The Interplay Between Opposition Politics and Political Party Ideology in Consolidating Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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ABSTRACT

The wave of democratization has become a global political phenomenon in several countries within the international system. The consolidation of democracy is, therefore, viewed as paramount in any country where it is being practiced. Specifically, the political context in Nigeria has constituted a subject of concern to scholars and policy makers within and without in recent years, partly because the country's politics has been enmeshed in intense politics of opposition, lack of political party ideology, increasing number of political parties, and unconvincing democratic consolidation. This paper, therefore, seeks to interrogate a significant relationship between the concepts of opposition politics and political party ideology with a view to establishing them as valid factors in the course of consolidating democracy in the country. It assesses the dynamism of opposition politics, political parties and ideology in relation to its capability in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. In order to achieve the basic objectives, the paper opts for secondary source of data and adopts the review of extant literature and content analysis, using textual narrative analysis in analyzing the data qualitatively. The study reveals the weakness and vulnerability of political parties in the country's fourth republic; as they did not possess fundamental features associated with formidable political parties such as ideology, likeminded people, viable opposition party strategies, and internal democracy. It also identifies some of the impediments to democratic consolidation in Nigeria such as insecurity, institutional weakness, electoral malpractice, political thuggery, poverty, corruption, incumbency factor, and lack of viable opposition parties. The paper concludes with suggestions and prospects for democratic consolidation in the country.

Key Words: Democracy, Democratic Consolidation, Nigeria, Opposition Politics, Party Ideology, Political Party.

Introduction

In spite of the evidence that Nigeria's Fourth Republic has witnessed seven general elections (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023); the country is yet to show profound evidence of a consolidating democracy. Scholars and policy makers have, therefore, focused attention on democratic consolidation as a concept since the beginning of the third wave of democratization.

As contended by Diamond (1997), democratic consolidation represents a state whereby institutions, rules and constraints of democracy constitute the sole legitimate means for the acquisition and exercise of political power. Specifically, in the fourth republic, Nigeria has come into the limelight since 1999 as regards the number and increase of political parties including the level of opposition politics. For instance, Olanrewaju (2015) contends that with the growth of democracy in the country, political party formation has gathered more momentum. Accordingly, one of the most complex and critical democratic institutions, which is essential to electoral democracy is the political party. Besides, the political parties' ideology has become a necessity in a democratic society, especially in terms of their functions and responsibilities. The political parties serve, as not only, acceptable and legal platform for electing public office holders, but also perform the roles of opposition politics including as watchdog to the government of the day.

Political party is seen in this paper as a fundamental political institution in the actualization of democratic regime. Its major concern is to examine the extent to which Nigerian political parties have been enhancing the consolidation of democracy in the country through opposition politics and ideological disposition. In the arguments of Yaqub (2002), Dode (2010), and Olanrewaju (2015), there are more questions than answers regarding the role of political parties in the emergent political experiments in Nigeria. Accordingly, political parties in the country have rarely demonstrated ideology at all such that they have exhibited many similarities than differences while only their names indicate the only visible difference. The opportunity to vote in terms of party ideology is, therefore, lacking among the electorates as they rather vote for personalities being the best they could do in the absence of party ideology.

It could be deduced further from the above argument that opposition parties in Nigeria are not adequately alive to perform their political responsibilities. The issues of concern in contemporary democratic societies particularly in developing countries have to do with the trend and viability of opposition politics, political parties and ideology in electoral contests. This, therefore, makes it imperative in this paper to assess the dynamism of politics of opposition, political parties and ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria, especially from May 1999 to May 2024.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian political context has become a subject for deep thought and empirical research in recent years. In this case, the nature of opposition politics and party ideology and their dynamics in relation to the country's democratic consolidation must be addressed. It is worrisome that twenty-five years after the commencement of the present democratic dispensation, the political landscape is yet to show clear evidence of democratic consolidation. This is an area that needs to be given a more pragmatic consideration in Nigeria.

Few works (Agbaje, 1999, Iyare, 2004; Lamidi and Bello, 2012; Abubakar, 2015) exist about Nigerian political parties, but their efforts on opposition politics, party ideology and democratic consolidation are scanty. Thus, this study is timely and relevant as it tends to ask for further research. Specifically, some research has been conducted on democratization process in relation to its challenges and prospects in Nigeria (Tyoden, 2000; Dolo, 2006; Fashagba, 2014; Edet, 2017). There is limited research on consolidating democracy in Nigeria in relation to specific activities of the political party ideology and opposition politics capable of bringing about strong sustainable and consolidated democracy. The research in this area has rather largely been emphatic on the general roles of political parties in a democratic system (Egbewole & Etudaiye, 2010; Olaitan, 2015; Salaam & Usman, 2019).

