

Impact of Party Politics on Decision Making In Government: The Nigerian Experience

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Abstract: A political party is an organized group of individuals seeking to attain power to government in order to enjoy the benefits being derived from such control primarily for its members and supposedly for the masses. Political parties perform tasks both during election campaigns and between elections. Much of the work-candidate selection, ideological changes and policy making- take place within the parties rather than in the public domain. This paper therefore examines political parties as an important element in decision making in democratic societies. It argues that decisions/public policy which are to serve the interest of the populace do otherwise serve the interests of the political elites since the parties are formed by them and they dictate the manifestoes of the parties which invariably become the programmes of the government if their parties win the election. It adopts the elite theory as its framework of analysis. The paper concludes that party politics is imparting negatively on decision making in government since real politics which is the allocation of scarce resources is dominated by the political elites who will see to it that the allocation (decision making/public policy) is to their advantage.

Keywords: Political parties, politics, party politics, decision making, elite.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Political party is an organized body of individuals who share common values and have a vested interest in the political system and committed to activities aimed at affecting positively or negatively political processes and institutions in a way desired by the group (Ngara & Orokpo 2013). Also, the definitive function of a political party is interest aggregation which is the process by which the multiple interest of groups are processed and reduced to a manageable set of policy proposals that can be presented by a political party to the electorate as the party manifesto which it will pursue if elected into office. Thus, party activities relate directly to the interests of the society which are translated into government policies when elected into office. The elected representatives (legislative and executive) are in the forefront of organizing the government of the day that makes decisions which affect everybody in the society. Although, governments claim to pursue policies and programmes consistent with the good of the nation, the policies and programmes often favour influential interest groups (that are affiliated with ruling party members). It is against this background that this paper examines the nexus between political parties and decision making in government

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

The term politics has been defined differently by different authors and these definitions reflect the philosophical, social and political background of the authors. This has made it impossible to have a universally accepted definition of politics. Easton (1965:383-400) defines politics as "the authoritative allocation of values" while Lasswell (1962) sees it as the process of deciding "who gets what, when and how". Latham (1971) identifies politics with the processes in a society leading to the allocation of values through structures of power. Ake (1995) also sees politics as mainly about the control of power; this is well known. What is not so well known is the extent to which the nature of the state, including its power, determines politics. Dyke (1960) views politics as a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. In the Marxian sense, politics is a class struggle, that is, the struggle between antagonistic classes in the society for the control of the state- the state being an 'organ of class rule'. Despite the divergent conceptions of politics, there is a common ground in the centrality of the state and power to the political process. Thus, politics is concentrated as revolving round the

state, its agencies, activities and overall impact on the society; and also an analysis of government and its responsibilities (Appadorai; 2003:4).

Therefore,

politics includes various interactions such as competition of socio-political groups with one another for allocation of collective resources, interactions of members of the society with its decision making organs of the structures, the relationship among the members of each decision making organs of the government, interactions of various decision making organs, and relations of different states among others. (Ayeni-Akeke; 2008:8).

Government, on the other hand, is one of humankind's oldest and unique institutions. MacIver (1956) noted long ago that 'wherever man lives on earth, at whatever level of existence, there is social order which always permeating it, is government of some sort. Therefore, government is an aspect of society' (as cited in Ayeni-Okeke, *ibid*). Government also refers to a whole set of institutions in society which engages in the general process of governing. The set of institutions includes the Cabinet, Parliament, local councils made up of elected representatives, public bureaucracies made up of civil servants, the military, the police, and the courts *e.t.c*. All these institutions are engaged in an active process of regulating and directing society. In the same vein, Appadorai (2003:12) defines government as the agency or machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and realized including the sum total of the legislative, executive and judicial bodies in the state, whether of the central or local government, of all those who are engaged in making, administering and interpreting law. Akindele *et al* (2000) also see government as an instrument or organization through which the state makes and enforces its decisions.

