

# POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR & PARTY POLITICS IN A DEMOCRACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GHANA & NIGERIA

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## Abstract

Contemporary literature on emerging democracies identifies the art of elections as the ultimate measure for democratic credentials in a country. "If free and fair elections are held regularly within a constitutionally stipulated time frame" and, in particular, "where regime change occurs through such elections", they have argued, "are enough reasons for a country to be branded democratic". Recent studies conducted by Ghanaian and Nigerian Universities on Ghana and Nigeria elections since 1996 tend to affirm this view. In contesting such unqualified assessment, this paper argues that merely conducting free and fair elections at regular intervals does not make a country democratic. Of paramount importance is the quality of elections held and the meaning attached to them. These features, the paper argues, are functions of enduring and sound party politics manifested in decent political behaviour which are enshrined in the basic tenets of political party systems in any given government. The descriptive and comparative critical method of analysis is adopted for examining the dynamics of party politics and political behaviours between Ghana and Nigeria with the view to determining their democratic status. Ultimately, the study attempts to show how the various conceptions of political behaviour & party politics in these countries have drawn them either nearer or further away from achieving democratization.

Key Words: Democracy, Government, Party Politics, Political Behaviour, Political Parties.

## 1. Introduction

Recent studies in the field of political science show that more and more scholars have continued to devote time and energy to the study of the nature, trends and models of democracy, and more generally, the kind of democratization process that seem to be prevalent among African countries. These studies were motivated by the lack of any known and viable political standard which was responsible for the radical styles that was known to characterize the African political arena. Majority of these writers couldn't help but wonder when democratic values and ideals would become the constant mode of operation in the continent of Africa, seeing that what was presently being practiced was far from the generally accepted notions of democracy. The need therefore arise for writers to properly situate the countries in the African continent into the correct political dispositions they belonged.

The study conducted in this paper will aid in understanding and identify the right kind political behaviour typical of a given system and the system of government that subsist or prevails within the continent. This is made possible after consideration the dynamic or rather, the complex nature of systems which countries in the continent of African have been known to practice, they kind of political activity that was gradually becoming a current trend for most African states. The study is premised on the idea which perceives democracy as "the instrument for advancing development because its methods makes for part-ways which allows for an identified polity to tame the excesses of undemocratic political practices" (James, 2010) that is, where the tenets of democracy are properly applied.

Accepted that the existence of viable party systems constitute the very basis of every democracy, the main trust of the first volume of this study is to critically analyze, via comparative methods of analysis, the kind of political behaviour and party politics that exist between Nigeria and Ghana, with the view to showing how their various conceptions of party politics have drawn them either nearer or further away from achieving democratic tenants. The need therefore arise to start by offering a conceptual clarifications of the relevant concepts and terms used in this study. They Include: Democracy, Political Parties, Political Behaviour, Party Politics, among other relevant concepts that we shall encounter in the cause of the study. There will also be the need to look critically at the origin, nature, dynamics and trends of political parties and their development in the countries in question as this shall largely offer a direction to explaining the style and the nature of democracy which is inherent in the countries under review.

## 2. Basic Reflections On The Rating of Democracy In World Politics

One of the most important and outstanding political development in recent years has been the rapid spread of democracy as a political idea throughout most parts of the world. There are strong evidences of an overwhelming appeal of the democratic idea, by which we mean "the claim by citizens that they should, in some ways, exercise substantial control over the decision made by their state or government" (Mark, Krieger & William, 2007:17). In 1973, a research organization based in the United States of America, known as Freedom House in a study, declared that:

There were 43 countries that could be considered "free" (or democratic), 38 that were "partly free" and 69 that could be classified as "not free." By 2004, the count was 89 free, 54 partly free and 49 not free. In terms of populations, in 1973, 35 percent of the world people lived in "free" countries, 18 percent in "partially free" and 47 percent were citizens of countries ranked as "not free." In 2004 however, the percentage was 44 percent free, 21 percent partly free, and 35 percent not free (Freedom House, 2005).

From this study, we see a strong inclination of the countries of the world towards democratic practices. However, while democracy is not yet uniformly practiced, nor indeed uniformly accepted, in the general climate of the world opinion, Amartya is of the opinion that “democratic governance has now achieved the status of being taken to be generally right” (Sen, 1999:3-17).

### 2.1. Freedom House Report on Democracy



In 2014, another report from Freedom House annual country-by country-report on global political rights and civil liberties noted that there has been yet another decline for the eight consecutive years. The 2014 report from Freedom House indicates that 45% of the world’s population representing 88 countries of the world is free. 30% of the world’s population representing 59 countries of the world is partially free. On the other hand, 25% of the world representing 48 countries is not free. Particularly notable were developments in Egypt, which endured

across-the-board reversals in its democratic institutions following a military coup. There were also serious setbacks to democratic rights in other large, politically influential countries, including Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Venezuela, and Indonesia (Freedom House, 2014).

