emergence of more political parties, there was no much difference from what was obtained under the First Republic. Rather, what happened was the reincarnation of parties of the First Republic under different nomenclatures with some additional Parties. The parties included the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), replacing the NPC, the A.G and the N.C.N.C respectively. Others were the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP), and later Nigerian Advance Party (NAP), which was registered in 1982, after failing the first round in 1978 (Osaghae; 1998). These parties were the major actors during the Second Republic in Nigeria. Under 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 association (Oyedirin and Agbaje; 1991). The parties were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC), the former being a little to the left and latter a little to the right (Olagunju, 2000). 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). The accidental annulment of time June 1993 presidential election by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida attested to this claim.

The Country once again returned to multi-party democracy in 1999 following the transition programme inaugurated and successfully completed by General Abdulsalam Abubakar (Omotola; 2010), hence discussions on renaissance of democracy an emergence of political parties in Nigeria the role of Chief Executives. To do this, the paper is structured into sections. Section one is the introduction. Section two provides conceptual and theoretical perspectives. In section three is the rebirth of democracy and emergence of political parties in Nigeria. Section four deals with the activities of some political parties in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic (1999 to 2007) .Section five discusses political parties and chief executive a study of PDP (1999 to 2007). Section six concludes the paper and recommends on how to overcome the control of the parties by the chief executive.

Conceptual and theoretical clarifications

For the purpose of this paper, a political party is defined as an aggregate of people united by a common and collective desire to capture political power and authority within a legitimate and legal political framework of canvassing for votes in a democratic polity. Political parties desire to form and influence the political direction and policy decision. These are the main distinguishing features of the political party vis-à-vis other interest groups within society (Abati, eds; 2000).

This desire to influence the political direction and policy have become major concerns to chief executives of the State. The question then is who are the chief executives? The Chief Executives can best be described than defined. They are those at the helm of administration in a state. They could be found at the national, state and local government levels, at the national level, we have the President; at the state level we have the Governor and at the local level we have the Chairman. They have numerous roles to play and functions to perform. By virtue of their positions, they tend to give political direction and influence policy decisions of political parties. In essence, they wield executive powers enshrined in the constitution and by using their powers optimally they influence the direction of political parties and ensure that their personal political interests are preserved.

This paper is guided by the elite theory and therefore it adopts the perspective of Classical elite, such as Vilfredo Pareto (1848 — 1923), Gaetano Mosca (1857 — 1941) and Robert Mitchels (1876 — 1936), this theorist argued that democracy was no more than a foolish delusion, because political power is always exercised by a privileged minority: and elite. For example, in “the ruling

class” (1896 — 1939), Mosca proclaimed that in all societies two classes of people appear “a class that rule and a class the is ruled”. In his view, the resources or attributes that are necessary for rule are always unequally distributed, and, further, a cohesive minority will always be able to manipulate and control the masses, even in a parliamentary democracy. Deduces from this line of argument it can be said that the ideology(ies) and other programmes or activities of some of these political parties are distorted or affected.

Rebirth of democracy and the emergence of political parties in nigeria (1999 to date)

The birth of the present democratic governance in Nigeria on May 29, 1999 was welcome with high hopes and expectations and a belief that, a new dawn had eventually arrived. Such expectations were informed by the fact that, democracy is reputed to be the best form of government, which offers better opportunities and challenges especially in this patently new globalized world (Fukuyama, 2000).

No democracy can triumph in the absence of political party, (Egwemi, 2009) .The origin of contemporary political parties in Nigeria could be traced to that transition programme of General (Rtd) Abubakar Abdulsalami. In July 1998, Abubakar came out with a ten-month transition package which included, among other things, party registration, conventions, campaigns and phased elections (Aina; 2002). Ab Inito, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recognized only three political parties-the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP), and the Action for Democracy (AD). Following a Supreme Court judgment on the case of Balarebe Musa Vs INEC, conditions for registration of political parties were liberalized. Subsequently, by April, 2011, Nigeria’s political space witnessed an unprecedented opening with the emergence of 63 registered political parties. Prominent among the parties are the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Political Change (CPC) and the Peoples Progressive Alliance (PPA). In addition, groups took advantage of the liberalization of the political space to register political parties that are not viable, but meant to serve as conduit pipes through which INEC’s funding of political parties could be channeled. In order to promote credible elections with the existence of strong political parties, section 78 (6) of the 2010 electoral act provided INEC with the power to deregister any political parties that failed to win any executive and legislative seats in elections (Jeremy and Jibrin; 2013).

