

Nigerian Parties and National Integration

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Abstract

Political Party is a formal institution in a liberal democracy. It performs a central role in the enthrone of an enduring democratic legacy in any society yearning for political development. Its importance is further seen in the fact that even in an authoritarian society despots always hide under its platform to perpetrate their unwholesome acts. Nigerian political parties, since 1922 when the first political party- Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP)- was founded have been known to have fared differently in the area of national integration which is an important function of a political party. The central objective of this study therefore, is to carry out an appraisal of how Nigerian parties have fared in the area of the integration of the country. Other objectives include: (i) assessing how a party can perform its integrative function, (ii) assessing constitutional provisions in Nigeria as they affect the integrative role of political parties vis-à-vis party activities in Nigeria's Fourth Republic; and (iii) advancing strategies on how Nigerian parties of the Fourth Republic can better perform their integrative role in the country. The study adopts historical cum comparative methods as its research instrument for gathering all the necessary information. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is structural functionalism. Some of the findings of the study include the following; (i) Nigerian parties before the Second Republic did not make the performance of integrative role a serious business; (ii) there were no manifest constitutional provisions or code of conduct for political parties that made it compulsory for Nigerian parties to key into the integrative efforts of successive regimes in the country, prior to the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; (iii) there has been a high level of compliance to the constitutional provision and electoral laws as they affect national cohesion by the Nigerian Parties of the Fourth Republic in the area of party organisation; (iv) activities of Nigerian Parties in the Fourth Republic in some instances, have given credence to the fact that they have not totally keyed into the integrative guidelines or provisions contained in the 1999 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Nigeria (as amended); and (v) the signing of non-violence pacts before the 2015 General Elections went a long way to reduce the incidence of violence in the country to the barest minimum. Furthermore, the policy of making a defeated candidate to congratulate the winner of an election dropped the number of litigations to the barest minimum in 2015. Based on these guidelines, the study proffers the following as the strategies that can make Nigerian political parties fair well in the task of national integration; (i) party organisation and its activities or operations should continue to be guided by constitutional provisions as spelt out in sections 222 and 223; (ii) the country's Election Management Body (EMB) (currently the Independent National Electoral Commission – INEC) should, on an interval of two years be subjecting the organisation programmes and activities of registered political parties to a review and deregister any of them that contravenes aspects relating to their integrative role. This is necessary because there is no alternative to the unity of the country; (iii) the country's EMB should be organising interactive sessions with the registered political parties in the country to guard against or reduce the incidence of political parties violating the aspects of their code of conduct bordering on national integration; and the signing of non-violence pacts should form part of the political parties code of conduct as developed by the Inter-Party Advisory Council. Furthermore, major political players should respect the rule of the game- accepting defeat.

Key words:

Political Party, National Integration, Election Management Body (EMB), Constitution, Code of Conduct, Republic.

Introduction

Nigeria has the credit of being the first Anglo-phone country in West Africa where party-politics was first introduced. This was in 1922 when the Clifford Constitution enshrined as part of its provisions, elective principle. It was that development that made the British Colonial government to introduce the nationalists to the idea of contesting elections. They were given a go ahead instruction by the British colonial authorities to form political associations that could later seek registration as political parties (Tamuno, 1966).

The nationalists then demonstrated their unity of purpose by forming only a political party. Herbert Macaulay and a number of his associates like Eric Moore, Augustine Shyngle and Adeniyi Jones founded the Nigerian National Democratic Party of Nigeria (NNDP) in 1922. In 1928, a break-away group of the NNDP led by Adeniyi Jones, founded the Union of Young Nigerians (UYN) because of the conservative posture of the leadership of the NNDP. The formation of Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) followed suit in 1934. However, it metamorphosed to the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) in 1936 so as to give it a broader outlook because at that time, members (for example, Nnamdi Azikiwe) outside Lagos started joining the party. But the development notwithstanding, organisation and activities of political parties in the country fell-short of the criterion of promoting national integration. The Constitution (1922) in operation in the country contributed to this as it limited representation in the Legislative Council to Lagos and Calabar.

The formation of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) (which became known later as the National Council of Nigerian Citizens in 1960) in 1944 was the first partial effort of a political party seen to be performing the task of national integration. It was the first party which had its Chairman, Herbert Macaulay, coming from Lagos; and Secretary, Nnamdi Azikiwe, coming from the East. But again, while the party embraced the West and East into its leadership role, the North was left unrepresented. However, the campaign activities of the party in preparation for the 1947 elections were extended to the North. But by 1954, the party became reduced to the political party of the people of the Eastern extraction when it won election into the Legislative Assembly of the East. From that time till the collapse of the First Republic, the party only, had national outlook in name and organisation but not in operation.

Action Group (AG) which was founded in 1951 was an off-shoot of a Yoruba socio-cultural association, Egbe Omo Oduduwa [the descendants of Oduduwa] which made its debut outing in 1947. Its leader was its founder, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, while its pioneer officers were drawn mainly from the South-West. In fact, it was regarded as the political party of the people of South-West. This it demonstrated when it defeated the then hitherto party-in-government in the Western Region, NCNC, during the 1952 Western Region Legislative Assembly election and formed government. It held sway till 1962. It is however, imperative to note that the failure of the party to win the 1963 Western Regional election orchestrated political crisis in the part of the country which eventually led to the collapse of the First Republic

(Dudley, 1978). The party however, reached out to the other parts of the country during the electioneering campaigns that preceded the 1959 Federal Election.

It was the experience of the country during colonial days and the First Republic that made the constitution engineers of the Second Republic to enshrine various sections in the constitution that were aimed at making political parties to perform the task of national integration. Since that period till the time of carrying out this research, various constitutions (1989, and 1999 Constitutions) of the country had addressed the integrative role of political parties. In fact many political associations seeking registration as political parties had, had their applications turned down by Electoral Commissions in the country at different times because of their failure to pass the litmus test of national integration.

The central objective of this study is to carry out an appraisal of how political parties in Nigeria have fared in the task of national integration. Other objectives include; (i) an assessment of how a political party can perform its integrative function in a democracy; (ii) an assessment of the constitutional provisions in Nigeria as they affect the integrative role of political parties vis-à-vis party activities in Nigeria's Fourth Republic; and (iii) advancing strategies on how the Nigerian parties of the Fourth Republic can better perform their integrative role.

The study adopts historical cum comparative method as its methodology outfit. However, the rubric for determining the extent to which a political party performs its integrative role was an assessment of the extent it complies with constitutional provisions/ electoral laws and the code of conduct governing party activities.

