

Political Party Activities and the Quagmire for Economic Development in Nigeria since the Resurgence of Democracy

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Abstract

There is mushrooming literature on political party activities in Nigeria. However, existing research has not focused much on how political parties became an albatross to Nigeria's economy. As a result, this study adds to the body of literature on the phenomenon under inquiry. Using existing historical data and statistical information, it confirms the critical link between political party activities and economic decline in Nigeria. Given the foregoing, the study suggests, among other things, a cessation of election violence and excessive campaign financing, which are the "roadmaps" for Nigeria's economic decline. These and other related ideas, if examined and implemented, will assist the country in finding the correct path to inclusive growth and sustainable economic development rather than leaving it in ruins.

Keywords: Political Parties; Quagmire; Economic Development; Nigeria; Democracy.

Introduction

In the pre-independence era, Nigeria had suffered the yoke and stings of colonialism and as such demanded independence to enable her citizens to be free from foreign dominations and also tap the benefits of democracy. However, with the attainment of independence, this long-awaited hope became shambled. This is because the military who are saddled with the constitutional responsibility of protecting the country's territorial integrity truncated the Nation's democracy in 1966. They justified their action that the former civilian administration was corrupt and ineffective. Therefore, they have arrogated themselves a (self-acclaimed) responsibility of bringing the country to a sound footing by throwing right in the wrongs of the former civilian administration.

This assertion, however, does not in any way lay claim that the military is blameless. Previously, when the army took over the political affairs of Nigeria, they have also been criticized for falling short of the same challenges; that is to say, the military regimes also have their distinctive weaknesses. Having suffered from the military dictatorship and autocracy; it is thought that the political class and the masses under democratic/civilian administrations using political party manifestoes would learn from their past experiences and bring the country to its right recourse for inclusive growth and development but this hope has remained a ruse. Omotola (2010:125) asserts that "political parties are indispensable for institutions of democracy and democratic societies". Similarly, Nwanegbo

(2014:3) cites Ogundiya who espouses that, "the functioning of every democratic system depends to a large extent on the nature, character, composition, organization, idealism, and institutionalization of political parties and party politics". Egwemi (2009b and 2017) argues that political parties of democracy indeed are pistons that power the democratic engine. Relatedly, Agbaje (1999:192) discusses the relevance of political parties to a democratic government when he espouses that:

Political parties... have the most crucial role to play in any democracy. Not having a properly functional party system in a supposedly democratic country is worse than tea without sugar; it is like trying to pass brown water as a tea. There can be no meaningful democracy without a properly functioning party process... political parties constitute the heart of democracy.

Despite the above postulations; in developing countries (including Nigeria) political parties have become a quagmire in the developmental process thereby retarding the growth of the Nigerian economy. It is, therefore, imperative to study these problematic and appropriate policy options that would help in nipping in the bud the economic challenges emanated from the activities of political parties since the resurgence of democracy in 1991. The remainder of the paper pursues this line of argument by, first conceptualizing the concepts that are central to this study, namely, political party, economic development, and democracy. Next, the paper traces the history of political parties in Nigeria. It further discusses political parties as agents of Nigeria's economic

retardation. The second but last segment ascertains what needs to be done to come out of this quagmire while the last aspect focuses on the concluding thought.

Conceptual Pathway

The concepts attracting clarification here are political party, economic development, and democracy. A lot of attempts have been made at defining the aforementioned concepts. It has been difficult to arrive at one generally accepted definition of these concepts. This is because different people look at them based on their academic backgrounds and experience. However, this segment of the paper attempts a review some of these definitions in the succeeding discourse. The aim is to arrive at a textual definition of each of these concepts to enhance the understanding of the phenomena under consideration. Political parties, on the one hand, are not quarks; they are visible and easily recognized in the wild. Despite these tangible qualities, the scholarly literature has yet to reach a consensus definition of the party (Lapalombara and Anderson, 2002:393). However, there are two schools of thought that define the party, is the public interest school and the private gain school. The public interest school of thought, on the one hand, is the brainchild of Edmund Burke. According to this school, "party is a body of men united, for promoting their joint endeavors the interest, upon some particular principle upon which they are all agreed" (Burke 1839:425). The private gain school, on the other hand, is championed by Schumpeter. Schumpeter

is the best-known antagonist of all public interest school theorists. He counters the preceding definition of party, full of the grift of power and political gain. Schumpeter (1976:283) laments that:

A party is a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for power... party and machine politicians are simply the response to the fact that the electoral mass is incapable of action other than in a stampede, and they constitute an attempt to regulate political competition exactly similar to the corresponding practice of trade association.