Only ten parties won seats in the 2011 elections. On the 18th of August 2011, INEC de-registered seven parties that did not contest in the 2011 elections. They are the Democratic Alternative, National Action Council, National Democratic Liberal Party, Masses Movement of Nigeria, Nigeria People’s Congress, Nigeria Elements Progressive Party and the National Unity Party (Daily Trust, of 19th August,2011:3). INEC also announced its intention to de-register more parties as soon as the numerous court cases are cleared.

Below are the lists of recently de-registered parties and currently registered parties, as of December, 31, 2012

List of De-registered political parties as at December, 31, 2012

S/N	Name	Date of De-Registration	Remark
1	Democratic Alternative (DA)	18 th August, 2011	Approved by the Commission
2	National Action Council (NAC)	18 th August, 2011	Approved by the Commission
3	National Democratic Liberty Party (NDLP)	18 th August, 2011	Approved by the Commission
4	Masses Movement Of Nigeria (MMN)	18 th August, 2011	Approved by the Commission
5	Nigeria People’s Congress (NPC)	18 th August, 2011	Approved by the Commission
6	Nigerian Elements Progressive Party (NEPP)	18 th August, 2011	Approved by the Commission
7	National Unity Party (NUP)	18 th August, 2011	Approved by the Commission
8	African Liberation Party (ALP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission

9	Action Party Nigeria (APN)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
10	African Political System (APS)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
11	Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
12	Congress For Democratic Change	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
13	Community Party of Nigeria	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
14	Democratic People's Alliance	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
15	Freedom Party of Nigeria (FPN)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
16	Fresh Democratic Party (FDP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
17	Hope Democratic Party (HDP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
18	Justice Party (JP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
19	Liberal Democratic Party of Nigeria (LDPN)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
20	Movement For Democratic and Justice (MDJ)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
21	Movement for the Restoration and Defense of Democracy (MRDD)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
22	Nigeria Advance Party (NAP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
23	New Democrats (ND)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
24	National Majority Democratic Party (NMDP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
25	National Movement of Progressive Party (NMPP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
26	National Reformation Party (NRP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
27	National Solidarity Democratic Party (NSDP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
28	Progressive Action Congress (PAC)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
29	Peoples Mandate Party (PMP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
30	Peoples Progressive Party (PPP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
31	Peoples Redemption Party (PRP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
32	Peoples Salvation Party (PSP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
33	Republic Party Of Nigeria (RPN)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
34	United National Party For Development (UNPD)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
35	United Nigeria Peoples Party (UNPP)	6 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
36	African Renaissance Party (ARP)	20 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission
37	National Transformation Party (NTP)	20 th December, 2012	Approved by the Commission