Government has assumed variety of forms and it changes from time to time as tenures of particular political leaders expire and others succeed them. The common features that are central to the different definitions of government are institution, making and implementing decisions for the general welfare of the citizens, which involve human beings. The formal institutions are occupied by human beings; decisions are taken by human beings. Thus, government refers to the set of institutions- together with the career and elected personnel who run them – by which the state carries out its numerous functions. These functions mostly involve formulation and implementation of laws for the protection and good governance of the citizens. Government preserves domestic peace by delivering justice, maintaining law and order and protecting property. Most theorists also agree that government should provide for the lives, stability, economic and social well-being of citizens.

Adebayo (2008:64) describes political parties "as associations that serve, both as interest and pressure groups performing, the important functions of recruitment of political actors, mobilization of the citizenry and provision of choice alternatives for the populace organizing and campaigning for votes". Furthermore, it may be defined as a formal organization whose self-conscious primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office persons who will control alone or in coalition the machinery of government (Oluwatusin, 2007:183). It is thus a major vehicle for enhancing participation in government. Olarinmoye (2008:67) posits that a political party is an organized group of individuals who share similar political beliefs, opinions, principles, aspirations and interests with the sole aim of capturing political power and exercising it through the formation of government.

Modern political theorists appreciate the fact that for any association to be described as a political party it must have a clearly stated ideology (whether capitalism, socialism or welfarism). Supporting this, MacIver (1964) views a political party as "an association organized in support of some principles or policies which by constitutional means it endeavours to make the determinant of government. There are different classifications of political parties such as democratic parties, ideological parties, elitist parties, pragmatic parties, monopolistic parties, oligarchy parties, mass parties *etc*. The most common classification of political parties is that which emphasizes the degree of competitiveness in a political system- one-party, two-party and multi-party systems. A more basic classification of political parties is that which highlights the nature of the membership of political parties. Thus, there can be:

- i. Branch/mass parties whose membership is composed of different sections of political society.***
- ii. Caucus/elitist parties whose membership is drawn mainly from the upper class of society.***
- iii. Religious parties whose membership is determined by nature of religious affiliation.***
- iv. Broker parties with membership drawn from both the rich and poor classes in society.***
- v. Charismatic parties formed around individuals with***

unique talents and whose membership cuts across identity and class lines. (Olarinmoye; opcit).

Political parties perform several important functions that help to hold the political system together and keep it working, thereby, becoming a useful index of the level of political development of a given polity (Omoruyi; 2001). Such functions are organizing for public opinion, communicating demands to the center of governmental decision making and political recruitment. Sambo (2013) sees political parties as providing policy ideas about how a society should be governed, identifying and training political leaders and also acting as links between the citizens and their government. Omotoso (2005:28; 2009:174-181) also gives a comprehensive list of the roles of political parties:

- ***formulating policies;***
- ***interest aggregation and articulation;***
- ***leadership recruitment;***
- ***educating the public;***
- ***organising the government;***
- ***mobilizing functions;***
- ***unifying functions;***
- ***provision of linkage networks between government and the citizenry;***
- ***ensuring political participation of the citizenry;***
- ***development of political consciousness and sense of belonging in the electorate;***
- ***providing politically constructive criticism of government policies; and***
- ***fostering for stability in government.***

In other words, there can be no meaningful democracy without a properly functioning political party system. It is obvious therefore, that political parties constitute the heart of democracy. The more vigorous and healthy they are, the better assured is the health of the democratic process (Agbaje, 1998). It is therefore difficult to imagine any modern democracy without political parties as they are the connecting links between diverse groups of peoples and governments.

Thus, from the foregoing, party politics can be described as all the activities of political parties in the political process aimed at gaining political power in order to control political/public offices which are in the forefront of organizing the government of the day that makes decisions for the general well-being of its citizens. Omilusi (2010:175) also conceives of party politics as the:

activities of formal structure, institution or organization which compete through electoral process to control the personnel and policies of government and with the aim of allocating the scarce resources in a state through an institutionalized means or procedure.