Schattschneider (1942:35), an earlier political scientist who minced no words about the power-centered nature of politics, promotes this narrowly instrumental view of parties in even more forceful terms. To him, the essence of the party is the edge to gain and keep power. Sharing a similar line of thought, Dibley (2008:92) insists that, "a political party is an organized group of citizens, who act together as a political unit, having distinctive aims and objectives involving political questions in the state and acting together and seeking to obtain control of the government". In the context of this study, a political party is a group of individuals who conceived a political ideology/philosophy to use to persuade the masses to gain their sympathy and conscience, win elections, and control the government of their control for the furtherance of that political ideology.

The meaning of economic development, on the other hand, cannot be easily stated with precision. Perhaps, it is easier to say what economic development is not. In this wise, it must

be emphasized that it is not equivalent to the total development of the society. It is only an aspect of general development. The emphasis here is that, is quite different from national development, which encompasses at a minimum social, economic, and political development among others in the building of national identity (Meier, 1970, Agaba, 2017).

Generally, economic development is conceived as improvements in material welfare, especially for persons with the lowest incomes; reduction of mass poverty with its correlates of illiteracy; diseases and early death; and general hardships; and in the underlining structure of production away from agricultural toward industrial activities. It also covers the organization of the economy in such a way that productive employment is generally among the working population rather than the situation of a privileged minority. This extends to the greater corresponding participation of broadly based groups in making decisions about the direction of the economy and otherwise in which they should move to improve their welfare (Kindleberg and Herrick, 1977). Contributing to the phenomenon of economic development, Agaba (2017) asserts that, "for the poor people, economic development represents a struggle that must be waged with increasing militancy". Rodney (1972:10) states authoritatively as excerpts hereunder:

A society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment is dependent on the extent to which they understand the laws of nature (science) on the extent to which they put that understanding into practice by

devising tools (technology), and on how work is organized.

The above definition provides a roadmap for understanding the concept of economic development. However, Agaba (2017) reiterates that economic development from the perspective of developing countries has gone beyond the concept of quantitative growth of Gross National Product (GNP), diversified economy through industrialization, modernized agriculture, and increased production but includes assurance of human needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health, and education for all. Contextually, economic development is a state of having a good atmosphere/environment which enhances the development of the agricultural sector, energy, business, and peaceful political activities that discourage a contradiction of electoral rules, such as vote-buying, snatching of ballot boxes which usually paves the way to electoral violence and in many times leading to the destruction of lives and property.

Democracy is a derivative of two Greek words, namely, *demos* and *Kratia* (rule), which implies the rule of the people (Johari, 2003:430). Democracy is one of the oldest concepts in the political lexicon because it had its origin in the Greek city-states of Athens. The early philosophers deliberated on democracy as a form of government which is why Pericles (quoted in Dzeka 2014) defines it as a "government in which the people are powerful". To Bryce (1921), democracy is the "rule of the people expressing their sovereign will through the votes". He shows

that test for any government is the welfare of the people and that is the most perfect yardstick for the determination of the government's success. Despite this, Ake (2000) argues that the concept of democracy is characterized by conceptual imprecise and connotes popular expression of power by the people. This is while Ghana (quoted in Shima, 2019) described democracy as government by persons freely chosen by the governed, who are also held accountable and responsible for their actions while in government. Shima (2019), postulates that democracy is synonymous with a political system in which all members of the society have a share of formal political power. This means that democracy is people-oriented and therefore, embedded in social justice and equity.

Historical Foundations of Political Parties in Nigeria

Historically, the search for a workable constitution in Nigeria began in 1922 when the Clifford Constitution was enacted; since that time the country has had about nine constitutions. The Clifford Constitution established an Executive Council made up of only British officials. It also created a Legislative Council whose council was limited to the colony and southern protectorate, while the governor was saddled with the legislative functions in the Northern Protectorate (Report of Constitutional Conference, 1995, and Akinboye and Anifowose 2000). The legislative body for the colony and southern protectorate comprised 46 members of which 4 were elected (3

from Lagos and 1 from Calabar). The elective principle which was introduced galvanized political activities, especially among educated Nigerians. The period witnessed the formation of the pioneer political parties in Nigeria, namely, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), formed by one of the foremost nationalists, Herbert Heelays Macaulay in Lagos in 1923, and the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) (Akinboye and Anifowose 2000).

Since the formation of the NNDP Nigeria has witnessed a succession of political parties which have been characterized in terms of first, second, third, and fourth-generation political parties or as political parties of the colonial period, First Republic, Second Republic, and Fourth Republic (Ujoh, 2000, Ubi, 2007). Political parties have appeared and disappeared over the years in Nigeria's political history. Their activities have been punctuated/truncated at various times by the incursion of the military regimes. Immediately after the 1966 coups, political party activities disappeared from the Nigerian political scene until about 1978 when the ban on political activities was lifted in preparation for the Second Republic. When the military was obstructed in 1983 political parties again vanished until about 1990. The political parties of the Third Republic were decreed into existence by the former military president, Ibrahim Babamasi Babangida who ended up truncating his transition programme. Egwemi (2008b) noted that the political parties under the Abacha government lacked any real essence as they were teleguided by him in his

transmutation quest. It has between 1998 and 1999 that political parties made their most enduring return to the political landscape of Nigeria. Since that time political parties have flourished in the country (2017).

