

A Global Comparison of Parties Politics as the Basis for Strengthening Nigeria Political Parties

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This paper explored contemporary comparative party politics of five (5) selected countries across the globe. Secondary data included media publications, scholarly research publications, government reports, government gazettes, textbook monographs, and journal articles were used in this article systematic analyses, The searched light was firstly beamed on three western state (United State of America, Great Britain and Germany) These; three countries were selected to represent western state base on their peculiarity, the research analyzed the political parties in United State as a Country that practices two parties and Federal constitution democracy. Great Britain with her two conservative political parties with her parliamentary Unitary system of Government were examined in comparison with German multi parties' system in federal parliamentary system. While China party politics represented Asian tiger on how one political party operate in Authoritarian democracy. The choice to analysed Nigeria party politics was made to represent the countries in the south, being the largest country in Africa and most popular black race in the world. During the systematic analyses and in comparison of Nigeria political parties politics with other four (4) aforementioned countries parties politics, it was discovered that Nigeria parties politics lack compliance with political finance regulations, party institutionalization, and her internal politics is entrenched in godfatherism, tribalism, ethnicity, nepotism, sectionalism and even regionalism among others as barriers to achieving party stability. Therefore, this paper recommended that party politics should constitute functional institutions for political recruitment in a democracy, mandate should be given within limited time to investigate and prosecute political finance violators, politics should be made less attractive. This will discourage many politicians from engaging in illicit vices to attain power. The Nigeria parties' structure has to return to parties internally elected executive, unofficial designation of the president and governors as leaders of political parties at the national and state levels must be reverse, hence, Nigeria democracy can make progress as a nation</i> Keywords: Party politics, party members, party organisation, right-wing populism, one party politics, two party and multiparty politics.
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Introduction

A political party is an organization that organizes candidates to run in a certain country's elections. Members of a party often share similar political beliefs, and parties advocate specific ideological or policy goals. Political parties have become an important aspect of practically every country's politics as modern party organizations emerged and spread over the world during the previous few centuries (Olawaju, 2017). Despite the absence of political parties in certain countries like Qatar, Kuwait,

Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, these countries prohibit political parties and require independent candidates. Most countries have multiple parties, while others have only one. Parties play a significant role in both autocratic and democratic politics; nevertheless, democracies often have more political parties than autocracies. Autocracies frequently have a single party in power; yet, political scientists believe that competition between two or more parties is an essential component of democracy.

Parties can emerge from existing societal differences, such as those between the lower and upper classes, and they facilitate the process of making political decisions by encouraging their members to collaborate. Political parties typically include a party leader, who is primarily responsible for the party's activities; party executives, who may select the leader and perform administrative and organizational tasks; and party members, who may volunteer to assist the party, donate money to it, and vote for its candidates.

There are numerous ways in which political parties can be established and connect with voters. Citizens' contributions to political parties are frequently restricted by law, and parties may occasionally govern in ways that benefit those who provide time and money to them

Many political parties in most developed countries are driven by ideological objectives. It is typical for democratic elections to include competitions based on political ideology; in different nations, political parties will frequently use similar colours and symbols to identify with a specific philosophy. Also, many political parties, particularly in developing countries, are said to have little ideological attachment and may be simply concerned with patronage, clientelism, and the growth of a specific political entrepreneur (Ajisebiyawo and Masajuwa, 2016). Other political parties may be formed as instruments for the progress of an individual politician. It is particularly frequent in nations with significant societal cleavages along ethnic or racial lines to represent the interests of one ethnic group or a dedication to identity politics (Kollman, 2004).

The nexus between party politics and democratic governance lacks comprehensive analysis. The party structure and political party management play a vital role in shaping the direction of politics and democracy. Democratic governance is about effective institutions capable of implementing government policies into infrastructure development and long-term economic growth essential for the well-being and self-actualization of most individuals. The links between institutions such as the legislature and the political components of the executive branch of government, as well as political parties that are primarily responsible for legislative and elective executive positions, cannot be overemphasized. Strong political parties or, in general, functional institutions, however, hardly emerge without directional leadership from political parties that possess positive political institutional ideology.

This paper used qualitative approach to undertake global comparison of party politics and democratic sustainability. In other words, the paper utilized secondary data collection

technique that included media publications, scholarly research publications, government reports, government gazettes, textbook monographs, and journal articles.

Literature Review

Origins of Party Politics

The concept of party politics originated from the idea that individuals could unite into larger groups or factions to promote their collective interests within a political system. The earliest recorded discussions of political associations can be traced back to Classical Athens, where Plato, in *The Republic*, referred to the existence of organized political groupings (Plato, 1935). Although democratic practices first developed in ancient Greece most notably in Athens, which implemented a form of popular rule these early systems differed significantly from modern representative democracies. The Athenian model was a form of direct democracy, limited to small communities in which citizens could personally engage in political decisions. However, this participation was restricted to free adult males, excluding women, slaves, and minors from the political process.

Similarly, Aristotle, in *Politics*, examined how different forms of government naturally give rise to factions and internal divisions (Aristotle, 1984). As human societies evolved and became more complex, technological advancement, social organization, and the struggle for equality and autonomy led to the emergence of more sophisticated forms of political coordination. In many early states, authority was maintained through coercion and hierarchical control rather than democratic consent. Yet, over time, the need for consensus and the aggregation of shared interests laid the groundwork for the development of democratic governance and organized political parties.

The modern political party as we understand it today began to emerge in the late eighteenth century, particularly in Europe and the United States. Both the United Kingdom's Conservative Party and the Democratic Party of the United States are often cited as the world's oldest continuously active political organizations (Metcalf, 1977; Dirr & Alison, 2016). Before the rise of mass political parties, electoral competition was generally limited in scope. Political participation was confined to small electorates, direct public involvement was sometimes feasible, and personal networks or elite circles were often sufficient to secure electoral success (Carles, 2009).