The objective of this research is to examine the interplay between opposition politics and political parties' ideology as keys in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. The study seeks to provide answers to the following questions: What is the nature of opposition politics and party ideology in Nigeria? What are the challenges of democratic consolidation in the Nigeria's fourth republic? What is the main role of opposition politics and party ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria?

Literature Review

The Nature of Opposition Politics, Political Parties and Ideology and Their Dynamics in Nigeria's Fourth republic

The Nigeria's fourth republic is politically characterized by different arguments in respect of the establishment of political parties, practice of opposition politics and inherent ideology. The essence of constitutionally formed political parties is to enhance the establishment and sustainability of democratic rule because they constitute vital instruments through which democratic process evolves. The distinguishable characteristics of political parties according to

Agbaje (1999:195) include, an organization that is saddled with the recruitments and campaigns responsibilities for its candidates interested in seeking election and selection into public political offices; an organization comprising a set of leaders who seek to organize and control law making and execution bodies of government; as well as an organization that its members and the electorate hold tenaciously in their minds. The last characteristic partly justifies the basis for political ideology.

However, Olorungbemi (2014) has argued that since the beginning of the existing democratic dispensation in 1999 and the ongoing Fourth Republic, political parties have been transformed into various forms of intra and inter struggles and pursuit of conflicting interests among party members all of which have affected the political stability of the polity. The issue is concerned with the political parties' and their leaders' sincerity as to whether the real essence of establishing political parties is being practiced.

On the issues of political party and ideology, Omotola (2009) contends that though the existing ones pretend demonstrating political ideologies through their manifestoes, Nigerian political parties do not have visible political ideologies. That is why it can be argued that party manifestoes and objectives despite indicating the ideological stance of a party, it is inherently not self-sufficient. Such manifestoes should rather largely differentiate the political parties from one another. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in Nigeria, notably from the beginning of the Second Republic. In corroborating this early in the fourth republic, Simbine (2005:24) overviews the manifestoes of the Nigerian political parties in relation to their objectives and strategies, and finds out that they are radically similar to one another in their planks and are all virtually addressing the same issues.

Consequently, it can be argued that the political parties in Nigeria have found it seemingly challenging to be emphatic on politics of issues, but they have rather been mobilizing based on their popular forces often necessitated by religion, ethnicity, and money politics, all of which also determine the nature and pattern of electoral victory of the political parties. The resultant effects of this has been observed in political parties suddenly becoming the tool being deployed to promote and achieve personal and sectional interests at the expense of the commonwealth and collective good, especially national integration, development and democratic consolidation. As noted by Omotola (2009), political parties in Nigeria have been failing to attain a reasonable degree of

institutionalization, especially as it concerns internal cohesion and collective discipline. Accordingly, the country's political parties have demonstrated to be very effective in terms of mobilization and legitimization, but political ideology has been notably lacking.

No doubt, the Nigerian Political parties have been characterized by some challenges, especially as manifesting in the fourth republic. For instance, Jinadu (2011) provides a few of the challenges faced by the parties as including, intra-party conflicts and lack of democratic values; the recycling nature of Nigerian politicians; and lack of politics based on ideology as well as emphasis on politics based on personal interest. Olaiya (2016) identifies other challenges being faced by political parties Nigeria as including, power of incumbency; lack of constitutional or statutory provisions for the prosecution of election offenders; ethnicity-based politics and campaign based on calumny; patrimonial politics; and poor funding of the political parties, especially from the national electoral body.

The Problems and Challenges of Consolidating Democracy in Nigeria

The definition of democratic consolidation by Schedler (1998) as the challenge of securing new democracies, of ensuring their life expectancy extend beyond the short term, and of making them immune and formidable against threats of authoritarian regression could not be more apt. Similarly, and in relation to Nigeria, Power and Powers (1988) have earlier argued that in new democracies such as Nigeria, where the threat of military coup is still a possibility, consolidation may also include attempts to continuously eliminate opposition to democracy by the powerful actors and establish permanent institutions and other arrangements for democracy to keep functioning as well as eliminating undemocratic features of post authoritarian systems.