Some of the major findings of the 41 edition of the Freedom report on democracy and human rights, include:

- Fifty-four countries showed overall declines in political rights and civil liberties, compared with 40 that showed gains.
- For the eighth consecutive year, *Freedom in the World* recorded more declines in democracy worldwide than gains.
- Some leaders effectively relied on “modern authoritarianism,” crippling their political opposition without annihilating it, and flouting the rule of law while maintaining a veneer of order, legitimacy, and prosperity.
- Central to modern authoritarians is the capture of institutions that undergird political pluralism. They seek to dominate not only the executive and legislative branches, but also the media, judiciary, civil society, economy, and security forces.

There was however some positive reports that was recorded in the years gone by. They include:

- Civil liberties improved in Tunisia, the most promising of the Arab Spring countries.
- Pakistan showed gains due to successful elections and an orderly rotation of power.
- In Africa, gains occurred in Mali, Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, Madagascar, Rwanda, Togo, and Zimbabwe.
- The addition of Honduras, Kenya, Nepal, and Pakistan raised the number of electoral democracies to 122 (Freedom House, 2014).

Apart from the report above the 2014 also highlights ten countries where listed among those with the lowest possible rating of 7 for their volitions of both political rights and civil liberties. The countries include: Central African Republic Equatorial Guinea Eritrea, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. Reports from the Middle East and North Africa registered the worst civil liberties scores of any region. On the reports of those countries that **gained**: Iraq’s political rights rating improved as the result of greater political activity by opposition parties during provincial elections, and Tunisia earned an increase in its civil liberties rating. However, on the records of countries that **declines**: Egypt saw its status decline from Partly Free to Not Free. The Gaza Strip received a decline in its political rights rating. The same report noted that in recent years, sub-Saharan Africa has been the most politically volatile region, with major democratic breakthroughs in some countries, and coups, insurgencies, and authoritarian crackdowns in others. This trend continued in 2013. **Gains**: Mali moved from Not Free to Partly Free due to successful elections and an improved security situation in the north. Côte d’Ivoire, Madagascar, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, and Zimbabwe all saw ratings improvements. **Declines**: The Central African Republic dropped from Partly Free to Not Free because of a rebellion that ousted the president and parliament and suspended the constitution, and Sierra Leone’s status declined from Free to Partly Free due to persistent problems with corruption. Ratings declines were also seen in South Sudan and Uganda (Freedom House, 2014).

S/N	Description	Rating for Ghana	Rating for Nigeria
1	Freedom Rating	1.5	4.5
2	Political Rights	1	4
3	Civil Liberties	2	5



Fig. 1 (2015 Freedom Rating for Ghana & Nigeria)

Fig. 2 (Map of West Africa Showing Nigeria & Ghana)

While there was hope for a better report in 2015, reports just coming from freedom house annual report on the condition of global political rights and civil liberties indicate that more aggressive tactics by authoritarian regimes and an upsurge in terrorist attacks contributed to yet further disturbing decline in global freedom for the ninth consecutive year. Indeed, the report noted showed that the acceptance of Democracy as the world’s dominant form of Government – and of an international system built on democratic ideals-is under grate threat than any point in the last 25 years (Freedom House, 2015). The report further notes that nearly twice as many countries suffered declines as registered gains—61 to 33—and the number of countries with improvements hit its lowest point since the nine-year erosion began. The report further notes:

The lack of democratic gains around the world was conspicuous. The one notable exception was Tunisia, which became the first Arab country to achieve the status of Free since Lebanon was gripped by civil war 40 years ago. By contrast, a troubling number of large, economically powerful, or regionally influential countries moved backward: Russia, Venezuela, Egypt, Turkey, Thailand, Nigeria, Kenya, and

Azerbaijan. Hungary, a European Union member state, also saw a sharp slide in its democratic standards as part of a process that began in 2010 (Freedom House, 2015).

Some of the major democratic indices that formed the bases of assessment include: the existence the freedom to express oneself, the existence of civil society, and an effective proof of the rule of law. Other countries lost ground due to state surveillance, restrictions on internet communications, and curbs on personal autonomy—including the freedom to make decisions about education and employment and the ability to travel freely. Nigeria in 2014 was rated as one of the countries which score 43% indicating that she was among those partly free on the freedom scale. However on the scale of 1-7 - while 1 is the highest point of freedom and 7 is the highest point of not being free - Nigeria and Ghana's freedom scores are as represented in the chart above in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2.

This study, in the light of the above report, finds it very puzzling to note that some contemporary writers have continued to ascribe most countries in the continent with Democratic status from the mere fact that such countries conduct elections or that they have successfully moved from one transition to the other via party politics and electoral practices without any military intervention. The rest of this section shall examine. Such writers this paper will argue are either biased, myopic or naïve to what democracy really entails. This paper is poised to address this misconception.

