

## **Party Ideology, Democratic Governance and Development Strategies in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Any Plausible Linkage?**

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### **Abstract**

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The study is an attempt to ascertain if there is a strong relationship between political party ideology and developmental action plans amongst the civilian regimes in Nigeria's fourth republic. Using historical method of data collection which involves oral sources, archival sources and documentary evidence, the study argues that absence of any clear cut political party ideology amongst the political parties in Nigeria's fourth republic raises a lacuna and dislocations between party in government and their developmental action plans. Adopting qualitative method of data collection and analysis which involved historical method through the use of oral, written sources and archival sources, the study argues that that, given the invaluable role which party ideology play in development strategies of any government in power, without linking developmental action plans to clearly defined party ideology breeds incoherence and ineffective service delivery in governance as development efforts in most cases become haphazard and unstable, fraught with inconsistencies, dislocations and frequent revisions and reversals, which in itself does not breed a healthy, steady and progressive development of the Nigeria state. The paper concludes that the Nigerian fourth republic political parties are bereaved of ideology which is the staff or cudgel of democracy and good governance.

**Keywords:** *Party ideology, Democratic governance, Development strategies, Fourth republic, Plausible Linkage, Dislocations*

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### **Background to the Study**

Political party ideology is an essential vehicle through which political party conveys the philosophy behind its beliefs, purpose and programmes of action. In an ideal situation, there is no political party without conviction of its cherished values which translates into ideology. However, it appears that Nigerian parties are suffering from ideological bareness unlike what is obtainable in advanced democracies. This explains why there is quick turnover of membership as movement of political actors from one party to the other is fluid, in what is loosely referred to in Nigeria as party defection. As a result, aspirants in Nigerian usually work against their parties when they failed to secure their party tickets to contest elections. Unless leaders of political parties form and maintain political ideology on their stand, crossing the carpet from one party to another will continue unabated and political uncertainties will continue besiege the political atmosphere. Paucity of party ideology makes Nigerian political parties have more of similarities than differences in outlook except in their names, party logo and symbols. As a result people lack the opportunity to vote in terms of party ideology rather they vote for personality. Political parties in the first and second republics were to a reasonable extent driven by meaningful ideological stance. On the contrary, particularly in the present fourth republic, there is near absence of party ideology as political parties lack ideological stand for its membership, actions and programme, as such parties lack the capacity to prioritize the needs of the country and its citizens, while programmes of the government are merely drawn when candidates assume office; we end up having candidates' own ideology and not a well designed clear cut collective ideology that drives the party visions, plans and programmes. It is quite unfortunate that the electoral umpires continue to put on the ballot, parties whose manifestoes are unknown to the electorate, party which do not articulate any public policy decision (Aleyomi, 2014). This paper therefore set to ascertain the link between party politics, party ideology and viable party programmes, discuss the relationship between the Nigerian fourth republic parties and ideological orientation, and lastly, the effects of lack of party ideology on governance in Nigeria.

### **The Nexus between Party Politics and Party Ideology and Viable Party Programmes Party Politics**

It is pertinent to present a brief description of what a political party ought to be before delving into party politics and party ideology. A political party denotes an association of men and women for the purpose of ascertaining state issues, problems, and defining them for the citizens' understanding as well as for proffering solutions to such problems with a view to gaining the mandate of the citizens to effect necessary solutions. Political parties are therefore associations based on like-minded groups of the citizens who by the virtue of their shared political views about the state come together to have common articulation of how best to promote progress and development of the state. It follows that political party system is about seeking through joint efforts of like minds to wrest state power through citizens' mandate for deciding how best to advance the course of the state (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019).

In agreement with the above description, Hardy (2012) considers political parties as groups of people with shared interests, understanding and principles which articulate for nomination of candidates for public offices in order to win elections for control of government, and set public

policy. Throwing his weight behind the other descriptions, Alapiki (2004) conceives political party as a group of people with common ideas and interests acting together for the political purpose of controlling the machinery of government. This implies that a political party is an association of individuals with similar ideals, but whose principal aim of coming together entail plotting how to win elections through their projected candidates so as to acquire political power.

Following this line of thought, Dibia (2003) defines a political party as an association of like-minded persons who organized themselves into a political group for the purpose of controlling political power and the administrative machinery of government. Lapalombara (1974) defines political party as a formal organization whose self-avowed primary intention is to place and maintain in public office, persons who alone or in collaboration will control the machinery of governance. It is then clear at this juncture that our understanding of political party is that it is a concept that refers to a congregation of people of common interests aspiring to be in charge of running the day-to-day affairs of government.