For Schedler (1998), the usage of the concept of democratic consolidation has expanded in scope as it is further associated with different issues such as popular legitimization, supremacy of civilian over the military, the stabilization of politics, party building, the introduction of mechanisms of direct democracy, the organization of functional interests, judicial reform, the alleviation of poverty, economic stabilization, and the decentralization of state power.

The advent of another democratic experiment in Nigeria on May 29, 1999 undoubtedly elicited expectations among the citizenry that the country would strive hard to keep deepening and consolidating democracy with a view to forestalling another breakdown of democratic process. In

contrary to this expectation, the country's Fourth Republic is viewed as witnessing developments that are not in tandem with democratic ethos and principles, including human rights violations, political exclusion, electoral malpractices, political assassinations, a tendency towards authoritarianism, and intolerance of opposition by ruling political parties, all of which have been resulting in lack of popular participation in politics and policies that affect the people (Unumen & Oghi, 2016).

Democracy in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been viewed as characterized by lack of political parties' internal democracy, dysfunctional electoral system, pauperization of citizens, and regime of contempt for the rule of law (Nyewusira & Nweke, 2012). Besides, Oke (2010), Abubakar (2015) and Obiajulu (2016) submit that the country's Fourth Republic democratization effort has been impeded by institutional weakness and/or decay, human rights violations, cyclical crisis of legitimacy, corruption, insurgency, insecurity and terrorism, and chronic economic hardship. It has also been revealed that Nigeria's Fourth Republic scored very low with regard to citizens choosing their leaders and representatives in free, fair and credible elections, simply because lack of credible elections has become the major concern of the country's democratic practice in the Fourth Republic (Omotosho, 2013).

Agudiegwu and Ezeani (2015) trace the historical antecedents of Nigeria's first and second republics regarding ideology of parties of those republics and argue that strong ideological base characterized the political parties of the first republic than those of the fourth republic democracy, which lack clear ideological focus and divides, while the politicians lack principles, all of which threaten the country's democratic consolidation and good governance. Isma'ila and Othman (2016) see Nigeria's democratization has been characterized with electoral malpractices, as a result of which consolidating democracy in the country appears to be in crisis because of the problems of electoral malpractices, which manifest in form of corruption, insecurity and weak democratic institutions.

Edet (2017) reveals lack of clear ideology and manifesto among political parties and the issue of defection as two of the major banes of democratic process and consolidation in Nigeria. In achieving this objective, the study relied on content analysis. Salaam and Usman (2019) examine the role of the APC as opposition party in Nigeria's democratization process and find out that since

the collapse of the First and Second Republics in the 1960s and 1980s, Nigeria has not had an effective opposition party the way the country had it with APC in 2015.

Unumen (2019) highlights the challenges of consolidating democracy in the fourth republic Nigeria as including systemic corruption, economic crisis, manipulation of both the electoral and constitutional arrangements for personal and party advantages, political exclusion, attempts at blackmailing and/or emasculating both the legislature and judiciary by the executive, intolerance of opposition by ruling political parties and a tendency towards authoritarianism, all of which have the capacity to derail the country's current democratic experiment and/or cause democratic breakdown.

Olorungbemi (2017) acknowledges political parties as the instruments of democratic process stable democratic order in the world over and effective political parties as essential in consolidating democratic rule in Nigeria, but views inter and intra-party conflicts as posing negative implications for democratic consolidation. Idowu (2017) observes democratic consolidation failing in the country based on factors such as; failure of opposition to perform their political responsibilities as most of them are only but fragile entities with shallow roots in the society, incessant division within the ruling parties and opposition parties, and the un-institutionalized nature of most political parties in Nigeria.

Many Nigerians now view democracy as associated with corruption, violence, poverty and underdevelopment, all of which have given rise to fears that rather than consolidating the country's democracy, it may be heading for another breakdown (Oke, 2010; Obiajulu, 2016). It is in view of this that a number of scholars and analysts have made attempts to examine the real challenge of democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and proffer different solutions (Alence, 2004; Sagay, 2012; Baba, 2013; Abubakar, 2015; Unumen, 2019).

