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Political parties and instability in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic

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Political parties are an important institutional component of liberal democracy and successful electoral machination and processes. Parties produce the candidates, set the parameters of issues and political agenda within which elections are to be fought and are furthermore expected to perform these duties from one election to another (IDEA, 2000: 226-227). Political parties are a form of human organization concerned with the expression of popular preferences, political choices and a means of controlling the policy making structures of the 'government'. They serve a primary purpose in the struggle to place and maintain in office persons who would, alone or in coalition, control the machinery of 'government' and translate aggregated interest into national public policies (Momoh and Adejumbi, 1999: 113). In a democracy, the existence of political parties is very essential, owing to the important roles they play. This is in consonance with Agbaje (1999: 197) who opined and explicated "there is no doubt that political parties are central to the longevity and vitality of democracy, and that their ability to aggregate freely, articulate, represent and organize within set limits is what determines the extent and contours of accountability in public life, including access to and use of power, as well as public performance". The study indepthly cross-examined the various lingering issues that characterized the actions and inactions of various actors in political parties in Oyo State and their activities which have led to instability in the state, thereby affecting the functionality of a virile democracy as a pivotal instrument to the development of improvement of the dividends of our nascent democratic virtues and ethos whimsically and capriciously. The paper argues that, the instability in Oyo State as the capital of the "old western region" has caused various crises within the state and which by implication if not resolved could affect the entire system. The various individual roles and the concept of godfather have divided the parties in the state into factions and consequentially, the government house as well. The instability in Oyo State, caused by the political party of dominance in the state which is the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has given birth to various challenges that affected interest aggregation and sustenance of democracy in the Nigerian Fourth Republic.

Key words: Political parties, democracy, instability, politics of acrimony, ethnic animosities, party politics.

INTRODUCTION

An intellectual discovery into the activities of political parties in the Nigeria Fourth Republic has shown or depicted that various parties are riddled with politics of acrimony and ethnic animosities. The political parties' activities in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic are not an exemption of these various instabilities. A society's method of choosing governmental leaders has crucial consequences on the polity. The extent to which a society enjoys political stability, peace, order and justice is related to its method of leadership selection and

succession. A democratic society offers regular opportunities to vote new individual to positions, and this can be done through the formation of political parties (Omotoso, 1997: 187).

In analyzing the evolution of modern political parties, Lapalombara and Weiner aptly noted that political parties are primarily a phenomenon of the 18th century in England, while the modern party really got underway with the organization of the local registration societies favoured by the liberals after the reforms of 1932. In

France and other European countries, the transformation of legislative cliques or political clubs into mass-oriented organization is associated with the revolutionary year of 1848. In the United States, which is generally regarded as the model of modern democracy, parties with substantial followers and stable structures appeared in the 1790's with the "federalists" of Hamilton and Adams and the "republicans" of Jefferson and Madison as enunciated by Janda et al. (1980: 22), Berry and Goldman. There is need to emphasize that there are three types of theories concerning party origin. There are institutional theories, centering on the interrelationship between early parliaments and the emergence of parties' historical situation theories, that focus on the historical crises or task that have been encountered by the system at that moment in time when parties developed, and finally developmental theories that relate to the broader process of modernisation. Political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic have not lived up to expectations, and so, they can be described here as parties of one political gladiator (Godfatherism) dictating the pace of what takes place, who gets what and how they rest over other staunch members who do not have financial muscles but, may intelligently raise an eye-brow. This paves way for instability in the political system. Sequel to the aforementioned assertion, there is incessant internal wrangling, unhealthy rivalry for political power on the basis of succession to GRA-Agodi as the seat of power. This has led to the inevitability of instability in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic. A good example here is Adedibu, 'Alaafin Molete', who always claim wherever he is not reckoned with that "The Oyos do not serve a governor twice". Bola Ige, Oluloyo and Adesina (all Ladojas) failed in their second term bid, due to the enormous power which Adedibu possessed.