### **Party Politics**

Contrary to the above definitions of political party, party politics, on the other hand, describes political acts and principles directed toward the interests of one political party or its members without reference to the common good (Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2020). Sequel to the above, party politics could also be described as actions or political behaviours motivated by what is best or right for the political party, rather than the people. This could be exemplified by when a politician passes a bill that is beneficial to his political party or his political career but harmful to the people he is representing ([www.yourdictionary.com](http://www.yourdictionary.com), 2020). Party politics therefore arises when politicians are accused of saying or doing something in order to make their party seem good or another seem bad, rather than for a better reason (Collins Dictionary.com, 2020).

### **Party Ideology**

Party ideology is a systematic articulation and outline of how to achieve the self-avowed political goals of a given party if given the political mandate. Party ideology also includes the political party strategy for capturing the targeted majority votes of the electorate which will empower the party to take charge or the control of affairs.

Political ideology is therefore very essential for political campaigns in communicating the uniqueness of each contending political party; its understanding of the state or national issues; and its intentions on how best to solve such issues so as to enable the electorates assess each contending party against others with a view to ascertaining the party with most authentic programmes of action for national progress and development (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019). Ideology represents a typically crucial element of political parties and their activities. It is a set of ideas about politics, all of which are related to one another and that modify and support each other. Though relatively enduring, it is yet a dynamic phenomenon, capable of being modified by new issues (Omotola, 2010). In line with this perception, Shively (1997) defines ideology as “a continually developing, organized set of ideas about politics that helps us to

make sense of the myriad of political questions that face use”. Similarly, Nnoli (2003, p.178) sees ideology as “a systematized and interconnected set of ideas about the socio-economic and political organization of society as a whole”

The relevance of party ideology to the party itself, politics, governance and the welfare of the society are numerous and cannot be overemphasized. Writing on the relevance of party ideology, Tunde (2014) articulates that political parties, across the world, are identified by their ideology as it defines the policies and programs they intend to pursue when they lead and govern. NDI (2013) highlights the pivotal significance of ideology to a political party by maintaining that ideology helps political parties to realize the following: attract, unite, and mobilize support; withstand significant changes in the internal organization and external operating environment; identify like-minded groups in other countries; and provide political parties with frameworks for analyzing societal needs, assessing and prioritizing any problems, establishing a vision for the future, and identifying the policy actions required to achieve that vision. It follows that without a clear-cut and well-thought-out ideology, a political party is doomed for failure. Lending credence to the above, Fulford (2017) posits that ideology is essential to a political party because, it is that which is built upon a set of philosophical premises, and which define in broad stroke the political template that a political party uses to create their brand, and is the standard they use to attract people with similar notion to support them.

It is evident that in the political sphere of life, the principal goal of every political party is to acquire political power through elections so as to control the machinery of state or national government. Conversely, this feat can only be achieved in an ideal political system through a well-articulated and clear-cut ideology that genuinely promises the desired good governance. Ideology does not only confer direction to political parties, but also ensures their uniqueness as has been mentioned earlier, and their viability as a means of realizing the state or national dream of peace, progress and development which are the hallmarks of good governance. In the light of above, Vassallo and Wilcox (2006) assert that ideology is a distinguishing factor that emphasizes the existence of one party outside another, and hence where more than one party exist, as in most democracies, each is known and identified with its unique ideology.

Democracy necessitates politics and politicking which entails discussions, debates, compromises and or consensus. If politics is essentially about seeking solutions to national or state problems, and such problems or issues, in turn, call for an understanding of the problems in view, and agreement of the citizens on how to solve them for the benefits of all the citizens, then political ideology is, therefore, a blueprint of solution to state or national problems, a road map on how to pull through “turbulent waters” of national or state problems as to arrive at the desired solution. Every party in a democratic dispensation is, therefore, expected to have a well-articulated plan of actions, measures and activities that amount to the party's ideology for taking the state or nation to the promised land of politics in the form of good governance (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019). More importantly, the political ideology enables the electorate to anticipate what each party has to offer if elected into office thereby eliminating unnecessary wild imagination and doubts about the capacity and readiness of the party to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development.