From the inception of the first political party in Nigeria, the NNDP to the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) and all the major political parties of the First Republic, the interest articulation function was always viewed from a narrow prism. The activities of the NNDP and LYM (later NYM) were restricted to the Lagos area (Anthony, 2003 quoted in Egwemi, 2017). The successors of political parties of the First Republic took on ethno-regional togas. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) was for the Northern Region, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) was for the Eastern Region and the Action Group (AC) was for the Western Region. Against this background, the national and/or Nigerian purpose was not served as each region was more interested in its affairs. In this connection, Izah (1991:21) stipulates that:

... each of the major political parties-the AG in the West, the NPC in the North, and NCNC in the East- controlled a government. Thus, there was the East for the Easterners, the North for the Northerners, the West for the Westerners, and Nigeria for nobody (Izah, 1991:21).

The pre-independence and early independence leaders and by extension their political parties lacked faith in the Nigerian project. In backing up this point, one of them, Chief Obafemi Awolowo in his quest to form a political party:

... was convinced that the "nationalist" aspect was superficial and that the real base was ethnic. In other words, he had come to believe that the real political struggle in the different effervescent South was a struggle to capture power by one ethnic group or another. He saw it then as his duty to organize the Yoruba to ensure that they were not left in the lurch should the "nationalists" succeed in wresting power from the colonial power (Folson 1987:199).

The Second Republic (1979- 1983) presidential system of government favoured a multi-party system. The Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) had to register five political parties for the election. These were the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Nigeria People's Party (NPP), the Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP), and the People's Redemption Party (PRP). These five political parties contested the 1979 general elections. In 1982, the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) was also registered to make six that contested the 1983 general elections (Dibie, 2008)

In the Third Republic, General Ibrahim Babangida promulgated the transition to the Civil Rule Decree through which two political parties evolved and were a product of the military regime because they were instrumental to the creation of the programmes. The registered political parties during this time were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The evolution of Nigeria's Fourth Republic after the exit of the then military regime by General Abdul-Salam Abubakar witnessed the registration of 3 political parties by INEC among other numerous political parties that contested the

election. These parties were the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP) (later changed to All-Nigerians Peoples Party, and Alliance for Democracy (AD) (Dibie, 2008). The aforesaid political parties contested the 1999 general elections, after the general elections at all levels of government. After the general elections held between December 1998 and April 1999; the PDP controlled 21 states, ANPP controlled 9 states and AD controlled 6 states (Dibie, 2008). The preceding material/history is a backdrop around which we examine Nigeria's political parties as agents of economic retardation or underdevelopment. In light of Nigeria's development deficits, the paper argues that political parties need to take their interest aggregating and as a corollary development role more seriously. The study brings to the fore that contrary to this expectation, the activities of political parties in Nigeria make them more agents of economic destruction and underdevelopment than economic development.

Political Parties and the Challenges of Economic Development in Nigeria since the Return of Democracy in 1999

Political party activities have negatively affected/impeded the economic development of Nigeria in two critical ways, namely, through electoral violence and campaign financing. The menace of electoral violence had thus had far-reaching implications on Nigeria's economic development. The political uncertainty that is occasioned by acts of electoral violence has resulted in civil unrest that is seriously affecting

the economic development of the country. For instance, the collapse of the first republic and the subsequent 'death' of the first National Development Plan was large because of the Federal Election crisis of 1964/5 (Ojo, 2012). The chaotic nature of Nigeria's political climate during the first republic affected business activities in the country, especially in Northern Nigeria. The return of civilian rule after the 1966 military coup and the 1983 electoral violence that greeted the country equally affected business activities in the country, especially in states like Ondo and Oyo. The consolidation agenda of the then-ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and her attempts to make inroads into the South West dominated UPN exacerbated a crisis that not only led to the destruction of lives and properties but equally led to the shutting of economic activities, especially in Akure, the capital of Ondo State (May 1983). The 1993 electoral violence that greeted the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election equally hampered economic activities in Ibadan and Lagos. Nigeria was declared a rogue state by the United States and the United Kingdom (Fawole, 2003). Nigeria was in danger of becoming what the UN Secretary-General called "a failed State" (Fawole, 2003). The United States, United Kingdom, and other European states like France placed sanctions on Nigeria and restricted economic aid to Nigeria.