On the other hand, party system is about the number of political parties that are legally recognised to participate in the political process of a country and this is usually defined by the constitution of the country. Party system is categorized based on numerical division viz- one party system, two party system and multi-party system.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Elite Theory is adopted for this paper as the framework of analysis and this theory has been developed by Gaetano Mosca, Wilfredo Pareto, Robert Michel and Ortega Gasset as a complement to conflict theory and pluralism. Being deep-rooted in classical Sociology, elite theory is very much concerned with structures, especially authority structure. The concept of elites is based on the notion that every society holds a ruling minority, a group that controls and disputes the most important power sources.

Elite theory is based on the assumption that elite action has a causal effect on the relationship between the state and society since the elites have greater influence/control of the state than the masses. Current elite theory defines 'elites' as actors controlling resources, occupying key positions and relating through power networks (Lopez, 2013:5) and power can be acquired through material and symbolic resources.(Reis & Moore, 2005).Higley & Burton (2006:7) also argue that elites are persons occupying the top of powerful organisations and movements thus capable of affecting political outcomes both substantially and regularly. This definition is often criticized because the notion of elites emerging from movements and organisations may lead to a vast array of elite sources contradicting the notion of elites as a small group.

However, elite theory limits elites to a necessary minority, who can effectively manage democratic institutions, accumulate the privileges that come with power, orchestrate mass support and protect their positions by controlling access to the top. Thus, the elites though, few are left to dominate the decision making

process while the masses though large in number are apathetic. Summarily, according to Mosca, elite theory points to the concentration of political power in the hands of a minority group which “performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings”. Thus, public policy may be viewed as the value and preferences of governing elite. (Anifowose & Enemuo, 2008:293-294).

The elite theory is very relevant in understanding party politics and the decision making process in Nigeria in that political parties in Nigeria are created and directed by the elites (minority) in the society who invariably exert significant power over corporate and government decisions.

IV. HISTORICAL REVIEW OF PARTY POLITICS IN NIGERIA

The development of political parties in Nigeria dates back to the early 1920s

when the first political party (Nigerian National Democratic Party) was established in 1923. This was made possible through the Clifford Constitution of 1922 that introduced the ‘elective principle’ in the country thereby allocating three seats in the Legislative Council to Lagos and one seat to Calabar. The introduction of the elective principle brought unprecedented political activities to Lagos. The Nigerian National Democratic Party won all the three seats allocated to Lagos in 1923, 1928 and 1933 (Adigwe, 1979). All the activities of the party were centred in Lagos, thus, the party could not emerge as a national party in the true sense of the word. Some of the founding members of the party were Ernest Okoli, H. O. Davies and Samuel Akinsanya (Okwodu, 1982). By 1936, the Nigerian Youth Movement sprang up to challenge the NNDP’s control of Lagos and its claim to speak for the whole of Nigeria. Although, both parties NNDP and NYM had aspirations which covered the whole of Nigeria, their operations did not go beyond Lagos and Ibadan (Adigwe; 1979:181).

However, after the World War II, Nigerian nationalists intensified their efforts towards attaining independence from the colonial government and owing to this, other parties began to surface. An important party that surfaced at this time was the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) which later metamorphosed into National Council of Nigerian Citizens. It was formed in 1944 and led by nationalists like Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe, and it was the first political party to spread over the country with its membership opened to everybody. However, it later degenerated into a party that was identified with the former Eastern Region of Nigeria (Adebayo, opcit).

The Egbe Omo Oduduwa, a Yoruba socio-political organization formed by Obafemi Awolowo in London in 1945, metamorphosed into a political party named Action Group (AG) in 1951 with some of its founding members like Chief S. L. Akintola, Bode Thomas etc. The party was also ethnically based in the former Western Region, the area now known as South Western zone of the country. Moreso, another political party named, Northern People’s Congress which was an offshoot a socio-cultural organization called Jamiyyar Mutanen Arewa came into being in 1951. Membership of NPC was restricted to the people of the northern Nigeria. It never laid claim to being a national political party. The leader of the party was Ahmadu Bello, an advocate of the policy of ‘one indivisible North’ (Adebayo; 2008:66). Apart from the three dominant parties, there was J. S. Tarka’s United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), a party which spoke for the area from which it derived its name (ibid).