## 2.2. Perceptions of Democracy

Democracy has been perceived to evolve from certain standoff or compromise among political contenders for power, in which no one group can claim sufficient strength to control outcomes by itself (Anderson, 1999). Another important pressure for democracy is born of the human desire for dignity and equality. Even when dictatorial regimes appear to benefit their countries - for example by promoting economic development or national goals - citizens are likely to demand democracy. Although authoritarian governments have been known to suppress demands for democratic participation, the domestic and international cost of doing so are high. Let us note here that not all authoritarian regimes have crumbled. China for instance, who is the world's most populous nation with its dynamic economy, remains resolutely undemocratic. Historically, powerful groups have often opposed democratization because the fear that democracy will threaten their privileges. Disadvantaged groups have also been known to oppose the democratic process because they see it as unresponsive to their deeply felt grievances. As a result, reversals of democratic regimes and restorations of authoritarian rule have occurred in the past and will doubtlessly occur in the future. In other words, the fact that the democratic idea is so powerful does not mean that all countries will adopt or preserve democratic institutions.

## 3. Conceptual Clarifications

**Democracy:** The ancient Athenians were concerned about the direct rule of the people, but not notions of consultation and representation as currently practiced even in advanced democracies today. The Athenians were of the strong view that, a life deprived of direct involvement in rulership is without merit, because without their exercise of sovereignty, the purpose of life will have been defeated. In essence, "democracy means adherence to the principle of equality in the sense of occupying offices through lot, rotation and short tenure, and the rule of law as against the sit-tight policy for African political leaders" (James, 2010). The people in this definition are defined in terms of class, but largely in an abstract context as exhibited by the political elites. Aristotle therefore summed his idea of democracy as that which exists where the sovereign authority is composed of the poorer classes and not of the owners of property (Aristotle, 1981). There are several other related themes that have been developed from this idea which are also thought to be integral to what democracy stands for today. Below are a few of them:

- a. Democracy has to do with the scenario where the people govern themselves by regular elections through which their highest leaders are periodically determined (representative democracy) or policies governing them are chosen (direct democracy).
- b. Democracy is also about granting exclusive rights to vote to the people. The right to vote here includes virtually all adults. This is an entirely modern addition. Not so long ago, governments were called democratic that excluded from the franchise all slaves, women, and free males that did not meet certain property or literacy requirements. Now it is considered perverse to call democratic any country so restricting the franchise, as for example, the South Africa apartheid regime that limited voting to minority whites.
- c. Democracy should also foster the acceptance of certain so-called democratic rights, particularly the right to vote, the right to have one's vote count equally, the right to run for the highest office, and the right to organize political groups or parties.
- d. In addition, there is above the state, a law to which all authorities adhere, that provides the framework for democratic rule, and that protects democratic rights. Democracy, therefore, now generally means that a people rule themselves through periodic elections of their highest leaders in which nearly all adults can participate, for whichever offices they are eligible, and under the rule of law.

### 3.1. *Political Parties:*

Political parties can be conceived as an advanced form of pressure or interest groups. They are usually a set of highly organized groups of persons or individual who come together with often quite broad scopes and objectives. By this, we mean that political parties are much broader in scope and seeking to hold power (to the point of perhaps modifying some of its issues, positions if that will help control power). This is where interest groups are known to differ from political parties (Thomas, 2001) "The goal of the political party is to win political office, gain political power, and thereby control the policy making process" (Blondel and Cotta, 2000). Such political parties are usually open to the general public or to a particular class of people or membership.

Put differently, a political party is 'a social group' defined by Herbert Simon as "a system of interdependent activities characterized by a high degree of rational direction of behavior towards ends that are objects of common acknowledgment and expectation" Simon, (1962). It is different from other social groups, such as labor unions and other associations because of the unique functions which political parties performs for the system, such as organizing for public opinion, communicating demands to the center of governmental decision-making and political recruitment. This is why a political party is taken 'as a useful index of the level political development' (LaPalombara and Weiner, 1966:7). Hence the relationship between a viable party system and a democratic order is axiomatic. In a similar dialogue, Plato was known to have insisted in *The Republic* that:

"unless philosophers bear kingly rule in cities or those who are now called kings and princes become genuine and adequate philosophers, and political power and philosophy are brought together, there will be no respite from evil for cities" (Lee, 2007:14).

It is from this premise, we suggest, that political scholars alluded to this point when they noted in Encyclopedia Britannica, that "Plato is thus indirectly the pioneer of modern beliefs that only a party organization, inspired by correct and scientific doctrines, formulated by the written word and interpreted by authority, can rightly guide the state. This is an idea corroborated by the definition of a political party, by The Electoral Knowledge Network, vis a vis, "A political party is defined as an organized group of people with at least roughly similar political aims and opinions that seeks to influence public policy by getting its candidates elected to public office" (Ukpabi, 2010).