Democratic governance demands from the common man a certain level of character, rational conduct and active participation in government, the intelligent understanding of public affairs, independent judgement and unselfish devotion to public interest (Obadan and Bello-Imam, 2004: 4). Agbaje, in consonance with Bello-Imam and Obadan, observed that political parties are essential mechanisms in a democratic system, as it helps in stabilizing the institutional device not only for representation, but also for conflict management. These aforementioned attributes of political parties, identified by Obadan and Bello-Imam, and Agbaje did not characterize political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic and are not an instrument for conflict management, political tolerance, unselfish devotion to public interest and the stabilization of the institutional device. They are used for promoting rancour, crash opportunism, lack of trust between and amongst party members, selfish ambition for political power on "who get what, when and how". From time immemorial, this has been the case in Oyo State and consequently, it has degenerated to instability even in the present "republic."

The intra-party crises experienced by political parties in Oyo State in the present political dispensation especially within the People's Democratic Party (PDP) ruling party members and the Godfathers syndrome is dangerous, and it portends a bad signal for the sustainability of the Fourth Republic Democratic experiment. The further discourse of the subject matter is explicated using David Easton systems theory and Joseph Schumpeter democratic theory in analyzing the punctuality of political parties (that is, being picked as the case study thereby showing the result which such a system generated and its feedback mechanism to the centre of administration).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research study is achieved by employing the primary and the secondary sources of data acquisition. The primary sources of collecting information for the study is carried out through oral interview techniques of interviewing notable personalities and key-actors in political parties in the state who have an in-depth knowledge about the happening events that have led to crises, rancour and instability in the state. Interviewing members of political parties in Oyo State at their secretariats is germane to this research study.

The Independent National Electrical Commission (INEC) as an electoral body cannot be excluded from this oral interview, since their understanding of activities and roles played by political parties in the Nigerian Fourth Republic is documented, and getting information from this quarter has helped the study to achieve intellectual validity. The secondary source of data collection for this paper is predominantly acquired through content analysis method which involves extracts from newspapers, magazines, journals, historical monogram and press statement, while library search method is also employed through extraction from various academic texts of relevance to the study, archives and on-line libraries (internet accessibility).

The institutional sources of data collection used for conducting this research study are acquired through the media houses, parties and their various secretariats, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA). The varying information collected from both the primary and secondary methods of getting information for the study were explicitly and qualitatively analyzed. This paper, also in addendum, exposes David Schumpeter's classical theory of democracy which explicitly explains the legitimate right practically given to the electorate to choose their elected representative into various positions and consequently consolidate democracy on a larger ground through public policy initiative generated issues (Schumpeter quoted by Lively, 1975). A concept is an abstraction from reality that is meant to give meaning to

this world. Democracy is a concept that promotes the stability of a heated polity. The electioneering process is given birth to by democracy and also helps to put the various party evolved naturally or generated by individuals' selfish motives to contest and represent the people in various capacities for the promotion of their various welfare. Schumpeter postulations, as espoused by Lively, also analysed the instrumentality of accountability of the governed to the electorate, as a key component for achieving the best result of carrying along the governed in every decision made while in governance.

In summary, Schumpeter has been able to identify the democratic virtues and ethos of stability that consolidate democracy, achieve efficiency and effective governance, the level of political participations and hindrance by political parties void of crises, instability as a panacea for having a stable polity and political parties participatory level, accountability and line representation in a polity to console democracy on a large scale.

Theoretical framework

William Mitchell has posited "A conceptual scheme or framework is an essential tool in all investigations, for it provides the elementary concepts, assumptions ideas and directives that guide the selection and interpretation of facts". In a way, a theoretical framework is like a compass, which guides a scholarly investigation. It therefore, helps situate a research within a scientific analysis. The theoretical framework to be employed for this study is the system theory. The system theory is propounded by David Easton's conception that political life is,

"A system of behaviours embedded in an environment, to influence which of the political systems is exposed and in turns reacts" (Varma, 1975: 194).

The systems theory encompasses the input, conversion process, output and feedback mechanism which are embodied in a system. The system comprises the political community, the filter of ideology and values, the political authorities, the processing machinery and implementation channels, while the input comprises the needs, problems, information and interests, demands, support and objectives, priorities, goals and resources. However, the output comprises decision and rules, authoritative allocations, input and interactions from other systems (Kousoulas, 1968:16). It is within this framework that political parties and instability in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic will be studied. Oyo State is been viewed as a unit of the political system (Nigeria) where demands and support take the form of voting during election after the formation of political parties in

1998 which ushered in the "Fourth Republic". The input goes into the political community (INEC) who process the demands and supports that come out with an output (election results), which is the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) won the election in 2003 in Oyo State and this is assumed be the reflection of the electorate choice.