From the various definitions, description and meaning of political party, party politics, political, it is pertinent to state that in an ideal political system, political parties through their ideology represent associations of common interests and common understanding with the purpose of wresting state power for effective governance in promotion of the state. It follows that in a political party, there must be something uniting them, which besides interests in benefits, must include the belief in their joint ability to achieve their desired goals and such belief must be founded on some shared principle or principles, creed or doctrine. Such uniting creed, belief system or doctrine is the ideology differentiating one political party from another and thereby making every political party unique. Ideology is, therefore, the individuating factor making one political party different in nature and orientation from another. With the foregoing, it is evident that party politics promotes democracy, and party ideology defines the model of democracy a state or nation practices (Alapiki, 2004).

On the other hand, political party system devoid of ideology amounts to playing party politics, which only describes the selfish interest aspect of political party, which in itself is an aberration, as it portends an association without clear-cut purpose and direction for some mutual good (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019). Thus, when only party politics is played as against the fulcrum of political party, it is usually devoid of political ideologies, or where parties will articulate one set of programme of actions only to come to power and renege on its promises, politics becomes muddled up, obfuscated, and at worse, it may prove chaotic as the citizens get hoodwinked, deluded and frustrated. This kind of scenario can equally prove a veritable recipe for failed state and Nigerian situation arguably approximates to such an ugly scenario (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019). Thus, the success of any political party is determined by the degree of political ideology especially in advanced democracy (Dilly, 2005:12). This issue of ideology has been so central to the activities of political party across the time and space, ideology has been regarded as the durable convictions held in common by party members in respect to the most desirable form, institutions, spirit and course of action of the state determines the natural attitude of a party towards every public question. (Iyare, 2003, p.12). We shall see in the next section whether the fourth republic political parties are ideologically based or mere party political players.

### **Nigerian Fourth Republic Parties and Ideological Orientation**

Right from independence, the country has had political parties with ill-defined ideological, rather than improving on the structure of our established political parties, they have continued to diminish political parties in the country (Simbine, 2005, p.24).

The recent activities of political parties in Nigeria represent total betrayal to the original principle of political ideology and one is tempted to ask whether Nigerian political parties have any ideological dispositions at all? This is because Nigerian elections, electoral campaigns on the basis of ideology and issues of importance in the polity have been scarce, the politics of 'do or die' has become a dominant factor in Nigerian politics rather than the debate of the most important issues in governance. Nigeria appears to be replete with parties that do not possess underlying ideology or political goals whose members are merely self-serving. Whichever the case one looks at it, the act is not good for Nigeria as it undermines the



democratic process and hinders sustainable development. Arising from the above, therefore, it is clear that one of the implications of the subject matter for Nigeria is absence of ideologically driven political party in Nigeria. Omotola (2009) maintains that Nigerian political parties, despite their pretense through party manifestoes, do not have clear cut political ideologies. Thus, Nigeria fourth republic political parties lack direction because none has an ideology from which one can conveniently say that this is the programme that this party or that party is pursuing.

Down the history lane, a look at the development of political parties in Nigeria before independence showed that parties such as the National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) headed by Macaulay was not only nationalist in orientation but has a progressive cum socialist ideology. The Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) headed by Ahmadu Bello had elitist and conservative ideology, while the Action Group (AG) headed by Awolowo had welfarist ideology but today, with special reference to the fourth republic, no defined ideology can be identified with any political party. Ironically, the prevalent ideology that is common is that of switching allegiance or carpet-crossing or cross carpeting from one party to another (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019). With political transformation from military autocracy and absolutism to civilian government in 1999 the country has witnessed another dimension of party formations. Initially, three political parties were formed; People Democratic Party (PDP), the All Peoples Party (APP), later All Nigerian People Party (ANPP) and the Alliance for democracy (AD) were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (Omoiya, 2012, p.10). By December 2002, the number of registered parties rose to thirty 30, while additional three political parties were registered in January/February 2006 (Momoh, 2005), the formation of political parties during the fourth republic has become unimaginable and the process is still ongoing. The era of fourth republic witnessed unprecedented number of political parties as there are over 60 political parties in the countries (Dosunmu, 2012, p.12). In 2013 All Progressive Congress was formed, an alliance of four opposition parties, the Action Congress of Nigeria, the Congress for Progressive Change, All Nigerian Party and a faction of the All Progressive Grand Alliance (Stanley, 2015, p.10). However, scholars have continued to criticize the lack of ideologies held by these fourth republic political parties. Whereas the People's Democratic Party PDP is described as a fractious and ideologically inarticulate congeries of politicians (Suberu, 2007, p.101), the All Progressive Congress (APC) has been described as participating in political prostitution (Soyinka, 2014).