There were also the United National Independent Party (UNIP) under the leadership of Eyo Ita, and Aminu Kano’s Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), a Hausa-Fulani’s party. However, the three dominant parties (NCNC, AG & NPC) controlled the politics of the First Republic, with each championing ethnic causes because they derived their political strength from their regional bases.

Biobaku (1986:6) describes the First Republic political parties thus:

The dominant parties in the North and Southeast formed the government with that in the Southwest in the opposition. Each party represented the predominant ethnic group in its region and each incidentally controlled the government in its region (as cited in Adebayo, ibid).

In the Second Republic, there was no significant difference from the form and character of the political parties and those of the First Republic. The five political parties that were registered by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) were formed along ethnic lines and drew their support from the same old regional power. The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) was a reincarnation of the Action Group (AG); the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was almost the replica of the NPC too, except that its membership was by the old Northern aristocracy and the Southern bourgeoisie; The Nigerian People’s Party (NPP) was (NCNC) re-incarnate with Igbo as its base and Nnamdi Azikiwe who led the NCNC was also the leader of the NPP. The Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) also came into being as an aftermath of the quarrel of the Kanuri who had in the First Republic resented political hegemony by the Hausa-Fulani ruling class. The GNPP was an offshoot of the First Republic’s Borno Youth Movement (BYM) and was led by Ibrahim Waziri. The Peoples Redemption Party

(PRP) was the replica of NEPU, with its influence in Kano and Kaduna and its leader was Mallam Aminu Kano. In 1982 Nigeria Advance Party (NAP) was registered and this brought the number of parties that contested the 1983 general elections to six. Political parties' appeals to ethnic sentiment had always impacted negatively on the unifying function of political party in Nigeria; thereby sacrificing the even development of the country on the altar of ethnic/sectional development.

The aborted Third Republic witnessed the emergence of centrist parties. About thirteen political parties sought registration from the National Electoral Commission (NEC) but the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention were formed by administrative fiat of the Babangida regime. The manifestoes of the thirteen political parties were synthesized into two for both parties by NEC (Adebayo, *ibid*). The parties that were registered during the transition programme of General Sanni Abacha were more or less an extension of federal government parastatals. All the parties adopted Abacha as a consensus presidential candidate. Following the death of Gen. Abacha in 1998, his successor, Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar initiated the transition which heralded Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999. In the preparation of Nigeria for the Fourth Republic, three political parties were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among several associations that struggled for registration as political parties. The registered political parties were Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The AD which is essentially a Yoruba outfit, committed to producing a Yoruba President in 1999, was inseparable with Afenifere- a Yoruba socio-cultural and political group. By 2003, the party could no more find its feet when it lost five out of the six states it controlled in 1999 to the ruling party (PDP). The APP which was later changed to All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) in 2002 has its root in the self-succession outfit of Sani Abacha (Adebayo; 2008). Its founders had served as ministers or as political aides to various political office holders in different parts of the country. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has four sources of origin. First, were the so-called politicians who were denied registration by Abacha during its self-succession bid- the G.34 Committee led by Solomon Lar. Second, were some politicians who were former members of NPN who were not opposed to the self-succession plan of Abacha but were not part of his machine led by S. B Awoniyi. Third, were those who were the followers of the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua political family; Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM). Included in this group are Tony Anenih and Abubakar Atiku. Four, were those who called themselves democrats (*ibid*).

The mode of party evolution in Nigeria is devoid of people of like minds who have a meaningful ideology to pursue when elected into office. The aftermath of this is made manifest in weak structures and ineffective operations of political parties which have adversely affect the output of political parties towards enhancing quality decision making, made manifest in people-oriented programmes that will engender good governance that Nigerians deserve. Thus, the composition of political parties at the inception of the Fourth Republic can be viewed as instrument of transition from military to civilian rule. In the current Fourth Republic, there have been over sixty-three registered political parties aligning and re-aligning in their quest to gain political power in order to control the government at the centre. Today, many of the political parties have been de-registered and we are left with sixty-eight political parties (Yakubu, 2018).