Consequently the role of political parties, in a mature democracy, includes:

- a. “Aggregating and articulating needs and problems, as identified by members and supporters.
- b. Socializing and educating voters and citizens on the functioning of the political and electoral system and the generation of general political values.
- c. Balancing opposing demands and converting them into general policies.
- d. Activating and mobilizing citizens into participating in political decisions and transforming their opinions into viable policy options.
- e. Channeling public opinion from citizens to government.
- f. And recruiting and training candidates for public office.”

During elections, their functions expand to include the following tasks; nominating candidates for election to public office and structuring the voting choice.

According to The Electoral Knowledge Network, this is achieved through the “internal processes of political parties, such as the personality of leaders and staff, the ideological foundations, party history, and internal political culture. If a political party applies the democratic principles of electoral politics within the party, the organization benefits from internal information and consultation processes, internal (formal or informal) rules and structures for organization and decision-making, and transparency in the party’s functioning at all levels. Party members may also take on more formal roles in administration like participating in internal polls for leadership positions or in selecting the party’s candidate(s) in upcoming elections. Such parties also work actively to enhance the role of traditionally under-represented groups in their organizations”. These policies, procedures, and processes usually result in positive public perception of political parties and consequently, in their electoral fortunes.

#### **4. Background To Party Politics & Political Behaviour in Ghana From Independence Till Date**

Ghana’s post-independence history has been characterized by long periods of military rule, marked by gross human rights abuses (Boadi, 2004a) With the exception of the First Republic under Nkrumah (1960-1966), the interludes of civilian governments under the Second (1969-72) and Third (1979-81) Republics have been short-lived, unable to survive for up to three years without being overthrown in a coup d’état. In the late 1980s, after nearly one decade of quasi-military rule under the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC), strong internal and external pressures on the government led to the promulgation of a liberal constitution in 1992 and the inauguration of a multiparty party democracy in 1993, ushering Ghana into its Fourth Republic.

Since 1992, Ghana has held five successful multiparty elections; it held its sixth set of Presidential and Parliamentary elections in December 2012. The peaceful transfer of power from the government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) following national elections in December 2000 clearly demonstrates how far Ghana has travelled along the path towards democratic consolidation over the past decade. Beyond successful elections, Abdul-Gafaru reports that “Ghana has made appreciable progress in institutionalizing multiparty democratic governance within the framework of the 1992 Constitution” (Human Rights Project, 2009). To date, (Abdul-Gafaru, 2009:1). *Political Contextual Study of Ghana*, argues that there is now considerable evidence of political liberalization in Ghana which allows Ghanaians to enjoy a much wider range of rights and liberties, as well as the emergence of a vibrant civil society and a free and independent media that increasingly hold government accountable on behalf of citizens. Indeed, with these significant developments, “Ghana’s democratization has been touted as one of the political success stories in Africa” (Gyimah-Boadi, 2008); Whitfield, and Jones, (2008); Ninsin, (1998).

The above gains notwithstanding, few will disagree that “the democratic development of Ghana is still very much work in progress” (Mensah, 2007:6), as a number of democratic deficits still persist at all levels of governance – national, regional and local. This study among other things is poised to measure the degree of truth in these claims in the light of the existing party politics practiced in Ghana since independence.

#### 4.1. Political Parties & Party Politics in Ghana

Dahl (1967) wrote that the “presence or absence of competing political parties can be used as a litmus paper test for...democracy in a country. No full-fledged modern democracy lacks parties that compete for votes and offices in national elections”. Unfortunately, while competitive parties are considered indispensable for democratic consolidation, the numerous military interventions in post-independence Ghana adversely affected the development of multi-party systems in the country. Indeed by 1962, only five years after independence in 1957, Ghana was a *de facto* single-party state, which was legalized in 1964. The period 1966 - 1992 saw the rise and fall of many political parties, as Ghana entered and exited from a succession of military regimes. Needless to say that the decade-long (1982-1992) ban on political parties under the PNDC, significantly undermined the development of the party system in Ghana.

Since the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1992, Ghana has witnessed a stable period of political party development. The 1992 Constitution not only proscribed the establishment of a single party state; it also criminalized the unconstitutional overthrow of democratically elected governments (Ghanaian Constitution, 1992). It must be noted however, that the constitutional entrenchment of a multiparty political system in Ghana has been overshadowed by the practical institutionalization of a strong two party system in the country. Although a multiplicity of parties have contested four sets of elections during the Fourth Republic, only the NDC and NPP have been very dominant, with these two parties alone currently controlling 222 of the 230 parliamentary seats. The dominance of only two parties in Ghanaian politics raises one critical question: to what extent are the leading parties driven by the core values of democracy such as the promotion of human rights and gender equality in decision making?