By the early nineteenth century, some countries had established permanent contemporary party systems. The party system that emerged in Sweden has been dubbed the world's first party system, since prior party systems were not totally stable or institutionalized. Many European

countries, including Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, and France, have political parties formed around a liberal-conservative division or religious differences; nevertheless, the development of the party model of politics was hastened by the 1848 Revolutions throughout Europe (Metcalf, 1977; Carles, 2009).

The Rise of Socialist and Post-Colonial Party Systems

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the emergence of socialist parties across Europe transformed traditional political landscapes, breaking the long-standing liberal conservative divide that had previously dominated most party systems. These socialist movements gained significant momentum through their close association with organized labor unions, which provided both ideological and material support.

During the mid-twentieth century wave of decolonization, many newly independent nations in Asia, Africa, and other regions developed their own party systems, often evolving from earlier nationalist and independence movements. In India, for instance, the Indian National Congress (INC) originated in the late nineteenth century as a reform-oriented political association advocating for greater self-rule under British colonial rule. After independence in 1947, the INC became the country's principal political party, shaping India's democratic and economic trajectory. The party's structure and influence, particularly during Indira Gandhi's leadership in the 1970s, served to consolidate the role of mass-based political organization in postcolonial states.

The Indian model inspired similar movements elsewhere. For example, the Uganda National Congress (UNC) the country's first political party was explicitly named in tribute to the Indian National Congress and adopted a similar pro-independence agenda (Byamukama, 2003; Chhibber, 2004). As voting rights expanded and eventually universal suffrage was introduced in many democracies, political parties grew into large-scale organizations that functioned as intermediaries between citizens and the state, representing public interests within increasingly complex political systems.

Russell (2020) argued that political party is universal to all modern states. Virtually all democratic states are characterized by the presence of strong political parties, and many political theorists argue that political systems with fewer than two active parties often tend toward authoritarianism. Nonetheless, scholars also recognize that the mere existence of multiple parties does not automatically guarantee democracy, as many authoritarian regimes organize their politics around a single dominant party to maintain control. The widespread presence and enduring influence of political parties in almost every

modern state have led researchers to view them as an essential and near-universal feature of political life. This has raised the question of why parties are so fundamental to the functioning of contemporary governments.

Several explanations have been proposed to account for this phenomenon. Political parties serve as a mechanism through which leaders are held accountable both by citizens and by other political elites. By articulating a shared ideology and a set of policy objectives, parties provide a benchmark against which their performance can be measured. Voters can assess whether a party has delivered on its promises and thereby decide whether to continue supporting it. Without such organized structures, it would be far more difficult for the public to evaluate individual candidates, their agendas, and their accomplishments.

In this sense, parties function as political symbols that represent clusters of ideas, values, and policy goals. They simplify complex political choices for voters, reducing decision-making to clear alternatives such as whether to support Party A or Party B. Beyond electoral efficiency, political parties are vital to the maintenance of democratic competition. They help build broad-based coalitions, prevent domination by any single faction, facilitate the accountability of elected officials, and promote the exchange of ideas and debate that sustains democratic governance.

Most political parties in developing countries lack party institutionalization, which explains the constant cross carpeting in parliament and the dumping of one party for the other for personal political gain, because third-world parties lack ideology rooted in party institutionalization. Developing countries may have more flexible and fragmented party structures. New parties routinely start and dissolve, and party agendas can evolve quickly. This can lead to frequent government transitions and instability. Political instability occurs in developing democracies as a result of emerging party systems, inadequate institutions, or foreign forces.

Theoretical Framework

This paper uses group theory as its theoretical basis. Bentley (1980) defines a group as a pattern of process involving a large number of activities, rather than a collection of individuals. The group emerges from frequent interaction between its individual members, which is motivated by a common interest. Individuals have a role, and each member of the group is subject to regulations. Bentley contended that politics is a collective activity, and that governance or election issues are a fight between diverse units for power. Other proponents of group theory include David Truman, Robert Daniel, Grant

McConnell, Theodora J. Lewis, and Earl Lathans, who argue that power is a distributed tool among numerous conflicting interest groups. The utility of this theory as a yardstick to assess party politics and democratic government in a certain state stems only from the interaction of forces and power struggles among distinct political parties in the study areas. In other words, the theory was accepted because institutional approaches, which are static, may not be adequate for political analysis when compared to dynamic and active political groups. Adopting group theory would therefore allow us to fully study the functions of political parties in democratic government around the world.

Comparative Analyses of Parties Politics and State of Parties Stability among Selected Systems in the World

In many contemporary political systems, the most critical distinction runs between competitive party systems and authoritarian party systems. Comparing party politics across democracies in developed and developing countries involves examining various aspects such as political party systems, electoral processes, party organization, and their impact on governance. Here's a broad comparative analysis:

People's Republic of China

The political structure of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is based on a unitary socialist system governed by a single dominant party, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). China's political framework adheres to the principles of Marxism Leninism, and the CCP holds exclusive authority over the state. In practice, China's political environment is authoritarian, as there are no freely contested national elections, opposition parties are prohibited, religious activity is heavily regulated, and civil liberties are constrained. Although local-level elections are conducted, the CCP controls the nomination and approval of all candidates, thereby maintaining firm control over political participation and leadership selection.

The CCP serves as the central institution of political life in China. Its National Congress, convened every five years, acts as the highest decision-making body of the Party. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, these congresses have been held regularly. The National Congress elects both the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), in turn, selects the Party's core leadership organs, including the General Secretary, who is China's paramount political leader; the Politburo is composed of 24 full members, including Seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee selected from the 24 full members Politburo; the Politburo

seven standing committee are the most powerful decisions - making body in China as of 2020. (Teets, 2014).