The Role and Importance of Opposition Politics in Consolidating Democracy

Politics of opposition indicates an organized partisan movement with a mandate to opposing, contesting in elections and possibly taking over political power from an incumbent government (Dolo, 2006; Adeola & Akinyemi, 2014). As posited by Awofeso and Irabor (2018), opposition parties can replace the government of a country through constructive criticisms, and the same government in turn could be opposed based on similar rules. Opposition is important to the

operation of political parties simply because opposition political parties have the right to contest election with the hope of controlling government power, especially when the ruling party's policies seem unpopular and unfavourable in their implementation (Waldron, 2011). Although the foregoing argument is expected to be the condition of most political parties across universally, Nigerian parties remained far different because of the lack of ideology among them just as the issues of inter/intra-party conflicts and cross-carpeting have gained momentum (Agbaje & Adejumobi, 2006; Fashagba, 2014; Awofeso and Irabor, 2017). This further explains the basis for emphasizing lack of ideology among political parties in Nigeria because of the selfish agenda of opposition parties to win election and take over power from the ruling party by all means without having a convincing idea of what it takes to provide alternative robust policies and good governance.

In the argument of Karpen (1996), opposition in political life could be described as a political counter-power which attempts to convince the majority that its values and goals are better; opposition is the fundamental bases for the development of democracy, as it recognizes rights for political and social actors to publicly criticize and challenge the government in its actions and policies. Alabi (2009) also believes that opposition in many parts of Africa including Nigeria is muffled because of cultural factors and colonial legacies. Accordingly, it is opined that Nigeria's democracy would develop if the opposition political parties genuinely play their fundamental role and operate sincerely in meeting the expectation of the greatest number of people.

The long-time acknowledgement among democratic theorists remains that the principle of legitimate political opposition constitutes one of the major fundamental components of any liberal democracy. For instance, Dolo (2006) describes opposition parties as partisan political organization that are designed with a motive to tempering the ruling party's excesses while still pursuing both legislative and presidential offices. Also, opposition parties are viewed as formalized political groups that possess the capacity of winning sufficient votes at the next election to remove the sitting government and seize power (Adam, 2012:383). The fundamental role of an opposition party in a democracy therefore, is to check and to replace the incumbent party with a view to improving and consolidating democracy.

The Influence of Political Parties and Ideology on Democratic Consolidation

Political parties are viewed as very important for democratization and democratic consolidation (Salih & Nordlund, 2007). The primary operation of political parties in democracies, according to Canton (2007), includes training, selecting and recruiting candidates for governmental and parliamentary positions; formulating government policies and programmes; gathering and implementing demands from a society; supervising and checking a government. Schattschneider (1942), in one of the earliest studies on political parties, states that it is impossible to have modern democracy without political parties. Also, political parties created democracy, and party politics is the main factor that differentiates democracy from dictatorship.

For Linz and Stephan (1996), political parties remain crucial in the course of establishing a strong democracy. Olanrewaju (2015) later emphasizes on political parties' influence on democratic consolidation and addresses the essence of political party in Nigeria's democratic atmosphere by highlighting some of the key tasks they perform in a democratic society, and argues that despite the relevance of political parties in a democratic system, Nigerian political parties have been exhibiting ideological indisposition to justify poverty of ideology. In this case, the major tasks of political parties towards consolidating democracy include: continuous socialization, education and enlightenment of members, citizens and voters as regards how political and electoral system function as well as understanding of and demand for allocation of general political values in the society; bringing public opinions of the citizens to the awareness of government; aggregation and articulation of the inherent needs and problems of members and supporters based on their popular opinions; converting the opposition public demands into robust and practicable policies in favour of the general public.

Ideology on the other hand, as opined by Omotola (2009), represents a fundamental aspect of political parties as well as their operations. Accordingly, ideology is conceived as a set of interrelated and dynamic ideas about politics, subject to modification by emerging issues. In terms of its functions, Nnoli (2003:181-83) says, among others, that ideology provides: a systematization and interconnectedness set of ideas regarding the entire societal socio-economic and political organization; a conflict management and the societal integration instrument of by controlling the basic values and other issues that form the basis of conflicts and disagreement among societal members; an individual and collective commitment dynamic force action necessary for or against the ruling class, policy or decision; a means of self-identification, self-evaluation and social

solidarity; and mechanism for the promotion of the political appeals of a political party, which differentiates political parties from one another.