This study is divided into the following broad sections, introduction, conceptual clarifications, theoretical framework, Nigerian parties of the Fourth Republic and national integration; and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study is 'structural functionalism' developed by Easton (1955) to explain his system analysis theory. The theory is anchored on three elements; the whole; the parts; and the functions performed by the various parts. It is the third element that is referred to as 'structural functionalism'. For stability to be attained in a political system, each part that makes up the whole must be willing to perform its functions. Relating this to the experience of a political system, each structure and sub-structures, in this case, political party must perform its statutory responsibility. By performing the task of national integration, a political party will help unify the entity, here in referred to as the political system. The failure on its part to perform this function will lead to the disintegration of the entity.

Conceptual Clarifications

a. Political party explained

Political party is an officially recognised institution in a liberal democracy. This means it should not be under the control of the executive but given a deserved recognition by the Constitution of such a country. For instance, Section 221 of 1999 Constitution of the Federal

Republic of Nigeria (as amended) recognises political party as a 'formal institution and not as an informal institution' as posited by Simbine (2002:8). This is because it is accorded constitutional recognition and has its organisation and activities regulated by the Constitution. Section 221 provides that: "No association other than a political party, shall canvass for votes for any candidate at any election or contribute to the funds of any political party or to the election expenses of any candidate at an election."

The above provision gives credence to the sensitivity of political party in the administration of a State. This is further buttressed by the fact that the Constitution goes ahead to differentiate political party from other forms of association by defining it as a distinct association that performs a peculiar task. The second part of Section 229 of the Constitution (1999) provides that: "Political party" includes any association whose activities include canvassing for votes in support of a candidate for election to the office of President, Vice-President, Governor, Deputy Governor or membership of a legislative house or of a local government council".

It is imperative to note that no any other association as defined in the first part of Section 229 promoting ethnic, social, cultural, occupational, or religious purposes can compete with political party or serve as an alternative, in its major task of serving as the platform of recruiting public officers or an effective channel for promoting national integration. For instance, ethnic, social, cultural, occupation or religious associations are interest (pressure) groups which champion individual or sectional interest.

Following from above constitutional explanation of the concept of political party, the positions of some scholars on what a party connotes shall be given a cursory look in this study. One of such scholars is Remy (1994:232) (cited in Simbine, 2002:7) who posits that "a political party refers to a group of people with broad common interests who organise to nominate candidates for office, to win elections, conduct /control government, and influence /determine government /public policies". A critical look at this definition will reveal that it contains the salient functions of a political party in a liberal democracy but importantly, it stresses the integrative role of a party. This it does by seeing a political party as a platform of unification.

In his own view Yaqub (2002:122) defines a political party as "an instrument for contesting elections for the purpose of selecting candidates and party(ies) to exercise political power". Although this position does state the integrative role of a political party directly, the contest of election by political party as mentioned in the definition is an indirect way of appreciating the integrative role of a party. This position is anchored on the fact that contestants are bound to take their campaigns to the different sections of a constituency. However, the salient aspect of the definition is seen in the fact that the major goal of any serious-minded political party is to control the reins of power.

Lapalombara and Anderson (2001:94) define a political party as: "Any political group in a country that is a formal organisation that links centre and locality presents

at elections, and capable of placing via elections "free or non-free", candidates for elected public offices".

The salient aspects of the above definitions are in two fold, namely; that political parties usually field candidates for elections; and that they perform the integrative role of providing links between 'the centre and locality', for instance, between the central government and other sections of the country. But as earlier posited in this study, electoral activities as performed by political parties are integrative in nature.

All the definitions of political party reviewed in this study appreciate the integrative role of parties in a liberal democracy either directly or indirectly. It is this view that makes this study to argue that a political party is an association of people of diverse socio-political backgrounds, who come together with the desire of championing a common course and with the desire to capture the reins of power in a contested election.

b. National Integration Explained

National integration is a sub-set of integration. What this position connotes is that integration as a political concept usually takes different forms. Their examples include; political (national) economic and cultural. This explains why Jacob and Teune (1964) argue that there is no universal definition for integration rather scholars define it according to the form it takes. Another problem identified by the scholars "concerns the identification of variables that have an influence in producing or inhibiting it" (integration). The scholars explain that it is difficult to say whether or not a given set of circumstances will encourage integration. The third problem identified by them is that it is difficult to measure the impact of each variable and all of the variables in combination upon the political process. What is responsible for this problem is the fact that integration often takes diversified forms.

Having addressed the problems that often associate with the conceptualisation of integration by political scientists and other social science scholars, attempt shall now be made to conceptualise the concept.

According to Duverger (1976:177) conflict and integration complement each other and that antagonism though generates conflicts, can also limit conflict and promote integration. Hence, he added that "integration appears to be the final result of political antagonisms". What this position portends is that there will be little or no need for integration if there is no conflict and in any system where citizens are free to make constructive criticisms, there will be social harmony. This view is also shared by Rubin and Weinstein (1977:151) who posit that "an integrated group can provide acceptable ways to resolve disputes peacefully among its members who have come to share the same basic rules of behaviour".

Having given what necessitates integration, uverger (1976) proceed to explain what integration is. According to him, integration is "the process of unifying a society which tends to

make it harmonious city, based upon an order its members regard as equitably harmonious" (Duverger, 1976:220).

Another scholar whose conception of national integration shall be examined in this study is Eisinger (1976). He explains it as: "A situation in which diverse groups in a political system have been successful in developing common institutions and norms by which to settle conflicts peacefully or pursue collective goals cooperatively, depending on the situation" (Eisinger, 1976:53).

Like the previous definition offered by Duverger (1976) Eisinger (1976:53) is also of the view that "integration is built on the fact of diversity, the need for mutual accommodation and the desire of the parties in the system to maintain the integrity of competing group".

One of the modern definitions of integration has been offered by Chaturvedi (2006). He explains integration as:

The process of bringing together of the different groups which may have same rights in law but nevertheless have unequal privileges and divided and disparate social and educational institutions. Integration would mean bringing all such institutions or organisations together on one platform or to bring together all people regardless of creed, race and origin, with the intention of forming a unified civil society (Chaturvedi, 2006:148).

The above position keys into the Nigerian State which is a country where there are diversities and imbalance developmental efforts in all ramifications. In a plural society of that nature, if no conscious efforts are made by political executives and various institutions (for example, political party) to integrate the various sections of the country, there can be political disequilibrium.

