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**POLITICAL PARTIES IN A DEMOCRATIC NIGERIA: UNDERSTANDING APC AND PDP**

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**Abstract**

*Political parties play two important roles in a political process; they form a government or they serve as opposition. The paper looks at the role of APC and PDP in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. This journal article is an attempt at analyzing secondary data towards carrying out a qualitative-conceptual research. It evaluates the significance of political parties in developing society and the state. The article asserts that political parties in Nigeria lack true ideology. They are lacking as opposition parties when out of power and suppress opposition when in power. Part of the recommendations is political parties must be based on true belief (ideology) and consists of members that truly believe in the party's ideology. These will ensure political parties play their rightful roles in a democratic Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Democracy, Ideology, Nigeria, Political parties,*

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**Introduction**

The world has witnessed phenomenal shift from authoritarian style of governance to democratic rule. The fact still remain that state is no longer interested in interacting with other state where democracy is not practiced. It then follows that any country desirous of relevance within the world system must be seen as democratic compliance (Omotola, 2008). African states are not left out in this development. Though, argument in some literature shows that the reasons for supporting democracy in Africa, specifically Nigeria, do not mirror Western perception.

Thus, African looks more at democracy in economic terms than political ideology (Saliu, 1999). The global recognition of democracy eventually paved way for the re-birth of democratic government in Nigeria on May 29, 1999. The struggle for

democratic government in Nigeria during military era is almost the same as anti-colonial struggle. This is because both the promoter and supporter of democracy in Nigeria are highly committed and dedicated before the transition comes to reality. In the process of achieving it, many of them lost their life, some were even detained while those who escaped the two gone on exile (Saliu, 2004).

Now that democracy becomes Nigerian “Public good”, credible institutions are required to defend the system. It is in this context that democratic consolidation and sustainability become imperative. Thus, democracy requires among others the supportive structures, such as political parties. These Political Parties will serve as mediating institutions through which differences in ideas, interests and perceptions of political problems at a given time can be managed (Omotola, 2008).

### **Methodology**

The article adopted the secondary sources of data towards carrying out a qualitative-conceptual research from a multi-dimensional perspective. Meaning existing literature was utilized reflecting the multi-dimensional backgrounds of the researchers.

### **Conceptual Literature**

**Democracy** is a concept that does not have any universally accepted definition. In spite of the differences in conceptualization and practices, all version of democracy in the view of Osaghae (1992), share one fundamental objective of “how to govern the society in such a way that power actually belongs to all people”. Chafe (1994) argued that democracy is the involvement of the people in the running the political, socio-economic and cultural affairs of their society.

The degree of involvement of the people in the total control of their polity, within the standard of natural justices, determines the degree of democratic substance of a political system (Sadeeq, 2008). This shows that the peculiar virtue of democracy is thought to lie in the fact that it is only government that can advance the interests of all the members of a politically organized community (Barry, 1992). Schumpeter (1990) defined democracy as an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide, by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote. Competitive struggle, according to this definition, is that individual can take advantage of whatever loopholes they perceived in their opponents’ political strategy and thereby rise to power.

Held (1982) conceptualized democracy as a cluster of rules and institutions permitting the broader participation of the majority of citizens in the selection of representatives who govern them. In the course of summation of varied definitions of democracy, it is deduced that democracy provides opportunities for the people to freely exercise their franchise in the selection of their representatives and leader. This type of exercise, excluded the use of force and coercion through the state apparatus.

A **political party** is an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions that seek to influence the public, policy by getting its candidate elected to public office (Likoti, 2005). Edmund Burke defined political party as a body of men united for promoting their joint endeavours that national interests upon some particular principles in which they all agreed (Ojo, 2009). The existence of political parties according to this definition must be based on the principles of promoting national interest. This is because political parties are often expected to have their membership spread across the country.

This explain, for instance, why Nigerian constitution required parties to reflect federal character before they can be registered (Tordoff, 1999). Similarly, Osumah (2009) conceives political party as a voluntary association organized by persons bind by common interests or aims, which seeks to acquire or retain power through the election of its candidates into public office. Here political party was perceived as an instrument of acquiring political power in order to implement government policies.