Since Nigeria reverted to democratic governance in 1999, the challenge of electoral violence has continued to have implications on Nigeria's economic development. For instance,

during the electioneering period, Nigeria is greeted with dwindling foreign reserves and foreign revenue (Ogeaga & Odejimi, 2015). There is a shortfall in foreign reserves and a huge amount of money is withdrawn from the Excess Crude Account (ECA) for electoral purposes. The ECA itself was established "with the primary objective of protecting government budgets against shortfalls arising from volatile crude oil prices (Central Bank Annual Report, 2006). The account was to be funded from surplus revenues derived from crude oil sales, Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), and royalties above the budgeted benchmark of the government for each fiscal year. Interestingly, the ECA has constituted one of the major sources of intergovernmental suspicion and conflict in Nigeria since its creation in 2006. This is because the political elite sees the account as a goldmine to be exploited under the guise of using the money to address budgetary deficits. Withdrawals from the ECA are done in preparation for general elections as evidenced in 2010, 2014, and 2018. Thus, in 2010, the sums of ₦450 billion, ₦873 billion, ₦502 billion, and ₦30.5 billion were withdrawn at different intervals from the ECA. Similarly, between 2012, 2013, and 2014, over ₦1 trillion is withdrawn from the ECA (Ityonzughul and Kerityo, 2021). Worrisome to note is the fact that these huge sums of money are withdrawn for the execution of projects and budget financing, however, they are in turn used for elections as evidenced in 2014 in preparation for the conduct of the 2015 general elections.

Similarly, the menace of electoral violence as argued by (Ogeaga & Odemiji, 2015: 9) has led to a poor inflow of foreign investment, capital flight, poor electricity supply, and a high level of ethnic and hate politicking. This, they argue is particularly true of the development that characterized the 2015 general elections where the chaotic political environment led to a significant drop in foreign investment for fears of a possible disintegration of Nigeria as predicted by the US and the migration of about two million people, representing 0.8 percent of Nigeria's total population of 160 million people two months to the election because of the pre-electoral violence that marred the conduct of the 2015 general elections. Electoral violence, again, often results in the internal migration of people which affects economic activities. In Kano, for instance, there was a mass exodus of Igbo Christians to states in Eastern Nigeria because of fears of possible attacks in events leading to 2011, 2015, and 2019 general elections (*The Nation*, 2019). The migration of this group of people resulted in a drastic drop in the internal revenue of Kano state as most businesses, especially in the Sabon Geri area are owned by the Igbo migrants. Besides, the intra/intermigration of people because of fears of possible attacks which most times assume ethno-religious tonga has hampered economic activities in the country. Since the country reverted to democracy, cars, and other properties amounting to huge amounts of monies have been lost as seen in table 1.

Table 1: Estimated Cost of Economic Facilities Destroyed During Electoral Violence in Nigeria

S/No	Year	State	Item (s)	Quantity	Estimated Amount (₦)
1	2003/2004	Benue	Flats	88	440,000,000
2	2003/2004	Benue	Bungalows	170	425,000,000
3	2004	Benue	Hotels	2	555,250,000
4	2004	Benue	Mattresses	2215	11,075,000
5	2002	Benue	Compounds	20	NA
6	2011	Bayelsa	INEC Office	1	NA
7	2011	Abuja	Houses	2	Worth Millions
8	2011	Katsina	House	1	NA
9	2011	Akwa Ibom	Cars	200 brand new Peugeot	Worth Millions
10	2011	Akwa Ibom	Tricycles	500	Worth Millions
11	2011	Kaduna	Cars & Motorcycles	More than 10	NA
12	2015	Osun	House	1	Worth millions
13	2015	Plateau	Hon. M. A. Alkali's House	1	Worth millions
14	2019	Kogi	House	1	Worth Millions

Source: Adopted (Modified) from Ityonzughul, T.T., and Kerityo, P.M., 2021.

The above table is not an exhaustive list of the items destroyed during electoral violence but just an example to show the damage it has done to the country. Arising from above table 1, it is important to note that during the violent electoral crises, trading activities are halted and goods worth millions of Naira are destroyed. Similarly, (besides the destructive effects in table 1) the invasion of the campaign rally of the then-PDP candidate in Oregun-Ikeja and the violence that followed between supporters of Obanikoro of the PDP and Fashola of the AC disrupted economic activities in the area. (*The Sun*, 2007: 4). Traders scampered and left their goods in the hands of party thugs who did not only destroy but vandalize goods worth thousands of naira.