Political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic are repleted with so much crises ranging from bad governance, unhealthy rivalry for political power (power tussle) between the governor that has failed the political party he is representing and the so called 'Godfather' (Lamidi Adedibu). All these have made different sections of the community and rival parties (AD and ANPP) to kick against his bad rulership by all means possible, coupled with the dirty party politics of killing, maiming, arson and the political urge to dethrone the present "chief executive" which has led to instability in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic.

Background of the Fourth Republic

This paper takes a chronological look at the events and activities of political parties of the First, Second and Third (aborted) Republics and the making of political parties of the Fourth Republic.

Political parties in the Nigerian First Republic (1960 to 1966)

The history of party politics in Nigeria dated back to pre-independence, but active partisan politics by political parties began fully in Nigeria during the 1959 general election which ushered in the First Republic (1960 to 1966). Twenty-six political parties were formed during the First Republic. Some of these parties formed were the Democratic Party of Nigeria and Cameroun (DPNC), Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), Borno Youth Movement (BYM) and United National Independent Party (UNIP). However, three main political parties dominated the political landscape during the said period. They are the Northern People Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG) and the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) which later metamorphosed into the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (Dike, 2001: 56).

The Action Group of Nigeria was led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo as a western dominate political party, while the Northern People Congress (NPC) with its support from the North had Alhaji Ahmadu Bello as its leader, and the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens held 'sway' in the East having Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of the NCNC as the first indigenous Governor-General. The AG, NPC and the NCNC were formed along regional lines. Political parties evolved along regional lines because the Macpherson Constitution of 1957 gave more power to Nigerians in the

regions, while the colonial government retained power at the centre until independence in 1960. Political parties emerged during the decolonization process to defend the interest of the ethnic group in the federating units. Hence, the political parties fought for membership and mobile supports based on ethnicity because essentially they emerged out of cultural organization to defend the interest of a specific cultural group.

In 1964, the political parties that emerge witnessed alliance of parties which produced two big political parties, the Nigeria National Alliance (NNA) and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). The NNA was made up of the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP), Midwest Democratic Front (MDF), Dynamic Party (DP), Republic Party (RP), Niger Delta Congress (NDC) and the Lagos State United front (LSUF), while the UPGA was a constellation of the National Convention of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC), Action Group (AG), Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and the Northern Progressive Front (NPF) (Andrain, 1975:17). In spite of the National cross-regional appearance of the alliances, the two camps presented a North and South constellation of forces. The mainstay of the NNA was the NPC, whose motive force was the consolidation of 'Northern hegemony'. The party concentrated its efforts on winning in the North and did not bother to campaign outside its region. The UPGA on the other hand, was a Southern coalition whose primary objective was to halt hegemony (Diamond, 1988).

The feature of party exhibit during the 1964 general elections affected the smooth functioning of the democratic process as there was an increasing use of violence by the "alliance". "The parties employed violent tactics, which sometimes involved the physical elimination of opposition candidates. This was well seen during the 1964 election, when opposition candidates were harassed, prevented from campaigning and even the filling of nomination papers was made impossible. These incidents took place more in the Northern and Western region, which were the focus of the competition to control (Osaghae, 2002: 45).

There were intimidation and killing of politicians and destruction of properties was rampant. The controversies surrounding the 1963 census raised the temperature in the polity. Attempts by political parties to expand their basis of support outside the region of origin, through either alliance with minority political parties of direct campaign and recruitment of members led to resistance and further hostility among the ethnic groups. Apart from using violence means by political parties of the First Republic, there is also an absence of existence of free and fair electoral process. The absence of an independent and non-partisan electoral body, an independent judiciary to interpret electoral laws, a free press and well organized police in maintaining peace and order best substantiate this assertion. During the First

Republic, it was brought out that the members of the electoral commission regarded themselves as representatives of their regions, whose duties were primarily to defend and protect regional interests (Ekeh et al, 1989: 116).