Significantly, both the NDC and NPP emphasize their commitment to democratic values though with differing interpretations. In ideological terms, the NPP, which is typically regarded as a pro-market, pro-business party, professes ‘Property Owning Democracy’ – the right of every citizen to have the opportunity to persevere to own property (NPP Manifesto, 2004). On the other hand, the NDC, which began as a revolutionary, Populist Party professes ‘social democracy’ – the protection of the rights of socially disadvantaged groups within a multiparty environment. (NPP Manifesto, 2004:14). This ideological difference has serious implications on the enjoyment of social and economic rights. On the one hand, by making private accumulation of property the primary objective of policy, with distribution of wealth essentially left to trickle down mechanisms, the NPP’s ideology of ‘property owning democracy’ is biased towards the protection and promotion of the property rights of the rich and foreign investors compared to the basic needs of the poor and the non-property owning classes (Azeem, Yohannes, & Abugre, 2002). On the other hand, the NDC’s brand of ‘social democracy’ seeks to “*protect the disadvantaged and the marginalized and to ensure optimum production and distributive justice*” (2004 NDC manifesto, p.12, emphasis original). Accordingly, the party purportedly makes the elimination of deprivation and inequality the central thrust of its policies.

However, it is also worth emphasizing that much as the NPP and the NDC identify themselves with different ideologies, in practice, these parties are more distinguishable by ethnic affiliations than ideological orientations, with (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante 2006) rightly noting that “the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), are largely perceived as Ewe- and Ashanti/Akan-based respectively” (GH PC, 2000). This is in spite of the fact that the 1992 Constitution requires every political party in Ghana to “have a national character” by *inter alia*,

ensuring that its membership is “not based on ethnic, religious, regional or other sectional divisions” (Ghanaian Constitution, 2009). The ethnic character of the NDC and NPP is reflected in the ethno-regional pattern of voting (Voting Pattern 2000) and its attendant problem of political patronage. During their tenures of office, both the NDC and NPP have been accused of discriminating against Akans’ and Ewes’ respectively, with (Langer, 2007) recently observing that “Kufuor and his New Patriotic Party’s (NPP) poor showing in the Volta Region during both the 2000 and 2004 elections was translated into a marginalization of the Ewes in his governments” (Report on Ewes Election, 2005). This argument finds credence in the fact that while the Akan’s constitute about 49% of the Ghanaian population, approximately 67% of all government ministers had an Akan background under Kufuor’s NPP administration (Langer, 2007:16). In relation to their contribution to democratic consolidation in Ghana, one recent assessment indicated that “political parties in Ghana have not lived up to their role of serving as the bedrock of democratic governance...”, given their failure to serve as “instruments of political modernization in extending, broadening and deepening individual rights...” Jonah, K. (2007:7).

The main reason is that Ghanaian political parties are not a rich source of alternative policies, but rather tend to operate “more like vote-gathering machines” that often recoil into political hibernation in between elections only to bounce back to life during election time (OSIWA 2007:97); Jonah, (2007:6). Even more disappointing is the inability of parties to serve as “vehicles for equal participation of men and women...in the political decision making processes whether at the party or the level of the state” Jonah, (2007:7), (emphasis added). Political parties in Ghana have generally been reluctant to select women as candidates at the national and constituency levels – a situation which partly accounts for the abysmal representation of women in Parliament since the return to multiparty democracy in 1992 (see Appendix 1). Since the equal participation of women in policy making is an important feature of democratic consolidation and a means for addressing women’s concerns, it is crucial that Ghanaian political parties demonstrate greater commitment to the issue of gender equity by deliberately fielding female parliamentary candidates in their strongholds, and by ensuring that women play more visible official roles in their party structures (Dake, 2008:5).

*Appendix 1: Women’s Representation in Ghana’s Parliament: 1992-2004*

S/N	Year	Total MPs	Total Women	% Women
1	1992	2000	16	8.0
2	1996	2000	14	7.0
3	2000	2000	19	9.5
4	2004	230	25	10.0

Source: OSIWA and IDEG (2007a:89)

## 5. Background To Party Politics In Nigeria From Independence Till Date

When Nigerian won political independence from Great Britain in 1960, they adopted its parliamentary form of political representation. But Nigeria's First Republic was markedly unstable, marred by power-grabbing, corruption and, in the end; the civil unrest was only quelled by a military coup d’état in 1966. During the subsequent period of military rule, from 1966 to 1979, Nigerians witnessed four coups and a bloody civil war. Finally, in 1979, Nigeria's military leaders proclaimed that they would adopt an American-style constitutional democracy.