S/N	NAME	ADDRESS OF POLITICAL PARTY
1	Accord (A)	Plot 488, Yauri Street, Area 3, Garki, Abuja.
2	Action Alliance (AA)	Plot 1977, Orlu Street, Area 3, Gaarki, Abuja. 08033141816, 07069277005
3	Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN)	Bissau Street, Wuse Zone 6, Abuja, Fct.
4	Advance Congress of Democrats (ACD)	Plot 778, Jikwoyi Layout, Yuby Plaza, Beside M/Maryland School, Along Jikwoyi – Karshi Road, Abuja. 08033145856
5	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN)	13, Monrovia Street, Wuse 2, By Babex Abuja. 08038313424
6	Alliance Of Democracy (ADC)	4, Aba Close, Area 8, Garki, Abuja. 08100116284, 08051289280
7	Africa Democratic Congress (ADC)	1, Capital Plaza, Nyanyan – Karu Road, Abuja. 08037755885.
8	All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP)	Plot 758, Basan Plaza, Central Business Centre, Behind Insurance Plaza, Abuja.
9	All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA)	41, Librevelle Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja.
10	African Peoples Alliance (APA)	Yauri Street, Garki 2, Abuja. 08033084842, 08065718859.
11	Change Advocacy Party (CAP)	40d, Anon Plaza, Joseph Gomwalk Way, Gudu District, Abuja. 08028588725.
12	Congress For Progressive Change (CPC)	Plot 1132 festus Okotie Ebo Crescent, Utako District, Abuja.
13	Citizens Popular Party (CPP)	Suite 319/323 Lozumba Complex, Area 10, Garki, Abuja 08030539096.
14	Democratic Front For A Peoples Federation (DFPF)	22, Mediterranean Street, Imani Estate, Off Shuhe Shagari Way, Maitama, Abuja. 08022240511.
15	Democratic Peoples Party (DPP)	14, Zaire Crescent, Off Mississippi Road, Maitama, Abuja.
16	Kowa Party (KP)	No. 129, Corner Shop Beside Total Filling Station, Federal Housing Estate, Lugbe, FCT. 0803335443.
17	Labour Party (LP)	Dabo Shopping Mall, 2 nd Floor, Wuse Zone 3, Abuja.
18	Mega Progressive Party (MPP)	1 st Avenue, House 53, FHA Lugbe, Abuja FCT. 07030147731
19	National Conscience Party (NAP)	1, Yaonde Street, Wuse Zone 6, Abuja. 08033144231, 0803607592.

20	New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP)	Plot MF 01 SDP Layout, City Centre Plaza, Suite GF 1, Cadastral Area, Opp. Nobel Heights Academy, Karu, Abuja. 08033323873, 08035881727.
21	People's Democratic Party (PDP)	Wadata Plaza, Michael Okpara Way Wuse Zone 5, Abuja.
22	People For Democratic Change (PDC)	No. 2, Bitou Street, Off Parakou Crescent, Off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II Abuja. 08033150603, 08023645376.
23	Progressive People Alliance (PPA)	Warri Street, Off Emeka Anyakou Street, Area 11, Garki, Abuja.
24	People's Party Of Nigeria (PPN)	House 43, 6 th Avenue Gwarimpa Estate, Abuja
25	Social Democratic Mega Party (SDMP)	Plot 2105, Herbert Macaulay Way, Opp Skye Memorial Plaza, Block B3, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja.
26	United Democratic Party (UDP)	6, Gnassinbge Eyadema Street, Asokoro District, Abuja. 080268052694
27	United Progressive	The Dome, N-Glory Centre, Plot 412, Cadastral Zone Central, Abuja.

Source: A Capacity Assessment of Nigerian Political Parties.

By Jeremy Lifbowitz And Jibrin Ibrahim.

Democratic Governance For Development (DGD II) UNDP Nigeria, 2013.

This development presupposes the opening up of the political space for democratic opportunities and development. But in reality, the opportunities associated with such openings are yet to be positively exploited for democratic development in the country. This may not be unconnected with the poverty of ideology that characterizes Nigerian parties (Omotola; 2009).

Activities of political parties in nigeria's fourth republic (1999 to 2007)

One of the most complex and critical institutions of democracy is political party. Political parties as “makers” of democracy have been so romanticized that scholars have claimed that neither democracy nor democratic societies are thinkable without them. They not only perform functions that are government related, such as making government accountable and exercising control over administration, and electorate related functions such as political representation, expression of people's demand through interest articulation and aggregation as well as structuring of electoral choices; but also linkage related functions such as playing an intermediary and mediatory role between the government and the electorate (Moore, 2002; Lapalombara and Anderson, 2001; Simon, 1962). Omotola (2005) pointed out that political parties can only cope effectively with these responsibilities when they are politically institutionalized and maintain a good structure,

contentious adherence to internal democracy, cohesion and discipline, as well as autonomy. The absence of these salient ingredients poses serious threats to “political liberalization, democratization and democratic consolidation”.