The 1962 AG crisis and the 1964 crisis over the federal elections of that year were linked to the desires of the major political parties to maintain control over the region. The crisis that emanated from the political process resulted to ethnic animosities, which apparently caused the military to take over power and thereby suspending political activities. Thus, this led to the demise of the First Republic political parties.

Political parties in the Nigerian Second Republic

General Murtala Muhammed, while inaugurating the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) in 1975, remarked "if during the course of your deliberations, regarding the country's disillusion with party politics in the past, you discover some means by which government can be formed without the involvement of political parties, you should feel free to recommend it" (Momoh and Adejumbi, 1999: 14). It is imperative to note that a no-party system may not be able to cope with a highly heterogeneous society like Nigeria and it is upon this basis that political parties were formed in Nigeria's Second Republic.

For the first time, political parties were given constitutional recognition in the bid to ensure that only national rather than sectional ones would be able to function (Osaghae, 2002:114). The political parties that emerged during the Second Republic were germane as a mechanism for returning the country to democratic rule. The major actors in the Second Republic were of course the political parties. After the ban on politics was lifted in September 1978, about fifty-five political associations were formed. This high number was an indication of the excitement generated by the lifting of the ban, but some of the associations were bargaining chips intended to obtain better accommodation for their founders within the main parties. Thus, of the fifty-five or more association, thirty-five obtained registration forms and only nineteen applied for registration. Of these, FEDECO presumably following the criteria stipulated in the electoral decree registered five on the 22nd of December, 1978: Great Nigeria People Party (GNPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). Later in 1982, the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) was registered as the sixth party (Osaghae, 2002: 118-119).

Despite the state creation and the adoption of a presidential system which would permit every party of the country or at least the major ethnic groups to be part of the executive, the political parties that emerged were the reincarnations of the old political parties of the First Republic. Thus, the UPN was for the West, NPP for the

East and NPN for the North, while Borno broke away and formed the GNPP, but has always been only an uneasy party of the 'North'. The speculations of Professor Billy J. Dudley showed that the parties of the Second Republic were ethnically based when he opined:

"The 1979 presidential election for instance shows that Ibrahim Waziri, the leader of the Great Nigeria People Party (GNPP), a Kanuri from Borno State, had his highest votes in Borno and Gongola States, while Aminu Kano (an Hausa-Fulani), leader and presidential candidate of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) had the highest electoral scores from Kano and Kaduna, both Hausa-Fulani ethnic bases. Nnamdi Azikiwe (an Igbo man by tribe), leader and presidential candidate of the Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP) had his highest votes from Anambra and Imo States, both Igbo dominated states. Obafemi Awolowo (a Yoruba), leader and presidential candidate of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) had his highest numbers of votes from Lagos, Ogun, Oyo and Ondo States which are core Yoruba States and Shehu Shagari, who is an Hausa-Fulani from Sokoto and the presidential candidate of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) scored his highest votes in Sokoto, Benue, Bauchi, Kaduna, Niger and Kwara, all Northern States with Hausa-Fulani dominance (Dudley, 1982: 204-210)."

The NPN, UPN and NPP accused the others of having rigged the elections at their post-election congress held in December, 1983 (Adamolekun; 1985: 74). The political leaders of the political parties of the Second Republic employed rigging processes, which made the Babalakin Commission of inquiry to be set up to investigate the activities of the electoral body (FEDECO) that handled the elections in the Second Republic. The report which was submitted on November 14, 1986, shows that FEDECO and some of its officials had joined the politicians to subvert the electoral process. The electoral malpractices seen included: compilation of fictitious names, absence of voter's revision exercise, stuffing of ballot boxes with ballot papers and falsification of election result (Nzongola et al, 1997: 128).

It is important to note that the same reasons for the collapse of the First Republic's political parties were advanced for the failure of the Second Republic because the political parties which were the main vehicles for providing governmental leadership through competition in elections were simply reincarnations of the First Republic's political parties. They were parochial, regional and ethnic-based with only minor differences from the First Republic's political parties. Due to the inability of the politicians to establish true "national parties", the Second Republic, like the first, collapsed because of lack of patriotism, corruption, nepotism, etc., which were the same reasons advanced for the failure of the First Republic. Political parties, rather than serve as vehicles for "national unity", in fact tore the country apart.