All the definitions of national integration that have been reviewed in this study have given insight to some of the salient attributes of integration. The attributes must be present in any society before there can be an integrative effort. They include; multi-lingua as opposed to mono-lingua; when the size of a country is too large like Nigeria; multiplicity of ethnic groups, religious/ cultural values; and presence of conflict. It is imperative to note that the attributes may present themselves in form of combinations but again, the presence of any of them is enough to elicit integrative effort. Coincidentally, all the attributes are true of Nigerian experience thus justifying why national integration has become a recurring decimal in the country.

Mechanisms for national integration

By mechanism for national integration is meant various strategies that can be adopted towards the unification of a society. Different views had been presented by a number of scholars in this area. According to Smock and Bentsi- Enchill (1976:12) one of the ways by which a

country can be fully integrated is through 'civic education'. This is the use of educational system to instill national identity and awareness in school children.

Another mechanism for national integration identified by Smock and Bentsi- Enchill (1976:12) is what they termed 'regional economic parity'. By this they mean governments should ensure there is balanced economic development in their countries if they want national integration to materialise. Revenue collected in one part of the country should be spent to develop every part of the country while at the same time introducing some palliative measures, where such revenues are sourced from.

Furthermore, Smock and Bentsi- Enchill (1976) identified 'creating a national history, culture and ideology' as another mechanisms for national integration. African countries in particular face the problem of choosing 'a stable past' because of the non-national character of most African history. To serve as a variable instrument of national integration therefore, (past) national heroes must be regarded as instruments of national unity.

Smock and Bentsi- Enchill (1976) further identified 'National Language Policy' as another mechanism of national integration. Lack of national language policy can create communication gap. This will be the case in the absence of 'lingua franca'. Rubin and Weinstein (1977:150-151) also regard language as a veritable tool of national integration.

'Balancing of political powers' is another mechanism of national integration identified by Smock and Bentsi -Enchill (1976:3). The distribution of political power is one of the important ingredients of balancing pluralistic pressures and promoting national cohesion the authors added. Every group that makes up a country should have an unfettered access to political power. This is often referred to as 'consociational democracy' (Roberts and Edwards, 1991:27).

Apart from the integrative mechanisms identified by Smock and Bentsi -Enchill (1976:173), Ojiako (1979) posits that "constitution is also regarded as an instrument for strengthening national unity. The constitution imposes certain duties on the government and the various institutions (for example, political party) of a country. Furthermore it usually contains a number of provisions (for example, Section 14 sub-section 3 of the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria – as amended – on the reflection of federal character principle) that make it mandatory for the political executives to adhere to reflection of federal character principle in the appointment makings. In fact, one of the political objectives of Nigeria enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the country (as amended) is promotion of national integration. Section 15(2) of the Constitution provides that: "Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited".

Following from the above is to ensure that no national or State religion is imposed on the people of a state where there are multiplicity of religious faiths. This has been taken care of by Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which provides that, "The Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as

State Religion". However, in monolithic societies, like the United States of America, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia, adoption of State religion always help to strengthen the ties of national cohesion.

Political party is another veritable tool of national integration. In fact one of the important functions performed by political parties in liberal democracy is that of national integration. Edmund Burke (1729-97) (cited in Olaniyi, 2016:148) who is often credited with the pioneer effort in the area of party-politics emphasised this in his definition of a political party, when he posits that; a political party is "a body of man united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are agreed". Furthermore, both Agbaje (2015:197) and; Saliu and Muhammad (2008:157) consider national integration as one of the important functions of a political party. The foregoing shows that political party is a mechanism for national integration.

One issue that often agitates the minds of political theorists is whether or not 'absolute integration' is attainable in any political system. Example of the proponents who argued that 'absolute integration' is attainable in a society are Jacob and Teune (1964). They posit that integrative processes will continue in a State until a degree of 'threshold of integration' is reached. The threshold of integration according to them is "the point where a group of people have become sufficiently integrated to be considered a community" (Jacob and Teune, 1964:8). The threshold is distinguished by the amount of corporate activity as compared to non-corporate, or it might be regarded as, "a zone that might be entered, or even crossed or re-crossed more than once during the halting and uncertain progress of a community toward integration" (Jacob and Teune, 1964:8).

This study is of the view that the argument of Jacob and Teune (1964) that total integration is attainable is doubtful. This is because even the more orchestrated developed States are not totally free from the clutches of forces of disintegration because as Duverger (1976:219) points out, "integration is already an accomplished fact or close to it in the West, while a long transitional period is still necessary in the East". As regards Nigeria, efforts of successive regimes aimed at integrating the country have not yielded much dividends.

Political Parties and National Integration

As earlier posited in this study, political party is a mechanism for national integration. As a mechanism for national integration, it is a platform of uniting people of different sociological backgrounds. What this connotes is that a party that has the desire to forge national outlook must not have a sectional outlook. Towards this end a party must shun discrimination in the way it relates with its members across the country. Furthermore, its electioneering campaigns must cover all the major sections of the country while it must make specifics during campaigns. Hence, while commenting on what differentiates a political party from interest or pressure groups which are sectional or localised, Kapur (2006) was actually emphasising how a political party can serve as a mechanism for national integration. He posits that:

Political Parties embrace the whole nation and their followings know no fetter of territory, region, class, occupation or section. They join the people from the entire length and breadth of the country and knit all those who think alike and subscribe to the programmes which embrace the interests of the nation and concern the issues that confront the country from within and without (Kapur, 2006:666).

Furthermore, Section 105 of the Electoral Act 2006 (as amended) also lends credence to how a political party can promote national integration through its activities. It provides that:

Any candidate, person, or association who engages in campaigning or broadcasting based on religious, tribal or sectional bias for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate commits an offence under this Act and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of N100,000 or imprisonment for twelve months or both.

Party formation is a reflection of whether or not a political party will be ready to integrate every section of a country. This is so because, when individuals who agree or assemble to form a political party come from the same section of a country, religion or social class undiluted, its later activities will only be seen to be promoting the interest of such a group. Consequently, national interest will be secondary to such a political party. And in fact, its membership might be restricted to that section of the country, religion, or social class. This was the reason responsible for the failure of the major political parties that operated in Nigeria during colonial days and First Republic (1960-1966) to promote national integration.

Despite constitutional provisions as stipulated in Section 202 of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which fore-closed registration of political associations having sectional aim as political parties, the origins of the five political parties (National Party of Nigeria, Peoples Redemption Party, Unity Party of Nigeria, Nigerian Peoples Party and Great Nigerian Peoples Party] registered in the Second Republic (1979-1983) had ethnic colouration. It was this experience that made the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) to be more detailed about guidelines on party formation. It is also addressed by the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended).