The ensuing five year period of party politics, dubbed Nigeria's democratic experiment, was eagerly anticipated by Nigerian and Western observers alike. Eames 1985). Using such terms as "political evolution" and "political modernization," Western (and Western-educated) journalists, politicians and academics suggested that Nigerians were now on the "correct path," undoubtedly meaning they were becoming "more like us." However, party politics in Nigeria has never functioned as it has in America,

partly because of the unresolved political and ethnic strife of the last half century. Accordingly, the Second Republic met its doom when rioting in the southwest and southeast followed the announcement of electoral victory by the party perceived as Northern. In December 1983, the military once again assumed power.

Nigerian and Western observers alike often blame inter-ethnic competition, known locally as tribalism, for the instability and weakness of Nigeria's "democracy." On the contrary, Nigeria's constitutional democracy is weak because it is an imported ideology imposed on an artificial political unit. The territory known as Nigeria springs not from an African, but a European, logic - from lines drawn on a map over 100 years ago at a conference table in Berlin. Nigerians have no common history and no communal symbols. What past they share consists of rigged elections and violent political confrontation, largely the result of regional rivalry. The government's redistribution of petroleum revenues according to constituent territorial units fosters this rivalry. Political patronage - the bedrock of Nigerian politics - has in turn fed off these regional and ethnic rivalries, further undermining national solidarity.

Contrary to common assumptions, party affiliation does not derive from unswerving loyalty based on sentimental attachment to a monolithic ethnic group. Political scientists and journalists often speak of ethnic politics as if party and ethnic group were coextensive. This is only true in a very crude sense, for competition over resources does split ethnic groups. It is under the guise of party affiliation that old rivalries within and between towns re-emerge in a transformed context.

Recent studies reveal that Nigerians in political offices would rather wish that their party become the only party. Generally, Nigerians competing for political office know that only two political formations are necessary. On the other, those dissatisfied with existing parties seem to have two options. In order to defeat the party in power, they realize that they would have to put together another sprawling organization; hence they are very likely to opt for a two party system (Omoruyi, 2010). These are the leaders who are arguing for a realignment of political forces such as the country had in 1964 and in 1982 with the formation of the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) and the Progressive Parties Alliance (PPA) respectively.

The other options available to those who are yet to stake political career are that they would prefer many parties and a liberal condition for the registration of new parties. These are usually for those who want to seek some political power at the local or state level or those who want to use the political formation as a clout for political bargaining purposes. This might be a temporary devise and could still lead to a two party formation.

This is the broad generalization, which one could make from looking at the attitude of Nigerians, in and out of office, to the formation of parties in the past. One could think of a one party dominance for the party in power; a two party system for the parties out of office, and many parties around some offices and in some localities for those who are still idealistic and want to break into the political arena. Consequently, records have it that over 40 registered political parties vied for various positions in the 2011 elections held in Nigeria. In 2003, those who are losing grip of the party and the party government want a relaxation of rules for the registration of new parties to enable them put together another sprawling organization to compete with the PDP for instance.

In all, Nigeria had attempted a two party system in 1989 with the view to reduce the political salience of ethnicity, religion, regionalism and statism in Nigeria. However, majority of the people then seem to have appreciated that the multi-party system was antithetical to the formation of a stable government in a plural society. As such, the method did not last. This was because the politicians of that time had more ethnic and religious agenda beneath their sleeves. The system today is worse than what was

before us in 1989. Today tribalism or ethnicity or regionalism or statism is a revered political platform for aspiring politicians and for those in various offices in the country. This is a debilitating disease. It is worse than what Sir James Robertson realized in 1974 when he confessed after 14 years of leaving Nigeria, that “the British colonial rule underestimated the strength of tribalism in Nigeria” (James Robertson 1974). Let me end this part by noting that Nigeria’s experience with the multiparty system in 1960-1969 and in 1979-1993 only encouraged the three ethnic players with their respective political parties and made the small groups to search for shelters under any of the three ethno-regional political parties founded by the leaders of the majority groups. The idea of zoning certain key offices by some political parties is indicative of how deep the problem has come to stay.

#### *5.1. Experience with Two Party System*

The innovation of the two party systems in 1989 introduced some elements of discontinuity between the past and 1989 in terms of origin, composition, leadership selection, funding and the interests they serve. It removed the idea of 'founders' and 'joiners', as all were joiners. It removed the idea of owners, as the government financed the founding of the two parties and provided a level playing field for all those who wanted to stake a political career from either of the two parties. The evolution of the two political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC), which grew out of security and national integration considerations, was one of the least understood by professional political scientist at that time. Sadly, the system could not see the next election of 2003. It was aborted in 1993.

In any case, the two party systems delivered a shift of power from the north to the south through the interplay of democratic forces. The abortion of the transition however was not because of the two party systems or in the manner of their origin. It was due largely to the forces extraneous to the two party systems or the manner of their origin. Those forces are still with Nigerians till today and they are in search of resolution.