The incidences of electoral violence in Azare, Jama'are, and Misua were also astounding. For example, during the 2011 post-election violence economic and commercial activities were paralyzed. In Jama'are, alone, shops worth

thousands of naira were vandalized by irate youths. The shops vandalized included provision stores, medical stores, and a pharmacy (Ityonzughul and Keityo, 2021). The vandalism implied that the owners of these shops had to look for capital to restart their businesses. Similarly, the violence affected the per capita income of her residents who are predominately farmers and traders. The same situation was evident in the Itas-Gadau Local Government Area where apart from the burning of ten churches by protesting youths following the announcement of the 2011 presidential elections, traders were attacked and shops vandalized, thereby affecting economic activities and the income of her residents who also, are predominantly farmers and traders (Oral Interview Audu, 2020). In Abuja, the attempted bomb blast at the Wuse main market and the scampering of traders resulted in the loss of goods and commodities that were worth thousands of naira. Besides, the subsequent "closure" of the market because of fear affected the revenue that is often generated in the market for three days (Oral Interview with Okafor, 2020). Apart from revenue generation, the closure also affected the per capita income of traders as most of them reverted to their hard-earned savings to purchase household utilities and other basic amenities.

There is inflation in the Nigerian economy during and after elections as a result of the huge amount of money that is used in prosecuting electoral ambit percent. For instance, prices of goods and services increased at all-time rates in Nigeria to 85 percent during preparations for the

2015 general elections (Ojeaga & Odejimi, 2015). The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also reduced during electoral violence situations. This was evident in the reduction of Nigeria's growth rate by almost 65 percent during the 2015 general elections.

Electoral violence has also occasioned the Proliferation of arms and Light Weapons (SALW) that has continued to mar Nigeria's economic development. Since the return of democracy in 1999, there has been a high increase in the number of arms and ammunition during electioneering periods. For instance, in preparation for the 2003 general elections, three former governors of the Niger Delta states were named as those who provided money to militants and Mr. Henry Okah for the purchase of weapons in 2002 (Adeniyi, 2011). The procurement of the weapons such as GPMGs, Sterling SMG, Bren LNG, AK 47 rifles, Uzis, FNs, 3G, Cetme, M12 She Berettas, grenades, rocket launchers, and several fragmentation jackets was linked to the governors' preparation for the 2003 re-election campaign (Adeniyi, 2011). The 2003 elections, therefore, witnessed the re-election of the six governors in the region; namely: Obong Victor Attah, James Ibori, Peter Odili, Donald Duke, Lucky Igbinedion, and Diepreye Alamiyeseigha of Akwa Ibom, Delta, Rivers, Cross-River, Edo and Bayelsa states respectively. What followed their re-election was the increase in the high levels of crisis and other criminal activities that resulted, for instance, in the kidnapping of foreign nationals, oil bunkering, and pipeline vandalism that occasioned

the drop in the production of oil which is the country's major export and the underdevelopment of the region.

Due to expenditure on party activities, political party activities that are related to financing elections and campaigns have also hurt Nigeria's economy. The material that is currently available, notably for the 2003 general elections, is illuminating and provides significant insight into the degree to which political parties flagrantly violated the 2002 Electoral Act. For instance, as seen in tables 2 and 3, President Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Vice President Atiku Abubakar raised approximately N5.5 billion in campaign funds during the 2003 election runoff. This amount vastly exceeds the upper limitations established by the Electoral Act of 2002. In a similar vein, the 2003 governorship election saw the former governors of Delta and Lagos states James Ibori (PDP) and Bola Tinubu (AD), who was running for governor at the time, raise N2.3 billion and N1.3 billion, respectively, in campaign contributions, as seen in tables 3, 5, and 6. Table 3 also shows that Lucky Igbinedion (PDP), who ran for governor of Edo State, raised N500 million, while Bukola Saraki (PDP), who ran for governor of Kwara State, raised N160 million. Others include Ghali Na' Abba (PDP), who served as the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Chibodom Nwuche (PDP), who served as his deputy and raised N150 million and N500 million, respectively. Great Ogboru (AD), a candidate for governor of the state of Edo, raised N200 million.

It should be noted that, except Saraki and Ogboru, every other candidate was holding a public office and running for governor for a second term.

Table 2: Selected Donations to Individual Party Candidates

Candidate	Position	Political Party	Amount (N)
Obasanjo/Atiku	President	PDP	N5.5 billion
Governor James Ibori	Governor	PDP	N2.3 billion
Governor Bola Tinubu	Governor	AD	N1.3 billion
Bukola Saraki	Governor	PDP	N160 million
Great Ugboru	Governor	AD	N200 million
Lucky Igbenedion	Governor	PDP	N500 million
Ghali Na'Abba	HouseofRep	PDP	N150 million
Chibodum Nwuche	HouseofRep	PDP	N500 million

Source: Adopted and modified from Kura, S. Y. B (2011), "Political Parties and Democracy in Nigeria: Candidate Selection, Campaign and Party Financing in People's Democratic Party" in *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 13, No. 6.