Section 222 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria makes provisions for how Party Formation can help promote national integration. It provides that:

- No association by whatever name called shall function as a political party, unless-
- (a) the names and addresses of its national officers are registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission;

- (b) the membership of the association is open to every citizen of Nigeria irrespective of the place of origin, circumstance of birth, sex, religion or ethnic grouping;
- (c) a copy of its constitution is registered in the principal office of the Independent National electoral Commission;
- (d) any alteration in its registered constitution is also registered in the principal office of the Independent National Electoral Commission within thirty days of the making of such alternation;
- (e) the name of the association, its symbol or logo does not contain any ethnic or religious connotation or give the apperance that the activities of the association are confined to a part only of the geographical area of Nigeria; and
- (f) the headquarters of the association is situated in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Party Organisation is another reflection of how a political party can promote national integration. Party offices should be filled in a way that will reflect national geographical spread. That is, appointments or elections of the national officers of a political party should not be lopsided. Section 223 (2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) addresses the issue of the organisation of a political party in a way to promote national cohesion. It provides that: "The members of the executive committee or other governing body of the political party shall be deemed to reflect the federal character of Nigeria only if the members thereof belong to different states not being less in number than two-thirds of all the States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja".

Accepting election outcome the way it is, first, before probably, further or fresh action is an important antidote of disintegration. When election results are rejected by a political party or any of its candidates, the bandwagon effects may spell doom for the unity of a State. This was perhaps what captured the mind of Manin (1995) who argued that no matter the nature of election result, it must be accepted by stakeholders. This position can be buttressed by the fact that there are usually Election Tribunals or Election Courts to entertain complaints arising from any election organised and conducted by a country's Election Management Body (EMB). In Nigeria, in the past, there were instances when some political parties and their candidates alike, called upon their supporters to take law into their hands because election outcomes did not favour them. Such actions of theirs were known to have threatened the political stability of the country. In fact, mass exodus of people of a particular part of the country residing in a specific section of the country had been recorded prior to the conduct of some elections and after their conclusion for fear of being attacked.

The enumerated four different ways-party formation, party activities, party organisation and acceptance election outcomes by parties-through which a political party can perform the task of national integration, will form the basis of the analysis of Nigeria's Fourth Republic Parties and national integration.

Nigeria's Fourth Republican Parties and National Integration

Nigeria's Fourth Republic spans from May 1999 till date. The democratic experiment has been on course uninterrupted and it remains the oldest Republic in the history of the country. The Fourth Republic is currently on its fifth phase. Each phase is defined as a tenure of four years which represents the life span of each set of elected ruling elites. However, apart from the Presidential election which has been held in the country as at when due elections into the National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) 'Governorship and State Houses of Assembly' have been characterised by staggered periods of elections occasioned by Election Tribunal rulings, Court judgments, deaths and resignation of some members. Therefore, for the sake of uniformity of analysis, the Presidential election will serve as the basis of analysis of this study.

Nigeria has experienced five Presidential elections to-date. They were held in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. The elections were contested by different political parties each manifesting, peculiar formation, organisation, activities and response to election outcomes. This section of the study will be analysed on these four parameters. However, there will be a greater emphasis on the fourth stage.

Formation

Only constitutional provisions guided party formation initially in the Fourth Republic. It was later Electoral Act added impetus to the provisions. As earlier posited in this study, the relevant Section of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) Section 222 of the Constitution in particular, gives conditions which a political association must meet before its registration as a political party. These cover sub-sections, a-f. But of interest to this study are sub-sections 'b' and 'e'. Section 222 (b) provides that the membership of the association must be open to every citizen of Nigeria. Furthermore, Section 222 (2) stipulates that the name of the association, its symbol or logo should not reflect ethnic or religious connotation or "give the appearance that activities of the association are confined to a part only of the geographical area of Nigeria."

In the first phase, of the Fourth Republic (1999-2003) three political parties- Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) All Peoples Party (APP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD)-participated in the electoral activities. However, prior to their emergence, in 1998, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) provisionally registered nine political parties with a clause that after the December 5, Local Government elections of that year, any political party that had at least 10 per cent of votes in at least two-thirds of the thirty six (36) States in the Federation (which translated to twenty four states) would qualify to contest subsequent elections- State and Federal (Apan, 2009:90) At the conclusion of the Local Government Polls the PDP won 465 Local Government Councils (about 60%), APP 192 (about 35%) and AD 109 (about 15%). According to Aina (2002:16) the Abdulsalami administration for obvious reasons had to bend its rule of a political party having ten per cent in twenty four (24) states to accommodate AD. This

study has revealed that one of the reasons was to ensure regional balancing. This was however, the undoing of the administration and INEC because subsequent election outcomes of the party reflected ethnic identity. However, APP was equally guilty of this.

The origin of PDP is traceable to the activities of a group known as 'G- 34' (*The Guardian*, August, 27, 1988:48, cited in Simbine, 2002:24). G-34 was opposed to the self-succession plan of late General Sani Abacha. According to Simbine, the aim of the group was to dissuade Abacha from succeeding himself and encourage him to accommodate broad based political parties which would cater for the interests of those that have been injured by the policy-somersault of his administration. The formation of the PDP, going by what necessitated it was therefore broad-based. Accordingly, its founding-fathers came from different parts of the country and most of them were leaders of some political associations. Their examples include Chief Solomon Lar (North Central) Dr. Alex Ekwueme, Vice-President in the Second Republic (South-East) Chief Jim Nwobodo, former Governor of Anambra State in the Second Republic (South – East). Alhaji Abubakar Rimi (North West), Lt. General Theophilus Danjuma (retd.) (North-East) and Paul Unongo (North Central). The failure of the group to get committed foundation members from onset from South-West, later made it to zone presidency to the geopolitical zone to placate them over the annulment of June 12, 1993 Presidential election popularly won by a Yoruba man, Chief M.K.O Abiola. The arrangement produced Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the pioneer President of the Fourth Republic.

As the origin of a party always have effects on its future electoral exploits, the performance of PDP in elections could not be matched by other parties for sixteen years (16). The party held sway until 2015 when it was defeated in a Presidential election by an Opposition Party, All Progressives Congress (APC) because of its factionalisation which threatened its national outlook.