Following the CCP's victory over the Kuomintang in the Chinese Civil War, Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Since then, the CCP has exercised complete control over the state and the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Over time, successive leaders have added their own ideological interpretations to the Party's constitution, creating what is now described as "socialism with Chinese characteristics." As of 2024, the CCP had a membership exceeding 99 million, making it the second-largest political organization in the world after India's Bharatiya Janata Party. The CCP operates according to the doctrine of democratic centralism, which encourages internal discussion but requires unity once decisions are made. The General Secretary serves as both the Party's top official and China's paramount leader. Xi Jinping, who first assumed this role in November 2012, was subsequently reappointed in 2017 and again in 2022 (Karl, 2010).

Historically, intra-party factionalism has been a defining feature of Chinese politics. Since the CCP monopolizes political power, internal competition for influence occurs primarily within the Party itself. During the administrations of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, two informal factions were widely recognized: the Tuanpai, composed mainly of officials with backgrounds in the Communist Youth League, and the Shanghai Clique, formed around officials associated with Jiang's tenure as Shanghai's party secretary. However, since Xi Jinping's rise to power in 2012, the Party has undergone significant centralization. Xi has consolidated authority by promoting his own allies often described as the "Xi Jinping faction" while diminishing the influence of previous groups. By the time of the 20th CCP National Congress, these older factions had largely disappeared, and Xi's loyalists dominated both the Politburo and the Politburo Standing Committee (Huang, 2000).

Beyond the CCP, China maintains a small number of minor political parties, which function within a tightly controlled system known as the United Front. These parties do not challenge the CCP's dominance; rather, they serve consultative and symbolic roles. Their members occasionally participate in national and local policy-making bodies, and their leadership is approved by the United Front Work Department (UFW) of the CCP. These minor parties were originally designed to create the appearance of a multi-party framework while affirming the CCP's "leading role" in governance (Baptista, 2021). The PRC officially recognizes eight minor parties, each representing specific professional or social groups:

- i. Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang (RCCK) – formed in 1948 by left-wing members who split from Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party.
- ii. China Democratic League (CDL) – established in 1941 as a coalition of intellectuals in the arts and education during the war against Japan.
- iii. China Democratic National Construction Association (CDNCA) – founded in 1945 by industrialists and business professionals.
- iv. China Association for Promoting Democracy (CAPD) – created in 1945 by educators and cultural workers.
- v. Chinese Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party (CPWDP) – originated in 1930 among intellectuals in medicine, the arts, and education.
- vi. Zhi Gong Party of China (China Zhi Gong Dang) – established in 1925 to engage overseas Chinese communities.
- vii. Jiusan Society – formed in 1945 by scientists and professors to commemorate the Allied victory in World War II on September 3.
- viii. Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League (TDSGL) – founded in 1947 by pro-mainland Taiwanese living in China (Tselichtchev, 2012).

Coordination between these parties and the CCP takes place primarily through the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which meets annually in Beijing around the same time as the National People's Congress (NPC). The CPPCC functions as a forum for limited consultation rather than genuine policy competition. In addition to the recognized parties, a small number of unofficial or banned organizations such as the Maoist Communist Party of China, the China Democratic Party, and the China New Democracy Party operate clandestinely or from abroad, as they are prohibited within mainland China.

United States of America

Since the presidency of Andrew Jackson in the United States and the Reform Act of 1867 in Britain, political party organization has become a central feature of governance in both nations. Political parties are indispensable to modern democratic systems, as representative government cannot operate effectively without them. They serve as the driving mechanism of democratic administration, translating public will into governmental action.

Recognizing the essential role of parties in modern states, it is necessary to examine how the party systems in Britain and the United States perform their fundamental task of ensuring governmental stability and policy

implementation. In the case of the United States, the complexity of its constitutional framework presents unique challenges for political parties. The U.S. Constitution, established in 1789, created a federal rather than unitary form of government. This means that authority is distributed between the national government and the individual states.

Many critical areas, including education, health, property rights, marriage, and divorce, fall under state jurisdiction. Furthermore, states delegate additional responsibilities to local authorities such as cities and counties. These "home rule" areas often act with a high degree of autonomy, restricted only by the state and federal constitutions. Consequently, political parties must organize not only at the national level but also at state and local levels to influence public policy effectively. Given this decentralized system, it is unsurprising that the United States has developed one of the most intricate and widespread systems of party organization in the world. (Lepore, 2008)

Because of the nation's size and diversity, party structures differ considerably from one region to another. Success in national politics depends not only on controlling the presidency or Congress but also on managing state and municipal governments. The federal structure has therefore decentralized political parties, allowing state organizations to operate independently from the national party leadership. It is even possible for state parties to oppose or ignore national directives while continuing to function under the same party label. (Scheidt, 2017)

For example, the Republican Party in Michigan and Wisconsin may share a name but can promote distinctly different policy priorities. Every four years, when delegates from all states convene at the national party convention, significant disagreements often arise among them. It is remarkable that such a diverse collection of interests can unite for a national campaign. American political parties, in essence, mirror the federal nature of the U.S. government; they are coalitions of local and state alliances rather than monolithic national entities.

The limited powers granted to the federal government further restrict the range of issues that can divide parties. Constitutional amendments, for instance, are rarely the subject of partisan dispute because their passage requires broad consensus that no single party can secure alone. Movements seeking constitutional change—such as the campaign for Prohibition—have therefore tended to emerge outside traditional party lines through independent advocacy groups like the Anti-Saloon League. (Neuhart, 2004). Foreign policy provides another example of this cooperative necessity. Because treaties require a two-

thirds majority in the Senate, bipartisan support is essential. While international relations often feature in campaign debates, parties must be cautious not to make promises that are beyond their constitutional power to fulfill. (Dottle, 2019).