#### *5.2. Political Parties Today*

What we have since 1999 in Nigeria as political parties include: {the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), the All Nigerian Peoples' Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD)} have nothing in common with the political parties of the first or second or third republic. Now we have the ACN as another South Western Party that has evolved to consolidate the ethnic and tribal agenda of Yoruba politicians. Their manner of origin of these political parties does not fit into what we know from literature. Their composition is fluid and unstable; they can be viewed as instrument of transition from military to civilian rule and form the future with the prospect of more parties. By 2011, the number of political parties has risen to at least 64 (Adejumo, 2011). The evolution of these parties with each coming election year raises more questions than answers to the lingering problems of political behaviour and party politics in Nigeria.

##### *5.2.1. An X-ray of the PDP*

The review of literature for this study revealed that the PDP and the APP and now ACN were status quo parties when they were formed. They did not have policy position, besides wanting to occupy the vacant positions at all levels of the federation in 1999 and beyond. This singular attitude has continued to be their sole reason for existing as political parties. This is evident in the past elections of 2003, 2007 and also in 2011. As we approach the elections of 2015, one can't but wonder the direction and the deepening political behavior which Nigerians and their political parties continue to manifest all in the quest of acquiring power. The next few pages will X-ray the PDP as a political party pursuing democratic tenets

The PDP, self-described as African's largest party, has been described by Wole Soyinka as a "power machine and a machinery for massive looting and despoliation of people collective patrimony" from the last section above, the objectives of these major parties, and PDP in particular is to rule the country for ever in a manner of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) of the short-lived second republic. For members of the PDP, the notion of politics is perceived as a public vocation, as an epiphany of commitment to Nigerians' welfare and security (Amuwo, 2015:15). Right from inception when the party was first formulated, PDP has only but one agenda, and that is to a broad based neo-conservative bloc who will stop at nothing than to position itself as the discredited political military's privileged replacement.

According to former US Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, "The PDP stood for nothing except power for its leaders and the public new it" (Campbell, 2010: 86). Since 1999, having used power and having been used by power- the PDP has grown in power into what framed columnist Tatal Alamu calls "A fascist Terror machine from which the entire nation is seeking liberation" (Alamu, 2015:3). As noted earlier, nearly all the parties registered in 1998 did not have any clear political ideology. The case is not different for the PDP. The party had no cogent policy blue print or coherent ideology of governance which the people could debate or buy in to –aside from its cheap slogan 'power to the people', as if to mock the long suffering masses. The fact remains that the PDP from all indications lacked the vision, strategy, grand ideas that are people friendly. This probably explains why they resort to primordial sentiments attached to religion, ethnicity and regionization. (Oluwajuyitan, 2014a:20) corroborates this point when he noted that: "The PDP has never really come out with any clear cut agenda to define its vision for Nigeria" From a pan Nigerian perspective, (Obi, 2011:372) contends that the country's politics is bereft of "concert issues, ideology, principles or a clear national vision" such that politics is a high stake contest for raw power and resources". From another perspective,

some have argued that for the PDP, ideologies are lacking and political formations are bereft of identity- as in Nigeria's 4<sup>th</sup> Republic- we are confronted with the efflorescence of several look alike political parties differentiated only by the fatness of the purpose of their main sponsors and the unique mannerisms and idiosyncrasies of their leaders (Amuwo, 2009:52).

The quest to take over power by all means perhaps explains the high level of corruption that is being perpetrated amongst the entire government. Amouw (2015:17) corroborates this fact when he said that: under the PDP's watch, about 10 percent of the populations – national and state legislators; executives of the federal, state and local government and an additional army of political appointees – gulp about 70% of the resources. In the words of a venerated columnist and master satirist, Professor Olatunji Dare: the PDP is the big brother that can provide the infrastructure of the stomach, despite manifest failures in many fronts" (Dare, 2014:51). There is no doubt. The ruling party spends too much on itself. Little wonder why recurrent expenditures have always bested capital expenditure in the country's annual budget. The 2014 figures indicate this fact as follows: 72.71 percent and 27.29 percent which are a far cry from World Bank's suggested 60-40 ratio. Governance was expected to gulp 3.7 trillion out of the total estimate budget of N4.6 trillion.

This revelation prompted some editorials to lament that this indeed is a "smacks of wild economic planning. Punch News (2014). In the same vein, the present PDP led Federal Executive Council granted approval for the purported expansion of the National Assembly Complex at a staggering cost of N40.2 Billion Naira. Yet the PDP led government by Goodluck Jonathan for reasons that have been described as the lack of political will, he had stalled the implementation of the recommendations given by the Stive Oronsaye-led committee which proposed that 220 agencies out of the existing 541

agencies be scraped since most of them already had overlapping functions (Punch, 2014). Small wonder led government is increasingly perceived by Nigerian as a rough government.