APP was formed by some Nigerian elites who were members of different political associations. However, according to Simbine (2002:24) the “party came about due to the unification of break-away factions from the original PDP as a result of disagreement over some knotty issues”. Six associations fused to form the party. They were: the All Nigeria Congress of Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, the United Nigeria Peoples Party of Chief Emmanuel Iwanyanwu, the National Unity Forum of Dr. Olusola Saraki, Peoples Congress of Mahmud Waziri, the New Era Alliance of Boda Olajumoke, the Depoples Consultative Forum and the Afenifere, a Yoruba Socio-cultural group. (*Nigerian Tribune*, September 16, 1998:7 cited in Simbine, 2002:24). Despite the fact that its formation cuts across different geo-political zones in the country, later events revealed that its leadership was later hijacked by its Northern members. This development made Chief Emmanuel Iwanyawu to dump the party shortly afterwards and decamp to PDP. Egbe Afenire leadership also left the party for AD to strengthen AD as the party of the people of South-West.

The origin of APP affected its electoral exploits during the 1999 general elections. The party won gubernatorial elections in Northern States only while the candidate of APP in the Presidential election, Chief Olu-Falae garnered a greater percentage of the total votes cast in the North.

During the elections that ushered in, the fifth phase of the Fourth Republic which were held in 2015, the major contenders of the Presidential election were the ruling PDP and a new comer to the political scene of the country, All Progressives Congress (APC). The APC was founded in 2013 and it was a product of a coalition arrangement of three political parties and a faction of the fourth party. The three parties that dissolved to form the 'new' party, were; All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) which until that time the foremost political party in Nigeria and which was popular in the North; Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) founded by a Northerner, Major- General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.) in 2010 which won gubernatorial poll in Nassarawa State during the 2011 general elections; and Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) a popular party in South-West which had Chief Bola Tinubu as its national leader and Chief Bisi Akande (both from South-West) as its National Chairman. The Party won four of the six states in the South-West during the gubernatorial polls of 2010 in Osun State, 2011 in Lagos Ogun and Oyo. The party which had its faction joining the APC was 'All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA). The faction was led by the then (and still now) the Governor of Imo State, Chief Rochas Okorocha.

The strength of APC at formation was later to be reinforced with the decampment of the then five serving governors of PDP. They were the Governors of Kwara (North Central) Abdul Fattah Ahmed, Rivers (South-South) Rotimi Amachi, Kano (North-West) Rabi'u Kwakwanso Sokoto (North-West), Aliyu Wamako and Adamawa (North-East) Murtala Nyako. The permutations gave APC a more national outlook by the time 2015 general elections were held. This explained why Major-General Muhammad Buhari (retd.) a serial Presidential candidate, who could not win Presidential Election on three occasions – 2003, 2007, and 2011 based on his failure to be accepted and / or supported in various sections of the country, had an easy ride to the 'Aso Villa' (the official residence of Nigeria's President) by winning the 2015 Presidential Poll. On the contrary, the Shaken foundation of the PDP cost it election victory.

Party Organisation

Party organisation is a reflection of how a political party is disposed to the task of national integration. A mere look at the organogram of a political party will speak volumes especially with regard to its reflection of Federal Character Principle as spelt out in Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

Sections 222 (f), 223 (1) (b) and 223 (2) (b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) complementarily make provisions for party organisation respectively. Section 222 (f) provides that; "the headquarters of the association, (seeking registration as a political party)" (bracket mine) is situated in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)

(bracket mine) Abuja". The FCT is regarded as a unifying territory in Nigeria, centrally located and commonly regarded as an egalitarian entity. All the political parties registered by INEC at different intervals in the Fourth Republic, as various publications by Commission usually reflect, have the addresses of their National Secretariat or Headquarters in Abuja. In fact this study is of the view that political parties in the country do find it more comfortable to have national secretariats in Abuja than other States of the Federation.

Section 223(1) (b) provides that the Constitution and rules of a political party shall, "ensure that the members of the executive committee or other governing body of the political party reflect federal character of Nigeria". At the point of seeking registration, a political association seeking registration as a political party will indicate the names of its interim officers. If INEC discovers that the spread does not conform to the reflection of federal character principle, it will be denied registration. For instance while announcing the registration of five new political parties out of ninety five political associations that sought registration as political parties in the country on June 7, 2017, National Commissioner and Chairman Information and Voter Education Committee, INEC, Prince Adediji Soyebi, stated among other things that: "Today, the Commission approved the applications of five of the associations which have fulfilled the constitutional requirements for registration" (Fabiya, 2017:13).

The constitutional requirements mentioned by Soyebi, definitely cover reflection of federal character principle in the share of party's national offices. For instance the fifth phase of the Fourth Republic, while the National Chairman of APC, Chief John Odigie Oyeogun hails from South-South, and its National Secretary Mallam Ibrahim Gubi is from North East. The Party's National Publicity Secretary, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi hails from North central while its Deputy National Secretary, Hon. Orji Ugofa comes from South-East. Furthermore, the National Youth Leader of the party, Ibrahim Dasuki Jalo comes from North-West. Apart from the examples of these National Officers, each of the six geo-political zones in the country has a Deputy National Chairman.

Section 223 (2) (b) is complimentary to Section 223 (1) (b) on the reflection of federal character principle in the sharing of offices. The section provides that: "The members of the executive committee or other governing body of the political party shall be deemed to reflect the federal character of Nigeria only if the members there of belong to different States not being less in number than two-thirds of all the State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja".

Before any political party can meet the above requirement, it must have a national outlook a binitio. This is because it is not possible to have twenty four states either only in the North or South. It is also not possible to have them in any of the six geo-political zones of the country- South-East, South-West, South -South, North-East, North-Central and North West. Consequently, by design, a political party must have geographical spread at the level of sharing of its national offices.

Party Activities

Party activities represent an important aspect of party-politics. This position is informed by the fact that the success of any political party at polls is contingent upon its dexterity especially when it comes to the stage of marketing its programmes and candidates. However, the way and manner by which a political party carry out its activities in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria, will dictate to an ordinary mind whether or not it is out to promote national integration.

The imperativeness of party activities is seen in the fact that it features prominently in 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) and the 2010 Electoral Act of the country (as amended). Section 227 of the Constitution on the 'prohibition of quasi-military organisation' is about the comportment of political parties and their candidates during electoral activities. The Section provides that: "No association shall retain, organise, train or equip any person or group of persons for the purpose of enabling them to be employed for the use or display of physical force or coercion in promoting any political objectives or interest or in such manner as to arouse reasonable apprehension that they are organised and trained or equipped for that purpose".