Table 3: List of Contributors to Obasanjo/Atiku Presidential Campaign

Contributors	Amount (N)
Friends of Atiku	N1 billion
Aliko Dangote	N250 million
Emeka Offor	N200 million
21 PDP Governors	N210 million
Group from Europe	N144 million
Rivers friends of Obasanjo/Atiku	N150 million
Construction Companies in the Country	N200 million
Dr. Samuel Uche (Businessman)	N50 million
PDP Caucus in the Senate	N12 million
Principal Staff of the Villa (Aso Rock)	N10.6 million
AVM Shekari	N10 million
First Atlantic Bank	N10 million
Ministers	N10 million
Otunba Fasawe	N6.5 million
PDP National Working Committee	N3.6 million
Dr. Ngozi Anyaegbunam	N500,000.00
Dr. Gamaliel Onosode	N100,000.00
Corporate Nigeria (Pledges)	N2 billion
Grand Alliance	Boeing 727 & 2 Luxury Buses for campaign
Another Group	Two Luxury Buses
TOTAL (Cash)	

Source: Adopted and modified from Kura, S. Y. B (2011), "Political Parties and Democracy in Nigeria."

Table 4: List of Contributors to James Ibori Governorship Campaign

Contributors	Amount
Vice President AtikuAbubakar	N34 million
Michael Ibru (On behalf of Ibru family and friends)	N250 million
Mr. Peter Okocha (on behalf of Delta North Professionals)	N200 million
Chief Michael Oki	N200 million
Olorugun John Oguma	N120 million
Chief Mike Omeruah	N120 million
Chief Newton Jibunor	N100 million
Chief Nam Okechukwu	N100 million
Alhaji Inuwa Umoru	N100 million
Bube Okorodudu	N10 million
Mr. Tony Anenih Jnr on behalf of friends of Ibori	N50 million
Chief Emeka Offor	N5 million
Bala Shagaya Representing the Oil and Gas sector	N5 billion
Construction Sector	N310 million
The transport and Aviation Sector represented by Didi Ndimou	N1 billion
The Real Estate Sector represented by Oluchi Okoye	N4 billion
The food and Agric Sector represented by Chief Ominife Uzeogbu	N500 million
Cizally Limited	N250 million
Power sector is represented by Tunde agent	N500 million
National Association of Stevedores	N25 million
Mr. Sam Egwu	N1 million
Halima Jibril	N5 million
Ajuji Best Hotel	N1 million
TOTAL	N22.442 Billion

Source: Adopted and modified from *ThisDayLive*, 21st December 2014.

Although details about Muhammed Buhari's campaign funding for the APC are scant, the Buhari Support Group (BSO) stated in January 2015 that it had gathered N54 million from Nigerians to aid in his campaign (www.naij.com/348842-Nigerians-donate-money-to-support-Buhari-campaign.html). A looking at Jonathan and Buhari's campaign spending revealed that they exceeded the maximum amounts allowed by the Act. For instance, a coalition of civil society organizations (CSOs) operating under the auspices of the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), AND International

Foundations for Electoral Systems (IFES) have raised concerns about the dangers that by-election spending poses to the expansion of the Nigerian economy, arguing that there is an unbreakable link between election spending and the state of the economy.

Due to a shift in focus away from governance and significant campaign spending, weakening currency, inflation, and a slower rate of economic growth were inevitable consequences for the economy (*The Guardian*, March 12, 2015). The two major political parties, PDP and APC, have already spent N1.382 billion on print media adverts alone. "The total up to February 14, 2015, for the PDP presidential candidate, is N1.049 billion," the group added specifically. The total up to February 14, 2015, for the APC presidential candidate, is N332.583 million (*The Guardian*, March 12th, 2015). The group went on to identify more expenses for both candidates' campaigns to support the Act's violation. Table 8 demonstrates that whereas the APC spent N595.082 million, the PDP spent N1.057 billion on rallies.

The PDP spent N155.13 million on billboards compared to N99.23 million spent by the APC. Others include electronic media campaign coverage, which cost the PDP N508.35 million, and the APC N391.05 million, while electronic media advertisements cost the PDP and APC, respectively, N7.399 million and N5.556 million, as shown in Table 8. According to table 8, the PDP spent N2.5 billion overall, whereas the APC spent N1.091 billion. This sum, along with the costs associated with print media, brings the

total expenditures for the PDP and APC to N3.882 billion and N1.433 billion, respectively. These are all cautious estimates because they do not account for other costs like lodging, transportation (by air, sea, and land), security, or food, to name a few (Ukase, 2016).

This proves the argument that, in our opinion, both candidates exceeded the income and spending caps imposed by the 2010 Electoral Act. Despite the PDP's valiant attempts to hide the campaign funds it raised, their expenditure profile amply demonstrates that the two major political parties flagrantly violated established campaign finance laws by raising and spending a combined total of more than N1 billion. Nigeria's electoral laws were broken when N21 billion was given to the PDP during its fundraiser dinner. The Act, which forbids donations from individuals or groups, or companies of more than N1 million, was also broken by the people and organizations who made the donations.