In a similar vein, The Nation Newspapers captured a group of demonstrators who were protesting against ills in the society such as “misrule, terrorism, and bad governance”, they were seen to carry Banners that read: “Stop Rogue Regime”, “How to be a PDP Leader: “Disobey Court Order”, “Seal Courts with Soldiers”, “Steal Public funds”, “Recruit Army Tugs” and “Import illegal Arms” (The Nations, 2014:10). Consequently, in corroboration a statement by (Oluwajuyitan, 2014), this study thinks it might not just be share coincidence that “ out of 23 PDP governors that emerged at the onset of the 4<sup>th</sup> republic in1999, 17 of them had either been jailed or facing prosecution”. International observers during elections have not also had good reports about the fairness and the sanctity of elections organized by the PDP led government. The International Crisis Group (ICG) for instance, where of the opinion that: “In the view of Nigerian and the many international observers alike, the 2007 general elections were the most poorly organized and massively rigged in the country’s history” (ICG, 2007:1) .

It was therefore not very surprising when the then incumbent president in 2007, President Obasanjo, openly remarked that the coming election was going to be a “do-or-die affair for his party and government. They were hoping to use the power of incumbency and all in their disposal to win. With this kind of mind set by the PDP led administration, the party therefore worked to ensure that elections were programmed to predetermine the results of the elections even before the elections started. This was necessary since most of the PDP candidates were usually handpicked from an unusual and unpopular group. Winning must therefore be assured long before the polls are conducted. Since it is gradually becoming a rule that all sitting incumbents must necessarily win or retain their party’s position since they have all the necessary resources, logistics and power at their disposal, a factor making it rather difficult for the other party to stand any chance of competing favorably with the incumbents. As the 2015 elections in Nigeria draws near, we can’t help but wonder whether history and this supposed law of incumbency would work for the PDP against the APC party. The die is cast...

## 6. Conclusion

From the comparative studies done so far in this paper, it is clear that *Party Politics* is conceived as political acts and principles directed toward the interests of one political party or its members without reference to the common good. Party politics is therefore mainly for the benefit of the party members. This is even more so where corruption and nepotism are the motivating factors for forming such political alliances and seeking elective offices.

Now, after almost over fifty three years of independence for both countries (Ghana and Nigeria), we will be making a biased judgment if we give a pass mark to both countries with regards to measuring up with the basic tenets of democratic standards when measured from the standard highlighted above, in the light of the nature of party politics practiced in the countries under review. While we may decide to cut the Ghanaian system and government some slacks for the efforts they have made towards entrenching an enduring institution of democracy, the same cannot be said of her counterpart Nigeria (see the chart above on the rating of Nigeria and Ghana who have groped in the dark for more than fifteen years, especially since the last transition from the military (literarily talking about the electricity problem in the country), we can’t help but come to the conclusion that Nigeria’s democracy should be termed “sick” instead of the using the word ‘nascent’ for the following reasons and some of the reasons already discussed above.

1. Though Nigeria has succeeded in holding regular elections, such activities do not necessarily amount to much when considered from the perspective of redemptive and emancipatory politics in state societies relations and in political economic terms (Amuwo, 2015:4).
2. If democratization entails a broadening of political space, an expansion of political participations for political mobilization and the establishment of credible processes and institutions that allow for change or renewal of political leadership through elections, (Famunyaoh, 2001:42-43), then the PDP led government have consecutively failed to uphold any of these tents as discussed above, therefore the practice in Nigeria is far from being synonymous with democracy.
3. Nigerian Political parties have been high jacked and privatized by money bags who appear in the guise of godfathers and godmothers. This is now a sociological phenomenon so powerful to the extent that they can abrogate, manipulate or subvert the electorates will during elections. As such, there is hardly any level playing field for the electoral politics.
4. The grand political behaviour manifested by the ruling PDP, propelled by the incomplete nature of the transition process from the military to the civilian in May 1999, Nigerian elections can hardly be free and fair (Amuwo, 2015).

From the above points it is clear how Nigerians unlike Ghana, have succeeded in making entrenching democracy, a ridiculous task against all logical odds and historical precedents as a result of her idea of *party politics*. A better name for what is being practiced in Nigeria is a system of politics called “*Selecto-cracy*” or as we some would rather call it “*Demo-crazy*”.

This paper therefore strongly advice that party politics in both countries (Ghana and Nigeria) should be practice in accordance with the major tenet and guidelines stipulated as basic reasons and conditions for setting up political parties. Politicians and political parties are therefore enjoined to seriously consider and insist that the purpose and functions for which political parties are instituted should be strictly followed to the later. These very salient steps, in the opinion of this paper, will seriously aid in enshrining lasting democratic systems in both countries and Nigeria in particular.

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