The above constitutional provision is being complimented by Sections 96, 97 and 98 of the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended). Section 96(1) which is on 'the conduct at political rallies and processions, etc', makes it mandatory for the Commissioner of Police in each State of the Federation and the FCT to provide adequate security for processions at political rallies. Sub-section 2 of the Section makes it an offence for any person to attend political rallies or go to voting centre with 'any offensive weapons'. The sub-section even goes ahead to stipulate the type of punishment that will be meted out against any erring individual. Furthermore, Section 97 of the Act is on 'Prohibition of certain conducts, etc at political campaign'. The Section prohibits the use of abusive language intemperate, slanderous, or insinuations at political campaigns or when fashioning out slogans for the party. Sub-section 4 of the Section bans the employment of masquerades or their use by any political party candidate or person during political campaigns'. Sub-section 5 prohibits the use of political thugs to perpetrate violence during political rallies or on the election day. Closely related to this is the provision contained in sub-section 6, which is on the ban of the use of private security organisation, vanguard for the purpose of providing security to a political party or its candidates.

Section 98 of the Electoral Act under focus is on the 'prohibition of use of force or violence during political campaigns'. Sub-section (1) of the Section prohibits candidate, person or group of persons, either directly or indirectly from threatening "any person with the use of force or violence during any political campaign in order to compel that person or any other person to support or any other person to support or refrain from supporting a political party or candidate".

How political parties can conduct their activities is also given a premium attention by the 'Political Parties Code of Conduct, 2013'. Some of their examples include the following: Section 2 (6) of the Code stipulates that party should not resort to the use of violence "as a way of demonstrating its strength". Sub-section 7 of the Section implores parties to ensure strict compliance with the Code of Conduct and assist security agencies in apprehending and sanctioning any of their members who flout aspects of the Code. Furthermore, on campaign issues, Section 3 (1) of the Code provides that: "All political parties, their candidates, officials and agents shall work towards ensuring an environment conducive for successful, peaceful, free and fair election campaign."

Furthermore, Section 3(7) of the Code implores political parties and their candidates not to resort to the use of inflammatory language, provocative actions, images or manifestation that can incite violence, contempt or intimidation against another party or candidate or any person or group of persons during political campaigns or voting exercise. Similarly, Section 3 (8) of the Code prohibits political parties or their candidates from making "inciting statements through broadcast press statement, handbills, pamphlets, leaflets or other publications".

The above provisions in the Constitution, Electoral Act and Code of Conduct for Political Parties are enshrined to guard against a repeat occurrence of what happened in the First Republic when violence marred regional and federal elections in some parts of the country (for example, Western Region) which culminated in the collapse of the Republic. At this juncture, the issue that arises is the extent to which the activities of political parties operating in the country, in the Fourth Republic, conform with all the provisions contained in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) and Political Parties Code of Conduct 2013.

This study has revealed that Nigerian parties operating in the Fourth Republic have not been faring well in the area of how their activities can promote national integration in the country. From the conduct of party primaries to electioneering campaigns, their activities are dotted by actions that can propel disaffection and political violence. For instance, at the level of party primaries some political parties often 'pay Peter to rub Paul' by short-changing a candidate who emerges victorious to placate their surrogate. This practice contradicts Section 2 (2) of the Political Parties Code of Conduct 2013, which stipulates that "every political party shall provide equal opportunity to qualified persons to participate in electoral activities". Also, Section 3 (4) of the Code emphasizes that; "political parties shall ensure that the processes of nomination of their candidates for any elections comply with the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) and Electoral Act 2010 (as amended)".

On several occasions, party leadership had disrespected the outcome of party primaries to elect their candidates especially when a 'political underdog' emerged as the winner. Such unwholesome action which is antithetical of democratic tenets had in the past propelled litigations. The first celebrated case in that category was Rotimi Amaechi versus Celestine Omehia (2007). Both were members of PDP who participated in the December 2006

gubernatorial primaries of Rivers State. Rotimi Amaechi emerged the winner in the 'shadow election' while Celestine came second. But when it was the time for their party (PDP) to forward the name of its candidate to INEC for the gubernatorial contest, Celestine Omehia was forwarded by it. In fact, he was the fellow that contested and won the gubernatorial election. It took Amaechi a lot of energy before the Supreme Court restored his victory to him. That episode pitched Amaechi with the then President of the country (Olusegun Obasanjo) and the leadership of his then party (PDP) in the State. It was that intra-party misgivings that over-blown to a major crisis that eventually saw Amaechi out of the party in 2013.

Recently, the Senator representing Taraba North Senatorial District, Alhaji Sani Abubakar Danlami was ordered by the Supreme Court, to vacate the Seat immediately and refund all salaries and allowances he received since 2015, when he was inaugurated, within ninety (90) days. The judgment was sequel to the substitution of the name of Alhaji Shuaib Isa Lau who won the PDP party primary ticket with that of Alhaji Sani Abubakar Danlami by their party. The Court therefore declared Alhaji Shuaibu Isa Lau as the Senator representing Taraba North (Adesomoju, 2017:4). Of concern to this study is the type of division the action of party's Leadership will create or has created within the rank and file of the party. More often than not, that type of an individual who gets justice through litigation when 'party internal democracy' has failed him usually fall prey of external forces (for example, other political parties).

The conduct of political parties during political rallies and on election days, still leave much to be discerned. Parties operating in the Fourth Republic have not dissuaded themselves from the past. This is because political campaigns are still being marred by violence, hate speech, while on election days prospective voters are usually intimidated by the hired or paid political thugs. For instance, the former Governor of Rivers State, Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi, while addressing APC 'mega rally' held at the Adokie Amiesimaka Stadium on October 25, 2014 was quoted thus; "for good or for bad, there must be change in Nigeria in 2015" (*Sunday Tribune*, 2 November, 2014:10). This was least expected from the Chief Security officer of a state. In a similar vein, speaking during the inauguration of Governor Rauf Aregbesola of Osun State, on November 27, 2014, the National Leader of A, Chief Bola Tinubu admonished, APC supporters present to use charms to defend their votes during elections (*The New Telegraph*, November 28, 2014:2). This type of utterance was an indirect way of igniting violence which could have resulted in political instability.

Despite the fact that party activities are still being marred by agents of disintegration in the Fourth Republic the introduction of electronic method of campaigning through the development of Information Technology (IT) has brought about a reduction in the incidence of forces of disintegration in the country during electoral process, at least when compared to the First and Second Republics. Currently, a political party or its candidate can reach out to people via electronic media without necessarily going out to meet them physically.