Political parties in the aborted Third Republic

The response to the lifting of the ban on political activities in May 1989 was the emergence of several political associations which had to be completed to be one of the two parties to be registered by NEC. Within one week, no less than twenty-three associations emerged, and in two months, the number rose to eighty-eight (Osaghae, 2002: 216). There are so many associations that sprang up during this period, but only thirteen applied for registration. The thirteen political associations were the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), Ideal People's party (IPP), Liberal Convention (LC), National Unity Party (NUP), National Congress (NC), Nigerian People's Welfare party (NPWP), Patriotic Nigerian Party (PNP), People's Front of Nigeria (PFN), People's Patriotic Party (PPP), People's Solidarity Party (PSP), Republican Party of Nigeria (RPN) and United Nigeria Democratic Party (UNDP) (Osaghae, 2002: 217).

General Babangida used the Decree 27 of 1988 to dissolve the thirteen political associations over night. The formation or emergence of political parties is usually achieved in either two major ways: the natural process of development and the imposed one. The natural process of development is one that is gradual and incremental. It takes place over a period of time through negotiation, conflict and consensus among groups, and a body of women and men sharing identical principles and doctrines. The legitimacy of such parties is not really in doubt, and the emergence of most parties in liberal democracy follows this pattern. By contrast, imposed parties are those established by "state fiat". They often rely on the credibility of the state to invoke support and legitimacy. The formation of the two Nigeria political parties under the Babangida transition process, namely, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Conventional (NRC) on October 7, 1989 by the Armed forces Ruling Council (AFRC) followed this unorthodox path (Momoh and Adejumo, 1999: 113).

Babangida believed that by imposing SDP and NRC on the people after the cancellation of the thirteen political associations would help in reducing ethnic politics by political parties in Nigeria during this period. To Babangida, the system had the distinct advantage of simplifying the choice available to the electorate and encouraging "cohesion in a land of pluralistic interests" (Bello-Imam, 1997: 148). Intellectuals have criticized this attempt as an undemocratic imposition. Fears were expressed by a significant cross-section of the citizens who lay claims to the fact that the two party system even if it prevented ethnic-based party politics of the First and Second Republics, could polarize political cleavages on regional (North/South) or religious (Muslim/ Christian) bases, which could be potentially dangerous if not more dangerous than polarization along ethnic lines. The annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election won by Abiola was tagged the aborted Third Republic or botched

Third Republic.

The making of Nigerian political parties of the Fourth Republic

Following the collapse of the Third Republic, which entails the handing-over of government by Babangida to an "interim national government", headed by Ernest Shonekan, and the overthrowing of Shonekan's ING after 82 days in office by Abacha's regime, there was registration of five political parties. These are the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), the National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), the Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM), and the Coalition for National Consensus (CNC) (Anifowose and Enemu, 2003: 148 in Omitola). These five political parties were branded by the Late Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, as the 'Five hands of leprosy'. Abacha's sudden death terminated the lives of these parties. General Abdusalami Abubakar was appointed by the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC) to be Abacha's successor after his demise. General Abubakar announced on 20 July, 1998 "after all necessary consultations, government has decided that election of a civilian president will be held in the first quarter of 1999. The newly elected president will be sworn into office on May 29, 1999 (Olukotun, 2002: 222)". This assertion made by Abubakar was seen as a development and this led to formation of political associations that later transform to political parties.

Abdusalami inaugurated on August 16, 1998 the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) headed by Justice Ephraim Akpata to conduct verification exercise for political associations having set their guidelines. Out of the nine political associations, only three were granted registration to be a full blown political party. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) were granted final registration with the AD said to have been done a favour by INEC (Iroanusi, 2000: 212). The presidential election of February 27, 1999 ended the Abdusalami Abubakar transition that precipitated the ushering of the Nigerian Fourth Republic on May 29, 1999 after General Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd) won.

