THE NASARA JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY KEFFI.

Dr. Afolabi Abiodun S

NASARA JOURNAL

OF HUMANITIES

NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Arts

NASARAWA STATE UNIVERSITY, KEFFI

Dr. Afolabi Aborodun &

Aflabi Abwurms

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

Nasara Journal of Humanities established since 2003 is a multi-disciplinary journal published by the Faculty of Arts, Nasarawa State University, Keffi. The journal publishes well-researched papers on issues relating to the humanities and other closely related disciplines. The journal is published biannually (June and December each year).

CONTACT DETAILS

Faculty of Arts, Nasarawa State University, Keffi.
c/o G. S. Omachonu, Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Nasarawa State University, PMB 1022, Keffi, Nigeria.
gsomachonu@yahoo.com, gsomachonu@gmail.com
+2348065309796, +2348058421956

PUBLICATION ETHICS

The following guidelines aim at regulating issues that could occur with publication of the *Nasara Journal of Humanities*. The strict regulations apply to authors, editorial board and reviewers:

1. Authors have rights concerning their own research and work, and the works are recognized as their own achievements. But upon acceptance of an article by the Journal, the authors will be asked to transfer copyright of the article to the publisher ((including the exclusive rights to reproduce and distribute the article).
2. Submission of a manuscript will be held to imply that it contains unpublished, original material which is not being considered for publication elsewhere.
3. On submission of an article to the editor, the author would receive an email within 24 hours acknowledging receipt and a notice that his/her submission is receiving attention. Thereafter, such author(s) will be properly notified of acceptance or rejection within 30 days of the submission of manuscripts. Manuscripts, once submitted, shall not be returned.

4. A detailed "Guidelines for Submitting Manuscripts" and "Publication Policies" shall be provided in every issue of the journal.
5. The Editorial Board/Reviewers will review and evaluate papers in strict course. Proofs will be sent to authors for corrections as may be suggested by the reviewers and such papers should be returned to the editor within three weeks of receipt.

CALL FOR PAPER

Nasara Journal of Humanities receives manuscripts all year round. Submission of manuscripts for assessment/publication and all correspondence on editorial matters should be addressed or sent **electronically** to:

G. S. Omachonu, Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Nasarawa State University, PMB 1022, Keffi, Nigeria.
gsomachonu@yahoo.com, gsomachonu@gmail.com

GUIDE TO AUTHORS

1. Manuscripts which could be written in English, French or Arabic should be scholarly and original in terms of contribution to knowledge. In the case of a paper written in either Arabic or French, the English equivalents should be provided for the title and abstract.
2. Manuscripts should not be longer than 15 pages in all: including abstract (not exceeding 250 words), references and appendices (if any). Manuscripts should be typed (1.5-line spacing) on Times New Roman (font size-12) except the abstract which is usually on single line spacing.
3. Because of its multi-disciplinary outlook, the journal accepts either the MLA or APA style sheet provided the writer is consistent.

4. Author's full name, designations and affiliations, GSM number and email address should be indicated in the body of the mail or typed on a separate sheet and firmly attached to the article.

5. In the case of two or more authors, the corresponding author's email address and GSM number should be so indicated.

CONTENTS

Onyinyechi Priscilla Christian Wariboko, Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, University of Port Harcourt.

Muhammad Aliyu Busa, Ph.D, Sashen Nazarin Harsuna Da Kimiyarsu Jami'ar Jihar Nassarawa, Keffi, Nijeriya

Oja Paul Egwemi, Ph.D, Department of Theatre Arts, Kogi State University, Anyigba

PARTY POLITICS AND POLITICAL THUGGERY IN NIGERIA, 1957-2011

Abiodun S Afolabi,
University of Ilorin

Abstract

Although thuggery and other forms of political rascality are not new phenomena in the Nigerian political space, they have lately taken the centre stage in national discourse. This article investigates violence in the Nigeria body politics from 1957 to 2011, a situation that has sadly dotted the political landscape and devastatingly affected the peaceful co-existence of the people. The study employed historical methods which includes both primary and secondary source materials. The hiring of youths as thugs and hoodlums, which usually characterized the pre and post-election periods and processes, in order to maneuver, intimidate opponents and legitimize their positions have, continually, resulted in the flow of tears and blood. The 'do or die' syndrome, which has continued to hamper the major stakeholders from being transparent and sportsmanly in their conduct and vituperations, have, consequently, made it impossible for Nigeria to achieve a stable polity. It posits that if the Nigerian political environment is to enjoy stability and development, there is the need for the sensitization of the people, particularly the youths, on their roles before, during and after elections.

Key Words: Elections, Nigeria, Political Party, Thuggery, Youths

Introduction

The activities of political parties have been a major cause of political instability in the Nigerian polity since the pre-independence era. Those who lived through Nigeria's 1st and 2nd Republics still tell tales of unmet promises, rigged elections, corruption in high and low places, hooliganism, and many other such abuses. The parties embodied and, indeed, promoted ethnic rivalry, which eventually led to a complete break-down of two

Republics, (1957-1966), and the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War, which ravaged the country from 1967 to 1970.