Table 5: Aspects of Campaign Expenditure by Presidential Candidates of the PDP and APC

Purpose of Expenditure	PDP	APC
Campaign Rallies	N1.057 billion	N595,082 million
Bill Boards	N155.13 million	N99.23 million
Electronic Media Campaign Coverage	N508.35 million	N391.05 million
Electronic Media Advert	N7.339 million	N5.556 million
TOTAL	N2.5 billion	N1.091 billion

Source: *Guardian*, March 12, 2015

A close examination of the aforementioned tables reveals that the campaign has been lavishly funded with funds that could have been utilized to create

businesses to engage the teeming populace. Probably, people who donated these enormous sums of money did not start their own private youth empowerment programs to support Nigerian graduates and strengthen the country's economy. Even worse, the individuals who fund these campaigns frequently ask potential elective office winners for favors. They consider the potential for kickbacks and retribution when individuals who donated money to their campaigns subsequently award them a contract.

To transfer a large sum of money to their accounts and further weaken Nigeria's economy, has the unfortunate consequence that such projects never saw the light of day. Even when they are eventually completed, their quality is typically quite low. Political party activities frequently encourage corruption, which is a cankerworm for the Nigerian economy and a threat to democracy. There are many troubling questions regarding how political parties and their candidates raised money throughout the past general elections, but especially during the 2015 general elections.

Political parties' mobilization of significant campaign money to run campaigns—funds that were, to put it mildly, fraudulent—was an example of how the electoral process had become corrupt. While it is true that campaigns have fair financial costs, the commercialization of the electoral process in the same way that political parties and candidates raised money raises ethical and legal concerns about people aspiring to run the country (*The Guardian*, 2015). It further stated that it is a tragic story that businesses, interest organizations,

and other people raised billions of naira in a matter of hours, for example, to support a candidate's campaign for the electoral office in a country where millions of people are unemployed. The contributors to all parties have blatantly said that they only played their cards face up out of self-interest, with the subtext being that these funders would have a major role in controlling the country's economic levers if their beneficiaries won the election (*The Guardian*, 2015).

First, there were hints that individual party members' contributions came from individuals who had access to plush government positions, while the majority came from businesspeople and contractors who received government favors (Kura: 286). Unfortunately, this pattern of giving has negative, far-reaching effects on the political and democratic development of the country. The nature and character of African politics, for instance, which elevate patron-client networks and neo-patrimonialism in an unprecedented way, are reflected in these gifts. Having said this, Okpeh (2013) advocates that Neo-patrimonialism also refers to the propensity for members of the ruling class to patronize one another in exchange for favors (both monetary and in-kind) to maintain their position in the power struggle. By this reasoning, a political newcomer must first choose a strong patron (sometimes referred to as a "Godfather") from the power elite group to help promote him to the important people. This negotiation typically takes place based on a variety of questionable agreements between the would-be politician and his or her patron and has little to do

with actually serving the people. In the end, the democratic process is endangered since the electorate's mandate was exploited in the patron's and his supporters' interests.

In connection with this, Isaac Asabor claims: many Nigerians have seen how financial support for political campaigns has put an abrupt end to the once-happy union between politicians and their "godfathers." Even worse, there are numerous godfathers involved in this situation, including corporations, parastatals, and people. When it comes time to make a payback, how many of them would be "compensate"? (<http://www.news24.com.ng/elections/MyNews24/The-moral-burden>).

Money ostensibly can determine a lot of things. For instance, money shapes voter preferences, influences election outcomes, and can strengthen or weaken a mandate. Money plays a significant role in how politics are played in Nigeria, as Okpeh (2013) has correctly noted. To the detriment of the interests of the general populace, money has allowed the nation's ruling elites to control its politics. Crude opportunism, corruption, and mediocrity are the results of this (Okpeh, 2013: 464; Oyovbaire, 1999; Lawrence, 2003). This financial arrangement, which was evident during the 2015 elections, not only makes corruption worse, but also makes it more difficult for the government to be transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the majority of the populace.

In addition, those who make financial contributions have a say in who receives the

money. As a result, politicians are held to higher standards of accountability by donors than by the people they represent. The majority of the donations came from people who currently receive or may someday desire government favors. Since these contributors are not "father Christmas," they, for example, take over governance structures once elections are done and nominate their friends and "godsons" for lucrative political jobs to repay their contributions and also earn a profit. Even though such policies are severely destructive to the overall well-being of the entire society, the corporate funders would always look to the administration they placed for policies that would be favorable to their respective sectors. This not only runs against democratic principles and good governance, but it also has the cumulative effect of enforcing a system of vast corruption.

Thirdly, the overwhelming influence of money in politics often disempowers well-intentioned Nigerians and prevents them from using politics as a tool for social change. The financial requirements of a campaign inherently exclude many people who might have brilliant ideas in a nation with a huge disparity between the haves and have-nots. This is because they do not have the godfather support that many incumbents and senior Nigerians do. This suggests that young people are automatically precluded from utilizing politics as a platform to bring about significant social change (Ukase, 2016).