Political parties and instability in the Nigeria Fourth Republic

Having carefully assessed political parties in Nigeria, in general, this paper is devoted to a careful and critical assessment of political parties' activities in the Nigeria Fourth Republic with particular reference to political parties in Oyo State. Of particular interest to the study is inter-party cum intra-party crises and instability in Oyo State in the Nigeria Fourth Republic since 1999.

Political violence and party politics in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic

The history of party politics in Nigeria is synonymous with crisis. These crises have undermined the ability of political parties as a platform for construction of sustainable democratic environment (Omitola, 2003: 143). The crises have led to political violence due to dirty practice of party politics. Huntington (1988) posits "to demoralize in a society where violence is a key part of government is to democratize violence" (Adebowale, 1998: 149, in Kolawole and Mimiko). Party politics association with political violence is prevalent in the south especially among the Yorubas (Anifowose, 1982: 21). The nature and practice of dirty politics by political parties in Nigeria is not totally different from what is happening in Oyo State in the Nigeria Fourth Republic. Political parties are meant to resolve crises, political violence and all forms of vices in any political system. In the Nigerian political system, the reverse is the case, people see political parties as an instrument for fighting their political opponent and those criticizing the parties for their inability not to perform their expected roles (Peil, 1976: 18). The nature of dirty practice of party politics played by political parties in Oyo State in the Nigeria Fourth Republic, no doubt, gave room for political violence to ensue. This shall be examined as the study progresses. Political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic are not an instrument for promoting a stable democratic order but an instrument for achieving and promoting political violence.

The politicians in the political parties in Oyo State in the struggle for political power and its retention hired political assassins to kill members in the rival political parties in the 'state' and also members within the same party. It is the nature through which politicians used the parties to achieve these vices that often result to political violence. The assassination of Mr. Lateef Olaniyan, one of the political aids of Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, best explain the assassination of members in the same party. The use of political violence by political parties in any part of the country and the existing political parties is a determinant factor of whether or not such unit of the political system will be able to provide good governance and promotion of a stable polity (Kolawole, 1998, in Ayeni and Soremekun). Since political parties in Oyo State in the present dispensation believed so much in employing violence to achieve their set goals and thereby failing to perform the expected functions for which they are voted to political offices, good governance and democratic order becomes undesirable. Onyeoziri supported this by saying the only way to achieve stability in any given political system is for political parties to perform the roles for which they promise the electorates before they were voted to political offices.

The Alliance for Democracy (AD), the All Peoples Party (APP) now All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) and the

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Oyo State employed high level of political violence in the struggle for the financial benefits which they would derive when voted to power. This sinister motive made the parties to employ electoral violence, arson, maiming and violent repression, but a few to mention of these selfish agenda (Olasupo, 2003: 39). The political violence employed in Oyo State in the Nigeria Fourth Republic is not unconnected to what led to the killing of President Olusegun Obasanjo's Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Chief Bola Ige, on December 23, 2001 (Olorode, 2003: 39, in Olasupo).

In order for political stability to be achieved, political parties should perform their expected roles of interest aggregation and articulation, accountability, justice and order (Dunmoye, 1990: 26 in Amdi and Hinjari) in working towards the achievement of these roles (that is, practicability) (Elaigwu et al., 1994: 18, in Mahadi et al.). The members of political parties in Oyo State, in the present 'republic' during the 1999 and 2003 election, employed violent means to get political power. This took the form of using fake ballot papers to rig elections in the state both at local and state level, and hiring of political mercenaries and thugs to scuttle the democratic process. This undue manner of practicing party politics in the state results to political violence and this portends danger for the sustainability of democracy in the Nigerian Fourth Republic. The manner to which political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic deviated from the rules of the game in relation to party politics has consequences on the democratization process in Nigeria. Oyo State as a unit of the Nigeria political system is a volatile part in the South-west going by history and the incessant political violence by the smooth functioning of the nation's democratic process.