Politics has been variously defined by authorities. David Easton defined it as "the authoritative allocation of values".[i] Aristotle saw it as "the activities and behaviour of individuals and groups in relation to the public realm. Weber viewed it as the "operation of organized power of the state" while Talbot Parson perceived it as "the instrumental aspect of social organisation".[ii] Edmund Burke, on his part, defined it as "a body of men united for promoting, by their joint endeavours, the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all united".[iii]

A political party is a group that is publicly organized with the intention, at some time, of gaining control of government to realise certain aims or to obtain personal advantages or both. It is 'a system of independent activities characterized by a high degree of rational direction of behavior towards end that are objects of common acknowledgement and expectation.[iv] This definition applies to the parties: in countries governed by ballot as party politics are played on the basis of political parties.

Theoretical Framework

Among the theories that have been used in explaining the existence of political parties is the 'human nature theory' and the theory of "One-Party System", both of which have been applied in justifying the existence of one-party in most African states in the early period of their independence. The theory of "community choice" will also be used to examine election or electoral behavior of the African electorates.

The Human Nature Theory

The Human Nature suggests that people instinctively divide into parties that correspond to the basic instincts of mankind. This is often described as running between those drives that make for preservation of the status-quo and those which seeks change in the

hope of improvement.[v] From time immemorial, men with differing opinions have always grouped into parties based on their convictions, and this is permitted in all democratic settings anywhere in the world. The human nature theory has been severally criticized by political thinkers of today who perceive 'human nature' theory of parties as simplistic. This criticism stems from the observation that it places a lot of emphasis on heredity, which is perceived as the prime factor in the formation of parties and none upon environment. It would not, for example, explain the solid south, where most voters do not divide into parties but cling to a single party.

The theory of One-Party System, (Uni-Party) has been applied to justify the existence of one party system in most African States at the early period of their independence. The theory, a mixture of defensive explanation and categorical postulations, was advanced by party leaders in Africa, and embedded in it is the over-present sentiment of anti-colonialism, a frequently romanticized African traditionalism and buoyant progressivism. Like most political ideologies, it serves primarily to rationalize and legitimize particular political state of affairs, which in this instance, is post-colonial one party system.

This theory connotes that the staggering problem of nation building and modernization requires a central and unitary organization of power within the state, and that Africa's parties are the only structures available for this purpose. The multi-party system is regarded as a form of "institutionalized factionalism", which not only divides the national will and dissipates national energies, but also continues to threaten internal stability.

The theory of Community Choice is the most central theoretical principle underlying most African election studies. It recognizes that African voters have tended to make their electoral choice as communities rather than as individuals. Taking the key community of orientation to be an ethnic one for the great majority of Africans, most observers have seen group identity as

determining the individual's choice; electoral contests as being a vying for ethnic community support, and electoral success as usually based on ethnic coalition building.[vi] The primacy of the community over the individual is seen as being far more important than party and issue orientation where ideological considerations are determinants of voting behavior. Rather than seeing community consensus as formed on the basis of traditional ethnic relations through the medium of traditional leadership. It was the new men that had acquired some form of western education and held modern occupations who acted as opinion leaders in shaping the community decision.[vii]

Ethnic community is a well defined unit for whose support politicians compete. Evidence indicates that ethnicity is a very malleable factor and a community is often shaped by the political struggle itself. For example, the 1959 Nigerian election result produced the picture of a highly united North behind the Northern People's Congress (NPC), but in the 1979 election, the old North was split with the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP), which was successful in Borno and Gongola States, the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) in Kano and Kaduna, the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPN) in Sokoto, and with all five parties gaining pockets of votes in a number of areas. In Borno State, the division between GNPP and NPN parties can be seen in terms of a Kanuri/Hausa ethnic cleavage, but many other ethnic divisions exist in Bornu.

Political Party, Politics and Elections

Party politics and election emerged with the evolution of democracy and popular representations. Historically, in Europe, when governments were generally monarchical, despotic and absolute, the typical form of political activity was that of cliques or factions. These were loose groupings of people surrounding the ruler and trying to influence him in favour of interests represented by their members. When a faction had a decisive influence in government, it was considered that many of its aims and actions

were in the interests of its own supporters rather than of the state. This situation later led to the evolution of democratic and popular representations.

Edmund Burke was the first philosopher to write on political parties, arguing that diversity and dissent are not necessarily incompatible with or disruptive of political order. He held that members of a political party are those who have agreed upon a principle by which the national interest might be served. The development of parties, however, seems bound up with that of democracy, with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives. Political parties are twentieth century mechanism designed to solve the problems of bringing the people, the new mass voters, into the political community, which translates to encouraging parties that are not mere aggregate of local and personal interests into the fold. These are parties that profess to give to the man in the street a voice in politics that he cannot have if all he is given as a political choice is between one group of notables and another.[viii]

Political parties are associations that are formally and explicitly organized with the declared purpose of acquiring and maintaining legal control, either simply or in evaluation of electoral competition with other similar associations, over the personnel and the policy of the government of an actual or prospective sovereign state.[ix] African parties are the organizational product of the massive social and economic changes of the colonial era, including, in particular, the appearance of new assertive social groups and claimant "elite"s; the provocations, frustrations and challenges of alien rule and the formation of a variety of interest associations, protest groups, and nationalist movement, directed first towards the amelioration of specific grievances and later toward the displacement of the colonial power by independent African governments.