Acceptance of Election Outcomes by Political Parties

Acceptance of election outcomes by political parties and their candidates alike goes a long way to give credibility to an election and enthrone peace and tranquility at the conclusion of a poll. What can be inferred from this position is that synergy exists between election outcome and peace on one hand and violence, on the other hand. When there is post-election violence after the announcement of an election result, it is either the electorate that participate in the election or the public at large, fault its outcome or they have been incited to react to the outcome by a defeated political party or its flag-bearer. Both had characterised Nigerian electoral process in the past. For instance, the breakdown of law and order in the old Western Region after the conclusion of the December 1964 Federal election can be attributed to malpractices that characterised the election.

The experience of Nigerians in the Second Republic, especially after the conduct of the 1983 General Elections was not totally different in some States from what happened in the First Republic. The post-election crisis in some states and the poor manner the Federal Electoral Commission, headed by Justice Ovie-Whiskey, managed the polls led to crisis in States like Ondo, Oyo, Kaduna and Niger, where members of the opposition parties in the country at that time, Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) had to call on their members and supporters to defend their votes (Otoghagua, 2007:155-156).

In the Fourth Republic, the experiences of the post-election crises of the First and Second Republics made electoral violence to be addressed by the various Electoral Acts- 2002, 2006, and 2010 (as amended) of the country. But in particular, the Political Parties Code of Conduct 2013 gives post-election violence a prominent attention. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) also provides for the process of seeking redress on issues bordering on post-election violence. This is contained in Section 285 of the Constitution which provides for the establishment of Election Tribunals, which have original jurisdiction to hear and determine petitions relating to electoral matters covering election period only. As regards pre-election and post-election matters, such cases are to be handled by civil courts. For instance, issues relating to post election violence are criminal in nature and they cannot be handled by Election Tribunals. Section 272 (1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) on the jurisdiction of High Court of a State covers this.

Section 5, on 'Post election issues' of Political Parties Code of Conduct 2013, addresses issues that can lead to post-election violence. Sub-sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Section are of interest to this study. Sub-section 3 states that; "Political parties and their candidates shall endeavour to send congratulatory messages to their opponents who are announced as duly elected". Some defeated contestants of certain political parties had practiced this in the Fourth Republic. For instance, the defeated Presidential candidate of the PDP who doubled as the incumbent President of the country at that time, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, was the first person to congratulate, the winner of the 2015 Presidential election, Major General Muhammad Buhari

(retd.) The logic is that after congratulating the winner of an election, it will be unethical for a defeated candidate to resort to violence or head for tribunal. This calculation worked out during the 2015 general elections as both candidates (Goodluck and Alao-Akala) neither fermented trouble nor head for Election Petition Tribunal. In fact the singular action of Jonathan of congratulating the winner of Presidential election (Buhari) whom he contested with made INEC to record no litigation on the Presidential election and went a long way to reduce the number of cases filed before Election Tribunals in 2015. This was because many of the defeated candidates followed suit. In all, 611 cases were reportedly filed before various Election Tribunals as at 28th May 2015 (INEC, 2015:79)

Section 5 (4) of the Code stipulates that: "all political parties and their candidates shall refrain from the use of violent or extra judicial means in expressing their non-acceptance of election results". Similarly, Sub-Section 5 of the Section under focus says "political parties and their candidates shall ensure strict adherence to provisions of the law in seeking redress against perceived electoral irregularities". This study has revealed that while some political parties have been availing themselves of the opportunity of seeking redress legally, since the birth of the Fourth Republic, few others have resorted to the unconventional means of seeking redress which is violence. Many of those who seek redress conventionally have gotten justice by having their mandates restored to them by way of the Election Tribunal or the court nullifying some election results (for example, Rauf Aregbesola Versus Olagunsoye Oyinlola of Osun State – 2006) or ordering a re-run election. For instance, in INEC (2007:56) in its report on 2007 General Elections, INEC (2007:56) says as at the time of its report, there were 1,249 cases at the various Tribunals across the nation. Furthermore, on January 20, 2015, Professor Attahiru Jega made public that the 2011 General Elections generated a total of 733 petitions (*The Nation*, 21 January 2015:1).

It is imperative to note that in the absence of avenue for seeking redress; perhaps, all the aggrieved parties or their candidates who headed for the Election Tribunals and Courts might have resorted to jungle justice. But not surprisingly, of course, some political parties or their candidates chose to advocate violence as a means of getting 'justice' in their own way. This has been a threat to the unity of the country. In its report on the 2007 polls in Nigeria, INEC (2007:52) noted that:

Violence and malpractices during elections are clear manifestations of wrong orientation and negative mind-sets within the political process, especially among the political class. They also reflect prevailing ills of the society. With the high stakes involved in contesting elections into political offices, politicians in young or evolving democracies tend to perceive election as "war" that must be won at all costs.

In a similar vein, Ologbenla (2013) bemoaning violence that characterised the 2003 General Elections in the country, gives the following reasons to explain why violence often characterise Nigerian elections. He posits: "Why do we have such a political violence in our body politics"? The answer to this question is that the political class use violence often in the political process to achieve their aims and objectives whenever they realize that competitive democratic process may not place them in power or position of authority desired" (Ologbenla, 2003:81).

The above positions coming from Nigeria's EMB and Ologbenla (2003) sum up why violence will continue to characterise Nigeria's electoral process. The 1999 General Elections did not witness manifest violence, reason being that they were transitional in nature. The elections were also held at a time the country was under military rule. The 2003 General Elections were not as peaceful as the polls of 1999. The elections were preceded by records of political assassinations which cut across both the ruling party (PDP) and the opposition parties in the country then (ANPP and AD). Electioneering campaigns, elections and post-election period equally witnessed series of violence.