The struggle over who gets what, when and how has made political parties not to be acceptable to the people whom they are representing. These set of people, at times, criticize the government in power and in some cases some of these so-called critics have been assassinated by members of the political parties who are not interested in the views of the people. Going by the opinion of Wiseman (1990: 12), who argued that there is hardly any stretch of fraud all over the political landscape, the activities and roles played by political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic is not too different from Wiseman postulations. Problems were encountered during the 2003 elections in the state in which parties involve in gangsterism, hoodlums and hired assassins to kill their opponent in the course of winning election at all cost. Political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic after been disappointed by the people who believe that they failed to perform and that there is a need for change in the state employed violence means of thuggery, killing, incarceration of strong party members who belong to rival political groupings in order to achieve their set hidden agenda and self-centred aims. Thus, the violence that was

instituted has a gross effect on the polity and the consolidation and sustenance of democracy in the Fourth Republic.

The lack of ideology by political parties in any given political system or setting will definitely have effect on the polity, functionality and efficiency of such parties (Plamenatz, 1970: 22). Political parties in Nigeria as a whole lacks ideological orientation from time immemorial. The parties were formed along ethnic line, religious bifocality from regional basis and this has a long way in showing why political parties in Nigeria have, to a large extent, failed. This situation also applies to political parties in Oyo State, as Oyo State cannot be treated in isolation. Political parties in Oyo State, in the Nigeria Fourth Republic, lack ideology and cohesion, and the interests of the people were not put into consideration. Party indiscipline within and amongst the political parties are responsible for crises, uproar and political violence in the state.

The democratic life of a society becomes a problem if the leaders in the parties are not focused, that is, if the leaders lack the required skilled vision. The parties will definitely fail to live up to fulfil the promises enshrined in the party manifestoes, party statutes and regulatories (Dike, 1999: 29). This situation is not unconnected with what is happening in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic. The manner by which politicians in the parties in Oyo State practice politics is a major reason responsible for crises, political violence and instability in Oyo State. This measure, no doubt, according to Ayida (1987: 16) affect the developmental process of the nation in enjoying the expected dividends of democracy. This is what is expected of political parties in a 'modern state', but the Nigeria and Oyo State case which is the focus of this study is different from Ayida's view as political parties are noted for killing and overnight assemblage of interest in the course of looting the state's treasury. This is a major reason why political parties are interested in winning elections at all cost and by what ever means possible, thereby destabilizing the electoral processes.

The problems in the House of Assembly as the legislative arm of government to check the excesses of members of these political parties in government and those in opposition gave room for party indiscipline, rancour, crises, political violence and ability of the political parties not to perform (O'Neil, 1987: 2). Political parties in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic, through the House of Assembly, are not able to check the excesses of the miscreants in the parties since they have perpetually made the appendage of the "executive arm" of government by the party in government.

Political parties have been at the heart of Nigeria's search for an enduring democracy (Izah, 2005: 1). The situation described by Izah is a negation to what is happening in Oyo State as the parties are involved in power tussle, unhealthy rivalry for political power over who gets what, when and how to use Harold Lasswell

felicitous term, physical fighting among and between the politicians in the state who made use of dangerous weapons like guns, political assassination of opponent in the search for political power, disobedience to verdict given by the Judiciary as a measure to check the parties gross excesses, intense level of politicking played by political parties associated with political violence and squabble over party offices are some of the reasons responsible for parties instability in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic.

Conclusion

The conclusion of scholars from this intellectual work is that political parties in modern state are expected to resolve internal disputes (intra-party) and disputes between or among parties (inter-party) within the democratic process. In other words, according to Olaitan (2000: 1), the amicable resolution of contestations among groups without resulting to political violence and crises lies with political parties. The Nation's political parties portend the stability and participatory level of Cilver's terms of representativeness of the aspirations of the electorate. This paper shows that the nature or practice of party politics by active subjects in the state has generated to various crises and instability in the state which act as clog in the wheel of progress in consolidating democracy in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic.

The political parties' formation is done along various ethnic lines, while the ideological content is thus lacking and principles are compromised for insanitary.

Consequently, this affects consolidation and consequently the welfare of the citizenry, whimsically and capriciously. Summarily on a larger note, this paper concluded that political parties' activities in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic, which is the present Republic, through its unhealthy rivalry for political power, political violence and dirty practice of party politics, crises of political succession, assassination of political opponents, decamping and cross-capering nature of hungry politicians without vision and hijacking of political parties in Oyo State by the 'money bags' and the so called 'Godfather' have led to instability in Oyo State in the Nigerian Fourth Republic.

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