Elaborating further, Olanrewaju (2015) while decrying the situation posits that Nigeria's political parties have many similarities than differences, the only visible difference being their names. As a result, Nigerians lack the opportunity to vote in terms of party ideology rather; they vote for personalities. This is because the best they could do in the absence of party ideology is to look for the candidate of their choice. Political parties during the days of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo's Action group (AG), for instance, were social democrats, and when you voted AG, you would be sure to access free education if the group won the election. Today we lack parties that prioritize the needs of the citizens. The conflict between All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is a reality check about our political status as a country. Thus, the poverty of ideology has been spreading like hurricane in Nigeria

since the inception of the fourth republic. When individuals that makeup parties in Nigeria are not driven by any political ideology then the issue of party ideology becomes a mirage. People are desperate to achieve their political objectives at the detriment of ideology; politicians change parties almost on daily basis. The case of former president Atiku has been generating some political puzzles among the scholars and political pundits, as Atiku's case has demonstrated high level of indiscipline, lack of ideological disposition right from 2007 till date (Oyenuga, 2014, p.12). Besides, the recent concluded 2015 general elections was another clear demonstration of poverty of ideology. Immediately after the emergence of General Mohammed Buhari as the new President of Federal Republic of Nigeria, thousands of people if not millions have changed from People Democratic Party to All Progressive Party. Even at that, because of lack of ideological clarity and assemblage of strange bedfellows within the All Progressive Party now there are five blocs with their divergent opinions and background that cannot make the party to be driven by any meaningful ideology. Thus, in APC, there were five governors who defected from PDP to APC because of their egocentric and ethnic chauvinism, former members of CPC as well as ACN, ANPP and some members of APGA. Even if all these individuals have any ideology to dispose it will definitely result to ideological collision because there were no basis and proper marriage between the defectors and the new party. The 2015 National Assembly elections that produced Bukola Saraki and Ekeremadu as the senate president and deputy senate president respectively was another testimony of poverty of ideology in Nigeria. Thus, the immediate past senate president of the National Assembly emerged through the support of opposition party; the senate president could not be regarded as a loyal member of the party because he could be said be 50 percent in PDP and 50 percent in APC (The Nations, 2015, p.10). This stance was unmasked during the build-up to the 2019 elections, when the so-called APC Senate president defected to the PDP as a presidential aspirant.

Solanke (2013) decrying this situation posits that all over the world, parties are differentiated based on what they stand for in economic policies, social issues, welfare issues, etc. But in Nigeria, parties are defined based on the personalities in the party and not on any defined ideology to contemporary issues. It is not in doubt that political parties in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) are defined by their ideologies on managing the economy, solving unemployment, fighting crime etc. That is why it is almost impossible to see the politicians defect intermittently. Therein, they have clear-cut ideologies which the party is built upon, but Nigeria's own case, this is obviously absent. Corroborating the above view, Odunze (2013) asserts that neither Nigerian leaders nor Nigerian political parties have a clearly articulated ideology regarding the country's political direction. This is so much so because of the frequency with which Nigerian leaders switch political parties and party loyalty. Thus, frequent party switching, which appears to be a daily routine in Nigeria political space, is either an indication that the parties have no underlying ideology or that the political goals of party members are merely self-serving. Whichever the case one looks at it, the act is not good for Nigeria as it undermines the democratic process and hinders sustainable development.

Nigerian political parties suffer from poverty of ideology because it is difficult to identify any political party ideology. It is sad that the road map for party operations with veritable tool for

mobilization, identification and democratic means of conflict management, as a guide to individual action, formula of operation and judgement is missing in all the registered political parties in Nigeria (Omotola, 2010; Aleyomi, 2013). It might be argued that parties have manifestoes from which their ideological inclination can be garnered, such manifestoes have always proved deficient and insufficient in reality because the manifestoes of various parties in Nigeria's fourth republic, compared with their counterparts in the first and second republic, are similar and hardly could they be differentiated. Poverty of ideology in party also affects politicians' altitude this is the reason why Carothers (2006) posits that parties are 'in deep trouble'. These send wrong signals to the citizens and make confidence in the parties declined. Nigeria's parties are briefcase and artificial. The controls of these political parties are covertly and/or overtly in the hand of an individual or group of individuals, and by implication debar parties from actualizing the roles they were abinitio established to perform let only consolidating democracy. It is not just the individual parties that need help but whole party systems which have yet to become institutionalized. Political elites pretentiously compete for power and when their pursuits are threatened for whatever reason, it result to what Omotola (2010) describes as “the push and pull effect” of the struggles which weaken the party institutionalization and solidarity. Nigerian parties have been victims of such push and pull effects/forces.