The 2007 General Elections were characterised by hostility and violence. The defection of the then serving Vice-President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, from PDP to AC heightened political tension in the country. What contributed to the tension was that the election was transitional in nature, being the first time the country would witness transition from one civilian regime to another, at the centre. Although, there were reported cases of pre-election, election and post election violence in other elections what could have been post-election violence of Presidential election was slugged out in the Election Tribunal. The presidential candidate of ANPP, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.) then resorted to litigation to advance his grievances against the outcome of the Presidential Poll. This was however, not the case during the 2011 General Elections. The elections remain the most hotly contested in the electoral history of the Fourth Republic. What was responsible was the death of President Umar Musa Yar'Adua, a Northerner. His demise gave his Vice, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan the advantage of being sworn-in as the country's President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. When it came to the election period of 2011, major power brokers in the North led by Alhaji Adamu Ciroma wanted political power to return to the North. But contrary to their agitation, the then ruling party, PDP, fielded the incumbent President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan. Major-General Muhammad Buhari (retd.) a Northerner, who had contested Presidential elections on two occasions before-2003 and 2007- cashed on this and became more forceful in his bid to win the Presidential Poll of 2011. His Party, ANPP, fielded him, but again, he lost to the PDP candidate, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan.

During the electioneering campaigns that preceded the Presidential Poll, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.) deviated from the 'Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP) governing political campaigns as spelt out in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and the Electoral Act

2010 (as amended) of the country. He made some inciting statements that prepared his party members and other supporters for post-election violence. For instance, while speaking in a radio programme in Kano, prior to the 2011 elections, he technically incited his supporters against the administration of the then Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau by stating that; "you made a choice in 2003 and you have seen the result of what you elected. Now it is time again for election. I urge you to elect a credible leader" (Muazzam, 2009:270). At another event Buhari was quoted to have said that if the 2011 Presidential election was rigged both the dog and baboon would be soaked in blood (Olatundun, 2013:46). This was an incitement of the highest order which came to fruition when he lost the 2011 Presidential election to the PDP candidate, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan. Violence broke out in some major towns of the North. Mostly affected were Kaduna, Kano and Bauchi. In the three days pogrom, about five hundred lives were reportedly lost while properties that worth billions of Naira were also destroyed. Those who were killed or got their properties destroyed were mainly Southerners where Dr. Jonathan hails from. Some Northerners affected by the crisis were those identified as showing unflinching support to the presidential candidate of PDP (Jonathan). Youth Corpers who participated in the Presidential election that produced Jonathan were not spared. Twelve (12) of them (eleven of which were Southerners) were gruesomely murdered by the rampaging youths in Bauchi State. The post-election crisis of 2011 threatened the unity of Nigeria as some southerners who resided in the North re-located home (South) while the same was also the case with some Northerner who were living in the South that relocated home (North).

The fear of a repeat occurrence of 2011 post-election violence made the Presidential candidate of the PDP, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to preach – a non-violence election all through. His maxim was: My ambition does not worth the blood of any Nigerian. In addition to this, political parties that contested elections were made to sign series of 'peace pacts' at the instance of different organisations or groups. One of such non-violence pacts that covered before, during and after elections, was signed on January 14, 2015 at the instance of a Former General Secretary of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan from Ghana, and a Former Secretary of Commonwealth, Mr. Emeka Anyaoku. This was done to seal the sensitisation workshop on non-violence elections, they organised in Abuja for the representatives of political parties contesting elections in the country. Similarly, at State level, State Commissioners of Police made gubernatorial candidates of political parties contesting elections to sign peace pacts.

The above measure and many other efforts, were undertaken in the country to avoid violence in 2015 elections especially, post-election violence, earlier predicted by the then National Security Adviser to President Jonathan, Sambo Dasuki. At the opening of a two-day workshop organised by INEC and Friedrich –Ebert Stiftung foundation to appraise the 2011 elections and prepare for 2015 polls, he (Dasuki) warns that:

There could be possible violence but with a different angle to it, not only post-election but before and during, because of the

prevailing security situation, unless the security situation gets better before then... The unexpected could happen; a good example was the post-election violence, (in 2011), which was not expected, especially in context and magnitude (Olorok, 2012:10)

Dasuki did not charge only the security agents to get prepared ahead of 2015 elections but extended the challenge to INEC, politicians and the general populace. The effort of the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan in not tampering with the independence of INEC deserves commendation. Furthermore, as earlier mentioned in this work, his maxim, which abhors shedding of blood for the actualization of his ambition, made him to quickly concede defeat as soon as it dawned on him that he could not win the election even when the results of the election have not been totally collated in two States. The foregoing explains, as earlier posited in this work, why the elections recorded the least litigations in the history of the Fourth Republic so far. Consequently, unlike the 2011 Presidential Election, the 2015 Presidential election did not witness any manifest post-election violence.

Conclusion

This study has examined how a political party can discharge its responsibility of national integration, using Nigeria as a case study. The introductory aspect of the study provides an insight into how political parties that operated in the country in the colonial days and First Republic fared in the area of National integration. Under conceptual clarification the study examined the concepts of Republic, political party, national integration and the nexus between political party and national integration. The study thereafter moved to its thrust, which is, how Nigerian parties of the Fourth Republic have been faring in the area of national integration.

The findings of the study include the following:

1. Efforts of political parties in serving as a mechanism for national integration in Nigeria began in the Second Republic due to Constitutional provisions;
2. political parties that operated in Nigeria during the colonial period and First Republic, promoted centrifugal forces;
3. there has been a high level of compliance to the constitutional provision and electoral law as they affect national cohesion by the Nigerian Parties of the Fourth Republic in the area of party organisation;
4. activities of the Nigeria's Fourth Republican Parties, in some instances have given credence to the fact that 'they have not totally keyed into the integrative guidelines of provisions contained in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) and Electoral act 2010 (as amended); and
5. the non-violence pacts signed by political parties or their candidates before the conduct of the 2015 presidential election; and the Political Parties Code of Conduct 2013 helped in stemming down violence before, during and after elections.

Following from the findings of this study, the following recommendations which will help make Nigerian political parties to perform their task of national integration better are here by made:

- i. Political party organisation and its activities should continue to be guided by constitutional provisions and electoral laws in view of the plural nature of the country;
- ii. The country's Election Management Body (EMB) (currently INEC) should on an interval of two years, be subjecting the organisation, programmes and activities of registered political parties in the country to a review and de-register any of them that contravenes aspects relating to their integrative role; this is necessary because there is no alternative to the unity of the country;
- iii. The country's EMB (currently INEC) should be organising interactive sessions with the registered political parties in the country to guard against or reduce the incidence of political parties violating the aspects of their Code of Conduct bordering on national integration; and
- iv. Signing of non-violence pacts by political parties or their candidates as it happened before the general elections of 2015 should become part of Code of Conduct governing electoral process in the country. This recommendation is informed by the fact that signing of non-violence pacts in 2015 stemmed the tide of violence in the country after the 2015 Presidential Poll. Closely related to this is that Political players should be ready to accept election outcome in good faith before contemplating litigation;

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