Political Parties are integral part of the process of institutionalizing democracy. Thus, political parties according to IDEA (2000) produce the candidates, set the parameters of issues and agenda within which elections are to be held and they are expected to perform these duties periodically. The, functions of a political party were summarized by Egbewole and Muhtar (2010) as:

1. Stimulating the citizenry to take a greater interest in election and activities of government
2. Defining political issues of the day and sharpen the choice between alternative paths.
3. Presenting candidates who are committed to announce position with respect to issues.
4. Majority party provides basis upon which government can be operated.
5. Accepting responsibility to govern upon winning election.

In addition, Political Parties, according to Huntington (1968), perform the functions of ordering the political system; they serve to structure political

process and ensure that citizen participation in that process is orderly; they seek to provide a distinctive collective identity for their followers, one that is premised upon acceptance of basic rules of the national political arena. As a result of these functions, Diamond (1997) asserted that political parties remain important if not essential instruments for representing political constituencies and interests, aggregating demands and preferences, recruiting and socializing new candidate for office; organizing the electoral competition for power, crafting policy alternatives, setting the policy-making agenda, forming effective governments, and integrating groups and individuals into the democratic process.

In order to perform these functions positively, political party should be guided by distinctive ideology which will sell them to a core set of electorates and distinguish them clearly from other political parties. At this juncture, ideology becomes important feature of political parties. **Party ideology**, according to Seruton is moral systems that enshrine the sanctity of contract and promise between them (parties) and electorate; it constitute the political doctrine from which a programme of political actions emanates and on which basis citizens choose how they will like to be ruled (Sambine, 2004).

In his opinion, Nnoli (2003) posited that ideology is very important aspect of politics, not only by serving as a cognitive structure for looking at society generally and providing a guide to individual action and judgment, but as a powerful instrument of conflict management, self identification, popular mobilization and legitimization. The party's policies plus strategies for achieving them and code of conduct for party members are encapsulated in ideology. On this basis, Simbine (2005) posited that parties and their manifestoes need to espouse the ideology on which they plan to run the government in order to give the electorates a clear picture of where the country is heading to and to decide whether or not to work in that direction. Absence of ideology in parties will therefore make it difficult for political parties to harmonize members view on political issues.

### **APC/PDP**

The fact still remain that "the strength and effectiveness of Political Parties is directly proportional to the degree of resilience democracy enjoy" (Mimiko, 2007). It is against this background that this study is concerned with the role of political parties in consolidation of democracy in Nigeria and the extent of party's contribution to the survival and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria with special focus on PDP and APC. Nigeria has a multi-party system, with two or three

strong parties and a third party that is electorally successful. PDP and APC remains the strongest parties in Nigeria in the opinion of the researcher.

The All Progressives Congress (APC) is a political party in Nigeria, formed on 6 February 2013 in anticipation of the 2015 elections. APC candidate Muhammadu Buhari won the presidential election by almost 2.6 million votes. Incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan conceded defeat on 31 March. This was the first time in Nigeria's political history that an opposition political party unseated a governing party in a general election and one in which power transferred peacefully from one political party to another. In addition, the APC won the majority of seats in the Senate and the House of Representatives in the 2015 elections, though it fell shy of winning a super-majority to override the ability of the opposition People's Democratic Party to block legislation.

The party is the result of an alliance of Nigeria's three biggest opposition parties – the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) – and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) – merged to take on the People's Democratic Party. The party received approval from the nation's electoral umpire Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on 31 July 2013 to become a political party and subsequently withdrew the operating licenses of the three predecessor parties (the ACN, CPC and ANPP). The People's Democratic Party is a major contemporary political party in Nigeria. Its policies generally lie towards the centre-right of the political spectrum. It won every Presidential election between 1999 and 2011, and was until the 2015 elections.

### **Political Party and Democratic Consolidation**

Democratic consolidation is the process by which a new democracy matures, such that it is unlikely to revert to authoritarianism. It also assumes two things, the first being that there is already in existence a state of democracy characterized by all democratic features via periodic election, security of life and property, fundamental human rights and freedom, constitutional stability as a fulcrum of society and governmental stability and also opportunities for equality, justice and fair play. On the other hand, it assumes that there is a need to consolidate the base of the existing democracy. This implies making firmer, more solid and more resilient the base of the existing democracy (Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013).