Issues of race and religion, which frequently divide parties in Europe, have historically played a smaller role in American party politics. The Constitution's guarantees of religious freedom and equal protection under the law prevent enduring political divisions along racial or religious lines. Although such factors may occasionally influence local elections or candidate perceptions, they have not become permanent sources of party conflict. Additionally, the use of citizen initiatives and referendums in several states allows voters to decide key issues directly, removing them from partisan competition. (Morris, 1961)

Another distinctive feature of the American political system is the fixed nature of its elections. Because the timing of elections is predetermined, political parties can plan campaigns well in advance. However, party activity between elections is often limited. Except during major election years, particularly presidential contests held every four years, party organizations may remain largely inactive. Many local party structures are temporary, formed primarily for specific campaigns. Permanent national and state headquarters exist but operate with relatively small staffs compared to their European counterparts. As political scientist Edward Sait once observed, American parties persist not merely because there are two sides to every issue, but because there are two sides to every office the incumbents and the challengers. (Sait, 2019)

The American political landscape has long been dominated by two major parties. Although minor parties occasionally emerge, their influence on national policy or election outcomes remains limited. There are exceptions at the local level, such as in Milwaukee, where the Socialist Party once governed the city for an extended period. Yet overall, the two-party system endures despite the nation's vast geographic, social, and economic diversity. Each major party must balance a broad mix of regional, racial, and class interests, making ideological unity difficult to maintain. Both major parties, therefore, encompass conservatives and progressives alike, representing nearly every segment of American society.

Nevertheless, there is a considerable difference between the two major parties in their sectional strength. "The foundations of the two parties are far apart (Holcombe, 2004), but to achieve complete success they must appeal for the support of groups of voters who are comparatively

close together.

There are other reasons why new parties are not likely to be formed. Under American primary laws it is made difficult for a third party. According to the laws of most states no party can have a primary unless it casts a certain percentage of the vote in the previous election. This means that it must be nominated by convention or otherwise and is not given the dignity or position of a major party. Of course, it is always possible for a third party or a fourth or a fifth party to put up a candidate for any office in the election, and with a widespread independent opinion existing in America it is occasionally successful in electing an individual here and there to office. But the general feeling about a new party is that one is wasting his vote by voting for any of its candidates, and this feeling is so strong that it is very difficult to think of a nationally organised and effective third party continuing to exist. After all it is easier and better to fight it out within the major parties. Even though third parties have not been important factors in controlling government, they have brought forth many issues which have been taken up by the great parties. They have rendered real service in the formulation of issues, and occasionally in breaking the hold of one party on the government (Dottle, 2019).

It seems clear therefore that the two-party system is a fixture in American politics, and there are many undoubted advantages accruing to the country from this system. Party in America has been a great nationalising influence, and it has done much to soften the violence of social and sectional strife. Even though the two great parties are composed of many inharmonious elements, they weld those elements into a workable whole so that the government can be carried on. The bases of the two-party system in America are pragmatic. I would not say that the system represents a later stage of political development than the multi-party system. I merely believe that under American conditions the two-party system is eminently the most satisfactory one.

Britain

When considering the British party system, several key elements immediately spring to mind. Britain has a considerably different constitutional structure than the United States, and political parties, as previously said, must be aware of the constitutional system of the country in which they operate. Because the British government is unitary, parliamentary, and does not have a separation of powers, British parties are not subject to the severe constraints that American parties face. Parliament being omnipotent, everything depends on its election. The elections to Parliament are really the sole purpose of party organisation. Municipal elections help to keep the local organisations together, but the real attention of the voters

is concentrated on a Parliamentary election. By one election the whole system of government could be changed, and parties are not restricted legally or constitutionally in what they may propose or carry out. This gives them the widest possible field(Keen, 2018).

The fact that the Cabinet must depend upon a majority in the House of Commons and must resign when it loses this majority on any vote has led to the enforcing of very strict party discipline in the Commons. Unless the party lines are tightly held, the Government will fail. There is therefore little room for independent voting, and independent members of parliament are very rare in England. Of recent years Governments have increasingly tended to force their supporters to vote for every Government measure as a matter of confidence. But in a parliament where there is no party majority, one wonders why minor measures of legislation, or administration at least, should not be discussed and voted for more on their own merits and less on considerations of party advantage. Why should strict party voting be insisted upon except on matters of importance where policies are being determined? It is probably true that this strong party discipline which is carried on down the line of the party organisation protects the members somewhat from the pressure of influence outside the parties, and if this is the case, it is all to the good. But one cannot avoid thinking that Britain is losing something by stifling independent members and making Parliament a stereotyped registering machine for recording the decisions of the Cabinet decisions arrived in secret(BBC, 2018)

One of the most notable features of the British system is the uncertainty regarding the time of elections. This uncertainty forces party organisations to always be ready for an election, and this means continuous party activity. Each party endeavors to have an organisation in as many constituencies Voluntary workers are necessary, but most of all, paid agents are needed to keep the party work going. These agents, being permanent and being linked up with and in constant touch with the area and central offices, exercise a great influence on party affairs. The party also has area and national meetings, and many constituency associations of the parties have clubs to aid them with the party work. In short, party machinery never stops. It may have slowed up, but it does not come to a complete stop (*Dougan, 2020*).

An election in Britain comes when there are issues to be decided, and not when the calendar requires it. Elections are therefore fought out on definite issues and not on invented ones or unreal ones. The recent General Election was quite an exception in this respect. This election was so long in coming, anticipated so far ahead like an American election that it lacked the spontaneity that of other British

elections (Browne, 2005).

Chappell (2021) gave another important feature of the British party system as that nominations are made without any apparent difficulty. Contests do not often develop, and there is rarely an independent candidate resulting from a party split. The candidate nominated usually polls the full party vote. The absence of numerous independent candidates and the small vote cast for independent candidates is proof of the power of the party machines over nominations and over the party vote. This acquiescence in nominations greatly simplifies electoral procedure, but it is not encouraging to independence. The nominating process also affects party regularity. Being indebted to a party association for his seat, it is natural that a member of Parliament, especially if he is indebted further for his campaign expenses, should seek to please those who were responsible for his success, a very small number of people elected as a member of a party, he is expected to vote the way his party tells him, and he soon finds himself in difficulty if he acts otherwise. Members do not therefore always vote as they should like. They vote as they are expected to vote with their party (Gourlay, 2009).