However, formal political parties did not appear until constitutional reforms were introduced to provide for devaluation

by the imperial government of a sufficiently meaningful and attractive measure of power to provoke nationalist leaders to convert their movements into political parties, introduce or refine institutions and procedure, such as an electoral system, which would make it technically possible for parties to seek power constitutionally.[x] The governing parties in most new states in Africa are the ones brought to power under institutional arrangements established during the terminal states of colonial rule. Some of these were lineal descendants of already existing political organization. Others were called into being literally "from scratch" by competing "elite" confronting their first election and the prospect of power. In any event, whatever their origin, they were all products of the colonial period.

Political parties in all political systems perform certain fundamental functions which include the mobilization of the electorate behind candidates and issues for the purposes of elections. This may be categorized as the aggregation and articulation of public interests, political parties epitomizing the socio-political characterization of the polity. They serve as institutions for obtaining and retaining political power. Except in an exceptional situation such as a coup d'état al or revolution, it is usually inconceivable for an individual or a group of people to acquire political power or ascend to a political office without going through the conventional democratic ritual of being nominated or sponsored by a political party. They also serve as agents of enlightenment to the populace. They interpret political issues and programme to their supporters. They, without being deceitful, simplify the intricate and complex policies of the state for the benefit of the electorate.[xi]

Succinctly put, therefore, political parties simplify political issues and often proffer alternatives, recruit political leadership and personnel, organize minorities and opposition, moderate and compromise political conflicts, organize the machinery of government and promote political legitimacy. Above all, a dynamic

and serious political party with articulate leadership can give the necessary ideological direction to a people through its programme, caliber of its officials and its performance, either in or out of government.[xii]

Political parties as political organizations continually pursue the goal of placing their avowed representatives in government positions. They generally aim at acquiring political power through whatever means possible, especially through the control of governments and their personnels. Wherever such acquisitions of control are governed by constitutional procedures, elections often become the processes and means through which political parties must seek to fulfill their control-of power objectives.[xiii]

Elections are the means by which the people choose and exercise some degree of control over their representatives. Elections in any political system are form of political communication between governments and the governed, a means by which political decision-makers become sensitive to the electorate's political demands, and in turn are in a position to 'educate' the electorate on important political issues. Elections are primarily a legitimate means of acquiring power or right of the rules to govern.[xiv]

Elections as a recognized means of providing succession is common to all systems, for even a lifetime dictator will eventually need replacements. Elections control the policy decision of government, the development of the devices of initiative, referendum and repeal institutionalized in large scale societies. In extreme cases, election may lead to the repudiation of a regime because of the intensity of differences of opinion among groups competing for office. Repudiation may take the form of government refusing to leave office following its apparent defeat, the revolt of losers.[xv]

In a major address to the nation outlining the programmes of the federal government, General Gowon declared 'there will be no question of returning to political parties that are merely state,

regional or tribal blocks'. He expressed the hope that Nigerians, 'through working together for a greater nation, will articulate a distinctive national ideology and the objectives of Nigerian society'. It is only in the context of such commonly accepted objectives and goals that the development of political parties can be a positive factor in nation building'[xvi]

However, this was not the case in the Nigerian society. Apparently, Gowon saw the offshoot of political parties from a nationalistic point of view, which did not come to fruition. What we had as political parties in Nigeria were a group of "elite" who desired to hold power for individual and party cum and ethnic reasons. At this point, one is forced to concur that 'new morality' which emerged from the military era was such that there was general acceptance among most members of the power "elite" that power was for profit rather than for responsible exercise of its privileges or services. The 'new morality' encouraged and protected chaos because members of the new "elite" had vested interest in chaos despite its long term danger to social stability and their real or permanent interests.[xvii]

A discussion of the emergence of political parties in Nigeria should look at the concept of a party system first, which denotes the number of political parties within a political system, the way they interact and compete with each other, the functions they perform and the way they relate to the overall political institutions and processes. There are four major party systems: the no-party or zero-party system, one-party system, a two-party system and a multi-party system. Nigerian operated the multi-party system during the 1st and 2nd Republics, which is an extremely functional political system. Experiences across the world have shown that countries that operate multi-party system are politically unstable since they lack ideological direction. It may be argued that the existence of ethnic and religious pluralism in Nigeria renders multi-partism imperfect. As a consequence of the colonial constitutional arrangements, all political parties that emerged in Nigeria before

independence were regionally and ethnically based. Their names, membership, tactics, policies and leadership reinforced ethno-centrism. The power that was exercised by major parties derived mainly from the class and communal foundation of these parties.[xviii]

The first noteworthy political party in Nigeria was the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). It was founded and led by the Herbert Macaulay who was regarded as the father of Nigerian Nationalism. This party was formed after of the National Convention of Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC). The bulk of the support of the NNDP came from Lagos, especially the "elite" and property owners. In the legislative council election of 1923, the NNDP won all the 3 seats on election basis for the unofficial members of the house. The party won again in 1928 and 1933 until the emergence of the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM), later Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), which was founded in 1936. Leading members of NYM were Chief H. C. Davies, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sir Kofo Abayomi, Ernest Ikoli, Oba Samuel Akinsanya and the Chief Obafemi Awolowo. These two political parties, the NNDP and the NYM, never really existed beyond the colony of Lagos and Calabar. Their support membership and leadership were rather restricted to the South.[xix]

The Macpherson Constitution of 1950-51, which came into being as a result of the acrimony over the Richards Constitution entrenched regionalism and ethnically based multi-partism in Nigeria. The Constitution recommended three regions, each with its own legislature. It allowed for increased regional autonomy and rested enormous powers on the Regions. It was obvious that before any political party or group could aspire to national leadership position, it must have a regional base. The most important aspect of the McPherson Constitution was its provision for three Regions; namely, Northern, Western and Eastern Regions. The Northern and Western Region had two chambers in the House of Chiefs and House of Assembly. Eastern Region had only one Regional House of Assembly.[xx]