What is to be done?

Political parties are the cornerstone of every

enduring democracy, as this essay previously acknowledged. They are supposed to be agents of progress, but in Nigeria, since the restoration of democracy, political party activities have taken on a negative aspect, weakening the economy of the country. What needs to be done in this regard is an easy question to answer. The paper approaches this question from two perspectives to provide an effective response: the cessation of electoral violence and the excessive funding of campaigns and elections. The paper makes several recommendations, among them, to avoid electoral violence and get Nigeria out of its economic hole. First, electoral violence is frequently encouraged by godfather politics, thus it must be resisted for this reason. The academic community may help with this by reorienting godfathers and godsons toward the serious negative effects of this kind of politics. Instead of pushing candidates on the political process, which typically results in violent disputes, intellectuals and academia should help the godsons and godsons recognize their leadership roles in promoting development. To stop electoral violence and come out of Nigeria's economic quagmire, the study recommends inter alia. First, the politics of godfatherism usually creates fertile grounds for electoral violence and as such, it should be necessary discouraged. To do this, academia has a role to play; they should reorientate godfathers and godsons on the grave consequences of this type of politics. The intellectuals/academia should let the godsons and godsons understand their leadership roles of bringing development rather than imposing

candidates on the electoral, the act that usually degenerates into violent conflicts.

Second, the Nigerian youth should assist in the actualization of the nation's noble cause and stop availing themselves of being hired actors of thuggery for hijacking ballot boxes, kidnapping electoral staff as well as killing innocent electorate. This could certainly be achieved if the youths are properly empowered economically. The empowerment could be by granting soft loans to unemployed youths and engaging them in skills acquisition programmes, among others. When this is done the youth will not see any reason to engage themselves in unlawful activities for earning a living.

The article also suggests that corruption be stopped in its tracks because it has fueled electoral violence in the past. The biggest threat to overall national and economic progress is corruption. It is discovered in terms of, among other things, electoral fraud, financial theft, dishonesty, betrayal of trust or confidence, disdain for the rules of the rule of law, and the biased nature of electoral tribunals. These corruption spillover consequences are so severe that they have a debilitating and weakening effect on Nigeria's economy.

Likewise, those involved in Nigerian politics should reject the idea that politics is a business and instead view it as a method of choosing strong leaders to speak for the people. They ought to exhibit moral qualities that the next generation can aspire to. When there is a conflict of interest between individuals vying for political power, they should engage in discourse rather than

inciting violence and follow the tenet of allowing a brother takes his turn.

In addition to methods for halting electoral violence, Nigeria needs to restructure election/campaign financing, which might be done in several ways. One is that legislators should tighten up current laws governing campaign contributions, particularly those that have gaps in them. For instance, they should make sure that candidates who have spent more than their allotted amount during the campaign are punished and, if found guilty, barred from running in future elections. Such a severe punishment will deter politicians from breaking campaign finance laws, which would improve Nigeria's economic growth (Ukase, 2016).

Similarly, in organizing elections every four years, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must regard itself as more than just that. In addition, it has responsibilities for upholding regulations governing political parties and campaign financing. Section 91 (2) of the 2010 Electoral Act as amended, which addresses the maximum election expenses that a political party may incur, may be challenging for INEC to implement. This does not imply that the proper authorities shouldn't make an effort. When a public travesty is committed, the perpetrators must be held accountable (Utomi, 2015). To accomplish this, the Commission should see to it that political parties submit their audited campaign spending by the law and that these expenses are examined to identify and penalize donors and candidates who must disobey the law. Additionally, it is crucial to

increase the severity of the punishment for applicants who violate this rule (Ukase, 2016). Thirdly, and most importantly, the media and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) may help improve and clean up the flaws in campaign funding laws. For media professionals to properly inform the public and expose corrupt political parties and their candidates who break the electoral act there is a need to effectively train them on its requirements. If the aforementioned recommendations are seriously taken into account and put into practice; political party activities in the nation will be subject to checks and balances, which will stop electoral violence and the financing of campaigns and elections.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to highlight how political parties, since the return of democracy in 1999, have transformed into agents of economic underdevelopment, obstruction, and destruction rather than agents of Nigeria's economic development. The paper tried a clarification of (conceptually and textually) several conceptual concerns in a thorough investigation of these phenomena, focusing on political party constituents, economic growth, and democracy. It has also dug into the political parties' historical past in Nigeria. The research also looked at political party activities and their effects on Nigeria's economic growth. This is clear from the country's recognition of the detrimental impacts of political violence and excessive campaign spending since 1999. However, the article has put

forth several strategies that could aid in resolving the gloomy problems that have beset the nation throughout time, since the return of democracy, due to the illegal activities of the political parties.

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