Another point of difference should be made. Political parties are not legally recognised in Britain, and this means that the numerous activities of parties are practically ignored so far as the law is concerned. This makes it quite convenient for the parties, but it leaves open the way to several abuses of the Corrupt Practices Act. Parties do many things during elections which are clearly against the intention of the law, and when by-elections come along there seems to be a tacit agreement among the parties to go to the limit. Since laws do not require parties to render financial accounts, much evasion is possible, and much uncertainty about party dealings exists. The general feeling seems to be that party matters are not proper subjects for legislation, that legislation would not be effective, and that no serious abuse exists which would warrant such a wide departure from British precedents in the matter. (Mackintosh, 2024).

British parties operate, and operate successfully, without a spoils system. So frequently American politicians say that a party organisation cannot be kept together without patronage. In Britain there is little or no patronage and yet parties are more strongly organised than in America. To be sure there are honours and peerages to be granted in England, and this helps some. And when a new Government comes to power there are about sixty important positions which change hands. But one cannot say that patronage characterizes British parties or is a feature of their system. It may be added that, resulting from this fact, the public services contain people of very

high grades who carry on the work of administration in a very efficient manner.

Germany

The development of the party system and the growth of political parties in Germany cannot be understood unless one takes into accounts the fact that the German people and the Germany state had been faced with four principal problems on whose satisfactory evolution depended on the emergence of modern Germany. These problems were (1) the problem of national unity; (2) the question of popular participation in government; (3) the state participation in a world trade system; and (4) the social problems arising out of increased production of goods and services. All these problems had remained practically untouched until about 1814 for the simple reason that Germany had remained divided and disunited throughout all these periods of her national existence. It was only in 1814 and during the Napoleonic War, the real struggle for Germany formal unification into modern nation-state commenced in August 1866. This; brought an end to the confederation Rhine and give birth to the present Federal Republic of Germany that eventually came into full force in 1949 (Girijak,1953).

The Republic of Germany has a plural multi-party system. The largest by members and parliament seats are the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), with its sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU) and Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). Germany as a democratic and federal parliamentary republic, where federal legislative power is vested in the Bundestag (the parliament of Germany) and the Bundesrat (the representative body of the land, Germany's regional state). The federal system has, since 1949, been dominated by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). To be admitted to a federal or state election in Germany, each party must prove that it is stable, has many members and a presence in public. Upon meeting these requirements, a party can register with the Federal Election Commissioner ("Bundeswahlleiter"). If a party does not participate in a Federal Parliament or state election for six years, it loses its status as a party (Borz, 2020)

The sheer proliferation of Germany's political parties contributed to the downfall of the Weimar Republic in 1933, but they have shown an increasing tendency toward consolidation since the early days of the Federal Republic. Smaller parties generally either have allied themselves with the larger ones, have shrunk into insignificance, or simply have vanished. Reunified Germany has, in effect, only two numerically major parties, the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union;

CDU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany(SozialdemokratischeParteiDeutschlands; SPD), neither of which can easily attain a parliamentary majority.

In addition, there are four smaller, but still important, parties: the Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union; CSU), the Bavarian sister party of the CDU; the free Democratic Party (FDP), which has served as a junior coalition partner in most German governments since World War II; Alliance' 90/The Greens), (Bundnis '90/Die Grunen) a party formed in 1993 by the merger of the ecologist Green Party and the eastern German Alliance '90; and the Left Party, formerly the Party of Democratic Socialism (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus; PDS), the successor of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), which later allied itself with left groups in western German People's Union (Deutsche Volksunion; DVU) and the Pirate Party of Germany (Piratenpartei Deutschland) have scored some success at the local and state levels but have not won representation at the national level. The 5 percent threshold for elections has proved a highly effective instrument in excluding radical parties of whatever stripe and in preventing the formation of splinter parties. However, the proportional element of the electoral system has necessitated the formation of coalition governments. Since 1966 all federal governments have been composed of at least two parties. Dissent within the major parties is contained in the wings and factions of each respective party (Cross, 2013).

German political parties operate within a competitive party system: that is, the parties compete for the votes of the electorate in federal and state elections. These elections take place every four years at the national level and every five years at the state level. In Germany, federal and state elections are run in accordance with proportional representation. Under the rules of this electoral system the parties' shares of votes are transformed into proportional shares of parliamentary mandates. However, a single party must get at least five per cent of the votes to be admitted to parliament. Those parties who fail to reach the 5 per cent barrier are not represented. Elections bestow political legitimacy, and it is based on electoral votes that parliamentary majorities and minorities are constituted. In most elections no single party holds a parliamentary majority on its own, so coalitions of two or more parties usually must be negotiated in order come up with a stable and working government. At present, out of a total of 16 Federal states, only one has a single-party government: in all the others, as well as at the national level, there are coalition governments consisting of two or more parties(Frankland, 2020).

At present, Germany has five parliamentary parties

competing for voters and trying to mobilise their members. However, two of them can be seen as the political poles of the party system. In all Federal elections up to the present they have been the biggest parties, and throughout the history of the Federal Republic they have provided the Federal Chancellor as the head of the national government. These two central parties are the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). The Christian Democrats represent the Christian (above all Catholic) tradition, as well as the rural and agrarian tradition, and broadly speaking they constitute Germany's conservative party. In the state of Bavaria, however, the Christian Democrats have established a peculiar tradition. Here a strictly regionalist party called the Christian Social Union (CSU) was founded in the post-war years and has ever since played an independent role as the Bavarian branch of Christian Democracy. Their political opponents are the Social Democrats, traditionally representing the workers and the trade unions, and their political programme has tended to focus on the idea of a strong and extensive welfare state. All in all, the Social Democrats have seen themselves as the party of the lower classes in Germany.