Another related problem was the skewed federal system that the constitution imposed. Conventional principle of federalism, which ensures political stability and minimized social conflicts amongst the constituent units, recommended that there should not be anyone state more powerful than the rest as to be capable of vying in strength with many of them combined.[xxi] The North was, however, greater in size and population than the other two regions put together. Hence, the morbid fear of the North dominating the South was reinforced by the Northern distrust of the Southern leaders whom they regarded as rash and pompous, and this made the emergence of a national party elusive, especially after the Macpherson Constitution. An analysis of the party formation just before and after the Macpherson Constitution will prove our case.

The first party that was born before the Macpherson Constitution, and which operated until 1951 as a national party, though with limited success in the North, was the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, (NCNC). It was founded following the demise of the Nigerian Youth Movement on the 27th of August 1944. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was first Secretary while the Herbert Macaulay was the President. Amongst the early members were Chief Nyang Essien (Ibibio), Zana Bukar Dipcharima (Kanuri who later join the NPC), Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti (Egba Yoruba), M. Imoudu (Edo) and Raji Abdallah (Ebira). The NCNC actually had the objective of emerging as a national party. It even organized a national tour in 1946 to campaign against the Richards' Constitution. It was during the tour that Macaulay died and was succeeded by Dr. Azikiwe. However, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe could not escape the budding ethnic rivalry of that period. Although he was leading a national party, Azikiwe was a party to the formation of a pan-Ibo organization, the Ibo State Union. He also became the first President of the Union.[xxii]

In 1945, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, along with his friends, inaugurated a pan-Yoruba Cultural Society in London, named the *Egbe-Omo-Oduduwa* (Society of the Descendants of *Oduduwa*).

When he returned home in 1946, he made contacts with influential Yoruba leaders, and in 1948, the "*Egbe- Omo Oduduwa*" was formally inaugurated with Sir Adeyemo Alakija as the President while Awolowo became the Secretary. *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* was, primarily, formed to advance the economic, political and social interests of the Yoruba race. In 1951, it transformed itself, into a pan-Yoruba political party.[xxiii] Chief Awolowo used the platform of the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* to launch the Action Group, AG, a party that maintained the closest association with *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* and for good measure, the Edo Union and other ethnic organizations in Western Region. Early members of the A.G. were mostly Yoruba but with a few Edo national, and they included Chief Awolowo (Ijebu Yoruba), S.C. Sonibare (Ijebu Yoruba), Olatunji Dosumu (Ijebu Yoruba), S.L. Akintola (Osun Yoruba), A.M.A. Akinloye (Ibadan Yoruba), and D. S. Adegbenro (Egba Yoruba). Others were Anthony Enahoro (Edo Ishan), Mr. E.R. Okorodudu (Itsekiri) and Alfred Rewane (Itsekiri).

Initially, the A.G. found it difficult to operate because the NCNC had supporters amongst the Yoruba, especially those in Lagos. NCNC was also influential in Benin Province, hence, the only way that the leadership of the Action Group could weaken the support of the NCNC in the Western Region and Lagos was to fall on the Yoruba. In fact, in the 1951 elections in Lagos, the NCNC candidates' votes nearly doubled the number of their AG opponents.[xxiv] At this point, party affiliations were not rigidly ethnic based, particularly in Southern Nigeria.

The race for the formation of a political party started late in the North. It, however, took the form of a cultural and regional organization when it came. In 1940, Dr. R. A. S. Dikko and Malam Abubakar Imam, the editor of *Gaskiya Tafikwabo* formed the *Jam'iyya' Mutanen Arewa*, Northern People's Congress. The *Jam'iyya Mutanen* was formally inaugurated on the 26th of June, 1949 and the emphasis was initially purely social and cultural organization. When it was inaugurated, it had the following people

as members; Dr. R.A Dikko (Christian Fulani), President, Malam Yusufu Maitama Sule (Hausa Kano), Vice President, Abubakar Imam, Salad Eungur and Kalam Aminu Kano. With the Macpherson Constitutions, and the fear that in the absence of a political party in the North, radical southerners might take over the Region, the *Jam' iyyar Mutanen* became a political party in 1951.[xxv] Dr. R. A. S. Dikko resigned as President and Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and a great grandson of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Caliphate, became the leader. Sir Ahmadu Bello noted that the 'Northern People's Congress grew out of a purely cultural society of that time and was started in Zaria by Dr. Dikko. He curiously observed that the AG also started in similar manner.[xxvi]

The NPC was able to control the North politically. Most of the leaders of the party were members of the "Saranta", the traditional rulers in the North, and the leader, Sir Ahmadu Bello, was a descendant of the founder of the Caliphate. Hence, support was based on appeal to regional and religious ties. The motto of the party was unmistakably sectional; "One North One People".[xxvii] Regionalism, in effect, created multi-partism, but since there were three Regions in the country, with each under the dominance of a particular ethnic group, three major parties emerged. In the North, NPC was controlled by the Hausa/Fulani, the AG in Western Region was led by the Yoruba while in the East, Igbo used the NCNC to control the Region. Consequently, what obtained was a three-party system.