Ideological principles are viewed as necessary in political party formation, structure and management and this is why Seliger (1976) has averred that politics interconnect with ideology. Accordingly, the entrenchment of internal party democracy to guarantee equal opportunity for participation and protest is fundamental in party ideology. In relation to Nigeria, Edet (2017) contends that issues such as ethnicity, religion, language, culture, money, among others have considerable role in political parties formation and management and thus, Nigeria's democratic sustenance has remained difficult since political parties in the country are riddled with ideological confusion, internal crisis and inadequate capacity to sustain itself. This is said to have necessitated parties to keep changing names, merging with other parties and sometimes form alliance but still facing peculiar problems.

In advanced democracy, ideology is seen as the foundation and determination of success of any political party (Dilly, 2005). In this case, the general activities of a political party are anchored on the issue of ideology as it constitutes the bond among party members based on durable convictions held in common such as the most desirable institutions and the state course of action (Iyare, 2003).

In Nigeria's democracy, political parties represent a departure from ideological identification as their idea of mobilization and association has been based on ethnic and religious factors, all of which have failed to aid the protracted quest and desire for democratic consolidation in the country. The lack of clear ideological commitments in Nigerian political parties has, therefore, become a great concern as political parties are seemingly no longer interested in the doctrines, beliefs or myths, thereby failing to offer unique characteristics capable of distinguishing them from other political parties.

Theoretical Framework

This paper explores a synthesis of elite theory and pluralist democracy theory to examine the issues of opposition politics, political parties and ideology in relation to democratic consolidation. In essence, elite theory, as discussed by Robert Michel, is an important component of modem political system as the concept earlier argued in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The literature on political elites is argued to be dominated by two different perspectives. For instance, the version

of the liberal pluralist contends on how power is dispersed within the elite and predicts the possibility of changes happening over time; while on the other hand, the critical elite perspective focuses on the concentration and cohesiveness of power within elite, thereby resulting in resistance to change and characterized by lack of openness and inclusiveness (Olsen, 1993). Michels admits the virtue and ability of elites in controlling the political system and believes that elites being a minority group hold influence and controls the political system by virtue of 'Iron Laws of Oligarchy' (Mahajan, 2005). Michel's argument is based on the supreme power and grip of elite in an organization being another way of spelling Oligarchy (Agarwal, 2005).

According to Henry (1994), elite theory is a state theory, which seeks to describe and explain the power relationships in modern society. Accordingly, the theory holds that the most power, which is usually independent of a state's democratic elections process, is controlled by a small minority, comprising members of the economic and political elite. Michels looked for an organizational basis to support the emergence of elites. According to Michels's basic reasoning, organization precludes democracy, and can destroy democracy, and can facilitate democratization (May, 1965). This theory is relevant to this paper because political parties in Nigeria are mostly funded and controlled by the elites. It follows that the position, direction and ideology of the party can be determined by the elites. In this case, the opposition level and ideology of the party in a democratic setting are determinable by the elites

Pluralist democracy theory, according to Robert Dahl, is the theory, which holds that political power is distributed among a wide array of diverse and competing interest groups. The theory holds the conviction that human beings are faced with a multitude of significant values and goals such that these values and goals unfortunately often clash, which if it happens, will necessitate need to inevitably strike a balance (Dahl, 1982). Accordingly, in pluralistic societies it is both unavoidable and laudable that individuals will organize on the basis of different values, interests, and definitions of the common good. In democratic politics, Dahl (1982) argues that independent interest groups acting as power buffers and communication channels between state and individual play a pivotal role.

The concept of pluralism forms the core of liberal elite theories and it implies that power is fragmented and dispersed over various groups formed on the basis of cross-cutting differences of interest in society (Stepan, 2001). Pluralist assumptions partly hold the notion that there is variation

in political regimes according to the nature of rules and resources that structure power and roles (Fishman, 1990). Dahl (1995) has contended importance of pluralism in democracy in that while authoritarian regimes restrict entrance to the power structure to a few, democratic regimes give access to a majority of the citizenry. The relevance of this theory is anchored on the fact that Nigeria is a pluralistic society, where majority of the citizens strive to make an impact in the governance and politics of the country through various groups and organizations, especially political parties. This is why democracy, characterized by pluralism, is viewed as the best system of government for the country as it is majority inclusive.