However, both SPD and CDU have for some time successfully been in pursuit of support from the growing number of so-called »new middle class« voters who have no traditional alignments to one of the big parties. Their considerable success in gaining political support from a broad range of voters is the main reason many party sociologists have named the Christian Democrats, and the Social Democrats catch all-parties, although traditional working class or Christian-Catholic biases can still be discerned in their policies. Apart from these two large parties there are three small parties, which generally receive approximately 5–10 per cent of the vote. They are the Free Democratic Party (FDP), a liberal and very much market-oriented party of the wealthy middle class, the already mentioned Green Party and, finally, a left-wing, post-communist party called Die Linke (The Left) with their regional and sociological strongholds in the former German Democratic Republic. The small parties usually combine with one of the two big ones to form a coalition government. Normally, the Liberals will join the Christian Democrats, and the Green Party will join the Social Democrats. The post-communist party (Die Linke) has so far formed coalitions with the SPD in several states, such as Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Since 2009, the Federal government has been based on a coalition of the CDU and the FDP (Kamenova, 2021)

The first positive aspect of German party life and party organisation which helps to mobilise people and ensure effective participation is the fact that parties are

subdivided into regional and local units with a high degree of independence from national central office. All German parties are organised administratively along federal, district and local lines. On each level, party units have some autonomy concerning political issues at that level: in other words, the party at the federal state level cannot and will not interfere with a local party unit. The same is true of the relationship between national and federal state party organisations. This vertical separation of power leaves room for units to discuss and make decisions about their specific problems (Scarrow, 2021)

A further element of intra-party democracy lies in the fact that parties may organise specific types and groups of members in specific working groups, thus creating a further functional network of sub organisations. All the parties have sub-divisions in which women, younger people or older people are organised at different levels within the party. In addition, there are similar working groups for members of certain professions and other social or cultural groups, such as workers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, Protestants and so on. These diverse sub-divisions have given rise to mixed feelings within the parties. On the one hand, people are happy with them because they help to integrate under one roof various groups and social strata that have little contact in daily life or live in different parts of town. The working groups and regional sub-divisions thus minimize social conflicts, making members feel at home and at ease in the party. Finally, this organisational differentiation is, in the eyes of many, a stimulus to participation because members can take up those issues that are of real, personal interest to them. On the other hand, some critics have warned that political parties might slide into a state of semi-anarchy because the numerous subdivisions and working groups could cast a shadow on common feelings of political identity. These professional and social groups have a tendency, many critics say, to establish independent organisational sub-cultures and, consequently, can become unwilling or unable to focus on common policy goals (Weissenbach, 2019)

Despite the sub-divisions in party organisation all parties in recent years have built up effective systems of intra-party communication to speed up the flow of information from central office to the regional and local parties. This has become a useful instrument for mobilising members during election campaigns, and it also has helped to professionalise party life in many ways. If a new question comes up on the political agenda it is now possible to come up with a common and official answer in a very short time and to circulate it within the party organisation. These communication systems of closed intra-net structure are expensive, but in the age of the internet they have

become a common and routine tool of political life in German parties. Again, feelings about these communication networks are ambivalent. There is no doubt about their usefulness to mobilise members in a very short time. But quite a few critics point to the fact that they help to establish and strengthen top-down communication rather than bottom-up participation and communication. So far, these networks have been powerful instruments for mobilising members, but they have not often been used as instruments for electronic democracy yet. (Bolleyer, 2013)

At the highest level of mobilisation and participation members can take part directly either in the election of party leaders or in decision-making about policy issues. Of course, members are always involved in these matters, mainly by electing delegates who then join the next level of representation. However, these delegate systems are not popular anymore because most proceedings are carefully planned. Spontaneous articulations of criticism, as well as open and controversial discussions are rare, and the elections of party leaders are boring acclamations with predictable results. Reforms have therefore been discussed that will open fair competition among different candidates and different positions. Above all, these competitions will include not only delegates but also ordinary members (Sandriseddone, 2015).

The practical regulations of these intra-party electoral contests and of decision-making on important policy issues differ considerably from one party to another, often changing over the course of time. But the guiding principles always seem to be the same. First, a certain quorum of supportive members must be attained within a certain time limit to start a direct democratic process. This can be a certain number of members or of party units willing to support an initiative. Only if this qualification is reached can an intra-party election or members' vote on a specific issue take place. In recent years, there have been all kinds of direct democratic decisions about candidates and issues in a wide range of parties and at different organisational levels. Sometimes party members decide on parliamentary candidates; sometimes they vote for party leadership candidates; and sometimes they vote for a party platform, which involves a wide range of issues in general, experiences with these attempts to give party members a direct say in party decisions have been positive. The participation level tends to be considerably higher than under the delegate system. Party members feel more satisfied, experiencing a greater sense of self-reliance and political efficacy because they have tangibly taken part in a political decision. They also tend to have stronger feelings of party identification. Nevertheless, whenever a specific decision is reached by means of direct democracy

the party decision-making process inevitably swings back into its usual delegate routine. What is still missing, therefore, is a decisive and courageous step forward to establish a fixed routine of membership involvement (Hermel, 1993)

Nigeria

Nigeria has a multi-party system, with over 18 duly registered political parties battling it out in the courts over their legitimacy after being deregistered by the independent national electoral commission (INEC) for failing to meet the country's registration requirements. Despite the presence of several political parties, the country has seen political power concentrated mostly in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) since its transition to democratic governance in 1999. Nonetheless, in 2015, control passed to the All-Progressive Congress (APC). This resulted in the ruling party (PDP) becoming an opposition party. Although other political parties had power at the state and local levels, the PDP and APC dominated the political scene. In recent years, the country has seen the growth of a third force in party politics, the Labour Party (LP), and the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), both of which are vying for a seat in power when the country has its national elections in March 2023 (NBS, 2022).