Given the obvious poverty of ideology that characterizes the first three political parties of the Fourth Republic, - PDP, APP and AD, it should not be surprising that almost all the other parties that sprang up or broke away from them are benefits of ideologies, leading to internal squabbles. Neither was it that they have articulated alternative views of governance for sustainable democracy and development as a viable means of popular mobilization. Rather, they were products of adversarial elite behavior taken to the points of irreconcilability. Little wonder, these parties also have no ideological stance on major national questions other than the transformation and manipulation of forces of identity, particularly ethnicity and religion (Simbine, 2005). The implication is that the “so-called political parties are not in competition with one another. They are in factions; factions are more in competition within themselves than with another party” (Omoruyi, 2002).

Political Parties in Nigeria demonstrate significant strengths but contains a number of features that make them less than ideal vehicles for the representation of the political demands and aspirations of Nigerians. The largest party has demonstrated a considerable amount of capacity in mobilizing voters but is weakened by a number of technical limitations and lack of internal democracy (Jeremy and Jibrin, 2013).

Most of the political parties have a fairly strong foundation in terms of their party constitutions. These constitutions provide for the establishment of a clear and coherent party structure and for the conduct of internal democracy. All the constitutions of political in Nigeria prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender. Some parties go further to include commitments like “ensuring gender balance in governance” (Labour Party and mainstreaming women’s concerns in all policies and programmes (PDP). However, it is not clear that the extent to which these parties have gone in mainstreaming gender in their agenda of action.

What seems evident is that many of these party laws and rules are manipulated to support the interests of powerful individuals and groups in each party, especially on the question of internal democracy (Jeremy and Jibrin, 2013). As Ibrahim (2011:101) writes, “parties have formal processes of the election of leaders but these processes are not followed and when they are, the Chief Executives have developed ways of determining the outcomes”. Therefore, while the legal framework guiding party activities is reasonable, adherence to these frameworks is often problematic.

Internal democracy in all of Nigeria’s political parties is limited. While there are rules on primary and internal party elections, parties often ignore, twist or otherwise subvert the rules to arrive at candidates through the process of selection, negotiation, or manipulation. The principle of zoning in terms of providing equal opportunities by geographical area, sometimes serves to disenfranchise candidates who might otherwise contest (Jeremy and Jibrin, 2013).

Buttressing the above Adejumoobi (2002) is of the view that, Nigerian parties have not been able to attain a reasonable degree of institutionalization especially in the area of internal cohesion and discipline. This deficiency has also contributed to the decline of the conflict management capacity of the parties at both intra and inter-party relations levels. The frequent incidence at the level of crisis of party relations is worrisome. It is such that none of the parties have been able to hold itself together without conflict and in most cases this has threatened the very heart of the parties. The most notable illustrations can be located in the morality of leadership in all the parties, as well as the unprecedented change in the leadership of political parties. For example between 1999 and 2011 the PDP was led by Chief Solomon Lar (late), Barnabas Gemade, Audu Ogbe, Ahmadu Ali, Vincent Ogbulafor, Bamanga Tukur and Adamu Muazu. One obvious fact is that, in none of these

changes was succession orderly, open, free, independent and reflective of the actual wishes of the party faithful. Rather, each was predicated upon the whims and caprices of a given section of the party elite led by the President (Chief Executive). The ANPP had also been led by Mohammed Waziri, Yusuf Ali and Dan Etiebet in quick succession, while the AD had four leadership changes. The issue of conflict management, an important function of ideology, is much more worrisome. A typical example relates to the 13 August, 2002 impeachment threats against former President Olusegun Obasanjo by the House of Representatives. Despite the fact that the PDP had majority seats in the house, it could not bring the matter under control in good time. In fact, it took the intervention of third parties outside the party, both in Nigeria and outside, to douse the tension that engulfed the party (Omotola 2005). The crisis that hit the Presidency over the Petroleum Technology Development Funds (PTDF) where the president and his vice, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, were deeply engaged in irreconcilable disagreement remains another prominent example. Matters came to a head when Atiku Abubakar eventually jettisoned the PDP, spearheaded the formation of the Action Congress (AC) by a breakaway faction of the PDP, including Audu Ogbe, an ex PDP National chairman. The inability of the PDP to resolve these and other accumulated internal crisis, leading to the formation of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) by a breakaway faction of the party, also attest to the vulnerability of internal crisis be deviling political parties in Nigeria . The effect is that Nigerian parties at this time rather than serve as a unifying force, now tend to promote disunity.