V. PARTY POLITICS AND DECISION MAKING IN GOVERNMENT- THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

Democracy is about participation and representation. Participation is the extent to which individual members of society take part or get involved in the activities in their societies. Representation on the other hand, refers to the process by which people get chosen to act in the interest of the community or sectors thereof. In modern day where the dominant form of democracy is indirect or representative democracy, political parties are the principal mechanism for ensuring citizen participation and representation in public policy decision-making (Agbaje, 2005); and in fact through which individuals share the democratic values. Of utmost importance is their role of organizing government thereby shaping government policies towards providing good governance for the citizens.

As pointed out above, political parties also produce decision makers (the elected representatives in the executive and legislature), and they are all involved in party politics which have been described in this paper as all activities of political parties in the political process aimed at gaining power in order to control political/public offices which are in the forefront of organizing the government of the day that makes decisions for the general welfare of its citizens. This means that the ruling party is of great importance to decision making. This is not to undermine the role of opposition party in shaping public policies because they are also to provide good, constructive criticisms to the policies/decisions of the party in power by providing alternative policies but, the emphasis on the ruling party is necessary because it is the party that forms the government which makes or control the day to day activities of the government that affect the citizenry.

To understand party politics and decision making in the Nigerian government, there is need to understand the character and nature of Nigerian political parties which invariably affect the tune of party

politics. First is that most parties have ethnic and regional bases or display identity orientations. For example, the Action Group, the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and Action Congress of Nigeria had (have) their bases in the Yoruba dominated South-west of Nigeria. Similarly, the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC), the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and All Progressives Grand Alliance had (have) their political stronghold in Igboland while Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) had (have) theirs in the Hausa-Fulani heartland of Northern Nigeria. Parties use mobilization of ethnic movements and the use of ethnic leadership at the grass roots level; and ethnic mobilization for electoral purposes result into elections being transformed into highly competitive zero-sum games; and ethnic interest take preference over merit in the choice of candidates for elective offices and appointive posts. In 2013 the three biggest opposition parties (CAN, CPC, ANPP) and a faction of APGA floated a new party All Progressives Congress (APC) in anticipation of 2015 general elections and to field a northern presidential candidate so that the centre can be controlled by the north in 2015. Writing on the ethnic factor in the formation of Nigerian parties, Ajayi (2005:35) argues:

Above all, politics and political parties were ethno-centrally based. Sub-national considerations overshadow the national interests. Primordial qualities and the syndrome of 'The Son of the Soil' took preference over merit and competence in the choice of national leaders.

Owing from the foregoing, those who have genuine ideas and passion for service delivery are not given the opportunity to participate in the political process. Also, the elected representatives and the politicians that are appointed to occupy public offices like ministers, commissioners, supervisory councilors, chairmen of parastatals etc. are prone to taking decisions that will favour their ethnic groups because they see themselves first as representing the interest of their groups rather than the national interest.

Second is the elitist/caucus nature of political parties in Nigeria, the direct outcome of thinking that "the educated minority in each ethnic group are the people who are qualified by natural right to lead their fellow nationals into higher political development" (Olarinmoye; 2006). The AG, UPN, AD, ACN were and are the handiwork of Yoruba middle-class business men and intelligentsia. The NPC was the creation of the Hausa-Fulani ruling class in Northern Nigeria. The NCNC was essentially composed of an elite core centred on Igbo educated class and surrounded by Igbo grass roots organizations. The NPN and most of the parties of the Second Republic and Third Republic as well as Babangida and Abacha's regimes created political parties arose from caucus formations in various constitutional assemblies. For example, the SDP and NRC were formed by administrative fiat of the Babangida government while political parties of the current Fourth Republic follow the same elite orientation. E.g. the AD was the result of splits among political elites, first in the PDP and later in the APP (Olarinmoye; 2008).