It is capital intensive to partake in elections, especially in Nigeria, where the process is both contentious and competitive. Few examples may suffice here. In the 2019 elections, APC presidential nomination forms cost a whopping forty-five million naira (N45, 000,000.00), that of PDP was twelve million naira (N12, 000,000.00). The cost of APC governorship form was placed at twenty-two-million-naira (N22, 000,000.00), and that of PDP was pegged at six-million-naira (N6,000,000.00) Punch Editorial, (2020). For the upcoming 2023 general elections, the presidential nomination form of the APC cost one hundred million naira (N100, 000,000.00), and that of the PDP cost forty million naira (N40, 000,000.00). The governorship nomination form of the APC cost fifty million naira at (N50, 000,000.00) and that of the PDP pegged at twenty-one million-naira (N21, 000,000.00) (Itodo, 2022). Unfortunately, these pre primaries' expenses represent a small fraction of the cost of politics in Nigeria. This demonstrates that Nigeria's democracy is jeopardized by excessive commercialization of party procedures, and party politics in Nigeria is for moneybags.

Different scholars (such as Chinedu 2022, Adamu 2015 and Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013) highlighted godfatherism, tribalism, ethnicity, nepotism, sectionalism among others as barriers to achieving democratic consolidation in Nigeria. This study adds to the discourse by asserting that the political environment is not conducive for electoral

officers to do their job. Electoral officers who are supposed to be neutral, have been found culpable to have compromised their neutral positions during elections for personal aggrandizements. Some electoral officers have also alleged threat to life and intimidation by politicians who want to get hold of power by any means necessary.

Furthermore, Obah-Akpowoghaha (2013) argued that political primaries are conducted based on selection and not elections; emergence of candidates is usually through imposition by political godfathers or unfair processes, a reality which is often inconsistent with the party's constitution, causing some party members to defect to other parties. The years 2007, 2013, 2014, and 2019 for instance witnessed increased cross-carpeting of politicians from one party to another due to internal party conflicts and candidate imposition. In 2013, seven aggrieved PDP governors formed a splinter group known as N-PDP; and they later decamped to the APC. In 2014, former governor of Kano State, Mallam Ibrahim Shekarau decamped from APC to PDP. In Sokoto state, former governor of the state, Attahiru Bafarawa also decamped from APC to PDP in 2014. Atiku Abubakar, a former Vice president, also decamped from PDP to APC, and the list is endless. Towards the 2019 general election, there was also massive decamping of some governors and members of the national assembly from the APC to PDP and vice-versa. A comprehensive detail on political cross-carpeting of politicians in Nigeria has been captured in Chinweuba, (2019). Intra party conflicts affect governance and distract the government in power. It leaves little room for quality governance as attention would be given to resolving party issues rather than focusing on the provision of quality projects and better living conditions for citizens.

Also, those that emerge from lopsided primaries (candidate imposition) after winning elections only seek to advance their self-centered interests and those of their godfathers, families, tribes, and loyalists further entrenching nepotism and polarizing the state. In such a situation, it becomes difficult to initiate policies and projects that are devoid of sentiments based on party

affiliations, kinship, or loyalty at the detriment of the generality of the people. Justifying this line of argument, Osabiya, (2015) asserts that political appointees divert funds meant for the public to their private coffers and give preferences and unmerited favor to sponsors, godfathers' friends and families at the expense of the masses. Political finance in Nigeria, scholars like Akhere and Ajisebiyawo (2025), Onuoha (2002), Akande and Simbine (2008) as well as Adetula (2008) have argued that level of compliance with political finance regulations in Nigeria was very low, that financial regulations are often breached by political parties in Nigeria. Political parties and their candidates often exceed spending limits stipulated by the country's electoral laws. Yet, in the 20 years of the Fourth Republic, nobody is known to have been punished for such violations. This is largely because there are no sanctions, they are inadequate, or not easy to verify and execute. Indeed, sections 88-93 of the 2010 Electoral Act provided sanctions for offences in relation to finances of a political party; period to be covered by annual financial statements of political parties; power to limit financial contribution to a political party; limitation on election expenses; disclosure by political parties; and penalties for violations or non-compliance.

Furthermore, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) summarized items concerning political finance in its 2017 publication, Political Finance Manual, as part of its monitoring role as Nigeria's main election management body. These items are expenses by parties, their candidates and the rules on disclosure; books of accounts and regulations guiding them; rules on anonymous contributions or donations and regulations on audited returns (INEC 2017:25- 27). The Commission relies on Sections 100 (1) and 153 of the Electoral Act to carry out this duty as well as others that are associated with public enlightenment and voter education. INEC draws strength from relevant sections of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and the Electoral Act to publish the following spending limits and penalties for violations, in the following tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: The approved Spending limits for candidates

Position	Spending Limit
Presidential candidate	N1 billion
Governorship candidate	N200 million
Senatorial candidate	N40 million
Member, House of Representatives (MHR)	N20 million
Member, State Assembly	N10 million
LG chairmanship candidate	N10 million
LG councillorship candidate	N1 million

Source: 2010 Electoral Act (as amended)

Table 2: The approved Sanctions for spending above limits

Position	Spending Limit
Presidential candidate	Fine of N1 million or 12 months imprisonment or both.
Governorship candidate	Fine of N800,000 or 9 months imprisonment or both
Senatorial candidate	Fine of N600,000 or 6 months imprisonment or both
Member, House of Representatives (MHR)	Fine of N500,000 or 5 months imprisonment or both
Member, State Assembly	Fine of N300,000 or 3 months imprisonment or both
LG chairmanship candidate	Fine of N300,000 or 3 months imprisonment or both
LG councillorship candidate	Fine of N100,000 or 1 month imprisonment or both

Source: 2010 Electoral Act (as amended)

The absence of prosecution or punishment of any known culprit in relation to political finance violations has giving unnecessary room for politician in Nigeria to continue to break law with impunity.