However, in a society where democratic consolidation is apace, political parties play an important role of creating a relationship between government and the citizenry. The relationship is fostered by the support given to the parties by the

people in exchange for information from the parties about the government. In other words, a vital stage in the process of democratic consolidation is the involvement of the masses through socialization and the recruitment of capable hands into the political system anchored on a systematic procedures and policies for selecting individuals. On a similar analysis, (Udofia 1981; Obah-Akpowoghaha 2013) describes a political party as a body that organizes public opinion and test attitudes and to transmit these to government officials and leaders so that the ruled and rulers, public and government, are in reasonably class accord. Their form is determined by entire socio-political framework of the society. They require a constitutional framework or political regime congenial to their functioning; and they depend upon groupings in the society for their membership. Political parties are subgroups in the systems with their own means of generating power.

However, democratic consolidation is a function of party politics. In other words, the growth of democracy in a country is as a result of conducive environment created by the interaction of political parties in a state. A negative interaction where actors (political parties) breach the code of conduct the in system or electoral process and undermining the constitution of the state, this will impact negatively on deepening democracy. Conversely, positive interactions of political parties both inter/intra parties' activities will signal a geometrical growth on democracy. Democracy is a concept that revolves around and about the will of the people where the minority rights are properly ensured.

A negative interaction of in the political parties describes politics without the people and is an enthronement of autocracy. Moreover, the ultimate goal of election itself is to measure, assess, articulate and integrate the needs of the electorates. Election is an avenue where by eligible voters and candidates make their will known. Once this process is interrupted by some class, then what exist is just artificial politics devoid of the general will.

### **Findings and Conclusion**

Democracy is a idea that orbits round and about the choice of the general public where the minority rights are appropriately safeguarded.

A damaging interaction in political parties defines politics deprived of the public and is a dethronement of democracy. Furthermore, the eventual objective of election itself is to size, evaluate, articulate and assimilate the wishes of the voters. Election is an way where by qualified electorates and aspirants make their will known. Once this process is interrupted by some class, then what occur is just fake politics lacking the will of the people.

Political parties must be based on true belief (ideology) and consists of members that truly believe in the party's ideology. Opposition parties must be given the space to operate as a critic of party in power and as a possible alternative. These will ensure political parties play their rightful roles in a democratic Nigeria.

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**CONSTRUCTION OF GREETINGS IN OLA ROTIMI' *THE GODS ARE NOT TO BLAME***

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**Abstract**

*Greeting is very important in the Yoruba culture, but its actual realization is beyond the routine expectation of the interactants as its pragmatic contexts play significant roles in its natural and mediated constructions. Most of the existing studies on greetings are based largely on the socio-cultural and institutional dimensions to the phenomenon within the ambits of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis (including aspects of literary discourse), pragmatics and stylistics; they do not largely examine the socio-pragmatic mechanisms of greetings in dramatic works influenced by the Yoruba culture, particularly, Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* with abundant instances of greetings. This study is out to consider the construction of greetings in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* with the purpose of identifying the greeting types in it, examining the speech functions the greetings are used to perform as well as accounting for their contextual implications. The choice of Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* was informed by its groundedness in Yoruba cultural contents, particularly the greeting culture. All the greetings in the play were subjected to pragmatic analysis. Two types of greetings, namely culture-informed greeting which bifurcates into routine and culture- constrained greetings, and situation-informed greetings, are discovered in the play. The greetings in the play are constructed both verbally (i.e. spoken, as in 'I greet the elders of our land') and non-verbally which is sex-determined/status-dictated (i.e., chiefs squatting, males prostrating and females kneeling). Using the theory of pragmatic acts, it is discovered that the greetings in the play pract, among others, respecting, encouraging, apologizing, consoling, prodding, attracting insulting and challenging.*

**Keywords:** *Greeting, culture-informed, culture-constrained, situation-informed and pragmatic acts.*

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**Introduction**

Greeting, as observed by Adeyanju (2003), is "a universal sociolinguistic phenomenon which signals the recognition of other participant as a potential agent in some activity and indicates continuity of personal relation." Greetings