A factor that complicated the party-system was the issue of ethnic minorities. As a result of ethnic consciousness and the struggle for political power among the three major ethnic groups, each using its region as its political base, the ethnic minorities, who felt that they were being oppressed by the major ethnic groups in each region, were brought into the fray.[xxviii] In the North, the ethnic minorities in the Middle Belt formed their own political party. This was the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) under the J.S.

Taraka and the aim was to oppose the dominance of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and seek self-determination for the middle Belt which included the Tiv, Birom and Idoma. Other political parties in the North include the Borno Youth Movement under Ibrahim Imam, the Igbira Trial Union (NPC Alliance) and Ilorin Talaka Parapo. In the Western Region, political parties that emerged for the interest of non-Yoruba ethnic groups included Edo National Union, which was a quasi-political party, and the Mobolaje Grand Alliance of Ibadan. In the Eastern region, the Calabar-Ogoja Rivers people did not form a political party as such but allied with the Action Group. There was also the Niger Delta Congress. The minority ethnic group introduced new dimensions into the party system by forming alliance with the major political parties outside their own regions with the hope that such alliance would be beneficial politically. The United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) was in alliance with the AG, while the Mabolaje Grand Alliance in West declared for the NFC. Consequently, intense political rivalry and extreme bitterness developed in their quest for power at all cost.

God-fatherism' and Youth Radicalization

Scholars have brought to the foregrounds some of the issues that were responsible for political thuggery in Nigeria. One of them was the high-handedness and poor management of the youth by the politicians. The average Nigerian politician nurses an ambition that he esteems higher than other considerations. Hence, he pursues his ambition by all means, not minding whose ox is gored. But our personal ambition must always be subsumed under national interests, and that is why individuals or groups, who are ever willing to subordinate personal ambition under national well being, should be applauded. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, expressing exception to this dangerous development in 2012 noted that 'no one's ambition is worth the blood of another'.[xxix]

There is a nexus between 'god-fatherism' and youth radicalization. The challenges associated with the unemployment of the youth in Nigeria have led to the radicalization of a number of them, which has consequently, thrown some of them into the hands of the politicians who employ them as thugs. 'God-fathers' are individuals who, as a result of the power and influence they wield, determines who does or does not step into certain juicy positions. Godfathers have vice-like grip on godsons, determining what they should, and should not do. They could even dictate when godsons should make love to their wives.

The likes of Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu in Ibadan, Senator Chris Nwabueze Ngige from Anambra State and Senator Abubakar Olusola Saraki in Kwara State were just a few of those powerful political stakeholders in the Nigeria political space who held sway between 1999 to 2007. The god fathers had god sons who did their biddings and who could only disobey instructions at their own political peril. Members of the road transport business, both at the state or national levels, were usually, potent tools in the hands of the political god-fathers. Some of these political juggernauts became so influential· to the extent that even former President Olusegun Obasanjo had difficulties handling them, and that was why, referring to Lamidi Adedibu, he commented that: 'Baba has become a dried fish that cannot be bent anymore; let us continue to manage him'.[xxx] People with discerning minds knew that Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, generally referred to as 'the strong man of Ibadan politics', was also a tool used by a former President in causing mayhem in Ibadan, and this explains why it was possible to violently upturn popular interests, and subvert the people's will so that the then incumbent Governor, Adewolu Ladoja, was displaced by his Deputy, Alao Akala, in Oyo State.

Thuggery is fast becoming a permanent feature of our electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. Consequently, the decent people do not want to have anything to do with brigandage. Acts of hooliganism has begun to constitute threat to the consolidation of

the Nigerian democracy in a number of ways; apart from militarizing the political environment and scaring off potential foreign investors and other patriotic individuals interested in contributing their quota to good governance, it has remained a major contributory factor to the proliferation of arms and ammunitions, thereby promoting criminality. The over concentration of power in the hands of the ruling party and some powerful stakeholders and the deliberate neglect of the opposition party has led to the perpetuation of violence and the subversion of political order, a situation that discourages the electorates from utilizing their franchise, hence, the low turnouts during elections.

Intra-Party Rift and the Inter-Party Confrontations in Perspective

Disruption of political party mechanism by members within and outside party platform was rampant all over Nigeria during the first, Second and Third Republics. Political upheaval in Nigeria has two categories; the intra and inter-party rifts.

The Intra-party Rifts

The 'accidents of historical acquisition together with the changing imperatives of administrative convenience", which were "factors" in the regionalization of nationalism,[xxxi] conditioned the peculiar pattern of the development of political parties in Nigeria. The political parties that emerged during the colonial period were parties that represented the faces of Nigerian nationalism. These parties, primarily, became champions of the interests' particularism of the major ethnic groups and remained the dominant system of power until 1966.

Ideally, a political party should consist of people of same mind, ambition, ideologies and goals. Therefore, it is not expected that there will exist any divergence as this could lead to incoherent policies. Once the party is driven by the same force, a lot can be achieved. On the other hand, Political parties are 'composed of

peoples with divergent interests and orientations', and this, in any case, produces discordant tunes manifesting in intra party conflicts'.[xxxii] Among other considerations that were the bane of intra-party stability, the First Republic witnessed a struggle for relevance, regional hegemony, and overbearing control over party',[xxxiii] which resulted in conflicts among party members, thus leading to inter party migrations, as was witnessed in the crossing of NCNC members to A.G, and A.G to other parties. That was the experience in the Nigeria's First Republic when we had Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe battling to assert his authority in the NCNC in the face of challenges from lieutenants such as Professor Eya Ita and Kingsley Mbadiwe, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo was slugging it out with the likes of Chief Samuel Akintola.[xxxiv] This is what happens when personal ambition is placed ahead of the national interest, and the same scenario was replicated in the PDP in 2014 when Alhaji Aminu Tambuwal, the Leader of the House of Representatives, crossed carpet to the All Progressive Congress (APC), a situation that generated a lot of heat within the polity.