Defection is an important phenomenon in party politics and is based on democratic principles of freedom of association. It is a regular occurrence even in mature democracies such as the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Germany and Canada among others. It is also not a recent development in Nigeria as many instances have been cited in the country's past republics (Yagboyaju 2019). However, attention is being drawn to the frequency of defections and their distractive tendencies that are not in the interest of the generality of ordinary Nigerians in the ongoing dispensation. Political heavyweights including MuhammaduBuhari (left ANPP to form the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the platform on which he contested the 2011 presidential election), AtikuAbubakar, governors, ex-governors and many senior parliamentarians as well as others that are relatively less prominent have defected at different points in time.

Okoosi-Simbine (2005) and Olatunbosun (2018) among others have sought explanations for the rampant political defections since 1999, when the Fourth Republic commenced. In these efforts, defections were interrogated as to explain whether they are for altruistic purposes from which the public stands to gain or mainly to serve the narrow interests of the defectors. There are serious issues around political defections in today's Nigeria, including lack of effective internal conflict management mechanisms in many of the political parties, ideological vacuity, and excessive and unregulated use of money in politics. However, a critical point to note in the pattern of

political defections is inordinate ambition and, sometimes, desperation on the part of the average politician. This partly accounts for many defectors' insistence on automatic tickets in their new parties. With a mindset of winning at all costs, it is not surprising that the average Nigerian politician has an attitude of "do-or-die", life and death towards politics.

Party politics feuding includes the unofficial designation of the president and governors as leaders of political parties at the national and state levels. PDP and the APC are the only parties that have controlled the presidency since 1999 – PDP: 1999 – 2015 and APC 2015 till date and, therefore, they are selected as examples. For PDP, especially under the Obasanjo presidency, this arrangement accounted for the uneasy relationships between the then president, the party executive, and the leadership of the National Assembly. Many of the cases of sudden removal of the party's national officers, replacement of nominated candidates for elective public offices based on the "advisory list of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), in 2007, and controversial suspension of members have been traced to President Obasanjo (Adejumo 2010; Amao 2020). Obasanjo's successors, Umar Yar'Adua (2007-2010) and Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) respectively, inherited the crises in the party and managed them differently.

Those who challenge arbitrariness in party administration may be expelled or even killed if they could not be silenced. For example, PDP expelled Amaechi of Rivers State while his case in connection with the 2007 governorship election was ongoing in court. The Supreme Court deplored the party for "bringing the administration of justice to disrepute" (Ugochukwu, 2009). The expulsion of Atiku Abubakar, then vice president, and his loyalists

who disagreed with President Obasanjo in the build up to the 2007 general elections is another case in reference. It attracted intense media war and fierce battles of verbal exchanges between “new” and “old” PDP, with serious distractive effects on the quality of governance. Imposition of candidates and litigations are real issues in political party reform in Nigeria, and they had, as at June 2019, accounted for court-ordered withdrawal of more than 80 certificates of return earlier issued by INEC in the 2019 general elections alone. Among these, the case of Zamfara State stands out. The governorship candidate of the APC, his deputy, all state assembly and national assembly members hitherto elected on the platform of the party in the 2019 exercise were removed having emerged from an unrecognized party primary (The Punch, 2020) and the election handed over to the PDP on a platter of gold.

The operations of political parties and politicians since the return to democracy do not manifest convincing prospects for party institutionalization, which is a critical criterion for democratic growth and consolidation in reference to developed nations like United State, Britain. There are currently many registered political parties in Nigeria, most of which are an assemblage of people who share the same level of determination to use the party’s platform to get power. As such, it is difficult to identify programmes or ideologies. The structure of the political parties is such that internal democracy is virtually absent. The political parties are weak and unable to effectively carry out political education and discipline. Party politics in Nigeria, particularly in the Fourth Republic, is faced with a plethora of bottlenecks which negate party institutionalisation. The way and manner political parties emerge in Nigeria, especially in the recent period, tend to negate their prospects for institutionalization, and ability to guarantee political stability and consolidate democracy. The activities of political parties that have been operating in the country since 1999 are diametrically opposed to those of the established democratic norms. (Amao, 2020).

Nigeria is ethnically and culturally diverse, ideally, “reduce the salience and potency of ethnic chauvinism, bigotry and other manifestations of communal and cultural intolerance”, which prevent ordinary citizens from meaningful engagement in public affairs (Yaqub, 2002). A party stands a good chance of displacing and, thereby, taking power from the incumbent if the former performs the role of constructive criticism and articulation of alternative options competently. Such instances can be found in the USA, the UK, especially during the Brexit discussion of issues in 2018/2019 leading to the winning of more parliamentary seats by the Liberal Democratic Party and, to a considerable extent, in Nigeria’s 2015

general elections when an incumbent president lost his reelection bid. However, effective opposition is still insignificant in Nigeria where power and relevance seeking politicians largely defect to the winning party (Yagboyaju 2019; Simbine and Oladeji 2010).

Conclusion

This paper has established that politics and the party system in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic have so far not contributed significantly to sustainable development in the country. Findings from the paper equally suggest that democracy in Nigeria is yet to be inclusive because majority of the ordinary citizens are involved mostly only when they vote. Votes are counted but so far, they seem not to count much because the living conditions of the generality of the people have not improved remarkably. The political parties are affected by the environment within which they operate while they also determine the well-being of their environment and society at large. Like every organization, political parties in Nigeria maintain an exchange of both input and output with their environment, prominent among which are societal values. While the state and its offices are, in many instances, abused by the representatives of the people, society is yet to rise to its responsibility of effective engagement in public affairs and with “elected” representatives. Except with profound change in values and orientation, it is hardly practicable that political parties in today’s Nigeria will do what is done elsewhere in terms of actualizing development aspirations and goals for the benefit of the greatest number of citizens. Therefore, civil society, preferably from the community levels, has critical role to play in the interest of the generality of Nigerians in the ongoing milieu of party politics of the Fourth Republic.

Lastly, there is need for government to establish specialized security agencies, especially police, judiciary and other enforcement bodies in the fight against illegal funding of political parties. Mandate should be given within limited time to investigate and prosecute political finance violators, the penalties, in terms of fines or jail terms for offenders, should not be lenient.

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