In other words, political elite first create political structures and then invite the mass to join. Thus, political parties are created and directed by the elite in the society who believe that the control of government and of political power should be their exclusive preserve. They pursue interests that are centred on elite objectives and their actualization at the expense of the masses. Elite parties are after securing and retaining political office for its leadership and distributing income to those who run it and work for it. Supporting this, Dudley (1973:20) submits:

...the shortest cut to affluence is through politics. Politics means money and money means politics, there is always a price... To be a member of the government party means an open avenue to government patronage, contract deals and the like.

This explains why the decisions/policies of government in the present day Nigeria have been to the advantage of the political elite at the detriment of the masses. Thus, gap exists between the parties and the mass electorate.

Third is the concept of godfatherism which had negatively impacted on the Nigerian political system. Godfatherism is the use of individuals who have the knowledge of the political terrain and the capacity to deploy such knowledge to enhance voter compliance. They have the power to determine personally both who gets nominated to contest elections and who wins. The godfather knows the knowledge of the structure of voters (electorate) in the sense of knowing what appeals and what incentives are most appropriate to each group. The godfather uses his knowledge of the voting structure for the politician and parties in return for economic and political benefits as he benefits in form of contracts and political appointments. Today, we now have the godfather patron in Nigerian politics that deploys his knowledge and control of voting structure of electorate to capture the party machinery for himself. With his control of the party structure, he becomes the sponsor of politicians and no longer their broker. He uses his control of party machinery to impose his clients as party candidates for elective offices and ensures their electoral success through activities which have been

characterized as electoral corruption which later translate into direct access to state resources meant for the public.

The festering sore of political godfatherism in Nigeria's political terrain has really eaten deep into the system which has greatly influenced government decisions towards benefiting the so-called godfathers at the expense of the public. Many instances come to mind at this junction- Late Dr.Olusola Saraki vs. Late Governor Mohammed Lawal in Kwara State, Senator Jim Nwobodo vs. Gov. Chimaroke Nnamani in Enugu State; Chief Emeka Offor vs. Gov. C. Mbadinuju in Anambra State; Late Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu vs. Gov. Ladoja in Oyo State and Chief Chris Uba vs. Gov. Chris Ngige in Anambra State.

These examples show how godfatherism adversely affects not only good governance but also the socio-economic stability of democratic governance. This is because godfatherism debars development. The state resources which the godson supposed to use for development of the state will be used to compensate the godfathers for throwing their political weight behind their godsons. Its effect further pauperizes the masses thereby making them gullible and manipulable by the dominant parasitic class (Awopetu, 2009).

Fourth is that there is no internal democracy in Nigerian political parties which always occasion consensus candidate. This has always been associated with internal party crisis, division, splitting and decamping. An example that readily comes to mind happened in Ifon community in Osun State on Wednesday, 3rd July, 2013 where there was a free-for-all fight following a disagreement over the sharing of elective posts (House of Assembly) by the leadership of the ACN instead of allowing aspirants to emerge through primary election of the party (*The Punch*, July 4, 2013:13). In case of executive position, the running mate is usually appointed by the party and not by the would-be governor or president that is contesting the election. This, always cause a lot of crises between the so-called executive and his deputy and much energy and resources of the state are always spent on impeachment. The time that is meant for governance is used to dissipate energy on lobbying the legislature to impeach the deputy/president who may not be loyal to his boss because of his loyalty to the people (party executive) that nominated him. A good example that readily comes to mind is the case of one-time Governor of Ekiti State, Governor Ayo Fayose and his Deputy, Surveyor Abiodun Aluko. Gov. Fayose eventually succeeded in impeaching Aluko (Imonikhe, 2005). Other recent instances are the Deputy Governors of Taraba and Imo States – Alhaji Sani Abubakar Danlandi and Mr. Jude Agbaso respectively (Ishu-Joseph, 2013; Olalaye & Uheze, 2013). Also, Olagunsoye Oyinlola who was the former National Secretary of PDP as a result of being a consensus candidate was removed from office by a court judgment which declared the process that brought him into office as illegal (Odunsi, 2013).