Findings and Discussion

This paper assesses the dynamism of opposition political parties and ideology in consolidating democracy in Nigeria. The review of writings on these issues further indicates that there are some studies on the significant relationship between political parties and democratic consolidation, though less in number (Omotola, 2009; Wondwosen, 2009; Egbewole and Etudaiye; 2010; Lamidi and Bello, 2012; Adeosun, 2014). However, there is dearth of empirical research on the direct role of opposition politics and ideology on both political parties and democratic consolidation within the studies of democracy.

The paper addresses the issues of Nigerian political parties with emphasis on political ideology, being the first and most important pillar of a political party, and reveals that political parties in Nigeria seem to be bereft of clear ideological commitments as indicated by factors such as the rising magnitude of political vagrancy on the basis of selfish and parochial interests, the high level of party indiscipline, as well as absence or weakness of party cohesion and internal democracy.

Despite the critical role of political parties in consolidating democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the paper indicates that the party system in Nigeria is still weak and vulnerable with no visible signs of adding value to the democratic consolidation. The challenges such as lack of institutionalization and political parties personalization, godfatherism, absence of internal democracy within the political parties and incessant party or political violence are revealed as plaguing the efforts at consolidating democracy in Nigeria since the commencement of the country's fourth republic.

The status, role, contributions and the challenges of the opposition politics as well as the opposition political parties, particularly in Nigeria's fourth republic, that emerged in the late 1990s are interrogated. It is revealed that the Nigerian opposition parties appear or become active only during an election, and become passive or disappear when the election is over. Although the role of opposition politics is viewed as sacrosanct as it is essential to the smooth running of any representative democracy, it is further revealed that the opposition parties in Nigeria are mostly established based on the personalities of individuals, and they suffer from various weaknesses including lack of internal democracy, intra-party and inter-party conflicts, weak base and lack of experience, poor organization and disconnection from the popular constituencies.

Above all, the challenges confronting democratic consolidation in Nigeria is analyzed and factors such as lack of viable opposition parties, electoral malpractice, incumbency, poverty, insecurity, incidence of political thuggery, corruption, and institutional weakness are revealed as some of the challenges facing democratic consolidation, all of which have constituted negative impacts on Nigeria's democratic consolidation and stability. No doubt that consolidating democracy in Nigeria could be revealed as a herculean task, tough and challenging; it is, however, not entirely hopeless, out of control and consolidation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper acknowledges the central role played by political parties in the development and nurturing of a virile democracy and its consolidation. It is, therefore, argued that democracy will grow and survive for a long period of time in a particular society provided political parties, among other vital institutions, are well established, and have genuinely played the role expected of them. Political parties, especially in Nigeria, can perform their fundamental roles, become formidable as well as enhance democratic consolidation through genuine and meaningful ideological disposition. A vibrant opposition party system would be needed to checkmate the political party in power if democracy will be effective and strong in Nigeria. Besides, consolidating democracy will demand free and fair elections, independence of the judiciary, respect for the rules of law, upholding democratic values of popular participation, and strengthening democratic institutions and systems to the extent that autocratic reversions are highly invisible. In addition, achieving consolidated democracy in Nigeria will require good governance that essentially promotes improved welfare of the greatest number of the people, transparency and accountability by bureaucrats in the conduct

of state affairs and mitigating the scourge of corruption to the barest minimum by the present and succeeding democratic governments. Above all, the country needs strong institutions with patriotic public officers the Nigerian public needs to gain confidence in its institutions in order to further advance the democratic project.

The key findings of this paper portend potential contributions for political parties and politicians, and will be invaluable to political party leaders and members as they will be able to understand vividly the factors of opposition politics and ideology that consolidate democracy. It is hoped that the results would aid political parties to determine how politics of opposition and political party ideology can be used in consolidating democracy and enhancing its long-term stability in Nigeria. This paper holds great value to political parties based not only in Nigeria, but also political parties in other developing countries desiring to consolidating democracy. The arguments and contributions here become imperative because Nigerian political parties are always seeking to gain political power, especially at the national level but cannot securely achieve this or consolidate democracy unless they work on their ability to innovate and develop new political strategies in relation to politics of opposition and formidable party ideology. The significance of the paper is anchored on its exploration and investigation of the interplay of the key issues and factors relating to politics of opposition, political parties and ideology, and all of these undoubtedly have implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It, therefore, serves as additional and robust information on the quest for strategies that contribute to consolidating democracy in the country. Hopefully, the discussion and findings of this paper would be invaluable to political party leaders and members as they would be able to understand vividly the factors of opposition politics and ideology that consolidate democracy.

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