Omoruyi in Omotola (2009) observed this trend in the National Assembly when he notes that “members of the National Assembly are not able to work with the President in his “agenda-setting function”. The situation could not have been different because the two parties were not necessarily motivated by a commitment to party agenda, if at all they had any, but by different personal and sectional interests. Therefore, it timely at this juncture to ask the question: What are the roles of Chief Executives in setting or perpetuating internal party crisis in Nigeria?

Political parties and chief executive in nigeria: a study of pdp 1999 to 2007

As Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999, democratic expectations were that the new democracy would usher in a new era of peace, stability, and development. Political parties representing the core institutions of democracy expected to play key and-positive roles in this regard (Omotola; 2009). Contrary to expectations, the country has witnessed several cases of political turbulence, intra and inter-party crises, party indiscipline and excessive influence of political parties by the Chief Executives since 1999.

The registration of more political parties since 1999 gives the impression of an expansion of the political space on the face value. However when critically assessed, it become clear that the diminishing relevance of political parties as a result of their increasing numbers has been further compounded by the ruling parties monopolization of political space. More political parties have meant a relevant deficit (Egwemi, 2009). Furthermore, the PDP has through its underground infiltration into the affair of weak political party has shown its determination to restrict political participation in the country. Preparatory for the 2007 general elections, Nigeria’s former president Olusegun Obasanjo had declared in February, 2007 that this election is a “do-or-die” affair for the PDP. We have a reform programme which we have started, we want those who we will handover to, to continue the reforms” (Vanguard, 12th February, 2007: 15). The undertone of such confession is clear. It simply meant that the Chief Executive and PDP were prepared to use both fair and foul means to put the people of their choice in power.

This did not end after the party’s controversial victory in the 2007 general elections. In fact, the party and its stalwarts seemed to have been influenced by the victory of the party in the 2007 elections that they take other political parties for granted. The relation between the language of politics and political behavior with specific reference to the 2007 elections has been demonstrated

by Tenuche (2007). She has shown that the conception of politics as warfare by Nigeria's former President was demonstrated in his infamous do-or-die declaration. This was why the 2007 election was greeted with a lot of opprobrium. In fact, the rhetoric of the PDP Chief Executives suggested that other Political Parties do not exist or that even if they do, they don't matter (Egwemi, 2010).

Sule Lamido former PDP Governor, Jigawa State had gleefully argued in this direction:

There is no alternative political party for Nigeria today apart from PDP. Therefore, our great party is the only political party that will continue to govern this country time without end. PDP is a big and strong enough to lead Nigeria (Ibrahim: 2009:9). The people's Democratic Party (PDP) has become strongly rooted to the extent that the political future of many legislators depended largely on party leader's deposition towards them rather than their performance and even the support of their constituencies. The emergence of strong parties has become a hindrance to the independence of thought, ideas, utterances and actions among Nigeria's law makers. Olusegun Obasanjo himself gave credence to this in his speech before his exit on the occasion of the commissioning of the phase III of the National Assembly Complex when he fore-warned the new law-makers elected under the platform of PDP to eschew taking independent positions on issues but rather give their first support to the party (Anyanwu; 2007, Yunusa, 2012, 151).

Ahead of the 2011 election, and at its special convention in April, 2009, most PDP stalwarts wanted Nigerians to know that there was "no vacancy in Aso Rock" and in the states controlled by the PDP. This assertion has been condemned by many political leaders as un-democratic (Maduabuchi; 2009; Olaniyi; 2009). Because other political parties in the country were psychologically short changed. Those who were cowed by the rhetoric defected to the PDP on the one hand. On the other hand, those who did not defect seem to realize their powerlessness as members or individual political parties have attempted albeit without much success to form a strong mega party (Egwemi, and Oladesu, 2010).