Fifth, Nigerian parties lack clear cut ideology which affects decision making in government. Some critics of representative democracy argue that party politics means that representatives will be forced to follow the party line on issues, rather than either the will of their conscience or constituents. The implication of this is that, it is what the party in power wants, and not what the people want. Since our parties do not have policy position (ideology) around which they are committed besides wanting to occupy the vacant positions at all levels of government in the country as a means of sharing the “national cake” as a system of patronage. For instance, Governor Rotimi Amaechi suspended the chairman and councilors of Obio/Akpor local council for alleged corruption (Uzodinma, 2013). The national leadership of PDP wanted the suspension reversed but the Governor declined saying the suspension was imposed by the state House of Assembly to enable it investigate the alleged corruption in the local council (ibid). The leadership of PDP was against the Governor's decision thus, the Governor was suspended by the PDP which generated series of crises that rocked the party both locally and nationally and Gov. Amaechi eventually left the party for the newly-formed APC. Also, most lawmakers (federal and state), who are major actors in the decision making process were sponsored by their Governors and they do not have the political will to make laws that will not be in the interest of their sponsors. They are interested in legislation that will benefit themselves and their sponsors instead of being involved in deep intellectual reflection of the condition of the Nigerian populace and initiate laws that will enhance the general well-being of the citizenry.

Electoral corruption that has also permeated Nigerian politics is impacting negatively on decision making in government. This is because the government that emerges from fraudulent electoral process spends better part of its tenure fighting legal battles with opposition parties at the election tribunals. The taxpayers' money that is to be expended to better the lot of the people is spent on prosecuting the election cases.

Also, the politicization of the civil service cannot but be discussed herein as it is the branch of the executive arm of government that implements the policies and decisions of government. Civil servants are not merely passive implementers of laws, they also have much input in the making and application of those laws. Much legislation originates in specialized agencies. Many of the data provided and witnesses that appear before legislative committees are from the executive departments and agencies and the heads of these departments and agencies are political appointees who are loyalists of the ruling party/government that appointed them. Also, the administrative head of each ministry in the civil service is the Permanent Secretary and the appointment has become political. For a Permanent Secretary to retain his/her position during a change of government, he/she

will have to play along with the chief executive and minister/commissioner in the ministry and their policies; any uncooperative Permanent Secretary even if it is based on rule and regulation is always seen as an agent of the opposition party and may likely lose the job. Therefore, in order to protect his/her job, a serving Permanent Secretary has to protect the interest of the political executives by supporting the decisions made by the latter even when they are not people-oriented, people friendly and are not making the desired or feasible impact on the governed.

Lastly, party politics, as it is being practiced in Nigeria has not encouraged continuity of decisions earlier made by previous administration especially when the incumbent is not in the same party with the government it succeeded. Good projects that are of immense and long-term benefits to the community are cancelled, abandoned or become moribund when a new government is installed.

VI. CONCLUSION

Party activities are supposed to relate directly to the interests of the society which are translated into government policies by the party when elected into office. In Nigeria, party politics is impacting negatively on decision making as observed in this paper. To engender good governance, politicians need a reorientation about the nature, formation and characteristics of political parties. There must be the establishment of a democratic ideological based party structure since this is lacking in the current political system. Nigerians should endeavour to develop strong political parties that have the ability to organize themselves and do what they should do in order to deepen democracy in the country so that it can have meaningful impact on the populace. This can be done when parties seek to enhance their capacity in response to changing circumstances by training the political leaders to develop policies that would drive the development of Nigeria. Internal democracy instead of consensus candidacy should be internalized and institutionalized by all political parties so as to allow for credible candidate to emerge. It can be said that democratic decisions/policies that reflect the wishes of the populace cannot come from a set of people that are not democratically elected/appointed into offices. Their allegiance is always to the politicians who through other means other than democratic means got them into offices and not to the general populace.

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