#### **Effects of Lack of Party Ideology on Governance in Nigeria**

Lack of political ideology by parties plying the Nigeria political routes have denied the country serious gratifications which can help in the development of her democratic infrastructure and consolidation. Political ideology helps people to make persuasive arguments convincingly to enlist popular support for a given public policy (Omotola, 2009, p.617), but this requisite aspect of politics have been denied Nigerians and Nigerian polity at large.

There is a consensus among scholars that any political party without a defined ideology remains detrimental to the practice of participatory and representative democracy. Soludo cited in Solanke (2013), supporting the above position observed that a political party without a consistent ideological predisposition is like an individual who does not believe in anything, and that is dangerous for the country. The lack of ideology in most political parties in Nigeria undermines democracy and the democratic process (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019).

A debilitating effect absence of party ideology in Nigerian political space is that Nigeria would continue to enthrone leaders who will consistently plunge the country into the abyss of underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment, bad governance, corruption, promotion of personal and sectional interests, mismanagement of resources, insecurity, etc. Iroegbu (2004) buttressing the above assertion posits that owing to the fact that Nigerians are ideological “jaundiced”, they are bound to remain in “economic servitude and flagrant disequilibrium”. Thus, because the country is economically malaise and disorganized, we have found ourselves in socio-cultural turmoil of confused *mélange*, the country has therefore been plunged into political “mumbo-jumbo” to which ideological stupidity yields to economic morass. Iroegbu concludes that since Nigeria is found wanting in terms of ideology, she is condemned to gruesome poverty both of the spirit, mind, body and materially.



On a second note, lack of well-articulated ideology is responsible for the wrong notion prevailing in Nigeria that a candidate elected on the platform of a political party, automatically becomes its leader as soon as he/she assumes office and is above the party. Examples are Governors, who becomes the leader of the party in the State and the President. This has somewhat made the so-called leaders not to be focused, being dictatorial in power as they see themselves to be above the party and cannot be cautioned or disciplined when they go wrong. Whereas In other climes, as soon as elections are over, the political party goes under so that its representatives can focus and concentrate on the task ahead of them with regards to governance. And, when any candidate deviate from the ideology of the party when in power, such candidate is cautioned and may be asked to resign as was the case in South Africa, where the ruling party asked a serving president to resign. The contrary becomes the case in Nigeria, where political parties are a tool in the hands of the president or governor and are manipulated to soothe his whims and caprices (Nnamdi and Ogan, 2019).

Thirdly, the political party in Nigeria has continued to cause distraction for its elected candidates, thereby making them confused and distracted in serving the people efficiently. This reveals why political parties in Nigeria have no ideological stance on burning national issues and questions.

Fourthly, another implication is that scarcity of ideology has shown that political parties in Nigeria lack internal democracy, discipline and cohesion. This fact was clearly demonstrated in the recently concluded ward congresses of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), where the party's secretariat was burnt down in some states and where majority of the party's faithful assert that materials for the congress were hijacked by the party's chieftain. Thus, the exercise was a sham and did not hold. This led to series of conflicts in some states of the federation. Throwing more light on the issue, Omotola (2009) recounts that political parties in Nigeria, particularly in the fourth republic lack the capacity to attain a reasonable degree of institutionalization, especially in the areas of internal cohesion and discipline. This deficiency has also contributed to the decline of the conflict management capacity of the parties at both intra and inter-party relations levels leading to crisis at both levels of party relations, which is a very worrisome trend in the political landscape of Nigeria. The resultant effect is that none of the political parties present in Nigeria have been able to hold itself together without conflict that most times threaten the very heart and existence of the parties leading to mass defections.