In terms of comparison, the United State, where the incidence of partisan voting is related to the type of issue, partisan loyalty is mostly evident on items related to social and economic programme, party organization or issues of critical significance to the administration, such as the budget (Malcom, Patterson, Samuel; 1977). America's legislative history is replete with how frequently legislators have voted against the stands or positions taken by their party leaders in congress and by a President from their own party. According to Olson (1980), President constantly faces legislative members of their own parties who do not support executive branch proposals or measures and only rarely does their party discipline United States' Congress members. There is obviously a decline of the importance of party in congress even as a party has declined in importance as a cue in congressional elections when party becomes a less important determinant of voting in elections, candidates, issues, money, organizations, and the professionalization of campaign staff and techniques become more important such that the congressmen emanating from such conditions are less likely to follow party dictates (Mayhew; 1974).

In contradictions to what happens in the United States, there is something analogous to the "tyranny of the party" in Nigeria, whereby legislators are more vulnerable or susceptible to party discipline were at critical moments, pressurized and even threatened by the chief executives uncles party hierarchy to toe the party line or face suspension. Before President Obasanjo could, on 21st April, 2004, assent to and sign into law the 2004 budget or appropriation Bill which he described as "one of the best budgets in the life of democracy in Nigeria", the country had witnessed a flurry of activities in which functionaries from the executive and legislative branches from the ruling PDP disagreed only to agree. The ruling PDP on that occasion, played a pivotal role in working out compromised acceptable to the Presidency (Chief Executive), though without resorting to a complete abandonment of the national assembly positions. Indeed, the then PDP brokered a political solution by engaging the national assembly leadership in an arm-twisting game,

embellished with threats and intimidation, in a remote venue outside Wadata House, headquarter of the party, with the national Chief Executive (President Obasanjo) the then PDP National Chairman, Audu Ogbeh, the Chairman of PDP board of trustee then, Anthony Anenih, and other party stalwarts in attendance (Ojo; 2006).

Apparently embarrassed by the acts Of gross indiscipline and the spate of crises that had, characterized executive-legislature interactions in the first-four years of the Obasanjo administration, climaxed by the attempted impeachment of the national chief executive (President) in 2002 on budget related causes an incident which the party considered an unsavoury development, when its members in the national assembly teamed-up with opposition parties to attempt an impeachment of a President produced by their party-the ruling PDP had moved decisively by taking a number of steps to forestall a re-enactment. First, the PDP was careful to ensure that it produced an overwhelming, pliable and therefore, comfortable majority of the legislators in the two-chambers national assembly under Obasanjo's second tenure by ensuring that legislators such as late Chuba Okadigbo (the impeached Senate President, Ghali Umar Na'Abba (Speaker, House of Representatives, 1999 - 2003) and their companions who were considered obstructions or confrontational to Chief Executive (President Obasanjo) during his first four year tenure, did not return to the legislature. Ogbanaya Onu, Abia State's first elected Governor, had explained PDP's sustanfuge or mechanism in a public lecture:

...All the PDP legislators in the national assembly who were considered unfriendly to the Chief Executive were denied nomination by the party. Those who slipped through the safety net, due to their high level of popularity among their party members in their constituencies, were made to lose during the general election. Also, some of those who went to other political parties to contest the election were equally denied victory. In the end, over two-thirds of the membership of both the senate and the House of Representatives who were announced victorious belonged to the same political party. All these efforts were made by the Chief Executive in order to have firmer control of the legislature (The Guardian, 19 August, 2004:8,)

The PDP thus ensured that legislative leaders and other members of the two chambers who spearheaded impeachment against the chief executive in any way did not return to parliament. The national assembly at a point accused the chief, executive of behaving like a civilian dictator by abrogating or merging institutions set up by law under previous regimes without submitting relevant bill for legislature. The chief executive (President) was also accused of unduly using the mass media to incite citizens against their representatives, thereby smearing the image of the National Assembly (Tell, April 24, 2000:19).