The general election of 1964 was considered a very fraudulent one in Nigeria's political history. During the 1965 Western Nigeria election, there were verifiable accounts of women, Akintola's supporters, who were found to have emptied thumb printed ballot papers hidden in their wrappers into ballot boxes. Electoral returning officers refused to declare such results at the polls after the count, thus enabling the broadcast of false returns from the regional capital, Ibadan. In a constituency, an A.G. candidate who secured certificate from the Returning Officer received the shock of his life when the NNDP candidate was declared as winner in a radio broadcast from Ibadan.[xxxv]

The demise of the Nigeria First Republic was both unfortunate and premature because the leadership failed to inculcate in the minds of Nigerians, through the enormous political apparatus which they controlled, a feeling of oneness. Rather, the main political stakeholders manipulated, in sinister ways, tribal and

ethnic sentiments for political and selfish purposes. The greed and avarice of the political leaders were also major reasons for its collapse. During this period, the Nigerian polity experienced an unprecedented era of "carpet crossers", a situation whereby an elected representative of a particular political party was literally "bought" by another party. Having been "bought", he then crossed over to the purchasing party, thereby swelling its ranks in parliament and thus making a mockery of the ballot box.

Unfortunately, the political alliances of convenience were formed principally for the benefit of the leadership. These manifestations of attitudinal selfishness led to bloodshed and total breakdown of law and order. Indeed, there was lots of brouhaha, particularly in the entire Western Region, which consequently, forced the federal government to declare a State of Emergency in the Region. Hooligans and thugs were employed by these politicians to set houses, cars and other valuables ablaze. Chaos and disorderliness characterized the October, 1965 elections. The riggings and manipulations led to violence and what came to be termed "operation *wetie*", a situation where members of the opposing party were literally set on fire after dousing them with petrol. Ultimately, this trend led to coup, counter coup and civil war in 1967.[xxxvi]

Intra-party rift has never been more pronounced in Nigeria than in the present Fourth Republic. Indeed, carpet crossing has become more rampant and god-fatherism has become the order of the day. Sitting Governors and the god-fathers on whose back they rode to the Government House have had to spit on each other's faces. Dictatorial party founders have generally had running battles with sitting Governors and party members who appeared to have the interest of the electorate at heart. Parties have been divided into caucuses and factions, and there have been frequent occurrences of infractions leading to disagreements among party members. For instance, the PDP have changed its party leadership six times[xxxvii] since the inception of the 4th Republic. We have also witnessed a

serious disagreement between the President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Vice, the Turakin of Adamawa, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, who ultimately jumped ship to the from Alliance for Democracy(AD), to Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and later to All Progressive Congress (APC).

Besides the internal wrangling between former President Obasanjo and his Vice Atiku, the issue of Zoning within the party almost led to the disintegration of the PDP. Similarly, the crisis in Alliance for Democracy (AD) at the beginning tore the party into two camps and later led to the exit of prominent members of the party. The breakaway group formed a new party, the Action Congress (AC), which metamorphosed into the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN).[xxxviii]

Inter-Party Confrontations

Inter-party confrontation is no longer a big deal in the Nigeria political landscape. From abusive songs against another party to physically challenging one another, many deaths have been recorded among politicians. Politics in Nigeria is not just dirty; it is, by extension, a game of death. This is why mothers now try to deter their children who nurse the ambition to become politicians, and 'the situation has sadly, deteriorated as we now have government of illiterates, politics of hooligans, of violence, of moneybags. These are the kinds of people that pervade all levels of government'.[xxxix]

Nigerian political "elite" perceives that the 'pen is mightier than the sword' but believes in the Machiavellian principle of the 'end justifies the means'. They eliminate the threats first then manipulate the press. We have witnessed a recurrence of confrontations between rival parties. In fact, the scenario could be likened to two powerful masquerades that must not parade on the same day. It is like rival cult groups who engage in fierce 'fight to finish' combat each time they meet. Inter-party confrontations in Nigeria could also translate to mayhem unleashed on the society.

From the inception of political parties in Nigeria, ethnic divides and the desire to control government have severally resulted in crises within the polity. Consequently, politicians from different parties have engaged in, often bloody, confrontation on the floor of the parliament. From the First to the Fourth Republic, chairs have been thrown, punches exchanged and opponents ambushed and killed. Thugs have been severally contracted to murder and raze down the properties of opponents. The list of such acts of terror is endless, and pathetically, to date, the murder of Chief Bola Ige and Funsho Williams remains unresolved by the police.

Intense political rivalry raged in the south-western part of Nigeria, especially from 1999 to 2008 between the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the Action Congress (AC), formerly Alliance for Democracy (AD). Particularly, the Oroki crisis took place on the occasion of the celebration of Oroki Festival, which was an annual celebration in Osogbo, Osun State. This disturbance, which violently rocked the State to its foundation in 2007, occurred against a backdrop of inter-party differences, and these resulted in a face-off between thugs of both parties. The battle between the party thugs was intense and the collateral damage so high that it took the intervention of the Nigeria Police before the situation was brought under control.