Because, the fourth republic political parties lack any clear ideology, and since strange bedfellows are dominant in the parties who are only there to serve their individual and collective self-interests, rather than for the people and society (party politics), there is much room for political brigandage – winner- takes-it-all-syndrome. Winner-takes-all syndrome in politics promotes the principle of neo-liberalism – the rich to grow richer and the poor to grow poorer (Adebayo, 2006; Olagunju, 2000). This equally explains the inability of party leaders and members alike to democratically manage political parties, which has, unfortunately, been a major source of intra-party conflicts, thus degenerating into larger conflicts threatening democratic stability. In the build-up to the 2015 general election, the split of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) over the election of the Chairman of Nigeria's Governors Forum

(NGF) and attendant democratic, developmental and security implications, especially in Rivers state, as well as the democratically suffocating politics of succession within the PDP in the aftermaths of the Yar'Adua's health crisis and eventual death in late 2010, are notable examples of party politics without ideology. There was also the worrisome and unhealthy issue of the fractionalization of the PDP into 'New' PDP and 'real' PDP. This is a crisis that has bedeviled the political movement in the country. This has negative effects on the polity of the country being the then ruling party. All these facilitate distractions and hamper on economic, political and social development of Nigerian. While these intra-party feuds are most recent, also in the past years, there have been a number of quarrels involving top chieftains and factions of the parties (Aleyomi, 2013). For instance, the feud between former President Olusegun Obasanjo and his Vice Atiku Abubakar had destabilizing effect on the succession politics of 2007. Again, there arose the aggrieved seven governors refers to as the 'G-7' that tore the PDP into shreds wherein, the northern wing of the party contemplated the selection of a northern candidate to run in 2015, while the south-south faction of the party, led by President Jonathan, also considered strategies to counter this move. The fractionalization of the hitherto united Governor's Forum, into three camps, namely the Rotimi Amaechi camp, Jonah Jang camp and PDP Governor's Forum Camp, largely from the same party, represents the most recent example of intra-party anomalies in Nigeria (Aleyomi, 2014) caused by party politics-based-ideological lines. Moreover, the unhealthy and incongruent party merger (of defunct Action Congress of Nigeria-ACN, Congress of Progressive Change-CPC, All Nigerian Peoples Party-ANPP and a faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance-APGA) is a pointer to lack of ideology, culture of impunity, and selfishness, they raise more questions than answers to the protracted political/democratic problem in Nigeria (Aleyomi, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

It is true that political parties being the only platforms through which leaders get elected into their various positions is *sin qua non* to the attainment of democratic government, and the indispensable role party ideology play in interest articulation and interest aggregation, however, findings from this study has clearly shown that Nigerian fourth republic political parties lack ideology through which they could effectively play the role of bastion of democracy and good governance. Thus, rather than play ideological politics, what Nigeria political parties play is simply party politics for the interests of its members and the few elites to the chagrin of accountable governance and development. Given the obvious poverty of ideology that characterizes the first three political parties of the Fourth Republic, PDP, APP and AD, it is not in doubt all other parties that sprang up or broke away from them did not do so because of ideological disagreements. Neither was it that they have articulated alternative views of governance for sustainable democracy and development as a viable basis of popular mobilization to wrestle power from the incumbent party. Rather, they were products of adversarial elite behaviour taken to the points of irreconcilability. Little wonder, these parties also have no ideological stance on major national questions other than the transformation and manipulation of forces of identity particularly ethnicity and religion. The implication is that the so-called political parties are not in competition with one another. They are in factions; these factions are more in competition within themselves than with another party. Nigerian political parties are not driven by any substantial ideological disposition because there are no

clear objectives for party formations as well as admission of members. Having underscored the above findings, it is in the best interest of the parties, politics, democracy, good governance, and development of the Nigerian society that parties be driven by meaningful ideology for the fulfillment of its original objectives as well as ensuring democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Since political parties play invaluable role in nurturing democracy, there is need for political actors to reorganize themselves according to their sheds of opinions, socio-economic and political beliefs and convictions. Political actors should refrain from the bandwagon and omnibus mentality of just joining a political party mere gains of political positions rather than convictions of how best to run the state affairs. Furthermore, INEC should as a matter of policy and political expediency, use the criteria of virile political ideology for registering political parties. That is to say, without a distinct viable, sustainable and verifiable party ideology, political associations would not be registered as political parties. Meanwhile, before the 2023 election, the INEC should creatively find a means of reorganizing existing political parties along ideology lines as practiced and witnessed in the first and second republic where defections were very insignificant. One way to effect this is either to adopt stringent rules against party defection or abolish it in its entirety.

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