The Chief Executive was accused of using financial inducement to influence the legislature. Money was openly displayed on the floor of both Senate and House of Representatives as bribes being distributed by the Chief Executive (President) to divide the House or enforce its will on the Parliament. The third Senate President had insisted during his valedictory address that the "notorious Ghana-must-Go bags only came to the National Assembly from outside whenever there was an effort to impeach the leadership of the National Assembly" A.P. Anyim, "Fourth Assembly Senate-A valedictory speech by Senator Anyim Puis Anyim, pp. 1- 39). 'The Chief Executive (President) in turn accused the Legislature of being corrupt, and of using blackmail and impeachment threats to force the Chief Executive to do its biddings (Obasanjo in the Guardian, June 6, 2013.

Similarly, the PDP also effected a "master stroke" by introducing into its constitution a clause that outlaws open disagreement with either the President (chief executive) or decisions taken by the party. The new clause stipulates that any of the PDP legislators, especially in the national assembly, that failed to toe to the party line on issues would be suspended, and once suspended, such a legislator would lose his seat in the national assembly. Consequently, whereas prior to the adoption

of the new clause that had hamstrung the operational independence of legislators, in the new dispensation, given this new clause, the party hierarchy has found a veritable weapon for instilling discipline among its members and for quelling recalcitrant moves aimed at dislodging Senate or house leadership considered to be sympathetic to the chief executive (Presidency). Legislators are thus compelled to engage in dialogue with the Chief Executive, to tolerate and accommodate even the most undemocratic and unilateral tendencies and decisions of the Chief Executive and of the PDP as they sacrifice their parliamentary privileges and immunities at the altar of party discipline (Ojo; 2006). What we experienced during this period of study can best be described as “the golden era of party tyranny in Nigeria”.

Conclusion

The papers focused on political parties and Chief Executives in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic (1999 to 2007). To do this, the paper is structured into parts. Part one is historical perspectives of the political parties in Nigeria. Part three is rebirth of democracy and the emergence of political parties in Nigeria (1999 to 2007). Part two is conceptual and theoretical clarifications. Part four is the activities of political parties in Nigerian’s Fourth Republic (1999 to 2007). Part five is political parties and Chief Executives in Nigeria, a study of PDP 1999 to 2007. Part six is conclusions with recommendations.

The findings revealed that: PDP through its antics and rhetoric showed its determination to restrict political participation in the country. Prior to 2007 general election, the Chief Executive declared that the election was a “do-or die affair” for the PDP. It means both the Chief Executive and PDP were prepared to use both fair and foul means to put the people of their choice in power.

The paper also found that, the rhetoric of the PDP Chief Executives suggested that other political parties did not exist or that even if they did they did not matter. To justify this was Governor Sule Lamido’s words that “there is no alternative party for Nigeria today apart from PDP”.

The paper also revealed that, ahead of 2011 election, most stalwarts wanted Nigerians to know that, there was no vacancy in ASO Rock and in the States controlled by PDP. With this brand of rhetoric, other political parties in the country were terrorized psychologically.

The paper also revealed that in Nigeria, Legislators were more vulnerable or susceptible to party discipline and are at critical moments, pressurized and even face suspension. Therefore, legislators are compelled to engage in dialogue with the Chief Executive, to tolerate and accommodate even the most undemocratic and unilateral tendencies and of the Chief Executive and of the PDP, as they sacrifice their parliamentary privileges and immunities at the altar of party discipline.

Finally, the paper revealed that, the power to remove the President, Governors, etc, which was constitutionally provided to check Executive excesses, became a major source of intimidation of the Chief Executive. At the State level, the scenario was also played out in most cases, with great undertone (Chief Executives) influence.

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that:

The Chief Executives should learn to put aside their personal ego, regional and religious differences in order to build a peaceful, productive and progressive Nigeria.

The Chief Executives at all level should aim at good governance as this is the most potent guarantee against military takeover of power instead of their unguarded utterances.

At the root of the concept of democracy lays the freedom of thought and expression. On no account should the Chief Executive mutilate or emasculate any party’s constitution to suit his/her interest at the detriment of the State. Such is unhealthy for a descent democracy.

Impeachment must be the last resort, when all other options have been exhausted and if need be, must be done strictly in accordance with constitutional provisions. The use of threat of impeachment to settle personal scores or to export favours must be discouraged.

There should be openness in the system so that each party knows what the other is doing as such; the Public will know what the Chief Executive(s) is/are saying and doing.

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