To sum it all up, from 1957-2011, Nigerian inter-party relations continued in its decline and degeneration until 2011. The current trend now in 2014 is that if the next Nigerian presidential leadership does not emerge from the North, 'Nigeria will be ungovernable'.[xl] In fact, the rivalry between these parties has now assumed the coloration of political terrorism. Former military ruler, Muhammadu Buhari was quoted to have said that 'if what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood".[xli] Although, this remark, issued in a simple Hausa adage, may have been taken out of context, yet it may epitomize a reflection of the mindset of Nigerian politicians. And that's why our politicians

must be careful when they ventilate their skewed political opinion in public. That is why we need to moderate intemperate language in the political space and start encouraging the followership to eschew violence in resolving differences. We need to understand that ignoring the judiciary portends grave danger for democracy and the entire polity. People who have already indicated through their vituperations that they have no faith in the rule of law are simply unfit to contest electoral positions. They should therefore be reprimanded and declared unfit for elective offices.

Asari Dokubo made himself the unofficial spoke person of President Jonathan when he declared that there would be violence and bloodshed in the country if the current president was not reelected in 2015. Indeed, there is the need to call people like him to order. There is need for dialogue and tolerance if the polity is not to be overheated as intemperate statements or language made by politicians can lead to serious crises in the polity. Language moderation and public speech grooming are necessary for our political stake holders as inflammatory statements, at all times, have embedded in them the potentials to unleash mayhem on the polity. Such should therefore be avoided like a plague by all stakeholders.

Conclusion

The fundamental issues discussed in this paper are that the political parties of the First Republic, just like the ones that came after them, championed the interests of members from the main ethnic groups, and that remained the traditional system of power until 1966. The struggle for relevance, regional hegemony, and overbearing control over party machineries were the bane of the First Republic. These challenges led to conflicts among party members, and ultimately translated into carpet crossing from one political party to another. Inter-party misunderstandings and confrontations also resulted in political disturbances, which, in turn, severely, culminated in disturbances and blood baths across the polity.

This paper found that the major political parties failed to unify the diverse elements during the Nigerian First and Second Republics. Political parties that operated in the First, Second and Third Republics were not national in outlook and did not articulate distinctive national ideology. Socio-economic conditions that create ethnic conflicts and ethnocentrism among political parties have remained un-remedied, while differences in the cultural traits, norms, and values of ethnic groups are yet to be de-emphasized. The national party leaderships did not subordinate sectional interests to national interests, and thus failed to unify all segments of the society through sustained effort of emphasizing those things that unite rather than divide the membership of the nation. The stakeholders have continued to perceive electoral contests for elective offices as 'do or die' duels, and these sustained pursuit of destructive self-aggrandizement at the expense of national interests have led to an almost total militarization of the polity, which have, consequently, resulted in the proliferation of armed groups.

But whether a politician studied modern political theories and methods in America, Asia or Europe should have nothing whatsoever to do with how he discharges his political duties to his constituencies. This is because the greatest political figures of America, Europe and Asia did not have to study politics abroad. Politics, whether in Europe, Asia or America should naturally translate to honest service for the society. Nigerians can still serve father land with or without university degrees, or higher school diplomas. The noise about Buhari's school certificate result is tantamount to political distraction and rascality.

That a politician changed parties does not mean that his personality should be scurrilously attacked. Party politics should ideally be based upon principles, not region, religion or race. A citizen can leave a party for another if he is convinced that his former party no longer appeals to his political conscience. New parties can be inaugurated with decency and no recrimination. To the victor, usually the most popular party, belong to the political

spoils and prestige. Such a party is bold, foresighted, altruistic, intelligent and capable of attaining its goals in spite of opposition. Two brothers do belong to opposing parties as do son and father. But at home they eat from a common family table. An honest politician is he who bows honorably to his victor. Let there be no recourse to violence during and after the 2015 elections.

The Nigerian youths are, unfortunately, at the butt of party crises. The unemployed among them are engaged by the politicians for a token to serve as personal body guards and wreck mayhem on the society while their own family members, especially their kids, are kept safe overseas. It is hoped that all stake holders will see what this dangerous trend portends for the nation and therefore come together to halt it in order not to set the entire polity on fire as a result of elections into political offices in February 2015.

Notes and References

[i] James Hanley; "What Is Politics?" http://ordinary-gentlemen.com/blog/2010/12/21/what-is-politics

[ii] Talcott Parsons, (June, 1963), On the Concept of Political Power, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 17, No. 3, p. 232.

[iii] www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-23-2-b-edmund-burke-the-father-of-consevatism.

[iv] Herbert Simon, (1949), "Comments on the Theory of Organization", *American Political Science Review'* XLVI No. 4, 1962, p.1130. Cited by Prof. Omoruyi in 'Party and Politics in Nigeria'. http://www.dawodu.com/omoruyi4.htm

[v] McKean Dayton David, *Party and Pressure Politics*, Cambridge Press, p.

[vi] McKean Dayton David, (1949), *Party and Pressure politics*, Cambridge Press, pp. 12-35

[vii] Denis L. Cohen, (1983), "Elections and Election Studies in Africa", in Yolamu-Barongo (Edited) *Political Science in Africa, A Critical Review,* (ZED Press, London), pp. 20-45.

[viii] Duverger, M, (1954), Political Parties, Heinemann, Methuen: Massachusetts, United States, p. 12

[ix] James S. Coleman, (1955), "Emergence of Africa Political Parties", in C. Grove Haines (ed.) *Africa Today*, (Beltimore Johnshopkins press, 1955), pp 243-235.

[x] James S. Coleman, (1955), "Emergence of Africa Political Parties", in C. Grove Haines (ed.) *Africa Today*, (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, pp. 243-235.

[xi] Dumoye Ayo, (1990), "Ethnicity and Party System in Nigeria", in I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari (Edited) *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Publication of Nigeria Political Science Association, ABU, Zaria, p. 81.

[xii] Dumoye Ayo, (1990), "Ethnicity and Party System in Nigeria", in I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari (Edited) *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Publication of Nigeria Political Science Association, ABU, Zaria, pp.82-83.

[xiii] Ladun Anise, *(1981), Political Parties and Party Manifestos, Unpublished Manuscript, (University of Ife, Ile Ife)*

[xiv] Alan R. Ball, (1982), *Modern Politics and Government,* Second Edition, Macmillan, London, pp. 125 – 129.

[xv] Richard R. Harve, (June 1967), "Voting and Elections, A Functional Analysis", *Journal of the Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom,* Vol. XV, No. 2, pp. 18-30.

[xvi] R. A. Akindele and S. N. Yarma: (1974) "The Problem and Prospect of National Parties in Nigeria", in *The African Review, A Journal of Africa Politics, Development and International Affairs,* Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 381 – 406.

[xvii] Report of the Presidential Transition Committee, (September, 1983), (Unpublished), Lagos. p.30

[xviii] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, pp. 80-85.

[xix] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, p. 85.

[xx] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, p. 86.

[xxi] Wheare, K. C., (1967), Federal Government, Oxford University Press, p. 50.

[xxii] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, p. 87

[xxiii] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, p. 90.

[xxiv] Sklar R., (1963), *Nigeria Political Parties*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, Pp. 115 – 116.

[xxv] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, p. 90.

[xxvi] Bellow A., (1962), **My Life,** Cambridge: **Cambridge University Press**, p. 85.

[xxvii] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, p. 91

[xxviii] I.E.S. Amdi and W. Hinjari, (1990), *Party Systems, Democracy and Political Instability in Nigeria*, Political Science Association, ABU Chapter, p. .92

[xxix] Alphonsus O. Njoku, (2012), "Political Thuggery: A Threat to the Consolidation of Democracy" in *Nigeria Journal of Arts, Humanities and Diplomacy*, Volume 2, Number 1, Insuderc Academic Publisher, P. 30.

xxx Human Right Watch, (2007), Criminal Politics: Violence, 'Godfathers' and Corruption in Nigeria; Case Study: Oyo State .Vol.19, NO.16 (A). Pp. 52-59.

xxxi James S. Coleman, (1955), "Emergence of Africa Political Parties", in C. Grove Haines (ed) *Africa Today*, (Beltimore John Hopkins Press, pp 243-235.

xxxii Abdulrasheed A. Muhammad, (2008), "Intra-party Relations and Conflict in Nigeria", *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences,* Vol. 5, pp 42-50

xxxiii Abdulrasheed A. Muhammad, (2008), "Intra-party Relations and Conflict in Nigeria" *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences.* Vol. 5, pp. 42-50.

xxxiv Tyoden S.G. (2002). Pp 1-23; as cited by Abdulrasheed Muhammad. (2008). Intra par relations and conflict in Nigeria. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences.* Vol. 5, pp. 42-50.

xxxv N. Nnadozie Nwosu, Political Party Realignment in Nigeria: The Lessons of the past a the Prospects for the Future, *Journal* of African Studies (edited) by Graduate School International law and Diplomacy, National Chengohi University, Taipei, Taiwan (N January 1, 1983), pp. 100.

xxxvi N. Nnadozie Nwosu, (1st January, 1983), "Political Party Realignment in Nigeria: Lessons of the past and the Prospects for the Future", *Journal* of African Studies (edi by Graduate School of International law and Diplomacy, National Chengohi Unive Taipei, Taiwan, No.9, p.83.

xxxvii O Lamidi, M. L Bello, "Party Politics and the Future of Nigerian Democrac Examination of Fourth Republic", *European Scientific Journal*, December edition, No. 29 ISSN: 1857 – 7881 (Print) e - ISSN 1857- 7431, p.173.

xxxviii O Lamidi, M. L Bello, "Party Politics and Future of Nigerian Democra Examination of Fourth Republic", *European Scientific Journal* (December edition, No. 29, ISSN: 1857 – 7881 (Print) e - ISSN 1857- 743, p.173.

xxxix Human Rights Watch interview, Ibadan, February 9, 2007.

xl Alaba Johnson: "A Northerner Must Emerge in 2015 or Nigeria will Divide", Law Http://www.naijapundit.com/news/a-northerner-must-emerge-in-2015-or-nigeria divide-lawal-kaita

xli Nigeria: A statement by General Buhari on Boko Haram, and Its aftermath;http://sahelblog.wordpess.com/2012/2012/05/29/Nigeria-a-statemer general-buhari-on-noko-haram-and-its-aftermath/ accessed 7/12/2013